

# Developing an underpinning competence framework for researchers in the UK

Vitae Researcher Development Conference 2008

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# Background

- The Council for Science and Technology recommended that an “all-encompassing careers framework, which is focussed on the researcher” be developed. (Oct 2007)
- The RCUK Delivery Plan 2008/09 – 2010/11 recognises the importance of a competency framework to support career and skills development for researchers.
- Roberts policy Forum 2008 recommended that the sector should:
  - “Set up, as a priority for 2008, a sector-led working group to develop an overarching competency framework/model of professional learning for researchers that builds on the Joint Skills Statement and includes the complete researcher continuum – from postgraduate researcher to research staff to PI/supervisor – and the complete breadth of the academic role”

# The Project

- Joint Rugby Team/Vitae Project
- To develop a framework that provides a thorough indication of the abilities and attributes expected of researchers at various points within a research career.
- Estimated Timescales
  - 2 iterations of this workshop today
  - Further Rugby Team Discussions in November
  - Framework outline for Policy Forum in January
  - Expected delivery Sept 2009 or January 2010
- Language???
  - “Career development Framework for Researchers”???

# Workshop Aims

1. To help identify the sectors needs for this project.
2. To help develop the scope and design of this project in order to meet these needs.

# What are Competency Frameworks?

The following excerpts from a competence framework designed by the National Prescribing Centre[1] are useful:

- “A competency is a quality or characteristic of a person which is related to effective or superior performance. Competencies can be described as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Competencies help individuals (and their managers) look at how they do their jobs.”
- “A competency framework is a collection of those competencies thought to be central to effective performance. Development of competencies should help individuals to continually improve their performance and to work more effectively.”

[1] [http://www.npc.co.uk/pdf/Concordant\\_Competency\\_Framework\\_2007.pdf](http://www.npc.co.uk/pdf/Concordant_Competency_Framework_2007.pdf)

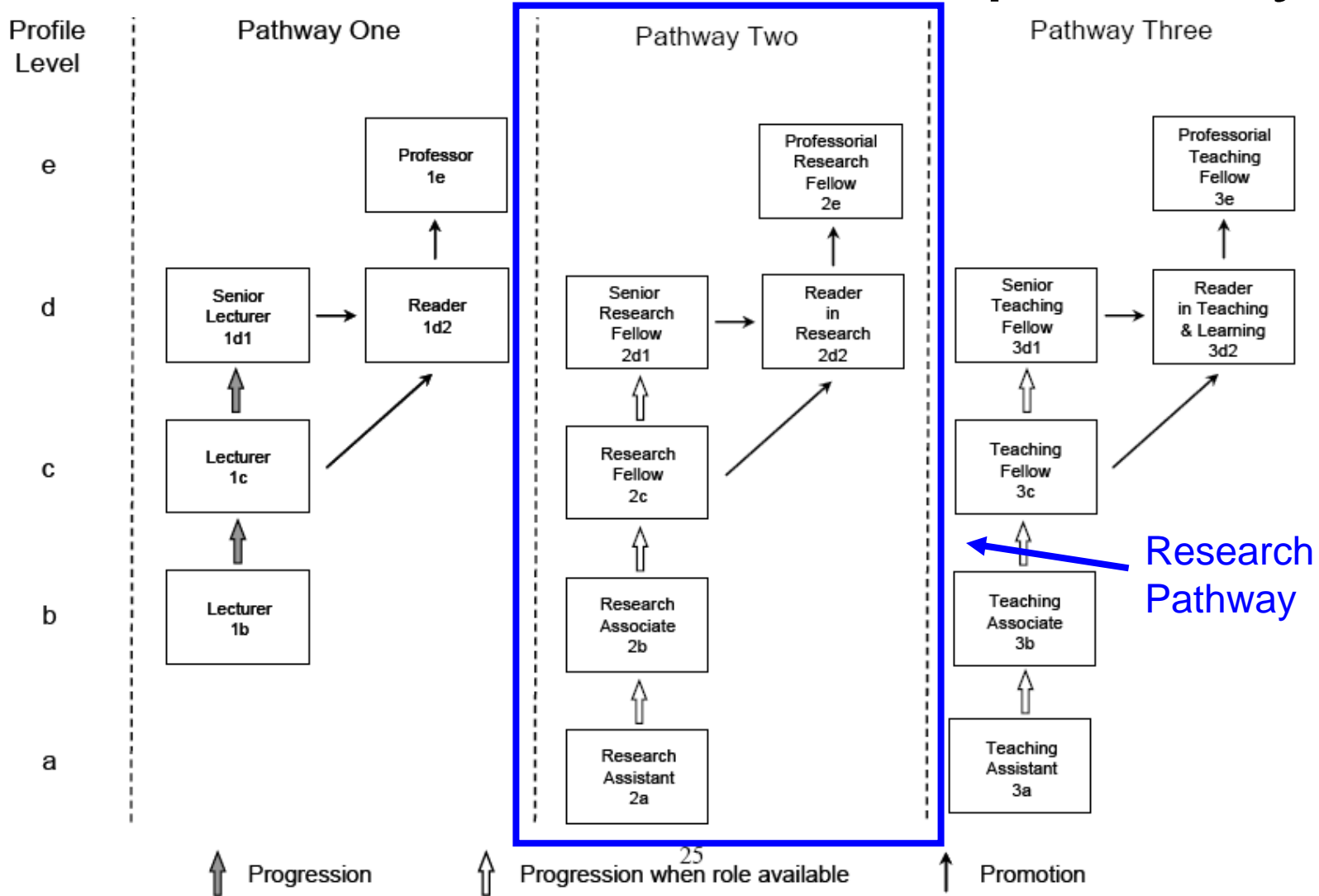
# What are Competency Frameworks?

Previous research suggests that there are two main reasons for organisations to use competency frameworks.<sup>[2]</sup> These are:

- that they will improve individual performance if used in “appraisal, training and other personnel management processes” ;
- the provide an articulation of “corporate values and objectives” which can be incorporated into “personnel management processes” and can then be “readily understood by individuals and teams within the organisation”

<sup>[2]</sup> Miller L, Rankin N and Neathey F, Competency frameworks in UK Organisations, CIPD 2001. (and references within)

# Academic Staff Career pathways



## Competencies required by academic staff for KT engagement [3]

Competency Dimension	Behavioural Indicators
Presenting and Communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Put information across concisely and easily accessible for client</li> <li>•Relate to audience and adapt to their needs</li> </ul>
Relating and networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Build rapport through regular contact with client</li> <li>•Network with other academics who are involved in KT work</li> </ul>
Delivering Results and Meeting Customer Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Establish client's needs through probing and confirm them in writing</li> <li>•Manage expectations on both sides</li> </ul>
Entrepreneurial & Commercial thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Stay in touch with latest development within the industry</li> <li>•Identify and develop technology ahead of the market and industry demand</li> </ul>
Planning and Organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Clarify outputs/deliverables</li> <li>•Provide clear timetable</li> </ul>

# What are Competency Frameworks used for?

## AURIL CPD Framework for KT Practitioners: [4]

Primary purpose “to identify their ‘continuing professional development’ (CPD) needs”

## Charles Darwin University Staff Competency Framework (Australia) [5]

Can be used for

- Developing and conducting professional development programmes
- Describing competency requirements for employment positions
- Self-appraisal and career development.

[4] <http://www.auril-cpd.org.uk/Portals/0/CPD%20Framework%20final%20dec%2006.pdf>

[5] [www.cdu.edu.au/pmd/Workforce%20Development/CDUStaffCompetencyFramework17Oct2006.pdf](http://www.cdu.edu.au/pmd/Workforce%20Development/CDUStaffCompetencyFramework17Oct2006.pdf)

# What frameworks are already being used in UK HE?

- Joint Skills Statement
- Academic Role Profiles (JNCHES)
- Research Career Builder (RCB)
- Various other institutional frameworks
- Professional Bodies/Association frameworks and standards
- HEA Professional Standards Framework

# Joint Skills Statement Areas

- A) Research Skills and Techniques
- B) Research Environment
- C) Research Management
- D) Personal Effectiveness
- E) Communication Skills
- F) Networking and Teamworking
- G) Career Management

# The Research Career Builder

- Developed at Loughborough University as part of the HEFCE-funded Good Management Practice for CRS project (1999-2002)
- Based on earlier research of professional development needs of researchers at 4 UK Research Centres
- Developed as a paper-based and online version with a trial group of researchers and research managers

Personal and Professional Skills	Current Level	Target Level	Important	Urgent	Plan	Planning Notes	Review Date	Evidence Notes
<a href="#">Communication and presentation skills</a>	2	2			2			2
<a href="#">Financial management</a>	2	2			2			2
<a href="#">IT skills</a>	2	2			2			2
<a href="#">Numerical skills</a>	2	2			2			2
<a href="#">Problem solving</a>	2	2			2			2
<a href="#">Reflecting on practice</a>	2	2			2			2
<a href="#">Time management</a>	2	2			2			2
<a href="#">Working with others</a>	2	2			2			2
Personal and Professional Skills	Current Level	Target Level	Important	Urgent	Plan	Planning Notes	Review Date	Evidence Notes

General Research Skills	Current Level	Target Level	P	o	r	t	a	n	Planning Notes	Review Date	Evidence Notes
<a href="#">Domain knowledge/expertise</a>	2	2						2			2
<a href="#">Data Collection and Analysis</a>	2	2						2			2
<a href="#">Generating Research Output</a>	2	2						2			2
<a href="#">Managing a research project</a>	2	2						2			2
<a href="#">Exploitation of research</a>	2	2						2			2
<a href="#">Understanding the research environment and setting the agenda</a>	2	2						2			2
<a href="#">Research reputation/external esteem</a>	2	2						2			2
<a href="#">Winning research income</a>	2	2						2			2
General Research Skills	Current Level	Target Level	I	m	p	o	r	t	Planning Notes	Review Date	Evidence Notes

# Research Output - Levels

1	2	3	4
Basic	Intermediate	Advanced	Super
<p>Must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish one paper per year in a peer-reviewed academic journal</li> <li>• Contribute competently to deliverables of high quality</li> </ul>	<p>Must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish two papers per year in peer-reviewed academic journals</li> <li>• Be responsible for significant project deliverables (final reports etc)</li> <li>• Compile a planned publication strategy</li> </ul>	<p>Must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish three papers per year in peer-reviewed academic journals</li> <li>• Present papers at academic conferences</li> <li>• Edit books/book chapters</li> <li>• Direct and guide research output of others</li> </ul>	<p>Must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish review articles/critiques of significant texts in relevant scientific domain</li> <li>• Develop research publication strategies at institutional level</li> </ul>

# Warwick Career Reviews

<b>General Research Skills</b>	<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Expert</b>	<b>Development Activities</b>
<b>Generating Research Output</b>	Can publish one paper per year in a peer-reviewed academic journal, produce high quality research outputs.	Can publish two papers per year in a peer-reviewed academic journal, can take responsibility for a significant part of the research project output (final reports etc.), can produce a personal publication strategy.	Can publish three papers per year in a peer-reviewed academic journal, present papers at academic conferences, edit books / book chapters and direct the research output of others.	Can publish review articles / critiques of significant texts in the discipline, can develop research publications strategies at institutional level.	You could develop your writing skills by attending relevant courses and seeking feedback from peers, identify relevant journals for your specialist area, become familiar with the custom and practice of appropriate journals, write your own personal publications strategy.

# Discussion

- How would we wish to use such a framework with researchers within UK HEIs?

# Discussion

What should the Scope and Design of this Framework be?

- a) What scope would the framework need to have?
- b) What particular features would be required?
- c) Who are the stakeholders that should be consulted during the design stage?

- Thank you for your participation!