Institutional Views, Emerging Models of Use and New Features within Vitae's RDF Planner

Dr Keith E. Fildes   5 September 2013

Motivation

▸ Need to update/replace our DNA form - "a document which no one loves and which I would like to bury with a stake through its heart"

▸ Based on the old Joint Skills Statement - so at least pre-2010

TABLE A: ASSESSMENT BY SKILL GROUP (refer to Table B)

Category of skill	Training and Development Activity previously completed	Training and Development Required	Anticipated source of skills development
(A) Research skills and techniques			
(B) Research environment			
(C) Research management			
(D) Personal effectiveness			
(E) Communication skills			
(F) Networking and team-working			
(G) Career management			

▸ Good timing - we were looking for an online system for DNA, PDP and a CPD ePortfolio

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Pilot
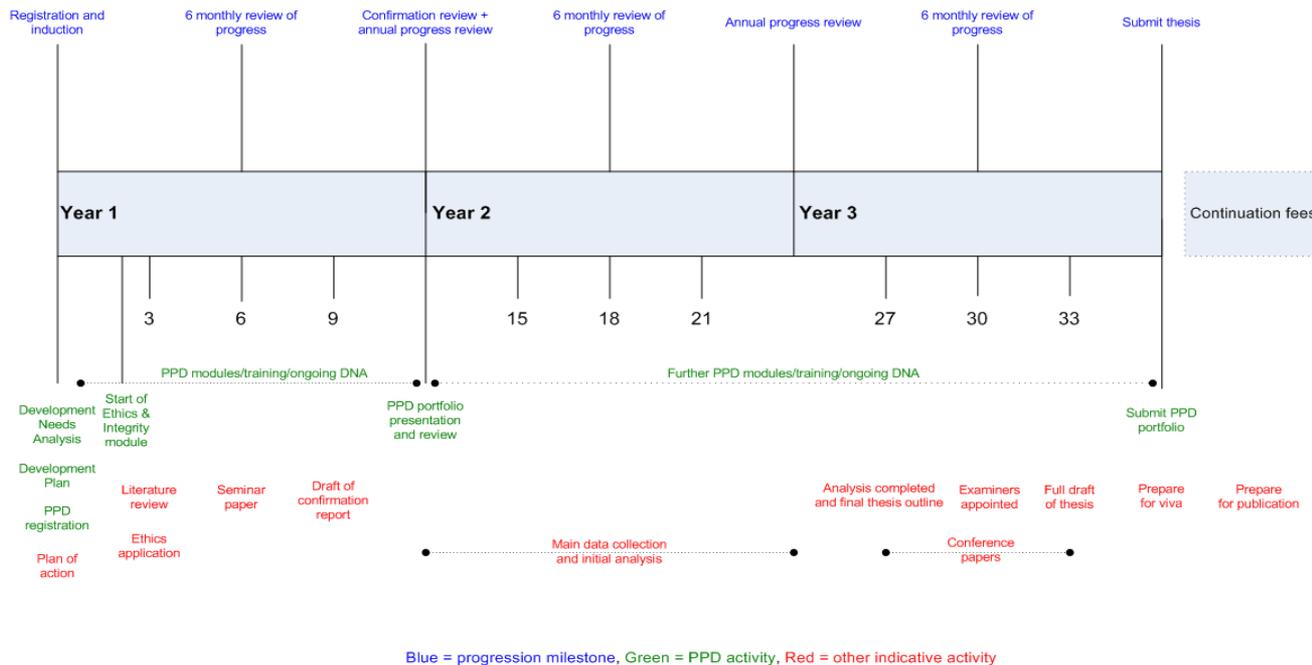
▸ 50 'friendly faces', with a mix of PGRs/ECRs and faculties

▸ Few teething problems - personal cf institutional login etc.

▸ Immediate reaction - overwhelmed by the size - felt having the 'phases' level beneath the 'descriptors' was just too much

▸ Vitae very responsive - the system was clearly evolving in front of our eyes in response to feedback. The addition of ePortfolio functionality was probably the deciding factor for us

Plans

▸ Primarily - mandatory for all our PGRs (c.650) for managing PPD

▸ Expect 'satisfactory engagement' - PhD = thesis + PPD

PGR Timeline

| Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Continuation fees |

Blue = progression milestone, Green = PPD activity, Red = other indicative activity

For part-time students, increase by a factor of 2

▸ Secondary - made available to all our ECRs (c.110)

Implementation

▶ Resources managed by researcher developer and the Library

▶ Administration by Graduate Studies team (PGRs) and researcher developer (ECRs)

▶ Administration has been easy so far

▶ Managing full cohort's worth of PGR accounts - we'll see!

▶ Still thinking about how to integrate into supervisory process - print out reports, or a way to share evidence with supervisors?

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Training and Buy-In

- ‣ 20/30 minute showcase with supervisors and an hour workshop with PGRs (taking place in a few weeks' time)
- ‣ System is very intuitive, so more about getting over reservations and getting up-and-running, than training on the system
- ‣ DNA form is so disliked, that it's not likely going to need a hard sell
- ‣ Researchers are a minority group at SHU, so tend to be welcoming of investment/dedicated initiatives for them
- ‣ Supervisors likely to be a mixed bag, but more about increasing weighting towards PPD than the Planner per se

Challenges

▸ CROS 2013 - 65.5% of our researchers have never heard of the RDF (cf 52.7% post-92 average and 62.9% UK average)

▸ Our researcher development programme (SHaRD programme) is informed by the RDF, but isn't strictly aligned - rationalised into 25 themes, rather than 63

▸ SHaRD is also new (not launching till end of 2013), so Planner will be rolled out while there are still a lot of gaps in our development provision. Possible phased transition year

▸ Practically integrating into supervisory meetings

▸ The ongoing cull and registration process (PGRs higher turnover)

Benefits

▶ Replacing our existing researcher development management systems

▶ The software is intuitive, simple to navigate around and has a slick interface

▶ Integrates all the different aspects of the development process - development needs analysis, personal development planning, accessing, and then recording development

▶ Explicitly aligned to the RDF (transferable/communicate capabilities)

▶ Reports generated provide a valuable basis for development discussions at supervisory/managerial meetings

▶ The ePortfolio functionality enables researchers to collate, store and share evidence of their development activities

▶ The living and interactive nature of it means that, unlike previous static PPD management systems, researchers can truly take ownership of and drive their own development

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