



# News update

## September 2010

**“ These are austere times for us all... The way forward lies in exploiting an evidently outstanding research capability with clear potential, under the right conditions, to drive sustainable economic growth. ”**

David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities and Science, at the Royal Institution, 9 July.

Vitae continues to play a crucial role in supporting the implementation of the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, and in leading transitions to new models of researcher development provision.

As we await the outcomes of the spending review in October, it's clear that we are entering a new era of public funding, of new priorities for research strategy, of new models for funding researcher development and of a different employment environment for which to prepare researchers.

Eight years into the Roberts agenda, we now have strong evidence of the positive impact of researcher development on maximising research investment, on employability, on research outcomes and on the researcher experience. Employers are increasingly informed of the skills provided by researchers, and researchers are better able to move into businesses.

In this context, Vitae has two priorities for the immediate future: to work with HEIs on the rationale, models and practice for sustaining researcher development for the future, and to ensure that the UK continues to produce excellent researchers equipped for future employment in a challenging labour market.

This newsletter provides updates on current activities and future plans. We look forward to working with you.



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# Researcher Development Framework

The UK is committed to enhancing the higher-level capabilities of the UK workforce including the development of world-class researchers. Researchers are critical to economic success, addressing major global challenges, and building a leading knowledge economy.

The Researcher Development Framework (RDF) was created during 2009 in response to a range of recommendations to provide a UK development framework for postgraduate researchers and research staff in higher education institutions. A major consultation with the HE sector, researchers and other stakeholders took place during autumn. There were 242 responses representing researchers, individuals working in institutions, employers and related organisations. There was strong support that the RDF will be useful for supporting the professional development of researchers.

The key messages from the consultation were considered by the RDF project team<sup>1</sup> in early February and reviewed by the RDF Advisory Group<sup>2</sup> in early March. A summary of the analysis of the consultation responses was published in May<sup>3</sup>.

In July, the Researcher Development Statement (RDS), which is derived from the RDF, was launched for policy makers and research organisations. The RDS sets out the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of effective and highly skilled researchers appropriate for a wide range of careers.

The RDS is an evolution and replacement of the Research Councils' Joint Skills Statement (JSS). The RDS is endorsed by a range of stakeholders, including the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), Concordat Strategy Group, Department for Employment and Learning (DELNI), Higher Education Academy (HEA), Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), Research Councils UK (RCUK), Researcher Development Advisory Group (ReSDAG), Universities Human Resources (UHR), Universities Scotland and Universities UK (UUK).

The RDS and RDF will underpin researcher training and development in the UK by providing a strategic statement (RDS) and operational framework (RDF) to support the implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers<sup>4</sup>, the QAA Code of practice for research degree programmes<sup>5</sup> and the 'Roberts'<sup>6</sup> recommendations for postgraduate researchers and research staff.

The full framework will be available in September and a consultation on the development of an interactive UK CPD tool for researchers will take place at the Vitae Researcher Development Conference.

“I've always thought of myself as being quite ambitious, driven and focused on what I want, but the framework made me realise I can have a much larger vision than I currently have.”

“It is helpful to have a national framework because it is based on wider consultation that could not be managed by a single institution and it allows us to benchmark ourselves against a national framework.”

[www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf)

<sup>1</sup> [www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/163601/Project-team-members.html](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/163601/Project-team-members.html)

<sup>2</sup> [www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/163621/Advisory-group-members.html](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/163621/Advisory-group-members.html)

<sup>3</sup> [www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/Vitae-RDF-consultation-analysis-may-2010.pdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/Vitae-RDF-consultation-analysis-may-2010.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [www.researchconcordat.ac.uk](http://www.researchconcordat.ac.uk)

<sup>5</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/)

<sup>6</sup> [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/set\\_for\\_success.htm](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/set_for_success.htm)

## Supporting postgr

### NUS Innovate project

Funded by Vitae Innovate 2009, the NUS Innovate project team discovered that the more they spoke to people across the sector, the more the words 'postgraduate community' seemed to be at the heart of why researcher-led schemes exist and why they work. The NUS project aim was to explore researcher-led initiatives as a potential model for student engagement in the skills agenda and to understand why and how these schemes have benefits. They mapped instances where universities encourage researchers to plan, organise and deliver their own events, initiatives and schemes. At the same time, they coordinated a number of pilot schemes with students' unions, examining whether and how unions could use the model of researcher-led initiatives to engage more effectively with their postgraduate researcher membership.

The project found that engaging researchers to set up their own initiatives can be a long process of trial and error, but encouragingly they discovered how a small investment (£500 per union) can act as a driver for major change.

For NUS, the project has enabled new ways of thinking about what researchers need and how students' unions and universities can work in partnership to improve the researcher experience. A report of the findings will be made available.

### Website news

The Vitae website is Vitae's most powerful information dissemination tool. Containing a wealth of information and resources for researchers and all those that support researchers, as well as up-to-date news and event information, it is the best way to find out what's going on!

With 20,000 visitors per month viewing 100,000 pages between them, the site is highly active. 1,500 new people have registered this year, increasing our registered userbase to 5,500. Other websites are increasingly linking to us, with the number increasing by 350 this year to 1,750. [www.vitae.ac.uk](http://www.vitae.ac.uk)

## Researcher events

### Careers in Academia

On 23 September Vitae will be running the second national Careers in Academia course this year, for up to 80 postgraduate researchers. This one-day event provides participants with an insight into aspects of forging a career in academia. Participants will meet with current academics from a range of disciplines to hear about their experiences of an academic career; explore how to market themselves for a career in academia, both within their department, and at interview; and look at how to write effective grant/paper applications. [www.vitae.ac.uk/events](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/events)

The Careers in Academia programme and resources are now available, free of charge, for use by higher education institutions. [www.vitae.ac.uk/cifacademia](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/cifacademia)

“The best training and careers advice I've had access to in the whole of my three years”

(Participant 2010)

### Careers in Focus: Arts and Humanities researchers

Vitae are collaborating with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to run a Careers in Focus event designed specifically for postgraduate researchers in the field of 'the creative industries'.

The programme is currently being developed and will run on 23 November 2010 for up to 80 postgraduate researchers. It will bring together a range of employers, allowing participants to explore the different types of career paths available to them outside of academia and providing them with an opportunity to consider and practice how they might articulate their skills to employers. Further details will be published on the Vitae website. [www.vitae.ac.uk/events](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/events)

### GRADschools

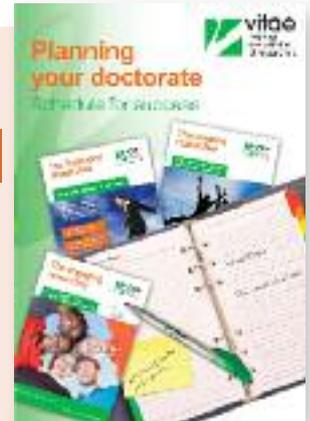
Vitae continues to run a small national programme of GRADschools. These are fully booked for 2010, but dates for the courses in 2011 will be made available in December. [www.vitae.ac.uk/events](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/events)

## Publications

### Planners

Developed to support researchers in the academic environment, the planners (Planning your doctorate – schedule for success) have proved increasingly popular with over 31,000 distributed this year.

A handy A2 size, postgraduate researchers can plan their progress throughout the year by inserting targets and milestones. The planner gives useful guidance on possible milestones that could be set as researchers start their doctorate, as they reach halfway and as they complete their doctorate. In addition, the planner provides an overview of key techniques for managing the doctorate process, such as managing the supervisor relationship, project management, objective setting and self management, and encourages researchers to think about their future development and career options, and how to raise their profile.



### PGR Tips

PGR Tips is a monthly e-bulletin with 2,000 regular subscribers. It contains tips and advice for postgraduate researchers about managing and taking ownership of their research, their personal development and careers. The bulletins have also proven useful as handouts for facilitators of transferable skill training sessions as part of their programmes. [www.vitae.ac.uk/pgrtips](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/pgrtips)

### Effective Researcher independent evaluation

Since its development, the Effective Researcher programme for postgraduate researchers has been delivered at over 40 HEIs and has reached over 3,000 participants.

In January 2010 Vitae commissioned an independent evaluation to review the impact of the programme. The evaluation was based on the IEG Impact Framework (formerly known as the Rugby Team Impact Framework) and received responses from 22 HEIs and 366 participants.

The report highlights that 95% of participating HEIs reported that the Effective Researcher programme had a positive impact in delivering against the Roberts agenda. 84% of the participating researchers felt more confident as researchers and had a better understanding of their transferable skills. 79% said their research had improved as a result of the programme.

“it was good in providing a cost effective, off the shelf product which helped promote and support the development of a wider generic skills programme.”

Dr Tracey Stead – Postgraduate Skills Training Coordinator, University of Bath\*

“I feel more confident in communicating with others in my field, managing my supervisor and getting the support I need.”

PhD participant\*

“there has been a noticeable difference to students' performance as a result of these courses.”

PhD supervisor\*

**For a copy of the full report with a formal response from Vitae or more information on the programme visit: [www.vitae.ac.uk/effectiveresearcher](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/effectiveresearcher)**

\*reference quotes from report

# Supporting postgraduate researchers and research staff

## Public engagement

Vitae has been working closely with the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) and Beacons to embed public engagement activities as part of the researcher development agenda.

### Engaging researcher booklet

Enriching Vitae's popular booklet series for researchers and staff supporting researchers, Vitae and the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) Beacons jointly launched 'The engaging researcher' in early July.

Describing what public engagement is and why it's worth doing, it offers practical tips for getting started and for measuring the impact of the engagement. It includes top tips from researchers who have engaged the public and provides details of where to find further support.

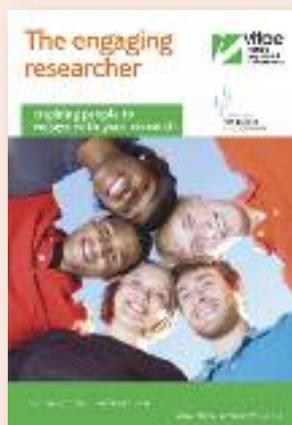
Other titles in the series are 'The creative researcher' and 'The balanced researcher'.

“These booklets make a great read while I'm commuting to work – in only 10 minutes of a read I've been left inspired to action some of the tips provided in my day-to-day work, be it to better manage my time or ways to think more creatively in the research environment.”

Researcher, UCL

“We really appreciate these booklets as they support our strategy for researcher development and reinforce the key messages that underpin our in-house provision for research staff at UCL.”

Su Bryant, Head, Organisational and Staff Development, UCL



To order: [www.vitae.ac.uk/researcherbooklets](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researcherbooklets)

### Online events: public engagement

To complement the launch of 'The engaging researcher' Vitae set up an online discussion space on public engagement in July. The resource was set up to acknowledge the importance of the public engagement agenda for researchers and also the commitment of many organisations and HEIs to raising the profile of the agenda; providing researchers with opportunities to develop their skills and actively participate in public engagement activities.

The online event became the second most popular landing page on the Vitae website during active promotion and in the weeks following its launch, achieving 743 unique visitors and over 1,600 hits. 22 articles (six commissioned and 16 impromptu) were added to the space which will remain available as an ongoing resource for researchers and those leading public engagement training and activities within institutions. [www.vitae.ac.uk/publicengagement](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/publicengagement)

Vitae Yorkshire and North East Hub public engagement competition in April showcased the Pecha kucha format to popular acclaim! This event included participants from ten of the 13 regional institutions, plus representatives from 15 external business or research organisations (amongst which was Systagenix Wound Management, Café Scientifique, Merck Sharp and Dohme, Wood Holmes, International Paint Limited and Beacon North East).

Early Career Researcher awards for public engagement partnership projects, funded by the Manchester Beacon for Public Engagement were announced at July's joint North West Vitae Hub and Beacon event. The funded projects will be showcased at a follow up event on 10 November.

The North West and London Hubs have each held joint events with their local Beacon for Public Engagement during 2010. In London the involvement of the Beacon and the Natural History Museum meant widened participation beyond the existing network and relationships will continue. The University of East London were inspired to run a public engagement course for researchers following this event.

Participants at the London public engagement event gave feedback to HEFCE concerning the REF consultation which produced proposals to assess impact through expert review; a pilot study is now underway using the case study method.

### Digital Researcher

To equip researchers to develop the skills needed for research in an increasingly digital world, including opportunities to explore the use of Web 2.0 in research, networks, building researchers own profiles and promoting emerging ways for managing information the Digital Researcher pilot, developed in partnership and hosted by the British Library, took place on 15 March. Presentations and interactive sessions were included on subjects such as microblogging, RSS feeds, social networking and social citation sharing.

Feedback from the 80 participants provided useful ideas on ways of modifying the event programme, and its overall success has encouraged us to run the event again early in 2011. Booking details will be made available in late autumn.

[www.vitae.ac.uk/events](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/events)

#### Participant feedback on most useful aspects of the event:

“Exposure to the potential of social networking in terms of the wider value to academic aims.”

“[To] have an overview of the ways researchers can take advantage of digital media.”

“Discussing with others their use of social media within their working context.”

“Highlighting range of tools available. Creating space/time in my schedule to think about [my] online presence.”

“Finding commonality with other researchers, discovering new/alternative media available.”

Participants 2010

# Supporting research staff

## CROS 2010

A tool for institutions to use to evidence their level of implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and Researcher Development Statement, the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) anonymously gathers data about working conditions, career aspirations and career development opportunities for research staff.

Following the success of CROS 2009, with 51 participating institutions, a breakdown of the 2009 aggregate results by broad disciplinary groups will be reported at the Vitae conference in September.

CROS 2010 was run from March until May with 15 institutions including three Russell Group/1994 Group institutions bringing the total number of HEIs who have run the revised CROS to 60.

In collaboration, the CROS Steering Group and the Vitae Yorkshire and North East and North West Hubs are organising a CROS practice sharing event, in York on 2 November 2010, to examine both strategic and operational perspectives.

The CROS Steering Group is working with the Concordat Strategy Group to develop a complementary and compatible survey, Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS), with the aim of running the two parallel surveys in 2011.  
[www.vitae.ac.uk/cros](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/cros)

## Leadership in Action

The Leadership in Action programme and resources will be made available for use by UK HEIs later this year, providing staff developers with new training resources focusing on leadership skills and particularly complementing the 'Engagement, influence and impact' domain of the new Researcher Development Framework.



Designed to develop leadership skills in researchers and better equip those who will become the leaders and managers of the future both within and outside academia, Vitae ran Leadership in Action, originally piloted in 2009, as a three day residential course in June of this year. The course was well attended by 34 postgraduate researchers and 20 research staff.

The course provides participants with the opportunity to look at relevant theory, practice their leadership style through a range of experiential learning activities, and receive feedback from their peers and a team of trained facilitators. 100% of participants from both the 2009 and 2010 course said they would recommend it to other researchers.

A follow up evaluation of the participants of the 2009 course will be carried out by Vitae, in the autumn, seeking to understand the longer-term impact of participating on the course.

“I just wanted to say what a fantastic gift the Leadership in Action course was. I am very grateful for having had the chance to participate. I began a new job last Monday and am managing eight staff and 20 part-time freelancers. The knowledge that I gained on the course is being put to very good use!”

Participant 2010

“I just want to say that it was the best training course I have ever taken part in. It has completely changed my outlook on teamwork and leadership, which affects so many crucial aspects of my work life. I think it has helped me to better understand and tackle my own problems and potentials, as well as those of teamwork in general. I am very grateful for that.”

Participant 2010

## Advancing in Academia

The Advancing in Academia programme and resources will be made available for use by UK HEIs later this year.

On 22 September Vitae will be running the second Advancing in Academia course in 2010, for up to 40 research staff. The interactive one-day event is aimed at early career researchers, enabling them to: review the current higher education environment; meet with successful academics from a range of disciplines to hear how they advanced their academic career; understand the balance required between skills, achievements and building their professional profile; and develop an action plan to strategically manage their career.

**Bookings are open at [www.vitae.ac.uk/aiabristol](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/aiabristol).**

### Participant feedback on most useful aspects of the event:

“Providing clarification of the job in academia, evaluating my perceptions, challenging these and evaluating where I want to be in the future.”

“Career development strategy from successful academics – it's been very useful to hear how they have succeeded.”

“Opportunity to share experiences with people at a similar stage in their careers and see that some of my thoughts and feelings about career progression were in common with theirs.”

Participants 2010

# Supporting research staff

## Working with research staff communities

Responding to requests to build staff communities Vitae's research staff blog, a further outcome of last year Research Staff Conference and hosted on the Vitae website, continues to showcase high quality posts (currently over 200) on a wide range of subjects pertaining to research that enables peer support and discussion. Comments consist of exchanges of opinions and perspectives, insights from different disciplines and institutions, ideas for practice and messages of support and thanks. This results in a growing, supportive, cross-disciplinary, national community of research staff in the academic environment. There are currently up to 1,000 unique visits to the forum per month. [www.vitae.ac.uk/rsblog](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rsblog)

## Working with research staff associations

The UK Research Staff Association (UKRSA) aims to provide a collective voice for researchers at institutions across the UK. The group will nurture the development of local and regional research staff associations (RSAs) and inform and advise on research staff policy issues. The UKRSA, supported by Vitae, was set up as an outcome of Vitae's Research Staff Conference in November 2010.

To achieve these aims the group's activity plan for 2010 includes a research project into the impact of RSAs and development of a guide on setting up and sustaining RSAs. These will be made available at Vitae's Research Staff (RS) Conference in November which the UKRSA have helped to develop. In addition, input from the UKRSA has been sought by the Roberts Skills Review Panel, Higher Education Funding Council for England, CROS Steering Group and the Concordat Strategy Group. [www.vitae.ac.uk/ukrsa](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/ukrsa)

## Researchers, fixed-term contracts and universities: understanding law in context, Vitae, 2010

We have seen enormous change in the culture of management for researchers and this report highlights a wide range of the good practice that has developed in the wake of legislative and policy changes relating to fixed-term employment for research staff. The Concordat emphasises the importance of HEIs recognising, valuing and affording equal treatment to all researchers, regardless of their employment status. A positive management culture, which supports the development of staff, is essential to building a successful higher education institution.

This report represents a major contribution to the evidence base about how to successfully manage researchers to ensure positive outcomes for researchers, their managers, the institutions where they work and the sector as a whole. It highlights:

- successful implementation of HR strategy requires a whole institution response
- the importance of high level leadership in implementing institutional policy, engaging and communicating effectively with principal investigators and researchers
- having the flexibility to respond to local needs and mechanisms for bridging funding and redundancy processes
- that researchers' perceptions of the move to open-ended contracts have been mixed, with a level of disappointment or confusion over what has actually changed
- how HEIs can optimise their research workforce by implementing the right communication, management and development strategies.

UK higher education is entering a particularly challenging time and it is important to remember that an effective, efficient and engaged workforce is key to any institution's success. It is important that university senior managers, heads of departments, principal investigators (PIs) and researchers themselves engage with the findings of this study. The report provides a wealth of ideas about how higher education institutions (HEIs) can optimise the research workforce by implementing the right communication, management and development strategies and take forward cultural change.



## The Vitae Research Staff Conference, 4 November 2010

Attending this event will enable individuals, through a greater understanding of policy and practice, to make an impact on the experiences and careers of research staff within their own institutions and influence national agendas. The conference is aimed at members of research staff who are active in research staff associations (RSAs) or who wish to become so and people who have an interest in setting up research staff associations.

This year, even more than last, the emphasis will be on the exchange of views by members of research staff alongside input on national developments.

### The conference will:

- discuss how research staff can get their voices heard more effectively in national and local policy discussions
- encourage participation with research staff associations to enable research staff to make an impact in their own institutions and nationally
- consider the research environment and examine issues that impact on research staff across institutional and disciplinary barriers
- examine issues around researchers career paths and discuss how RSAs can develop and influence professional development.

Bookings are now open at [www.vitae.ac.uk/rsconference2010](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rsconference2010).

# Supporting researcher development

## The UKRC – Managing an academic career: a career development programme for women

To support the Concordat principal around the importance of ensuring that researchers proactively engage in their own personal and career development Vitae worked in partnership with the UK Resource Centre for Women in SET (the UKRC), to develop a one-day career development programme for women, exploring how to manage an academic career.

“I came away with three new contacts to help with specific tasks over the next four months – fantastic!”

“It was a great approach to help me think about what I want.”

The programme provides an opportunity to share career progress and aspirations with other researchers, explore a wide range of issues that women face in the management of their careers and provide the language to describe their skills and experiences so they can progress in their career.

**The programme materials are available to UK HEIs and can be accessed from [www.vitae.ac.uk/resources](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/resources).**

## Future funding mechanisms for researcher development

RCUK ‘anticipate that funding for researcher development will be increasingly embedded into their normal training and research grant mechanisms’. In March RCUK published a statement of expectations which recognised the progress that had been made and that they expect ‘the quality of skills training and employability of researchers to be maintained and improved’.

It has been well signalled that ring-fenced funding for researcher development has not been confirmed beyond March 2011. The Vitae Policy Forum in January explored the challenges and opportunities around achieving sustainable funding for researcher development activities. The resulting report ‘Vitae Policy Forum 2010: exploring funding options for researcher development’ provides a useful summary of the advantages and disadvantages of possible funding mechanisms for postgraduate researchers and research staff. It highlighted the importance of transition funding to ensure the significant progress that has been made does not stall, or is lost.

In July RCUK wrote to institutions and released a set of FAQs explaining how they expect institutions to recover the costs of researcher development for postgraduate researchers through fees, and that the anticipated uplift for Research Council Training Grants will be £200 per annum. A similar uplift is expected for the career development of research staff and will be built into the cost of research grants. RCUK expect to provide further guidance on the mechanisms for this in the autumn.

One of the key strategic themes for Vitae is to work with the sector to ensure the sustainability of researcher development. We will be looking at collaborative activities both nationally and through the Vitae Hubs, sharing practice and developing high-quality packaged programmes, such as Effective Researcher, Broadening Horizons, and materials that are freely available to UK HEIs.

## Staff supporting researchers masterclasses

The masterclass series has continued to build capacity within our HE staff networks to deliver outstanding researcher development. In July, we ran the third masterclass in our series on Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) in researcher development programmes. The masterclass provided 20 staff responsible for researcher development, representing 16 HEIs, with the opportunity to learn from an expert in the topic. The masterclass explored the key principles of NLP and how tools and processes can be used in training provision and related to achieving goals, behavioural flexibility, ‘reframing’ problems and emotional self management.

“I will take the material and use for self development and in workshops.”

“I will use techniques personally and professionally and try and integrate the basics implicitly into training.”

### There are two further masterclasses running in 2010 on the following topics:

- **Demonstrating impact: evaluation**  
(Tuesday 21 September, London)
- **Coaching and mentoring**  
(Tuesday 19 October, Newcastle)

## Social enterprise in practice

To promote an awareness of social enterprise as a potential career option and highlight how researcher skills relate to enterprise Vitae is working in collaboration with the University of the West of England to develop training materials on social enterprise. The project will generate case study materials and will include video vignettes of successful social entrepreneurs, which will be available, free of charge, for use by UK HEIs.

# Supporting researcher development

## Vitae Connections: using Vitae resources to develop the skills and careers of researchers

Following the success of last year's event Vitae Connections is an important vehicle for the dissemination of the Vitae programme which enables people to use Vitae resources to enhance researchers' employability and career management skills.

**Vitae Connections will be held on Wednesday 10 November in Birmingham.**

The event will provide an opportunity to share practice, increase awareness of Vitae training resources, build relationships and network with other institutional contacts to explore areas of common interest.

## Vitae Innovate

Vitae Innovate, now in its second year, funds innovative approaches and projects for personal, professional and career development of researchers. The funding stream of £100,000 recognises an opportunity to build on the excellent work undertaken to date by the HE sector, especially in response to the Roberts review of 2002 and the 2008 Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

Innovate projects provide access to new, exciting and quality resources for staff developing researchers, in the HE sector, to enhance provision.

There were 92 submissions from 67 institutions and organisations across all Vitae Hub regions in 2010. Almost £1.7 million of funds was requested, and the Vitae Innovate panel met in July to consider the bids and agree the successful projects.

The panel members appointed were senior staff from a broad range of organisations including: University of Aberdeen, Student Switch Off Campaign, ESRC, UK Trade and Investment, University of Liverpool and Vitae.

The panel were hugely impressed with the quality and diversity of the projects this year which made the selection of projects to fund challenging. Given the current pressure on HE finance and the changes to the Roberts funding, the panel sought to fund projects which met the requirements of the fund, and: genuinely aimed for a new approach or to transfer learning in an innovative way to a new area; were scalable or had outcomes which were replicable; and contributed to underpinning the sustainability of the researcher development agenda in the long term.

The eight Vitae Innovate 2010 winning submissions will present their projects via posters at the Vitae Researcher Development Conference. In addition, project teams funded by Innovate 2009 will be providing updates on their projects and results (preliminary or final) as part of the conference workshop programme.

**Information about Vitae Innovate 2009 and 2010 including project outlines and updates are available at [www.vitae.ac.uk/innovate](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/innovate).**

## overview

A key communication channel to supervisors and PIs overview is published three times a year and distributed via the regional Hubs. This publication aims to keep supervisors and PIs informed of policy, news, new developments and events relevant to postgraduate researchers and research staff, with particular reference to skills development.

Key articles in the spring issue 2010 include a feature on public engagement by Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell, President and Vice-Chancellor at the University of Manchester and information about a new guide on peer review for researchers.



## NTA awards

The National Training Awards are one of the most prestigious training and development awards in the UK and highlight outstanding success through the investment in training.

In recognition of the success of the Effective Researcher programme we are pleased to announce that Vitae and the University of Edinburgh have become regional finalists for a National Training Award.

Run by UK Skills on behalf of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, entries are judged across all sectors of the UK.

The regional ceremony will take place in October when the awards will be announced.

## Intrapreneurship: resources to embed intrapreneurial capabilities in researchers

Following the report 'Exploring intrapreneurship in researcher development' (2008), a continuing collaborative project between Vitae and nine HEIs has focused on articulating intrapreneurial capabilities in academic and business environments (the 'intrapreneurial lens'), and developing a package of new training materials for sector-wide use.

At a time when Government is concerned with global competitiveness challenges, embedding innovation and sustaining our research base, it is becoming increasingly important to also acknowledge and understand the intrapreneurial skills, traits and capabilities of researchers who drive and create internal change within universities.

The training package includes a lens of intrapreneurial capabilities that has been developed by the project and trialled with postgraduate researchers, research staff, academics and development professionals. It includes a self-reflection questionnaire and explores the relatedness of academic and business intrapreneurial capabilities.

The materials for this project will be launched this autumn.

**[www.vitae.ac.uk/intrapreneurship](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/intrapreneurship)**

## Vitae regional Hub events and activities

**Vitae regional Hub activity in 2010 has focused on helping staff supporting researchers to meet the challenges of a reduced funding environment. The regional Hubs are pro-actively facilitating the set-up of practical collaborations as well as leading on the sharing of practice, showcasing learning materials developed by Vitae and offering tailored training opportunities.**

### Sharing practice within and across Hub regions

- Representatives of London and East of England HEIs met again in June 2010 at a joint Hub event to share institutional progress on implementing the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and to explore its impact on research staff
- The Midlands Hub ran an event in March aimed at supporting staff to manage changes to funding structures. This led to a further regional event to share the outcomes of the Vitae Policy Forum. Midlands HEIs are interested in further collaborative meetings to design service delivery models for postgraduate researchers that are needs based and more cost-effective
- A review of collaborative training in Scotland with Universities Scotland looked at models for collaboration and lessons learned from successes
- The South West and Wales Hub completed a phone survey on collaboration in the region, leading to a Hub 'focus on collaboration' day in July

### Regional Hubs working with other organisations

- Celebrating the achievements of women in science, engineering and technology and highlighting resources available to them the Yorkshire and North East Hub ran a workshop with UKRC for women in SET on 25 June, the latest in a series of workshops
- The recent Research Information Network report 'Mind the skills gap: information-handling training for researchers' made a specific recommendation that research libraries engage with their Vitae regional Hub to share practice. The South East Hub took this forward with a 'Bridging the skills gap' event in June. There was a very high level of interest within and beyond the region from librarians responsible for supporting researchers, with 80 participants from 43 institutions attending, a majority of whom had not previously been in touch with Vitae

### Showcasing and trialling approaches and materials within and across regions

- A London Hub event in March increased awareness of how to promote networking amongst early-career researchers including the use of on line tools and also the resources available from Vitae. There was great interest from participants – both researchers and supporting staff – in the Café Scientifique concept and examples of how to run these successfully were seen as particularly useful
- The regional Hubs have run many Vitae courses during the year so far – details available on regional Hub web pages or from the Hub Managers. Courses run include: Broadening Horizons (pilots and 'taster' sessions), Part-time Researcher course (collaborative events), Effective Researcher ('taster' sessions), GRADschools (collaborative events and training for tutors and course organisers), Leadership in Action (pilots are forthcoming)
- Participation in collaborative courses facilitated by the Midlands Hub have contributed to a new culture in the region with many HEIs considering long term shared course delivery and sharing their staff skills base; the North West Hub have set up a training programme working group
- A practice sharing event around the Part time Researcher course provided by the Scotland and Northern Ireland Hub was over subscribed with 200 applications to attend!

### Developing resources within and across regions

- An April workshop in the East of England saw regional HEIs working together towards developing a pool of online resources. Regional project teams will put actions into practice
- Online materials (including video and audio) to add to Vitae resources on public engagement are being developed from the 2010 North West Hub/Manchester Beacon public engagement event

### Practical training opportunities offered by Vitae regional Hubs

- Participants from 19 institutions met at a North West Hub event in May to explore the integration of technology into researcher development. Highlighting current practice through case studies, the event also offered support in the form of practical skills sessions and opportunities for group discussion. Participants met others interested in using Web 2.0 technology in training and were encouraged to develop personal action plans
- A June workshop for staff supporting researchers and research managers in the South West and Wales focused on marketing tips and techniques to manage the profile of researcher development programmes within HEIs. The Hub undertook a pre-course assessment of needs in order to direct the training appropriately
- The South East Hub are planning an autumn workshop to help upskill those in a support role who might want to deliver training but have not yet done so

## ‘What do researchers do? Doctoral graduate destinations and impact three years on’

‘What do researchers do? Doctoral graduate destinations and impact three years on’ presents findings of the occupations and perceived impact of doctoral graduates in their early careers. It forms part of a wider investigation led by the Research Councils UK and Vitae to explore and track the career pathways of doctoral graduates and to inform policy development directed at supporting and training future doctoral researchers.

It uses the enhanced longitudinal destinations survey (L DLHE) to capture for the first time the views, experiences and careers of a representative cohort of more than 2,000 doctoral graduates approximately three and a half years after graduating. It also begins to gather evidence of the individual benefits of doctoral study, and the potential impact postgraduate researchers have on the economy and wider aspects of society and culture in the UK.



The majority of doctoral graduates were in paid employment, with very few unemployed. Most were working in the UK, half in the education sector. The report introduces a new typology of typical doctoral ‘occupational clusters’, which employ 86% of respondents. This shows doctoral graduates are predominately in a different employment market to other degree holders. Only 14% of doctoral graduates were spread across a wide range of ‘other occupations’, compared to 63% of first degree graduates and 56% of Masters graduates are concentrated in this ‘cluster’.

The research presents a vivid picture of the personal and professional benefits of a doctorate.

Respondents:

- are attracted to further research due to their interest and passion for a subject, yet most of them report a high degree of fit between their current role and their ‘career plan’
- are largely pro-active about their careers and believe their doctorate to be helpful to their career progression
- achieve careers where they perceive their qualification is enabling them to have an impact and make a difference in the workplace
- have roles with high degrees of autonomy and responsibility, but also have the opportunity to influence others
- are able to make extensive use of their general disciplinary knowledge and the generic skills
- use their research skills in the workplace, even those in non-research roles
- have very positive views of their doctoral experience and for many it enhanced the quality of their lives and their social and intellectual capabilities beyond employment.

[www.vitae.ac.uk/wdrd](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/wdrd)

## ‘What do researchers do? Career profiles of doctoral entrepreneurs’

‘WDRD? Career profiles of doctoral entrepreneurs’, is a recent addition to the WDRD series, and highlights the experiences of 30 researchers. The collection of narratives demonstrate the way in which researchers have used skills gained during doctoral training to develop careers as entrepreneurs. The stories also highlight the wider impact of doctoral entrepreneurs in a range of sectors.

This publication, written for postgraduate researchers, research staff and staff supporting researchers:

- demonstrates the way in which researchers have used the skills gained from a research training to become entrepreneurs
- provides a resource for careers advisers and staff supporting researchers
- informs doctoral researchers and research staff of potential career opportunities
- inspires future generations of researchers who are considering this career path
- enhances our understanding of the factors that led people to pursue enterprising careers from a background in research
- begins to demonstrate the wider impact of research careers on society/the economy.

“I found that my doctoral study really taught me to think logically and test for things – some very transferable skills”

Joanne Morgan, Favio

“I love the independence it has brought me and the fact that I have a budget which can be spent how I choose”

Madhuri Warren, Pathology Diagnostics



## Database of Career Stories

The Database of Career Stories (DoCS) is a resource for postgraduate researchers, research staff and researcher developers to inform career decisions and career planning. The database provides access to the career stories of hundreds of people with a doctorate or research background and is searchable by research subject, employment sector and story theme. It illustrates the range and variety of careers that people with a research training go on to do and demonstrates the wider impact of research careers on society/the economy. DoCS now includes functionality to enable both individual story uploads and the uploading of career story collections (projects) to enrich and expand the resource on an ongoing basis. Both individuals and those working on career story projects are encouraged to upload their stories.

[www.vitae.ac.uk/docs](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/docs)

“I felt that I could only really satisfy my intellectual appetites and ethical conscience by moving out on my own”

Atul Shah, Diverse Ethics

“Climate change was getting a lot of coverage in the media and I decided that this was my primary motivation, namely a need to raise awareness of the issue”

Neil Jennings, Student Switch Off Campaign

## Stakeholders' view of the impact of Vitae and its activities

Vitae commissioned an independent review, by Oxford Research & Policy, of key national and international stakeholders with an interest in, or responsibility for, researcher development. 55 semi-structured interviews were conducted, equally divided between international and UK stakeholders. Most interviewees were in leadership/senior positions.

Stakeholders were asked their views on:

- their impressions of Vitae, what it does and the value of its work
- Vitae's role in raising the profile of the issues and challenges relating to researcher development
- Vitae's impact outside the UK (for international stakeholders)
- the value of some of Vitae's activities and resources (for UK stakeholders).

A key outcome from the review was that Vitae has a positive and transformational impact on the researcher development agenda. In particular, international stakeholders believe that the UK is benefiting from a reputation for being world-leading in providing professional and career development for researchers, both in attracting researchers to the UK and benefiting from better trained, more innovative researchers.

All stakeholders felt that developing researchers and encouraging them to think more

“Vitae is an unique and valuable organisation whose work has placed the UK into a leadership position in the area of researcher development.”

Stakeholders' views of the impact of Vitae, 2010

about careers was important, particularly in times of economic pressure.

There continues to be a significant role for Vitae in supporting, driving and embedding cultural change in HEIs. Furthermore there is still an ongoing coordinating role for a national organisation beyond embedding culture change.

The report contains recommendations based on the feedback from stakeholders around three main areas:

- the importance of Vitae's role in ensuring and promoting that the UK is world leading in researcher development
- evidencing and communicating the value and impact of researcher development and Vitae to demonstrate the excellence of UK provision
- opportunities for Vitae to extend its reach, activities and funding through working more closely with other UK groups and beyond the UK.

# Supporting researcher development

## Progress in implementing the Concordat: HEI strategies survey

The Concordat is clearly having a discernable impact upon higher education institutions in the UK, shaping policy and practice in respect of research staff development. As part of a series of benchmarking activities, a total of 103 institutions, representing 93% of research staff employed in the UK, responded to a survey of institutions' strategic activities in relation to the Concordat.

Institutions have responded positively to the Concordat and it has a high profile at senior level. More than a quarter of institutions had strategies for implementing the principles of the Concordat and a further half were in the process of drawing one up. Many institutions had made significant and substantial changes to their policies towards research staff development and more than half were currently implementing change. In some cases this has triggered wider development across the institution. Institutions have publicised both the Concordat and their response to it and almost all respondents had set up mechanisms for internally monitoring their response to the Concordat.

Institutions highlighted a number of challenges to implementing the principles of the Concordat, principally engaging senior managers, principal investigators and research staff. There were also concerns about coordination and sustainability, especially should ring-fenced Roberts funding be discontinued. Respondents welcomed the activities provided by national organisations to help them support the principles of the Concordat, and hoped that these would be maintained, such as mechanisms for sharing practice, awareness raising activities and joint training opportunities.

Throughout 2010 Vitae has run a series of events and activities around the Concordat, including supporting the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS). The Vitae Database of Practice hosts examples of institutional practice relating to implementing the principles of the Concordat ([www.vitae.ac.uk/dop](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/dop)). We have published 'Researchers, fixed-term contracts and universities: understanding the law in context' and provide courses for research staff.

By responding to the Concordat, institutions can demonstrate alignment with the European Charter and Code and gain the right to use the European Commissions 'HR excellence in research' badge. The first UK HEIs to gain recognition will be announced at the Vitae conference.

<sup>7</sup> Building Evidence of Researchers' Impact 'Doctoral Careers Pathway Study'  
[www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/rcdu/impact.htm](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/rcdu/impact.htm)



## RCUK cohort study

To evidence the impact of researcher development continues at a UK level. Vitae is currently leading on the third phase of the RCUK 'Doctoral Careers Pathway Study'<sup>7</sup>. This will follow up, through a qualitative study, a sample of the respondents to the longitudinal DLHE, three and a half years after graduation. It will explore the demonstrable impact that excellent researchers make to society and the economy.



## Impact and Evaluation Group

Supported by Vitae and founded in 2005 The Rugby Team has been re-named as the Impact and Evaluation Group. The mission of this sector-led group is to 'propose a meaningful and workable way of evaluating the effectiveness of skills development in early career researchers'. The first publication under the IEG banner, and launched at the Vitae Researcher development conference, is 'The impact of researcher training and development: two years on'.

This report summarises 120 wide-ranging case studies of the impact of researcher training and development activity from across the higher education sector and national bodies since the launch in 2008 of the (Rugby Team) Impact Framework. It demonstrates that the sector, responding to the recommendations in Sir Gareth Roberts' SET for Success and the Warry report, provide researcher training and development activities that have had, and continue to have, significant positive impact across all levels of the Impact Framework.

### These include:

- substantial growth in the development opportunities for both postgraduate researchers and research staff
- clear demonstration that researcher development is capable of maximising the investment in research and providing return on investment
- direct link between training and development activity and employment of researchers
- direct link with improved doctoral submission rates, increases in grant income, publications, management of research projects and enhancement of research practice
- evidence of change in the views of supervisors and employers on the need and value of skills development for researchers
- improved researcher experience, including life changing impact in terms of the personal and professional development of individual researchers.

Vitae also uses the IEG framework as the methodology for internal and external evaluation.

[www.vitae.ac.uk/impact](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/impact)



## Working with other organisations

### Engaging employers

There is an increasing emphasis on the 'knowledge economy' and the importance of high-level skills in helping the UK out of recession. The economic importance of research activity has been frequently highlighted by both Government and industry.

Given that there are currently over 90,000 people working towards a doctorate in the UK and that over half of these will not continue into the HE sector on graduation, Vitae's work with employers is more important than ever to demonstrate how researchers can support UK plc.

Our 2010 activities include an interactive seminar in partnership with the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE) and the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) for employers on 28 September. PhDs: how to add value to your business aims to: share strategies for successful recruitment and retention of postgraduate researchers; demonstrate the clear business benefits of targeting the postgraduate market; and explore the practical implications of work experience and internships.

Future plans also include research into existing practice and resources to support work placements for researchers, demonstrating their value for all stakeholders: researchers employers and HE staff. [www.vitae.ac.uk/employers](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/employers)

### Professional bodies

As part of activities to support the implementation of the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, the Concordat Strategy Group has invited a wide range of professional bodies to explore the synergy between the aims of the Concordat and those of professional bodies at an event in November.

The aims of the event are to explore:

- the overlap between the aims of the Concordat and the UK Researcher Development Framework and those of the professional bodies
- how to work together to engage researchers in their professional development and secure the next generation of researchers
- opportunities for sharing good practice and developing supporting networks.

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## Vitae

Vitae is funded by Research Councils UK (RCUK), managed by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation and delivered in partnership with regional Hub host Universities.

## Vitae national team

Based in Cambridge, the national team is responsible for bringing together partners and stakeholders of the programme and coordinates our national programme of activities.

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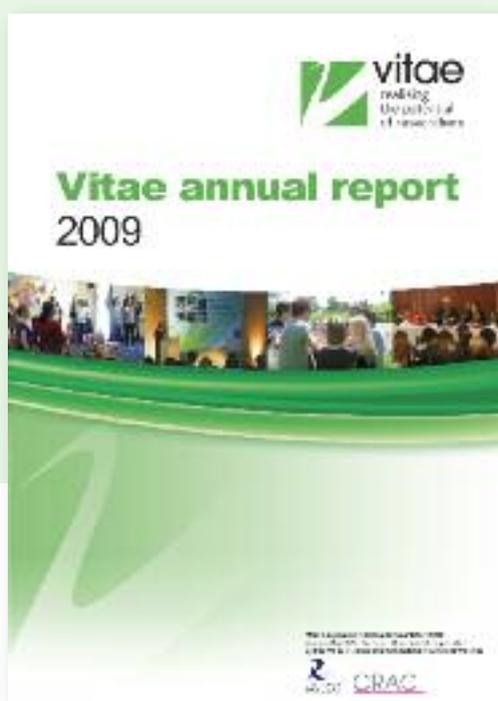
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# Vitae activities

## Vitae Annual Report 2009

The Vitae annual report 2009 provides key achievements and future priorities to stakeholders. Key successes in 2009 include:

- Vitae facilitated dialogue between the Research Councils and the HE sector to explore sustainable strategies for maintaining support for researcher development ensuring that researchers continue to play a key role in building the UK economy
- Vitae played a crucial role in the implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers
- Vitae developed and consulted on a new UK Researcher Development Framework to support the implementation of the Concordat and ensure researchers are prepared for future careers
- Vitae continued to work with UK institutions to embed enhanced professional and career development for researchers leading to demonstrable improvements in researchers' successful grant applications, fellowships and employability
- The Vitae Hubs developed regional collaborations to extend the range of development opportunities for researchers
- Vitae launched Innovate to promote new approaches to researcher development and developed masterclasses for staff and a range of activities for researchers on creativity and leadership.



## Diary of events

### September

<b>2 September</b>	P/T researcher conference, Edinburgh
<b>6 September</b>	Midlands practice sharing meeting on RDF (at the Vitae conference), Midlands Hub
<b>7-9 September</b>	Business skills and the low Carbon economy workshop, funded by Innovate 09, UEA
<b>13 September</b>	Regional Broadening Horizons for Research Staff, YNE Hub
<b>15 September</b>	Focus on...collaboration, SWW Hub
<b>21 September</b>	Staff Supporting Researchers Masterclass – Coaching and Mentoring
<b>22 September</b>	Advancing in Academia for research staff
<b>23 September</b>	Careers in Academia for postgraduate researchers
<b>23 September</b>	7th Annual Postgraduate researchers in science and medicine conference (PRISM). Lancaster University

### October

<b>11 October</b>	SE Hub Good practice workshop, Southampton
<b>19 October</b>	Staff Supporting Researchers Masterclass – Coaching and Mentoring
<b>19 – 22 October</b>	National GRADSschool

### November

<b>2 November</b>	CROS practice sharing event, York
<b>4 November</b>	Vitae Research Staff Conference
<b>4 November</b>	Graduate schools and researcher experience workshop for staff supporting researchers, research managers and other stakeholders, Strathclyde University, SNI Hub
<b>9 November</b>	'The engaging researcher: Early career researcher awards showcase', Manchester University
<b>10 November</b>	Vitae Connections 2010: an event aimed at those who are using, or are considering using, Vitae programmes and resources
<b>12 November</b>	P/T researcher event, Universities of Keele and Wolverhampton
<b>17 November</b>	Doctoral vivas workshop for supervisors, venue TBC
<b>25 November</b>	Introduction to training workshop, Reading, SE Hub

### December

<b>7 December</b>	Successfully managing change in a shifting researcher development landscape, NW Hub
<b>14 December</b>	SE Hub careers staff event, Brighton

## 2011

### January

<b>12-13 January</b>	Vitae Policy Forum
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# Keep in touch

Vitae has a central team and a network of eight Regional Hubs. Each Hub has a Hub Co-ordinator and a Hub Manager and is hosted by a university in the Region. If you would like to be on the mailing list of the Vitae programme or your local Hub, to receive Regional newsletters, email alerts and details of local events, contact:

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- Scotland and Northern Ireland
- North West
- South West and Wales
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