Practical actions for employers

- Attract key talent and promote your organisation to researchers by showing how your business needs match the competencies and skills researchers develop during their doctorate
- When offering training programmes for researchers within your organisation you can use the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to support the planning and development of training programmes for researchers
- Encourage the career development of researchers in your organisation: you can explore the value of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework for development reviews and self-assessment of researchers
- Use the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to inform decisions about the strategic approach to recruitment: map the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to your organisation's competency framework to identify gaps/areas to align job descriptions relevant to researchers
- Engage with higher education institutions: provide information about employment opportunities and career choices for researcher positions outside higher education using the Vitae Researcher Development Framework terminology

Useful links

The Researcher Development Framework

- Researcher Development Framework: **www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf**
- Researcher Development Framework researcher profiles: **www.vitae.ac.uk/rdfprofiles**
- Researcher Development Framework Professional Development Planner: **www.vitae.ac.uk/rdfplanner**
- Researcher Development Framework employability lens: **www.vitae.ac.uk/rdflenses**
- Contact: **rdf@vitae.ac.uk**

Vitae resources for employers and employability

- Vitae employer network: **www.vitae.ac.uk/employers**
- Placements and internships guidelines and opportunities: **www.vitae.ac.uk/workexperience**
- Vitae information on doctoral researchers destinations: **www.vitae.ac.uk/wdrd**

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The Vitae Researcher Development Framework was produced by Vitae in conjunction with colleagues from the UK higher education sector. The Vitae Researcher Development Framework may be used by the UK higher education sector subject to the conditions of use, including requirements for acknowledgement. Conditions of use can be found at **www.vitae.ac.uk/rdfconditionsofuse**

Vitae welcomes enquiries about the Vitae Researcher Development Framework. If you are an employer outside the UK higher education sector and are interested in using the Vitae Researcher Development Framework please contact: **rdf@vitae.ac.uk**

Contact us

If you want to talk to us about this briefing or researchers' employability please contact: **employers@vitae.ac.uk**

About Vitae

Vitae is the UK organisation championing the professional and career development of postgraduate researchers and research staff in UK higher education institutions and research institutes. We play a major role in the drive for high-level skills and innovation and in meeting the UK's goal to produce world-class researchers.

Vitae works with institutions to embed professional and career development for researchers into the research environment. It plays a leading role in innovating, sharing practice and enhancing the capability of the higher education sector to provide support for researchers in this area.

For further information about Vitae visit **www.vitae.ac.uk**

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

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vitae realising the potential of researchers | Researcher Development Framework

Vitae Researcher Development Framework

Briefing for employers

Overview

Researchers make an important contribution to the UK economy, both in sustaining our research base and as leaders in the workforce. The Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) underpins a major new approach to developing world-class researchers.

The framework has been developed by and for researchers working in higher education as an aid to planning, promoting and enhancing professional and career development. It articulates the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers and encourages all researchers to realise their potential.

The associated Researcher Development Statement, endorsed by Research Councils UK, Universities UK and other national organisations, provides a policy reference for researcher development strategies. Together with the full, operational framework it supports the implementation of policy related to researchers' professional development in the UK.

This is one of a series of briefings developed by Vitae for a range of stakeholders involved in the professional and career development of researchers.

For further information about the Researcher Development Framework and other briefings in this series visit: www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf

> **"The Researcher Development Framework provides researchers with a tool to use to help identify their transferable skills, strengths and capabilities and how to develop them. All of which are relevant to a range of careers and extremely valued by employers"**
>
> **Jackie Wilbraham, R&D Science Policy Director, AstraZeneca**

Using the Vitae Researcher Development Framework

This briefing introduces employers to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework which articulates the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of researchers.

The Vitae Researcher Development Framework provides employers with the opportunity to recognise and take advantage of the expertise that researchers can bring to the workplace, including innovation, creativity and critical analysis.

This framework enables prospective and current employers of researchers to:

- identify the knowledge, behaviours and attributes that researchers can bring to their organisation and consider researchers as a key talent pool for recruitment and selection
- support the full breadth of professional and career development for researchers working on collaborative doctoral programmes, research projects or placements
- compare the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to the organisation's competency frameworks, to enhance understanding of the potential of researcher talent to the organisation.

In a rapidly changing global business environment, research, innovation and highly skilled employees are key to maintaining competitive advantage.

Researchers knowledge, behaviours and attributes are critical to economic success, addressing major global challenges and building a leading knowledge economy.

> **"In addition to the postgraduate market there is also value in considering what professional university researchers may offer to your business. This sizeable group (ca. 40,000) is made up of experienced professionals who have been delivering to tight deadlines, solving challenging problems and working with multi-level teams. Many within this group pursue their careers outside of higher education, often in roles that draw as much on their transferable skills as their technical expertise. The Vitae Researcher Development Framework evidences the development of these skills and the employability lens shows, at a glance, the skills and expertise most frequently required by employers when targeting researchers."**
>
> **Carl Gilleard, Chief Executive, Association of Graduate Recruiters**

Background

The Vitae Researcher Development Framework and Researcher Development Statement underpin policies for supporting the professional and career development of researchers. Institution-wide implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, the QAA Code of Practice for research degree programmes and the Roberts recommendations for postgraduate researchers and research staff are enhanced and strengthened by use of the Researcher Development Framework and Statement.

Structure

- The Researcher Development Framework and Statement were created through interviews with researchers and empirical data, leading to the identification of the characteristics of excellent researchers
- Characteristics, expressed in the framework as 'descriptors', are structured into four domains and 12 sub-domains, encompassing the knowledge, intellectual abilities, techniques and professional standards to do research, as well as the personal qualities, knowledge and skills to work with others and ensure the wider impact of research
- Three to five phases for each descriptor present stages of development or levels of performance

Who is the Researcher Development Framework for?

- Researchers – to evaluate and plan their professional development
- Principal investigators and supervisors of researchers – in their role supporting the development of researchers
- Researcher developers, trainers, human resources specialists, careers advisors, senior managers and others – in planning and providing support to researchers
- Policy makers, funders and other organisations – to inform and reinforce policy and strategy relating to researchers
- Employers – to provide insight into the unique blend of researchers' skills and to enable exploration of researchers' potential benefits to the company as employees

Employers say

"The terminology of 'competences' is used throughout the Royal Bank of Scotland framework, and is in line with the Researcher Development Framework. It is easy to map the content of the Researcher Development Framework with the Royal Bank of Scotland competence framework."

Royal Bank of Scotland

"The Researcher Development Framework is a useful tool and I think would provide a structure for approaching skills development and training."

Landis+Gyr

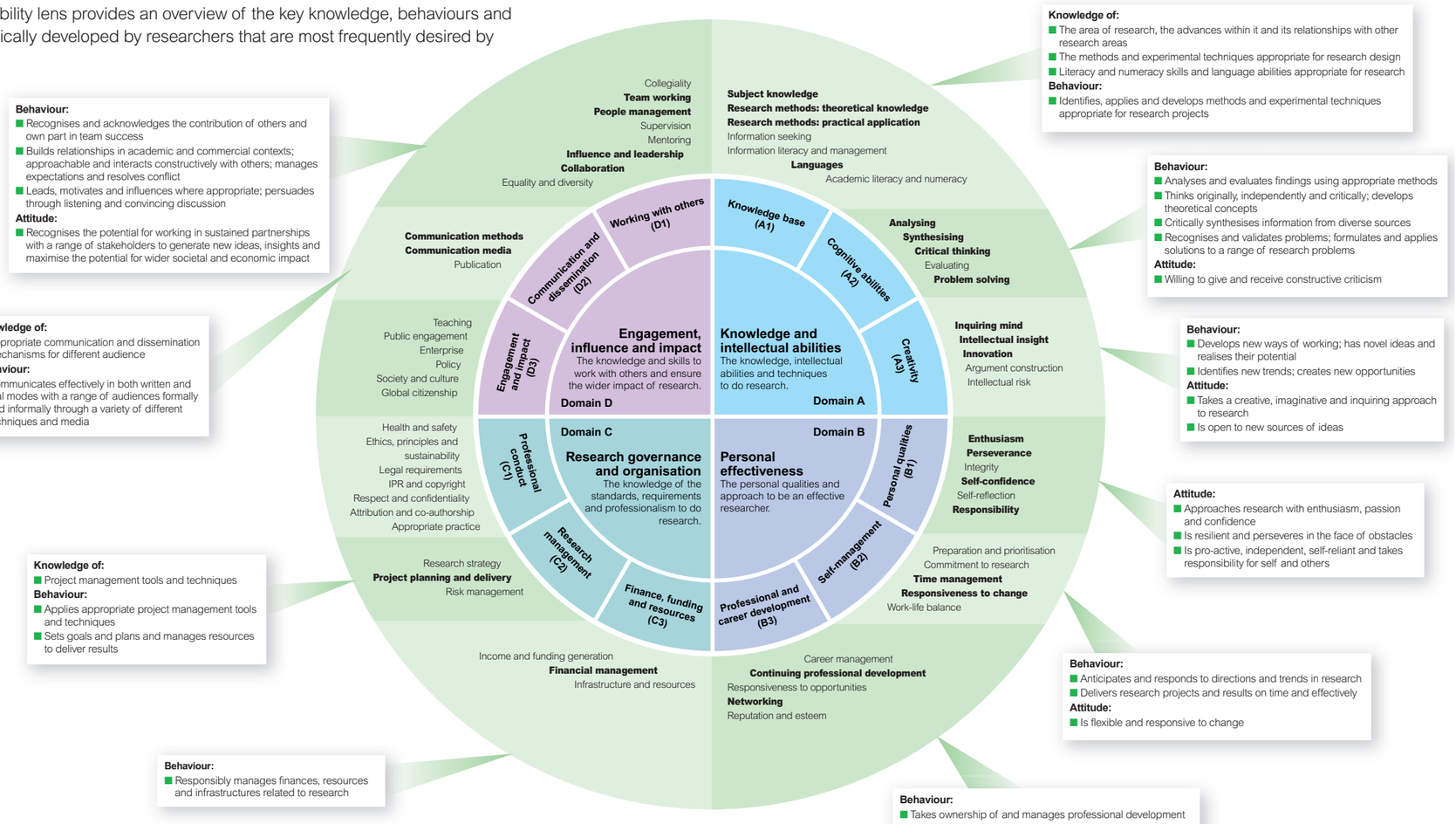
"As a tool to support the development of researchers I think it is good and it is being implemented for the new PhD student intake in the National History Museum. Not only will the new students have an introduction to the RDF and be encouraged to use it to guide their own personal development, but we are also mapping our postgraduate training offer against the RDF."

The Natural History Museum

Employability lens on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework

for careers outside academia

The employability lens provides an overview of the key knowledge, behaviours and attributes typically developed by researchers that are most frequently desired by employers.



Bold text in outer circle – key RDF descriptors that relate to employability and vice versa
Boxed text – summary statements from the Vitae Researcher Development Statement that relate to employability for careers outside academia. www.vitae.ac.uk/rds

Researchers say

"It took me a while to realise the call for my PhD wasn't just the technical knowledge that I picked up but it was also the transferable skills which you don't really see at the time. But it's things like problem solving, taking on a challenge, getting it down to, sort of, the nitty gritty and working out a step by step method of solving a problem."

MBE, Space Scientist, Astrium Limited

"The Researcher Development Framework provides an excellent resource both for managing my own career development and for helping my staff identify particular training needs at key points in their research careers."

Senior Academic Fellow in Pharmacology, University of Edinburgh

"The Researcher Development Framework will encourage me to be more proactive about my career development as it provides me with a framework (list of milestones) so that I can judge my current progress in relation to what I want to achieve with my career."

Postgraduate Researcher, School of Management, University of Southampton

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