



Working principles for researcher career tracking and destinations data under development by the Vitae Member Researcher Careers Working Group

Vitae Working Groups aim to influence the global research environment by giving members an opportunity to engage with a wide range of colleagues who have a stake in the policy and practice of researcher development. They provide a platform for innovation, giving a greater voice to all members of the research environment.

The Researcher Careers Working Group has been focusing on researcher career tracking and engagement for the sector and hope to support the collection of improved doctoral destinations data. During 2020, the group has been developing the following set of working principles around the collection of researcher career tracking data. The principles will:

- **Ensure equality between institutions across the UK. Data should be about researchers from all UK Higher Education Institutions (HEI's), using a consistent approach affording equal reach and use within and across institutions (which may require addressing hidden or unintended systemic bias)**
- **Ensure transparency in data use to all participants and stakeholders**
- **Include researchers who graduated (and/or worked) in the UK who have (had) international destinations**
- **Include relevant demographic variables (ethnicity, SES, gender etc) to reveal any systemic barriers to progression**
- **Sustain tracking throughout researchers working lives (on a par with the USA)**

The proposed goals of data collection are to:

- **Inform researchers of the breadth of roles and sectors open to them and provide examples of progression**
- **Generate evidence-based information about the likelihood of successfully pursuing certain career paths**
- **Generate data for universities, employers, funders and government on the career destinations of researchers at key points following graduation or contract-end, in order to inform policy and investment in professional development for early career researchers**

In terms of data collection, the principles will ensure that:

- **Data is sought specifically on researcher careers without the process becoming a data harvesting exercise**
- **Data is anonymised unless individuals opt in to having their career stories published**
- **Data handling is fully compliant with GDPR regulations**