Vitae and the research environment

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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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The REF is going to be the most important driver in HEIs over the next four years – why care about researcher development?

- The quality of research outputs
- The wider impact of research
- The vitality of the research environment
'The research environment element of the REF is likely to make explicit references to the Concordat and require institutions to evidence their support for the development of researchers and academic staff.'

CROS and PIRLS letter to VCs from the Concordat Strategy Group
The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

- The future for researcher careers in universities
- Sets out expectations and responsibilities of researchers, their managers, employers and funders
- 7 key principles for support and management of research careers
- Endorsed by Universities UK, Research Councils and others
- Consistent with EU Charter and Code
- Increase attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK
- Improve quantity, quality and impact of research
- Benefit of UK society and the economy.

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The Concordat's key principles:

- Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.
- **Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation's human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world-class research.**
- Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment.
- The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.
- Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to proactively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning.
- Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.
- The sector and all stakeholders will undertake regular and collective review of their progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK.

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Principle 2 – areas to consider

For senior managers:
- Reviewing institutional strategy for research staff
- Reviewing the effectiveness of institutional communications with research staff and their managers
- Reviewing the institution's career progression framework for research staff
- Exploring the use of institutional systems to underpin continuity of support for researchers

For staff developers
- Ensuring equality of access to development opportunities
- Reviewing development opportunities for managers of researchers, including effective use of the appraisal process
How can Vitae help?
Vitae is the national organisation championing the personal, professional and career development of doctoral researchers and research staff in higher education institutions and research institutes.
Vitae launched in 2008

**2002:** SET for Success report, by Sir Gareth Roberts
Researchers lack the transferable skills that employers want

**January 2003:** UK GRAD Programme launched (PGR)

**2005** – Roberts’ money to support researcher development

**June 2008:** Concordat and Vitae launched

**Vitae responds to the need for highly skilled workers to maximise UK business potential**
Vitae vision and aims

“For the UK to be world-class in supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers”

- Championing the development and implementation of effective policy
- Enhancing higher education provision through sharing practice and resource
- Providing access to development opportunities and resources
- Building an evidence base to support the researcher development agenda
Vitae

- A national team based in Cambridge
- Vitae is funded through the Research Careers and Diversity Unit of RCUK and managed by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation.
- Supported by a range of sector based bodies and advised by a range of expert advisory groups drawn from across the sector.
- 8 regional hubs located in universities across the UK.

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Who do Vitae work with?

- Employers
  - HR, senior managers, HEI administrators
  - Supervisors and managers
  - Researchers: Research staff and students
  - Staff supporting researchers: University training departments and careers services

- Professional bodies & National organisations
- Government and Research Councils (RCUK)
- International stakeholders
- HR, senior managers, HEI administrators

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Vitae delivery process
(from Hodge Independent Review)

To influence researcher development policy, Vitae:
- Brings together all those with a stake in realising potential of researchers
- Establishes strategic partnerships between funders and national organisations

To support research organisations, Vitae:
- Works with research organisations to embed professional and career development in the research environment
Vitae provides:

- UK policy development e.g. the Concordat
- Leadership of European Policy areas e.g. HR Excellence in research
- Translation of policy into practice
- New researcher development framework
- Support for stakeholders
Concordat Implementation

- High level Strategy Group chaired by Sir Ivor Crewe
- Benchmarking process:
  - Support the implementation by all stakeholders
  - Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS)
  - Principal Investigator and Research Leader survey (PIRLS)
  - Survey of HEI implementation
- Process linked to EC ‘HR Excellence in Research’

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Careers in research online survey (CROS)

- 43.4k research staff in UK HE (07/08; 25% of HE academic staff)
- Question set covers the principles of the Concordat
- Parallel online surveys run by HEIs targeting research staff (51 HEIs in 2009)
- Very representative of overall population (5908 responses)
- Valuable tool in gathering views of research staff and observing progress with Concordat implementation

Overall, most researchers feel:
- valued and satisfied with work-life balance
- integrated in their department and stimulated by research culture
- that their HEI supports training and career development
Progress

- Half have **undertaken appraisal** in last 2 years (*up from 32% in 2002*)
- 2/3 **participated in training** in last year (*up from 1/3 in 2006*)
- Most are encouraged to consider **career development** (*40% talked to ‘manager’*); half have a **career plan**
- Most are **well-informed** about current employment and research (*although less so about their progression*)
- Most feel **valued for their research work**
- Widespread belief in **commitment to diversity and equality**
Room for improvement

Many feel not valued for contributions to teaching, supervision and management.

Half not treated equally to lecturing staff re: career progression or participation in decision-making.

Few talk to careers service or development staff.

Strong appetite for development, but many appear not yet to have taken advantage.
PIRLS

- Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS)
- to gain responses from PIs on how they gained the experience and capabilities that have made them research leaders
- how the research leaders of tomorrow may gain the experience and capabilities that they will need.
- PIRLS & CROS will run every two years

PIRLS: 1 May and 30 June 2011
CROS: 1 March to 31 May 2011
Concordat implementation

- Survey of HEI strategies (103 responses)
- Significant senior engagement in implementation
- 82% of HEIs have or developing strategy for implementation
- 87% of HEIs changing policies in light of Concordat
HR Excellence

- European Commission's ‘HR excellence in research' badge
- UK wide process
- alignment with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for their Recruitment
- In UK, relates to Concordat implementation
- 23 UK institutions compared to just 15 other European universities
5 steps

1. The institution conducts an **internal analysis** to compare practice against the Charter and Code

2. The institution **publishes an action plan** for aligning more closely with the Charter and Code

3. The Commission will **acknowledge** the strategy

4. Through their own internal quality assurance mechanism, institutions will carry out a **self-assessment** at least every two years to test and update their action plans

5. At least every four years an **external evaluation** will take place

If you would like to submit and/or would like advice from Vitae email Ellen Pearce on **ellen.pearce@vitae.ac.uk**.
Major new approach to researcher development describes knowledge, behaviours and attributes of researchers at different stages of development, providing a language for communicating researcher qualities consistent with European competencies.

Researcher Development Statement policy document endorsed by key 26 stakeholders.

RDF website resources, FAQs researcher profiles.

Professional development tool.

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I've always thought of myself as being quite ambitious, driven and focussed on what I want, but the framework made me realise I can have a much larger visions.

It was very good for me to reflect. I realised that nothing is stopping me but myself. The sky is the limit.

Think about staging the targets; what can I do smarter, what training do I need to request and what do I need someone else to facilitate so that I can move forward.

I now have a path that I would like to follow.

I would see this [RDF] as a barometer...to give me a bit more clarity about what areas I could develop and what might be most important. It's something I could keep returning to.

The RDF “…identified areas for me that I needed to hone and really made me think about my career development. I’ve highlighted things now that I know I need to do.

What we’ve always tried to do with the postdocs [in Edinburgh] is say 'look this is your career and it’s your responsibility'.

Read it carefully and be honest about where you are. You don’t always have to aim for phase 5 - identify shorter term goals that are more achievable.

It put career development back into the forefront of my mind as it can often slip back when you’re engaged in what you’re doing day to day.
Vitae work with Universities

- Professional development for practitioners
  - national and regional networks (Hubs)
  - national conference and regional events
  - community of practice
  - series of masterclasses for trainers and developers
  - Vitae connections (& connections online)

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Courses for researchers

- Advancing in Academia
- Broadening horizons
- Careers in Academia
- Effective researcher: research staff
- Effective researcher: research students
- Managing your academic career
- Part time researcher

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Researcher careers

What do researchers do?

Important series on career destinations of researchers

- First destinations by subject
- Career profiles of doctoral graduates
- Career profiles of doctoral entrepreneurs
- Doctoral graduate destinations and impact three years on

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WDRD? three years on

- Experience of research degree programme
- Value of the doctorate (82% requirement or important)
- Employability
  - 2% unemployed
  - 54% have changed jobs
  - £34,000 median gross annual salary
- Satisfied with career to date (93%)
- Undertaking research (40% most of the time)
- Use of research (82%) and generic skills (91%)
- Impact on employment (94%) and beyond (89%)
- Unique doctoral occupations

‘My doctorate changed my life. It opened doors, and it also opened my mind. I take on challenges now, in my life and my career, because I have faith in my own abilities.’

Cora Beth Knowles (Latin literature), Open University
Distinct doctoral occupation clusters

86% employed in 5 occupational clusters

- HE research occupations
- Research (not in HE sector)
- Teaching and lecturing in HE
- Other teaching occupations
- Other common doctoral occupations
- Other occupations

- Doctoral graduates
- Masters graduates
- First degree 1st/2:1

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Support for continuing researcher development

- Positive messages about HE achievements through Roberts’ funding (Hodge Independent Review, Haynes Review of reporting to RCUK)
- Encouraging responses from HEs about future of researcher development (Policy Forum 2011)
- Strong theme of the importance of highly skilled workforce (BIS, RCUK and HEFCE)
Future Vitae activities

- Embedding researcher development in HEI practice
  - researcher development responsive to the changing environment
  - build the evidence base to engage PIs and key funders/stakeholders
  - provide leadership through Vitae people and learning resources
Future Vitae activities

- Developing excellent researchers and enhancing the researcher experience
  - embed Concordat principles in normal business within HEIs
  - embed the Researcher Development Framework
  - extend professional networks engaged in researcher development
  - drive excellence in provision through practice sharing
Future Vitae activities

- Improving employability
  - demonstrate the unique value of researchers to non-HE employers
  - further engagement and dialogue to bridge the communication gap
  - empowering researchers to take responsibility for their career development
References

- Vitae  www.vitae.ac.uk
- Concordat  www.researchconcordat.ac.uk
- What do researchers do?  www.vitae.ac.uk/wdrd
- CROS  www.vitae.ac.uk/cros
- Researcher Development Framework  www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf
- 'HR excellence in research' badging  www.vitae.ac.uk/HRbadging