



ESF Member Organisation Forum

European Alliance on Research Career Development

International workshop – Oslo – 21/23 Mai 2013

Working group 2 – Skills Update and results

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Overall aim of WG 2

- Foster better researchers through providing guidance on how to encourage continuous professional development of researchers at all career levels.

Specific objectives

1. Work towards a **shared definition** of researchers' professional development
2. Assess the general applicability (across Europe) of a generic framework for the professional development of researchers (building on the Vitae model) in view of creating a **European Researcher Development Framework**
3. Produce **guidance** to research funding and research performing organisations **on developing policies and implementation strategies** to directly or indirectly influence the improvement of researchers' professional development



Definition of Researchers' Professional Development

Researchers' professional development is a structured approach to the continuous development of researchers' knowledge, expertise and attributes at all stages of their career to improve their competency, employability and ability to pursue multiple career paths. This may be achieved by a variety of activities, whether formal and structured or informal and self-directed.

A pan-European professional development framework for researchers

– a feasibility study by the ESF Member Organisation Forum European Alliance on Research Career Development





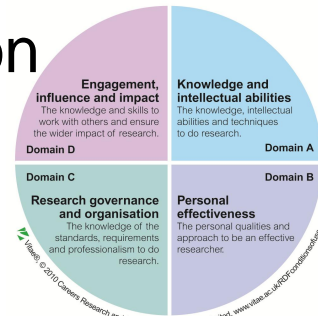
European Charter and Code

- Specific career development strategy for all stages of career
- Mentors for personal and professional development
- Access to research training and continuous development
- Assess accessibility, take-up and effectiveness of continuing professional development provision
- Evaluation/appraisal systems for assessing performance

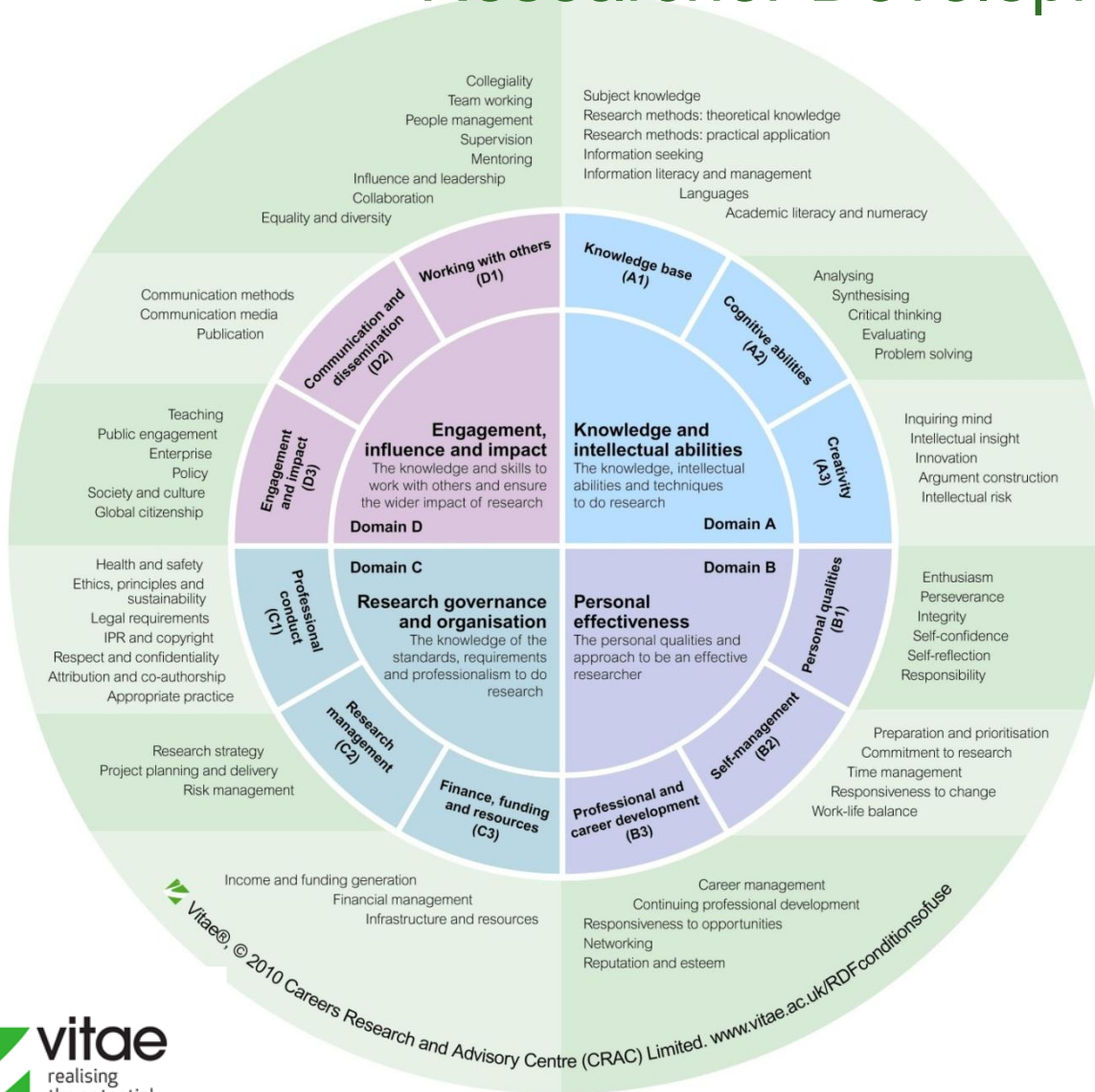


Vitae Researcher Development Framework

- Designed by researchers for researchers
- Framework informed by literature surveys and empirical data
- >100 interviews with experienced researchers: range of experiences, institution types, geographical context, disciplines and demographics
- >1000 characteristics and variants, clustered into common groups
- Refined using feedback from specialist groups, sector-wide consultation, non-HE employers and validation with senior academics



Researcher Development Framework



- ▣ Framework of the knowledge, behaviour and attributes of successful researchers
- ▣ Enables self-assessment of strengths and areas for further development
- ▣ Common language for researchers capabilities
- ▣ Endorsed by 33 UK organisations

Personal effectiveness

The personal qualities and approach to be an effective researcher.

Domain B

Personal qualities (B1)

Enthusiasm
Perseverance
Integrity
Self-confidence
Self-reflection
Responsibility

Integrity

Self management (B2)

Preparation and prioritisation
Commitment to research
Time management
Responsiveness to change
Work-life balance

Professional and career development (B3)

Career management
Continuing professional development
Responsiveness to opportunities
Networking
Reputation and esteem





Sample descriptor and phases

Domain B: *Personal effectiveness*

Sub-domain B1: *Personal qualities*

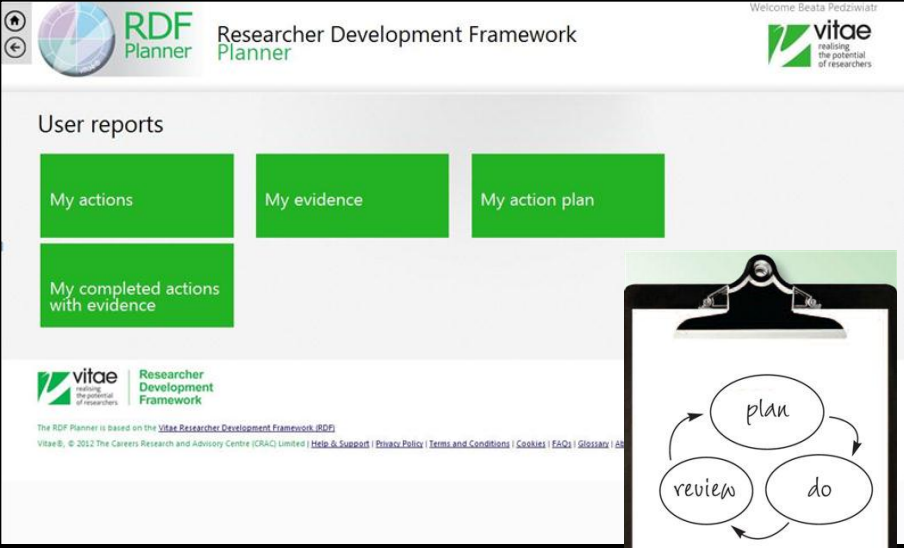
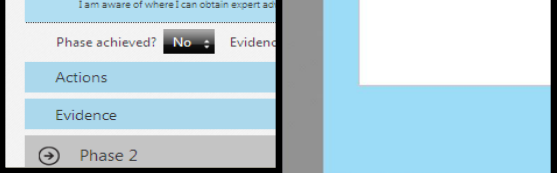
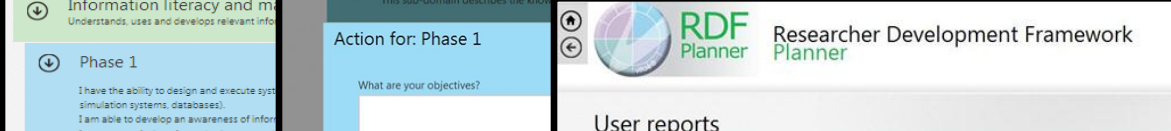
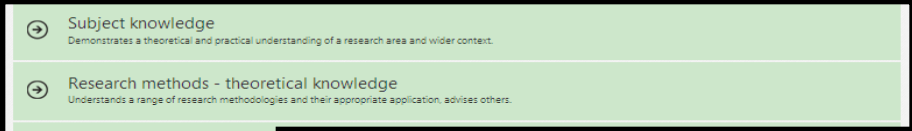
Descriptor 3: *Integrity*



Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
Demonstrates appreciation of standards of good research practice in the institution and/or discipline/ research area. Seeks guidance as necessary.	Acts with professional integrity and humility at all times and is honest in all aspects of research; takes especial care in information/data handling and dissemination and engagement with others.	Acts as exemplar to and advises peers and less experienced members of staff; respecting their views and engaging effectively in discussion.	Sets expectations and standard of conduct. Advises all staff and contributes to institutional and disciplinary policy/practice.	Shapes policy and procedures of good practice in research in the HE sector, professional associations and bodies.



Vitae RDF Planner



Institutional version

- map resources
- branding





ESF-funded RDF trial methodology

- Six focus groups in six countries
 - Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway
- Standard process:
 - Individual use of the RDF
 - semi-structured focus groups
 - range of researchers by disciplines/experience
 - feedback on overall content of the RDF and value of professional development planner
- Analysis of focus group responses
- Presentation of initial findings to ESF MOF
- Report and recommendations

Conclusions

- Overall very positive response to the RDF
 - further clarity through better glossary and explanations
 - important to facilitate initial engagement
 - individual preferences on engagement
 - value for career development and further discussions
- Different levels of readiness in different HEIs/countries
 - concept of career development
 - culture of appraisal, review and self evaluation
 - local provision of development opportunities
- Value of European wide framework

Value of a Common European Framework for researchers' professional development.

- Supports the aims of the European Charter and Code
- Provides a single European language for researchers to describe/talk about their expertise, skills and attributes
- Supports the aims of the ERA, promotes the concept of the European researcher and facilitates mobility
- Could be implemented by the existing channels at a European level such as the EURAXESS
- Constitutes an economy of scale and avoids reinventing the wheel

Recommendations

- The EC should consider investing in making available and promoting a European Researcher Development Framework
- The Vitae RDF model constitutes a promising starting point to achieving this goal
- - EC to support (financially) a large-scale independent trial of the Vitae RDF in Europe, making the RDF available to larger number of researchers and research stakeholders at various levels and in more countries
 - EC to make available funding to develop the Vitae RDF into a European version of the RDF, including additional resources, FAQs and guidance for a European audience.

Further recommendations

- There is a need for concerted efforts by all stakeholders involved in research policy and research management
- - to promote the concept and importance of researchers' professional development at all levels of the research hierarchy
- - to offer researchers at all career levels adequate training opportunities and career development means

Researchers across Europe must take responsibility for their own professional development and reflect how to improve their own career possibilities



Recommendations for research funding and performing organisations to directly or indirectly influence the improvement of RPD

Objective: Produce **guidance** to research funding and research performing organisations **on developing policies and implementation strategies** to directly or indirectly influence the improvement of researchers' professional development

Background

- "Skills have become the global currency of the 21st century" (OECD)
- Research funding and performing organisations promote highest quality research, sustain the research base, maximise their contribution to economy, society and culture.
- Policy-makers need to justify why and how public resources are spent

The aim of the briefing

- Provide guidance to improve RPD
- Develop a common understanding in Europe and beyond of RPD
- How to best develop RPD
- Recommendations and case studies to guide the successful implementation strategies for RPD and the creation of attractive working environment for researchers
- Contribute to achieve the aims of the European Research and Innovation Area
- Sharing practice and experience on RPD



Action list “10 commandments”

- Strategy
- Implementation
- Monitoring and evaluation



Actions - strategy

1. Develop a strategy for researchers' professional development based on the principles of the European Charter & Code, the EU HR Strategy for Researchers and the four levels of the European Framework for Research Careers.
2. Translate this strategy into codes of practice and quality standards for RPD at all career levels of researchers, and into terms and conditions of research funding schemes.

Actions - Implementation

3. Map existing professional development practice and review the examples and case studies in this briefing to build an understanding of current RPD provision.
4. Implement structures, processes and resources to embed professional development in the normal process of doing research.
5. Set up a programme of professional development activities covering the breadth of knowledge, competencies and abilities of effective researchers
6. Provide access to information, advice and guidance to researchers on the range of career opportunities and professional development
7. Ensure researchers at all levels are aware of their responsibility to actively develop their own careers and those of others, where appropriate.

Actions – Mentoring and evaluation

8. Set up structures and processes to review and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of RPD provision at all career levels of researchers, and within research funding schemes.
9. Install mechanisms to gather feedback from current researchers and alumni on the appropriateness of RPD provision for their individual careers.
10. Develop an approach to evaluate the long-term impact of RPD on researchers' contribution to the economy, society and culture.

Final remarks

- A dissemination and implementation strategy
"needs to be defined"
- Further discussions in the break-out group
- Other comments?