Vitae and the research environment

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REF

- 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

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.

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 pro-actively 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.

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

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.
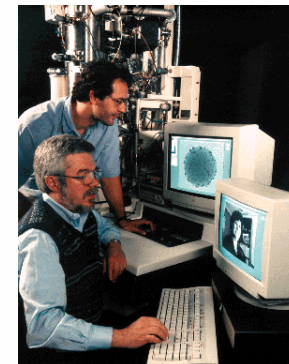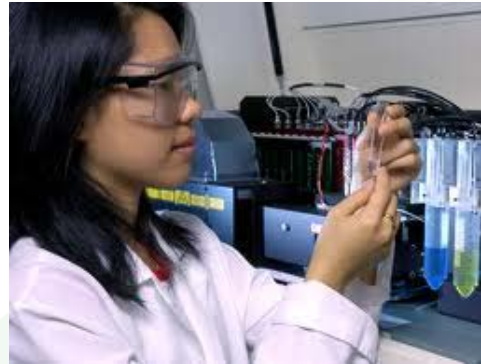
Vitae launched in 2008

- 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.

Who do Vitae work with?
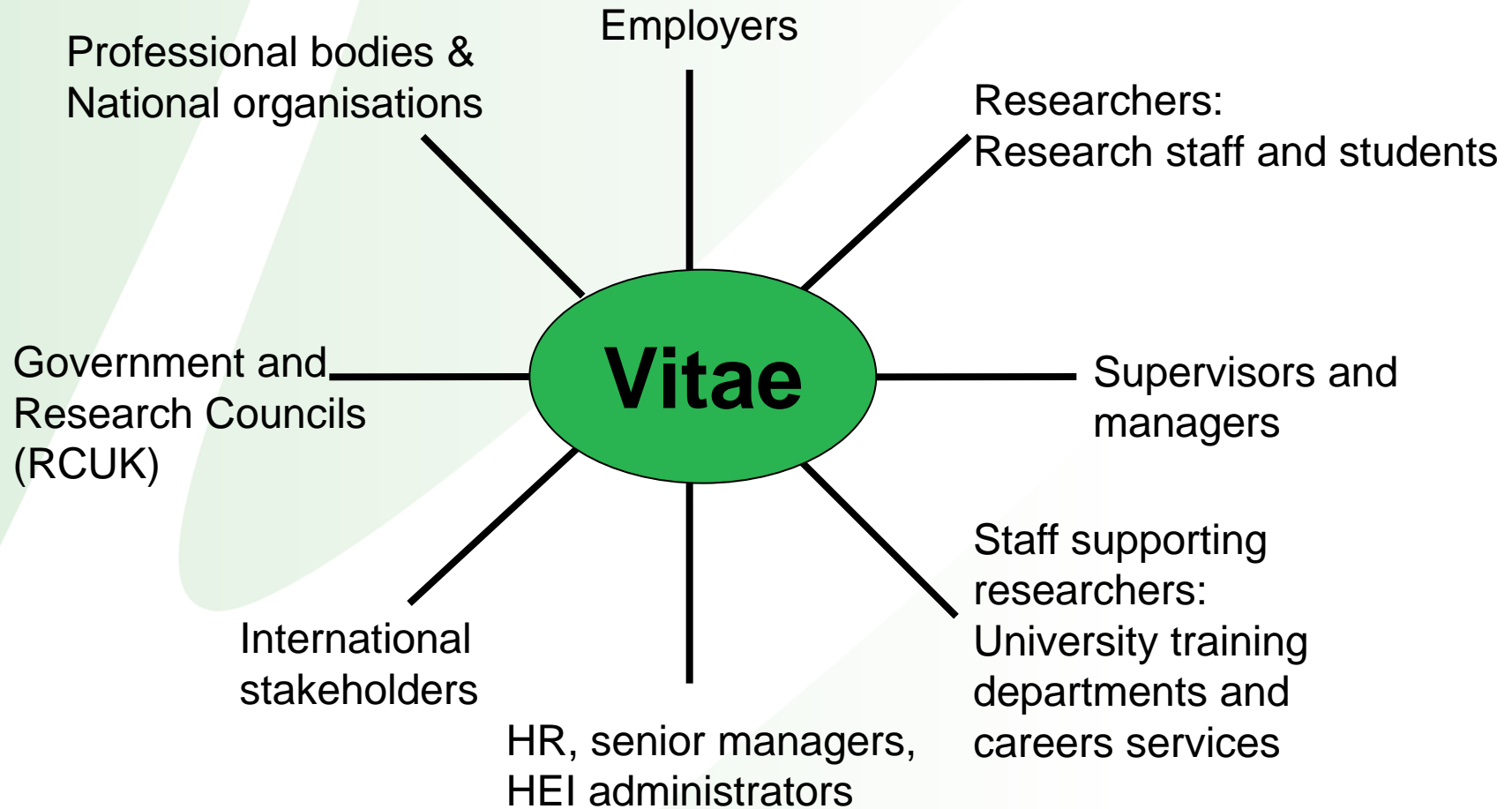
Vitae delivery process

(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'

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

www.vitae.ac.uk/cros
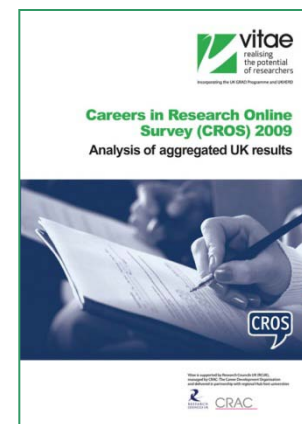
Progress

- 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
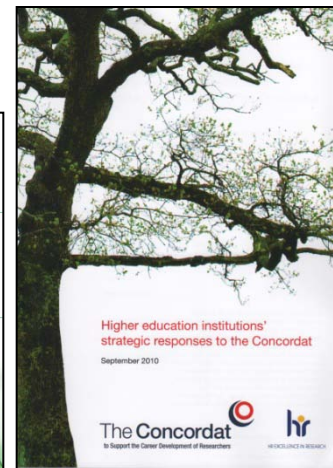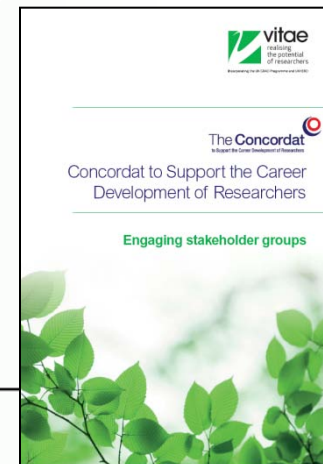
HR Excellence

- 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

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

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.

Researcher Development Framework

vitae
realising
the potential
of researchers

- **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**

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.

The RDF will encourage me to be more proactive about my career development as it provides me with a framework (list of milestones).

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

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.

I now have a path that I would like to follow

Engagement, influence and impact
The knowledge and skills to work with others and ensure the wider impact of research.
Domain D

Knowledge and intellectual abilities
The knowledge, intellectual abilities and techniques to do research.
Domain A

Domain C

Domain B

Research governance and organisation
The knowledge of the standards, requirements and professionalism to do research.

Personal effectiveness
The personal qualities and approach to be an effective researcher.

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

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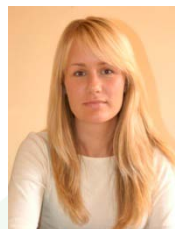
The RDF "…identified areas for me that I needed to hone and really made me think about my career development. I've highlighted things now that I know I need to do.

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.

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realising the potential of researchers

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)

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

Publications

# 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
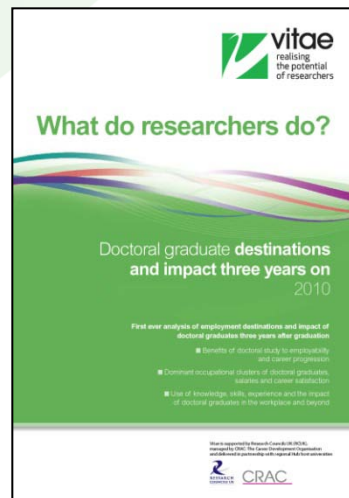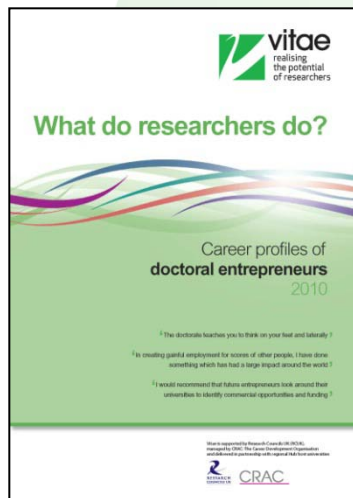
WDRD? three years on

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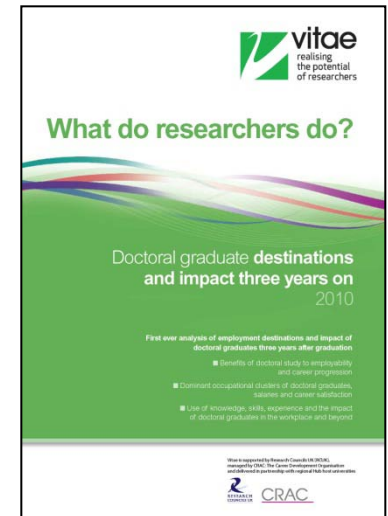
'My doctorate changed my life. It opened doors, and it also opened my mind. I take on challenges now, in my life and my career, because I have faith in my own abilities.'

Cora Beth Knowles (Latin literature), Open University

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Distinct doctoral occupation clusters

86% employed in 5 occupational clusters

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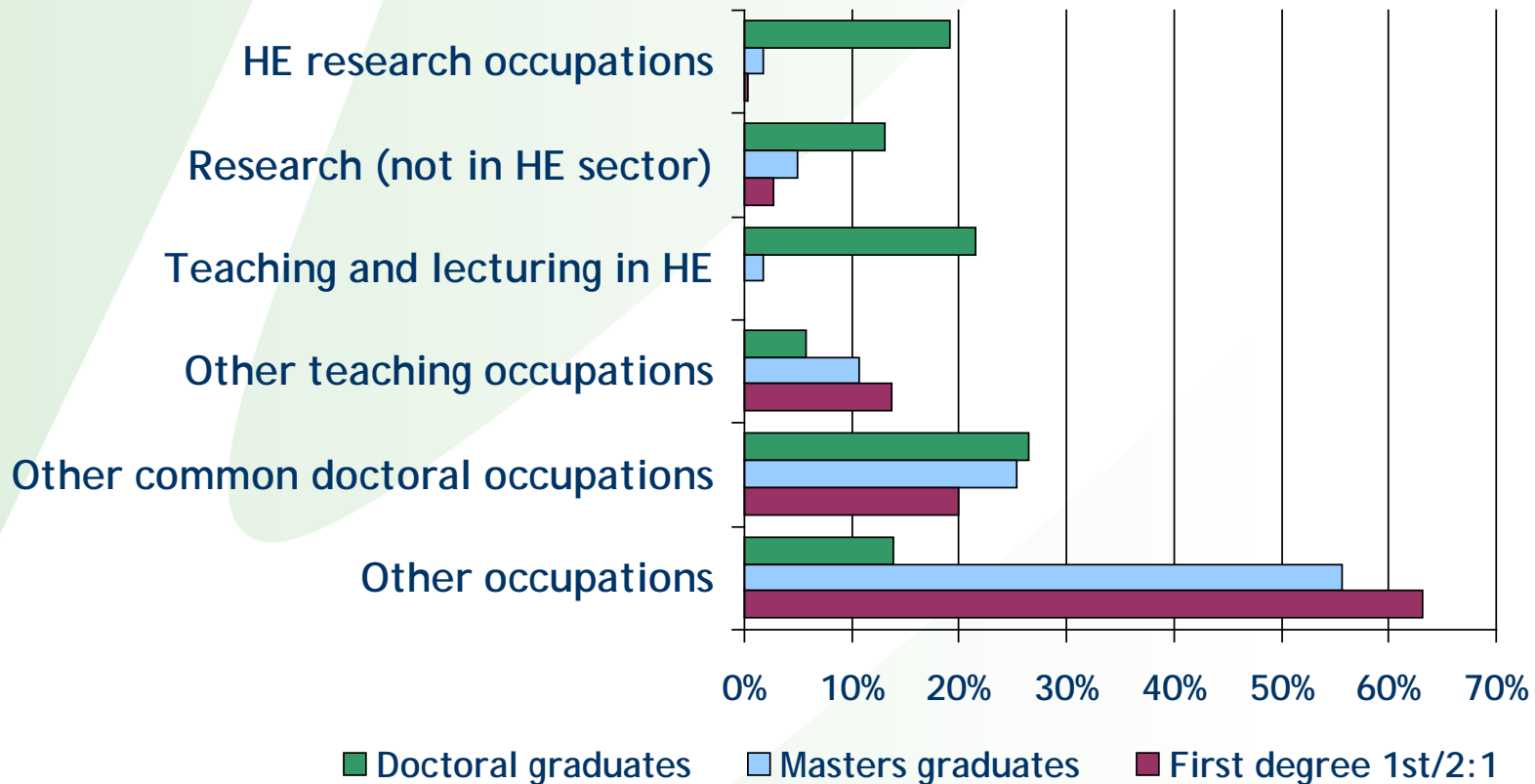
Support for continuing researcher development

- 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