

Introducing the Researcher Development Framework

The Vitae Researcher Development Framework is a guide to your development as a professional researcher, enabling you to identify the strengths you already have and prioritise for personal and career development in the context of future career opportunities.

Being a successful researcher involves many skills including communicating your work to others, being aware of its impact and being innovative and enterprising. The Researcher Development Framework can help you decide on priorities for your professional development, informing discussions with your supervisor, principal investigator or research manager. The Researcher Development Framework enables you to consider the skills and experiences that will enhance your career prospects and articulate your capabilities to future employers.

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

**Kristina Hultgren,
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Background

The 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 twelve 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

Top ten tips from other researchers on using the Researcher Development Framework Planner:

- use the Researcher Development Framework Planner to select individual areas for development
- you can choose to use the Researcher Development Framework for short term as well as long term development

- prioritise development on those areas which are most relevant to you
- draw on experiences outside of your daily research to evidence, reflect on and develop your capabilities
- progression to the highest phase in a descriptor may not always be relevant to your career plans
- talk to others to get their views about your strengths and capabilities
- to move from one phase to the next why not explore attending courses
- some phases may only be reached through experience and practice
- create a realistic action plan with measurable goals in specific time frames
- review your progress against your action plan and go through the cycle again regularly

