

# **Effective Researcher The Next 90 Days**

## **Programme leader manual**

Vitae resources: developing the  
skills and careers of researchers

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## Contents

Conditions of use .....	1
Acknowledgements .....	4
Overview of the programme .....	5
Overview and aims .....	5
Background .....	5
Positioning:.....	6
Researcher Development Framework learning outcomes.....	7
Room, layout and resources .....	7
Introduction for the programme leader .....	9
Effective Researcher: The next 90 days programme.....	11
Introduction.....	14
Session 1: Being independent.....	16
Session 2: Who's in your team .....	20
Post lunch energiser .....	25
Session 3: From supervisor to academic colleague .....	26
Session 4: The end of the beginning.....and the beginning of the middle.....	33
Closing the course .....	36
Handout 1: Help! I need somebody! – Participant brief.....	37

## Acknowledgements

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## Overview of the programme

### Overview and aims

This one-day programme offers participants in the first year of their doctorate, or part time equivalent, a chance to develop the skills required to manage this phase of their doctorate and to action plan accordingly.

The learning outcomes of the course are to enable researchers to:

- acknowledge the progress they have made to date and recognise the skills they have developed
- identify people who can contribute to the success of their doctorate
- develop techniques to effectively communicate with their supervisor and develop this relationship now and in the future
- explore the importance of communicating their research and its impact
- practice communication techniques to a range of audiences
- develop their individual plan for the coming year and recognise that there are things they need to do now in order to secure the job they want.

### Type of resource

Programme

### Recommended running time

1 day

### Audience

This material has been written for postgraduate researchers (PGRs)

### Background

Since the introduction of the 'How to be an effective researcher for postgraduate researchers' programme much has changed in the researcher development environment. Induction/orientation programmes and a suite of training courses are now commonly available in institutions.

The development of this programme was to both complement the 'How to be an effective researcher for postgraduate researchers' programme and to replace it where there is other provision available at the institution.

### Link with the current 'How to be an effective researcher for postgraduate researchers' 2-day programme:

This course is not a replacement for the Vitae two-day (or one-day) 'How to be an effective researcher for postgraduate researchers'. It offers different aspects of researcher development and complements the material offered in the 'How to be an effective researcher for postgraduate researchers'.

### Why should participants come on this course? What's in it for them?

Participants will probably be 6-12 months into their doctorate and are likely to have attended some courses for generic skills and research specific skills. They will probably have read a great deal, tuned in to their field, be building relationships with their supervisors and be starting to have an idea of where their doctorate is headed over the next two plus years. They may be heading towards their first year transfer viva (or equivalent).

This course has been designed to help them navigate this part of their doctorate as they may have recognised that there are areas they need to develop. It is an opportunity to review what they have done to date and what they need to be doing next. It will give them the opportunity to look at the direction they are taking with their work, the skills they have

developed and need to develop, their relationships and communicating the work they have done to date.

**Positioning:**

- 6 - 12 months after the start of their (full time) doctorate, which is likely to be 9 -18 months for a part time doctorate
- A standalone programme to (and complements) the current one or two day 'How to be an effective researcher programme for postgraduate researchers'
- Designed for up to 24 participants
- Assumes one skilled facilitator to be the Programme Leader, plus ideally one other facilitator

**The programme outline:**

10.00 **Introduction to the day**

10.30 **Session 1: Being independent**

Recognising what they have achieved so far and how to navigate this phase of the doctorate

11.40 Break

11.50 **Session 2: Who is in your team?**

Identifying people who can contribute to the success of their doctorate and how to navigate from here to the end of the year

12.55 Lunch

13.45 **Session 3: From supervisor to academic colleague**

Developing techniques for communicating with and developing your relationship with your supervisor now and in the future

14.55 Break

15.05 **Session 4: The end of the beginning.....and the beginning of the middle**

Exploring the importance of communicating your research and action planning for the next 90 days

16.10 **Close of course**

## Researcher Development Framework learning outcomes

These are the learning outcome areas as mapped on to the Researcher Development Framework (RDF).<sup>1</sup> For conditions of use for the RDF please refer to [www.vitae.ac.uk/rdfconditionsofuse](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rdfconditionsofuse).

The RDF is a professional development framework for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers in higher education. It articulates the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers and encourages them to realise their potential.

A primary outcome is defined as an outcome that is likely to be achieved by all participants irrespective of how the resource is presented. A secondary outcome is that which might be achieved but to a lesser extent than a primary outcome and will vary from participant to participant depending on how the training activity is delivered and what focus is presented.

Domain A: Knowledge and intellectual abilities		
<b>A1 Knowledge base</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>
1. Subject to knowledge		
2. Research methods – theoretical knowledge		
3. Research methods – practical application		
4. Information seeking		
5. Information literacy and management		
6. Languages		
7. Academic literacy and numeracy		
<b>A2 Cognitive abilities</b>		
1. Analysing		
2. Synthesising		
3. Critical thinking		
4. Evaluating		
5. Problem solving		
<b>A3 Creativity</b>		
1. Inquiring mind		
2. Intellectual insight		
3. Innovation		
4. Argument construction		
5. Intellectual risk		

Domain B: Personal effectiveness		
<b>B1 Personal qualities</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>
1. Enthusiasm		
2. Perseverance		✓
3. Integrity		
4. Self-confidence	✓	
5. Self-reflection	✓	
6. Responsibility	✓	
<b>B2 Self-management</b>		
1. Preparation and prioritisation		
2. Commitment to research	✓	
3. Time management		
4. Responsiveness to change		
5. Work-life balance		
<b>B3 Professional and career development</b>		
1. Career management		
2. Continuing professional development		
3. Responsiveness to opportunities		
4. Networking		✓
5. Reputation and esteem		

Domain C: Research governance and organisation		
<b>C1 Professional conduct</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>
1. Health and safety		
2. Ethics, principles and sustainability		
3. Legal requirements		
4. IPR and copyright		
5. Respect and confidentiality		
6. Attribution and co-authorship		
7. Appropriate practice		
<b>C2 Research management</b>		
1. Research strategy		
2. Project planning and delivery		
3. Risk management		
<b>C3 Finance, funding and resources</b>		
1. Income and funding generation		
2. Financial management		
3. Infrastructure and resources		

Domain D: Engagement, influence and impact		
<b>D1 Working with others</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>S</b>
1. Collegiality		
2. Team working		✓
3. People management		✓
4. Supervision		
5. Mentoring		
6. Influence and leadership		
7. Collaboration		
8. Equality and diversity		
<b>D2 Communication and dissemination</b>		
1. Communication methods		✓
2. Communication media		
3. Publication		
<b>D3 Engagement and impact</b>		
1. Teaching		
2. Public engagement		
3. Enterprise		
4. Policy		
5. Society and culture		
6. Global citizenship		

Primary (P) and secondary (S) outcomes highlighted (✓)

<sup>1</sup> [www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf)

## Room, layout and resources

### Room:

A room that will:

- comfortably take the number of participants when seated in cabaret style, (which is roughly double the space required for lecture style)
- permit flexible working – pairs, fours, the whole course

### Layout:

When participants arrive:

- tables with 4/6 chairs around them, (to encourage discussion as people arrive)

During the course, flexible, so:

- ideally a very large room with fixed or heavy tables, or
- a smaller room with moveable tables

### Resources:

- Paper and pen for each participant
- Flip chart stand, minimum of 1 and ideally 1 per 4 participants
- Flip chart paper
- Flip chart pens x12
- Briefs/handouts

Ideally include:

- 'Seeing the Point' available from RSVP Design [www.rsvpdesign.co.uk](http://www.rsvpdesign.co.uk)
- Vitae booklets:
  - Balanced Researcher
  - Creative Researcher
  - Planning your doctorate
  - The Researcher Development Framework
  - Employers' Briefing, What Do Researchers do?

## Introduction for the programme leader

### About you

This course has been designed to be run by an experienced facilitator working with an audience of postgraduate researchers.

If budget permits it is best run with two facilitators.

What we mean by an experienced facilitator. You should be able to answer yes to both of the following questions:

1. Have you been a tutor/facilitator on any Vitae course e.g. GRADschool, Effective Researcher, Broadening Horizons or equivalent experiential learning course?
2. Can you adapt your presentation, (programme content), to respond to participant responses or requests?

### Your role

Your role as the programme leader is to help participants:

- understand the activities, while clearly recognising that you don't have the 'right' answers
- relate what they are doing on the programme to their personal circumstances
- think about the activities in a structured way.

### Responsibilities

In advance of the programme the programme leader should:

- familiarise themselves with the programme
- ensure that they are aware of the programme activities and the learning outcomes
- have a discussion with the institution around how the programme fits in with their overall programme of provision
- liaise with the institution regarding the suitability of the venue and participant profile
- agree on the requirements for the programme, (audio visuals, catering and special/extra materials) with the programme organiser
- liaise with the programme organiser on a regular basis to confirm participant bookings.

During the programme the programme leader is responsible for:

- supporting the development of participants during the programme
- introducing and debriefing appropriately, and providing the learning context for the participants
- setting up and clearing away activities.

After the programme the programme leader is responsible for:

- identifying the areas that worked and those areas that could be improved
- having a discussion with the institution on the outcomes of the programme and considering any actions that will need to be taken to support the future delivery of the programme.

Experiential learning on occasion can bring certain issues to the fore for some people. However, please remember you are not on the programme to act as a therapist. If participants show any signs that they have any serious problems then they need to seek professional help (support in their academic department might be a first point of contact).

## **What the programme leader manual contains**

This is the 'master pack' for the programme leader and contains all the activity summaries and notes that you will need to lead the programme.

The programme leader materials are written in an informal style because the culture of the course is relaxed – you will be encouraged to dress casually and to create a relaxed and fun environment for your team and the participants.

## **How the programme leader manual is structured**

This manual is delivered as a guide rather than a definitive set of actions. Each activity uses this template:

### **Title**

Includes overall timing for the session.

### **Purpose**

This section defines the key aims and objectives of the session.

### **Process**

This section provides an overview of activities and any other relevant information.

### **Structure**

In this section you will be given a breakdown of timings.

### **Resources**

This section lists all the resources you require to complete the session successfully.

### **Detail**

In this section you will find all the relevant guidance, supporting notes, discussion points and background information that you require to facilitate the session.

## Effective Researcher: The next 90 days programme timetable

Timings are indicative and can be changed by the programme leader to accommodate participant learning

### Programme aim:

To enable participants to gain a clearer self-orientation of where they are within their doctorate and what next steps to take, and to build an action plan.

Day 1			
TIME	ACTIVITY	FORMAT	CONTENT
0900	Programme leader preparation		
0945	Participant arrival Tea and coffee available		
1000	Introduction to the day	Plenary Pairs	What is a doctorate? (The illustrated guide to a PhD by Matt Might) Purpose of the day.
	<b>BEING INDEPENDENT</b>		
1030	Skills used	Fours Plenary	How is it going? What have been your successes? What skills have you used and/or developed?
1105	The next 90 days	Fours Plenary	What do you need to do differently, how do you need to be, what is stopping you? Drivers and Resistors
1125	Instant promotion! What is 'fit for purpose'?	Group Plenary	How will your external examiner; your funder; and your prospective employer judge whether your doctorate is 'fit for purpose'?

1140	<b>Break</b>		
	<b>WHO IS IN YOUR TEAM</b>		
1150	<b>Introduction</b>	Plenary	Who else has an interest in your doctorate?
1200	<b>Who is in your team?</b>	Subject themed groups of no more than 6 Plenary	What they need from you, and what else they care about?
1225	<b>In order to get what you need, what do they need from you?</b>	Plenary/Group	Allocated topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk into a job outside academia at the end of the doctorate</li> <li>• Build an academic reputation</li> <li>• Be invited to be part of a new collaboration</li> <li>• Have your doctorate published as a book (Arts researchers)</li> <li>• Have your research reported on in the media</li> <li>• Get funding to go to a prestigious international conference</li> </ul>
1240	<b>Behaviour top tips</b>	Subject themed groups of no more than 6 Plenary	List of behavioural top tips
1250	<b>Final thoughts</b>	Plenary	What are you going to do to impress?
1255	<b>Break</b>		

1330	<b>Energiser</b>	Plenary	What are good things as an 'effective' researcher to do at this time of day?
	<b>FROM SUPERVISOR TO ACADEMIC COLLEAGUE</b>		
1345	<b>Introduction</b>	Plenary	Participant's relationship with their supervisor now and in the future
1350	<b>Help! I need somebody!</b>	Group Plenary	A set of six scenarios based on real researcher experience
1420	<b>Supervisor SatNav</b>	Group Plenary	A creative exercise based on looking forward
1450	<b>Review and close</b>	Plenary	What is the value in a supervisor relationship now and in the future?
1455	<b>Break</b>		
	<b>THE END OF THE BEGINNING.....AND THE BEGINNING OF THE MIDDLE</b>		
1505	<b>Why do we need to communicate clearly? Because .....</b>	Individual Pair	Write a tweet of no more than 140 characters that tells the general public what you are doing and why they should be interested
1525	<b>The past 90 days</b>	Pair	As we come toward the end of this course let's reflect on what we have achieved in the past 90 days.
1540	<b>The next 90 days</b>		As we come toward the end of this course let's look forward to the next 90 days.
1555 1610	<b>CLOSING THE COURSE</b>		What we think makes an effective researcher Postcards

## Introduction to the day

(30 minutes)

### Purpose

To help participants settle in  
To give time for latecomers to join  
To get the course started

### Process

Led by the programme leader  
Discussion activities, in pairs

### Structure

Welcome and set the scene for what the course is and is not	2 mins
Introduce self and establish credibility	1 min
Paired discussion, 'What is a doctorate?'	15 mins
Plenary review of 'What is a doctorate?'	10 mins
Description of a doctorate using 'The Illustrated guide to a PhD'	1 min
Purpose of the day	1 min

### Resources

For programme leader:

- Whiteboard or flip chart or data projector for 'The illustrated guide to a PhD'

For participants:

- Note pads and pens

### Detail

**Welcome and set the scene for what the course is and is not** **2 mins**

This course is not about me talking to you; it is about you talking with each other.

There are no lengthy PowerPoint presentations but there are things for you to do.

There are no handouts so you may want to take a few notes as we go through the day.

This course is about helping you to get your doctorate and the job after your doctorate; and to ensure the next 90 days are successful for you.

Let's cover the logistics:

- refreshment breaks and what is provided
- fire alarm and evacuation
- toilets

**Introduce self and establish credibility** **1 min**

Who you are, where you are from, and your experience with working with researchers.

**Paired discussion, 'What is a doctorate'** **15 min**

Please find someone you don't know and answer the question, 'What is a doctorate?'

Welcome latecomers as they arrive and include them in the paired discussions.

### Plenary review of 'What is a doctorate'

10 min

Get the attention of the participants and ask, 'did anyone get around to answering the question?!'

Collect the answers, which typically will be, (and comment on them):

- Training you to be a researcher
- A title
- Career progression
- Passion
- Contribution to knowledge
- Challenging
- External validation of training
- Period of independent investigation

Summarise by explaining 'The illustrated guide to a PhD' by Matt Might:  
<http://matt.might.net/>

### Description of a doctorate using the 'The illustrated guide to a PhD'

1 min

<http://matt.might.net/articles/phd-school-in-pictures/>

Matt Might: <http://matt.might.net/>

The aim of year 1 is to get to the edge. The rest of the doctorate is pushing at that edge and you are the one that has to do the pushing.

### Purpose of the day

1 min

4 sessions centred around:

- Being independent
- Who's in your team?
- From supervisor to academic colleague
- The end of the beginning.....and the beginning of the middle

## Session 1: Being independent

(70 minutes)

### Purpose

To help participants navigate this phase of their doctorate, the next 90 days, (which may include a transfer viva).

### Process

Led by the programme leader

Discussion activities, in groups of 3 – 5, designed to help participants recognise what they have achieved so far and what they still have to do.

### Structure

Skills utilised	35 mins
The next 90 days	20 mins
Instant promotion! What is 'fit for purpose'?	15 mins

### Resources

For participants:

- Flip-chart paper and pens for each group of 4 participants
- White-tack to attach these to the wall, or ideally a flip-chart stand per group
- Note pads and pens
- Vitae booklet: Balanced researcher [www.vitae.ac.uk/researcherbooklets](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researcherbooklets)

### Detail

**Skills utilised** **35 mins**

Today is a chance to take a break and reflect on the time just passed, and the time to come.

In your pairs find another pair to work with. Give them 20 minutes.

Discuss:

- What skills have you used and/or developed?

Give them flip chart paper and pen and ask them to list them.

After 20 minutes get the attention of the participants and ask, 'What skills have you used and/or developed?'

You may choose to record them on a flip chart. Collect the answers, which typically will be, and comment on them:

- Time management
- Organisational
- Learning how to learn
- Critical evaluation
- Communication – presenting
- Communication – asking for something to be explained four times!
- Writing
- Specialised - e.g. lab, statistics, research methods
- Supervisor relationship
- Literature review
- Ethic application

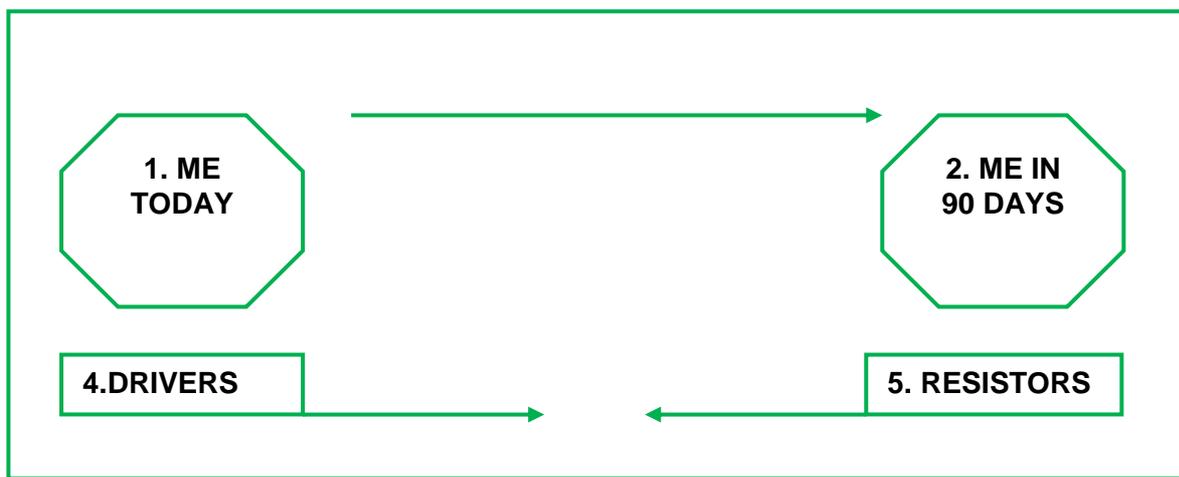
- Prioritisation
- Networking
- Relationship management
- Patience
- Persistence
- Teamwork
- Meeting deadlines
- Attending conference

### The next 90 days

20 mins

As you move forward into the next 90 days, 'what do you need to do differently, how do you need to be, what is stopping you?'

Introduce: 'Drivers and Resistors'



#### Drivers:

- I.e. effective time management
- I.e. effective teamwork

#### Resistors:

- I.e. procrastination
- I.e. displacement activities such as Facebook

Get into different groups of 4 and answer the questions:

- What stopped me from achieving everything I could over the past 90 days?
- How will I achieve everything I could in the next 90 days?

Time is tight so you may choose not to bring the group together and move on to the next activity.

### Instant promotion! What is 'fit for purpose'?

15 mins

- How will your external examiner; your funder; and your prospective employer judge whether your doctorate is 'fit for purpose'?

Throughout this-morning, we've been focusing on you - on the skills you have and those you need to develop, and what you need to do to progress your doctorate. We have also been evaluating to some extent successes and failures. In doing this though, we need to be clear what our standards are. We need to be clear what the standard is for your doctorate to be 'fit for purpose'.

Remember, time is ticking. In a little over 2 years from now, 3 very important people will be deciding whether they think your doctorate is fit for their purpose:

- Your external examiner (Do you know who that will be? Or at least what sort of person that might be?)
- Your funder - did they get their money's worth? (This may be a research council, a company or charity, yourself and your family, or...) What impact could this have on you if they did or didn't?
- Your prospective employer (Any idea who this might be..?)

Now is your chance to start to define what standards they might apply to assess 'fit for purpose'.

In the same groups of 4, allocate each group one of these three roles. If there are more than 3 groups of 4, give different groups the same role, in this order:

- external examiner
- employer
- funder

NB: Funder still works even if self-funded, but factor in family and everyone else who is sacrificing into this. They may also struggle with the relevance here. Some possible nudges would include:

- Do you want future funding for research?
- Who else will write you a reference beyond your supervisor?
- Your supervisor does not judge your doctorate, but they can influence your career. How happy will they be if your funder is not satisfied?

Tell them they have about 7 minutes to come up with bulleted list of things they will be looking for to constitute 'fit for purpose' (and including questions about what might constitute 'fit for purpose').

After about 7 minutes get the attention of the participants and ask, 'What is fit for purpose?' You may choose to record them on a flip chart. Collect the answers and comment on them:

External examiner (Should be exploring whether the person and the research are 'fit for purpose')

- Does the research meet the institutional assessment criteria for the award of the degree? (What are the institutional assessment criteria for the award of the degree? Needs to include originality at the very least. This is covered in more detail on the 'Effective Researcher: Effective Progress' programme.
- Does the research satisfy the accepted disciplinary standards for: evidence, methodology, sample size, literature review, etc?
- Is it written sufficiently clearly, and in appropriate style? (This may include: index, bibliog, notes, etc.)
- Is there sufficient evidence that it is the candidates own work and that all work of others is appropriately credited?
- Can the candidate defend their thesis?
- Can the candidate identify the weaknesses in their work and suggest additional work in the light of it? Can they assess the implications of it for the wider discipline? (= Are they capable of being an independent researcher)

Funder (Likely primary focus on whether the research is fit for purpose)

- Does it answer the question that was asked?
- Are the results useable? Useful?
- Is the methodology applicable in other contexts (if it was original)?
- Does the research suggest other possible projects - for this candidate, for this institution, at this level?
- Does this 'feel' like value for money – sometimes the response is qualitative more than quantitative?
- Has it been published – is our contribution to this work now public knowledge?

Employer (Likely primary focus on whether the person is fit for purpose)

- Has the doctoral process evidenced the skills I am looking for? [This is the only real question. But it then breaks down to...]
- Has the candidate demonstrated original thinking?
- Has the candidate demonstrated problem solving ability?
- Has the candidate demonstrated the ability to master a broad amount of complex information?
- Can they communicate in a mode appropriate to the audience, including the ability to make complex ideas comprehensible?
- Are they self-motivated / working alone / collaborating appropriately with people at different levels and from different backgrounds / team-working?
- Does the doctoral process reinforce other evidence of these things from the candidate's previous career and experience, and experience outside the doctorate? Is there a coherent story here?
- Could they work in a team?
- Are they so wedded to their research that I couldn't move their focus if I needed to?

Use their responses to steer them to things to think about and look into further:

- External: Assessment criteria (University website)
- External funder: Academic standards in their discipline (appropriate journals)
- Employer: What do employers want (Vitae website)
- Funder (employer?): Researcher Development Framework (RDF)

This is fundamentally answering the question 'what does success look like from the perspective of my key stakeholders'?

### At the end of this session

Issue Vitae booklet:

- Balanced Researcher
- Copy of the Researcher Development Framework

At the end of each session there are questions you can ask to help participants have a moment of reflection and make a **note to self**:

- What skills do I have?
- How am I managing myself?
- How am I engaging with my stakeholders and externals?
- How effective am I at the moment?

### Break

## Session 2: Who's in your team

(65 minutes)

### Purpose

To help participants navigate this phase of their doctorate, between now and the end of year, (which may include a transfer viva).

### Process

This session looks at the supporting players who will contribute to the success of the doctorate in a range of ways.

The activity is for the group to design a doctoral team. In doing this, they will think about the various challenges facing them during their doctorate and identify people who will help them overcome these successfully.

Feedback is in the form of presentations, which can be streamed for larger groups. Each group will present on a different topic.

### Structure

Introduction	10 mins
Activity 1: Who is in your team?	25 mins
Activity 2: In order to get what you need, what do they need from you?	15 mins
Activity 3: Behaviour top tips	10 mins
Final thoughts	5 mins

### Resources

Flipcharts and pens.

### Detail

#### Introduction

**10 mins**

This morning we've largely focused on your doctorate and your progress. As you probably realise, even the most independent researcher cannot work in isolation. Your doctorate needs to have a broader impact than simply creating a few papers which will only be read by a handful of people.

1. The drivers from government and funding bodies are towards a new model – research must lead to academic results (knowledge, papers, trained people) but must also have broader impacts – these might lead to improvements in quality of life, of development of government policies, better public engagement in research). All these rely on researchers engaging with different groups of people. To do this effectively, they need to understand the interests and needs of these people.

2. Although having a doctorate can give you a huge advantage, you will get your next job. You need to be visible and be known in your field if you want to be a researcher after your doctorate. If you want to move into new areas, you should be thinking about how to get to know people in the fields you want to move into.

3. Most of you will be doing research in the same space as other people – your colleagues and those who support the process of research in your institution.

So, although it may feel isolating at times, your doctorate will have more impact and success if you work with a much bigger team of people. In this activity we're going to look at who makes up that team and how to engage with them.

First let's think about whom else has an interest in your doctorate.

Form new groups of about 4 people and spend five minutes coming up with a list of people or roles that are associated with your research in anyway.

Collect results on a flipchart and leave visible throughout activity

Anticipated people include:

- Students in my group
- Researchers in my field
- Librarians
- Technicians
- Ethics committee
- Head of Department
- Funding body
- Other researchers I might collaborate with
- People who read my papers
- People who listen to my conference presentations/view my posters
- Industrial partners
- Practitioners in my field
- My family/friends
- Future employers
- Supervisor 1,2,3
- Administrators
- Colleagues, who share an office with you
- Patients
- Subjects (of interviews or case studies)
- IT support
- Trainers/Developers

### **Who is in your team?**

**25 mins**

### **Introducing the activity**

**5 mins**

'For this activity, I'd like you to work in subject themed groups. Although there will be many overlaps, there are significant differences in the audiences and stakeholders interested in different kinds of research.' (Examples if needed: clinical research: clinicians and patients; practice based arts: book publishers and curators: industrially linked projects; government funded international students etc).

Arrange groups of no more than 6 participants – roughly although not essential. Key is to have broadly similar subjects but don't let them get too hung up on this.

'So I want you to think about the people who are in your team to help with getting your doctorate. I want you to think of the people in your team who will help you get a job after you complete your doctorate - at the end of your doctorate who would you like to know that you are out there?'

'You can tackle this activity in a number of ways, but remember that your team has to cope with a range of challenges. Try to think about what might happen during the whole doctorate and who might be useful to have in your team even if they contribute little much of the time.'

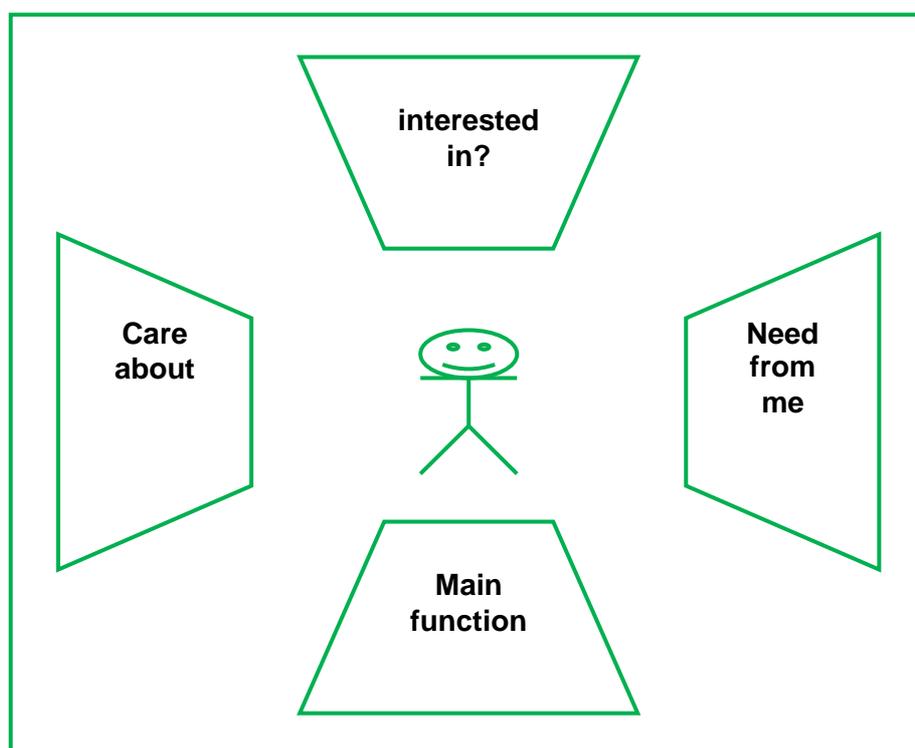
## Activity

20 mins

'You can have as many people in your team as you need. You can have more than one of each kind of person you identify (i.e. co-workers) but there is an advantage to having a range of people.'

As well as identifying the people in your team you also need to think about what they need from you, and what else they care about (beyond you and your doctorate).'

Facilitator draw this on flipchart:



'Think about the perspective of this individual. For a supervisor:

- Cares about: Their reputation, getting funding, getting published
- Interested in: My plans, regular progress, my understanding of the work
- Main function: Feedback on research, guidance and advice, knows what a doctorate is and keeps me on track
- Needs from me: Good work, new ideas, progress as agreed, contribution to their development'

Let the group get on. After ten minutes encourage them to work on the individual perspectives – if they finish one of these, tell them to pick another.

Some prompts for any groups who are really struggling or ideas to use in the review:

Aspiring academics should be connecting with:

- Funding bodies (applying for money to attend conferences?)
- Future reviewers (start referencing their work in your papers?)
- Conference organisers (talk to them at meetings and find out about awards and themes)
- Potential collaborators (visit their groups?)

All doctorates should think about their future careers:

- Careers advisers
- Potential employers (meet at conferences or careers events)
- Mentors
- Professional bodies
- Training providers

Within their departments they should know:

- Head of department
- Head of department's secretary
- Technical and supporting staff
- Administrators who might be able to help with funding applications, health and safety ethics considerations or thesis – submission/viva regulations

After around 20 minutes stop the groups and introduce the topics for presentations.

If time permits review the work of the groups.

**In order to get what you need, what do they need from you? 15 mins**

'Think about the team around you. What do you need to do (in terms of engaging with others)?'

Allocate one of the topics below to each team:

- Walk into a job outside academia at the end of the doctorate
- Build an academic reputation
- Be invited to be part of a new collaboration
- Have your doctorate published as a book (Arts/humanities/some social science researchers)
- Have your research reported on in the media
- Get funding to go to a prestigious international conference

'You have 10 minutes, and then each group will finish with a **three** minute presentation on their aspect.'

After 10 minutes receive presentations and comment accordingly.

Typical comments you might make:

- How do you prove you have the appropriate skills?
- What skills do employers want?
- What do I want to do next?
- How do you act like a professional at all times? – include thinking about your presence on Facebook and twitter etc
- How do you effectively work with others?
- What is the strategic direction of your university/faculty/unit/group?

**Behaviour top tips 10 mins**

'What is it that an effective researcher does when managing these relationships?'

Spend 5 minutes listing your behavioural top tips.

Typical top tips will be:

- Communication
- Respect of other people's opinion
- Politically astute
- Tolerance
- Managing relationships
- Make yourself approachable / easy to know
- Knowing when to be selfish / support others
- My word is my bond, what I say I will do, I will do
- Reflection, what works / doesn't work
- Informal conversations

After 5 minutes receive presentations and comment accordingly.

### **Final thoughts**

**5 mins**

The universities or institutions you work in are full of very talented specialists – find the people who can help you.

The impact agenda means that your research must have resonance outside the rarified research community you work in – think of who your broader audience is and how you will engage with them.

Meeting and engaging with people around your doctorate gives you access not only to expertise but also a support network, potential mentors and careers options.

Think beyond your supervisor.

With 15000 doctorates graduating each year in the UK you need to be doctorate plus.

Spend some time thinking about a wider view of your doctorate.

What are you going to do to impress?

### **At the end of this session**

Issue Vitae booklet:

- What do researchers do?
- Engaged researcher

Note to self:

- Who is in your team?
- Who do I need to get to know better?

## **Break**

## Post lunch energiser

(15 minutes)

An energiser that works at this time is:

- 'Seeing the Point' available from RSVP design, <http://rsvpdesign.co.uk/shop/seeing-the-point%C2%99-p-28.html>

Otherwise use your own preferred energiser.

This also gives time for the latecomers to get back.

What happens at this time of the day?

Sleep!

What do you do at this time of the day?

We need to get the blood from our stomachs to our brains!

In groups of 6 give them the RSVP Design equipment and tell them that the end result is 5 identical shapes.

Let the whole course know when one group has successfully completed the task, normally about 10 minutes.

Give them just a few minutes longer.

With 2 minutes to go bring the activity to a close.

Ask, 'What good questions could you have asked me?'

Relate this to, 'What good questions do you ask your supervisor?'

Link into the next activity, 'Working with your supervisor'.

## Session 3: From supervisor to academic colleague

(70 minutes)

### Purpose

The aim of this session is to cover current issues between researchers and their supervisor(s) and to look ahead to a time when the participants may have a different, peer based, relationship with their current supervisors within their academic field(s) or as part of their wider network.

This session aims to look at the ways in which a supervisor relationship can be developed during the doctorate process.

It will examine communication themes and opportunities within the supervisor relationship.

### Process

Led by the programme leader.

Participants work in small groups.

There are two parts to this session:

Part 1: Help! I need somebody! (30 minutes)

A set of six scenarios based on real researcher experience. This requires participants to reflect on their own experiences and judgement to give advice to the researchers facing typical (or occasional) issues for doctoral researchers 6-12 months into their research.

Part 2: Supervisor SatNav (30 minutes)

A creative exercise based on looking forward. The activity maps the time and relationship signposts for the time between the course to a point beyond the end of participant's doctorate.

The other 10 minutes of the session are to introduce and close this set of activities.

### Structure

Introduction	5 mins
Help! I need somebody!	30 mins
Supervisor SatNav	30 mins
Close session	5 mins

### Resources

Handout or PowerPoint

Flip chart paper and a range of coloured pens are required for Part 2

### Detail

**Introduction** **5 mins**

We are looking at participants' relationships with their supervisors now and in the future.

In framing this third session the core points to communicate to participants are:

- This session aims to look at the ways in which a Supervisor relationship can be developed during the doctorate process
- It will examine communication themes and opportunities within the Supervisor relationship.

- There is an opportunity to discuss participants' own supervisory relationships within the context of the three activities.

### **Help! I need somebody!**

**30 mins**

This is a scenario-based activity and involves participants discussing the scenarios and generating a variety of different answers to each situation.

Ask the group to form small groups of 3-4 people that they have not yet had the chance to work with during the day.

'I am going to provide you with some scenarios and I would like you to discuss and work on them for 15-20 minutes as a group. Then we will reconvene as a whole group to gather your advice.'

Hand the small groups the A4 handout and give them 15-20 minutes overall to work on the six scenarios with 10-15 minutes debrief depending upon your assessment of the group's need for small group vs. larger group discussions.

Each scenario is detailed below and is followed by five questions that you might ask to start discussions or facilitate greater depth of thinking. The questions aren't exhaustive or prescriptive and it isn't necessary to use them all for each scenario; they are starting points for facilitating a discussion. There are no prescriptive answers in this session; it is about exploring possibilities and for participants to share their own experiences and opinions.

### Scenario 1:

Doctoral researcher Jon was quite nervous at the start of his doctorate – he didn't really know what to expect but had secured funding, had started to get to know a few people in the department and feels 'ok'. His supervisor hasn't supervised a doctorate before and Jon is his only researcher.

Jon is making good progress. He's completed his literature review and is moving into a practical phase of his research. He gets on well with his supervisor and has regular meetings. He's heard on the 'grapevine' of the need to publish papers during his doctorate but doesn't know much more than this. Please advise.

### Debrief questions:

1. What are you advising Jon to do?
2. What could Jon learn from his supervisor?
3. Who would Jon be expecting to publish with?
4. Where else could Jon find help?
5. What are the expectations around publication during your doctorate in different subjects?

### Scenario 2:

Doctoral researcher Jenni is really quite confident. She had a strong performance at undergraduate and masters level and was really looking forward to getting started on the doctorate (and maybe even finishing it early). She wondered how it could possibly take three years. Her supervisor is the head of department and also supervises 8 other doctorates at various stages in their research.

Jenni is doing fine. She took advice at her induction programme and is making good use of the other people in the department to help her make progress. She is still very ambitious and would like to present a paper at a conference sometime soon. It is a bit unusual in her field to present a paper so early in her work but she's really keen, is getting some interesting results and likes to push herself. Please advise.

### Debrief questions:

1. What are you advising Jenni to do?
2. What do you think of Jenni's ambition? Is she right to push herself like this?
3. What environment is a good starting point for presenting papers to other researchers?
4. What help could Jenni ask her supervisor for? How should she communicate this?
5. How would the other researchers in her department be able to help Jenni? How would she need to approach them?

### Scenario 3:

Mark has a good undergraduate degree, a masters studied by distance learning and 15 years experience of working for a large company. He embarked on a part-time doctorate as he is passionate about his interest in research and looking to make a life change. His first supervisor is younger than him and has only worked in academia; she is very well respected as a researcher publishing widely and presenting papers regularly at conferences. He sees his second supervisor occasionally.

Mark is loving his research – WHEN HE GETS THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO IT! He just isn't finding the time in his busy work and home life to do as much work on his doctorate as he wants to. He and his wife are delighted that they'll be having their third child later this year. His first supervisor thinks he's doing fine (but Mark's a bit doubtful!). He gets on well with her but is reluctant to talk about the problems he's having juggling his research and the rest of his life. Please advise.

### Debrief questions:

1. What are you advising Mark to do?
2. Where do you think this situation is heading?
3. What specific things should Mark be talking to his supervisor about?
4. Are there any topics that Mark should avoid talking to his supervisor about?
5. Where else could Mark find help?

### Scenario 4:

James already has a doctorate, which he obtained when he was 24. He is an experienced practitioner in the area of biomedicine and was an expert and renowned in his field but decided to take early retirement in his 50s. Throughout his life Danish Literature has been his passion. He decided to do a second doctorate focusing on one author in some depth. James is not specifically concerned whether he gets his doctorate or not. He is self-funding and is looking forward to researching his passion.

James is making good progress. His supervisor can see his obvious intelligence and ability as a researcher. James's supervisor would like to help push him into publishing papers and presenting at conferences in the next 12 months but James is not so sure – he'd rather just get on with his research. Please advise.

### Debrief questions:

1. What are you advising James to do?
2. Where are the possible tensions in this relationship?
3. How can James and his supervisor gain some common ground regarding his research?
4. Where else could James's supervisor find some support?
5. What do you think this relationship is heading? Is there anything you would suggest to take it in a different direction?

### Scenario 5:

Sarah is really enjoying her doctorate. She started six months ago and has enjoyed her reading and she believes she has identified an excellent research topic.

She has found it so different from her undergraduate and masters studies, which were OK. She loves the freedom to explore, to find her own way, her relationship with her supervisors, the conversations she has with colleagues – everything is going well so far (although it is a challenge to know when to stop work as her doctorate is everywhere).

Her father had been feeling unwell of late, nothing to worry about. However last week she received a call from her mother saying that her father had suffered a stroke. She, of course, immediately went to assist her mother and father. It proved to be a severe stroke and her father will need a considerable amount of home care for the next six months. Her mother has asked Sarah, her only child, to support her through this very difficult time. What are Sarah's options? What should Sarah do?

### Debrief questions:

1. What are you advising Sarah to do?
2. What things should Sarah be discussing with her supervisor?
3. Is there anything Sarah should avoid discussing with her supervisor?
4. Where else could Sarah find help? Who else in the University can provide support?
5. Are there any other doctorate scenarios that might arise where this kind of change is required?

### Scenario 6:

Shanni is a capable individual in work and outside. She is diligent in her research and successfully manages a number of responsibilities away from her academic life. She has performed strongly in her previous study through a combination of talent and hard work. She sees a career post-doctorate either in academia (although she realises the competition will be tough) or within a government role influencing policy. Her first supervisor is a career academic who has supervised >10 doctorates and countless masters and her second supervisor is a Principal Investigator from outside her discipline; they are both very good at attracting research funding. So far she has got on well with both and has had meetings with them together and separately. Early on in her doctorate as well as discussing progress with her literature review both encouraged her to think about her 'personal development plan'.

She thought carefully about her development following the University's induction plan and has attended a couple of courses. It has slipped to the 'bottom of the pile' since as she's been battling for lab time, pursuing her literature review and doing extra things for her supervisors that she sees as helping her to develop and build relationships within her field. Please advise what she should do now and be thinking about.

### Debrief questions:

1. What are you advising Shanni to do?
2. How important is managing your own development through your doctorate?
3. What role does your supervisor play in this development plan?
4. What skills do you develop directly through working with your supervisor(s)?
5. What development areas should Shanni be looking at for the next 6-12 months.

## Close

Summarise the key points you have heard from the group.

These might include (but are not limited to):

- Treating the relationship with supervisors as a professional relationship
- Preparing for meetings with supervisors, and actively directing the process
- Working independently and looking for other sources of help beyond the supervisory team.
- Thinking ahead and thinking more widely about the doctorate and the process of it.
- Accessing all of the supervisory team and not just the first supervisor.

## Supervisor SatNav

30 mins

1. To maintain or regenerate some energy in the room create new groups by merging the groups of 3 into a larger group of 6.
2. This is a 30 minute activity in total allowing 25 minutes for the discussion and 5 minutes to view other's posters.

**Once you have decided on the format from the options above, brief the group:**

You have **25 minutes** to discuss and prepare this activity.

Using the flip chart paper and pens provided, the task is to prepare either a map (picture) or SatNav set of instructions on the major routes, junctions and landmarks involved in completing a doctorate. The goal is to have your supervisor(s) as either academic colleagues or key people in your network at the end of the instructions.

The criteria:

- Your starting point is today.
- The 'journey' should be as detailed as possible.
- The end point is 3 months after your graduation.

## Close session

5 mins

You have to draw these 70 minutes to a close

Lead the discussion from the front and highlight the key points that you have observed from the two parts to this session asking for contributions from the participants. This should include:

- What is the value in a supervisor relationship now and in the future?
- As researchers do they make the best of having more than one supervisor?
- What would they have done differently at the start of their relationship with their supervisor if they'd had the knowledge they have now?

## At the end of this session

Issue Vitae booklet

- Planning your doctorate

Note to self:

- What will you need to do in order for your supervisor to become your colleague?
- Is there a conversation you need to have with your supervisor?

## Break

## Session 4: The end of the beginning.....and the beginning of the middle

(50 minutes)

### Purpose

To emphasise the importance of communicating their research – how we communicate and what we communicate

To make them aware of the impact agenda, (previously introduced in Session 2)

### Process

Led by the programme leader.

Participants work individually and in pairs.

### Structure

Why do we need to communicate clearly? Because .....	20 mins
The past 90 days	15 mins
The next 90 days	15 mins

### Resources

Flip chart and pens for the programme leader  
Individual pens and paper

### Detail

**Why do we need to communicate clearly? Because .....** **20 mins**

Introduction: 2 minutes

This morning we talked about all the people in your team.

How often do you get asked the question, 'What do you do?'

Ask the group to give you situations when they are asked, 'What do you do?'

Typical answers might be:

- Conferences
- When talking to senior academics in your institution
- Within your family
- When interviewed by the media
- In the profile of your CV
- At job interviews
- Party or social gathering
- Meeting strangers on the train
- .....

Activity: 15 minutes

These days much is communicated with a lot of words, but it is perfectly possible to communicate with a few.

Twitter allows you 140 characters – just how much can you communicate in this way?

Here are examples of tweets:

- 'Placebo effect works even if patients know they are getting a sham drug'
- 'Must 'get a life' mean get a car?'

Twitter is currently being used:

- As a PR tool
- A career development tool
- For collaboration
- To engage with an audience

Your task is to write a tweet (140 characters) that tells the general public what you are doing and why they should be interested.

Examples, should participants need assistance:

- 'The project=Engineered plants fighting disease through molecular warfare Beating bugs at their own game!'
- 'Film buff? Do GFT and GFF audiences differ? What's the cultural impact of local festivals? And how important is site? My doctorate in a nutshell'

(GFT = Glasgow Film Theatre GFF = Glasgow Film Festival)

After 10 minutes encourage them to pair up and in the final 5 minutes use each other as 'independent critical friends' to coach with the end result of improving their tweets.

Summarise: 2 minutes

Get participants to read out their tweets

### **The past 90 days**

**15 mins**

As we come toward the end of this course let's reflect on what we have achieved in the past 90 days.

Find someone to work with.

I want you to interview your partner and these are the questions I would like you to ask them:

- What have you achieved in the past 90 days?
- How did you manage to do so much?
- What might other people see but you may not have recognised as an achievement?
- Who helped you?
- Is there anything that you have stopped doing that has helped you make progress?
- Is there anything that regularly crops up that stops you making as much progress as you'd planned?

7 minutes for each person.

### **The next 90 days**

**15 mins**

As we come toward the end of this course let's look forward to the next 90 days.

Interview your partner again asking these questions:

- What are you going to continue doing?
- What new/different things are you going to do?
- Who will you continue to seek help from?
- Who else will you seek help from?

- What are your immediate next steps
- What have you learned about what you need to do to both complete your doctorate and get the job that you want?

What is the one key question that you need to keep at the front of your mind for the next 90 days.....?

### **At the end of this session**

Issue Vitae booklet:

- Creative Researcher

Note to self:

- What have you learned about what you need to do to both complete your doctorate and get the job that you want?

## Closing the course

(15 minutes)

### Purpose

To ensure participants feel energised and motivated to continue their doctorate

### Process

Programme leader summarises what is an effective researcher

Individual one action on a post card

### Structure

Summary	5 mins
Postcards	5 mins
Participants leave	5 mins

### Resources

Postcards  
Envelopes

### Detail

#### Summary

5 mins

Let me summarise what we think makes an effective researcher

An effective researcher is:

1. Aware of their skills and how they develop them
2. Aware of the different roles their doctorate fulfills, and their careers
3. Someone with a wide and effective network
4. Someone who is focused on building a reputation
5. Someone who can work collaboratively and can work with others
6. Acts like a professional and actively manages their relationships
7. Aware of university, government and funding strategy and themes
8. Somebody who can work independently and manage their supervisors

#### Postcards

5 mins

One final activity we would like you to do.

Pick one action that you are going to follow through on within the next 90 days.

Here is a postcard, write your action on the postcard. Place it in the envelope and write your address on the envelope. Hand it in to me and I will ensure that is posted to you in 60 days. A little reminder of today and what you thought important as you left here. With 90 days in mind this will leave you 30 days to go.

Thank you for your energy today, (and anything else you want to say).

We wish you good luck with your doctorate and in particular the next 90 days.

#### Participants leave

5 mins

## Handout 1: Help! I need somebody! – Participant brief

Each of the following scenarios details a different researcher. The first part of the scenarios outlines their position at the start of their doctorate. The second part gives their current situation.

### Scenario 1:

Doctoral researcher Jon was quite nervous at the start of his doctorate – he didn't really know what to expect but had secured funding, had started to get to know a few people in the department and feels 'ok'. His supervisor hasn't supervised a doctorate before and Jon is his only researcher.

Jon is making good progress. He's completed his literature review and is moving into a practical phase of his research. He gets on well with his supervisor and has regular meetings. He's heard on the 'grapevine' of the need to publish papers during his doctorate but doesn't know much more than this. Please advise.

### Scenario 2:

Doctoral researcher Jenni is really quite confident. She had a strong performance at undergraduate and masters level and was really looking forward to getting started on the doctorate (and maybe even finishing it early). She wondered how it could possibly take three years. Her supervisor is the head of department and also supervises 8 other doctorates at various stages in their research.

Jenni is doing fine. She took advice at her induction programme and is making good use of the other people in the department to help her make progress. She is still very ambitious and would like to present a paper at a conference sometime soon. It is a bit unusual in her field to present a paper so early in her work but she's really keen, is getting some interesting results and likes to push herself. Please advise.

### Scenario 3:

Mark has a good undergraduate degree, a masters studied by distance learning and 15 years experience of working for a large company. He embarked on a part-time doctorate as he is passionate about his interest in research and looking to make a life change. His first supervisor is younger than him and has only worked in academia; she is very well respected as a researcher publishing widely and presenting papers regularly at conferences. He sees his second supervisor occasionally.

Mark is loving his research – WHEN HE GETS THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO IT! He just isn't finding the time in his busy work and home life to do as much work on his doctorate as he wants to. He and his wife are delighted that they'll be having their third child later this year. His first supervisor thinks he's doing fine (but Mark's a bit doubtful!). He gets on well with her but is reluctant to talk about the problems he's having juggling his research and the rest of his life. Please advise.

#### Scenario 4:

James already has a doctorate, which he obtained when he was 24. He is an experienced practitioner in the area of biomedicine and was an expert and renowned in his field but decided to take early retirement in his 50s. Throughout his life Danish Literature has been his passion. He decided to do a second doctorate focusing on one author in some depth. James is not specifically concerned whether he gets his doctorate or not. He is self-funding and is looking forward to researching his passion.

James is making good progress. His supervisor can see his obvious intelligence and ability as a researcher. James's supervisor would like to help push him into publishing papers and presenting at conferences in the next 12 months but James is not so sure – he'd rather just get on with his research. Please advise.

#### Scenario 5:

Sarah is really enjoying her doctorate. She started six months ago and has enjoyed her reading and she believes she has identified an excellent research topic.

She has found it so different from her undergraduate and masters studies, which were OK. She loves the freedom to explore, to find her own way, her relationship with her supervisors, the conversations she has with colleagues – everything is going well so far (although it is a challenge to know when to stop work as her doctorate is everywhere).

Her father had been feeling unwell of late, nothing to worry about. However last week she received a call from her mother saying that her father had suffered a stroke. She, of course, immediately went to assist her mother and father. It proved to be a severe stroke and her father will need a considerable amount of home care for the next six months. Her mother has asked Sarah, her only child, to support her through this very difficult time. What are Sarah's options? What should Sarah do?

#### Scenario 6:

Shanni is a capable individual in work and outside. She is diligent in her research and successfully manages a number of responsibilities away from her academic life. She has performed strongly in her previous study through a combination of talent and hard work. She sees a career post-doctorate either in academia (although she realises the competition will be tough) or within a government role influencing policy. Her first supervisor is a career academic who has supervised >10 doctorates and countless masters and her second supervisor is a Principal Investigator from outside her discipline; they are both very good at attracting research funding. So far she has got on well with both and has had meetings with them together and separately. Early on in her doctorate as well as discussing progress with her literature review both encouraged her to think about her 'personal development plan'.

She thought carefully about her development following the University's induction plan and has attended a couple of courses. It has slipped to the 'bottom of the pile' since as she's been battling for lab time, pursuing her literature review and doing extra things for her supervisors that she sees as helping her to develop and build relationships within her field. Please advise what she should do now and be thinking about.





## About Vitae

Vitae is supported by Research Councils UK (RCUK) and managed by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation. Vitae's vision is for the UK to be world class in supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers.

To achieve our vision we have four aims:

- building human capital by influencing the development and implementation of effective policy relating to researcher development
- enhancing higher education provision to train and develop researchers
- empowering researchers to make an impact in their careers
- evidencing the impact of professional and career development support for researchers.

## Vitae's work with higher education institutions

Vitae works with UK higher education institutions (HEIs) to embed professional and career development in the research environment. Vitae plays a major role in innovating, sharing practice and enhancing the capability of the higher education sector to provide world-class professional development and training of researchers. We do this both through national projects and through Hub activities.

The programme develops resources for use by trainers and others working with researchers; and provides opportunities for HEIs to share information and practice; develop ideas and approaches; and work collaboratively.

For further information about the range of our resources, email [resources@vitae.ac.uk](mailto:resources@vitae.ac.uk) or visit [www.vitae.ac.uk/resources](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/resources)

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