

vitae

realising
the potential
of researchers



Vitae Annual Report

—
2021 / 2022

Global leader in supporting
the professional development
of researchers

www.vitae.ac.uk



Foreword

As this is my first Vitae Annual Report foreword as new Chair of the Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC), I have been considering the milestones of progress over the past year.

Vitae has further cemented its place in the landscape and at the heart of the research ecosystem and researcher community.

In a global survey of researcher developers, Vitae sought to systematically understand trends in conditions, policies and practices of support for researchers internationally. This is an important piece of work for Vitae, but also for the broader research community. The survey was planned as organisations began to emerge from Covid-19 - a moment when transitions to new styles of working began to emerge, consolidate and become more common-place. The findings of the survey are significant and will inform and help shape higher education policy in the UK and beyond.

The research landscape has been impacted dramatically by Covid, but also by broader national and geo-political upheavals and challenges. Vitae has spent time over the last year hosting a series of member forums and reflecting on how best to support our members and the wider community in their support for researchers and research careers.

New global perspectives been introduced this year to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) as part of its evolution to current and future research cultures and environments. These adaptations

take account of different regional, national and sectoral contexts and cultures, and open up fruitful opportunities for connecting and enabling researchers to share the RDF as a common language describing their competencies.

Keeping abreast of and leading on the future of the best in research culture is core to what we do and believe in as a charity. Vitae continues to be called on by those wanting to understand what research cultures, practices and policies work best, but also to help expose and make visible areas where we as a community are less than good or where we can improve.

Our broad remit for advancing research culture has been made more manageable through the implementation of the Researcher Development Concordat. Vitae has run several initiatives to help further embed the Concordat Principles, including an online 'Concordat Platform of Practice'; a consultation and implementation to evolve the HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) Award process; and a member event about engaging their researchers with continuing professional development.

In continuing to tackle serious challenges in our research base, this year we presented oral evidence to the Diversity in STEM Inquiry at the House of Commons, addressing longstanding barriers for under-represented groups in Higher Education. With support from the Elsevier Foundation, Vitae will launch a new project to establish the right priorities for support to enhance the progression of Black early career researchers. The project will seek to identify effective practice and intervention. Diversity across all levels of the research ecosystem is an imperative. There is growing evidence that greater diversity within any workforce, alongside more inclusive working cultures, supports increased innovation and creativity.

So, after an incredible year, I think that we as a community can be proud of our achievements and can look forward to a bright future. A year in which Vitae can further support the sector in championing a more open, responsible, and inclusive research culture and in which researchers' wellbeing and career development can positively thrive.

Professor David Oswell
 Chair of the Board of Trustees, Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC), Professor of Sociology and Pro-Warden for Research, Enterprise and Knowledge Exchange at Goldsmiths, University of London

About us

Vitae is the global leader in supporting the professional and career development of researchers, experienced in working with institutions as they strive for research excellence, innovation and impact.

We are a non-profit programme, part of the Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) Ltd, with over 50 years' experience of enhancing the skills of researchers. We strengthen our members' institutional provision for the professional development of researchers through research and innovation, training and resources, events, consultancy and membership.

Vitae has four aims:

- Influence the development and implementation of effective policy relating to researcher development
- Enhance higher education provision to train and develop researchers
- Empower researchers to make an impact on their careers
- Evidence the impact of professional and career development support for researchers

We continue to work with policy makers, Vitae member institutions, and all those who support the development of researchers to influence and enhance effective policy, practice and provision for researcher development, with a particular focus through Vitae 2025 on:

- *Redefining what makes a successful researcher*
- *Championing a healthy research culture and environment*
- *Promoting the value of researchers*

Our partners include governments, funders of research, academies, professional bodies, trusts and foundations, universities and research institutes.

CRAC provides research intelligence and innovation for all those who support career development for people of all ages and in all sectors. We work in partnership with government agencies, education organisations and providers, and employers and professional bodies.

CRAC is a registered charity No 313164 established in 1964.





Vitae Connections Week 2021

254 participants with a stake in researcher development policy and practice joined **Vitae Connections Week 2021**, representing a total of **139 institutions** from nearly **20 countries**. Participants engaged remotely during four days of keynote presentations, expert panels, roundtables, workshops, social activities, on demand content and an online exhibition.

The focus was to build on the positive outcomes of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and further mitigate negative outcomes Concordat Platform of practice launch.

Concordat Platform of practice launch

Following the independent online information hub for the Researcher Development Concordat, created for the sector by Universities UK (UUK), Vitae developed a **Concordat Platform of Practice** for the Researcher Development Concordat Strategy Group. The platform showcases and serves as a repository for sharing organisations' practice of implementing the three principles of the Concordat.

Championing a healthy research culture and environment

Supporting an environment conducive to successful research

Connections: Policy and practice

Held for professionals in roles supporting or leading the development of researchers and research, around 30 people from 24 institutions broadened their understanding of the evaluation and impact of researcher development to inform institutional policy and practice. Participants explored how supporting the development of researchers could help tackle challenges facing them, with a consideration and emphasis on demonstrating impact through evaluation concepts and methodologies.

"What I enjoyed most was learning about different frameworks for evaluating and demonstrating impact and having the time to try these out for myself"

Connections: Policy and Practice Participant

Researcher development strategy, provision, and profession survey 2022

The **global survey of researcher developers** was a first-of-its-kind and enabled a systematic look at contemporary researcher development. 270 respondents took part, shining a light on how researcher development can meet the evolving policy landscape, such as the need to equip researchers for academic and non-academic careers. It studied the structure and provision of researcher development; institutional strategy and impact; the effect of COVID; and the demographics of researcher developer practitioners.

It also demonstrated how researcher development as a service and profession needs to advance, providing a welcome horizon-scanning opportunity and advocating for better diversity amongst those delivering.

HR Excellence in Research Award

Vitae continues to manage the **HR Excellence in Research Award** process for Vitae organisational members with **96 Vitae member institutions currently holding the Award**. In response to interest from Vitae members, this year, Vitae has six run six 'drop-in' sessions to support institutions to prepare for submissions.

During spring 2022, Vitae launched a consultation on the future evolution of the Award, proposing streamlined changes for the benefit of individual Award holders and the sector. The proposals will result in increased time available for substantive progress to be made within institutions and for sharing this progress across institutions.

Following **feedback collected from institutional awardees and HREiR peer reviewers** about the evolution of the UK process, a sizable 89% of consultation respondents agreed with extending the HREiR review process from a two-year cycle to a three-year cycle and this has now been put in place.

The changes should help support institutional capacity building and further embedding of the Concordat Principles.

"We are glad to see proposals to streamline the template and see value in a shorter, simpler format that can easily reflect progress on the Concordat and related culture work."

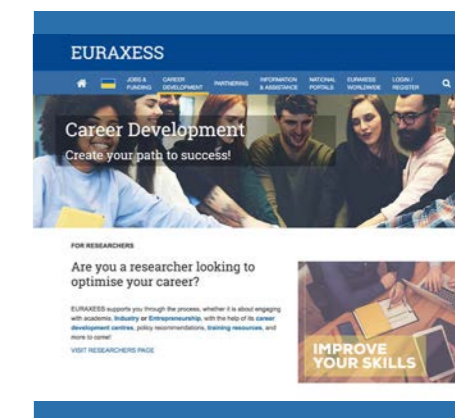
HREiR Award holder

Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS)

2021 saw the first full run of **CEDARS**, that captured the views and experiences of over 12,500 researchers from 48 institutions. It has proven to be a rich dataset for institutions, particularly in measuring progress against the Researcher Development Concordat and reporting for the HR Excellence in Research Award. In October we ran a Vitae member event on 'Getting the most out of your CEDARS data'. As well as supporting Concordat implementation, the data is being used to identify specific challenges and differences across faculties/departments. It also provides an insight into other initiatives, such as research integrity, knowledge exchange and equality, diversity and inclusion. CEDARS has also gone international: the University of Queensland ran CEDARS this year and are considering running it again in 2023 when the next UK survey will run.

EURAXESS

We continue to support and partner with the British Council in representing the UK in the EURAXESS network as we move towards the establishment of the European Talent Platform. We were delighted to collaborate with the British Council and represent the UK at the EURAXESS Conference 2022. The event focussed on improving the attractiveness of research careers whilst protecting the wellbeing of researchers. Vitae has also facilitated and contributed to a number of webinars and discussion forums around the EURAXESS hubs over the past year.



The 'Toolbox', hosted on the Vitae website, includes examples of good practice to support colleagues in nurturing researcher networks involving diverse stakeholders. To date, 30 individual organisations have contributed 33 case studies. A variety of networks have been covered, which include 11 institutional; 4 regional; 8 national and 7 international examples.

"Many case examples captured the representational power networks offer when shaping policy and practice through advocacy initiatives"

Angela Midgely, Researcher Developer, University of Liverpool and member of the Vitae researcher networks working group



Vitae Member working groups

Vitae's **mental Health and Wellbeing Working Group** have been particularly active this year and have led events including: 'What influences doctoral supervisors' approach to supervising?' and 'Mental Health and Wellbeing in Structured Doctorates' as well. They also contributed to 'Sharing of tools and good practice' and 'Supporting mental health and wellbeing through the pandemic'.

The **Researcher Networks working group** has created a handy new toolbox, launched earlier this month containing examples of good practice on how to nurture and sustain researcher networks.

Surveys and consultations

Vitae has gathered evidence on behalf of the researcher development community to inform responses and over 20,000 responses received in response to surveys and consultations including:

New deal for postgraduate research

As part of the 'UK Research and Development (R&D) Roadmap' (2020), UKRI sought input from across the

research system to develop a more attractive offer for postgraduate research training and accessible, fair and well-funded conditions for future doctoral candidates. A Vitae member forum brought together nearly 50 participants from 35 universities, two university consortia and one funder, representing a breadth of experience and perspectives needed to co-develop a comprehensive policy statement for UKRI's open

call for input. The forum focused on three issues critical to postgraduate researchers' (PGRs) inclusion: experience, development and professional prospects, and **consolidated feedback and recommendations** from the event were submitted by Vitae on behalf of the community.

Evaluation of policy interventions

Vitae is working with RAND-Europe on an evaluation of BEIS and UKRI's policy interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluation is in three phases and will run to March 2025.

STEM inquiry

The Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC), who manages the Vitae programme was invited by the House of Commons Science and Technology

Select Committee to **present oral evidence at the Diversity and Inclusion in STEM Inquiry**. Although the evidence we provided was wide ranging, the Committee were particularly struck by the data that shows the severe under-representation of Black scientists within HE. The importance of diversity and inclusion to enhance excellence in research, science and technology globally was also **highlighted**.

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

On behalf of the Vitae community we submitted information and evidence to the UKRI EDI consultation, specifically calling for better connection between existing policy instruments and actions. Vitae has invited collaboration opportunities in response to the funding call from UKRI and the British Academy to establish and lead an equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) caucus. We have also been working with the University of Essex this year to support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students in postgraduate research, as part of an £8m UKRI initiative to help reduce inequalities for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students in HE. A training and development programme is being created based on Vitae's expertise and in depth understanding of the essential skills to support the aspirations and potential of these researchers.

Vitae is also part of a Steering Group for a programme called Surrey Black Scholars. The project aims to improve access and participation in postgraduate research for Black British students at the University of Surrey and is funded by the Office for Students and Research England.



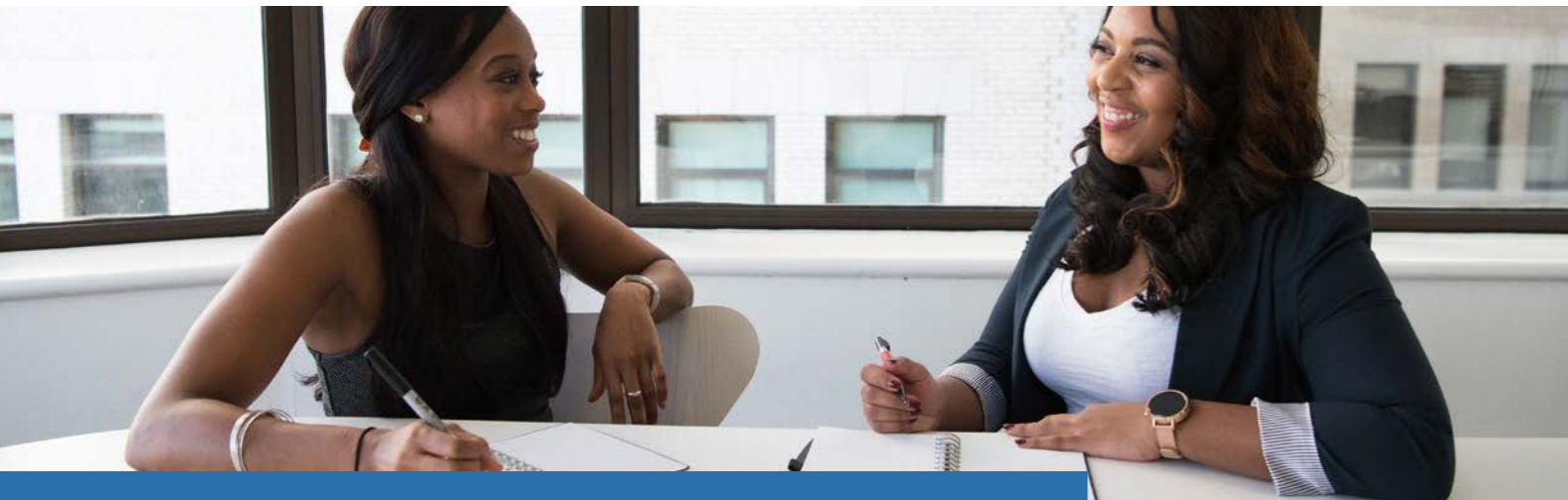
Advocacy

- BEIS Research and Innovation Workforce Survey Steering Group
- BBSRC Institute Assessment Exercise Panel
- Chemistry in Cells Doctoral Training Programme Advisory Board
- Developing and Implementing hands on training on Open Science and Open Innovation for Early Career Researchers (DIOSI) Advisory Board
- Economic and Social Research Council
- North West Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership Training, Employability and Knowledge Exchange (TEKE) Panel
- EUniWell Advisory Board
- National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC)
- People and Culture Strategy, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS): Ministerial Advisory Group and working groups that sit under it (Inspiring and Attracting People Working and Dynamic and Sustainable Career Paths Working Group
- Prosper Advisory Board
- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers
- Queen Mary Academy External Advisory Board
- Reforming Research Assessment Stakeholder Assembly (Science Europe/EUA)*
- Researcher Mental Health Observatory (REMO) Management Committee
- Scientific Advisory Board for GW4 BioMed Medical Research Council (MRC) Doctoral Training Partnership
- Surrey Black Scholars
- Technicians Commitment Advisory Board
- The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) Data Insights Strategy Group
- The European Laboratory Research and Innovation Group (ELRIG) Board and Early Career Professionals (ECP) Panel
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) International Survey of Science Association (ISSA) Advisory Board
- The Faraday Institution's Training and Diversity Panel
- Transitions and Transformations Strategy Board
- University Alliance Awards Panel



* Vitae's membership of the Reforming Research Assessment Stakeholder Assembly helped provide stakeholder feedback on the development of the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment. The agreement commits signatories to recognise within assessment processes the wide range of contributions that researchers make to research and the research ecosystem.





Career Guidance Guarantee launch

As a member of the **Career Development Policy Group (CDPG)**, The Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) Ltd, that manages the Vitae programme was involved in launching a 'Career Guidance Guarantee' in October. The CDPG believes that England should further develop its career guidance system with everyone able to benefit from a government-backed Career Guidance Guarantee.

The Career Development Policy Group (CPDG), of which The Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) Ltd is a founding member, have published a summary of the three virtual roundtables recently hosted, discussing the career guidance system in England.

"Need for career guidance is stronger than ever - we need a joined up national lifelong strategy for career guidance involving employers, education and careers professionals"

Professor Tristram Hooley, Director of Research, The Careers & Enterprise Company and Professor of Career Education, University of Derby.

Vitae in the media

Vitae has continued to gain **global media coverage** over the last year through its engagement activities and influence in the sector.

Research, Development, and Innovation Landscape Review

Vitae was interviewed by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in developing their independent Review of the UK's Research, Development, and Innovation Organisational Landscape (RDI Landscape Review) led by Sir Paul Nurse.

Research and evaluation

Research and evaluation activity has continued to be focused on a range of themes which relate to our strategic interests, for a wide range of clients who support career development. Our areas of specialism include career progression and transitions, career tracking, diversity and inclusion, and STEM and research careers. Many of our evaluation and impact studies relate to Vitae's sphere of interest, i.e. researchers and the research environment, and add to the growing evidence base on research careers. In the past year, specific projects have been undertaken in the following areas:

- Doctoral provision - a substantial engagement project to help the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) consider future options for its support of doctoral education.
- Evaluation of fellowship programmes - evaluations ranging in level from engineering undergraduates to the Royal Society's Research Professorships.

- Longer-term evaluation of funding programmes for the Office for Students (improving outcomes for local graduates; development of conversion MSc courses in data science and artificial intelligence; HE short courses trials) and BEIS (Covid response programmes).
- Thematic studies - insights into career issues for young barristers; showcasing approaches to development of data skills.
- Studies using systematic and administrative data - establishing diversity profiles for key groups (such as those eligible for fellowship programmes); outcomes for doctoral graduates.
- Development of content for a new STEM research careers resource for the Royal Society.



Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF)

Vitae's ongoing **RDF** 'refresh' project has gone from strength to strength with several new projects involving exciting global contextual adaptations of the framework taking place in New Zealand, Australia and India. Closer to home, in collaboration with the University of Essex, a consultation phase is currently underway to understand if and how the Vitae 'Getting Started in Research' RDF lens works for 'pre-researchers' (undergraduate and taught masters) who are black.

Our European links are really helping to inform the RDF refresh too. We were interviewed for a policy study as part of the new European Research Area (ERA) on behalf of the EU Commission and interviewed as part of series of four international peer-learning seminars to enhance the labour market relevance and outcomes of higher education organised by the OECD and the European Commission. Vitae also contributed to the **NCUB's State of the Relationship Report**, published in December 2021.

The possibilities around **RDF adaptations** by Vitae, to suit different environments, research cultures and contexts, present some very exciting opportunities for researchers of the future globally and for those who support them.

Redefining what makes a successful researcher

Helping you provide holistic support for your researchers building from our evidence, information and guidance

A key tool in redefining success in research is Vitae's Researcher Development Framework (RDF), which describes the competencies of effective researchers. We know that success in research is about more than papers and grant funding - collaboration, inclusivity and collegiality are crucial. As part of Vitae's ongoing RDF 'refresh' project, we are collaborating with key stakeholders to develop the RDF in relation to priority areas, including:

- Wellbeing and mental health
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Open research and digital skills

We are also excited to be part of several new projects involving global adaptations of the framework to suit contexts in New Zealand, Australia and India.

"[As a result of attending the course] I'll definitely use the RDF . . . to map researchers' needs, and help me find and fill gaps in provision"

Connections:
Getting to grips participant 2022



Ten is Zen: Counting 10 days of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

A staggering 71 attendees from 51 member institutions came together at this event to learn more about what constitutes 10 days of continuing professional development (CPD) activities for researchers - a key obligation within the principles of the 2019 Concordat for the Career Development of Researchers.

Participants shared perspectives on how to champion the engagement of CPD for the benefit of researchers and their careers. A dedicated member resource was created as a quick glance guide for researcher developer practitioners.

Research culture at Teesside University

Using funding from Research England allocated for the purpose of developing and initiating new activities in response to the Government's **R&D People and Culture Strategy**, we have been working with the University of Teesside to support them in evolving research culture. The consultancy involves:

1. Providing insights into the current research culture at Teesside University
2. Identifying opportunities for future investment in research culture
3. Co-creating potential actions with key stakeholders
4. Reporting on recommendations for the future.

Festive networking event

21 member institutions were represented at our community-driven end of year networking event. It represented an opportunity for those supporting the career and professional development of researchers to come together and reflect on events and learning from 2021, to make new connections and renew old ones.

RDF Planner

There are currently 6,100 organisation RDF planner user licences being used from 97 subscribing organisations, including GuildHE/CREST and Advance CRT and a total of 142 individual subscribers to the RDF Planner.

Online career and professional development training from Vitae

We have delivered approximately 70 training events to audiences in more than 10 countries in the last year; about 50% of the institutions were in the UK, with others in locations from Australia to Finland, Malaysia to Spain, Luxembourg to Lebanon. While most clients have been higher education institutions, we have also worked with funders, research institutes, government departments and EU-funded ITNs/Doctoral Networks.

The **types of support provided** have included training; coaching programmes; development needs analyses; our Vitae 'Train the Trainer' programme. They have ranged from one-off short webinars on a specific topic, to extensive programmes supporting cultural change within an institution.

Connections: Getting to grips

Our professional development event for those who have recently taken on responsibility for supporting researchers in their professional development attracted nearly 50 attendees from 33 institutions. Participants explored the researcher development landscape, gained insights into adding value and impact to their roles and effectively engaging researchers in their professional development. The event also provided an opportunity for participants to concentrate on their own professional development.

The most popular content for training was professional development planning, often including use of the RDF Planner, and training for supervisors/managers to support their researchers, as well as for the researchers themselves. Other popular courses include some perennially popular topics such as research leadership, effective researcher, and impact and engagement; we have also added new content in response to demand, such as equality, diversity & inclusion, mental health & wellbeing, and knowledge exchange.

"Researcher Development is a core element of the University's strategic plan and we aim to help our staff make the most of their opportunities . . . that's why we are working with Vitae"

Prof Alistair McEwan, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research), University of Queensland

Member forums

Vitae invited members to join perspective-based forums to consider and discuss with like-minded professionals, issues relevant to their role. The forums were divided into perspectives for senior leaders; perspectives for leaders of researcher development; and perspectives for staff supporting the development of researchers.

A dedicated Australian forum also held to consider the Australian perspective on Vitae membership and to learn more about how Vitae can support Australian members as part of our Annual Programme.

Toolkits to enable managers to support early career researchers

As part of a collaborative partnership led by King's College, London and in conjunction with independent research funded by the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship Development Network's Plus Fund, Vitae was delighted to be involved in the development of two **new toolkits to support the career development and progression of Early Career Researchers (ECRs)**. The toolkits aimed at managers of ECRs and their institutions come in response to a strong interest from multiple stakeholders in a survey for action due to the gap in knowledge in this area.

Research Culture and Practice Forum

Vitae were invited to speak at the **Research Culture and Practice Forum** hosted by Universities UK (UUK) this year. The core obligation of the Researcher Development Concordat of researchers to engage in at least 10 days of professional development per year was highlighted by Vitae, along with the importance of multi-stakeholder responsibility for ensuring this and the value of practice sharing across the sector, in driving culture change through the Concordat.

Institutional Strengthening Programme (ISP) Implementation Funding in Africa

Vitae provided an overview of the activity in each of five African institutions following awards by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) to implement an institutional strengthening programme (ISP).

Key findings and recommendations were summarised in three thematic areas corresponding to national, institutional and individual levels with detailed recommendations for ACU, Senior Leaders and African researchers.

Vitae website statistics

There have been 1,216,067 page views in the past year and 425,850 visitors to the Vitae website. Vitae's web pages around the subject of careers have continued to be the most referred to pages with approximately 400,000 page views this past year.

Vitae members can also benefit from the off-the-shelf training resources, the latest publications and YouTube playlists that we have started to develop such as our topical precarity in research recording accompanied by 6 additional precarity interviews with relevant stakeholders from the sector.



Building REsearch Capacity for sustainable water and food security In drylands of sub-saharan Africa (BRECCIA): Assessing the difference BRECCIA has made

Vitae produced the final evaluation report into the capacity building activities undertaken as part of the BRECCIA programme. The University of Southampton led project comprised of staff based at eight universities located in four countries (UK, Malawi, Kenya, and Ghana) and partnerships with international organisations, working on research and capacity development in the coupled areas of water and food security. The project was funded by the UKRI Global Challenges Research Fund.

With an intention to prioritise and develop capacity building in participating institutions. The report highlights the key findings and makes recommendations for senior leaders, funders and researchers for similar projects in the future. The programme and its philosophy of empowering researchers and those that support them was extremely successful. It is clear there is a need and an appetite for more of this work in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Intellectual Property Office (IPO) live lectures

We recruited eight institutions across the UK to host a free 90-minute webinar each between January and March 2022. The webinars were developed by the Intellectual Property Office in partnership with Vitae. We also ran six live lectures that took place during January and February. Researchers from 87 UK HEIs attended the events, which reached a total of 705 people. Feedback was very positive, with **96% of respondents agreeing** that the event helped them to understand the relevance of IP to research, and 95% saying they would recommend the event to other researchers.

Innovative Training Networks (ITNs) and Doctoral Networks (DNs)

Vitae has been involved in two funded ITNs from funding in the final year of Horizon 2020: 'Oligonucleotides for Medical Applications' (OLIGOMED) addressing urgent needs in healthcare, in particular cancer, Huntington's Disease and cardiovascular diseases; and 'Systems approach of URban enviRonmEnts and health' (SURREAL) improving understanding of the urban health system's complexity, and on co-designing and applying adequate interventions.

We are also working in two new DN's. The first is MITGEST focusing on

enhancing innovative treatment strategies designed to mitigate mitochondrial dysfunction in a range of diseases. The second is Episeedlink which focusses on mechanisms to design strategies for crop improvement to identify interesting traits that underlie priming and enhance seed and crop vigour.

Training for the Japan Science and Technology Agency

Following the webinars we delivered for the Japan Science and Technology Agency, we are producing three taster videos on different aspects of researcher development to promote to Japanese universities.

Three Minute Thesis® (3MT) competition

Our compelling Vitae **Three Minute Thesis competition** 2021, sponsored by Taylor & Francis, attracted 663 registrations to vote for the People's Choice in the final. Voters represented 95 institutions worldwide and came from the UK, USA, Austria, Netherlands, Finland, Serbia, Germany, Italy, Ireland, France, Australia, Sri Lanka, China, Russia and Belgium.

The competition helps candidates build key communication skills for their future careers and often opens many doors. It also a great way for the public to realise the importance and impact that the work of researchers can have on society.

Recent winners have used their prize money for public engagement projects including the translation of cancer screening awareness videos for under-served minority communities; and the creation of a podcast about Imposter Syndrome, to inspire women and girls to work in academia.

Since last year, entries for the 2022 competition are up by 13.5%.

"I [competed] at the national #3MT finals . . . to a massive ballroom of 350+ people, had the room roar in applause and won the People's Choice Award. That win changed my career and life direction"

Dr Jamie Pei, PhD, 'The Messy Coach'

National Postdoc conference

Vitae presented at the National Postdoc conference 2021 on 'Preparing for a successful future' and spoke about building on the obligations for researchers under the Researcher Development Concordat. Vitae have been involved in the selection process for the National Postdoc Conference 2022 and on the Steering Group.



Promoting the value of researchers

Identifying, establishing and sharing good practice in employing and developing research talent

Academic Apprenticeships

We continue to work with Advance HE on the Level 7 Academic Professional Apprenticeship standard (L7 APA) to develop early career academics in higher education, following either a teaching or research specialist route. Aligned to both the UK Professional Standards Framework and the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF), the standard has been reviewed and recommendations made to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to further emphasise ethics and sustainability and equality, diversity and inclusion considerations relevant to academic professional practice. Vitae will continue to work with the HE Trailblazer Group to support and understand what can be done to increase the uptake of research specialist apprenticeships.

ELRIG Early Career Professional Network

Vitae has continued supporting the career and professional development strands and activity of the ELRIG Early Career Professional network - the not-for-profit organisation serving the life science and drug discovery communities.

This year there has been a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion to develop aims and guiding principles with the Board and community, as well as a focus on inclusive events (online and physical), the concept of inclusive research and experimental design and skills development has also been considered.



Looking to the future

The Vitae programme was launched in 2008 alongside the **Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers**. The Vitae programme was launched in 2008 alongside the **aims**, the building of a healthy and positive research culture in which all researchers can realise their potential.

Drawing on this legacy, more than two years ago we started the groundwork for Vitae 2025. This new strategic roadmap builds on Vitae's current aims, combining an enhanced focus on research culture and environment, increased recognition and support of researcher developers, and the further development of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) through partnerships and projects in the UK and internationally.

We will continue to work with policy makers, Vitae member institutions, and all those who support the development of researchers to influence and enhance effective policy, practice and provision for researcher development, with a particular focus through Vitae 2025 on:

- *redefining what makes a successful researcher*
- *championing a healthy research culture and environment*
- *promoting the value of researchers*

Alongside this, we will continue to articulate and promote the immense value and impact of researcher developer professionals, **both above and below the waterline**. As mentioned in the introduction to this report, Vitae's recent surveys of researcher developers and related roles will provide crucial insights into the international landscape of researcher development. The findings will shed light on international researcher development conditions, policies and practices and enable evidence-based decisions about researcher development within institutions and beyond. It will also provide further visibility for the career experiences of researcher developers and the crucial role they play in helping researchers to realise their potential.

The RDF underpins much of this work and, **as reported earlier this year**, we have made significant progress in understanding areas of the RDF that can evolve to take account of recent and potential future changes to the research environment and culture.

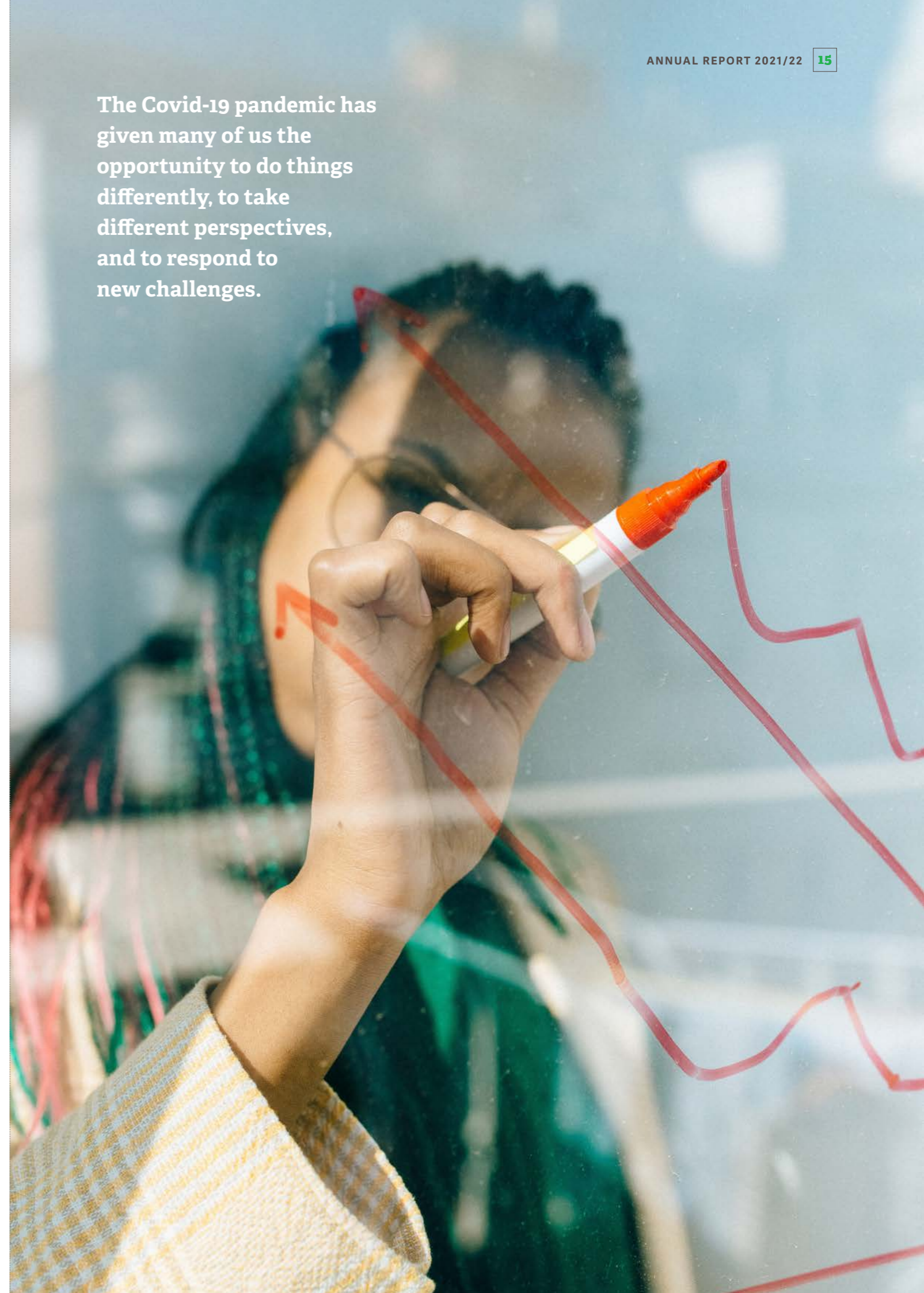
We are excited by the potential to enable all stakeholders to make the most of the RDF in their specific contexts, while at the same time preserving the RDF's valuable role in providing a universal language that describes the competencies of effective researchers.

The Vitae 2025 strategic roadmap encompasses three main strands: enhanced Vitae membership, a new research culture programme for institutions worldwide, and the evolution of the RDF. **We are excited to share** further details of these with our members and the wider community over the coming months.

Dr Kate Jones
Head of Learning and Professional Development, Vitae



The Covid-19 pandemic has given many of us the opportunity to do things differently, to take different perspectives, and to respond to new challenges.



Global leader in supporting
the professional development
of researchers

We are a non-profit
programme, part of the
**Careers Research
and Advisory Centre
(CRAC) Ltd** with over
50 years' experience
of enhancing the skills &
careers of researchers

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