How to use the employability lens

Employers may wish to use this lens to:

- identify the knowledge, behaviours and attributes that researchers can bring to their organisation as researchers are a key talent pool for recruitment and selection
- support the full breadth of professional and career development for researchers working on collaborative doctoral programmes, research projects, secondments or placements
- compare the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to the organisation's competency framework's underpinning placements, recruitment and staff development.

Researchers may wish to use this lens to:

- understand the key knowledge, behaviours and attributes typically developed during their research that are most frequently required by a wide range of employers
- identify knowledge, behaviours and attributes that might be of interest to employers and accentuate development of these skills and competencies as an integral part of their career development
- provide evidence of the transferability of their knowledge, behaviours and attributes in their CV, in job applications and at interviews
- explore how to present themselves in a job interview by providing real examples of relevant transferable knowledge, behaviours and attributes developed as researchers, or acquired through professional secondments, placements or work experience.

For further information on researchers' employability visit: www.vitae.ac.uk/employers

"The Society of Biology welcomes the employability lens, focusing on the Researcher Development Framework. The lens mirrors our 2010 Industry Survey in highlighting many of the same key abilities. We hope prospective researchers will use the lens to realise the breadth of skills they hold and define the areas in which they may need further development."
Dr Mark Downs FSB, Chief Executive, Society of Biology

"The lens fits well with an overall researcher competency framework, and could help employers when devising interview strategies in order to tease out the right behaviours/knowledge/attributes they require of a successful researcher."
Joanne McCawley, HR Advisor, TATA Steel

"The terminology of 'competences' is used throughout the Royal Bank of Scotland framework, and is in line with the Researcher Development Framework. It is easy to map the content of the Researcher Development Framework with the Royal Bank of Scotland competence framework."
Royal Bank of Scotland

Lens development

The employability lens on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework has been developed by Vitae based on a wide range of employers' views of researchers' knowledge, behaviours and attributes. Vitae brought together published research into the skills that are most frequently desired by employers, and consultations with professional organisations and employers who have an interest in researchers' employability.

Surveys of employers views on researchers' knowledge, behaviours and attributes:

- 'Employers' views of researchers' skills: A comprehensive review of the existing literature into employers' views of the skills of early career researchers', The Rugby Team, September 2007
- 'EMPRESS – Employers' Perceptions of Recruiting', Research Staff and Students, University of Leeds, November 2005
- 'Recruiting researchers: survey of employer practice 2009', Vitae, February 2010
- 'Survey of employer attitudes to postgraduate researchers', The University of Sheffield, August 2006
- 'Skills and competencies needed in the research field. Objectives 2020', APEC/Deloitte study, November 2010
- 'Talent Fishing: What Businesses Want from Postgraduates', CIHE report for Department of Business Innovation and Skills, March 2010
- 'The Value of PhDs: the Impact of Doctoral Education in Research Intensive Employers', DTZ report for Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), July 2011

The knowledge, behaviours and attributes identified in this lens are a foundation for building 'commercial awareness' in combination with, for example, general knowledge of the economic impact of research, experience of business culture gained through work experiences, professional placements and training, and an enterprising approach to work.

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Researcher Development Framework

Employability lens on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework for careers outside academia

Overview

The Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) underpins a major new approach to developing world-class researchers. The framework has been developed by and for researchers working in higher education as an aid to planning, promoting and enhancing professional and career development.

It articulates the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers and encourages all researchers to realise their potential.

This is one of a series of lenses on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework.

For further information about the Vitae Researcher Development Framework visit: **www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf**

Supporting materials relating to this lens are available at: **www.vitae.ac.uk/rdflenses**

"It took me a while to realise the call for my PhD wasn't just the technical knowledge that I picked up, but it was also the transferable skills which you don't really see at the time. But it's things like problem solving, taking on a challenge, getting it down to, sort of, the nitty gritty and working out a step by step method of solving a problem."
Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock MBE, Space Scientist

Purpose of the employability lens

The employability lens provides an overview of the key knowledge, behaviours and attributes typically developed by researchers that are most frequently desired by employers. At a glance the lens highlights key skills for current and prospective employers when attracting and recruiting researchers to enhance their business. Depending on the business' needs, employers might look for additional role specific skills. This lens focuses on the key knowledge, behaviours and attributes of researchers that can be applied or acquired working outside of higher education research.

Context

In a rapidly changing global business environment, research, innovation and highly skilled employees are key to maintaining competitive advantage.

Researchers' expertise is critical to economic success, addressing major global challenges and building a leading knowledge economy.

Describing employability
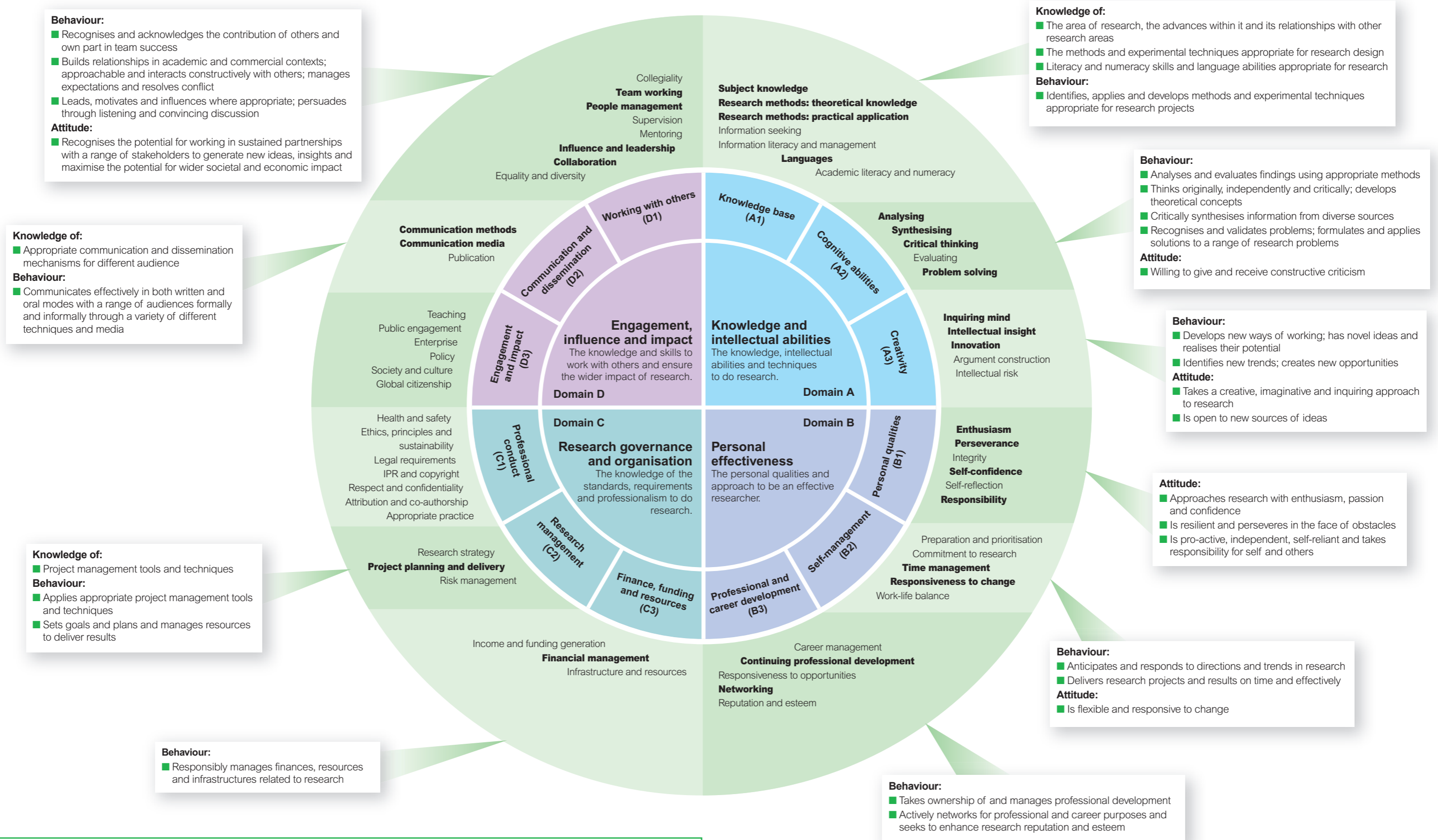
Within this lens, employability is defined as:

"A set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labour market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace – to the benefit of themselves, their employer and the wider economy."
Confederation of British Industry (CBI)

Employability lens
on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework for careers outside academia

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Researcher Development Framework

Behaviour:
- Recognises and acknowledges the contribution of others and own part in team success
- Builds relationships in academic and commercial contexts; approachable and interacts constructively with others; manages expectations and resolves conflict
- Leads, motivates and influences where appropriate; persuades through listening and convincing discussion

Attitude:
- Recognises the potential for working in sustained partnerships with a range of stakeholders to generate new ideas, insights and maximise the potential for wider societal and economic impact

Knowledge of:
- Appropriate communication and dissemination mechanisms for different audience

Behaviour:
- Communicates effectively in both written and oral modes with a range of audiences formally and informally through a variety of different techniques and media

Knowledge of:
- Project management tools and techniques

Behaviour:
- Applies appropriate project management tools and techniques
- Sets goals and plans and manages resources to deliver results

Behaviour:
- Responsibly manages finances, resources and infrastructures related to research

Knowledge of:
- The area of research, the advances within it and its relationships with other research areas
- The methods and experimental techniques appropriate for research design
- Literacy and numeracy skills and language abilities appropriate for research

Behaviour:
- Identifies, applies and develops methods and experimental techniques appropriate for research projects

Behaviour:
- Analyses and evaluates findings using appropriate methods
- Thinks originally, independently and critically; develops theoretical concepts
- Critically synthesises information from diverse sources
- Recognises and validates problems; formulates and applies solutions to a range of research problems

Attitude:
- Willing to give and receive constructive criticism

Behaviour:
- Develops new ways of working; has novel ideas and realises their potential
- Identifies new trends; creates new opportunities

Attitude:
- Takes a creative, imaginative and inquiring approach to research
- Is open to new sources of ideas

Attitude:
- Approaches research with enthusiasm, passion and confidence
- Is resilient and perseveres in the face of obstacles
- Is pro-active, independent, self-reliant and takes responsibility for self and others

Behaviour:
- Anticipates and responds to directions and trends in research
- Delivers research projects and results on time and effectively

Attitude:
- Is flexible and responsive to change

Behaviour:
- Takes ownership of and manages professional development
- Actively networks for professional and career purposes and seeks to enhance research reputation and esteem

Central diagram

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

- Working with others (D1)
- Communication and dissemination (D2)
- Engagement and impact (D3)

Collegiality
Team working
People management
Supervision
Mentoring
Influence and leadership
Collaboration
Equality and diversity

Communication methods
Communication media
Publication

Teaching
Public engagement
Enterprise
Policy
Society and culture
Global citizenship

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

- Knowledge base (A1)
- Cognitive abilities (A2)
- Creativity (A3)

Subject knowledge
Research methods: theoretical knowledge
Research methods: practical application
Information seeking
Information literacy and management
Languages
Academic literacy and numeracy

Analysing
Synthesising
Critical thinking
Evaluating
Problem solving

Inquiring mind
Intellectual insight
Innovation
Argument construction
Intellectual risk

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

- Professional conduct (C1)
- Research management (C2)
- Finance, funding and resources (C3)

Health and safety
Ethics, principles and sustainability
Legal requirements
IPR and copyright
Respect and confidentiality
Attribution and co-authorship
Appropriate practice

Research strategy
Project planning and delivery
Risk management

Income and funding generation
Financial management
Infrastructure and resources

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

- Personal qualities (B1)
- Self-management (B2)
- Professional and career development (B3)

Enthusiasm
Perseverance
Integrity
Self-confidence
Self-reflection
Responsibility

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

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

Bold text in outer circle – key RDF descriptors that relate to employability and vice versa
Boxed text – summary statements from the Vitae Researcher Development Statement that relate to employability for careers outside academia. www.vitae.ac.uk/rds