

RDF Planner introduction and user guide – for organisation subscription users

To provide feedback on this user guide or to make suggestions for improvements, please email rdfplannerhelpdesk@vitae.ac.uk with 'User guide' in the subject line.

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1 Introducing the Vitae RDF Planner

1. Brief introduction to the RDF Planner

The Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) provides a foundation for the design and development of all Vitae training and development activities. Vitae's sector-leading RDF framework articulates the knowledge, skills, and behaviours of effective researchers, and is used for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers both within academia and across sectors. Originally developed by researchers in 2010, and embedded across the UK and international institutions, the RDF is a recognised framework for planning and supporting your personal and professional development. It does so by providing a structured map of the broad skills and behaviours of an effective researcher, and by empowering researchers to take ownership of their professional and career development, whatever their current career aspirations. The framework also provides a recognised language and scaffolding to articulate their developing competencies and skills.

Mapped to the RDF, the RDF Planner tool enables a structured, reflective approach to professional development. Drawing upon the Researcher Development Framework 2025, it supports researchers to identify strengths, set development goals, track progress, understand their professional journey, and take ownership of their career development.

The RDF Planner is designed to help you:

- reflect on your achievements against the Vitae RDF
- set aspirational goals
- consider skills and experiences that will enhance your prospects of success in particular career areas
- identify opportunities for further professional development
- create a personal record of progress, backed up by evidence
- develop an action plan
- highlight, articulate and evidence the transferability of your skills in your CV, in job applications and at interviews
- articulate your skills and attributes in a language employers outside as well as inside academia will recognise and respect
- prepare for one-on-one reviews with your supervisor, research manager or principal investigator where you will be discussing your professional or career development

When to review

You can review your career, where you are and where you want to be, at different points, for example to:

- develop in your current role
- prepare for promotion
- find a new direction/job

Vitae has developed this innovative, interactive RDF Planner incorporating the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to support researchers in their own professional and career development.

2 Getting started

To use the RDF Planner under an organisation subscription, you will need to:

- have been added to the application by your organisation admin
- have received an email invitation from your organisation admin
- follow the link in the invitation email and complete and submit the registration form. You must agree to the Terms and Conditions and Cookies policy as part of this process

Registration is a one-off process. Once you have successfully registered you can login to the RDF Planner at <http://rdfplanner.vitae.ac.uk>

Registering and logging on are covered in more detail in the [Getting Started](#) guide. You can also see information on how to transfer to a different organisation subscription in the Getting Started guide.

3 Navigating the RDF Planner

From the RDF Planner page you can access:

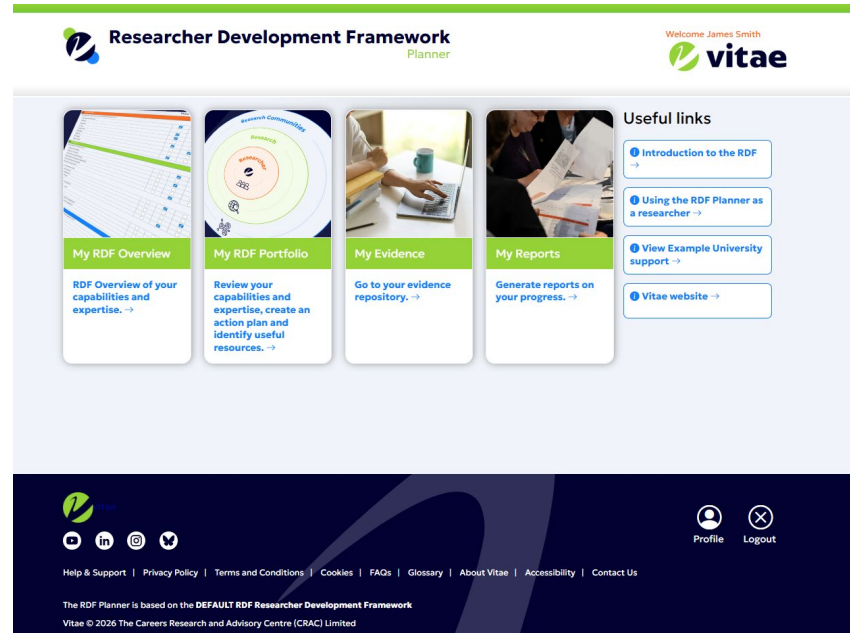
- myRDF – first tile/box on the home page. From here you can navigate through the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) and record actions and evidence against RDF elements (see Suggestions for creating an action plan)
- myEvidence – second tile/box on the home page. Access your evidence repository, where you can upload documents, add links to online evidence or add text to support your development.
- myReports – third tile/box on the home page. From here you can access the RDF Planner reporting engine and get an overview of your action plan. You can export data from the system (see How to view your action plan and How to export action plan information)
- Useful links – fourth set of tile/boxes on the home page. From here you can link out to help and support files and sites
- Profile – Profile button in the application page footer. From here you can update the profile information that you set when you first registered on the RDF Planner (see Updating your profile settings)

You can use the 'Home' icon in the header to return to the RDF Planner from anywhere in the application.

You can quickly move to the top of a page by clicking on the 'Back to top' icon that appears in the bottom right corner of the screen as you scroll down.

There are links to 'Help and Support' files, the 'Privacy Policy', 'Terms and Conditions' and 'FAQs' in the application page footer.

Tip: you can use the RDF Planner report engine to get an overview of the phases for descriptors that you have achieved or are currently working on and to see the actions and evidence you have entered in the RDF Planner.



4 Suggestions for creating an action plan

Information

The RDF Planner enables you to consider skills and experiences that will enhance your career prospects and articulate your knowledge, behaviours and attributes to employers. It is not exclusive to people wanting to pursue an academic career. The RDF Planner covers the complete researcher continuum from postgraduate researcher to research staff to principal investigator/supervisor and the complete breadth of their roles: research, teaching and learning, career development, knowledge transfer, etc. It is informed by the requirements of different job roles/functions as appropriate during a research career. It allows individuals to take different routes through the framework and recognises varied learning styles and approaches to development. Differences between disciplines have been taken into account.

The RDF states in great detail the knowledge, behaviours and attributes gained through doing research. It encourages you to identify your strengths and prioritise your professional development and allows you to set targeted aspirational goals.

Tip: You may wish to [print a copy of the RDF](#) for reference as you navigate the RDF Planner and set goals.

The RDF is divided into four domains and 63 descriptors and covers all the skills and attributes of a successful researcher. Each descriptor is divided into a number of phases of development that describe the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of research professionals at increasing levels of

experience. Creating an action plan involves reading through the phases of development for each descriptor you are interested in, deciding which phase best describes you currently, choosing which phase you want to reach and thinking about how you are going to achieve that.

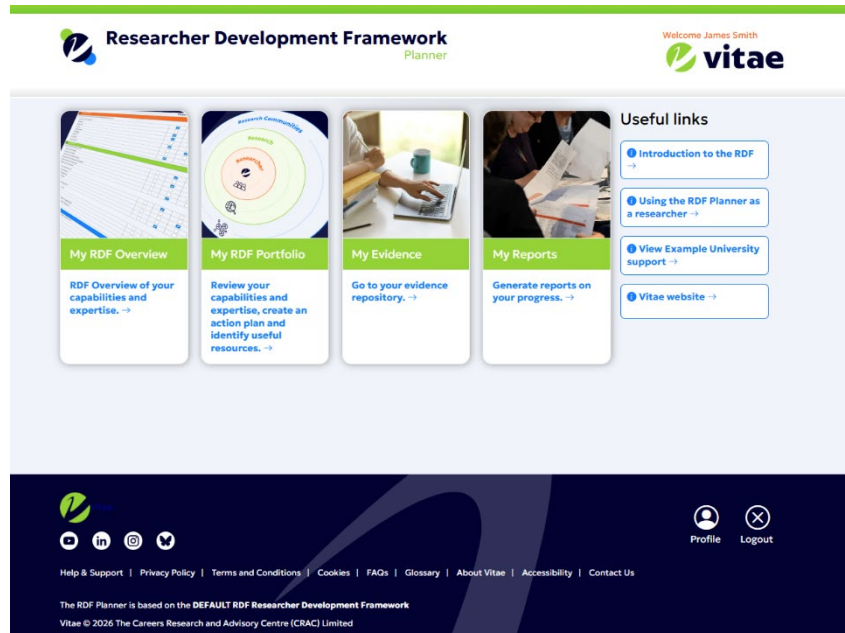
Creating an action plan involves:

- navigating to the descriptor that interests you
- choosing the phase that best describes your current level of experience, marking this phase as achieved
- optionally adding evidence or hyperlinks to evidence that supports the current phase achieved
- choosing a target phase for the descriptor
- adding an action or multiple actions to the target phase that describe what you will do, in practice, to achieve this phase of development
- revisiting the target phase to add evidence that substantiates development against the target
- marking the target phase as achieved once you feel you have completed your outstanding action or actions and feel you have the experience to support the step up in level of development
- adding evidence to support the new phase
- setting new actions and targets for a higher phase if relevant.

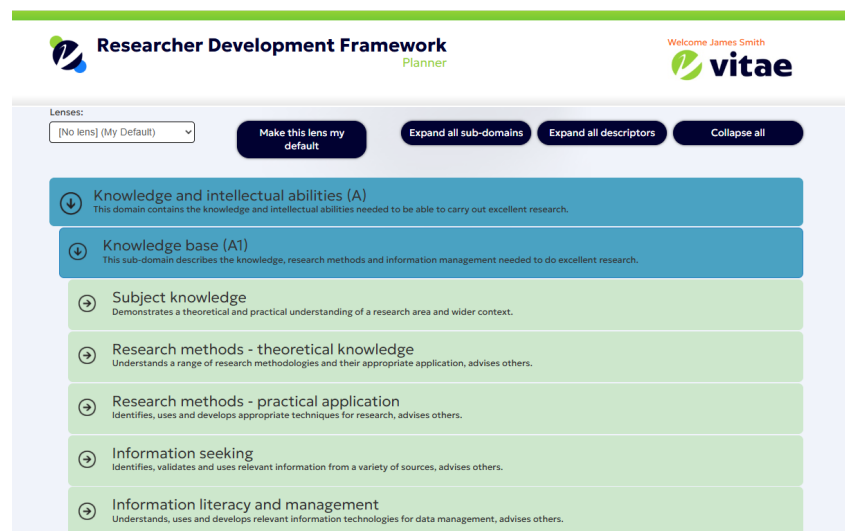
The RDF Planner can be used to explore the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) and set actions against the descriptors that interest you.

5 Navigating to the descriptor that interests you

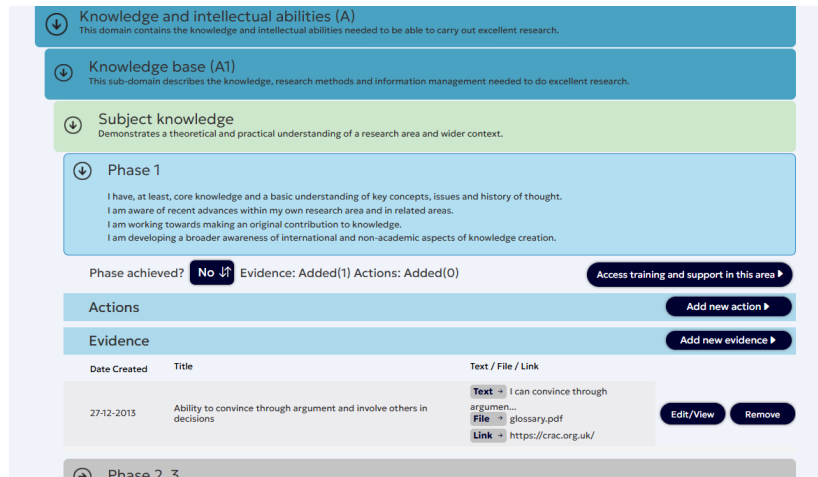
- 1 Select the 'My RDF Portfolio' tile/box, the second tile/box on the RDF Planner home page.



- 2 Expand the RDF tree view by clicking on the parent RDF domain and subdomain of the descriptor you wish to review until you can see the descriptor.



- 3 Click on the descriptor to expand the descriptor phases and click on a phase to see the phase details.



6 Marking a phase as achieved

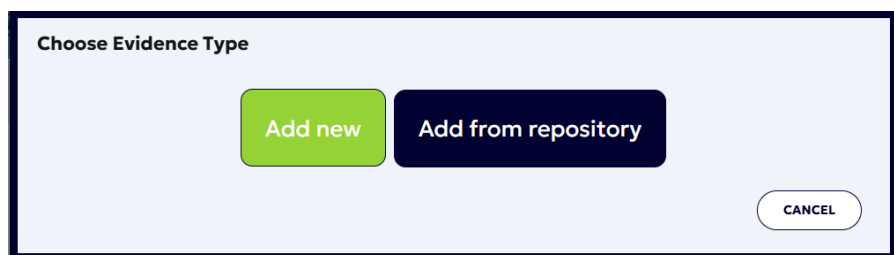
When you have reached the phase details level of the RDF tree, you can mark a phase as achieved by clicking the black button labelled 'Phase achieved?'. The button value will toggle from 'No' to 'Yes'. This change in phase status is automatically saved to your action plan.

There is no requirement to have marked earlier phases as achieved but you may wish to do this first by going to the relevant phase detail sections.

7 Adding evidence supporting development against a phase or other RDF element/s

Tip: You can also add and manage evidence from your evidence repository (see section 12).

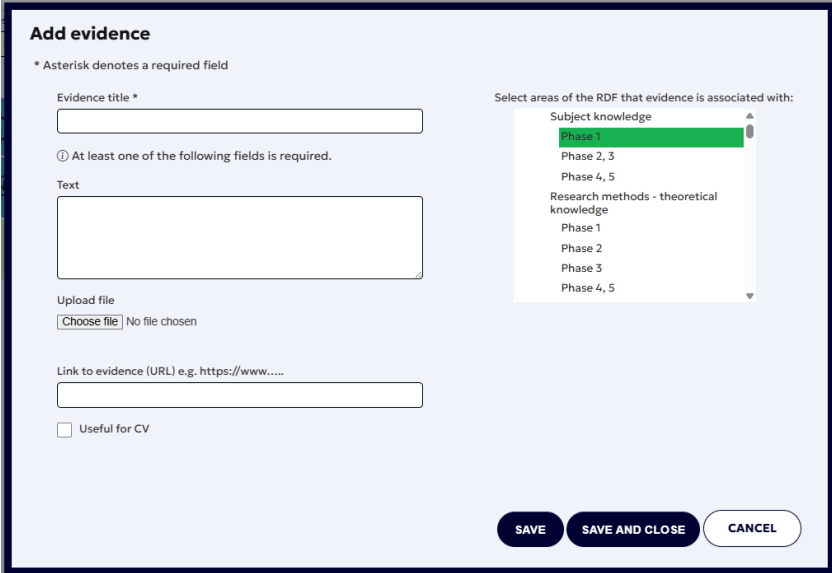
- 1 Select the 'Add new evidence' button
- 2 Select to add evidence from your evidence repository (see section 12) or select to add new evidence. In this example we will select to add a new item of evidence.



- 3 There are three types of evidence you can add:
 - text
 - link to online evidence
 - upload a document

- Complete the form fields and select the domain/s, sub-domain/s, descriptor/s or phase or phases that this evidence applies to using the 'RDF Picker' on the right hand side of the form.

Tip: hover over the RDF element names on the 'RDF Picker' tool on the 'Add evidence' form to see pop-ups of the text describing the RDF element



- Select the 'Save and close' button when finished.
- Your evidence will appear as a line in the phase 'Evidence' table on the phase or phases that the evidence was tagged against or the phases that belong to the RDF element that the evidence was tagged against.



You can follow links to linked evidence or download your document in this table by clicking on the link description text in the 'Text/link' column in the 'Evidence' table. The target URL or opens in a new browser tab or your document downloads.

You can edit your evidence at any time by selecting the 'Edit/View' button in the table row.

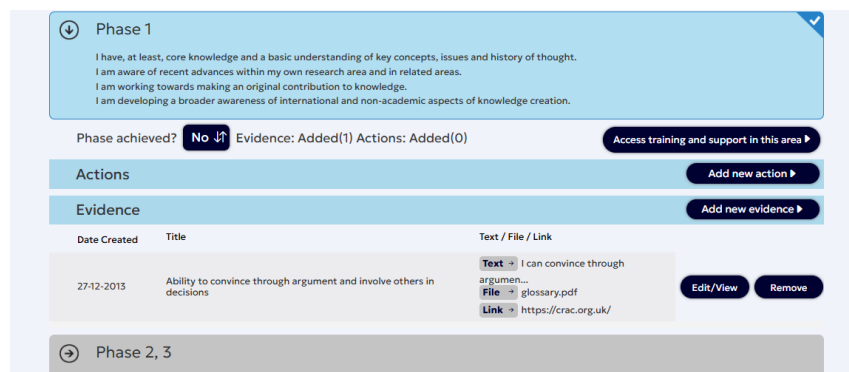
You can remove a line of evidence from the phase 'Evidence' table by selecting the 'Remove' button in the table row. The evidence remains in your evidence repository but is no longer mapped to this RDF Phase.

8 Choosing a development target phase for a descriptor

To choose a target phase for a descriptor, exit the 'Add evidence' form if it is open by selecting 'Save and close'. Move down the RDF tree view by expanding and reviewing the phase details sections as you go. Decide which phase you would like to set as your target.

9 Access support resources and training opportunities

You can view training and support resources and opportunities for each phase by selecting the black button labelled 'Access training and support in this area' in the phase detail area of the RDF tree. A window will open showing resources and opportunities provided by Vitae, on the right hand side, and resources and opportunities provided by your organisation on the left hand side.



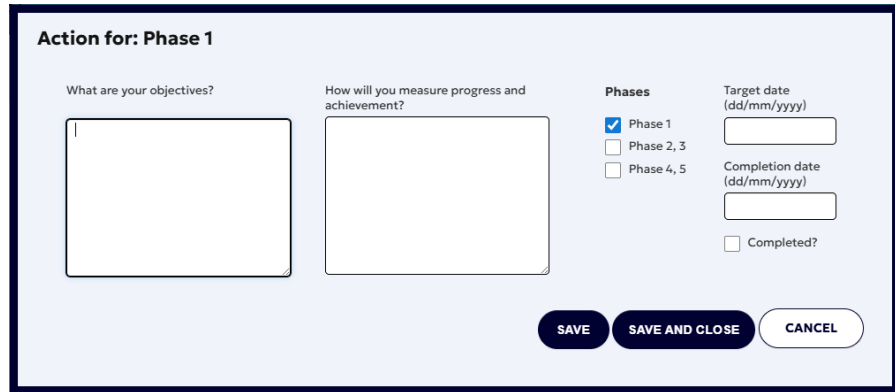
The screenshot displays the 'Phase 1' details in the Vitae RDF Planner. At the top, a blue header box contains the phase description: 'I have, at least, core knowledge and a basic understanding of key concepts, issues and history of thought. I am aware of recent advances within my own research area and in related areas. I am working towards making an original contribution to knowledge. I am developing a broader awareness of international and non-academic aspects of knowledge creation.' Below this, a status bar shows 'Phase achieved? No' with a dropdown arrow, 'Evidence: Added(1)', and 'Actions: Added(0)'. To the right is a button 'Access training and support in this area'. Below the status bar are two sections: 'Actions' with an 'Add new action' button, and 'Evidence' with an 'Add new evidence' button. The 'Evidence' section contains a table with columns 'Date Created', 'Title', and 'Text / File / Link'. One row is visible with the date '27-12-2015', the title 'Ability to convince through argument and involve others in decisions', and a link to 'https://crac.org.uk/'. To the right of the table are 'Edit/View' and 'Remove' buttons. At the bottom, a grey box indicates 'Phase 2, 3'.

Once you have selected a target phase, you can use the phase description and supporting resources to help you reflect on how you might reach this developmental goal. It might then be useful to record how you are going to reach this goal as an action, or series of actions, marked against the target phase.

10 Adding an action or multiple actions to a phase

- 1 Select the 'Add new action' button in the phase detail view of the RDF tree. The 'Add action' window will open.

Tip: hover over the phase names on the 'Add action' form to see pop-ups of the text describing the phases



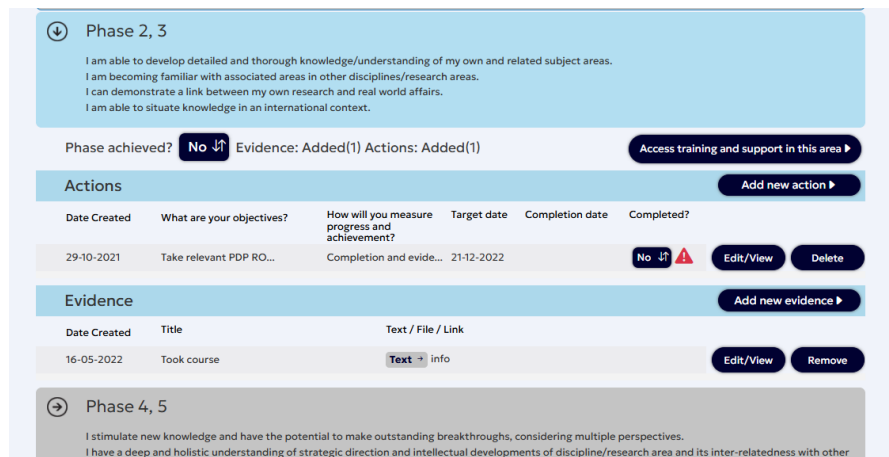
There are fields to record what your objective is for the action, and how you will measure progress and know when you have achieved the action.

- 2 Select the other descriptor phases that this action applies to if relevant.
- 3 Select a target date for the action (optional).

Information

Target and completion dates can now be set in the past. This is useful if you are transferring data from the RDF Planner Excel Prototype tool.

- 4 Save and close when finished. Your action will appear as a line in the phase 'Actions' table on the phase or phases that the evidence was tagged against.



- 5 You can edit your action at any time by selecting the 'Edit/View' button in the table row.

- 6 You can delete an action from the phase 'Actions' table by selecting the 'Delete' button in the table row.

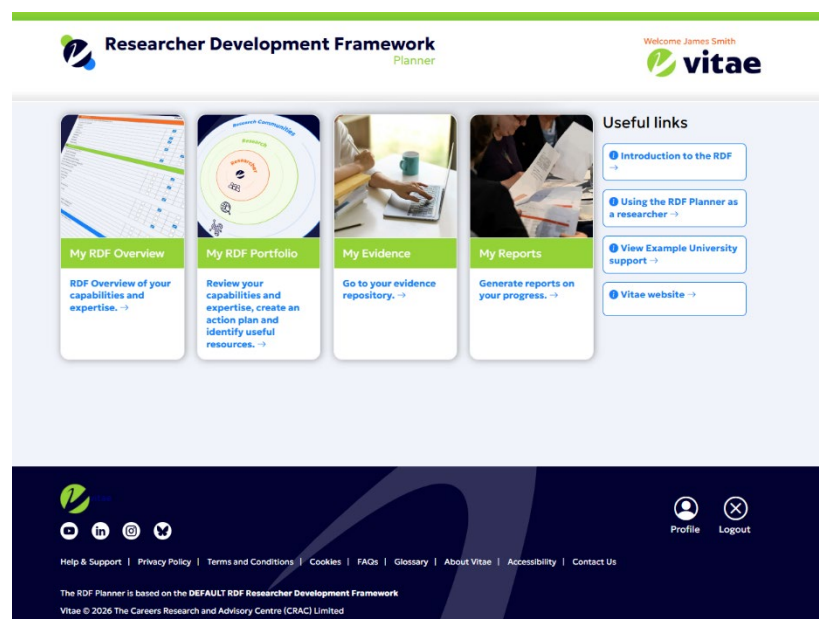
11 On-going recording of evidence of achievement and progress

It is recommended that you periodically revisit the RDF Planner to:

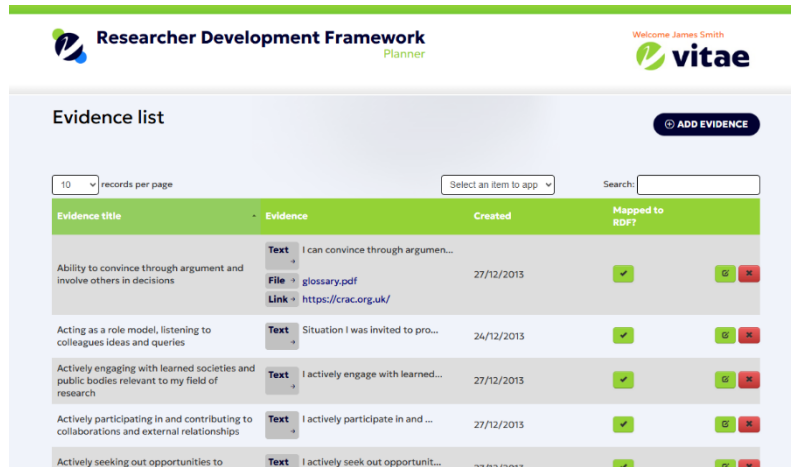
- update target phases with new evidence (add new lines of evidence to the 'Evidence' table using the 'Add new evidence' form)
- review actions and add further actions if required (add new action to the 'Actions' table using the 'Add new action' form)
- close and mark as complete any actions that have been undertaken (using the 'Completion date' and 'Completed?' fields in the 'Edit action' form accessible from the 'Edit/View' button in the action table row)
- explore and review other parts of the RDF as potentially useful for reflecting on and planning your career and personal development

12 Managing your evidence using the evidence repository

- 1 Select the 'myEvidence' tile/box on the RDF Planner home page.



- 2 The 'Evidence list' shows you all the items of evidence that you have added to the RDF Planner.



Evidence title	Evidence	Created	Mapped to RDF?
Ability to convince through argument and involve others in decisions	Text I can convince through argumen... File glossary.pdf Link https://crac.org.uk/	27/12/2013	☒
Acting as a role model, listening to colleagues ideas and queries	Text Situation I was invited to pro...	24/12/2013	☒
Actively engaging with learned societies and public bodies relevant to my field of research	Text I actively engage with learned...	27/12/2013	☒
Actively participating in and contributing to collaborations and external relationships	Text I actively participate in and ...	27/12/2013	☒
Actively seeking out opportunities to	Text I actively seek out opportunit...	27/12/2013	☒

Information

There are three types of information that you can add to evidence your development:

- text
- link to online evidence
- upload a document

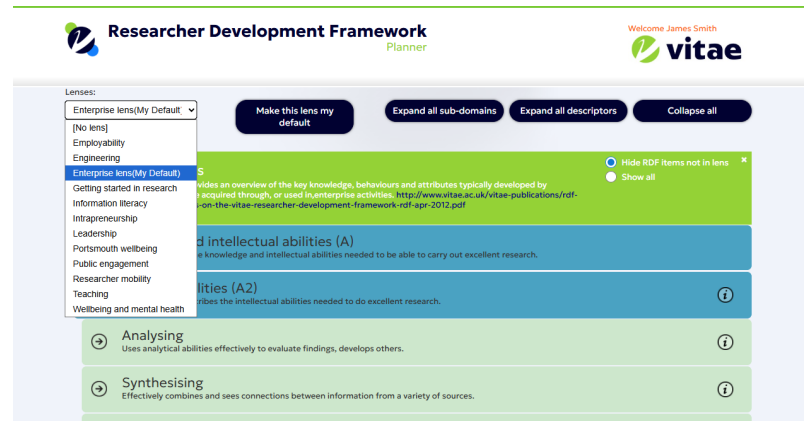
- 3 Manage your evidence. From the 'Evidence list', you can:
 - add new evidence ('Add evidence' button, top right). Evidence added to the myEvidence repository will be available when you select to add evidence to a Phase in the RDF tree view.
 - link to online evidence or download uploaded file evidence (click on link in 'Text' column)
 - map evidence to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (click on the row edit icon next to the row delete icon and use the 'RDF Picker' on the evidence form)
 - delete evidence from the RDF Planner (click on the row delete icon at far end of evidence row)

13 Applying a lens (filter) to the RDF tree view

The Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) provides an overarching framework to support researchers in identifying the wide range of knowledge, behaviours and attributes of excellent researchers. Using the RDF, a lens provides an overview of the key knowledge, behaviours and attributes developed by researchers that can be acquired through, or used in, particular areas such as enterprise, leadership, teaching etc.

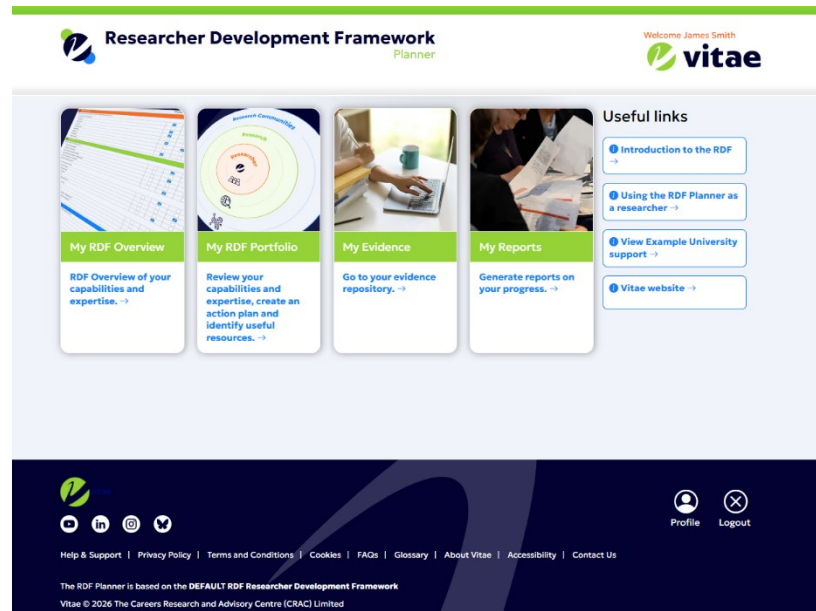
More information about the current complete set of RDF lenses can be found at www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf/lenses.

Lenses available on the RDF Planner can be applied by selecting from the 'Lenses' dropdown list at the top of the RDF tree. You can set a lens as your default view of the RDF by selecting the 'Make this lens my default' button.



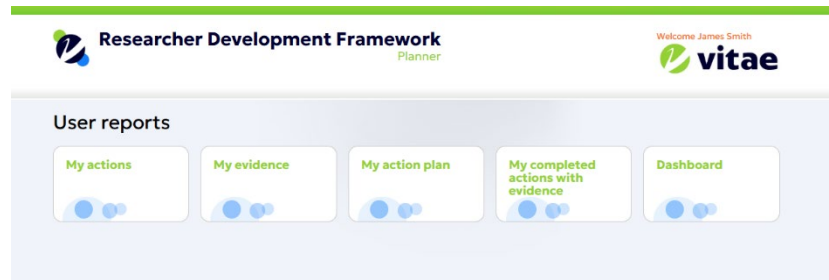
14 Getting an overview of your action plan

- 1 There are a number of real-time reports that you can run and that will give you an overview of your action plan. All reports are accessed by selecting the fourth tile/box on the RDF Planner home page labelled 'My Reports'.



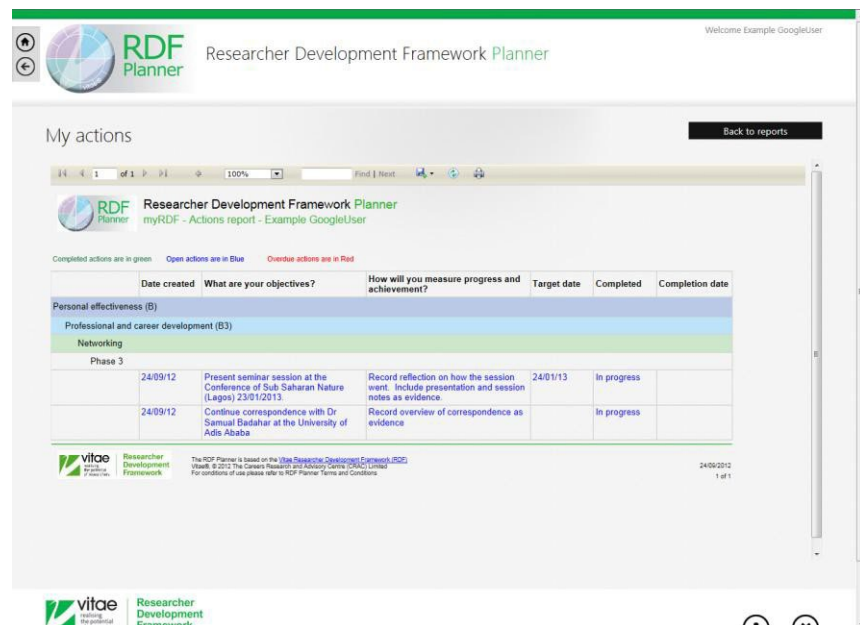
You will be taken to the 'Reports' home page which lists the available user reports.

Selecting a report will take you to that report's page. The report window will show as empty while the report compiles. This may take a few seconds.



14.2 My actions

The 'My actions' report shows all actions that you have entered onto the RDF Planner. Actions that are overdue are written in red. Actions that are in progress are written in blue. Actions that are completed are written in green. The 'Completed', 'In progress' and 'Overdue' status is also written in the 'Completed' column on the report.



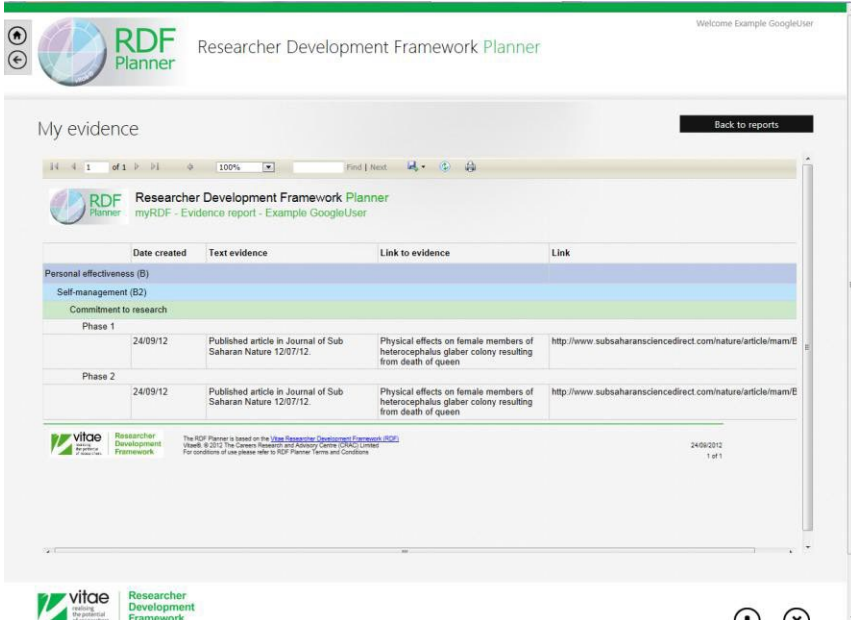
The screenshot displays the 'My actions' report for a user named 'Example GoogleUser'. The report is titled 'myRDF - Actions report - Example GoogleUser'. It includes a legend: 'Completed actions are in green', 'Open actions are in Blue', and 'Overdue actions are in Red'. The report is organized into sections: 'Personal effectiveness (B)', 'Professional and career development (B3)', and 'Networking'. The 'Networking' section is further divided into 'Phase 3'. The table below lists specific actions with their dates, objectives, progress status, and completion dates.

Date created	What are your objectives?	How will you measure progress and achievement?	Target date	Completed	Completion date
24/09/12	Present seminar session at the Conference of Sub Saharan Nature (Lagos) 23/01/2013	Record reflection on how the session went. Include presentation and session notes as evidence	24/01/13	In progress	
24/09/12	Continue correspondence with Dr Samuel Badahar at the University of Adis Ababa	Record overview of correspondence as evidence		In progress	

The footer of the report includes the Vitae logo, the text 'Researcher Development Framework', and a disclaimer: 'The RDF Planner is based on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) Vitae® © 2012 The Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) Limited. For conditions of use please refer to RDF Planner Terms and Conditions.' The date '24/09/2012' and page number '1 of 1' are also displayed.

14.3 My evidence

The 'My evidence' report shows all evidence that you have entered onto the RDF Planner mapped against the Vitae Researcher Development Framework.



My evidence

Back to reports

Date created	Text evidence	Link to evidence	Link
Personal effectiveness (B)			
Self-management (B2)			
Commitment to research			
Phase 1			
24/09/12	Published article in Journal of Sub-Saharan Nature 12/07/12.	Physical effects on female members of heterocephalus glaber colony resulting from death of queen	http://www.subsaharansciencedirect.com/nature/article/mam/E
Phase 2			
24/09/12	Published article in Journal of Sub-Saharan Nature 12/07/12.	Physical effects on female members of heterocephalus glaber colony resulting from death of queen	http://www.subsaharansciencedirect.com/nature/article/mam/E

The RDF Planner is based on the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework \(RDF\)](#).
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For conditions of use please refer to RDF Planner Terms and Conditions.

24/09/2012
1 of 1

14.4 My action plan

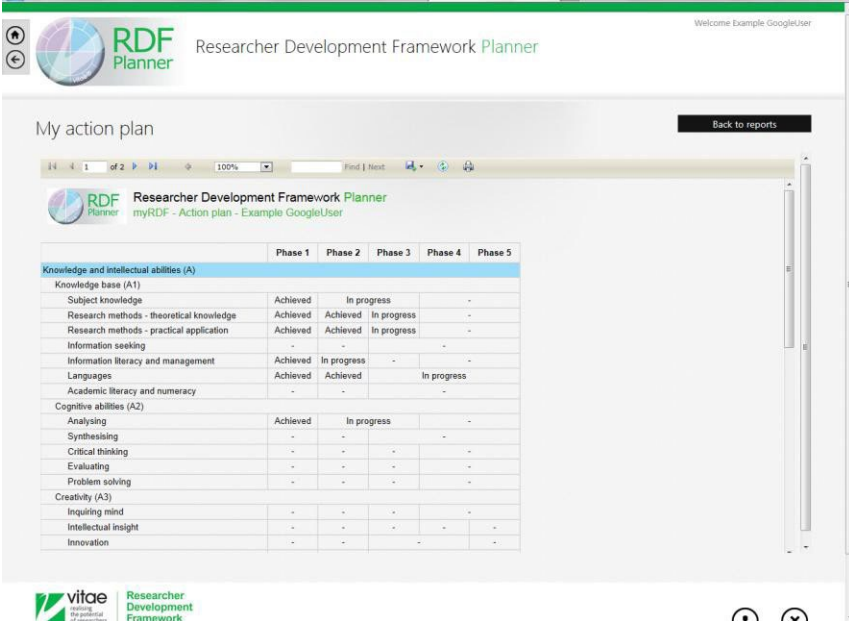
The 'My action plan' report gives an overview of your activity against the Vitae Researcher Development Framework.

The report shows every phase for every descriptor in the framework.

Phases that have been marked as achieved in the RDF Planner show as 'Achieved' on the report.

Phases that are not marked as achieved but have actions and/or evidence recorded against them are marked as 'In progress' on the report.

Phases that are not marked as achieved and have no activity against them, in the form of actions or evidence are marked with a dash symbol.



My action plan

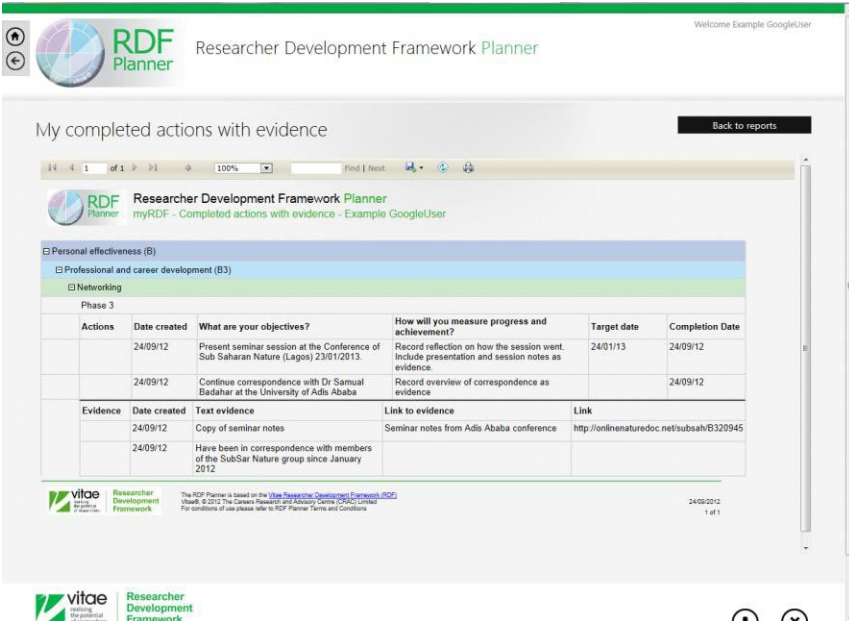
Back to reports

RDF Planner myRDF - Action plan - Example GoogleUser

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
Knowledge and intellectual abilities (A)					
Knowledge base (A1)					
Subject knowledge	Achieved	In progress	-	-	-
Research methods - theoretical knowledge	Achieved	Achieved	In progress	-	-
Research methods - practical application	Achieved	Achieved	In progress	-	-
Information seeking	-	-	-	-	-
Information literacy and management	Achieved	In progress	-	-	-
Languages	Achieved	Achieved	In progress	-	-
Academic literacy and numeracy	-	-	-	-	-
Cognitive abilities (A2)					
Analysing	Achieved	In progress	-	-	-
Synthesising	-	-	-	-	-
Critical thinking	-	-	-	-	-
Evaluating	-	-	-	-	-
Problem solving	-	-	-	-	-
Creativity (A3)					
Inquiring mind	-	-	-	-	-
Intellectual insight	-	-	-	-	-
Innovation	-	-	-	-	-

14.5 My completed actions with evidence

This report shows a complete list of your actions in the RDF Planner along with any evidence that has been entered against the phases containing actions.



My completed actions with evidence

Back to reports

RDF Planner myRDF - Completed actions with evidence - Example GoogleUser

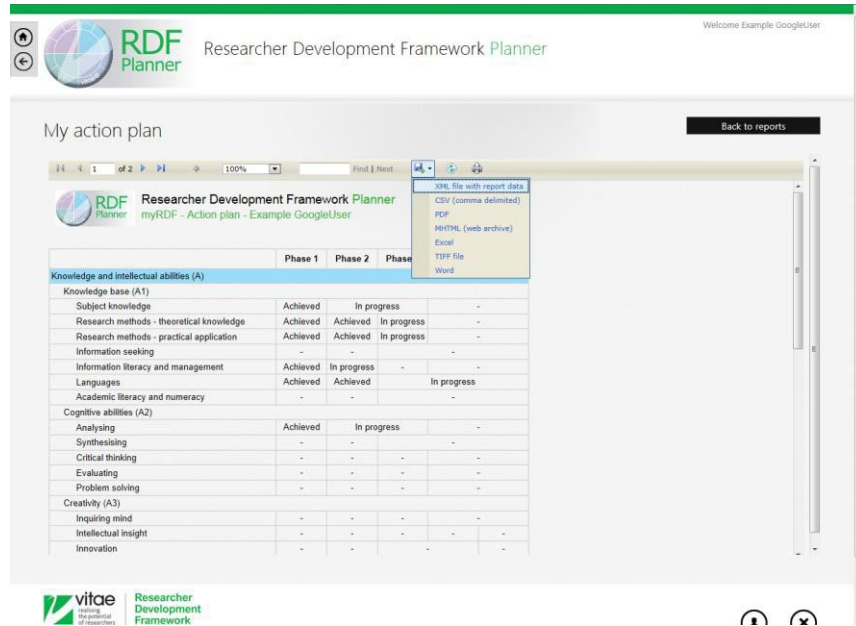
Personal effectiveness (B)					
Professional and career development (B3)					
Networking					
Phase 3					
Actions	Date created	What are your objectives?	How will you measure progress and achievement?	Target date	Completion Date
	24/09/12	Present seminar session at the Conference of Sub-Saharan Nature (Lagos) 23/01/2013	Record reflection on how the session went. Include presentation and session notes as evidence.	24/01/13	24/09/12
	24/09/12	Continue correspondence with Dr Samuel Badahar at the University of Adis Ababa	Record overview of correspondence as evidence		24/09/12
Evidence	Date created	Text evidence	Link to evidence	Link	
	24/09/12	Copy of seminar notes	Seminar notes from Adis Ababa conference	http://online.naturedoc.net/subsahB320945	
	24/09/12	Have been in correspondence with members of the SubSar Nature group since January 2012			

14.6 How to export action plan information

To export data, run the report that contains the data you want to export. Then click the small floppy disk icon in the report header and select the file format you want to export to from the drop down menu.

Supported formats for data export are:

- XML
- CSV (comma delimited) PDF
- MHTML
- Excel
- TIFF
- Word

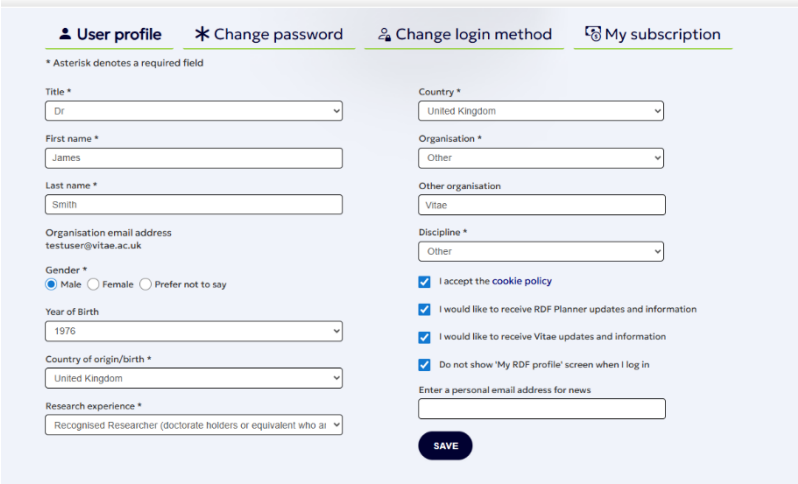


The screenshot shows the 'My action plan' section of the RDF Planner. It features a table with columns for 'Phase 1', 'Phase 2', and 'Phase 3'. The table lists various skills under categories like 'Knowledge and intellectual abilities (A1)', 'Cognitive abilities (A2)', and 'Creativity (A3)'. A file export menu is open, showing options: 'XML file with report data', 'CSV (comma delimited)', 'PDF', 'MHTML (web archive)', 'Excel', 'TIFF file', and 'Word'.

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Knowledge and intellectual abilities (A1)			
Knowledge base (A1)			
Subject knowledge	Achieved	In progress	-
Research methods - theoretical knowledge	Achieved	Achieved	In progress
Research methods - practical application	Achieved	Achieved	In progress
Information seeking	-	-	-
Information literacy and management	Achieved	In progress	-
Languages	Achieved	Achieved	In progress
Academic literacy and numeracy	-	-	-
Cognitive abilities (A2)			
Analysing	Achieved	In progress	-
Synthesising	-	-	-
Critical thinking	-	-	-
Evaluating	-	-	-
Problem solving	-	-	-
Creativity (A3)			
Creativity (A3)	-	-	-
Inquiring mind	-	-	-
Intellectual insight	-	-	-
Innovation	-	-	-

15 Updating your profile settings

To update your profile information, log on to the RDF Planner and select the 'Profile' button on the right-hand side of the application footer. The profile window will open. Update your profile information and save changes by selecting the 'Save' button.



Researcher Development Framework Planner

Welcome James Smith

User profile * Change password Change login method My subscription

* Asterisk denotes a required field

Title *
Dr

First name *
James

Last name *
Smith

Organisation email address
testuser@vitae.ac.uk

Gender *
☒ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say

Year of Birth
1976

Country of origin/birth *
United Kingdom

Research experience *
Recognised Researcher (doctorate holders or equivalent who ar

Country *
United Kingdom

Organisation *
Other

Other organisation
Vitae

Discipline *
Other

☒ I accept the cookie policy

☒ I would like to receive RDF Planner updates and information

☒ I would like to receive Vitae updates and information

☒ Do not show 'My RDF profile' screen when I log in

Enter a personal email address for news

SAVE

- Change your user profile details on the 'User profile' tab.
- Change your password on the 'Change password' tab.
- Check your subscription details and cancel your subscription if you are an individual subscriber on the 'My subscription' tab.

16 Getting help

There are a number of sources available to gain further information about the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) and for obtaining more help in using the RDF Planner online tool.

16.1 RDF help

- Information about the RDF can be found by clicking on the 'Introduction to the RDF' tile/box in the 'Useful links' section of the home page
- Further information about the RDF can be found on the Vitae website at www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf
- Links to a glossary of RDF terms and terms related to the area of personal development can be found in the RDF Planner footer and in the 'Useful links' section of the home page

16.2 RDF Planner help

- The 'Useful links' section on the RDF Planner home page includes links to help documents and web pages provided by Vitae and your organisation
- You can view training and support resources and opportunities for RDF descriptor phases by selecting the black button labelled 'Access training and support in this area' when you are looking at the phase detail section of the RDF tree
- If you are having problems getting started or logging on to the system, you can get help from your organisation administrator. Your organisation administrator's email address is included in the email you were sent inviting you to logon to the RDF Planner
- If you cannot find the answers you need in the above resources, you can email the RDF Planner support team at rdfplannerhelpdesk@vitae.ac.uk