vitae
realising
the potential
of researchers

Incorporating the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD

# Strategies for sustaining the skills agenda for researchers


## Ellen Pearce, Vitae


www.vitae.ac.uk


Vitae is supported by Research Councils UK (RCUK),
managed by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation
and delivered in partnership with regional Hub host universities

vitae
realising
the potential
of researchers
Incorporating the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD

# Aims

- Vitae - vision and aims
- the current environment
- exploring strategies for sustainability
- exploring some key questions and making recommendations for key stakeholders

vitae
realising
the potential
of researchers
Incorporating the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD

# About Vitae

- Vitae is about professional development and careers for doctoral researchers and research staff
- Vitae builds on the work of the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD
- Vitae aims to raise the profile of researchers and their contributions to society
- Vitae will achieve its aims primarily by working with universities
- Vitae also works with researchers, employers and other stakeholders

# Vision and aims

vitae
realising
the potential
of researchers
Incorporating the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD

- for the UK to be world-class in supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers
- championing the development and implementation of effective policy
- enhancing higher education provision through sharing practice and resource
- providing access to development opportunities and resources
- building an evidence base to support the researcher development agenda

vitae
realising the potential of researchers
Incorporating the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD

# Current environment - context

- Roberts funding since 2003/4 approx £24m per year
- range of national and European initiatives, including:
  - Roberts review, revised QAA code of practice, European Charter and Code, Leitch review, Warry report, implementation of fixed term employees legislation, European Council for Doctoral Education, Concordat, HE debate
- Roberts funding confirmed by RCUK in current form to 2011; with ring-fencing, annual reporting and database of practice entries

# Current environment – HE debate

vitae
realising the potential of researchers
Incorporating the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD

- Thrift
  - The Roberts funding for universities should be sustained over the long-term to ensure high-quality researcher development programmes become embedded across the sector
- Wellings
  - Recommendation 8 The 'Roberts Funding' for post-graduate student and post-doctoral researchers designed to cover the costs of additional transferable skills should be continued and expanded. Additional resources should build on the current 'employability' agenda and expand to include a broader set of courses specifically to assist in progressing the commercialisation of research.
    In addition the eligibility criteria should be expanded to cover all post-graduates and post-doctoral fellows, including international students, rather than just being directed to those funded by RCUK. DIUS, RCUK and HEFCE should agree a mechanism to achieve this outcome.

# Current environment – links with the Concordat

vitae
realising the potential of researchers
Incorporating the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD

Concordat implementation plans

- benchmarking principles:
  - use existing data and information wherever possible
  - benchmark the UK position and not individual institutions
  - highlight good practice and encourage enhancement
  - focus on institutional approach to supporting research staff, research staff experiences and principal investigators' perceptions
- five projects:
  - understanding the research staff cohort
  - exploring the experiences of research staff
  - exploring HEI approaches to human resources strategies for research staff
  - reviewing the use of fixed term contracts
  - exploring funders' responses to the Concordat principles

# Key questions for discussion

vitae
realising the potential of researchers
Incorporating the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD

- funding:
  - should funding continue via the Research Councils (Thrift) or via a wider set of funders (Wellings)?
  - if the funding is no longer ring-fenced, how should it come to HEIs?
  - assuming that the total funding stream is finite and a similar level, should funding be allocated by RC funded researchers or by HESA figures?
- reporting:
  - should HEIs provide reports on the implementation of the Concordat principles as part of the Roberts reporting process?
  - to what extent should Roberts reporting be focussed on outcomes and impact (eg impact of skills on enterprise, outreach and policy development identified in the last Roberts letter)?
- institutional strategies:
  - what strategies can HEIs use to embed the importance of skills and career development for researchers?