Researcher Development Framework

Public engagement lens on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework

Support and resources

Research funders want researchers to feel supported and rewarded to engage with the public and achieve culture change so that public engagement is embedded alongside research and valued as an important activity. The 'Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research' provides a mandate from the funders of research for research organisations, research managers and researchers to build on the wealth of existing good practice and foster public engagement so that this activity is better recognised and rewarded within the higher education and research sectors. www.rcuk.ac.uk/per

Vitae supports researchers' involvement in public engagement through the identification of key skills and knowledge in the Vitae Researcher Development Framework and by providing events to encourage and enthuse researchers to participate in this important area of impact. www.vitae.ac.uk/publicengagement

The NCCPE seeks to support universities to embed engagement into their work and to support researchers to develop their engagement skills. They have produced a series of stakeholder briefings to support the implementation of the Concordat within institutions alongside a wide range of useful resources for culture change and public engagement, accessible on their website: www.publicengagement.ac.uk.

Using the public engagement lens

Researchers may wish to use this lens to:

- identify how public engagement can contribute to their professional development as a researcher
- identify how the skills and attributes they have developed through research can contribute to or underpin their development in public engagement
- select areas that they need to develop to be more effective in public engagement and use this to inform development reviews
- explore how the Vitae Researcher Development Framework relates to the NCCPE Public Engagement Attributes Framework and vice versa
- provide evidence of the transferability of their skills in their CV, in job applications and at interviews.

Researcher Developers may wish to use this lens to:

- demonstrate to researchers and other stakeholders how public engagement can contribute towards the overall professional development of researchers
- enable researchers to recognise the learning they have acquired in other contexts and highlight the transferability of their knowledge, behaviours and attributes
- highlight personal development needs and create action plans
- strategically align training and development around the lens.

This public engagement lens was developed by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE), the Beacons for Public Engagement, Research Councils UK and Vitae, in consultation with individuals and organisations with an interest in public engagement.

To protect and maintain the integrity of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) and the Researcher Development Statement (RDS)[1] and to ensure a consistent approach to the development of lenses on the RDF, anyone wishing to create a lens on the RDF should seek permission from Vitae, and must adhere to the RDF conditions of use[2]. Enquiries regarding the development of a lens on the RDF should be directed to rdf@vitae.ac.uk

For further information about the range of Vitae activities, go to www.vitae.ac.uk or contact website@vitae.ac.uk,

To find out more about why public engagement matters, access resources to support your public engagement activities and for information about the NCCPE, visit www.publicengagement.ac.uk
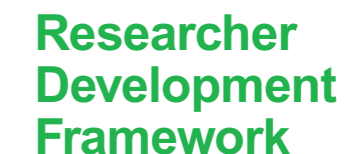
For further information about RCUK public engagement activities, visit www.rcuk.ac.uk/per

Vitae is led and managed by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation and supported by Research Councils UK (RCUK) and UK HE funding bodies

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

The NCCPE supports universities and researchers to engage with the public. Visit www.publicengagement.ac.uk

Purpose of a lens

Using the Vitae Researcher Development Framework, the public engagement lens highlights how public engagement is part of the professional development of researchers. Inspired by the work of the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) the lens provides an overview of the key knowledge, behaviours and attributes typically developed by researchers that can be acquired through, or used in, public engagement activities.

Context

Public engagement should be part of every researcher's portfolio of skills. There are many reasons for researchers to engage with the public. Public engagement can:

- improve the quality and impact of research
- build trust, understanding and collaboration with the public
- challenge assumptions, sharpen thinking and inject energy
- develop skills that can aid researchers' employment and promotion prospects
- increase research's relevance to, and impact on, society
- provide additional sources of information, knowledge and expertise
- offer new perspectives on research
- raise the profile of researchers.

Describing public engagement

Within this lens, public engagement is defined as a

"myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit".

NCCPE, 2010

Public engagement lens on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework

vitae realising the potential of researchers | **Researcher Development Framework**

Public engagement requires an ability to build trust, understanding, collaboration and effective partnerships.

Core skills and attributes:
- Respects and values input from others
- Is sensitive to issues of diversity and inclusion; relates well to different groups; appreciates how partnerships can enhance public engagement activity; responds positively to the expertise and insights of other professionals and non-experts

Advanced skills and attributes:
- Ensures there is space for all contributions; can manage groups effectively, uses appropriate techniques to stimulate discussion or deal with challenging behaviour
- Can broker effective relationships and partnerships; identifies key stakeholders and ensures their inclusion; identifies appropriate partners for particular roles; can manage conflict and achieve resolution

Effective engagement requires communication media and methods appropriate to the purpose and audience.

Core skills and attributes:
- Can differentiate how they speak or write for different audiences; communicate their personal commitment and interest in the topic; make presentations using props and AV resources; provide relevant examples, stories, activities and metaphors; adapts language to the needs of particular audiences
- Is sensitive to the needs of audiences

Advanced skills and attributes:
- Can speak and adapt to almost any audience; can speak or write on a number of given topics
- Keeps channels of communication open with all participants at all times

Engagement projects enable researchers to develop an understanding of the social and ethical implications of their work and ensure their research has relevance to and impact on society.

Core skills and attributes:
- Understands their own motivation for engagement
- Identifies social, political and ethical issues of relevance for particular audiences

Advanced skills and attributes:
- Has a secure knowledge and understanding of a wide range of engagement approaches including discussion, debate and deliberative approaches

Engagement projects develop skills of empathy, listening, communication and respect for others.
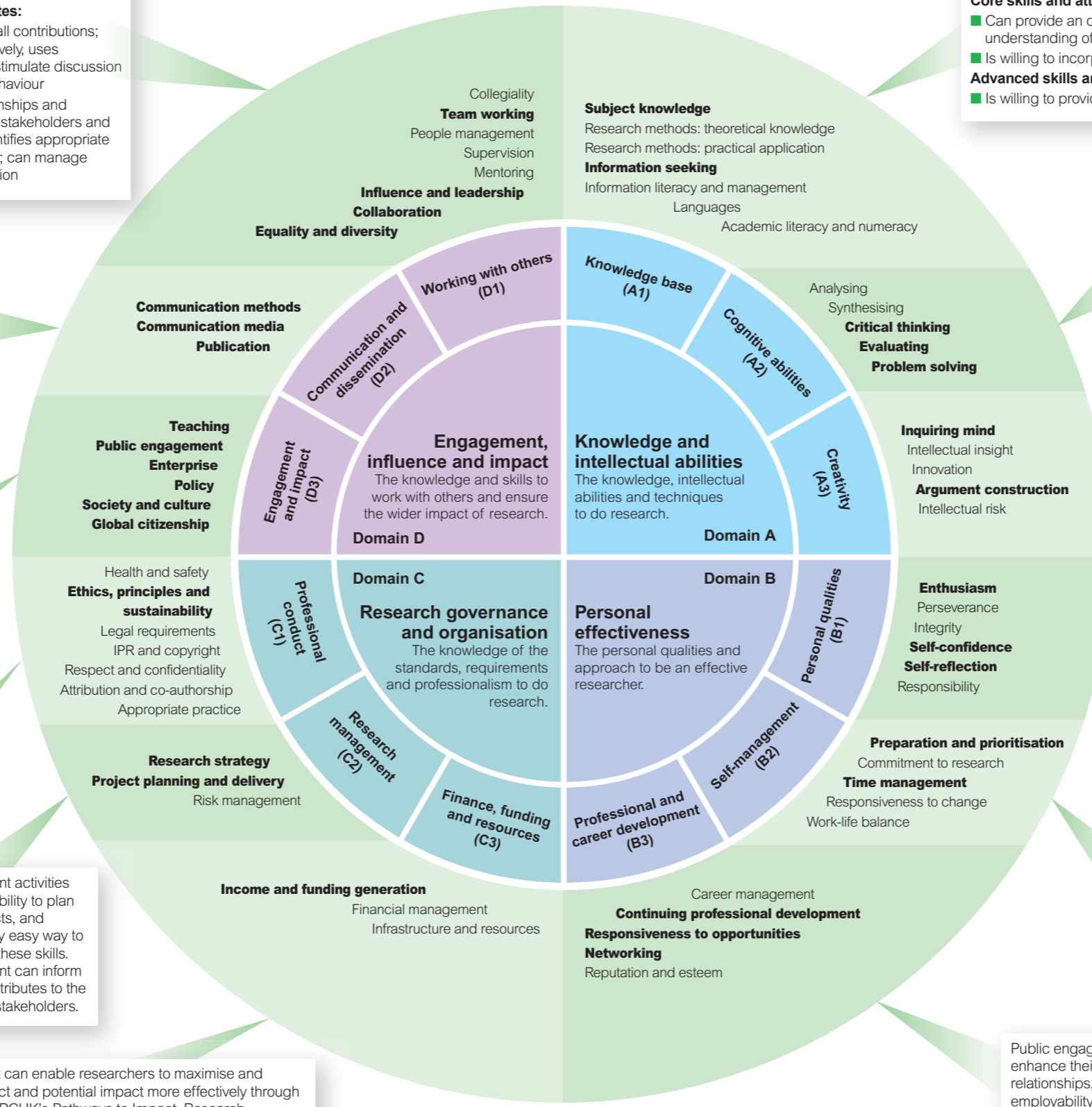
Core skills and attributes:
- Operates in a professional manner at all times
- Identifies social, political and ethical issues of relevance to particular audiences

Advanced skills and attributes:
- Ensure transparency throughout the process; is aware of relevant/ controversial ethical issues within the field and takes these into account in their own engagement activity

Public engagement activities often require an ability to plan and deliver projects, and provide a relatively easy way to use and develop these skills. Public engagement can inform research so it contributes to the wider aims of all stakeholders.

Public engagement can enable researchers to maximise and communicate impact and potential impact more effectively through funding proposals, RCUK's Pathways to Impact, Research Excellence Framework (REF) impact templates and case studies.

Engaging with the public can be used to elicit insights, knowledge and expertise from the public to inform research and better understand the relevance of research to society

Core skills and attributes:
- Can provide an overview of their area of expertise; has a secure knowledge and understanding of the topic they are engaging about
- Is willing to incorporate new views into their own understanding

Advanced skills and attributes:
- Is willing to provide an expert opinion

Collaborative working with the public can bring new insights to solve problems and approach research from a new perspective.

Core skills and attributes:
- Uses feedback mechanisms that are accessible to the publics they are working with; gathers feedback on activities; is open to constructive feedback; is prepared to be disagreed with

Advanced skills and attributes:
- Is able to conduct formative and summative evaluation activities; distils learning from evaluation; incorporates learning from evaluation into the generation of new public engagement opportunities; shares their learning/evaluation with others

Understanding and being able to respond to the publics' views of research requires an inquiring mind and being open to new sources of ideas.

Core skills and attributes:
- Is willing to provide supporting information; can answer related questions; can elicit and answer audience questions
- Is open to new ways of working; is willing to consider differing views

Advanced skills and attributes:
- Ensures there is space for all contributions; can build on audiences' prior knowledge and conceptions, making links with their knowledge and areas being discussed; is willing to provide evidence and opinion

Engaged researchers report that the public's interest in their research reignites their enthusiasm and passion for their research area.

Core skills and attributes:
- Reflects on their practice and tries to learn from their experience; shows evidence of learning; is able to recognise when professional help is needed

Public engagement can provide an opportunity to apply and develop skills in running projects, which can develop skills such as time management, preparation and prioritisation.

Advanced skills and attributes:
- Is willing to change their mind; can be flexible in their approach, changing tasks to meet the situation

Public engagement can raise researchers' profiles, enhance their reputation, build networks and relationships, and develop skills that enhance their employability both within and outside academia.

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): Collegiality, **Team working**, People management, Supervision, Mentoring, **Influence and leadership**, **Collaboration**, **Equality and diversity**
- Communication and dissemination (D2): **Communication methods**, **Communication media**, **Publication**
- Engagement and impact (D3): **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): Subject knowledge, Research methods: theoretical knowledge, Research methods: practical application, **Information seeking**, Information literacy and management, Languages, Academic literacy and numeracy
- Cognitive abilities (A2): Analysing, Synthesising, **Critical thinking**, **Evaluating**, **Problem solving**
- Creativity (A3): **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): Health and safety, **Ethics, principles and sustainability**, Legal requirements, IPR and copyright, Respect and confidentiality, Attribution and co-authorship, Appropriate practice
- Research management (C2): **Research strategy**, **Project planning and delivery**, Risk management
- Finance, funding and resources (C3): 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): **Enthusiasm**, Perseverance, Integrity, **Self-confidence**, **Self-reflection**, Responsibility
- Self-management (B2): **Preparation and prioritisation**, Commitment to research, **Time management**, Responsiveness to change, Work-life balance
- Professional and career development (B3): Career management, **Continuing professional development**, **Responsiveness to opportunities**, **Networking**, Reputation and esteem

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Bold text in outer circle – key RDF descriptors that relate to public engagement and vice versa
Boxed text – statements adapted from the NCCPE's Public Engagement Attributes Framework www.publicengagement.ac.uk/what/skills-and-attributes