# Investing in your professional development for career success

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**www.vitae.ac.uk**

# Why invest in professional development?

- Changing nature of research and researcher careers
- Researcher journey
- Researchers' career aspirations
- Researchers and employer's views of desirable competencies

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# The way research is done is changing

- Interdisciplinary research / multidisciplinary research teams / team science / international development goals
- Intersectoral collaborations / innovative / evidencing impact
- Open research / publication / data
- Research integrity / RRI / reproducibility

Being an excellent researcher is not enough…

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# Difficult researcher career environment

- Increasing numbers of doctoral graduates
- Increasing numbers of research staff/postdoctoral researchers
- Lack of research career structures
- Few academic opportunities
- Perception that academia is the first choice career
- Little understanding of careers in other employment sectors
- Employers have poor perceptions of researchers' competencies

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# EURAXIND Researchers career thinking and development

- 78% want an academic career in the long term
- 57% would consider working outside academia – of these:
  - 70% would still want to do research
  - 37% in research/grant management
  - 35% in research/science policy
- 65% think it would be hard to get a non-research job in business
- < 30% think businesses value what researchers offer working in non-research roles

The EURAXIND project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 710294

# Alumni: Why researchers leave academia

- Top reasons for leaving:
  - Better long-term employment prospects
  - More job security, no short-term contracts
  - Metter work/life balance
  - Wanted different professional challenges

- Most useful support / experience / attribute when making transition:
  - Active job searching
  - Personal motivation / confidence / determination (73%)
  - Flexibility / adaptability (69%)

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# In their current job…

- 84% are very or fairly satisfied with current work/job (42% very satisfied)
- Only 6% now want an academic career
- What they actually do now:
  - 43% conduct research
  - 43% use detailed knowledge from their specialism
  - 68% evaluate/understand others' research
  - 75% draw on experience/competencies developed during HE research

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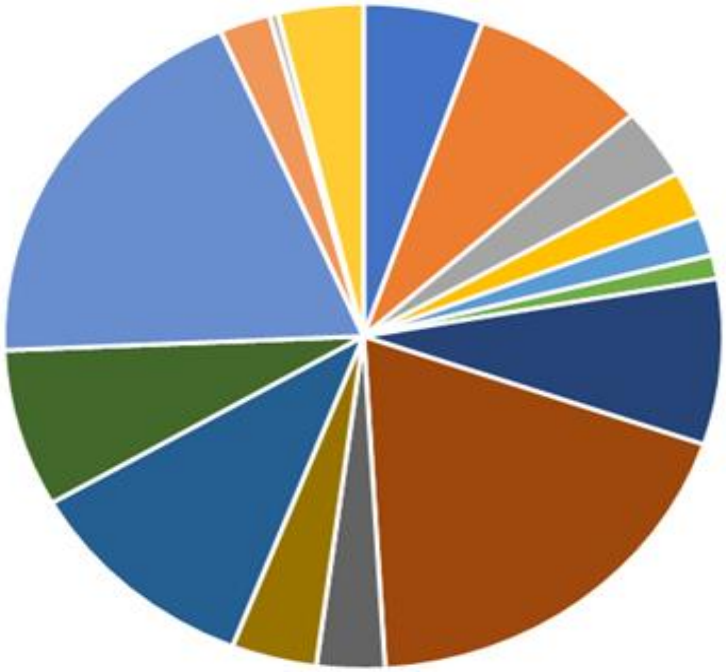
# Occupations alumni now work in



- Engineering professional
- Functional manager
- Health professional
- ICT professional
- Journalist or media professional
- Law professional
- Management, business or finance professional
- Other occupation (please specify)
- Public service professional
- Public/science engagement professional
- Research or grants manager
- Research/science policy professional
- Researcher
- Teaching professional
- Technician
- Vocational or industrial trainer/instructor

# Vitae: Supporting the researcher journey

vitae
realising the potential of researchers

**Supervisory support and mentoring**

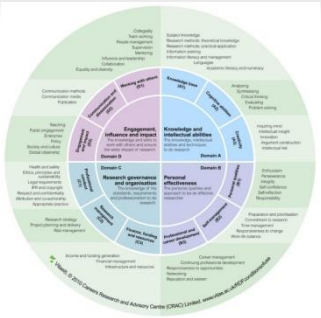
**Initial stage**
Induction
Supervision relationship
Training needs analysis
Effective researcher

**Making progress**
Keeping on track
Publication
GRADSchool

**Final stage**
Preparing for viva
Networking
Careers advice

**Research staff**
Independence
Grant income
Leadership

Underpinning **Vitae Researcher Development Framework / Planner**
self reflection / action planning / evidence & CV building



RDF Planner

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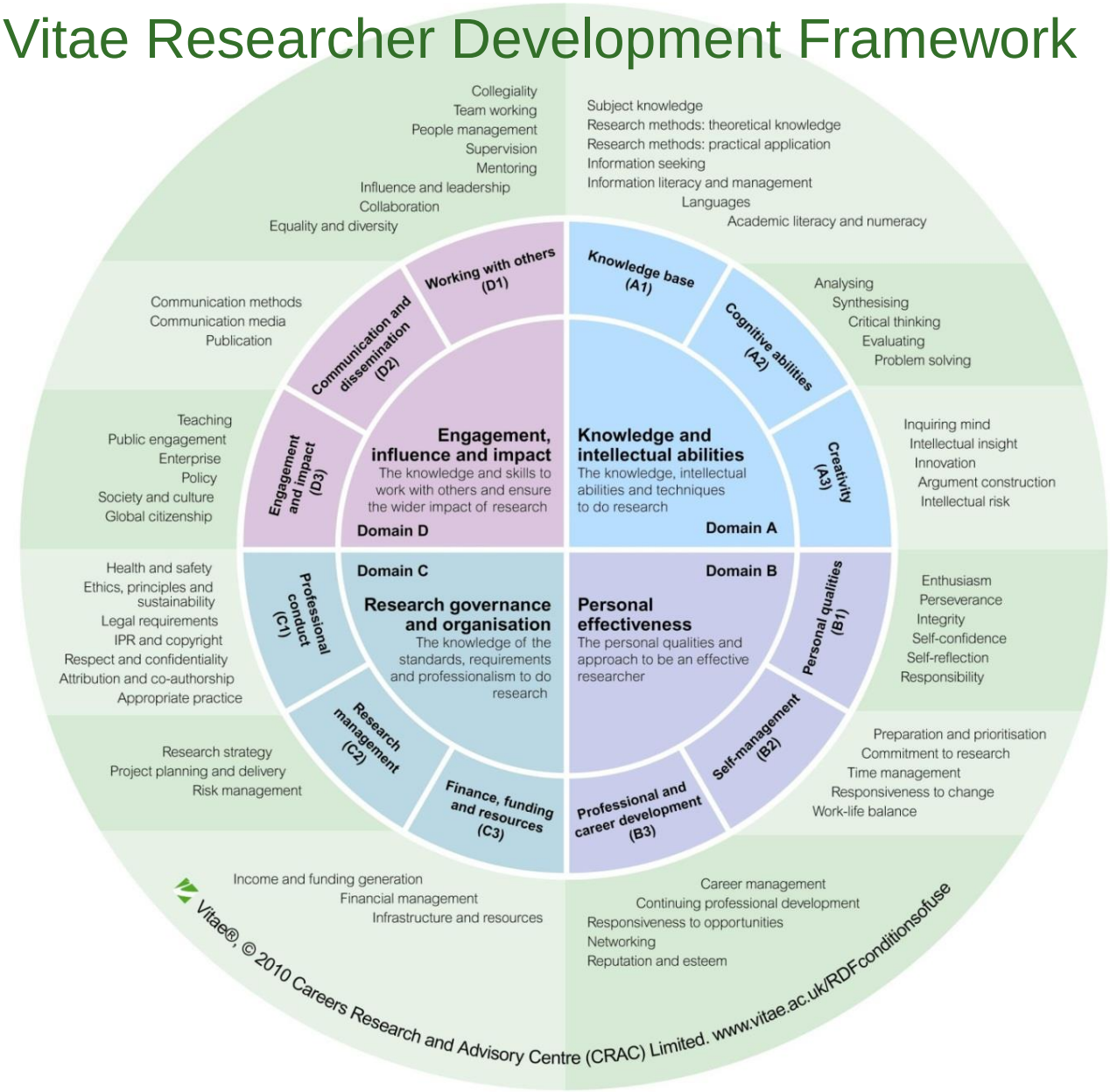
# Vitae Researcher Development Framework




vitae
realising the potential of researchers

- Framework of the knowledge, behaviour and attributes of successful researchers
- Recognise researchers as professionals
- Encompass the breadth of researcher activities
- Enables self-assessment of strengths and areas for further development
- Common language for researchers capabilities
- Used in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia

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# How the RDF can help researchers

- Personal and professional development
  - Understand strengths
  - Identify areas for development
  - Set goals
- Self-assessment and review
- Identify your transferable competencies
- Broadens your view of available career options
- Help with CVs, job applications and interviews

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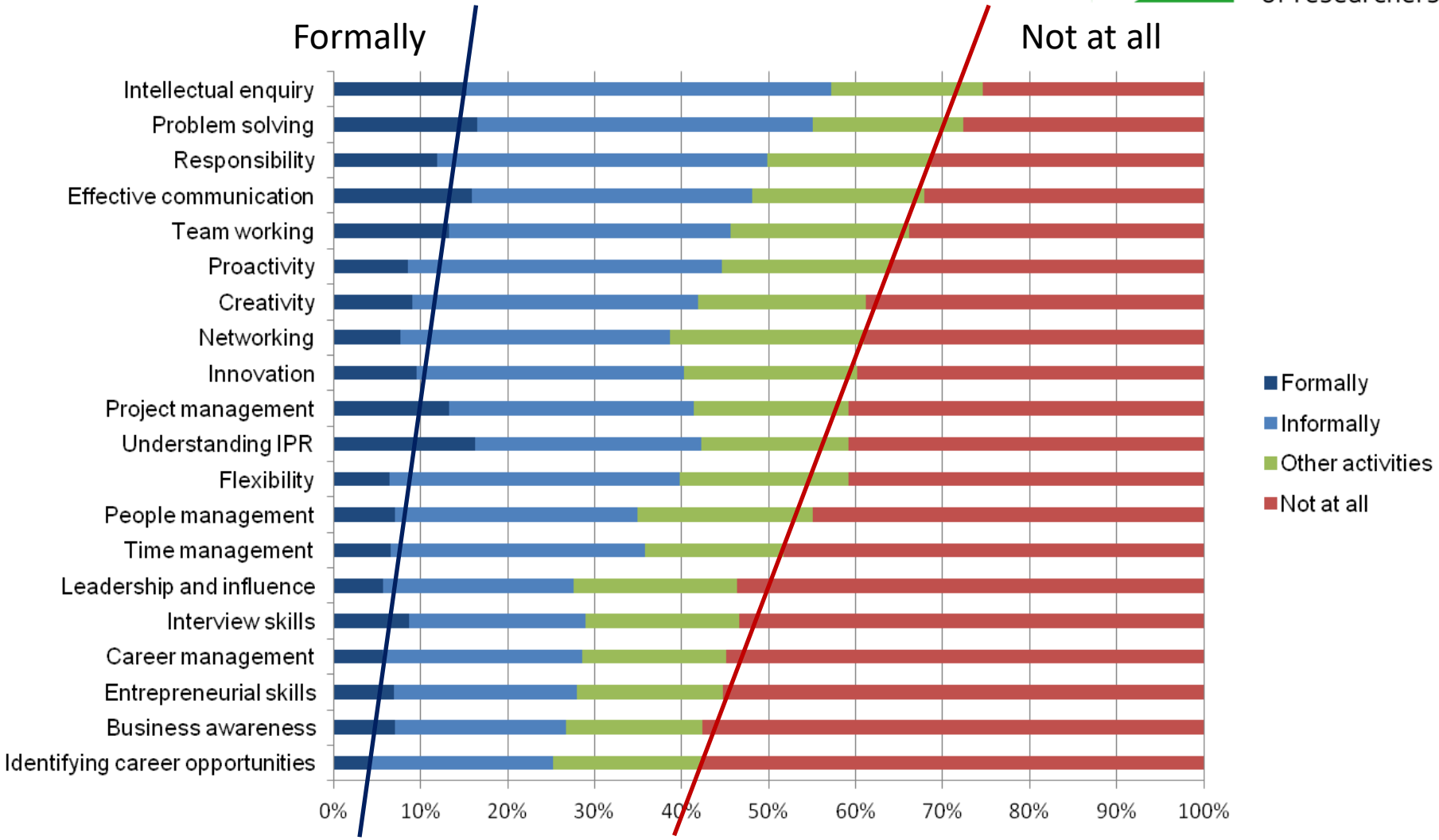
# Development of competencies during doctoral programme

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Professional competencies of doctoral researchers, Eastern European country, 2014

# Employers' expectation of researchers' competencies

| | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Data analysis | 100% | 100% | 91% | 91% |
| Problem Solving | 100% | 88% | 89% | 83% |
| Drive and Motivation | 100% | 84% | 59% | 74% |
| Project Management | 83% | 36% | 70% | 39% |
| Interpersonal Skills | 67% | 56% | 39% | 26% |
| Leadership | 67% | 28% | 24% | 17% |
| Commercial awareness | 50% | 20% | 28% | 22% |
| **Overall** | **81%** | **59%** | **57%** | **50%** |

**Employer categories**

Group 1: actively target doctorates

Group 2: strong interest

Group 3: some interest, occasionally recruit

Group 4: no interest

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Recruiting researchers, 2009, 104 employers

# We also asked…

1. Problem solving
2. Research skills
3. Collaboration
4. Tech/subject expertise
5. Self-organisation
6. Adaptability
7. Creativity
8. Emotional intelligence
9. Communication
10. Project management

**What researchers believe they are good at**

1. Problem solving
2. Tech/subject expertise
3. Research skills
4. Communication
5. Creativity
6. Self-organisation
7. Collaboration
8. Innovation
9. Project management
10. Emotional intelligence

**What employers say they need**

# How well researchers evidence their competencies

| | Very well | Fairly well | Not very well | Not well at all |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Research skills and experience | 60% | 35% | 5% | 0% |
| Professional effectiveness | 16% | 59% | 23% | 1% |
| Self management | 13% | 54% | 29% | 4% |
| People skills | 5% | 38% | 50% | 8% |
| Communication skills | 2% | 24% | 49% | 25% |

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# Most valued in highly-skilled employees

- Problem solving
- Technical / subject expertise
- Research skills
- Communication
- Creativity
- Self-organisation
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Project management
- Emotional intelligence

Motivation / self confidence

Flexibility / agility

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