

SCORE Higher: Using OERs to explore self-assessment for first year postgraduate researchers



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The project

This project seeks to explore how we can use OERs to aid first-year postgraduate researchers (PGRs) in self-assessing their skills base at the start of candidature.

Process

I will select and interview a group of ten new PGRs to establish their knowledge and understanding of the skills listed in the Researcher Development Framework (RDF, below right). I will then create learning materials and test them using the same sample group of PGR students. The students will be observed as they work through the learning activities on a computer; noting their approach, manner of use and any difficulties encountered, in order to evaluate the learning activities. Following an examination of results, the same sample group of PGRs will be interviewed again to establish how their understanding of the RDF skills has changed.

Why OER?

I have chosen to explore self-assessment through OER for three reasons:

1. **Approach** – PGRs come from a variety of different backgrounds and with very different life experiences. OER activities will enable students to work at their own pace and to get what they need from the exercises
2. **Access** – not all PGRs are based on campus; a large percentage are part-time and only visit occasionally, and many work at a distance. Resources available online provide better access both in terms of geography and time
3. **Interaction** – enabling staff from across HE to use and develop these materials in the best way for their students will maximise their value

Questions? Contact me:

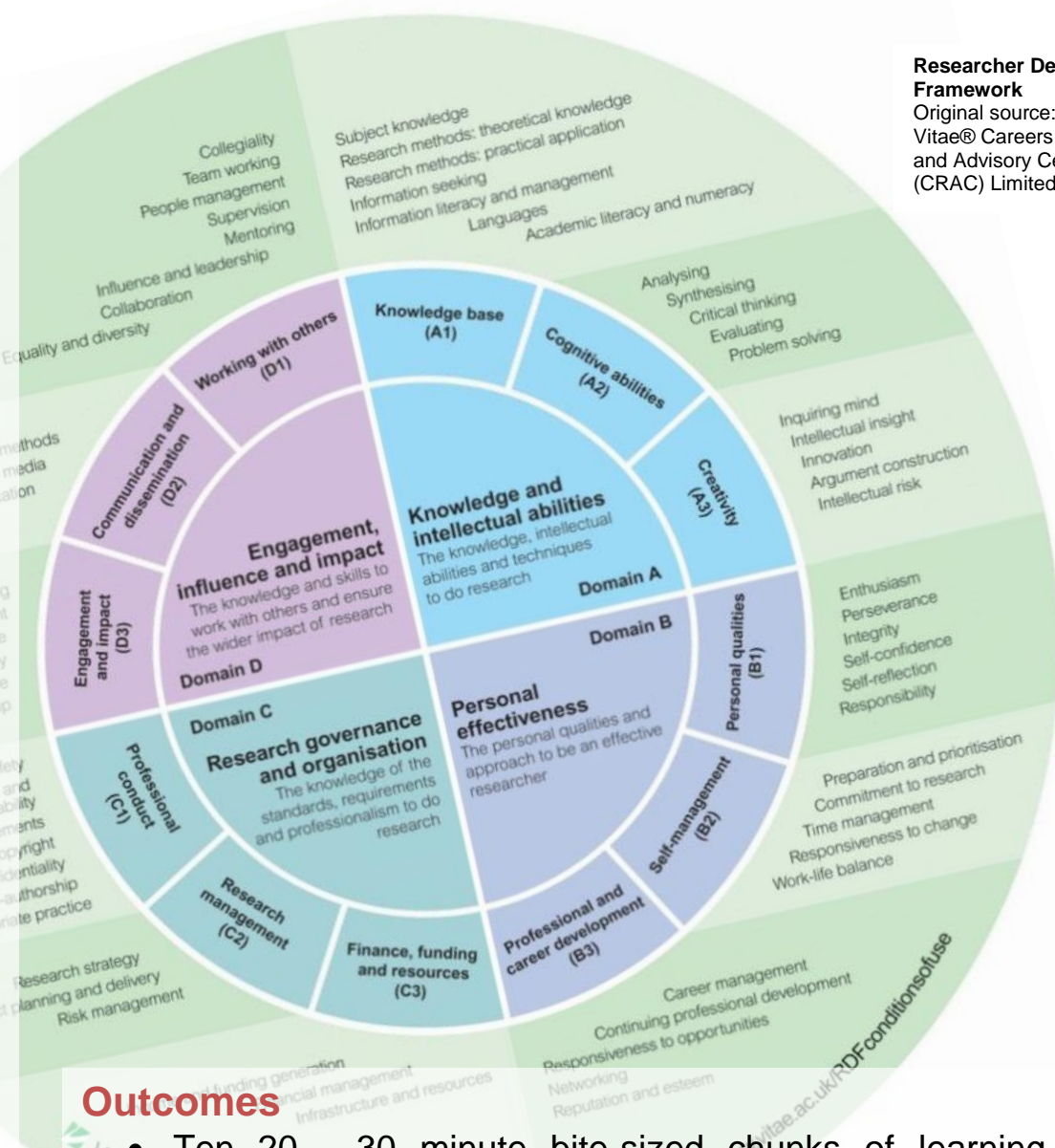
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Using the Researcher Development Framework (RDF)

The project uses the new RDF (below) as a starting point. The RDF is a set of skills, divided into four domains, which the Research Councils UK expect postgraduate researchers to gain during candidature. The four domains are:

- A – Knowledge and intellectual abilities
- B – Personal effectiveness
- C – Research governance and organisation
- D – Engagement, influence and impact

The majority of skills courses across the UK are mapped to the RDF, so helping postgraduate researchers to understand the skills areas covered within the four domains, will enable them to make more informed choices about future training.



Outcomes

- Ten 20 - 30 minute bite-sized chunks of learning activity for PGRs to undertake which will help them to assess their key skills. The key skills have been chosen from the four domains identified in the RDF (above): cognitive abilities (in domain A); self-management (B); research management (C); and communication (D).
- The activities will be self-measuring; PGRs will analyse their results using an answer key, identifying their level of competency in the skill, their learning process and indicating what training to undertake next.

