

# CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN



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**Career development** is most effective when it starts early and becomes a continual activity. Therefore this handbook is aimed at First Stage Researchers (R1) who carry out research under supervision up to the point of obtaining a PhD and to Recognized Researchers (R2) who are PhD holders or equivalent and are not yet fully independent.

You may be at a point at which you are considering your overall career development and growth in academia or be considering a career change. This handbook offers some basic principles for those of you wanting to contemplate on your career to date and to begin to formulate an ongoing career strategy. In the following pages, examples of researchers' stories (CareerStories) that use the recommended processes and tools of the handbook are presented.

CareerStories are intended to explain when and how you can use this handbook in order to plan and manage your career development.

## #CAREERSTORY1

Anna was just accepted as a PhD student at a University in Germany. Her supervisor suggested that they put together a Career Development Plan, as this is a pre-requisite of the University. Anna had no idea where to start. She uses a **SWOT analysis** for her self-assessment and then uses the **PIPERS resources** to find out what skills she needs to develop and how she could go about it. She then created a draft **Action Plan** covering the duration of her PhD studies.

## #CAREERSTORY2

Mark has submitted his PhD thesis and he is waiting for his Viva. Meanwhile he's contemplating what he should do next. He used the **myIDP app** for all the steps of his Career Development Plan. He also went through the **VITAE Researcher Career Stories** and has decided to pursue a career in Academia and gain tenure track position. He uses the **PIPERS resources** to find out how he could develop the necessary skills and the **EURAXESS Jobs Database** to find a postdoc position in his field.

## #CAREERSTORY3

Ruth is half way through a postdoc position she had previously found via **EURAXESS Jobs**. She feels that she wants to see the results of her research taking actual and she's thinking of pursuing a career in industry. She uses the **Career Development Toolkit for Researchers** (jobs.ac.uk) for her self-assessment and after flipping through a **Booklet by Science Careers (Science Journal AAAS)** decides that she wants to pursue a career in consultancy.

## #CAREERSTORY4

Alain after finishing his PhD was able to secure a Marie Skłodowska Curie Individual Fellowship in Portugal. As part of his work during the fellowship, he needs to develop in collaboration with his supervisor a **Career Development Plan**. He uses the **NPA Core Competencies Self-Assessment Checklist** to identify the skills he needs to cultivate and puts together an **Action Plan**.



## WHAT IS A CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

**"Career Development is the lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure, and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future."**<sup>1</sup>

A Career development plan (CDP) helps you explore career possibilities and set goals to follow the career path that fits you best. A CDP is therefore a proactive planning and implementation of steps towards your career goals. Quite simply, it is about setting and implementing goals that are related to your career. Very importantly, the plan can be altered as skills develop, interests change, and career objectives are reconsidered.

## WHY HAVE ONE?

Regardless of your career goals, your next job will not supernaturally appear. The odds of gaining entry into any career dramatically improve if you have a plan. The purpose of such planning is to ensure that your work is clearly focused on achieving your research and professional goals.

There is a body of literature that highlights the value of deliberate career planning. This research finds that people who develop and implement strategies to pursue career-specific goals achieve greater career success as measured by remuneration, promotions, and level of responsibility. They also report greater career satisfaction and rate themselves as more successful than their peers compared to those without career plans. A study of 7600 postdoctoral researchers found that postdocs who developed training plans with their advisers at the start of their appointments reported greater satisfaction, published more papers, and experienced fewer conflicts with those advisers.<sup>4</sup>

A CDP is very beneficial because by developing, implementing and reviewing your plan, you will be able to:<sup>5</sup>

- Better recognise your strengths and identify areas for improvement
- Fully realise and maximise your potential as both a researcher and a research leader
- Be more proactive in seeking and making most use of the development opportunities that are available within and outside your Organisation
- Equip you with more advanced skills, knowledge and techniques to carry out excellent research
- Improve your ability to work effectively in your current role and preparing for future positions you may aspire to hold, within or beyond your Organisation
- Become a world-class researcher, who can make a real-world impact on the wider environment
- Successfully pursue your career aspirations either in academia or beyond

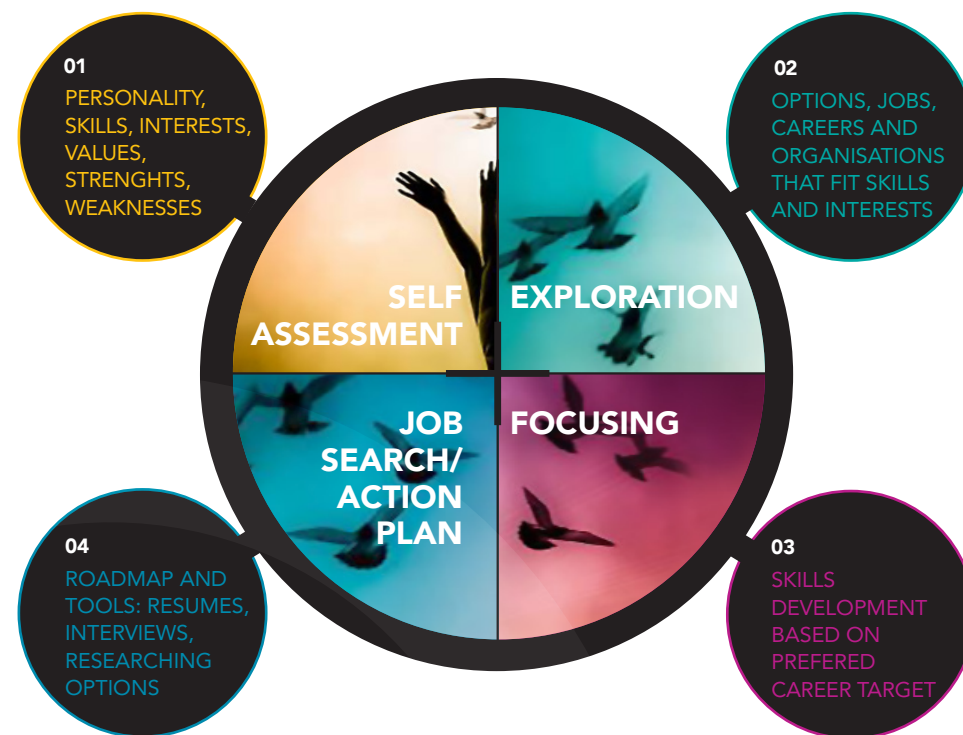
1 Source: Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (2012)  
2 Ng T. W. H, Eby L. T., Sorensen K. L., and Feldman D. C. (2005). "Predictors of objective and subjective career success: A meta-analysis." *Personnel Psychology*, 58, 367–408.  
3 Abele A. E. and Wiese B. S. (2008). "The nomological network of self-management strategies and career success." *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 81, 733-749.  
4 Davis G. (2005). "Doctors Without Orders." *American Scientist*, 93 (3), supplement 1-13.  
5 Aston University ECR's Career Development Plan

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The following diagram serves as a visual guide for understanding the steps we encourage you to take in your career development and decision making process<sup>6</sup>. It is meant to be a dynamic process with movement back and forth between stages, though it is recommend you begin by building self-awareness. Whenever you consider a career change, you can employ these same steps. The details may differ but the process is essentially the same.



<sup>6</sup> Peter S. Fiske, Putting Your Degree to Work, APS February 26, 2012



Adapted from Peter S. Fiske, Putting Your Degree to Work, APS February 26, 2012.

It is important to note that the career planning process never ends. At various points in your career, you may have to go back to the beginning, or to any phase as you redefine yourself and your goals. For example, you may decide to change your career or you may have to figure out how to pursue better options in your current one.

In the following chapters, a **short description of each step** is further described and a table containing different **tools to support you in each stage** is provided.





## STEP 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT

### INTERESTS & SKILLS

The first step in career planning should be a self-assessment, i.e. to gather information about your skills, abilities and interests, which will assist you in making a decision about a career.

Self-assessment is important in career choice because it helps you select careers based on your unique personality, skills, interests and values. This step done early-on can help you prevent years of needless frustration that can come about as a result of choosing a career that doesn't work well with these factors. A self-assessment is also important in discovering new career paths that may not have been considered previously. You can use this information to be more open to other careers available in new and developing industries. Additionally, doing a self-assessment can help you identify areas of weakness where more training or education can help you develop existing skills into a long-lasting career.

During a self-assessment, you gather information about yourself to make an informed career decision. A self-assessment should include a look at your skills, values, interests, and personality<sup>7</sup>.

- **Skills:** the activities you are good at, such as writing, computer programming, and teaching. An aptitude may be a natural skill or one you acquired
- **Values:** the things that are important to you, like achievement, status, and autonomy
- **Interests:** what you enjoy doing, i.e., playing golf, taking long walks and hanging out with friends
- **Personality:** your individual traits, motivational drives, needs and attitudes

<sup>7</sup> Reardon, R. C., Lenz, J. G., Peterson, G. W., & Sampson, J. P. (2017). Career Development & Planning: A Comprehensive Approach (5th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The following table includes a set of tools designed specifically to assist you (early stage researchers, ESR) in your self-assessment process. The list is non-exhaustive.

| TOOL   | TYPE OF DOCUMENT  | DESCRIPTION   | LINK  |
|--|---|---|---|
| SWOT <sup>8</sup> Analysis   | Self-Administered Questionnaire / Diagram   | Think about your skills and areas for development and organise key information into an overview   | <a href="#">Scientific Article on Self SWOT Analysis with Templates</a>                           |
| myIDP <sup>9</sup> - Step 1: Skills Assessment   | Web-based career-planning tool created specifically for graduate students and postdocs      | Includes knowledge and skills emphasized in graduate and postdoctoral training and needed to succeed in a research career, as well as skills that aren't a formal part of this training but are fundamental to a wide range of science-related jobs                 | <a href="#">myIDP Online Tool</a><br><a href="#">Science Careers Article on Skills Assessment</a> |
| 'No limits' toolkit : Values and Motivations Tab   | Online Platform created to support researchers in the proactive development of their career | The toolkit includes advice, quizzes and resources to help you explore your values and motivations and understand why these should inform your career development   | <a href="#">'No limits' toolkit</a>   |
| Career Development Toolkit for Researchers <sup>11</sup> - Section 1 Stop and take stock | Self-Administered Exercises aimed at post-doctoral researchers with 1-2 years' experience   | Review your career and experience and to reflect on your career decision making to this point   | <a href="#">Career Development Toolkit for Researchers E-book</a>                                 |
| NPA Core Competencies Self-Assessment Checklist <sup>12</sup>                            | Self-Administered Skills Checklist for post-doctoral researchers                            | Rate your current level of development in each of the six NPA Core Competencies. These competencies are meant to serve as a basis for self-evaluation and for developing training opportunities that can be evaluated by mentors, institutions, and other advisors  | <a href="#">NPA Competencies Checklist</a><br><a href="#">NPA Competencies Description</a>        |
| Talent Development Suite   | Self-Administered Instrument for researchers  | Consists of four different types of assessment: Future, Present, Past and Personal Journey Map. The tool does not evaluate researchers' skills and abilities but focuses on a researcher's vision, i.e. assistance to find out what their dreams for the future are | <a href="#">EURAXESS Career Development Website</a>   |

8 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis (SWOT)

9 MyIDP, is an interactive, free, web-based career-planning tool which guides you through a 4 step process: self-assessment, career exploration, goal-setting and plan implementation. The tool is based on the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology's (FASEB's) Individual Development Plan for Postdoctoral Fellows and is available by Science Careers, part of the AAAS group.

10 'No limits' toolkit is a career orientation tool supported by EURAXESS which provides resources and information on Values and Motivations, Skills, Career Options and Development Plan.

11 Career Development Toolkit is an e-book divided into three main sections: stop and take stock, assessing your academic career progress and planning and considering alternative career options. The e-book is published by jobs.ac.uk which is operated from and by the University of Warwick.

12 The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) Self-Assessment Checklist lists six core competencies essential to postdoctoral researchers to achieving intellectual and professional independence and success. The Checklist has been developed by NPA, a non-profit organization of post-doctoral researchers.



## STEP 2: EXPLORATION

### WHAT'S OUT THERE & WHERE TO LOOK

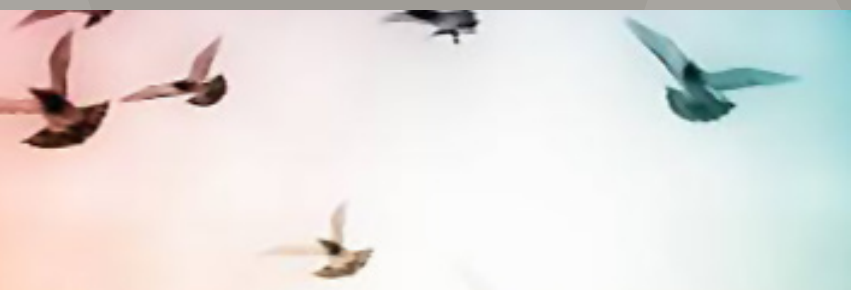
The second step in career planning is to explore and research your options. Exploring takes your self-assessment a step further by looking at your personal interests, skills, values, and work-life needs and narrowing down areas of possibilities.

Career Exploration is an important step as by investigating the world of work, you learn about career exploration considerations, what employers want from employees and how to explore new opportunities. The most important is to determine what occupations and jobs best match your skills, interests, values and personality. Ideally, you engage in career exploration during or after identifying your career preferences through self-assessment.

Initially, you can use online and print resources to get a job description; learn about specific job duties; and gather labour market information including median salaries and job outlooks. After completing this preliminary research, you can start eliminating professions that don't appeal to you and get more details about those that do.

According to [targetpostgrad.com](https://targetpostgrad.com), sectors and types of work likely to match the skills and aspirations of PhD graduates include the following:

- Education (teaching): teach your subject in schools or to lecture in a further education (FE) college.
- Education (administrative and professional roles): non-teaching roles in universities and other educational institutions (PhD graduates are valued for their administrative skills and understanding of the research environment).
- Public sector: roles within the Civil Service, government agencies and local government where you can use your analytical, research and communication skills.
- Industry research and development: continue your research in commercial and industrial environments, for example in the medical, pharmaceutical and engineering sectors.
- Healthcare sector and medical research: the health sector is a relatively common destination for PhD graduates who wish to continue or build on their area of research in the NHS or public research institutes.
- Business and finance: jobs are available in areas such as investment and retail banking, insurance and pensions. Specialist quantitative and statistical training and high-level analytical and communication skills are particularly valued.
- Consultancy and think tanks: your ability to work on projects and to devise novel solutions to problems are of value in a range of management consultancy and policy analysis contexts, such as business and finance, technology and IT.
- Publishing: the analytical and writing skills developed preparing papers and writing a thesis are essential skills for the publishing sector. You may be well-placed for editorial roles.
- Intellectual property (IP): jobs are available for science, engineering or technology PhD graduates who are looking to put their skills in lateral thinking and writing into practice, in roles such as patent attorney work.
- Not-for-profit sector: research and policy opportunities in charities, voluntary and non-governmental organisations.
- Entrepreneurial activities: whether developing a spin-out from your PhD or doing something completely new, the independence, problem-solving and creative-thinking developed during your PhD mean that you may be suited to starting your own business.



## EXPLORATION TOOLS

The following table includes a set of tools designed specifically to assist you (early stage researchers, ESR) in your career exploration process. The list is non-exhaustive.

| TOOL  | TYPE OF DOCUMENT   | DESCRIPTION  | LINK   |
|---|--|--|--|
| myIDP <sup>13</sup> - Step 2: Career Exploration          | Web-based career-planning tool created specifically for graduate students and postdocs   | Helps you use your self-assessment as a guide for exploring and evaluating career opportunities in your field and identifying your preferred career, as well as an alternative   | <a href="#">myIDP Online Tool</a><br><a href="#">Science Careers Article on using self-assessment results</a><br><a href="#">Science Careers Article on choosing career paths</a><br><a href="#">Science Careers Article on networking</a> |
| 'No limits' toolkit <sup>14</sup> : Career Options Tab    | Online Platform created to support researchers in the proactive development of their career  | The toolkit includes advice and resources to help you investigate your career options  | <a href="#">'No limits' toolkit</a>  |
| Booklets by Science Careers (Science Journal AAAS)        | A series of booklets by highly qualified individuals covering the basics and more advanced matters around pursuing a career in science | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Science Careers 2018 Career Handbook</li><li>• Step by Step: Your Career from Undergrad to Postdoc</li><li>• Career Trends: Industry or Academia: Where do I fit in?</li><li>• Career Trends: Careers Away from the Bench</li><li>• Career Trends: Finding Your Personal Job Chemistry</li></ul> | <a href="#">2018 Career Handbook Booklet: From Undergrad to Postdoc</a><br><a href="#">Booklet: Industry or Academia</a><br><a href="#">Booklet: Away from the Bench</a><br><a href="#">Booklet: Job Chemistry</a>                         |
| Career Webinars by Science Careers (Science Journal AAAS) | A series of webinars by highly qualified individuals covering the basics and more advanced matters around pursuing a career in science | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thinking outside the lab: Finding a fulfilling non-research career</li><li>• Facts and Fiction: Careers in Industry and Academia</li><li>• Nontraditional Careers: Opportunities Away From the Bench</li></ul>   | <a href="#">Webinar: Fulfilling non-research career</a><br><a href="#">Webinar: Careers in Industry and Academia</a><br><a href="#">Webinar: Opportunities Away from the Bench</a>   |

<sup>13</sup> MyIDP, is an interactive, free, web-based career-planning tool which guides you through a 4 step process: self-assessment, career exploration, goal-setting and plan implementation. The tool is based on the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology's (FASEB's) Individual Development Plan for Postdoctoral Fellows and is available by Science Careers, part of the AAAS group.

<sup>14</sup> 'No limits' toolkit is a career orientation tool supported by EURAXESS which provides resources and information on Values and Motivations, Skills, Career Options and Development Plan.



| TOOL                                    | TYPE OF DOCUMENT   | DESCRIPTION   | LINK   |
|---|--|---|--|
| 10 Career Paths for PhDs                | An e-book targeted at those considering or at an early stage of an academic career   | This e-book helps you explore options outside academia and identify your transferable skills  | <a href="#">E-book: 10 Career Paths for PhDs</a>   |
| PROSPECTS <sup>15</sup> Job Sectors     | UK's biggest graduate careers website  | Descriptions of a variety of roles arranged by sector for browsing. This site also generates ideas based on values/ motivations   | <a href="#">Prospects Job Sectors</a>  |
| O*NET <sup>16</sup> OnLine Database     | A database, containing hundreds of standardized and occupation-specific descriptors on almost 1,000 occupations covering the entire U.S. economy | O*NET OnLine has detailed descriptions of the world of work for use by job seekers, workforce development and HR professionals, students, researchers, and more   | <a href="#">O*NET OnLine Database</a>  |
| TARGETjobs <sup>17</sup> Career Sectors | Website for graduate and school leaver recruitment services  | Includes case studies, application, progression and reward information. Information on a range of careers by sector, including 'graduate career sectors'  | <a href="#">TARGETjobs Career Sectors</a>  |
| Job Search Sites                        | Various Websites offering Job Search Tools   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EURAXESS Jobs</li> <li>• Academic Positions</li> <li>• Researchgate Jobs</li> <li>• LinkedIn Jobs</li> <li>• European Personnel Selection Office</li> </ul>  | <a href="#">EURAXESS Jobs</a><br><a href="#">Academic Positions</a><br><a href="#">Researchgate Jobs</a><br><a href="#">LinkedIn Jobs</a><br><a href="#">European Personnel Selection Office</a> |
| Direct requests                         | Direct contact with recruiting companies.  | You may contact (or be contacted) by job search firms or agencies that have open positions. If considering a search firm, choose one that specializes in your discipline or industry, and be sure to do your due diligence into their approach and track record |  |

15 Website by the Careers Organisation "Higher Education Careers Services Unit", registered charity in United Kingdom

16 The Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) is developed under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA) through a grant to the North Carolina Department of Commerce.

17 Website by GTI Media Ltd, one of UK and Ireland's providers of recruitment services.

## STEP 3: FOCUSING HOW TO GET THERE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The third step in career planning is improving your skills in order to match your desired career. Skill development means developing yourself and your skill sets to add value for your own career development and future employer.

Improving your skills is a key part of your professional development. The skills you choose to work on may be skills that you need to build now for future success (presentation skills for future job talks, for example), or skills necessary for success in your current training (such as particular research skills, writing skills, and so on). If you focus on improving one to three specific skills this year, and then do the same during each year of your training, then you will be much better prepared for your next career move (and likely more successful during your training).

Setting skill-development goals is like creating your own curriculum. For each skill that you want to improve, you can set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely) goals for how you will get training, practice the skill, and get feedback (training, practice, feedback cycle). To become a better team player, for example, you may want to attend a workshop on teamwork. Then, to maximize your development of this skill, you can practice the techniques you learn in the workshop in your everyday interactions with your team group and collaborators. You can then get feedback from trusted colleagues, your supervisor, or whoever is available and willing.

## WHAT ARE THE MAIN SKILLS NEEDED?

Developing your skills begins with assessing which skills are important for your desired career development. The following skills sets have been chosen based on their close proximity to early stage researchers interests and career paths.

## SKILLS FOR ACADEMIA

The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) has established six core competencies to offer guidance to individual postdoctoral scholars who must seek out relevant training experiences, in collaboration with mentors, institutions, and other advisors who provide this training. These competencies are meant to serve primarily as: (1) a basis for self-evaluation by postdoctoral scholars, and (2) a basis for developing training opportunities that can be evaluated by mentors, institutions, and other advisors.

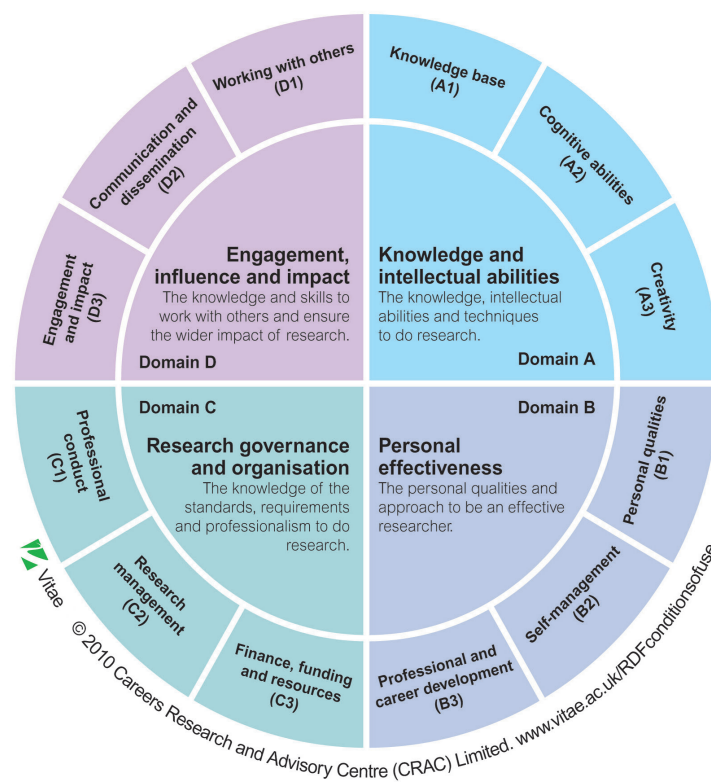
### NATIONAL POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATION SKILLS TO ACHIEVE INTELLECTUAL AND PROFESSIONAL INDEPENDENCE & SUCCESS

DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC CONCEPTUAL KNOWLEDGE  
RESEARCH SKILL DEVELOPMENT  
COMMUNICATION SKILLS

PROFESSIONALISM  
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS  
RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH (RCR)

## VITAE RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (RDF)

The Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) is structured into four domains covering the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of researchers. It sets out the wide-ranging knowledge, intellectual abilities, techniques and professional standards expected to do research, as well as the personal qualities, knowledge and skills to work with others and ensure the wider impact of research. Within each of the domains there are three sub-domains and associated descriptors. The Framework is grounded in research through interviews and focus groups with over 100 researchers and additional expertise from specialists and stakeholders.



## SKILLS FOR INDUSTRY

EURAXIND project aimed to develop resources to support researchers and institutions to increase industry and research collaboration opportunities and for institutions and industry to promote these opportunities. The overall objective of the project was therefore to develop key resources to support industry, institutions and researchers in this endeavour. In this framework, through an extensive literature review, the following set of skills that industrial employers expect from academic researchers has been identified:

### EURAXIND<sup>18</sup> HIGH LEVEL SKILLS INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYERS EXPECT FROM ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS

COMMUNICATION SKILLS  
ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS  
PROBLEM-SOLVING  
FLEXIBILITY  
LEADERSHIP SKILLS

CONFIDENCE  
ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS  
TEAMWORK  
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

<sup>18</sup> EURAXIND Literature review of employers' needs in enhancing intersectoral mobility <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/reports/euraxind-literature-review-of-employers-needs-in-enhancing-intersectoral-mobility.pdf>

## WHERE & HOW TO GET TRAINING FOR THESE SKILLS?

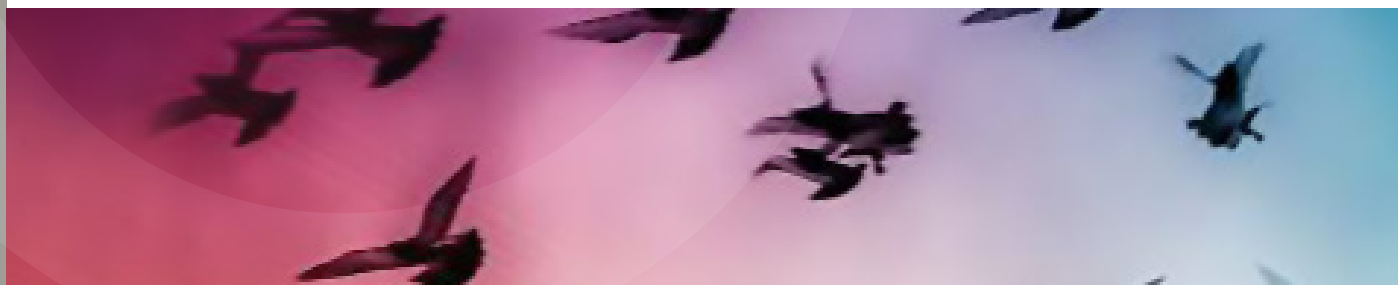
The variety of career options available at present demands a diverse set of skills, such as grant proposal writing, communication and dissemination methods and effective resource management, which are often left aside during PhD study and postdoctoral research.

Many of the skills mentioned above can be acquired using informal methods such as one-on-one mentoring, informal talks, and group meetings. They can also be learned through team work, problem solving and social interaction with colleagues and collaborators. Informal processes implied in these activities, require discussing, observing and asking questions, and could be either intentional or incidental. All of these however may not be feasible in today's large interdisciplinary research groups with demanding schedules. Nor is it appropriate to assume that every mentor will have the capacity required to teach all of these topics. Therefore, formal training is an important addition to informal methods.

Effective formal teaching methods however, must follow your optimal learning style and the technological limits of your Organisation. No one didactic method works for all members of an audience. Many trainees benefit from accessible, individualized online courses while others would benefit from focused group discussions or educational lectures. The majority of Organisations run specific training programs in transferable and generic research skills that is offered to all research postgraduates, so your first step might be to contact your administration. Other skill development tools are described in the following table.

Nevertheless, to achieve long-term improvement of a skill, you should consider using the below cycle of training-practice-feedback several times over several months:

1. **Get training:** Attend a workshop, take a course, read an article or book, observe someone who excels at the skill.
2. **Practice:** Consider ways you can deliberately use the skill in your everyday work
3. **Get feedback:** Assess your progress and identify areas where you have improved and areas for continued growth.





## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

The following table includes a set of tools designed specifically to assist you (early stage researchers, ESR) in your skills development process. The list is non-exhaustive.

| TOOL  | TYPE OF DOCUMENT   | DESCRIPTION  | LINK  |
|---|--|--|---|
| myIDP <sup>19</sup> - Step 3: Goal Setting  | Web-based career-planning tool created specifically for graduate students and postdocs   | Once you have identified your preferred career path, the third step is to set goals, which help you move forward - one step at a time  | <a href="#">myIDP Online Tool</a><br><a href="#">Science Careers Article on setting goals and strategies</a>  |
| 'No limits' toolkit <sup>20</sup> : Skills Tab  | Online Platform created to support researchers in the proactive development of their career  | The toolkit includes advice, quizzes and resources to help you recognise, articulate, demonstrate and develop your skills, expertise and experience  | <a href="#">'No limits' toolkit</a>   |
| Discover: careers beyond academia   | EURAXESS online guide about careers in sectors outside academia  | The guide is addressed to early stage researchers and includes sections on sector information, jobs & competencies, career planning and career stories   | <a href="#">EURAXESS-Discover: careers beyond academia</a>  |
| Career Development Toolkit for Researchers <sup>21</sup> - Section 2: Assessing your academic career progress | Self-Administered Exercises aimed at post-doctoral researchers with 1-2 years' experience  | Assessing your academic career progress and planning for the future. This section will focus on the key areas of academic career development and offer prompts for your career analysis, with suggestions for future actions and tips on how to follow up on these | <a href="#">E-book Career Development Toolkit for Researchers</a>   |
| Career Development Toolkit for Researchers- Section 3: Considering other career options                       | Self-Administered Exercises aimed at post-doctoral researchers with 1-2 years' experience  | Considering alternative career options. In this part of the toolkit you will be encouraged to use the reflections on your experience undertaken in section one to investigate other career options   | <a href="#">E-book Career Development Toolkit for Researchers</a>   |
| Booklets by Science Careers (Science Journal AAAS)  | A series of booklets by highly qualified individuals covering the basics and more advanced matters around pursuing a career in science | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Career Trends: Building Relationships</li><li>• Career Trends: Developing Your Skills</li><li>• Career Trends: Transferring Your Skills</li></ul>  | <a href="#">Booklet: Building Relationships</a><br><a href="#">Booklet: Developing your Skills</a><br><a href="#">Booklet: Transferring your Skills</a> |
| Career Webinars by Science Careers (Science Journal AAAS)   | A series of webinars by highly qualified individuals covering the basics and more advanced matters around pursuing a career in science | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Networking: Building Solid Career Connections</li><li>• Effective Lab Skills: Managing People, Projects, and Money</li></ul>   | <a href="#">Webinar: Building Solid Career Connections</a><br><a href="#">Webinar: Effective Lab Skills</a>   |

19 MyIDP, is an interactive, free, web-based career-planning tool which guides you through a 4 step process: self-assessment, career exploration, goal-setting and plan implementation. The tool is based on the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology's (FASEB's) Individual Development Plan for Postdoctoral Fellows and is available by Science Careers, part of the AAAS group.

20 'No limits' toolkit is a career orientation tool supported by EURAXESS which provides resources and information on Values and Motivations, Skills, Career Options and Development Plan.

21 Career Development Toolkit is an e-book divided into three main sections: stop and take stock, assessing your academic career progress and planning and considering alternative career options. The e-book is published by jobs.ac.uk which is operated from and by the University of Warwick.

## STEP 4: ACTION PLAN

Here you plan the steps you need to take to put your plan into action. Use all you have learnt about your skills, interests and values together with the information you have gathered about the world of work to create your plan. During this step, you will write a career action plan. It will serve as a guide to reaching your ultimate goal of getting a job in the career you deemed to be a good match. Identify what long-term and short-term goals you will have to reach to get to the ultimate one.

Begin by asking yourself:

- What actions/steps will help me achieve my work, training and career goals?
- Where can I get help?
- Who will support me?

At the end of this step you will have:

- a plan to help you explore your options further (eg work experience, work shadowing or more research); or
- a plan which sets out the steps to help you achieve your next learning or work goal.

## ACTION PLAN TOOLS

The following table includes a set of tools designed specifically to assist you (early stage researchers, ESR) in your action plan process. The list is non-exhaustive.

| TOOL   | TYPE OF DOCUMENT  | DESCRIPTION   | LINK  |
|--|---|---|---|
| myIDP <sup>22</sup> – Step 4: Plan Implementation  | Web-based career-planning tool created specifically for graduate students and postdocs  | The fourth and final step is to implement your plan by completing task and meeting deadlines according to your specific goals   | <a href="#">myIDP Online Tool</a><br><a href="#">Science Careers Article on Plan Implementation</a><br><a href="#">Science Careers Article on Mentoring</a> |
| 'No limits' toolkit <sup>23</sup> : Development Plan Tab   | Online Platform created to support researchers in the proactive development of their career   | The toolkit includes advice and resources to help you make a great development plan   | <a href="#">'No limits' toolkit</a>   |
| Marie Skłodowska Curie Development Plan Template   | Self-administered Form for post-doctoral researchers  | The Plan is an outline of all the activities (i.e. planned publications, development of nonresearch skills) that you will undertake during your fellowship with the goal of improving your professional and academic standing for the long-term | <a href="#">Annex I</a>   |
| The 5 Minute Career Action Plan <sup>24</sup>  | A booklet with Action Plan Template   | This booklet is for anyone who is short of time and wants a structured approach to their career planning  | <a href="#">Booklet: The 5 Minute Career Action Plan</a>  |
| REFLEX Online Application  | An online application developed to help the research institutions, researchers and professionals in process of researchers' career development. | The scheme identifies key areas of researchers' professional development and provides the examples of activities that can be carried out to support you in all of these areas.  | <a href="#">REFLEX App</a>  |
| Booklets by Science Careers (Science Journal AAAS)   | A series of booklets by highly qualified individuals covering the basics and more advanced matters around pursuing a career in science          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career Trends: Resources and Advice on the Basics</li> <li>• Career Trends: The Informed Job Search</li> </ul>   | <a href="#">Booklet: Resources and Advice on the Basics</a><br><a href="#">Booklet: The Informed Job Search</a>   |
| Career Webinars by Science Careers (Science Journal AAAS)  | A series of webinars by highly qualified individuals covering the basics and more advanced matters around pursuing a career in science          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job Searching for Scientists: Tools, Tips, and Essentials</li> </ul>   | <a href="#">Webinar: Tools, Tips and Essentials</a>   |
| Building Academic Job Applications: A Quick & Practical Guide for Early Career Researchers <sup>24</sup> | A booklet targeted at those at an early stage of their academic career  | This resource has been designed to offer practical suggestions and advice to assist in applications for jobs in Academia  | <a href="#">Booklet: Building Academic Job Applications</a>   |

<sup>22</sup> MyIDP, is an interactive, free, web-based career-planning tool which guides you through a 4 step process: self-assessment, career exploration, goal-setting and plan implementation. The tool is based on the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology's (FASEB's) Individual Development Plan for Postdoctoral Fellows and is available by Science Careers, part of the AAAS group.

<sup>23</sup> 'No limits' toolkit is a career orientation tool supported by EURAXESS which provides resources and information on Values and Motivations, Skills, Career Options and Development Plan.

<sup>24</sup> The 5 Minute Career Action Plan and The Building Academic Job Applications Guide is published by jobs.ac.uk which is operated from and by the University of Warwick.

## EURAXESS CAREER SERVICES: «SUPPORT FOR YOUR PERSONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT”

EURAXESS is an inspiring and effective network, aiming to make Europe more attractive for international researchers through providing them with clear information on funding, jobs and administrative procedures in all European countries. General information on EURAXESS is available [here](#) and in the video [here](#).

## EURAXESS CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES FOR RESEARCHERS

There is a common agreement that better trained and informed about their career options researchers will do better science and will be more inter-sectoral and inter-discipline mobile. EURAXESS supports you through your career development process, whether it is about engaging with academia or Industry, with the help of useful information, training resources, its career development centres, and more. You can find a plethora of useful information and tools that have been developed specifically for researchers in the dedicated section of EURAXESS website available [here](#).

## EURAXESS CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTRES

Career development services, information and tools are important and necessary to support and advise researchers. EURAXESS provides a free service that research institutions can make use of for researchers, with dedicated staff providing advice on career development opportunities. EURAXESS supports you through the process, with the help of its 40+ career development centers, useful information, training resources and many more! Further information is available [here](#).

## MSCA PERSONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN TEMPLATE 2016

### Career Development Plan-Year 1 (Draft)

Name of fellow:

Department:

Name of Supervisor:

Date:

### BRIEF OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH PROJECT AND MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS EXPECTED (half page should be sufficient):

#### LONG-TERM CAREER OBJECTIVES (over 5 years):

1. Goals:
2. What further research activity or other training is needed to attain these goals?

#### SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES (1-2 years):

1. Research results
  - Anticipated publications:
  - Anticipated conference, workshop attendance, courses, and /or seminar presentations:
2. Research Skills and techniques:
  - Training in specific new areas, or technical expertise etc:
3. Research management:
  - Fellowship or other funding applications planned (indicate name of award if known; include fellowships with entire funding periods, grants written/applied for/received, professional society presentation awards or travel awards, etc.)
4. Communication skills:
5. Other professional training (course work, teaching activity):
6. Anticipated networking opportunities:
7. Other activities (community, etc) with professional relevance:

Date & Signature of fellow

Date & Signature of supervisor

**Career Development Plan-Final year**  
(Draft)

**BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS, ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE (half page should be sufficient):**

**LONG-TERM CAREER OBJECTIVES (over 5 years):**

If relevant, mention any adjustments to your long-term career objectives as a result of the training received.

**SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED DURING THE TRAINING PERIOD:**

1. Research results
  - Publications (incl. in press):
  - Conference, workshop attendance, courses, and /or seminar presentations:
2. Research Skills and techniques acquired:
  - Training in specific new areas, or technical expertise etc:
3. Research management:
  - Fellowship or other funding applications achieved (indicate name of award if known; include fellowships with entire funding periods, grants written/applied for/received, professional society presentation awards or travel awards, etc.)
4. Communication skills:
5. Other professional training (course work, teaching activity):
6. Anticipated networking opportunities
7. Other activities (community, etc) with professional relevance:

Date & Signature of fellow

Date & Signature of supervisor





## CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN GUIDANCE ON SOME OF THE COMPETENCIES EXPECTED

The following points are a non-exhaustive series of aspects that could be covered by the career development plan, and it is relevant to the short-term objectives that will be set by the researcher and the reviewer at the beginning of the fellowship period. The objectives should be set with respect to the skills and experience that each researcher should acquire at a given time of his/her career. A postgraduate researcher at PhD level will have very different needs compared to a post-doctoral researcher at an advanced stage of his/her professional development. These objectives should be revised at the end of the fellowship and should be used as a pro-active monitoring of progress in the researcher's career.

### 1. Research results.

These should give an overview of the main direct results obtained as a consequence of the research carried out during the training period. It may include publications, conference, workshop attendance, courses, and /or seminar presentations, patents etc. This will vary according to the area of research and the type of results most common to each field. The information at this level should be relatively general since the career development plan does not strictly constitute a report on the scientific results achieved.

### 2. Research Skills and techniques acquired.

Competence in experimental design, quantitative and qualitative methods, relevant research methodologies, data capture, statistics, analytical skills.  
Original, independent and critical thinking.  
Critical analysis and evaluation of one's findings and those of others  
Acquisition of new expertise in areas and techniques related to the researcher's field and adequate understanding their appropriate application  
Foresight and technology transfer, grasp of ethics and appreciation of IPPR.

### 3. Research management.

Ability to successfully identify and secure possible sources of funding for personal and team research as appropriate.  
Project management skills relating to proposals and tenders work programming, supervision, deadlines and delivery, negotiation with funders, financial planning, and resource management.  
Skills appropriate to working with others and in teams and in teambuilding.

### 4. Communication skills.

Personal presentation skills, poster presentations, skills in report writing and preparing academic papers and books.  
To be able to defend research outcomes at seminars, conferences, etc.  
Contribute to promote public understanding of one's own field.

### 5. Other professional training (course work, teaching activity):

Involvement in teaching, supervision or mentoring.

### 6. Anticipated networking opportunities.

Develop/maintain co-operative networks and working relationships as appropriate with supervisor/peers/colleagues within the institution and the wider research community.

### 7. Other activities (community, etc) with professional relevance.

Issues related with career management, including transferable skills, management of own career progression, ways to develop employability, awareness of what potential employers are looking for when considering CV applications etc.





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