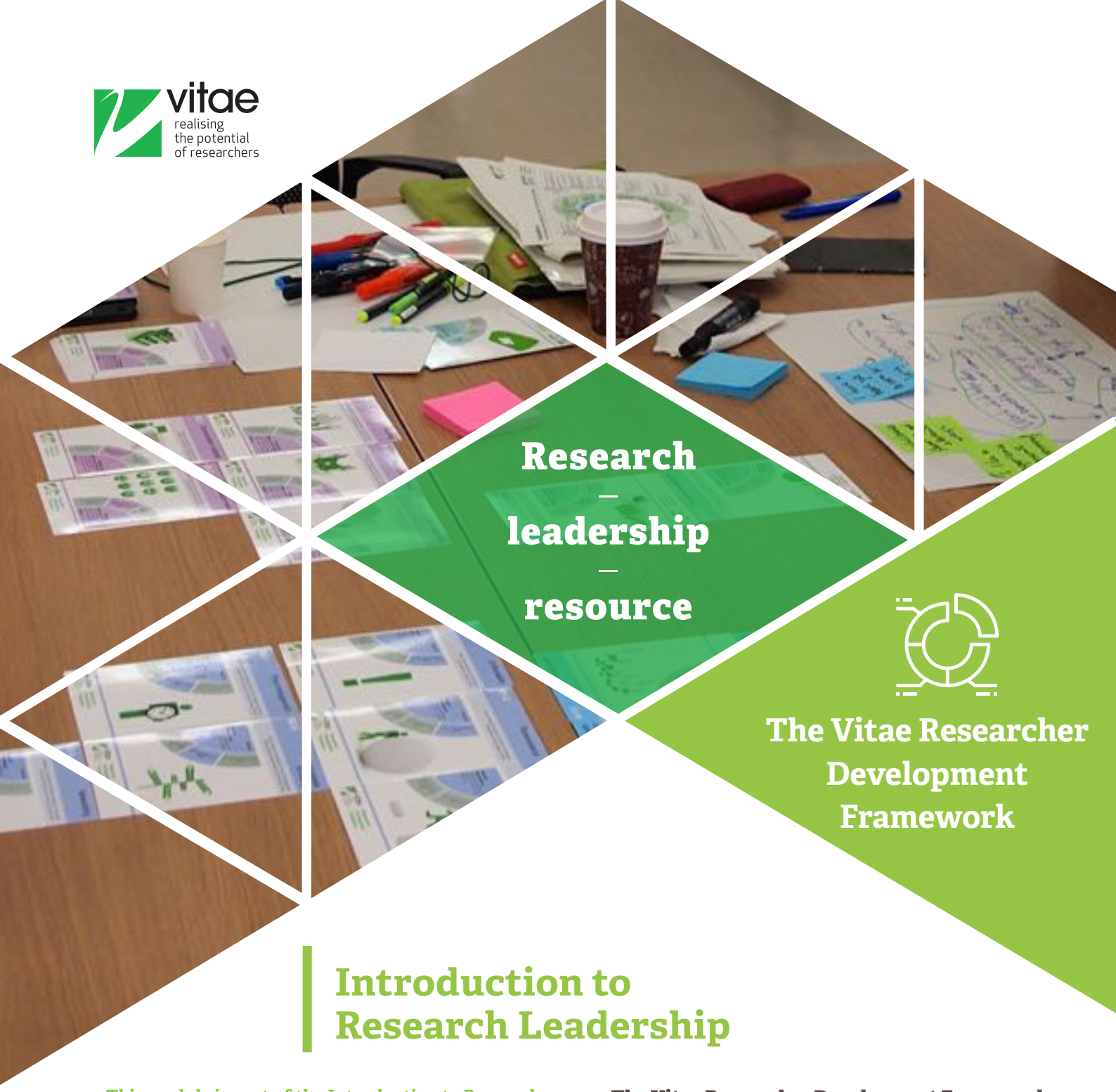


vitae
realising
the potential
of researchers

Research
—
leadership
—
resource

The Vitae Researcher Development Framework

Introduction to Research Leadership

This module is part of the Introduction to Research Leadership series of resources, which provides an introduction to leadership theory, skills, behaviours, and attributes for researchers who aspire to a research leadership position.

These resources were created by Vitae, a UK-based non-profit programme that supports the professional and career development of researchers globally. The resources are designed as a practical guide for you to use at an individual level. Depending on your preference and the amount of time you have available, you can focus on just one or two modules or work through all of the modules in the series at a pace that suits you.

The Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) is specific to researchers and has been designed as an inspirational guide to self-development and to help you to make the most of your strengths. We refer to it throughout these leadership resources. The RDF describes the knowledge, behaviours and attributes that the higher education sector has identified as significant in creating highly successful researchers.

The core of the RDF has been determined and defined by the research profession. It is the result of a robust research process including interviews and focus groups with over 100 researchers, extensive consultation and additional expertise from specialists and stakeholders.

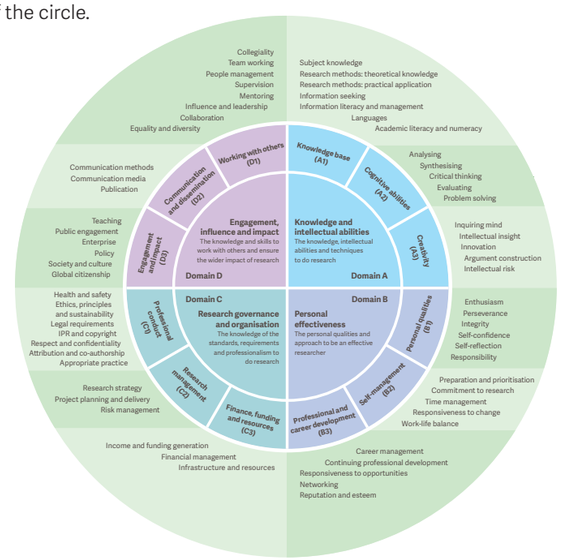


RDF:

This proven tool[1] can be used to help you:

- **assess your strengths, knowledge and attributes**
- **identify areas for development**
- **make an action plan for development**
- **structure conversations with your supervisor or line manager about your performance and development needs**
- **articulate evidence of your skills when applying for a new role.**

Within each of the domains there are three sub-domains (A1, A2 and so forth) and within these are the associated descriptors - 63 in total - shown in the green outer part of the circle.



RDF Phases of Development

Each of the 63 Descriptors of the RDF is mapped to up to five Phases of development. This enables the RDF to be used by researchers at all career stages and levels, from doctoral researchers right through to highly experienced senior researchers.

It is structured into four domains:

Domain A: Knowledge and intellectual abilities: The knowledge, intellectual abilities and techniques to do research

Domain B: Personal effectiveness: The personal qualities and approach to be an effective researcher

Domain C: Research governance and organisation: Knowledge of the professional standards and requirements to do research

Domain D: Engagement, influence and impact: The knowledge and skills to work with others to ensure the wider impact of research

1. See www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf

Published by Vitae © 2021 The Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) Limited

Research Leadership Resource: The Vitae Researcher Development Framework

For example, the table below shows the five different phases of RDF descriptor B1.6 'Responsibility'.

Phase 1
Gradually takes complete responsibility for own project and own well-being.
Develops independence.
Phase 2
Takes responsibility for own and others' projects.
Delegates responsibly.
Alert to the well-being of others.
Phase 3
Accepts and takes responsibility for building/leading a research team and developing its members.
Engages in and encourages the development of well-being in other researchers/the team.
Phase 4 - Phase 5
Has leading responsibility for delivering highly skilled researchers for academic and non-academic professions.
Is responsible for leading the discipline/research area nationally and/or internationally.
Engages in and encourages the development of well-being in academic and non-academic colleagues.

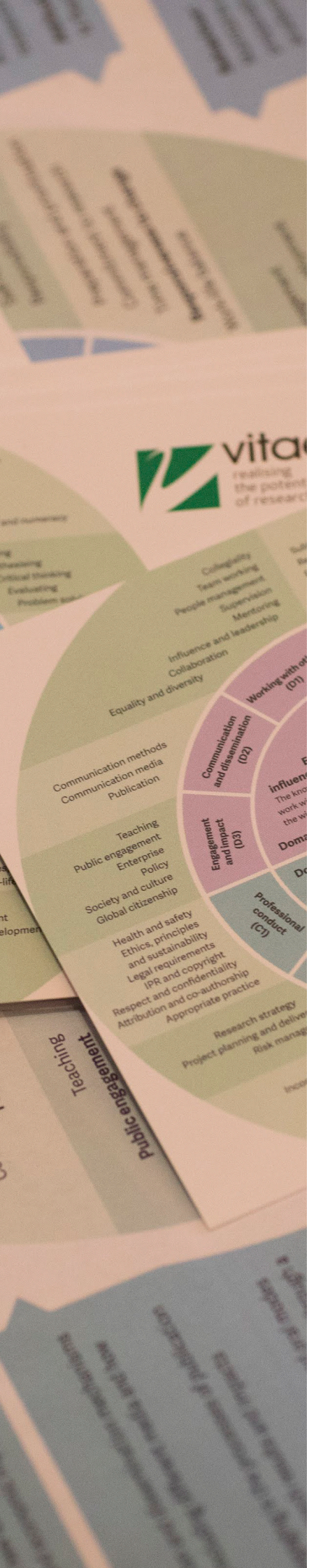
Reflection

Take a little time to familiarise yourself with the RDF.

Identify 3 - 5 descriptors that indicate your strengths as a researcher and how these may be helpful for research leadership.

You can find out more about the RDF by visiting **www.vitae.ac.uk**

Published by Vitae © 2021 The Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) Limited



Reflection

Now identify 3 - 5 descriptors in areas where you are less confident. Choose ones that you can do something to improve in the next three months. These can be small steps!

Note down what you intend to do.

For further insight you might like to explore the Career management module.

You can find out more about the RDF by visiting **www.vitae.ac.uk**

Vitae and its membership programme are managed by the **Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) Limited** an independent registered charity. CRAC Registered Charity No 313164.

Published by Vitae © 2021 The Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) Limited