Researcher Development Framework Consultation

An Institute of Physics response to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework consultation

A full list of the Institute’s responses and submissions to consultations can be found at http://www.iop.org

11 December 2009
IOP Institute of Physics

Dear Janet

Researcher Development Framework Consultation

The Institute of Physics welcomes the opportunity to respond to the proposal for a Researcher development framework.

The Institute supports the implementation of a framework for researchers that will underpin their professional development at all stages of their careers. Such a framework will provide meaningful descriptors to enable a much wider understanding of what researchers actually do and how they can develop in their career as a researcher.

Through the Institute's work with its Project Juno, which aims to address the under-representation of women in university physics and to implement good practice for all academic and research staff, it has become clear that postdoctoral researchers are often the least well supported group of staff within a department. The development of this framework will help formalise the position of postdoctoral researchers and enable them to be supported better in their career pathways.

Whilst in recent years, many universities have increased their career support for postdoctoral researchers (usually through Roberts money), there still remains a need to provide an overarching accessible and useful source of guidance for all researchers. The framework may enable career support for researchers to become embedded throughout physics departments by providing a formal basis for staff review and development activities, such as appraisals, for research staff. Both men and women researchers will be able to use the same standard guidance to identify and describe their own specific skills, attributes, experience and qualities to prospective employers, in academia and beyond.

The Institute believes that there is a need for a national framework for researchers and those supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers and that these proposals meet this need.

Yours sincerely

Professor Peter Main
Director, Education and Science
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