

EMPLOYABILITY OF DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS

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RESEARCH PROBLEM

Graduate employability is one of the major issues discussed in contemporary higher education. Initially focused primarily on undergraduate students, in the past few years the debate has broadened to include the development of employability skills of postgraduates, mainly doctoral students. Interest in this area is further enhanced by a large number of doctoral researchers pursuing careers outside academia (see Fig.1). This trend challenges the traditional perception of the doctoral degree as the one preparing for career in academia.

The challenge for Higher Education Institutions is to find ways of transforming “students into highly proficient, independent researchers, capable of adapting to a range of employment destinations and taking up positions in academe, industry and the professions” (Manathunga et al 2007, p19)

RESEARCH FOCUS

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA: Scotland

SUBJECT AREA: Social Sciences

KEY INFORMANTS:

- Full-time PhD students
- Supervisors
- Researcher developers
- Employers
- Scottish government
- Universities Scotland
- Scottish Funding Council
- Vitae
- NUS Scotland
- Quality Assurance Agency

METHODOLOGY

The study involves a mixed methods approach with application of quantitative and qualitative methods. This approach facilitates triangulation of data (Saunders et al 2003), and allows for investigation of the phenomenon from different angles (Neuman 2003).

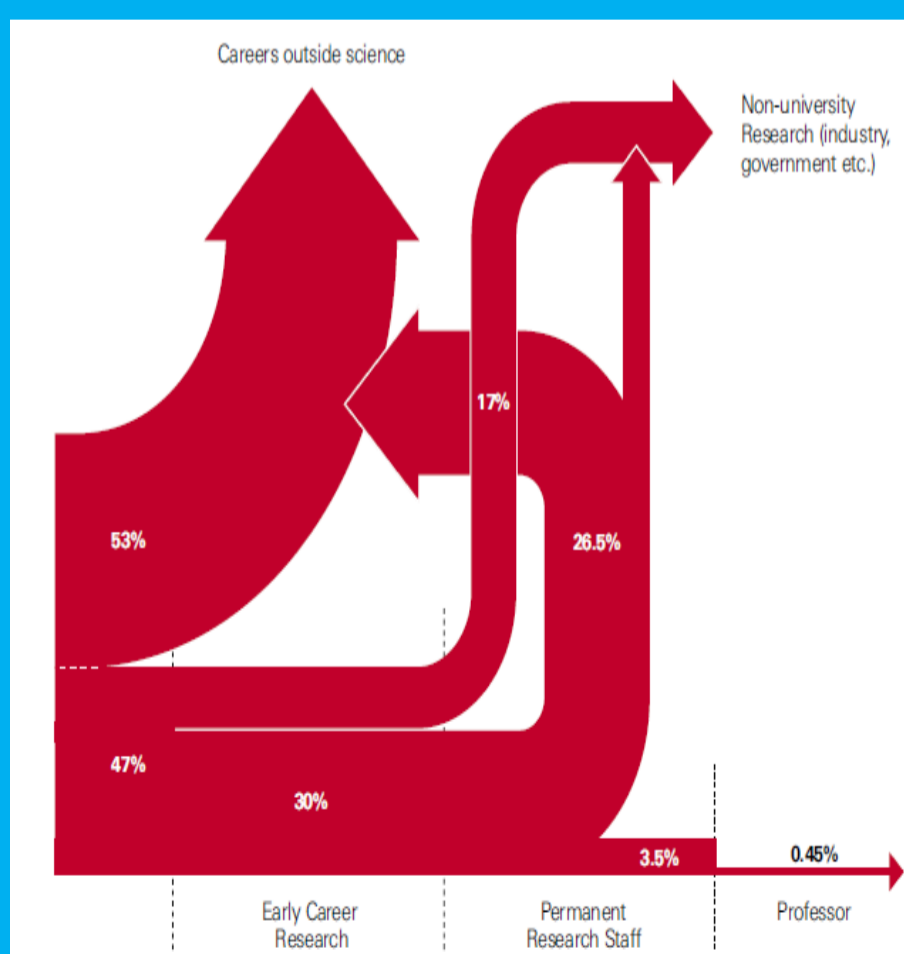
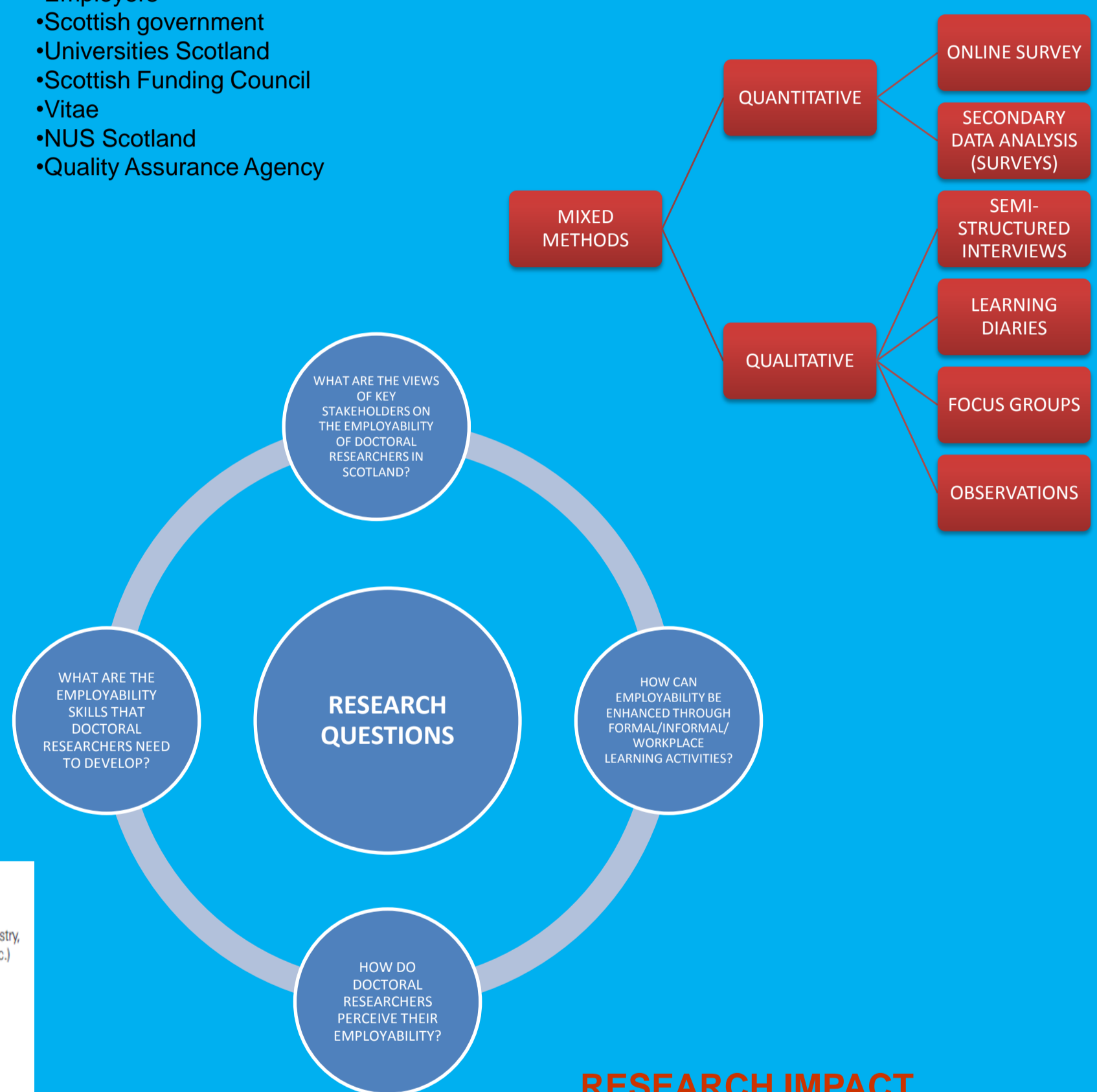


Fig.1: Careers in and outside academia (The Royal Society 2010)

RESEARCH IMPACT

This is the first large-scale research project on employability of doctoral researchers in Scottish Higher Education Institutions. The project is expected to contribute to the knowledge in the areas of research, policy and practice of employability of doctoral researchers. As a result of the project, recommendations will be provided to the stakeholders demonstrating key issues in employability of doctoral researchers and the proposed solutions.

Questions? Suggestions? Ideas? Please contact us:

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