Developing Data Steward Personas

RDA WG Data Stewards Career Tracks.

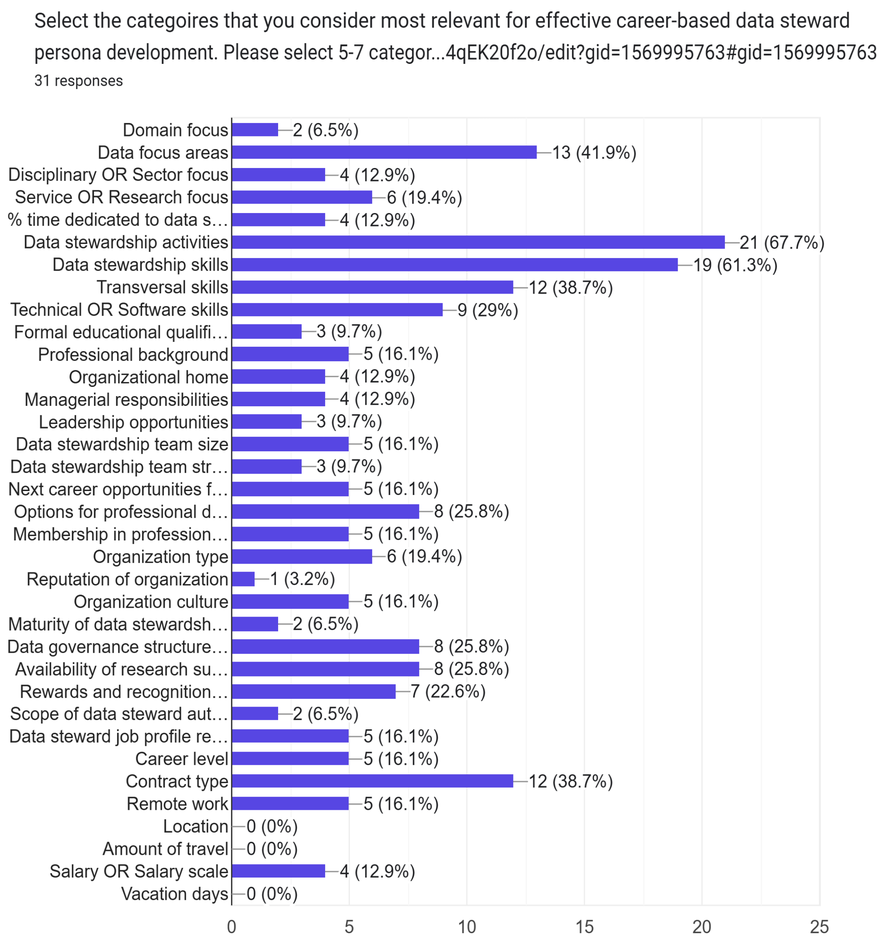
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Aim: The RDA Data Steward Career Tracks WG proposes to approach data steward career tracks systematically by developing a methodology for data steward persona definition and creating a sample of data steward personas as well as career pathways for the sample personas.

Why? Many individuals undertaking the work of data stewards and self identifying as a data steward don't have a job title data steward, career paths are not necessarily well defined. During 2022 as part of RDA Professionalising Data Stewardship IG we conducted a survey of data stewards and those doing data stewardship type roles. The 2022 survey showed that career paths were ill defined. RDA Professionalising Data Stewardship IG - What does a career track for data stewards look like? https://doi.org/10.15497/RDA00102. The Data Steward Career Tracks WG was established in April 2024 to address these issues.

Data Stewards wear many "hats" and what a data steward role comprises of is often organisation and context specific – this makes comparisons across roles and organisation difficult and limit career progression. The aim of the personas is to help address this knowledge gap and enable greater clarity between roles and organisations.



Example of category ranking from workshop showing categories and voting.

Landscaping work: collection of job profiles, background reading on persona methodology and related reports and documents on data steward careers. Publicly available Zotero Library (Zotero | Groups > RDA Data Steward Career Tracks WG) containing three types of material: job descriptions; grey literature/scientific literature relating to data stewardship and skills; persona methodology articles.

Co-Creation workshops: 8 co-creation workshops, additional presentations, talks and webinars engaging over 180 community members. Workshops delivered over 3 continents and 7 countries including: IDW2025 (hybrid Australia), Nordic Data Stewards Network (online), Portuguese Data Stewards Network (online), RDAP (online USA) RDA Slovenia (in person), UK (2 events online and hybrid).

Career path stories: guest speakers share their career path stories at our working group meetings. Stories are contributing to the WG knowledgebase of evidence for persona development, collecting stories from different organisations types, roles and geographic regions.



Working Group Outputs in development.

Data Stewardship categories and attributes:

Through the co-creation workshops we developed a list of 35 **categories** and related **attributes** that can be used to describe data stewardship roles.

The categories can be split into three main areas:

- data steward role specific e.g discipline or sector focus (arts & humanities, social sciences, life sciences etc)
- organisation focused e.g organisation type (research intensive university, teaching focused university etc)
- generic human resources focused categories e.g. career level (early career, mid career, senior career, unclear)

The categories and attributes were developed iteratively through the workshops. At each workshop participants considered the inputs from the previous workshop adding to and upvoting the categories and attributes.

Persona templates and example personas:

Drafting a template for persona development with example personas illustrating career progression..

The outputs are currently being finalised and early version v0.1 available in Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20308190

RESEARCH DATA ALLIANCE

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