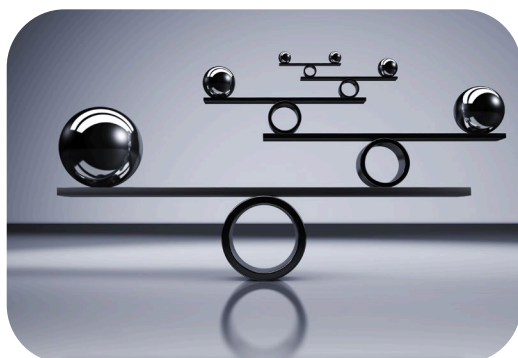


EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR RESEARCHERS

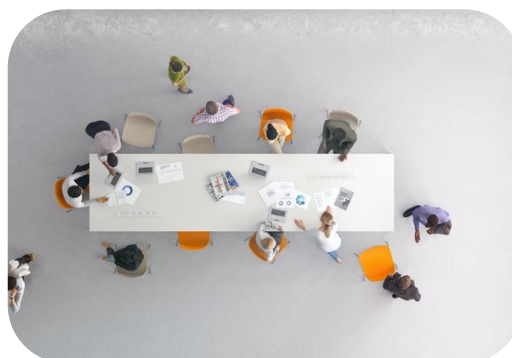
Draft 23rd January 2023

THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR RESEARCHERS

The principles in this Charter put researchers at the heart of the European Research Area as they are the knowledge creators and innovators underpinning European Research and Innovation. It should be understood that there is a shared duty of all stakeholders (researchers, employers, funders and policy makers) to respect and implement each of the principles according to their own responsibilities and capacities.



**ETHICS, INTEGRITY, GENDER
AND OPEN SCIENCE**



**RESEARCHERS ASSESSMENT,
RECRUITMENT AND
PROGRESSION**



**WORKING CONDITIONS
AND PRACTICES**



**RESEARCH CAREERS AND
TALENT DEVELOPMENT**

**ETHICS, INTEGRITY,
GENDER AND OPEN
SCIENCE**

- ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY
- FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
- OPEN SCIENCE AND INNOVATION
- GENDER EQUALITY
- EMBRACING DIVERSITY
- THE RESEARCH PROFESSION
- FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS
- SUSTAINABILITY OF RESEARCH

**RESEARCHERS
ASSESSMENT,
RECRUITMENT AND
PROGRESSION**

- RESEARCHERS ASSESSMENT
- RECRUITMENT
- SELECTION
- CAREER PROGRESSION

**WORKING CONDITIONS
AND PRACTICES**

- WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES
- STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT
- CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS
- DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

**RESEARCH CAREERS AND
TALENT DEVELOPMENT**

- VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS
- CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE
- CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

PILLAR 1 – ETHICS, INTEGRITY, GENDER AND OPEN SCIENCE

This pillar gathers the fundamental principles of the Charter and its commitment towards supporting excellence in research, understood as fostering the best possible research teams and projects and free from gender and other biases. The principles under this pillar are expected to contribute to the foundations of the vision of a revitalized European Research Area, and to inspire European researchers, research employers, funders and policy makers. Because of the transversal nature of all these values they are expected to be mainstreamed and taken into consideration in the deployment of rest of the principles.

Ethics and Research Integrity¹

Researchers should comply with strict ethics rules and approach their work with honesty; reliability; objectivity; impartiality and independence; open communication; duty of care; fairness and responsibility for future science generations. These are the foundations of responsible and trustworthy research free from undue influence (including foreign interference² and conflict of interest), a prerequisite for achieving excellence, and underpin the responsibility of researchers to guard against biases and methodological shortcuts.

Researchers should adhere to the recognised ethical practices and fundamental ethical principles³ appropriate to their discipline(s) as well as to ethical standards as documented in the different national, sectoral or institutional Codes of Ethics.

The primary responsibility for research integrity is with researchers themselves. Researchers should be supported by an institutional culture of research integrity to create and respect rules, procedures and guidelines as well as training and mentoring based on the exchange of best practices.

In order to foster good research practices and a culture of research integrity, a number of dimensions need to be considered by all the involved stakeholders, such as the existence of research integrity research environments; training and capacity building on research integrity; research processes and policies embedding research integrity; data, publication, dissemination, review, evaluation and editing policies. Equally, mechanisms to identify, report and deal with research misconducts need to be put in place.

Researchers must avoid plagiarism of any kind and abide by the principles of intellectual property and joint data ownership in the case of research carried out in collaboration with a supervisor(s) and/or other researchers (as appropriate to the discipline). This should apply at all stages of the research process including conception, preparing funding applications, the development and delivery of results. The need to validate new observations by showing that findings are reproducible should not be interpreted as plagiarism, provided that the data to be confirmed are explicitly quoted.

Freedom of Scientific Research

The freedom of scientific research is a common core value and principle for research cooperation within the European Research Area and with international partners⁴. Researchers should focus their research for the good of humanity and for expanding the frontiers of human knowledge, while enjoying the freedom of thought and expression, and the freedom to identify methods by which problems are solved. Researchers should, however, recognise the limitations to this freedom that could arise because of particular research circumstances (including

¹Council Conclusions Research Integrity 14853/15 (2015), <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14853-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

² Tackling R&I Foreign Interference, European Commission (SWD), 2022, doi:10.2777/513746

³ European Code for Research Integrity ALLEA (2017), <https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/>

⁴ Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research, Adopted at the Ministerial Conference on the European Research Area on 20 October 2020 in Bonn, https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/shareddocs/downloads/files/_drp-efr-bonner_erklaerung_en_with-signatures_maerz_2021.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1

supervision/guidance/management) or operational constraints, e.g., for intellectual property rights, budgetary or infrastructural reasons.

Open Science and Innovation

Researchers should target engagement in all aspects of Open Science⁵ and Innovation and be facilitated by their employers and funders in this regard. They should share their results openly, e.g., through open and FAIR data, open access publications, open software, models and algorithms. They should take measures to ensure reproducibility of research results. They should aim to practice Open Science methodologies and engage in open peer review. Employers and/or funders should support and reward a true Open Science culture across the Union, including mainstreaming open access to scholarly publications, research data and other research outputs (i.e. following the “as open as possible, as closed as necessary” principle) and the diffusion and uptake of Open Science principles and practices, whilst considering differences between disciplines and cultural differences, including multilingualism, supporting the development of Open Science skills, and further developing and integrating the underpinning digital infrastructure and service

Citizen Science

Researchers should incorporate citizen science into their projects as much as possible and where relevant. This means involving citizens in the concept, design and implementation of research projects in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics (STEAM), Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH). This is an ideal means to democratise science, build trust in science, and leverage the vast societal intelligence and capabilities to conduct excellent research and innovation.

Gender Equality

All stakeholders should foster gender balance in research teams, managerial, decision-making bodies, recruitment and promotion committees, and advisory groups. This also includes fostering the integration of the gender dimension in research, teaching and innovation content in order to improve the scientific quality, excellence, and societal relevance of the produced knowledge. Gender Equality also aims at combating gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Gender Equality shall be understood from an intersectional perspective, where different systems of power between gender and other social categories and identities intersect and reinforce each other. Sustainable institutional changes, channelled through Gender Equality plans⁶ or similar, that allow for proper reporting of infringements, and include monitoring and evaluation systems, are adequate mechanisms to promote Gender Equality.

Embracing Diversity

A core principle of ERA is to take account of diversity in the broad sense, including, inter alia, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, social diversity, disability, age, sexual orientation and combating discrimination on all grounds. Employers and/or funders should embrace diversity in their researchers since different life experiences add valuable perspectives to research projects. Also, diversity in participants can inform research results applying to and enriching the diverse societies we live in. Acknowledging unconscious biases, for instance in hiring, promoting and in reviewing tasks, and compensating for them where possible is also needed, particularly in the realm of science.

The Research Profession

All researchers engaged in the conception or creation of new knowledge should be recognised as professionals and be treated accordingly. This should commence at the beginning of their careers, independently of the sector in which they operate, namely at postgraduate level, and should include

⁵ Council Conclusions, The transition towards an Open Science system, 9526/16 27 May 2016

⁶ See https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en and <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/what-gender-equality-plan-gep>

all levels, regardless of their classification at national level (e.g., employee, postgraduate student, doctoral candidate, postdoctoral fellow, civil servants).

Employers and funders should encourage and support non-linear and multi-career paths, to be intended as paths characterised by geographical, disciplinary, sectoral, and inter-organisational mobility (secondments). They should also encourage hybrid paths combining simultaneously different sectors that should be considered as linear career paths.

Professional Attitude

Researchers should be familiar with the strategic goals governing their research environment and funding mechanisms and should seek all necessary approvals before starting their research or accessing the resources provided. Researchers should make every effort to ensure that their research is relevant to society and does not needlessly duplicate research previously carried out elsewhere.

There should be clear communication between researchers and employers, funders, or supervisors when a research project is delayed, redefined or completed; notice should be given if a research project is to be terminated earlier or suspended for whatever reason.

Accountability

Being accountable means taking responsibility for one's actions when carrying out research. Researchers need to be aware that they are accountable towards their employers, funders or other related public or private bodies as well as, on more ethical grounds, towards society. Researchers funded by public funds are also accountable for the efficient use of taxpayers' money. Consequently, they should adhere to the principles of sound, transparent and efficient financial management and cooperate with any authorised audits of their research, whether undertaken by their employers/funders or by ethics committees. This expectation requires them to serve as examples of ethical behaviour for their peers and for the broader society.

Methods of collection and analysis, the outputs and, where applicable, details of the data should be open to internal and external scrutiny, whenever necessary and as requested by the appropriate authorities. This is also important to make the data open and help ensure the reproducibility of their results.

Teaching

Research and higher education teaching should be mutually supportive and be valued in parity. Teaching should benefit from and make use of scientific knowledge and promote research interest among students. Teaching responsibilities (including lecturing, tutoring, supervising and mentoring) should be acknowledged as a common responsibility of stakeholders in research and should be adequately remunerated and considered in the evaluation/appraisal systems. This common responsibility should allow R1 and R2 researchers to carry out their research satisfactorily and senior researchers to share their knowledge and competences with students. Academic career schemes should reflect engagement in research and teaching and suitable training and resources should be provided for teaching and coaching activities as part of the professional development of researchers.

Free circulation of researchers

Funders and employers should promote free circulation of researchers and support staff, scientific knowledge and technology, while attracting talent and avoiding potential talent drain. They should recognise the value of geographical, inter-institutional, intersectoral, inter- and trans-disciplinary, and virtual mobility⁷ as important means of enhancing knowledge and professional development at any stage of a researcher's career and fully value and acknowledge any mobility experience within their career progression/appraisal system. This also requires that the necessary administrative instruments be put in place to allow the portability of both grants and social security provisions, in accordance with national legislation.

⁷ i.e., remote collaboration over electronic networks and infrastructures.

Sustainability of Research

Researchers, employers and funders should promote the sustainable implementation of research activities in line with the European Green Deal, the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Researchers should be supported by an institutional culture of sustainable research management, as well as training and mentoring based on the exchange of best practices. They should take the lead in reducing their carbon emissions in a way that sets a positive example to others within the research community.

The European Commission's "[MSCA Green Charter](#)"⁸, developed in the framework of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, can be used as reference point.

⁸ Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions Green Charter, <https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/about-msca/msca-green-charter>

PILLAR 2 – RESEARCHERS ASSESSMENT, RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION

Research assessment should ensure an equal recognition and reward of researchers' careers regardless of the sector of employment or activity and follow an unbiased talent-based approach. Fair recruitment and selection of researchers' policies are fundamental for achieving an open labour market for researchers, contributing to the advancement of the European Research Area.

Researchers Assessment⁹

Research assessment should enable evaluating the performance of researchers and research to achieve the highest quality and impact. This requires recognition of increasingly diverse research activities and outputs, and rewarding collaboration, open sharing of outputs, and research integrity. Consequently, the importance of bibliometric indicators should be properly balanced within a wider range of evaluation criteria, such as teaching, peer review, management and leadership, supervision, mentoring, knowledge valorisation, entrepreneurship and collaboration with industry, teamwork, services to society, science communication and interaction with society, and methodological rigour and Open Science practices. For candidates from an industrial background, particular attention should be paid to any contributions to innovation through patents, development or inventions.

Employers and funders should support a system for the assessment and reward of researchers that considers the overall quality of impact of researchers on society, science and innovation, the diversity of activities performed, Open Science practices, and the value of geographical, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral mobility. Such a system should be;

- be based on qualitative judgement provided by peers, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators
- reward quality and the various potential impacts of research on society, science and innovation;
- value a diversity of outputs (*inter alia* publications, datasets, software, methodologies, protocols, patents), activities (*inter alia* mentoring, leadership roles, entrepreneurship, data management, peer review, teaching, knowledge valorisation, industry-academia cooperation, support for evidence-informed policy-making, interaction with society) and practices (*inter alia* early knowledge and data sharing, open collaboration), as well as all mobility experiences;
- ensure that the researcher's professional activity meets high standards of ethics and integrity, rewards appropriate conduct of research, and values good practices, in particular open practices for sharing research results and methodologies, whenever possible;
- use assessment criteria and processes that respect the variety of research disciplines and national contexts;
- support a diversity of researcher profiles and career paths, and value individual contributions, but also the role of teams, collaborative work, and cross-disciplinarity;
- ensure gender equality, equal opportunities and inclusiveness.

Recruitment

Employers and/or funders should establish recruitment and selection procedures which are open¹⁰, transparent and merit-based, without any penalisation for career breaks or inter-sectoral mobility. They should seek for excellence, Gender Equality, diversity, and be tailored to the type of position advertised. Advertisements should include a comprehensive description of knowledge and competencies required, including description of the working conditions and entitlements, career development prospects and an overview of the timeline. Candidates should be informed, prior to

⁹ Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment (2022)

https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022_07_19_rra_agreement_final.pdf

¹⁰ All available instruments should be used, international or globally accessible web-based resources such as the EURAXESS Portal: <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu>.

the selection, about the recruitment process and the selection criteria, the number of available positions and the career development prospects.

Variations in the chronological order of CVs

Career breaks or variations in the chronological order of CVs should not be penalised, but regarded as an evolution of a career, and consequently, as a potentially valuable contribution to the professional development of researchers towards a multidimensional career track. Candidates should therefore be allowed to submit evidence-based CVs, reflecting a representative array of achievements and qualifications appropriate to the post for which application is being made.

Seniority

The levels of qualifications required should be in line with the needs of the position and not be set as a barrier to entry. Recognition and evaluation of qualifications should focus on judging the achievements of the person rather than his/her circumstances or the reputation of the institution where the qualifications were acquired. As professional qualifications may be acquired at an early stage of a long career, the pattern of lifelong professional development should also be encouraged and recognised.

Selection

The selection process should take into consideration the whole range of experience of the candidates. While focusing on their overall potential as researchers, their creativity and level of independence should also be considered. Selection committees should bring together diverse expertise, competences and experience relevant to assess the candidate. There should be adequate gender balance and, where appropriate and feasible, include members from different sectors (public and private) and disciplines, and other countries. Whenever possible, a wide range of selection practices should be used, such as external expert assessment and face-to-face and online interviews. Members of selection panels should be adequately trained especially for minimizing gender or any other possible unconscious biases. All candidates should be informed after the selection process about the strengths and weaknesses of their applications.

Non-discrimination

Employers and/or funders of researchers will not discriminate against researchers in any way based on gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition.

Career progression

Employers and/or funders should introduce for all researchers, including senior researchers, evaluation/appraisal systems for assessing their professional performance on a regular basis and in a transparent manner by an independent (and, in the case of senior researchers, preferably international) committee. A multiple career path, characterised by geographical, sectoral, and inter-organisational mobility (secondments), or hybrid paths characterised by the simultaneous combination of sectors, deserves full recognition and consideration on a par with a linear career path.

Such evaluation and appraisal procedures should take due account of researchers' overall potential, their research creativity, their research results (e.g. publications, data, software, models, algorithms, methods, protocols, patents, policy contributions), their activities (e.g. management and leadership, teaching/lecturing, peer review, supervision, mentoring, entrepreneurship, knowledge valorisation, national or international collaboration, administrative duties, service to society, science communication and interaction with society), their research behaviour (e.g. ethics and integrity practice, methodological rigour, early knowledge and data sharing, open collaboration) and their mobility, and should be taken into consideration in the context of career progression.

A transparent, structured, inclusive and gender-equal career accession and progression system is needed to reinforce careers in academia, up to the top positions¹¹. The adoption of tenure-track-like systems, to be intended as a fixed-term contract with the perspective of a progression to a permanent position subject to positive evaluation, could be considered for this purpose at the level of Member States and research performing organisations.

Co-authorship

Co-authorship should be viewed positively by institutions when evaluating staff, as evidence of a constructive approach to the conduct of research. Employers and/or funders should therefore develop strategies, practices and procedures to provide researchers, including those at the beginning of their research careers, with the necessary framework conditions so that they can enjoy the right to be recognised and listed and/or quoted, in the context of their actual contributions, as co-authors of papers, patents, etc, or to publish their own research results independently from their supervisor(s).

Recognition of mobility experience

Any mobility experience, e.g., a stay in another country/region or in another research setting (public or private) or a change from one discipline or sector to another, whether as part of the initial research training or at a later stage of the research career, or virtual mobility experience, should be considered as a valuable contribution to the professional development of a researcher.

¹¹ See MORE 4 study (2021) - https://cdn5.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/more4_final_report.pdf

PILLAR 3 - WORKING CONDITIONS AND PRACTICES

Improving researchers working conditions should be at the core of the EU policy framework for research careers. Within this area several actions are proposed to contribute to the stability of employment, to the definition of researchers' labour rights and obligations and the need for employers and funders to develop a research culture for research excellence and facilitate a thriving researcher community.

Working conditions, funding and salaries

Employers and/or funders should ensure that the working conditions for researchers, including those with disabilities, provide where appropriate the flexibility and accessibility deemed essential for successful research performance in accordance with existing national legislation and with national or sectoral collective-bargaining agreements. They should aim to provide working conditions which allow all researchers to combine a personal and professional life¹². Particular attention should be paid, inter alia, to flexible working hours, part-time working, remote working and sabbatical leave, as well as to the necessary financial and administrative provisions governing such arrangements. Employers should provide a working environment that promotes the mental health and wellbeing of researchers.

Research environment

Employers and/or funders of researchers should ensure that the most stimulating research or research training environment is created which offers appropriate equipment, facilities and opportunities, including for remote collaboration over research networks. The national or sectoral regulations concerning health and safety in research should always be observed. Funders should ensure that adequate resources are provided in support of the agreed work programme. In particular, it is important to have qualified support staff (e.g., professionals including research managers and administrators).

Complaints/appeals

Employers and/or funders of researchers should establish, in compliance with national rules and regulations, appropriate procedures, possibly in the form of an impartial (ombudsperson-type) person to deal with complaints/appeals of researchers, including those concerning conflicts between supervisor(s) and First Stage (R1) / Recognised (R2) researchers. Such procedures should provide all research staff with confidential and informal assistance in resolving work-related conflicts, disputes, and grievances, with the aim of promoting fair and equitable treatment within the institution and improving the overall quality of the working environment.

Participation in organisation governance

Employers and/or funders of researchers should recognise it as wholly legitimate, and indeed desirable, that researchers be represented in the relevant information, consultation and decision-making bodies of the institutions for which they work, to protect and promote their individual and collective interests as professionals and to actively contribute to the workings of the institution¹³.

Funding and salaries

Employers and/or funders of researchers should ensure that researchers, irrespective of their status, enjoy fair and attractive remuneration conditions (funding and/or salaries) with adequate and equitable social security provisions (including sickness and parental benefits, pension rights and unemployment benefits, invalidity benefits and benefits in respect of accidents at work and occupational disease) in accordance with existing national legislation and with national or sectoral collective bargaining agreements. This must include researchers at all career stages including First Stage Researchers (R1), commensurate with their legal status, performance and level of qualifications

¹² See SEC (2005) 260, Women and Science: Excellence and Innovation – Gender Equality in Science.

¹³ In this context see also EU Directive 2002/14/EC.

and/or responsibilities. Researchers should be made aware of their rights and obligations when it comes to understanding how their salaries are being taxed.

Stability of employment

Employers and/or funders should take resolute actions to counter the phenomenon of precarity and to support job security and stability, including by way of a limited maximum total duration of fixed-term appointments, and a maximum threshold of one third of fixed-term contracts in the overall researchers' human resources of a given employer.

Post-doctoral positions (R2)

This is a particular issue in academia; to counter this situation and to support job security and stability, clear rules and explicit guidelines for the recruitment and appointment of postdoctoral researchers (R2), including the maximum duration and the objectives of such appointments, should be established by the institutions appointing postdoctoral researchers. Such guidelines should consider time spent in prior postdoctoral appointments at other institutions and take into consideration that the postdoctoral status should be transitional, with the primary purpose of providing additional professional development opportunities for a research career in the context of long-term career prospects with fixed contract or tenure.

Contractual and legal obligations

Researchers at all levels must be familiar with the national, sectoral or institutional regulations governing training and/or working conditions. This includes Intellectual Property Rights regulations, and the requirements and conditions of any sponsor or funders, independently of the nature of their contract. Employer and funders should provide copies of these documents in English. Researchers should adhere to such regulations by delivering the required results (e.g., thesis, publications, patents, reports, new products development, etc) as set out in the terms and conditions of the contract or equivalent document.

Researchers should always adopt safe working practices, in line with national legislation, including taking the necessary precautions for health and safety and for recovery from cybersecurity attacks, information technology disasters, e.g., by preparing proper back-up strategies. They should also be familiar with the current national legal requirements regarding data protection and confidentiality protection requirements and undertake the necessary steps to always fulfil them.

Dissemination and exploitation of results

Open Science should be used by all researchers to ensure, in compliance with their contractual arrangements, that the results of their research are disseminated made openly available and exploited, e.g., communicated, transferred into other research settings or, if appropriate, commercialised. Senior researchers are expected to take a lead in ensuring that research is fruitful and that results are either exploited commercially or made accessible to the public (or both) whenever the opportunity arises.

Researchers should be facilitated in this regard by their employers and funders through the relevant skills training and access to the appropriate funding, infrastructure and support. The engagement of researchers in Open Science should be recognised, incentivised and rewarded by employers and funders in recruitment, career progression and funding programme assessment.

Intellectual Property Rights

Employers and/or funders should ensure that researchers at all career stages reap the benefits of the exploitation (if any) of their R&D results through legal protection and through appropriate protection of Intellectual Property Rights, including copyrights. Integrated and balanced IPR/Open Science policies need to be put in place.

Policies and practices should specify what rights belong to researchers and/or, where applicable, to their employers or other parties, including external commercial or industrial organisations, as possibly provided for under specific collaboration agreements or other types of agreement.

Public Engagement

Researchers should ensure that their research activities are made known to society at large in such a way that they can be understood by non-specialists, thereby improving the public's understanding of science. Direct engagement with the civil society and citizens will help researchers to better understand public interest in priorities for research and the public's concerns, and to harness the potential of co-design and co-creation with society where relevant.

PILLAR 4 -RESEARCH CAREERS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

The research community is diverse in talents, skills, competences and capacities and roles. The more these talents are fostered and developed, the better the research quality, and societal relevance of the produced knowledge. Encouraging continuous professional development along with skills training is needed to maintain competence and provide researchers with a broad range of career opportunities in the public and private sectors.

Valuing diverse Research Careers

Employers and/or funders should recognise that researchers may have highly diverse careers both in research and in other functions. Diversification typically includes mobility in all its forms; inter/intra-national, inter-sectoral, inter-institutional, inter- and trans-disciplinary and virtual mobility. This requires more talent-based and diversity-sensitive quality assessment, going beyond metrics, considering diverse contributions and their potential impacts, diverse activities and practices like teaching and skills, peer review, management and leadership, supervision, mentoring, knowledge valorisation, entrepreneurship and collaboration with industry, services to society, science communication and interaction with society, methodological rigour and Open Science practices, team science, among others as well as mobility.

Employers and/or funders should put measures in place to make researchers, in particular early-career ones, aware of opportunities available in all relevant sectors and to promote a culture of diversification of careers for better personal and professional development. This will require career advisory and support services to stimulate inter-sectoral, inter-disciplinary and geographical mobility, as well as the creation and development of entrepreneurial activities.

Career Development and Advice

Employers and/or funders of researchers should draw up, preferably within the framework of their human resources management, a specific career development strategy for researchers at all stages of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, including for researchers on fixed-term contracts. In this context, researchers should be supported to develop an individual career plan to identify the necessary training and research required to attain their career goals. It should include the availability of mentors involved in providing support and guidance for the personal and professional development of researchers, thus motivating them and contributing to reducing any insecurity in their professional future. All researchers should be made familiar with such provisions and arrangements and be proactive and responsible for their career development.

Employers and/or funders should ensure either in the institutions concerned, or through collaboration with other structures, accessible and up-to-date career guidance and job placement assistance, providing information, guidance and support for career development both within and beyond the institution concerned. This shall be offered to researchers at all stages of their careers, regardless of their contractual situation

Continuous Professional Development

Researchers at all career stages should seek proactively and be given opportunities by their employer/funder to continually improve themselves by regularly updating and expanding their skills and competencies. This may be achieved by a variety of means including, but not restricted to, formal training, workshops, conferences and e-learning. Particular attention should be paid to the training of First Stage Researchers (R1) the majority of whom are PhD candidates at the beginning of their research career¹⁴.

¹⁴ see Innovative Doctoral Training Principles (2011) https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/policy_library/principles_for_innovative_doctoral_training.pdf, Salzburg Principles (2016) https://www.eua-cde.org/downloads/publications/2016_euacde_doctoral-salzburg-implementation-new-challenges.pdf, Hannover Principles (2022) https://www.uclpress.co.uk/products/176626?_pos=1&_sid=d5bf44607&_ss=r

Access to research training and continuous development

Employers and/or funders should ensure that all researchers at any stage of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, are given the opportunity for professional development and for improving their employability through access to measures for the continuing development of skills and competencies. Employers and funders should take action to support the development and provision of targeted training, including in the form of micro-credentials, to ensure up-skilling and re-skilling opportunities for researchers with a lifelong learning perspective and to foster inter-sectoral and inter-disciplinary mobility. Such measures should be regularly assessed for their accessibility, take-up and effectiveness in improving competencies, skills and employability.

Employers and funders should attribute adequate relevance to the need to foster entrepreneurial competences in researchers, with the objective of allowing those who undertake an entrepreneurial career path to couple their knowledge production capabilities with knowledge valorisation proficiency, turning innovative ideas into business and fostering innovation and progress.

Employers and funders should take steps to ensure that doctoral training is adapted for interoperable careers in all relevant sectors and for the practice of Open Science, including by making use of the European Competence Framework for Researchers and of any other future initiatives taken by the Commission for the purpose of strengthening transversal skills of researchers.

Recognition of qualifications

As part of broadening researchers' skills sets, employers and/or funders should provide for the recognition, appropriate assessment and evaluation of formal and informal training including on-the-job skills and training, particularly within the context of international and professional mobility.

Teaching

Teaching is an essential means for the structuring and dissemination of knowledge and should therefore be considered a valuable option within a researcher's career path. However, teaching responsibilities should not be overloaded and prevent researchers, particularly at the beginning of their careers, fully engaging in their research activities or research training.

Employers and/or funders should ensure that teaching duties are adequately remunerated and considered in the evaluation/appraisal systems, and that time devoted by senior members of staff to the training of First Stage (R1) researchers should be counted as part of their teaching commitment. Suitable training should be provided for teaching and coaching activities as part of the professional development of researchers.

Supervision and Mentoring

Proper people and team management are crucial in research working environments as science is by definition a joint endeavour. The necessary training, tools and evaluation mechanisms should be put in place as to ensure that senior and leading researchers are capable of managing their staff and teams in a fair and non-discriminatory manner, free of gender and other types of biases, and are capable of establishing fruitful and cooperative working relationships to their peers. This should contribute to healthy, fair, creative environments where every individual is respected, duly motivated, recognized and their general well-being fostered.

Employers and/or funders should ensure that a person or a group of persons is clearly identified to whom First Stage (R1) and Recognised (R2) researchers can refer for the performance of their professional duties and should inform the researchers accordingly.

Such arrangements should clearly define that the proposed supervisor/s have an adequate level of expertise in supervising research and have the time and commitment to be able to offer the research

trainee appropriate support and provide for the necessary progress and review procedures, as well as the necessary feedback mechanisms.

Specific provisions for the integration, research support and career development of researchers, for their mentoring and wellbeing, for communication and conflict resolution as well as for the training and professional development of supervisors are provided in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions ([MSCA\) Guidelines for Supervision](#)¹⁵. The MSCA Guidelines on Supervision are a set of recommendations for individuals and institutions who receive MSCA funding. The Guidelines promote effective supervision, mentoring and appropriate career guidance.

Relation with supervisors

Researchers in their training phase should establish a structured and regular relationship with their supervisor(s) and faculty/departmental representative(s) to take full advantage of their relationship with them. Supervisors should also actively support especially early-stage researchers by organising feedback meetings with them and promoting training activities relevant to their work.

This includes keeping records of all work progress and research findings, obtaining feedback by means of reports and seminars, applying such feedback and working in accordance with agreed schedules, milestones, deliverables and/or research outputs.

Senior researchers

Senior researchers (R3 and R4) should devote particular attention to their multi-faceted role as supervisors, mentors, career advisors, leaders, project coordinators, managers or science communicators. They should perform these tasks to the highest professional standards and have access to the appropriate training. Regarding their role as supervisors or mentors of researchers, senior researchers should build up a constructive and positive relationship with the First Stage (R1) and Recognised (R2) researchers, in order to set the conditions for efficient transfer of knowledge and for the further successful development of their careers. This is a highly responsible role to support the career development of R1 and R2 researchers communicating experience and values in a trusted and confidential environment.

¹⁵ <https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/about-msca/msca-guidelines-on-supervision>