European Commission

Research and Innovation

European Charter for Researchers

Supporting attractive careers in the public and private sectors

European Charter for Researchers

European Commission
Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
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Unit A2 - ERA, Spreading Excellence and Research Careers

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

European Charter for Researchers

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2025

Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
Research and Innovation policy

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European Charter for Researchers

The European Charter for Researchers is a set of principles underpinning the development of attractive research careers to support excellence in research and innovation across Europe. The focus of the European Charter for Researchers (Charter for Researchers) is the rights and responsibilities of researchers, employers, funders and policymakers; it consists of 20 key principles. These are classified under the following four pillars:

1. **Ethics, Integrity, Gender and Open Science,**
2. **Researchers' Assessment, Recruitment and Progression,**
3. **Working Conditions and Practices,**
4. **Research Careers and Talent Development.**

The Charter for Researchers is directed at all researchers, research performing sectors and respective umbrella organisations (stakeholders). This includes:

a. **researchers in all sectors – academia, public and private organisations performing research;**
b. **employers of researchers in the public and private sector;**
c. **funders of research and researchers in the public and private sector;**
d. **policymakers concerned with policies relevant to the Charter.**

It addresses researchers across all disciplines, including science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) and social sciences and humanities (SSH). It covers all types of research, namely frontier, targeted, strategic, applied and close to market.

PILLAR 1

Ethics, Integrity, Gender and Open Science

1. Ethics and Research Integrity
2. Freedom of Scientific Research
3. Open Science
4. Gender Equality
5. Embracing Diversity
6. The Researcher
7. Free Circulation of Researchers
8. Sustainability of Research

PILLAR 2

Researchers' Assessment, Recruitment and Progression

1. Researchers' Assessment
2. Recruitment
3. Selection
4. Career Progression

PILLAR 3

Working Conditions and Practices

1. Working Conditions, Funding and Salaries
2. Stability of Employment
3. Contractual and Legal Obligations
4. Dissemination and Exploitation of Results

PILLAR 4

Research Careers and Talent Development

1. Valuing Diverse Research Careers
2. Career Development and Advice
3. Continuous Professional Development
4. Supervision and Mentoring

PILLAR 1

Ethics, Integrity, Gender and Open Science

1. **ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY**
2. **FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**
3. **OPEN SCIENCE**
4. **GENDER EQUALITY**
5. **EMBRACING DIVERSITY**
6. **THE RESEARCHER**
7. **FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS**
8. **SUSTAINABILITY OF RESEARCH**

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

1. Ethics and Research Integrity [1]

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 interference and conflict of interest). They are 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 principles 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 stakeholders involved, such as research integrity in 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 should be put in place.

[1] Research Integrity – Council conclusions (adopted on 1 December 2015) – Council doc. 14853/15.

Researchers should avoid plagiarism of any kind. Particular attention should be paid to the principles of joint ownership when research is carried out in collaboration with supervisors and/or other researchers – as appropriate to the discipline – as well as to intellectual property rules. This should apply to all stages of the research process, including conception, preparation of funding applications, and the development and delivery of results. The need to validate observations by showing that findings are reproducible should not be interpreted as plagiarism, provided that the data to be confirmed are explicitly referenced.

The values of ethics and integrity are also of great importance when researchers are in a supervisory role. These should be applied promptly to ensure a safe, inclusive and gender-equal research environment for all involved, and especially when discrimination, sexual or moral harassment, hindrance to learning or research work, or unjustified personal appropriation of data or results occur.

2. 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 partners. Researchers should focus their research on the good of humanity and expanding the frontiers of human knowledge, while enjoying freedom of thought, opinion and expression, the freedom to define research questions, the freedom to identify methods by which problems are solved, the freedom to choose and develop theories, the freedom to question accepted wisdom and bring forward new ideas, and the freedom to associate with professional or representative academic bodies. Researchers should have the right to disseminate and publish the results of their research, including through training and teaching. Researchers should, however, recognise the limitations to this freedom that could arise because of particular research circumstances, including supervision/guidance/management, or legal or operational constraints, such as intellectual property rights, budgetary or infrastructural reasons.

3. Open Science

Researchers should target engagement in all aspects of Open Science [2] and be facilitated by their employers and funders in this regard. They should share their results openly, such as through open and FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable) data, open access publications, as well as open software, models and algorithms. They should take measures to ensure reproducibility of research results. They should also aim to practice Open Science methodologies and to engage in open peer review. Employers and funders should support, provide the necessary tools and infrastructure, and reward a true Open Science culture across the EU, 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. This should be done while considering differences among 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 STEM and 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.

[2] The transition towards an Open Science system – Council conclusions (adopted on 27 May 2016) – Council doc. 9526/16.

4. Gender Equality

All stakeholders should foster gender equality and gender balance in research teams, managerial and decision-making bodies, recruitment and promotion committees, and advisory groups. This 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 to combat gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Gender equality should be understood from an intersectional perspective, where different systems of power among gender and other social categories and identities intersect and reinforce each other. Sustainable institutional changes, channelled through Gender Equality plans [3] or similar that allow for proper reporting of infringements and include monitoring and evaluation systems, are adequate mechanisms to promote gender equality.

A key component of the transformation of an organisation's culture for advancing gender equality is work-life balance. Work-life balance is relevant for both women and men, and involves ensuring that all staff are properly supported to advance their career alongside personal responsibilities that they may hold outside of the workplace, including caring responsibilities.

[3] See Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, COM(2020) 152 final.

5. Embracing Diversity

A core principle of the European Research Area 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 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 reviewing tasks, and compensating for them where possible is also needed, particularly in the realm of science.

6. The Researcher

All researchers are engaged in the conception or creation of new scientific knowledge based on original concepts or hypotheses. Researchers are professionals whose work should be valued, independent of the sector in which they operate. This should commence at the beginning of their careers, namely at postgraduate level, and should include all levels, regardless of their classification at national level.

Employers and funders should encourage and support non-linear and multi-career paths, to be understood as paths characterised by geographical, disciplinary, inter-sectoral and inter-organisational mobility (e.g. secondments). They should also encourage hybrid paths combining simultaneously different sectors that are to be considered on a par with 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 by allowing a better understanding of the world, and does not needlessly duplicate research previously carried out elsewhere. This involves efficient research results' valorisation.

There should be clear communication among 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 early or suspended for any 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 taxpayer money. Consequently, they should adhere to the principles of sound, transparent and efficient financial management and cooperate during 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 results.

7. Free Circulation of Researchers

Employers and funders should promote free circulation of researchers, scientific knowledge and technology, while attracting talent and avoiding potential talent drain. They should recognise the value of geographical, inter-institutional, inter-sectoral, inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary mobility 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. Virtual mobility has been proved as a valid asset and can also be considered. 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.

8. Sustainability of Research

Researchers, employers and funders should promote the sustainable implementation of research activities in line with current and future policy initiatives adopted to progress society, such as 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, developed in the framework of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), can be used as reference point.

PILLAR 2

Researchers' Assessment, Recruitment and Progression

1. **RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT**
2. **RECRUITMENT**
3. **SELECTION**
4. **CAREER PROGRESSION**

Researchers' 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 researcher policies are fundamental for achieving an open labour market for researchers, thus contributing to the advancement of the European Research Area.

1. Researchers' Assessment

Researchers' assessment should enable evaluating the performance of researchers and research to achieve the highest quality and impact. This requires recognition of increasingly diverse activities, practices and research outputs. Consequently, assessment should be based primarily on qualitative judgement, for which peer review and review by other pertinent experts is central, supported by the responsible use of quantitative indicators. Contributions to innovation should also be recognised, particularly for candidates from an industrial background.

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

a. be based on qualitative unbiased judgement provided by peers and pertinent experts, supported by the responsible use of quantitative indicators;
b. reward quality and the various potential impacts of research on society, science and innovation;
c. recognise a diversity of outputs, including among others publications, datasets, software, methodologies, protocols, patents, models, theories, algorithms, workflows, exhibitions, strategies and policy contributions; a diversity of activities, inter alia mentoring, research supervision, leadership roles, entrepreneurship, FAIR data management, peer review, teaching, knowledge valorisation, industry–academia cooperation, support for evidence-informed policymaking, interaction with society, management and leadership, supervision, teamwork, services to society, science communication and methodological rigor; and a diversity of practices, inter alia Open Science, early knowledge and data sharing, and open collaboration, as well as all mobility experiences including geographical, inter-sectoral, inter-institutional, and inter- and transdisciplinary;
d. ensure that researchers' activity meets high standards of ethics and integrity, applies appropriate conduct of research, and values good practices, including open practices for sharing research results and methodologies, whenever possible;
e. use assessment criteria and processes that respect the variety of research disciplines and national contexts;
f. support a diversity of researcher profiles and career paths, and value individual contributions, but also the role of teams, collaborative work and inter-disciplinarity;
g. ensure gender balance, gender equality, equal opportunities and inclusiveness.

To ensure coherence in the implementation of these principles, employers and funders should foster continuous training for the actors involved in the assessment and reward process.

2. Recruitment

In accordance with the principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, employers and funders are recommended to establish recruitment and selection procedures that are open, transparent and merit-based, without penalising career breaks or non-linear, multi-career and hybrid paths. They should seek excellence, gender equality, diversity, and be tailored to the type of position advertised. Advertisements should include a comprehensive description of the knowledge and competencies required, including a description of the working conditions and entitlements, career development prospects and an overview of the timeline. Candidates should be informed prior to the selection about the recruitment process and the selection criteria, the number of available positions and career development prospects. Committee members should also be made aware of and trained in fair recruitment principles.

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 multi-dimensional 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 they are applying.

Seniority

The level of qualifications required should be in line with the needs of the position and not set as a barrier to entry. Evaluation of qualifications should focus on judging the achievements of the person, rather than their 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.

3. Selection

As part of recruitment, the selection process should take into consideration the whole range of the candidates' experience. While focusing on their overall potential as researchers, their creativity – as assessed on the basis of their innovative research methods, approaches and outputs – and level of independence should also be considered. Selection committees should bring together diverse expertise, competences and experience relevant to assess the candidate. Selection committees should also have adequate gender balance and, where appropriate and feasible, include members from different public and private sectors and disciplines, and from 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 to minimise gender bias or any other possible unconscious biases. All candidates should be informed about the strengths and weaknesses of their application after the selection process.

Non-discrimination

Employers and funders of researchers should 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.

4. Career Progression

Employers and funders should introduce for all researchers, including senior researchers, evaluation/appraisal systems for assessing the performance of their duties on a regular basis and in a transparent manner by an independent – and, in the case of senior researchers, preferably international – committee. Non-linear and multi-career paths characterised by geographical, sectoral and inter-organisational mobility, or hybrid paths characterised by the simultaneous combination of sectors, deserve full recognition and consideration on a par with linear career paths. Linear paths are to be understood as careers that follow a straight line of progression from one position to another, usually within the same field or discipline.

Such evaluation and appraisal procedures should take due account of researchers' overall potential, research creativity, research output (e.g. publications, data, software, models, algorithms, methods, protocols, patents, policy contributions), 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), research behaviour (e.g. ethics and integrity practice, methodological rigour, early knowledge and data sharing, open collaboration) and their mobility. All these factors 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, all the way to the top positions. The development of tenure-track-like systems (defined frameworks where a fixed-term contract has the prospect of a progression to a permanent position subject to positive evaluation) could be considered for this purpose at the level of the EU 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 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, listed and/or quoted in the context of their actual contributions as co-authors of papers, co-inventors of patents, etc., or to publish their own research results independently from their supervisors. They should also offer training and workshops to researchers, especially early-career researchers, on ethical authorship practices, including the understanding of individual contributions and their rights and responsibilities.

Recognition of mobility experience

Any relevant mobility experience should be considered as a valuable contribution to the professional development of a researcher. Examples include a stay in another country/region or in another public or private research setting, 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.

PILLAR 3 Working Conditions and Practices

1. **WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES**
2. **STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT**
3. **CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS**
4. **DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS**

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 and to the definition of researchers' labour rights and obligations, subject to national legislation and circumstances. The need for employers and funders to develop a research culture for research excellence and facilitate a thriving researcher community is also emphasised.

1. Working Conditions, Funding and Salaries

Employers and 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 circumstances, and with national or sectoral collective bargaining agreements. They should aim to provide working conditions for combining personal life, family, caring, health, safety, and overall well-being, without prejudice to research careers. Particular attention should be paid, inter alia, to flexible working hours, part-time work, remote work and sabbatical leave, as well as to the necessary

financial and administrative provisions governing such arrangements. Employers should provide the working conditions and environment that promote the mental health and physical well-being of researchers, including appropriate procedures for preventing and tackling gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

Research environment

Employers and funders of researchers should ensure that the most stimulating research or research training environment is created that offers appropriate equipment, facilities and opportunities, including for remote collaboration over research networks, and the highest level of health and safety in line with EU, national and sectoral regulations. 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. research managers and administrators).

Complaints/appeals

Employers and funders of researchers should establish, in compliance with relevant national, EU or international law, rules and regulations, appropriate procedures, possibly in the form of an impartial ombudsperson, to deal with complaints/appeals of researchers, including those concerning conflicts among supervisors 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 to promote fair and equitable treatment within the institution and improve the overall quality of the working conditions and environment.

Participation in organisation governance

Employers and funders of researchers should recognise 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 and to actively contribute to the workings of the institution.

Funding and salaries

Employers and funders of researchers should ensure that researchers, irrespective of their status, enjoy fair and attractive remuneration conditions – funding and salaries – with adequate and equitable social security provisions, including sickness, healthcare and parental benefits, pension rights and unemployment benefits, old age and survivor's benefits, invalidity benefits and benefits related to work accidents and occupational disease, in accordance with existing national legislation and national or sectoral collective bargaining agreements. This should include researchers at all career stages, including R1, commensurate with their legal status, performance and level of qualifications and responsibilities. Researchers should be made aware of their rights and obligations when it comes to understanding how their salaries are being taxed. They should also be provided with transparent information on social protection rights, such as national pension rights.

2. Stability of Employment

Employers and funders should take resolute actions to counter the phenomenon of precarity and to support job security and stability. This could, on a voluntary basis, include the establishment of a maximum threshold for the number of fixed-term contracts per organisation in the overall researchers' human resources. Whenever permanent, long-term or highly recurrent research tasks are being fulfilled, permanent or open-ended contracts are recommended as the appropriate instrument. Researchers under fixed-term contracts should benefit from specific career development and advisory services to ensure career continuity.

Early-career researchers (R1-R2)

Precarity of employment is a particular issue in academia. To counter this situation, specific measures can be introduced to support early-career researchers, subject always to national legislation and circumstances. One is particular to providing R1 with social protection and working conditions that are applicable to researchers in other career stages and with adequate income. A second is promoting involvement of early-career researchers in research teams where required tasks relate only to their scientific training and recognise inter-institutional, inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary and geographical mobility, including virtual mobility. Additionally, appointing institutions should establish clear rules and explicit guidelines for the recruitment and appointment of R2, including the maximum duration and the objectives of these appointments. 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-term contract or tenure.

Employers and funders should make their best effort to inform early-career researchers about career opportunities within and beyond academia, offering broad professional development, especially during the R2 stage, more transparent and predictable career prospects, and work-based learning opportunities in a diversity of sectors.

3. Contractual and Legal Obligations

Researchers at all levels should be familiar with the national, sectoral or institutional regulations governing training and 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. Employers and funders should provide copies of these documents in English. Researchers should adhere to such regulations by delivering the required results (e.g. theses, publications, patents, reports, new products, etc.) as set out in the terms and conditions of the contract or equivalent document.

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

4. Dissemination and Exploitation of Results

Open Science should be practiced 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 to other research settings and, if appropriate, commercialised). Senior researchers are expected to take a lead in ensuring that research is fruitful and that results are either exploited commercially and/or made accessible to the public 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 practices should be recognised, incentivised and rewarded by employers and funders in recruitment, career progression and funding programme assessment.

Intellectual assets, including intellectual property rights

Employers and funders should ensure that researchers at all career stages are adequately compensated for the benefits resulting from the exploitation – if any – of their research and innovation activities results, where appropriate by guaranteeing co-ownership of the intellectual property rights (e.g. copyright). Employers and funders should address this explicitly in their intellectual assets management strategy and make the strategy publicly available. The intellectual assets management strategy should cover the creation, management, ownership and use of all types of intellectual assets, including peer-reviewed publications, data, know-how, standards, and support Open Science practices.

The strategy should explicitly refer to ownership provisions and access rights to researchers and/or, where applicable, to their employers or other parties, including industry partners, 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 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

1. VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS
2. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE
3. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
4. SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

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.

1. Valuing Diverse Research Careers

Employers and 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 quality assessment that is focused on talent and sensitive to diversity. The approach should foster responsible use of metrics and consider diverse contributions and their potential impacts. Equally important factors are diverse activities and practices like teaching and skills, peer review, management and leadership, supervision, mentoring and knowledge valorisation. Additionally, technology transfer activities, entrepreneurship and collaboration with industry, developing evidence-informed policymaking activities, science communication and interaction with society, open science practices, team science and related activities as well as mobility must also be included.

Employers and 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 career diversification for better personal and professional development. This will require career advisory, mentoring and support services to stimulate inter-sectoral, inter-disciplinary and geographical mobility, as well as the creation and development of entrepreneurial activities.

2. Career Development and Advice

Employers and 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 in developing 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 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 that provides information, guidance and support for career development, both within and beyond the institution concerned. This should be offered to researchers at all career stages, regardless of their contractual situation.

3. 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, or collaboration within a team and the respective networks. Particular attention should be paid to the training of R1, the majority of whom are PhD candidates at the beginning of their research career.

Access to research training and continuous development

Employers and 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, to encourage upskilling and reskilling 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, thus turning innovative ideas into business and fostering innovation and progress.

Employers and funders should take steps to ensure that doctoral training is compatible with interoperable careers in all relevant sectors and for the practice of Open Science, including by making use of the European Competence Framework for Researchers, the Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training, the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, and of any other future initiatives taken to strengthen the transversal skills of researchers.

Validation of skills

As part of broadening researchers' skills sets, employers and funders should provide for the appropriate assessment and evaluation of formal and informal training, including on-the-job skills and training, particularly within the context of international, intersectoral and inter-disciplinary mobility. The assessment should be done in a fair and transparent manner within a reasonable timeframe.

Teaching

Teaching is an essential means for the structuring and dissemination of knowledge and is a valuable option within a researcher's career path. Teaching should benefit from and make use of scientific knowledge and promote research interest among students. Involvement of researchers in teaching should be fully supported and recognised, and might vary at different time periods during a career. Special attention should be paid to researchers at the beginning of their careers, ensuring that they are rightly supported and that teaching responsibilities, including lecturing, tutoring, supervising and mentoring, are compatible with their research activities or research training.

Employers and funders should ensure that teaching duties are adequately remunerated and considered in the evaluation/appraisal systems from an early stage of researchers' careers. It should also be ensured that time devoted by senior members of staff to the training and mentoring of R1 and R2 is counted as part of their teaching commitment. Suitable training should be provided for teaching and coaching activities as part of the initial training and professional development of researchers.

4. 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 so as to ensure that senior and leading researchers manage their staff and teams in a fair and non-discriminatory manner, free of gender bias and other types of biases, such as those based on religion, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity and socio-economic background, and establish fruitful and cooperative working relationships with their peers. This should contribute to healthy, fair and creative environments where every individual is respected, duly motivated and recognised, and their well-being fostered.

Employers and funders should ensure that a person or group of persons is clearly identified to whom R1 and R2 researchers can refer to for performing their duties. They should also inform researchers accordingly.

Such arrangements should clearly stipulate that the proposed supervisor has an adequate level of expertise in supervising research and the time and commitment to offer the research trainee appropriate support; moreover, they should provide for the necessary progress and review procedures, as well as for the necessary feedback mechanisms.

Specific provisions for the integration, research support and career development of researchers, their mentoring and well-being, communication and conflict resolution, as well as for the training and professional development of supervisors, are provided in the MSCA Guidelines on Supervision. These guidelines are a set of recommendations for individuals and institutions receiving MSCA funding. They promote effective supervision, mentoring and appropriate career guidance.

Relations with supervisors

Researchers in their training phase should have a structured and regular relationship with their supervisor(s) and faculty/departmental representative(s), and take full advantage of their relationship with them. Supervisors should also actively support researchers, especially those in the early stages of their careers, 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, senior researchers should build a constructive and positive relationship with R1 and R2 researchers to set the conditions for efficient transfer of knowledge and for the further successful development of their careers. Supporting the career development of R1 and R2 researchers in communicating experience and values in a trusted and confidential environment is a highly responsible role.

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EU open data

The portal data.europa.eu provides access to open datasets from the EU institutions, bodies and agencies. These can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes. The portal also provides access to a wealth of datasets from European countries.

The European Charter for Researchers was adopted by the Council on 18 December 2023, as Annex 2 to the Council Recommendation C/2023/1640, which outlines a European framework for attracting and retaining research, innovation, and entrepreneurial talents in Europe. This new Charter replaces the previous European Charter and Code (2005) and represents a significant development in Research and Innovation policy.

It is a set of principles underpinning the development of attractive research careers to support excellence in research and innovation across Europe, and is recognised by the European Commission as a driver for strengthening the European Research Area.

This publication is a key reference for the HR Excellence in Research Award process, and aims at increasing awareness, facilitating dissemination, and providing support to researchers, employers, funders and policymakers across all disciplines and all sectors

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