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Recommendations for the organisation of Core Research Career Structures in academia

I. Observations.

1. Throughout Europe, **the current traditions of academic research jobs correspond to vaguely characterised positions**¹ in terms of experience, skills and duties, especially at the level of the initial and intermediate stages of the research career². This leads to a lack of attractiveness in terms of recruitment, career progression and working conditions, and hampers career driven mobility.
2. To overcome this situation, **it is necessary to redefine career structures in academia** and consider that researchers are professionals^{3,4,5,6} with well defined duties to fulfil for a given career track position, and who gain experience and skills from their work, thus enabling them to move to the next step of their career.

II. Aim of this document.

3. This document lays down the bases to organise core research career structures⁷ in academia using distinct and clearly labelled career track positions, with defined requirement profiles and clear duties.
4. This new career structure description aims to:
 - a. Promote the recognition of the duties fulfilled and the experience acquired within the frame of an academic research job, to **allow for proper career and human resources management within academia.**

¹ Report of proceedings of the conference on European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment organized by the UK Grad programme and UKRO. London, 8th-9th September 2005.

www.grad.ac.uk/downloads/documents/Euro%20Conference/Conference%20Report,%20Euro%20conference.doc.pdf

² Eurodoc 2004 workshop report.

www.eurodoc.net/articles.php?lng=en&pg=33

³ EUA Salzburg declaration (February 2005).

www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/Salzburg_Conclusions.1108990538850.pdf

⁴ European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment (March 2005).

[http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/pdf/C\(2005\)576%20EN.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/pdf/C(2005)576%20EN.pdf)

⁵ Eurodoc Strasbourg declaration (May 2005).

www.eurodoc.net/file/20050512_eurodoc_declaration_strasbourg.pdf

⁶ Berlin declaration (May 2005).

www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050520_Bergen_Communique.pdf

⁷ In particular, this document does not address some aspects that can be linked to a researcher's position, such as teaching and administration.

- b. Promote the identification by other sectors of the professional experience and skills of academic researchers, and **facilitate the possibility of intersectorial mobility**.
- c. Make the researchers themselves aware of their own professional experience and skills in order to **enable them to choose sensibly the next step of their career**.

III. Disclaimer.

- 5. The career structure positions proposed in this present draft and their description are in agreement with the points approved by the Eurodoc delegates in the Career Path workshops of the Eurodoc conference from 2001 to 2005.
- 6. Descriptions for research jobs are limited and scarce. To take this into account, this document aims at establishing a first series of basic recommendations which may be revised and amended as appropriate.

IV. Basic principles.

- 7. **Early Stage Researchers define the first step** of the academic research career track.
- 8. **Recruitment and promotion** of candidates should be based on their actual research experience and capabilities and **should not require thresholds based on age or length of time in the job** which are incompatible with precocious career progression.
- 9. **Career progression and mobility** are desirable and should be facilitated and advertised, but **should not be compulsory**. Individuals should be able to perform research at any level/category without any time restriction. Academic institutions and funding bodies should develop programmes to fund researchers at any stage of their career and offer fair and attractive working conditions regardless of the level of their position. The norm for employment contracts should be open-ended contracts⁸.
- 10. Guidelines should be produced for the objective assessment of researchers considering all other tasks they may conduct (teaching, managing, administration...)

V. Proposal for a Core Research Career Structure in academia.

RESEARCH WORKFORCE

11. Early Stage Researcher.

- a. Profile of the candidate.
 - Any individual fulfilling the requirements to register for a PhD.

⁸ In agreement with the European Council Directive 1999/70/EC of 28 June 1999 concerning the framework agreement on fixed-term work concluded by ETUC, UNICE and CEEP.
http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/1999/l_175/l_17519990710en00430048.pdf

b. Duties.

- Acquiring and interpreting research data and results.
- Provide feedback to other staff and students.

12. Experienced Researcher.

a. Profile of the candidate.

- Any individual holding a PhD or with equivalent research experience.

b. Duties.

- Provide and take initiatives in the planning of independent original research.
- Provide guidance to other staff such as early stage researchers and research technicians.

RESEARCH MANAGEMENT

13. Team leader/manager.

a. Profile of the candidate.

- PhD holder or individual with appropriate research experience.
- Proven ability to provide high quality research (e.g. authorship of a range of publications/reports or development of patents, products etc.).
- Experience of active participation in the planning of research projects, coordination of the work of other staff.

b. Duties.

- Carry out a research programme by managing teams and providing supervision to other research staff such as technicians, administrative staff, experienced and early stage researchers.
- Attract funding to support his/her research team.

14. Department coordinator/manager.

a. Profile of the candidate.

- PhD holder or individual with appropriate research experience
- Ability to devise and direct research projects successfully.
- Proven ability to lead a research team and attract funding, potential to lead several research teams.

b. Duties.

- Direct large, multiple, and/or multidisciplinary research projects gathered as departments of research within the institution.
- Attract funding to support his/her research teams.

15. Institution/strategic director/manager.

a. Profile of the candidate.

- PhD holder or individual with appropriate research experience.
- Ability to devise and direct multiple research programmes.
- Ability to attract funding for large/multiple/multidisciplinary research programmes.

b. Duties.

- Project management, including leading large multi-disciplinary teams and/or collaborating with groups in other academic institutions and/or public sector.