

Templin Manifesto

A dream career in academic life

For a reform of personnel structure and career paths in higher education and research



Higher education and research face growing demands as a result of the rise in student numbers, reforms to the course structure, self-management and the increasing importance of third-party sponsorship. Staff in this sector are expected to meet these challenges without the benefit of appropriate conditions to facilitate their work. More and more academics are given fixed-term contracts or other types of atypical and precarious employment. Many lack the leeway they need for independent teaching and research and are denied reliable career prospects.

However, effective teaching and research on the one hand and decent working conditions and career prospects on the other are two sides to the same coin. We therefore urge the federal and state agencies and institutions in the sector to undertake a reform of personnel structure and career paths in higher education and research, guided by the ten principles set out below.

1. Enhancing the security and structure of early-stage research

We regard post-graduate research as the first stage in an academic career path. Researchers working towards their doctorate should therefore enjoy adequate conditions of employment, rooted in collective bargaining procedures, which entail the payment of social insurance contributions and enable them to spend at least three-quarters of their time pursuing their qualification. Interdisciplinary graduate centres should assist all doctoral students in submitting, carrying out and completing their research project. We advocate greater transparency and social justice in access to doctoral research, including for graduates from the universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*).

2. Reliable prospects for postdocs

Academics who have obtained a doctoral degree (postdocs) need reliable career prospects, founded on a tenure track that facilitates a permanent future in higher education and research, whether or not a professorial appointment follows. This calls for the systematic planning and development of human resources by higher education institutions and research institutes. Teaching in higher education must be accessible via a variety of career paths, with the advanced doctorate counting as just one option.

3. Permanent jobs for permanent tasks

Apart from positions for professors and for those pursuing their qualifications, higher education institutions and research institutes need to create a sufficient number of posts for academics to exercise their profession on permanent contracts. This is the only way to ensure that permanent tasks in research, teaching and academic management can be performed with the requisite continuity and quality. Only then will qualified young academics encounter career paths other than a professorship.

4. Regular, not precarious employment

Many higher education institutions respond to major financial strains by contracting out a substantial proportion of their essential teaching to part-time and temporary staff. There has to be an end to this exploitation of teachers forced to accept dumping terms! Staff carrying out sustained teaching and examination duties should be granted regular contracts which include the payment of social insurance contributions. Wherever meaningful use is made of part-time and temporary contracts to complement the courses available, these must be subject to minimum standards of pay, duration and options to continue.

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5. Striking a balance between teaching, researching and life

Academic work is a profession like any other, and even academics have a right to a work-life balance. This means that higher education and research must be organised to reflect family needs. Our interpretation of family life is a broad one, embracing any form of living together where people accepted a responsibility to care for each other. Schools and childcare facilities must reflect these patterns, the particular requirements of staff with relatives in need of care must be accommodated and the arrangement of working hours must be based on appropriate models.

6. Gender balance

As women are under-represented in managerial functions in the academic sector, we need effective measures to boost the proportion of women in every stage of the academic career path and close the gender gap. The performance of higher education institutions and research institutes must be evaluated in the light of their success in implementing equality. We call for a binding quota, with penalties as an incentive, which includes professorial and managerial appointments. Gender and equality officers require effective options to initiate action and put their views.

7. Equality in decision-making

Higher education institutions and research institutes need to become more democratic and self-management must be built on stronger foundations. All academic staff should enjoy an equal right to decide, regardless of their status on university councils or research advisories. The same applies to new structures such as graduate schools and clusters of excellence. We want the scope of legislation on staff councils and workforce representation to be extended to all employees, with greater rights for the elected members of these councils, not least as a result of the greater autonomy these institutions now enjoy with regard to commercial arrangements and human resources.

8. Encourage mobility, don't penalise it

We campaign for conditions that will encourage academic mobility: between higher education and research establishments, within higher education and research in Europe and across the world, and between theory and practice. This means upholding full pension and social insurance rights and recognising experience in other establishments and qualifications from elsewhere. Equally it means that anyone who cannot or does not want to be mobile should be given a fair chance in the academic world.

9. Building higher education and research to meet needs and demand

In the long term, the growing pressures on research, teaching and academic management can only be met if the expansion in higher education and research responds to needs and demand. To this end, we need more places for students, a better tuition ratio and deeper research to tackle the social, economic and environmental challenges of the 21st century.

10. Collective negotiation to govern all forms of employment

Academics and students under contract are all entitled to the protection afforded by collective bargaining procedures. We therefore urge that the scope of regionally negotiated public service agreements be extended to cover everyone employed in higher education and research. We are committed to sector-specific provisions that do justice to the particular requirements of working in a higher education institution or research establishment. Lawmakers must respect the autonomous powers of trade unions and employers to negotiate these matters and they must rescind the rule that forbids the negotiation and implementation of provisions on fixed-term contracts in higher education and research. The veto on collective bargaining contained in the Act on Temporary Employment for Scientific Professions must be repealed in full.

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