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GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF UTENA COLLEGE RESEARCHERS

INTRODUCTION

Utenos kolegija Higher Education Institution (hereinafter referred to as the Utenos kolegija HEI), implementing the principles of the European Research Area [1](ERA) and guided by *the European Charter for Researchers* [2], seeks to ensure consistent professional development of researchers based on the values of the Utenos kolegija HEI and higher education, and to create a favorable environment for strengthening researchers' competencies at all stages of their careers.

The Utenos kolegija HEI's guidelines for professional development and career development of researchers (hereinafter referred to as the Guidelines) have been prepared in accordance with *the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania* (hereinafter referred to as the Republic of Lithuania) , the Description of Mandatory Competencies for Career Stages of Researchers in Research and Study Institutions, Utenos kolegija HEI *Human Resources Management Strategy (HRS4R) Gap Analysis (GAP Analysis)* [3]and *the Utenos kolegija HEI Institution Open, Transparent, Merit-Based Recruitment Policy for Researchers* [4]*, the Utenos kolegija HEI Scientific Activity Regulations* , based on examples of good practice from foreign countries [5].

The guidelines are based on the provision established *in the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania* that the career of researchers consists of four stages: beginning researcher, approved researcher, recognized researcher, and leading researcher.

the professional development of researchers is understood as the systematic improvement of various forms of competences at all career levels; **the career development of researchers** - as the consistent movement of a researcher in a vertical career direction - from one level to another, and as movement in a horizontal career direction - at the career level level.

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[1]European Research Area, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/lt/policies/european-research-area/

[2] The European Charter for Researchers , https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15135-2023-ADD-1/lt/pdf

[3]Analysis of the shortcomings of the Utena College Human Resources Management Strategy (HRS4R), https://www.utenos-kolegija.lt/upload/file_manager/Kolegija/Dokumentai/2025/Projektai/GAP_Utenos%20kolegijos%20Atotr%C5%ABkio%20analiz%C4%97.pdf

[4] Utena College's open, transparent, merit-based recruitment policy for researchers, https://www.utenos-kolegija.lt/upload/file_manager/Visuomenei/Projektai/UTENOS%20KOLEGIJOS%20ATVIRA%20%C4%AEDARBINIMO%20POLITIKA.pdf

[5] Researcher Development Framework , https://vitae.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Researcher-Development-Framework-RDF-Vitae-4.pdf

Other terms used in the Guidelines are understood as *in the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, the Description of Mandatory Competencies for Career Stages of Researchers in Science and Studies Institutions.*

The guidelines discuss the purpose, principles, competencies, professional development and professional growth path, and support for researchers' professional development.

The guidelines are intended for:

- all researchers of the Utenos kolegija HEI participating in applied scientific research and experimental development (hereinafter - R&D), meeting the requirements for researchers established *in the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania* and holding the following teaching positions - professor, associate professor, assistant, junior assistant, senior lecturer, lecturer, and research staff positions - chief researcher, senior researcher, researcher, junior researcher;
- Utenos kolegija HEI administration staff responsible for human resources management, academic activities and strategic development;
- for candidates for researcher positions.

1. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES, PRINCIPLES OF RESEARCHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The aim of the guidelines is to promote the continuous professional development of researchers at all career levels by increasing the capabilities of researchers in the field of R&D, to promote the career development of researchers in vertical and horizontal directions.

The professional development and career development of researchers is based on the following principles:

- *equal opportunities* – every researcher has the right to improve their competences and develop their career regardless of age, gender, race, religious beliefs or position held;
- *continuity* – improving competences is a continuous process that responds to the concept of lifelong learning;
- *selectivity* – the researcher can freely choose the methods, forms, and topics of career development and competence improvement, combining them with the strategic goals of the College, the faculty, and the department's activity program;
- *responsibility* for one's actions in planning and implementing career development and professional improvement;
- *cooperation* - joint work, constant exchange of knowledge, adoption of good practices and contribution to achieving the goals of the Utenos kolegija HEI;

- *efficiency* in achieving the intended goals and rational use of resources, through continuous analysis, evaluation and planning of competence development activities, based on effective management.

2. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCHERS' COMPETENCIES

In accordance with *the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania*, *the Description of Mandatory Competencies for Research Career Stages of Research and Studies Institutions* [6], four researcher career stages are distinguished:

1. **First-stage researcher**, aspiring to hold the position of junior assistant or junior research associate, holding a master's degree or equivalent higher education qualification, carries out scientific (artistic) activities under the guidance of a recognized or leading researcher.

2. **Recognized researcher**, scientist seeking to hold the position of assistant, research intern or research worker, a scientist whose scientific activities are not fully independent;

3. **Established researcher** who aspires to hold the position of associate professor or senior research worker is a scientist who has achieved a level of independence in scientific activity;

4. **Leading researcher**, aspiring to the position of professor or chief research officer, is an independent, leading scientist in their field of research or science.

Taking into account the career stage of researchers and the direction of professional development, two groups of researcher competencies are distinguished:

1. **Required professional competencies of researchers** - these competencies are divided into four main areas: carrying out R&D activities; organizing R&D; disseminating R&D results and predicting impact; and R&D expert assessment. These areas include skills related to planning and implementing scientific research, participating in project activities and research teams, presenting research results to the scientific and general public, and participating in expert and peer review activities (Annex 1).

2. **Desirable competencies** - these competencies include adherence to scientific integrity, the ability to apply the principles of intellectual property protection, knowledge dissemination and inter-institutional cooperation (Annex 2).

Based on the good experience of foreign countries [7], in addition to mandatory and desirable competencies, a researcher at each stage of his or her career should: In order to achieve professional and personal development, the development of transferable skills is also encouraged. Transferable

[6] Description of mandatory competencies for career stages of researchers in research and study institutions , https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/0d62c2b216b211eea9b3de7dd350a34e

[7] Researcher Development Framework , https://vitae.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Researcher-Development-Framework-RDF-Vitae-4.pdf

skills are divided into six categories: interpersonal skills, cognitive skills, communication skills, research skills, organizational skills, and influencing and impact skills (Annex 3).

3. RESEARCHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The career development of researchers at Utenos kolegija HEI is based on consistent, planned improvement, deepening of knowledge and assumption of responsibilities, moving from the level of a beginner to a leading researcher. Career development is associated not only with scientific activity, but also with the opportunity to engage in other academic activities, to lead scientific projects, and progress is based on the acquisition of qualifications, competencies, and achievements.

The career development of college researchers is possible in two directions: **horizontal career and/or vertical career.**

At all stages of their career development, researchers at Utenos kolegija HEI are encouraged and supported to continuously improve, regularly update and expand their skills and competencies. Development can be ensured through a variety of means – from formal studies, training, seminars, and participation in conferences to collaboration in scientific groups and networks.

A researcher's career can be started after obtaining a master's degree or an equivalent higher education qualification. A beginning researcher can develop his early career in two directions: a vertical career, based on further studies at a university in doctoral programs, planning professional development and moving to higher stages of a researcher's career; a horizontal career based on professional activity, its evaluation, increasing responsibility and expanding areas of activity.

Higher levels of research career development are possible with a doctorate degree. and participating in scientific and other academic activities.

The vertical career of researchers is developed from the level of novice researcher to the level of leading researcher, taking into account scientific achievements, competencies and growth in responsibility (Figure 1).

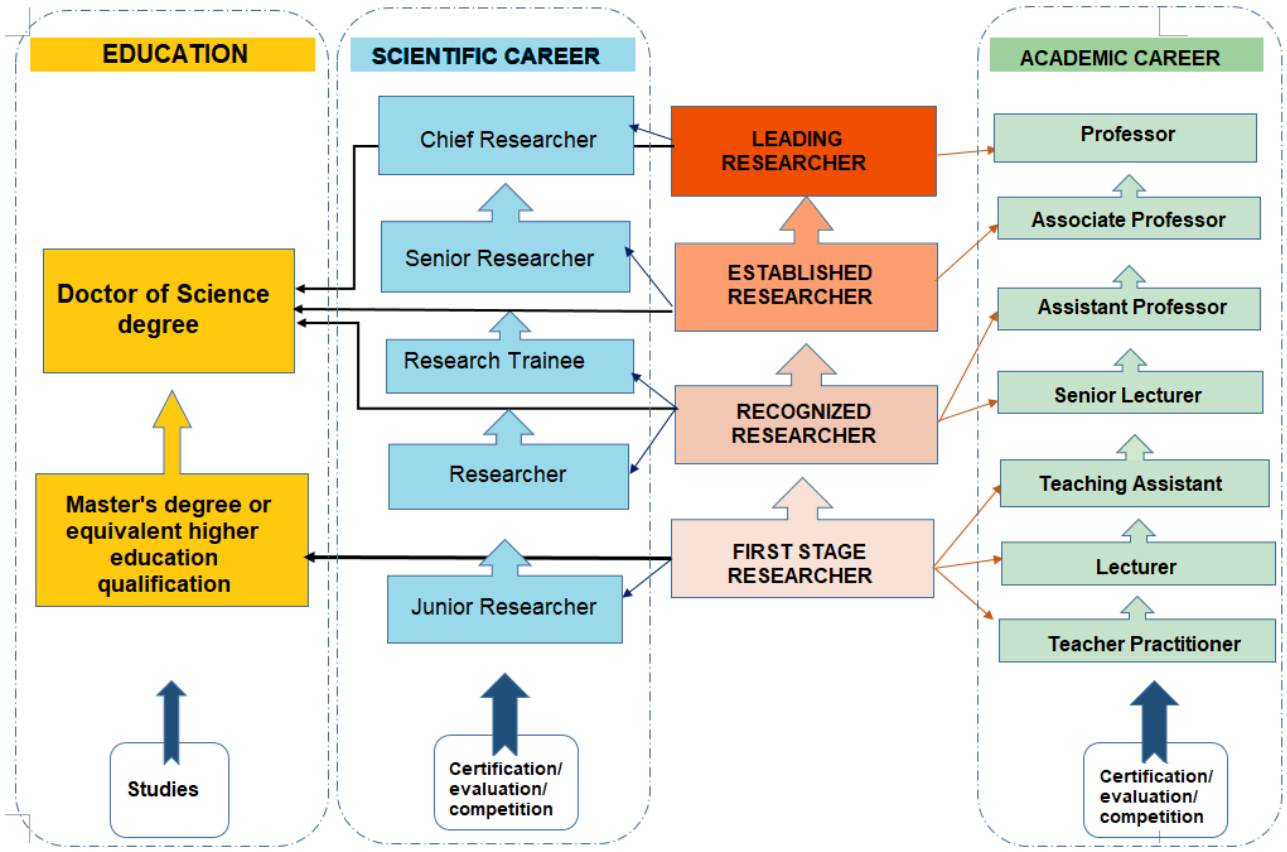

Figure 1. **Vertical career development of researchers**

In accordance with *the description of mandatory competencies for career stages of researchers in research and study institutions* and taking into account the requirements for the relevant career stages of researchers, researchers may apply for the following positions of research staff at Utenos kolegija HEI:

- *Chief Researcher* - this position can be held by a leading researcher. The Chief Researcher must train scientists, lead scientific research and experimental development, and publish research results;
- *Senior Researcher* - this position may be held by a researcher who is at least at the level of a recognized researcher. A Senior Researcher must lead scientific research and experimental development, and publish research results;
- *Researcher* - this position can be held by a researcher who is at least at the level of an approved researcher. A Researcher must conduct scientific research and carry out experimental development, and publish the results of this activity;
- *Research Trainee* - this position can be held by a researcher who is at least at a level lower than an recognized researcher;
- *Junior Researcher* - This position can be held by a beginning researcher. A Junior Researcher must perform or assist in performing scientific research and experimental development work.

In accordance with *the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania* , researchers can also hold teaching positions. The teaching positions at Utenos kolegija HEI are as follows:

- *Professor* - this position can be held by a scientist who is a leading researcher and is responsible for training scientists, teaching students, conducting and directing scientific research and experimental development, and publishing research results;
- *Associate Professor* - this position can be held by a scientist who is at least at the level of a recognized researcher and who is required to teach students, conduct scientific research and experimental development, and publish the results of these activities;
- *Assistant Professor* - this position can be held by a scientist who is at least at a level lower than an approved researcher, who supervises students' practical activities (practical work, exercises, student internships, etc.), and assists in conducting scientific research and experimental development work;
- *Teaching Assistant* - this position can be held by a novice researcher who must perform or assist in teaching work and assist in conducting scientific research and experimental development work;
- *Senior Lecturer* – this position can be held by a person with a doctorate in science (arts), he must teach students and carry out methodological work.
- *Lecturer* - this position can be held by a scientist or a person with at least a master's degree or equivalent higher education. A lecturer must teach students and carry out methodological work;
- *Teacher Practitioner* - lecturers holding this position must perform practical work outside of scientific and educational institutions, have at least 3 years of such practical work related to the field of teaching, professional achievements and meet the teaching competencies provided by the College. These lecturers teach, conduct practical classes, supervise students' practical work, introduce students to the application of scientific research in practice, help them perform applied scientific activities, and convey to them the knowledge of practical work.

In accordance with *Utenos* kolegija *HEI's regulations on scientific activity*, lecturers holding the positions of professor, associate professor, assistant, senior lecturer shall devote at least one third of their working time in their pedagogical position to scientific activity; junior assistants, lecturers working in their main workplace – at least one quarter of their working time in their pedagogical position; scientific activity is recommended for lecturers working in a non-main workplace and teaching assistants [8].

When moving from the beginning researcher to the leading researcher career stage, the depth of competencies gradually increases, moving from the ability to perform assigned tasks to the ability

[8] Regulations on scientific activities of Utena College, https://www.utenos-kolegija.lt/upload/file_manager/Kolegija/Dokumentai/2019/Mokslin%C4%97s%20veiklos%20nuostatai_2019.pdf

to generate strategic decisions, act independently at the international level and shape science policy; the diversity of fields of activity is consistently expanded, reflecting the researcher's maturity, level of responsibilities and involvement in the broader context of academic, scientific and societal activities; the scale of cooperation consistently increases, its scope, level and impact change (Figure 2).

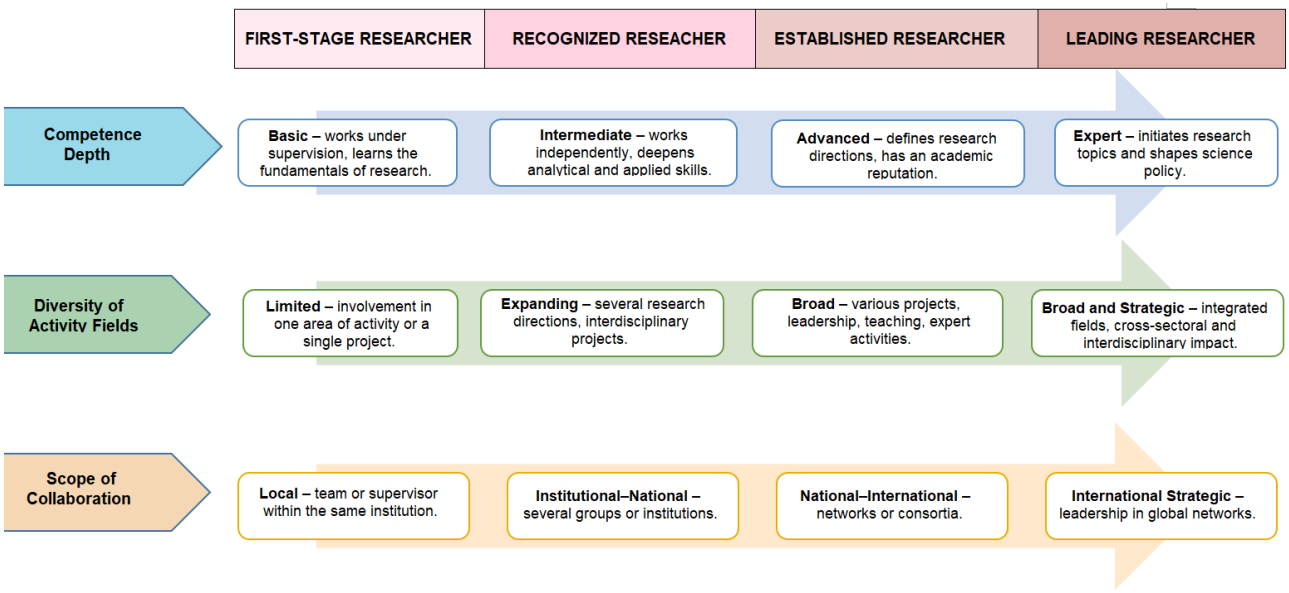

Figure 2. **Researcher career development according to depth of competences, diversity of fields of activity and extent of collaboration**

At the relevant stages of a researcher's career, the development of a researcher's career in terms of depth of competences, diversity of fields of activity and extent of collaboration includes:

- *First-stage Researcher* - involvement as a team member in various R&D projects on a national or international scale; development of competencies through internships, training, workshops or under the guidance of a mentor; participation in scientific communication activities (e.g., popularization of science); transfer of knowledge to students; involvement in open science initiatives (e.g., open access databases, ethics training).
- *Recognized Researcher* - active participation in multidisciplinary R&D projects (e.g., interdisciplinary); involvement in professional networks, societies, thematic forums; dissemination of scientific results not only to the academic, but also to the professional community or the general public; cooperation with business, public sector or non-governmental organizations; expert activities (reviewing, participation in evaluation committees).
- *Established Researcher* - leading small scientific groups or specific research packages; initiating interdisciplinary or international projects; transferring experience to novice researchers (mentoring, training of scientists); participating in editorial boards, preparing scientific publications; collaborating with business enterprises in developing solutions that meet their needs.
- *Leading Researcher* - leadership in international R&D networks and expert groups; preparation of expert conclusions for public or private sector institutions; creation of innovations and

knowledge commercialization activities (spin-offs , startups , patents, licensing); development of cross-sectoral cooperation models (e.g. with industry, public sector); strategic contribution to science policy or institutional decisions.

The advancement of researchers to higher levels takes place through a public competition or in another manner specified in the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania and the legal acts of the College.

Recruitment and selection of researchers to positions corresponding to all stages of a researcher's career is carried out in accordance with the provisions of *Utenos kolegija HEI's open, transparent, merit-based researcher recruitment policy*.

All researchers participate in an annual performance evaluation:

- holding teaching positions - under the guidance of *Description of the procedure for organizing certification, evaluation and competitions for the positions of teachers of Utenos* kolegija *HEI* ;
- holding the position of research staff, no later than one month before the end of a fixed-term one-year employment contract or no later than one month before the end of the academic year, if the employment contract is concluded for a period longer than one year.

Horizontal career of researchers is developed by developing interdisciplinary, intersectoral or international mobility, changing research direction, field of activity or combining different activities. Horizontal career allows the researcher to grow without changing positions, but by expanding influence, responsibilities and field of cooperation. In pursuit of horizontal career, researchers engage in academic activities or become experts in a specific field of science, combining scientific, study and project activities according to institutional needs.

When developing the horizontal career of researchers, *the provision of the Procedure for Improving the Qualifications of Teachers and Other Employees of Utenos* kolegija HEI *is followed* [9], which states that teachers and other employees must improve their qualifications regularly, but at least once every 3 years.

4. SUPPORT FOR RESEARCHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Support for the professional development and career development of researchers is based on the following principles:

[9] Description of the procedure for improving the qualifications of teachers and other employees of Utena College, https://www.utenos-kolegija.lt/upload/file_manager/Kolegija/Dokumentai/2021/Utenos%20kolegijos%20darbuotoju%CC%A8%20kvalifikacijos%20tobulinimo%20tvarkos%20apras%CC%8Cas.pdf

1. **Creating an inclusive research environment and culture** to attract and retain talent. Emphasizes the importance of attractive, safe working conditions, respectful, open communication and collaboration to support the well-being and productivity of researchers.

2. **Ensuring fair, transparent and merit-based recruitment and career development processes for researchers,** emphasizing the importance of effective performance management, clear job descriptions and maintaining a good work-life balance.

3. **Ensuring professional development and career progression,** recognising that researchers need to have the skills and knowledge to adapt to the changing research environment. It is therefore important to provide them with access to training, support, networking opportunities, and opportunities to develop research skills, leadership and transferable skills. Emphasis is placed on supporting early-stage researchers who can turn to experienced researchers in their departments for support at an early stage of their careers.

Support for the professional development and career development of researchers is enshrined in the main legal acts of Utenos kolegija HEI - *the Statute of Utenos* kolegija *HEI* [10], *the Regulations on Scientific Activities of* Utenos kolegija HEI, *the Description of the Procedure for Improving the Qualifications of Teachers and Other Employees of Utenos* kolegija *HEI*, etc.

The statute of Utenos kolegija *HEI* provides that lecturers and other researchers may receive state support for scientific internships, as well as support for participating in scientific conferences abroad, and teaching at foreign research and study institutions in accordance with the procedure established by the Law on Research and Study of the Republic of Lithuania.

The regulations on scientific activities of Utenos kolegija HEI provide that, in order to conduct scientific research and improve scientific, methodological and professional qualifications, teachers may be exempted from pedagogical work for no longer than one year in accordance with the procedure established by the laws of the Republic of Lithuania. The aforementioned document also provides that part of Utenos kolegija HEI's funds, received from the State budget appropriations intended to promote the participation of state colleges in R&D, each year, may be allocated: to research groups through a competition, in order to promote applied scientific activity and research, the results of which could be applied to solve relevant real-life problems; to researchers of Utenos kolegija HEI and their groups, by awarding them for the best publications, projects and applied works.

description of the procedure for improving the qualifications of teachers and other employees of Utenos kolegija *HEI* provides that a teacher may be granted creative leave once within a 5-year period, teachers and other employees may go on an internship once within a 5-year period, and the improvement of the qualifications of teachers and other employees may be financed from various sources.

[10] Statute of Utena College, https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/f65cc936757911eaa38ed97835ec4df6?jfwid=-1cf20o2wcd

Annex 1

Required competencies for researchers

Researcher career stages	**Carrying out R&D activities**	**R&D organization**	**R&D dissemination of results and prediction of their impact**	**R&D expert assessment**
First-stage Researcher	• is able to conduct scientific research (accumulate, systematize, and present scientific data) under the guidance or assistance of recognized and/or leading researchers; • understands the topic of scientific research and is able to contribute to its development.	• is able to participate in scientific research, experimental development and/or innovation, science dissemination projects and/or programs implemented by institutions; • is able to work in a research group.	• is able to present the results of their research;	-
Recognized Researcher	• are able to conduct scientific research in research groups or in consultation with other researchers that expands the boundaries of knowledge and	• is able to prepare and/or participate in national and/or international scientific research, experimental development and/or innovation, science dissemination projects	• is able to publish research results in national and/or international scientific publications; • is able to present their research results at scientific events.	• is able to participate in thematic research networks and/or scientific societies, reviewers and/or expert groups.

Researcher career stages	Carrying out R&D activities	R&D organization	R&D dissemination of results and prediction of their impact	R&D expert assessment
	thus contributes to the implementation of R&D; • is able to understand the possibilities of applying their research results in a cultural, social, and economic context; • independently or with the help of higher-level researchers or other mentors, is able to use their existing knowledge to critically analyze, evaluate, and summarize new and complex ideas or possibilities.	and/or programs implemented by institutions; • is able to collaborate with other researchers and work in research groups		
Established Researcher	• is able to contribute to the development of research topics at the national and/or international level with their scientific results; • is able to critically evaluate and/or implement promising	• is able to prepare and/or participate in national or international scientific research, experimental development and/or innovation, science dissemination projects or lead them, prepare and/or	• is able to publish research results in international scientific publications; • is able to present their research results at international scientific events and/or is a member of the organizational	• is an expert in national or international R&D projects and/or national or international programs; • is invited or delegated to prepare expert

Researcher career stages	Carrying out R&D activities	R&D organization	R&D dissemination of results and prediction of their impact	R&D expert assessment
	research topics and/or experimental development opportunities; • has an academic reputation based on nationally or internationally recognized research results in his/her research topic(s); • is able to assess the impact and application possibilities of their research results in a cultural, social, and economic context.	implement programs carried out by institutions; • is able to be the leader of a smaller scientific group or otherwise demonstrate leadership in organizing scientific research; • participates in the education of beginning researchers.	(or scientific) committees of international scientific events; • is able to make a significant contribution to creating impactful R&D work.	conclusions or recommendations for public and /or private sector entities.
Leading Researcher	• is able to significantly contribute to the development of a research topic or even several topics at the national and/or international level with their scientific results;	• is able to lead the preparation and implementation of international scientific research, experimental development and/or innovation, science dissemination projects and/or programs implemented by institutions;	• is able to publish research results in international scientific publications independently or as a main co-author; • is able to present their research results as a guest speaker at	• is an expert in international R&D projects and/or national and international programs; • is able to initiate or is invited or delegated to

Researcher career stages	**Carrying out R&D activities**	**R&D organization**	**R&D dissemination of results and prediction of their impact**	**R&D expert assessment**
	• is able to critically evaluate and identify and/or implement promising (strategically important) research topics and /or experimental development opportunities; • has an academic reputation based on internationally recognized research results in his/her research topic(s); • is able to assess (understand) the broader impact and application possibilities of their research results in a broad cultural, social, and economic context.	• is able to train scientists by guiding them, consulting them or carrying out other activities for training scientists and/or is able to be the leader of an independent scientific group or otherwise demonstrate leadership in organizing scientific research	international scientific events and/or is a member of scientific committees of international scientific events; • is able to create high-impact R&D work.	prepare expert conclusions or recommendations on the development of the public and/or private sectors.

Annex 2

Desirable competencies for researchers

Researcher career stages	**Desirable competencies**
First-stage Researcher	• is able to understand the continuity and potential impact of their research results; • understands and applies the principles of research ethics and scientific integrity, and open science.
Recognized Researcher	• By working in a team, they gain the ability to transfer their competencies and skills to other environments; • participates in creating a culture of research ethics and scientific integrity, and open science in the institution; • is able to apply forms of intellectual property protection; • is able to convey knowledge about their research results to the professional community and society.
Established Researcher	• improves the ability to transfer high-level competencies and skills to other environments and research areas where they can be applied or used; • participates in creating a culture of research ethics and scientific integrity, open science within the institution and/or beyond its boundaries; • contributes to strengthening mutual trust and cooperation between researchers and/or developing researchers' careers; • is able to manage intellectual property; • is able to effectively communicate knowledge about their research results to the professional community and the general public; • actively participates in research networks, is able to establish cooperative relations with public sector institutions and/or business enterprises; • is a member of the editorial boards of periodicals and/or individual publications referenced in international databases.
Leading Researcher	• is able to transfer high-level competencies and skills to other environments and research areas where they can be applied or used; • creates a culture of research ethics and scientific integrity, and open science within the institution and beyond;

	• is able to strengthen mutual trust and cooperation among researchers, is able to contribute to the development of researchers' careers and the attraction of talented researchers; • is able to effectively manage intellectual property; • is able to effectively communicate knowledge about their research results internationally to the professional community and the public; • leads working groups that prepare expert conclusions and recommendations on the development of the public and/or private sectors; • participates in management or supervision groups of international research projects; • is a guest editor of periodicals and/or individual publications referenced in international databases.

Annex 3

Transferable skills of researchers

1. **Interpersonal skills:** The skills needed to maintain effective professional connections and relationships with a variety of people and groups.
• Working with others/teamwork – the ability to contribute to teamwork, avoid and/or resolve conflict, motivate others, and foster a collaborative environment. • Team management/leadership – the ability to lead a group, create a common vision and goal, and motivate a team while respecting people of all races, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. • Mentoring and supervision – the ability to respond constructively to advice and criticism, as well as the ability to guide, support and advise others. • Negotiation skills are the ability to promote consensus, that is, to unite different opinions and reach agreements that benefit all parties. • Networking – the ability to establish personal and professional connections and build a broad network of contacts for the exchange of personal and professional information
2. **Cognitive skills:** The skills needed to recognize problems, plan effectively and meaningfully, and make decisions.
• Creativity and the ability to think abstractly – the ability to transcend ideas, norms, and traditional relationships, creating new ideas, methods, and interpretations. • Problem solving and decision making – the ability to define problems and find solutions appropriate to their context.
3. **Communication skills.** The skills needed to convey information clearly and comprehensively to a variety of people and groups.
• Communication/Oral and Written Presentation – the ability to properly understand, interpret, create and convey information orally and in writing. • Communication/dialogue with non-specialists – the ability to communicate and conduct conversations and discussions with a non-specialist audience, both orally and in writing. • Teaching skills – the ability to teach and support the learning process of students through participation in teaching activities.
4. **Research skills:** The skills needed to carry out high-quality and useful research projects.
• Project planning and design – the ability to plan projects based on realistic goals. • Information retrieval and management skills – the ability to recognize the need for information, the ability to identify, find, evaluate and effectively use information to solve specific problems.

• Knowledge of research methods and techniques – the ability to confidently apply various research methods and techniques. • Writing funding applications – the ability to prepare and present applications for project funding. • Research management – the ability to manage research projects professionally, transparently, and responsibly. • Research ethics and integrity – the ability to apply ethical and research principles.
5. **Organizational skills.** Skills needed to organize the effective work of researchers, both their own and those of their subordinates.
• Time management – the ability to plan time effectively and complete tasks and projects within set deadlines. • Resource management – the ability to plan and manage the resources needed to execute projects. • Career planning – the ability to plan, manage and make informed decisions about one's professional career.
6. **Influence and impact skills.** Skills needed to influence the academic, social, cultural and economic environment.
• Entrepreneurship is the ability to turn ideas into real actions. • Commercialization , patenting, and knowledge transfer – the ability to recognize and understand which areas of personal research may have an impact on the social and economic environment. • Applying science to policymaking – the ability to inform policymakers and influence decision-making through individual research.