

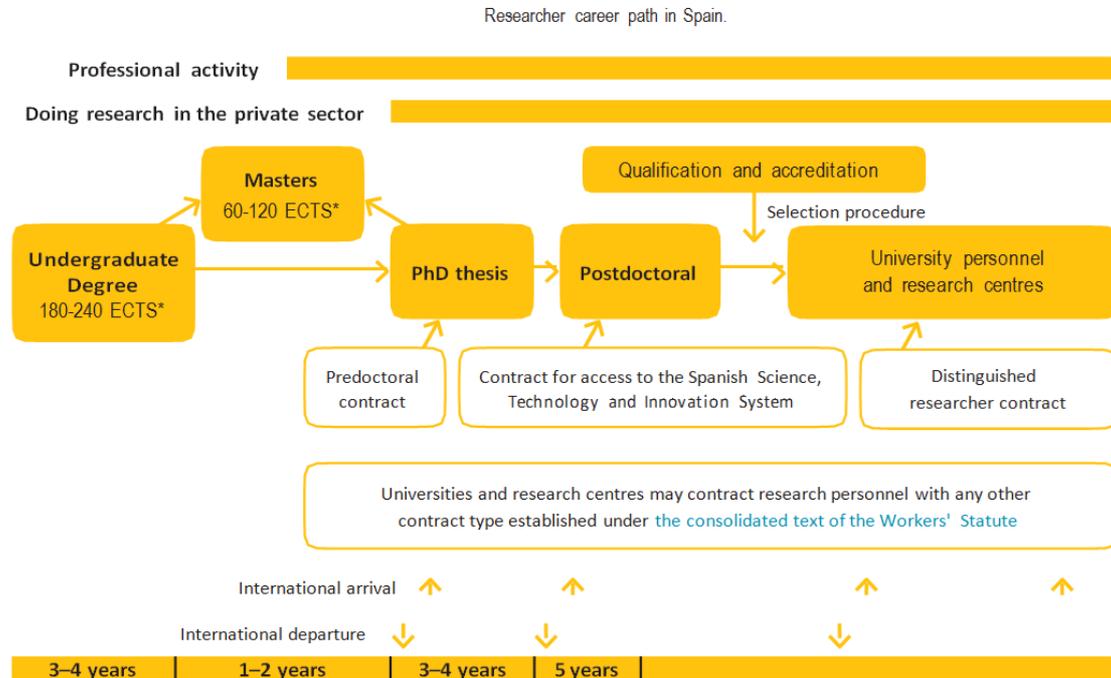
# Researcher career stages in Spain

The objective of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act is to make the career of researcher attractive nationally and internationally, and to develop it on the basis of respect for the constitutional principles of equality, merit and skill.

The Act stipulates **three types of contracts** that can be used by the State Research Centres attached to the Public Administration, other Regional Government Research Bodies and also state universities when they receive funds the purposes of which include recruiting researchers. The specific employment contracts for research personnel are as follows:

- **Predocctoral Contract.**
- **Contract for access to the Spanish Science, Technology and Innovation System.**
- **Distinguished researcher contract.**

In addition, the entities listed may contract research personnel under the employment contract modes established in the consolidated text of the Workers' Statute (<https://boe.es/boe/dias/1995/03/29/pdfs/A09654-09688.pdf>).



\*ECTS: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/resources/european-credit-transfer-accumulation-system\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/education/resources/european-credit-transfer-accumulation-system_en).

As stated in the CTI Law, the scientific community must be equipped with a foreseeable technical and scientific degree, based on merits and socially recognised, whereas the Spanish

System of Science, Technology and Innovation must include the criteria of maximum mobility and openness governing the international scientific community.

The general objective of the Spanish Strategy on Science and Technology and on Innovation is the recognition and promotion of talent in R&D&I and its employability. This is aimed at increasing the training capacities in R&D&I of the System; encouraging job placement and the employability of trained resources, both in the public and business sectors, and facilitating their temporary mobility among the public institutions and between these and the private sector for the implementation of R&D&I activities. Therefore, the consideration of the research career always considers the possibilities of professional development in both the public and the private sector.

Research personnel linked to a public body to which they provide services, in a relation subject to the administrative or labour laws, may hold a career position, or a temporary position in the civil service, or may be part of the permanent or temporary staff.

More specifically, the professional career of civil service research personnel is structured around a design of scientific scales which aim to homogenise the selection, payment and promotion regime. In addition, objective systems are established to assess the performance of civil service personnel for the purposes of a horizontal professional career, training, the provision of jobs and the receipt of complementary payments.

Public employment as regards a career as a researcher working for Public Research Centres that report to the Public Administration is divided into the following scientific categories which will have full research authority: PRC research teachers, PRC scientific researchers and PRC graduate scientists.

Public university lecturers employed by the Government will belong to the following categories and will have full teaching and research authority: university professors and university lecturers.

### **Predoctoral contract**

Employment contracts under the predoctoral contract mode are signed in accordance with the following **requirements**:

- a. The contract is for research work as part of specific, original projects undertaken by degree-holders, engineers, architects, recent university graduates with at least 300 credits (European Credit Transfer System – ECTS), a university masters degree or equivalent who have been accepted onto a PhD course. The chosen persons will receive the title of **predoctoral research trainees**.

b. The contract will be signed in writing by the predoctoral research trainee, as the employee, and the public university or research centre leading the research group, as the employer, and must be accompanied by the written acceptance of the former onto the PhD programme issued by the department responsible for the programme or by the PhD or postgraduate school if applicable.

c. The contract will have a specific duration and will be full-time.

The contract must have a duration of more than one year, but not exceed four years. When the duration of a contract is less than four years, it may be extended subsequently. Such extensions must not have a duration of less than one year under any circumstances. The activity carried out by the predoctoral research personnel shall be assessed annually by the academic commission of the doctorate programme—or, where applicable, the doctorate school— while the person remains in the programme.

d. The salary for this contract must be no less than 56% of the salary set for equivalent categories by the collective bargaining agreements in the field during the first two years, no less than 60% in the third year and no less than 75% in the fourth. Nor may it be less than the minimum wage (SMI) established each year.

### **Contract for access to the Spanish Science, Technology and Innovation System**

This contract was designed in the mould of the 'tenure track' used in other countries.

Consequently, contracts for access to the Spanish Science, Technology and Innovation System are signed in accordance with the following **requirements**:

a. These contracts can only be offered to holders of a PhD or equivalent.

b. The work to be undertaken will primarily consist of research activity with the intention of helping researchers achieve a high level of professional perfection and specialisation to consolidate their professional experience.

c. The contract must have a duration of more than one year, but not exceed five years. When the duration of a contract is less than five years, it may be extended subsequently. Such extensions must not have a duration of less than one year under any circumstances.

No employee can be offered a contract of this type, in the same organisation or any other, for a period of time in excess of five years.

d. The remuneration for this contract must be no less than that of a researcher who carries out the same activity.

- e. Researchers who are recruited subject to this type of contract can complement their work with teaching activities related to the proposed research activity up to a maximum of 80 hours a year.

From completion of the second year of the contract onwards, **researchers with a contract of this type could be subject of an evaluation of their research activity**. Evaluations will take into account criteria of excellence, will be performed in accordance with the regulations of the university or employer and will include an external report that will be binding if negative and will be written by:

- a. in the case of researchers contracted by state universities, the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) or an equivalent external organisation in each Autonomous Region; and,
- b. in the case of researchers contracted by Public Research Centres, the National Evaluation and Foresight Agency (ANEP) or an equivalent organisation determined within the National Research Agency, or an organisation equivalent to the ANEP in Autonomous Regions if the employer is accountable to them.

**The selection processes for permanent staff** announced by government bodies will consider favourable evaluations received during the course of a contract for access to the Spanish Science, Technology and Innovation system as research merits.

In the case of a negative evaluation, researchers may request a second and final evaluation of their research activity before the contract or its extensions end.

#### **Distinguished researcher contract**

**Spanish and foreign researchers of renowned prestige** in the scientific and technical field who hold **PhDs** or equivalent can be recruited under distinguished researcher contracts, in accordance with the following **criteria**:

- a. The objective of the contract is to perform research activities, to lead a research teams, research centres, unique scientific and technological facilities or programmes of great importance in the field of knowledge, in accordance with the functions and objectives of the employer.
- b. The duration of the contract will be determined by mutual agreement.
- c. Researchers offered this type of contract may not sign other employment contracts with other organisation, unless they have received express permission from the employer or a written agreement otherwise and without disregarding the regulations.

d. Compliance of the contract will be subject to an objective monitoring system the employer will establish.

e. The contract may be terminated due to abandonment on behalf of the employer, notifying the decision in writing with three months' notice, notwithstanding the possibility of the employer cancelling the contract for just causes.

This new draft classification aims to communicate the various characteristics that researchers may have throughout their career. It describes four broad profiles that apply to all researchers, independent of where they work in the private or public sector: in companies, NGOs, research institutes, research universities or universities of applied sciences. Regardless of any particular profession one can outline broad profiles that describe the different characteristics researchers may possess.

### **First Stage Researcher (R1)** (Up to the point of PhD)

This profile includes individuals doing research under supervision in industry, research institutes or universities. It includes doctoral candidates.

Researchers with this profile will:

- Carry out research under supervision;
- Have the ambition to develop knowledge of research methodologies and discipline;
- Have demonstrated a good understanding of a field of study;
- Have demonstrated the ability to produce data under supervision;
- Be capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;
- Be able to explain the outcome of research (and value thereof) to research colleagues.

Desirable competences

- Develops integrated language, communication and environment skills, especially in an international context.

### **Recognised Researcher (R2)** (PhD holders or equivalent who are not yet fully independent)

Here we are including:

- Doctorate degree (PhD) holders who have not yet established a significant level of independence;
- Researchers with an equivalent level of experience and competence.

### Necessary competences

All competences of 'First Stage Researcher' plus:

- Has demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of research associated with that field;
- Has demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial programme of research with integrity;
- Has made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, innovation or application. This could merit national or international refereed publication or patent;
- Demonstrates critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;
- Can communicate with their peers - be able to explain the outcome of their research (and value thereof) to the research community
- Takes ownership for and manages own career progression, sets realistic and achievable career goals, identifies and develops ways to improve employability;
- Co-authors papers at workshop and conferences

### Desirable competences

- Understands the agenda of industry and other related employment sectors
- Understands the value of their research work in the context of products and services from industry and other related employment sectors
- Can communicate with the wider community, and with society generally, about their areas of expertise
- Can be expected to promote, within professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society

- Can mentor First Stage Researchers, helping them to be more effective and successful in their R&D trajectory.

### **R3 - Established Researcher** (Researchers who have developed a level of independence)

This describes researchers who have developed a level of independence.

Necessary competences

All necessary and most desirable competences of 'Recognised Researcher' plus:

- Has an established reputation based on research excellence in their field;
- Makes a positive contribution to the development of knowledge, research and development through co-operations and collaborations;
- Identifies research problems and opportunities within their area of expertise;
- Identifies appropriate research methodologies and approaches;
- Conducts research independently which advances a research agenda;
- Can take the lead in executing collaborative research projects in cooperation with colleagues and project partners;
- Publishes papers as lead author, organises workshop or conference sessions

Desirable competences

- Establishes collaborative relationships with relevant industry research or development groups
- Communicates their research effectively to the research community and wider society
- Is innovative in their approach to research
- Can form research consortia and secure research funding / budgets / resources from research councils or industry
- Is committed to professional development of his/her own career and acts as mentor for others.

### **R4 - Leading Researcher** (Researchers leading their research area or field)

This is a researcher leading his/her research area or field. It would include the team leader of a research group or head of an industry R&D laboratory. In particular disciplines as an exception, leading researchers may include individuals who operate as lone researchers.

#### Necessary competences

All necessary and most desirable competences of 'Established Researcher' plus:

- Has an international reputation based on research excellence in their field;
- Demonstrates critical judgment in the identification and execution of research activities;
- Makes a substantial contribution (breakthroughs) to their research field or spanning multiple areas;
- Develops a strategic vision on the future of the research field
- Recognises the broader implications and applications of their research;
- Publishes and presents influential papers and books, serves on workshop and conference organising committees and delivers invited talks

#### Desirable competences

- Is an expert at managing and leading research projects
- Is skilled at managing and developing others
- Has a proven record in securing significant research funding / budgets / resources
- Beyond team building and collaboration, focusing on long-term team planning (e.g. career paths for the researchers and securing funding for the team positions)
- Is an excellent communicator and networker within and outside the research community [creating networks]
- Is able to create an innovative and creative environment for research
- Acts as a professional development role model for others

<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/europe/career-development/training-researchers/research-profiles-descriptors>