

RETHINKING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT TO SHAPE INNOVATIVE, INCLUSIVE, AND IMPACTFUL SCIENCE IN EUROPE

The early and mid-career researcher perspective

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Young
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of Europe



The Young Academy of Europe

- Pan-European bottom-up initiative of outstanding early and mid-career researchers for networking, scientific exchange, promotion of equity, diversity and inclusion, science policy and evidence-based policy
- YAE fellows demonstrate leadership (young principal investigators), their research is recognised at national and international levels, and have an interest in science policy
- 160 members and 180 alumni



The Young Academy of Europe and CoARA

- Part of the 20 stakeholders of the Core Group preparing CoARA
- Among the first signatories of CoARA in July 2022
- Member of the following working groups:
 - Reforming Academic Career Assessment – co-chaired by Moniek Tromp
previous YAE Chair
 - Improving practices in the assessment of research proposals (Mona Simion)
 - TIER – Towards an Inclusive Evaluation of Research (Marc Yeste)
 - Early-and-mid-career researchers (EMCRs) – Assessment and Research Culture

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The European Council of Doctoral
Candidates and Junior Researchers



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CoARA

Coalition for Advancing
Research Assessment



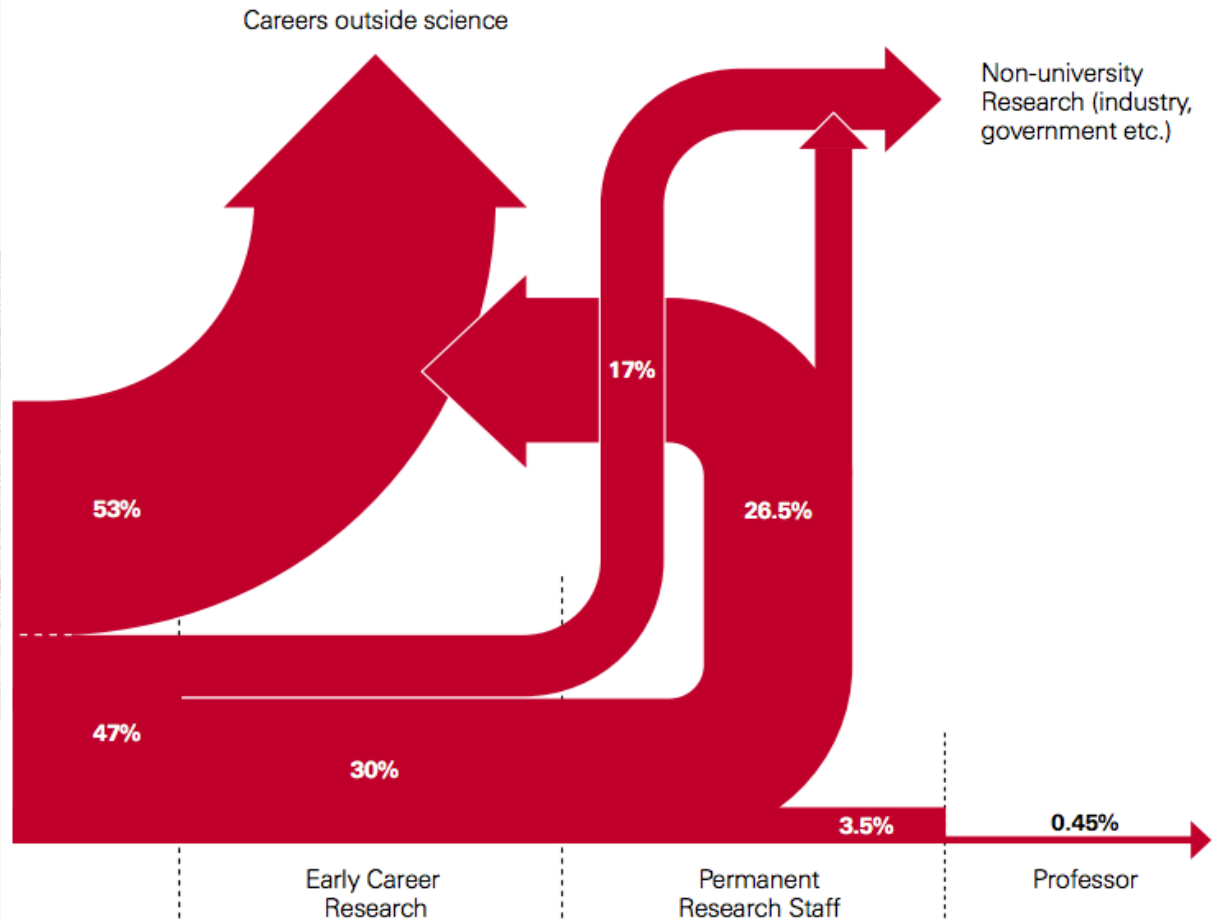
WORLD SCIENCE FORUM
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Specific challenges

Leaving the linear academic path or academia is quite general, but

- most early-to-mid-career researchers (EMCRs) are not prepared for careers outside science
- due to this and their precarious situation, there is hypercompetition
- frustration and feeling of failure (affecting women more) - mental health

Figure 1.6 Careers in and outside science



Source: 2010 Royal Society policy report entitled “The Scientific Century: securing our future prosperity”

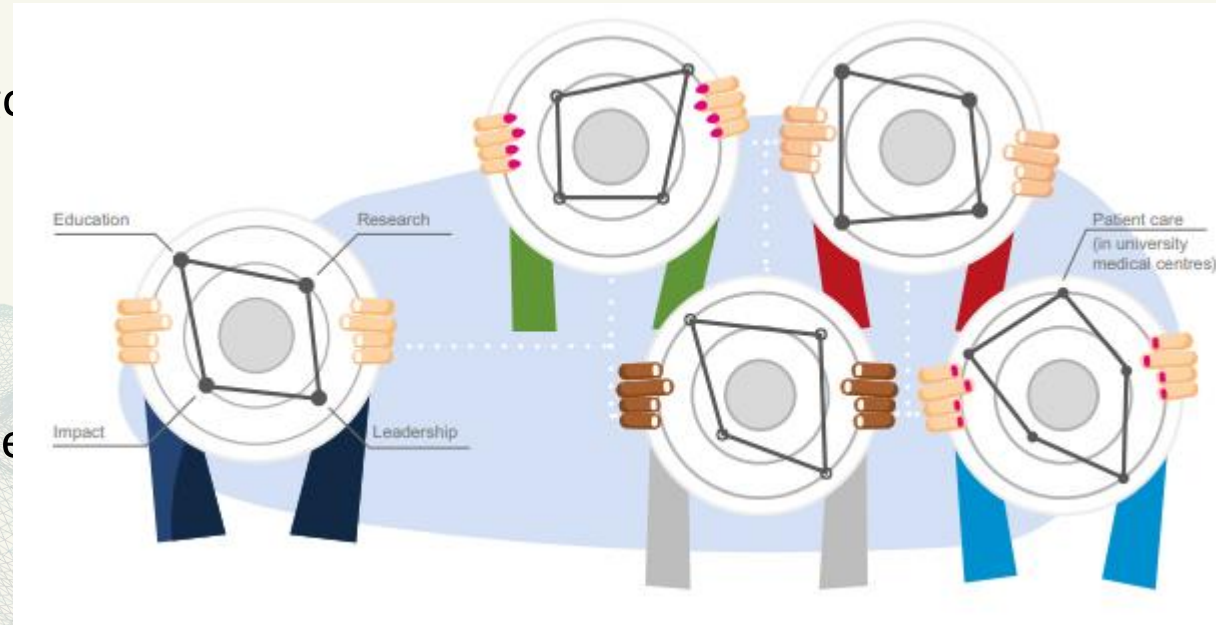
Specific challenges

- need to improve doctoral training to meet needs of developing transversal skills and a diverse set of research competencies
- this takes time (become a good lecturer, mentor, science communicator, innovator) and it is uncertain which competencies will be needed, recognized and rewarded later



Specific challenges

- “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”
- Teamwork – complementarity in competencies, large societal/research challenges often require inter- and transdisciplinary research teams
- We need to recognize and reward the importance of various researcher competencies



<https://recognitionrewards.nl/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Room-for-everyones-talent-in-practice-Road-map-Recognition-Rewards.pdf>

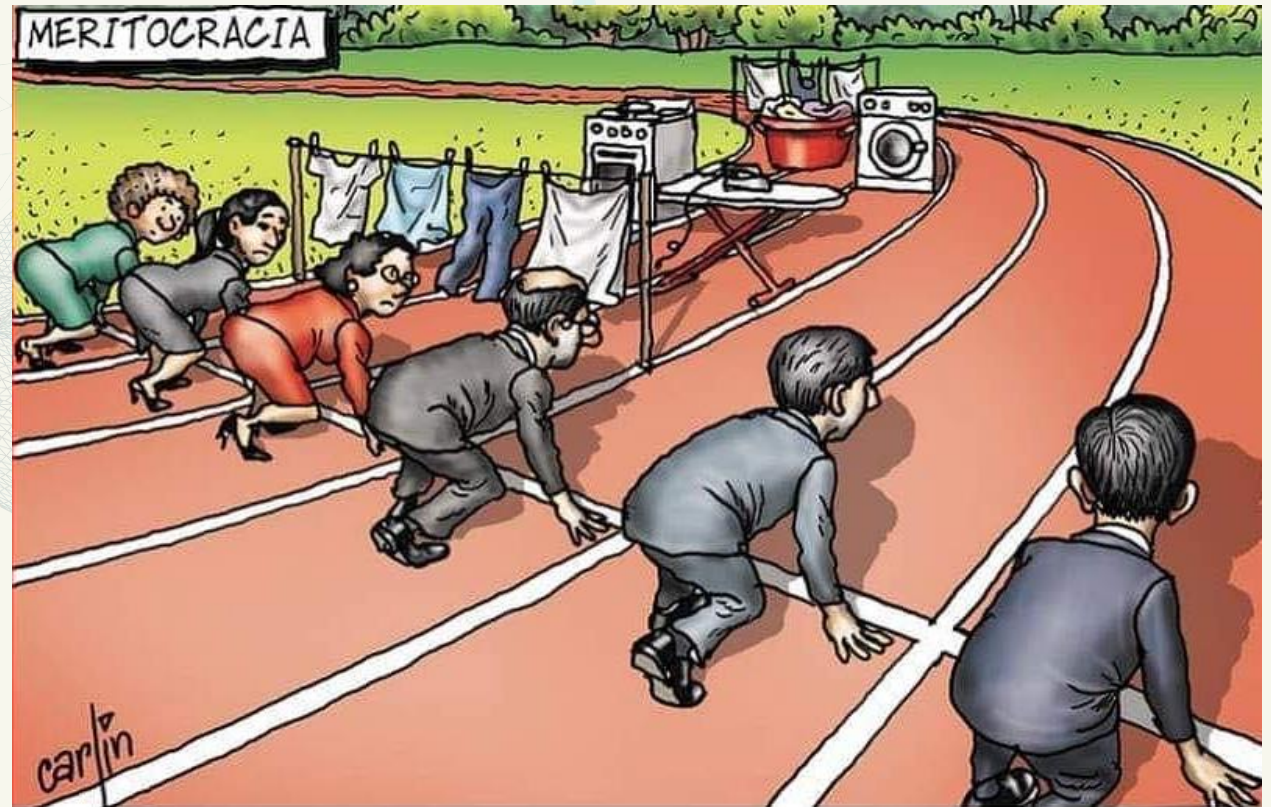
- Achieving balance between the individuals and the collective
- It is hard to tell apart the excellence of the researcher from that of the supervisor/group leader/group/institution at an early career stage

Specific challenges

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

“Academia is a marathon, not a sprint.”

- but how can you compare and assess people based on the first 100 m when this is a marathon?
- gender, parental leave, teaching, science policy related activities are all “handicaps”
- Matthew effect strengthens inequalities
- uncertainty in evaluation criteria is also challenging (poor mental health)

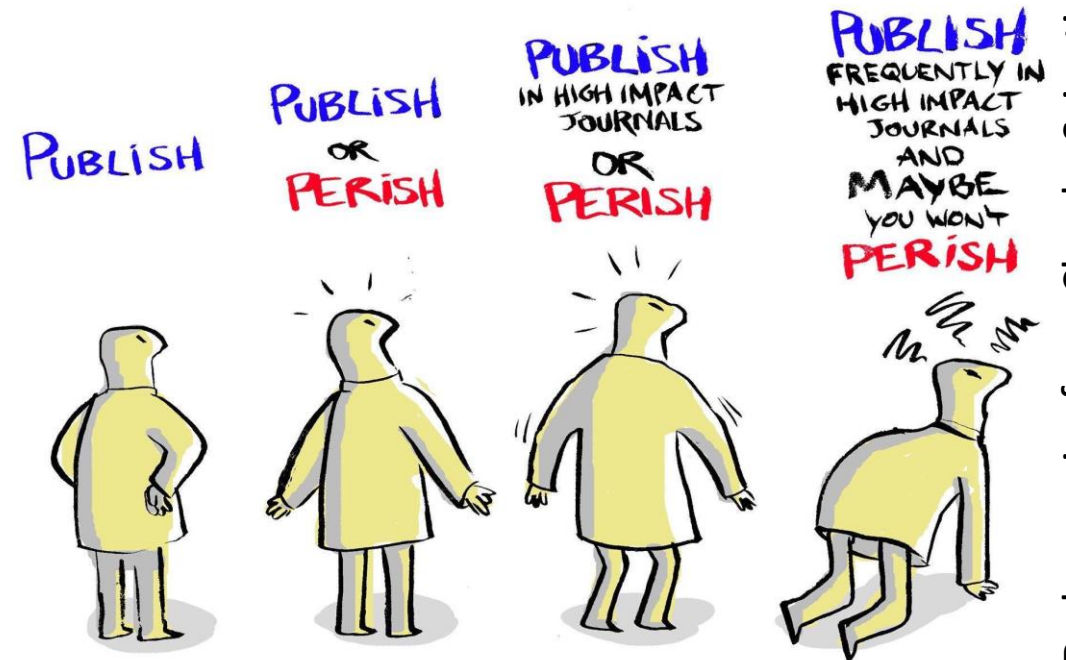


Solutions

Change in research culture

- advocating for improved recognition and rewarding of various researcher competencies – not only of EMCRs but also their supervisors (quality/excellence of supervision/teaching/mentoring/doctoral training)
- providing credit for parental leave, unconventional career paths (industry), teaching, mentoring, etc.
- narrative CVs may help (peer mentoring platform by MCAA, YAE and 6 funders): <https://pep-cv.mariecuriealumni.eu/>

THE EVOLUTION OF ACADEMIA



Pedronomics from Cheeky Scientist



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Solutions

Change in research culture

- stable, transparent, meritocratic, and predictable evaluation criteria
- internationally compatible (to allow global mobility)
- collection of data, discussions and sharing of best practices on
 - 1) doctoral work/candidate assessment (by universities, doctoral schools)
 - 2) (transparent) postdoctoral grant assessment (by funders)
 - 3) habilitation evaluation procedures across Europe (by universities/authorities)

JOIN OUR TASK FORCE FOR EARLY-TO-MID-CAREER RESEARCHERS!

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THANK YOU!



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