# 2023 EUA-CDE THEMATIC PEER GROUP "PROFILES AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHERS"

# Call for participation

**Deadline for application: 6 October 2022**

## Introduction

Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs) organised by the EUA Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE) provide participating members with opportunities for mutual learning on selected topics. They contribute to a common knowledge base on doctoral education structures, policies and practices in Europe. EUA-CDE is launching a call for participation for the 2023 TPG "Profiles and institutional support for postdoctoral researchers".

## Objectives

The main objectives of TPGs are:
- Mutual learning: discussion and exploration of success factors and areas for improvement in doctoral education structures, policies and practices in Europe;
- Common knowledge base: contribution to a common knowledge base on doctoral education in Europe by identifying key lessons learnt on the selected topic.

## Theme and expected outcomes

Postdoctoral researchers are highly trained and productive members of the university who play a significant role in the research environment and are often involved in other university activities such as teaching. As confirmed by the 2021 EUA-CDE survey, this population has substantially diversified as its role and status are quite different depending on the specific country, institution or discipline.

In recent years, a significant expansion of the number of postdoctoral researchers has taken place. In many cases, this does not coincide with the share of tenure-track positions available at European universities. Consequently, postdoctoral researchers are more exposed to fixed-term or project-based contracts without a secure career perspective and must contend with extremely competitive criteria when applying for a very limited number of senior positions. Together with the diversity of tasks postdoctoral researchers are confronted with, this situation has motivated many universities to design initiatives and specific training courses and to provide professional development infrastructures for this group. However, there is still a need for continued work in this area given the lack of comprehensive data and limited knowledge about this population. In addition, many universities are still developing their offers, which raises the need for exchanges on good practice and the development of common definitions.

The 2023 EUA-CDE Thematic Peer Group will reflect on the current profiles and situation of the postdoctoral community at European universities, identify the support already provided by institutions to this population, share existing or potential good practices and suggest areas for improvement regarding postdoctoral services and support. The members of this working group will also have the opportunity to present their experience

with the postdoctoral population, discuss the main challenges when dealing with this group and formulate recommendations on how to best address them.

The TPG will reflect on the following aspects:

1. What is the purpose of a postdoctoral position?
2. What are the types and profiles of postdoctoral positions currently in place at European universities?
3. What are the key challenges concerning postdoctoral researchers, both from the point of view of the institution and of the individual, and how are these obstacles being addressed by universities?
4. How can university structures, strategies and practices be further improved to better support the needs of this population?
5. How can universities better assist postdoctoral researchers so that their expertise and experience is recognised both inside and outside of academia?

Based on mutual learning and exchange during the meetings, the TPG is expected to result in a report outlining key lessons on the selected topic.

### Activities and timeline

The first TPG meeting will take place towards the beginning of 2023. Participants will meet approximately three times over the course of the year for full-day meetings. They are requested to participate in <u>all</u> of these activities.

The work of the TPG will be chaired by one participating university and coordinated by the EUA-CDE Secretariat.

### Eligibility

TPGs are open only to **EUA-CDE members**. Each university should be represented by a Vice-Rector/Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Head of doctoral school or other person in a senior position with responsibilities in doctoral education. Universities are strongly encouraged to engage postdoctoral researchers or to consult them internally between meetings.

### Selection criteria

The selection of participants will be primarily based on motivation and experience relevant to the theme, as demonstrated in the application.

Participants of the Thematic Peer Groups will be selected based on a multiplicity of criteria, including diversity of institutional and geographical backgrounds and experience with the topic. Priority will also be given to applications coming from universities that have <u>not</u> yet participated in previous TPG editions.

### Terms and conditions for participation

EUA-CDE members participate on a self-funded basis and are responsible for organising and covering their own travel and accommodation for the group's meetings. Catering (lunches, coffee breaks) during the meetings will be covered by EUA-CDE.

**Universities interested in participating in the TPG are invited to fill in the submission form below and send it to Ana-Maria Peneoasu at ana.maria.peneoasu@eua.eu by 6 October 2022 at the latest.**

**2023 EUA-CDE Thematic Peer Group – submission form**

*About EUA-CDE*

*EUA-CDE was launched in 2008 at the initiative of the European University Association, responding to a growing interest in doctoral education and research training in Europe. We are now the largest European network in this field, covering 37 countries and bringing together a community of academic leaders and professionals from over 250 universities awarding doctoral degrees and related institutions. For more information about EUA-CDE, please visit our website at https://eua-cde.org.*