

2026-2028 EUA Thematic Peer Group

Reforming academic careers in practice

Call for participation

Deadline for application: **4 September 2026**

1. Introduction and objectives

Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs) provide a forum for EUA members to engage in structured peer learning and exchange on strategic topics of common interest. Bringing together universities from across Europe, TPGs enable participants to share experiences, discuss challenges, identify emerging practices and collectively reflect on institutional responses to developments affecting higher education and research. Participants benefit from mutual learning while contributing to broader discussions within the European university community.

Academic careers are central to universities' ability to fulfil their missions in education, research, innovation and service to society. Yet universities face growing challenges in attracting, developing and retaining talented staff, while also responding to evolving expectations regarding academic work, research assessment, career development and working conditions. At the same time, efforts to recognise a broader range of academic contributions, support more diverse career paths and foster collaborative forms of knowledge creation are prompting institutions to review established policies and practices.

Against this backdrop, universities are increasingly seeking ways to translate shared principles and reform agendas into meaningful institutional change. This group will provide a dedicated space for participants to exchange experiences and explore how academic career reforms can be effectively implemented and sustained in practice.

The outcomes of the group's work will contribute, inter alia, to a report and a public workshop that will be disseminated to the wider EUA community and therefore support a common knowledge base on academic career reform principles and practices in Europe.

2. Topics and expected outcomes

While many universities have adopted principles and commitments related to the recognition of diverse academic contributions and career development, as well as responsible assessment, implementing these reforms often requires significant cultural and organisational change.

The group will explore how institutions can create enabling environments for more diverse, attractive and sustainable academic careers. Discussions may address approaches to recognising a broader

range of academic contributions across research, teaching, innovation, leadership and societal engagement the development of more diverse and flexible career pathways and the recognition of collective and interdisciplinary forms of work. The group will also examine the organisational conditions that support successful reform, including staff development, professionalisation of relevant institutional functions, leadership, change-management approaches, and mechanisms for building trust and engagement across academic communities.

Through peer learning and exchange, participants will identify opportunities and challenges in embedding academic career reforms within institutional culture, policies and practices.

3. Activities and timeline

Eight to ten EUA members will take part in the TPG. Group members will attend three meetings between November/December 2026 and February 2028, each lasting one or two days. As a given, one of the three meetings will take place in person, hosted by a group member, and one online. The group is free to decide whether to organise the third meeting in person or online. Meeting venues and dates will be jointly determined once group members have been selected and the availability of selected group members has been mapped.

Group members are expected to participate in all activities of the TPG, which may also include presenting their organisations' experiences and good practices as well as participating in consultations between the meetings.

4. Group chairs

The EUA secretariat will assign a coordinator who will support the group's work, organise and attend all meetings and support the drafting of the final report.

EUA will also appoint one representative from the group to act as chair. Chairing responsibilities include the planning of the group's work (including the meetings and potential asynchronous work), facilitation and steering of the discussions during meetings and ensuring that the group stays focused and goal-oriented, in collaboration with the EUA secretariat.

Those interested in taking up this role are invited to express their interest as part of the application.

5. Eligibility

The call is open to all EUA members, represented by a vice-rector/vice-president/pro vice-chancellor or another person in a senior position with responsibilities in academic careers and/or academic assessment at the organisation.

6. Selection criteria

The selection of group members will be done primarily on the basis of the motivation of the organisation and the experience in the selected theme, as demonstrated in the application.

In addition, the following aspects will be considered:

- geographical diversity;
- balance of institutional profiles (e.g. multi-faculty, specialised);
- degree of implementation/maturity of academic career reforms in the organisation.

7. Terms and conditions for participation

There is no participation fee. However, institutions will participate on a self-funded basis and are thus responsible for organising and covering their own travel and accommodation for the physical group meeting(s). EUA will cover the costs of joint meals (lunches, coffee breaks and dinner) during the meetings.

EUA member institutions interested in participating are invited to fill in the [online application form](#) by 4 September 2026. Applicants will be informed in October whether their application has been successful. For further questions, please contact Rita Morais (rita.morais@eua.eu).

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