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Report

Key Indicators on Research Career Development at UPV

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1. Introduction.

The Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV) holds the **HR Excellence in Research** award, within the framework of the *Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)*, and maintains a strong commitment to the continuous improvement of its human resources policies in research, in line with the principles of the Charter and the Code. UPV is currently in the *Award Renewal* phase, reinforcing its commitment to an open, transparent and merit-based research environment.

In order to **promote interoperability among institutions and countries within the European Union**, research and academic positions in Spanish universities and public research organisations have been **mapped in accordance with the four profiles established by the European Framework for Research Careers: R1, R2, R3 and R4**.

This classification is defined according to the characteristics, responsibilities and achievements that research staff may develop and acquire throughout their professional careers. **These criteria apply to all research personnel, regardless of whether they work in the public or private sector¹**.

This framework enables researchers to **identify their current stage of professional development** and to understand the **main milestones required to progress to higher stages** within their research career.

¹ EURAXESS España. *What are EU Research Career Profiles (R1–R4)?* Available at: <https://www.euraxess.es/spain/science-spain/research-career-path-spain>

At the same time, **universities and public research organisations** may use this classification as **a reference to align their institutional categories** with the European framework, thereby contributing to greater coherence and transparency in research career management².

Furthermore, according to the **Council Recommendation of 18 December 2023** on a European framework for attracting and retaining research, innovation and entrepreneurship talent, **researchers are defined as** professionals engaged in the conception or creation of new scientific knowledge based on original hypotheses or concepts. They carry out research activities and contribute to improving or generating concepts, theories, models, infrastructures, techniques, instruments, software or operational methods³.

In the Spanish context, the **R3 accreditation** regulated by the *Ley de la Ciencia, la Tecnología y la Innovación (LCTI)* is particularly relevant. It is granted through a procedure **managed by the Agencia Estatal de Investigación** via a **national call**. This accreditation recognises the track record of research personnel, both national and international, within the postdoctoral pathway for access to the Spanish System of Science, Technology and Innovation, and **certifies their research quality and independence, in line with the established European research profile**.

The following sections present key information on research career development at the Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV), based on an analysis of R1–R4 profiles, contract types and professional categories of the institution’s research staff.

This report, which compiles **key indicators on research career development**, aims to **provide structured, data-based guidance** to research staff — **particularly those in the early stages of their careers** — regarding the different phases of the research career, existing contract types and their progression. The analysis also offers an **approximate overview of the distribution and likelihood of access to different contract types and professional categories**, contributing to greater transparency and understanding of research career pathways.

² EURAXESS España. *What are EU Research Career Profiles (R1–R4)?* Available at: <https://www.euraxess.es/spain/science-spain/research-career-path-spain>

³ Council of the European Union. (2023). *Council Recommendation of 18 December 2023 on a European framework to attract and retain talent in research, innovation and entrepreneurship in Europe (C/2023/1640)*. Official Journal of the European Union. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C_202301640

2. Research Profile Descriptors.

Research Profile Descriptors	
	<p>R1 – First Stage Researcher</p> <p>Researchers doing research <u>under supervision up to the point of a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience.</u></p>
	<p>R2 – Recognised Researcher</p> <p>Researchers with a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience who are <u>not yet fully independent</u> in their ability to develop their own research, attract funding, or lead a research group.</p>
	<p>R3 – Established Researcher</p> <p>Researchers with a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience who <u>have achieved a level of independence</u> in their ability to develop their own research, attract funding, or lead a research group.</p>
	<p>R4 – Leading Researcher</p> <p>Researchers with a PhD or equivalent level of competence and experience who are <u>recognised as leading</u> their research field by their peers.</p>

3. Overall Distribution by Profile.

Profile	Nº of Research Staff
R1	2925 1023 (429/594) 1477 425*
R2	820
R3	935
R4	574

*R1 breakdown:

2925 – Total number of enrolled doctoral students.

1023 – Doctoral students with a predoctoral contract (429 at UPV and 594 at other institutions or agencies).

1477 – Doctoral students with employment.

425 – Doctoral students without funding and/or in the process of securing funding.

3.1 R3 Certificates

Number of research staff holding an R3 certificate from the *Agencia Estatal de Investigación (AEI)*: **18**

4. Distribution by Legal Status.

Profile → Legal status ↓	R1	R2	R3	R4
Civil servant (Funcionario de carrera)	0	76	908	541
Labour contract (Laboral)	413	744	27	33

5. Classification of Research Staff (PDI and PI) within R1–R4 Profiles.

Research Staff				
	R1 First Stage Researcher	R2 Recognised Researcher	R3 Established Researcher	R4 Leading Researcher
PI	Contrato predoctoral (art. 21 LCTI ⁴)	Contrato predoctoral - POP (art 21 LCTI)	Contrato de acceso de personal investigador doctor - R3 (art. 22 LCTI)	Contrato personal investigador distinguido (art. 23 LCTI)
PDI		Contrato predoctoral (art. 21 LCTI ⁴)		
		Profesorado ayudante doctor	Profesorado permanente laboral Contratado/a doctor/a	Catedrático y catedrática de universidad
			Profesorado titular de universidad	

6. Options within the *Contrato de actividad científico-técnica* (Art. 23 bis LCTI)

Contrato de actividad científico-técnica (art. 23 bis LCTI)		
Contract modality	Research project staff	Technical support or management staff
R1–R4 categories	According to level of independence	No R1–R4 categories

⁴ <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2011-9617>

7. Classification by Contract Type / PDI Categories.

The following table presents the current situation of research staff at UPV. For a comprehensive overview of research career figures and possibilities in Spain, please refer to the FECYT document [“Researcher Career Path in Spain at a Glance! \(8th edition\)”](#).

Perfil → Tipo contrato / categoría PDI ↓	R1	R2	R3	R4
Contrato predoctoral Art. 21 LCTI	✓			
Contrato de acceso de personal investigador doctor Art. 22 LCTI		✓	✓	
Contrato de actividades científico-técnicas Art. 23 bis LCTI		✓	✓	
Contrato de investigador/a distinguido/a Art. 23 LCTI			✓	✓
Profesor/a Colaborador/a		✓		
Profesor/a Titular de Escuela Universitaria		✓		
Profesor/a Ayudante Doctor/a		✓	✓	
Profesor/a Permanente Laboral			✓	
Profesor/a Contratado/a Doctor/a			✓	
Contrato de Duración Determinada [PRTR/MRR/FE]		✓	✓	
Catedrático/a de Escuela Universitaria			✓	
Profesor/a Titular de Universidad			✓	
Catedrático/a de Universidad				✓
Profesor/a Distinguido/a				✓