

INCORPORATION OF RESEARCHERS WITH ERC GRANTS INTO THE UAB

(Agreement of the Governing Council of May 15, 2019)

For two years now, the UAB has been implementing a policy to attract and retain research talent, with the aim of boosting its research activities across all the areas of knowledge it covers. In two selection processes, for five positions each, (the second of which is now over, apart from the contract formalities), researchers have been recruited using the figure of established researcher (*investigador ordinari*) defined in the Collective Agreement for Teaching and Research Staff (PDI) at the Catalan public universities: a figure equated for financial purposes with the category of associate lecturer (*professor agregat*), half-funded by resources deriving from the researcher's own work, and with a three-year contract that can be subsequently renewed for periods of five years once the corresponding evaluations have been passed.

To complement this, and provide further impetus to research at the UAB, new measures are being proposed to incorporate researchers into this university, on a permanent basis, who have been awarded projects by the European Research Council (ERC), within a programme of high international standing. Since 2007, the Executive Agency of the ERC (ERCEA) has funded some 9,000 projects after evaluating over 65,000 proposals in a rigorous process that is based exclusively on excellence and comes with no predetermined priorities.

ERC grants (Starting Grants, Consolidator Grants and Advanced Grants) are awarded for a maximum of five years and for an amount between EUR 1.5 million and EUR 3.5 million. The grants awarded have led to the recruitment of six new researchers on average to constitute and/or expand the research group for the corresponding project.

The ERC allows researchers to choose the university or research centre where they wish to conduct their project, which has evidently led to many EU universities taking measures to attract or consolidate these researchers at their institutions. In this context, it can be seen as a step in the right direction to devote resources to offering permanent contracts to researchers who express a firm interest in carrying out their project at the UAB. To this end, the following initiative is now approved.

1. From the 2019 PDI replacement rate at the UAB, two permanent positions are reserved for researchers with an ERC project, once their incorporation has been accepted by a UAB department or institute.
2. Should there be more applications than available positions, the vice-rector for Academic Staff, after consulting with the vice-rector for Research, will determine

which ones to prioritise in view of teaching needs and the need to promote research in the departments involved. The Academic Staff Committee will be notified of this decision.

3. The contracts will be for a permanent established researcher, equated for financial purposes with the category of associate lecturer in the case of the Starting Grants, and for a permanent leading researcher (*director d'investigació*), equated for financial purposes with the category of full professor (*catedràtic contractat*) in the case of the Consolidator Grants and Advanced Grants (figures which are contemplated in Article 11 of the Collective Agreement for PDI in the Catalan public universities).
4. Regarding teaching loads and the staffing structure of the departments and institutes, the arrangements would be equivalent to those in place for researchers incorporated into the UAB from the Catalan Institution for Research and Advanced Studies (ICREA).
5. Permanent researchers can engage in teaching at bachelor's degree and master's degree levels up to a maximum of 90 classroom hours. This teaching will not be deducted from the department's teaching allocation for the purposes of staffing provision B.
6. Newly-incorporated researchers assume the following commitments.
 1. To apply to the Quality Assurance Agency for the University System in Catalonia (AQU) for research or advanced research accreditation at the first opportunity on attaining the position of permanent researcher.
 2. To apply for any lecturing positions (associate lecturer or full professor, as the case may be) offered by the departments and whose profile fits in with their research activity.
 3. To apply for places on the ICREA programme.
 4. To co-fund part of their salary (at a percentage to be negotiated in each case) while their ERC grants are in effect.
7. Successful participation in an open recruitment process is required in order to achieve the position of permanent researcher, pursuant to the UAB Academic Staff Regulations.
8. If any of the job positions reserved for 2019 are not used, they may be transferred to the following year. If one or both 2019 positions were to be filled, one or two positions, respectively, would be proposed for this programme in 2020.