

Ad hoc statement

Berlin, 12.11.2021

Ad hoc statement by the Board of *Die Junge Akademie* on the situation of scientists in temporary positions

The Board of *Die Junge Akademie*

We want to take this opportunity to state our position on the situation of advanced postdocs and group leaders (i.e. researchers in category R3¹) in temporary positions within the German research system. In Germany, this group of researchers is often amalgamated with researchers who have only developed limited research independence (e.g. at the doctorate or early postdoc phase) in one joint category for “early career researchers”. This categorisation does not make sense, for example, when considering how appropriate it is for positions to be temporary.

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Positions being made temporary beyond the early postdoc phase results in problems for individual researchers and the German research system as a whole. These problems are not new and have been well documented especially given that they impact negatively on how competitive the German research system is on a global scale.

The precarious situation in which these researchers find themselves is a well-known structural problem that has not been sufficiently prioritised thus far in terms of finding a solution. As it stands, researchers cannot reliably plan out their career paths and the associated risks are being borne by those individuals rather than at the institutional level.

It is highly unlikely that there is a quick win that could be applied to all disciplines across the board to solve this problem. For that reason, we do not back the recommendation to rely on the model of a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, we are in favour of an open, solution-oriented debate and permanent academic restructuring. Advanced postdocs and group leaders need to be involved in this process for it to prove fruitful.

For us, it is a matter of urgency that researchers in temporary positions should be fully involved in any future structural decisions about careers in research rather than being overlooked and excluded from that decision-making process. This applies to consultation processes for future legal framework conditions and their implementation at German higher education institutions and other research organisations.

¹<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/europe/career-development/training-researchers/research-profiles-descriptors>. Researchers in Category R3 are established postdoctoral researchers who have already developed a good level of research independence, e.g. advanced postdocs and group leaders.

Die Junge Akademie
an der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
und der Nationalen Akademie der Wissenschaften Leopoldina

Die Junge Akademie wurde im Jahr 2000 als weltweit erste Akademie für herausragende junge Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler ins Leben gerufen. Ihre Mitglieder stammen aus allen wissenschaftlichen Disziplinen sowie aus dem künstlerischen Bereich – sie loten Potenzial und Grenzen interdisziplinärer Arbeit in immer neuen Projekten aus, wollen Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft ins Gespräch miteinander und neue Impulse in die wissenschaftspolitische Diskussion bringen. Die Junge Akademie wird gemeinsam von der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (BBAW) und der Nationalen Akademie der Wissenschaften Leopoldina getragen. Sitz der Geschäftsstelle ist Berlin.