



RI4C2  
Research & Innovation  
For Cities & Citizens



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# Toolkit for Research Career Development

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## Report

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## D3.3 – Toolkit for Researcher Career Development

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## I. Introduction

The deliverable Toolkit for Researcher Career Development, produced by WP3, is an informative tool that aims to provide an intuitive summary of the different opportunities that the EC2U Alliance has to offer to its community, specifically for those working in Research and Innovation activities. Moreover, it provides access to all the resources produced by the Research and Innovation for Cities and Citizens (RI4C2) project, which serves as the link between the EC2U Alliance and the Research and Innovation dimension of its member universities.

It was therefore RI4C2 WP3's aim to come up with a tool that could be easily updated, as the EC2U Alliance is funded until the end of 2027 and will continue to offer many opportunities for its community.

The Toolkit for Researcher Career Development can now be accessed on the [EC2U Tools Page](#), which is referenced on the [EC2U website](#).

## II. Structure and Content

### A. Innovation Hub

Innovation and entrepreneurship are key components of the EC2U Alliance. Therefore, within this group, researchers interested in those topics are invited to take part in the following upcoming activities (for the period 2024-2027):

1. **EC2U Open Learning Opportunities in Entrepreneurship** are being designed to **foster curiosity for entrepreneurship, and awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities**. The main goal is to underline entrepreneurial competences and activities and their relevance and purpose for the whole university community. Therefore, it is a low-threshold offer and easy entry point for individuals in any fields of study and research. The online resources offer **basic understanding and easy tools for innovation and entrepreneurial learning**. One of the purposes of the resources is to support participants in the critical assessment of ideas that can be further developed during the planned EC2U Entrepreneurial Weeks organised in the context of the Erasmus+ work plan of the EC2U Alliance (see below).
2. **The EC2U Entrepreneurial Week** is an inspiring **entrepreneurial journey targeting student** from Bachelor to PhD levels as well as recent graduates. Participants collaborate on new ideas in international and multidisciplinary teams. Workshops are led by international and multidisciplinary experts and entrepreneurs who share their experience and advice.

**Four EC2U Entrepreneurial Weeks** will be held during the period 2024-2027 with four distinctive themes. The location will rotate among the EC2U partner universities to provide opportunities for on-site networking and visits. Participants from all disciplines are welcome to join and receive a certificate of participation.

3. **Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Transfer Experts' Network [EITEN] Programme** will be settled with the aim to **support the innovation process, starting from ideation towards team formation all the way up to operations and investment** and develop a cohort of hyper-connected individuals.

This network involves **experts from each EC2U partner university**. Its activities consist of, but are not limited to, sharing best practices and skill development, and providing the drive for the challenge-based programme. Activities are implemented through joint meetings, online and in-person.

4. Several Living Labs or Open Innovation initiatives already exist across the EC2U Alliance. The aim of this task is to **intensify the interconnection, exploration, and exploitation** of their possible impacts. The support for interconnection between campuses is also provided by EITEN. Activities take place via one-on-one meetings, building business connections, creating awareness, and pushing forward communication and outreach efforts. Integration with relevant stakeholders across “regional innovation valleys” is also planned.

Those are complemented by **two joint thematic meetings with Living Lab and open innovation representatives**.

## **B. HRS4R Label (Human Resources Strategy for Researchers)**

To ensure quality standards in the daily tasks of the Alliance, EC2U Universities need to be able to retain and/or recruit staff including Researchers, Science Managers, and Support Technicians by offering good working conditions and career progression prospects. The HRS4R certification is one way to ensure this quality standard is being implemented.

It is therefore important for the Alliance's Research and Innovation community to know what it means to belong to a Certified University with this label and what impact this certification can have on the management of their careers.

This content group also contains a direct link related to the HRS4R public document produced under the RI4C2 project: [Roadmap towards HRS4R label](#)

### C. EC2U Research Databases and Platforms

With the different deliverables of the RI4C2 project as a starting point for the *Toolkit for Researcher Career Development*, it makes sense that these should be easily accessible to the research and innovation community, who can use them as useful reference tools for their future work. Therefore, within the EC2U Research Databases and Platforms section, you can find content relating to the innovation sphere of the Alliance's Universities through the publication [Recipes of Innovation](#); a database with all the information on the [Knowledge Ecosystem](#), a [Guidebook on Open Science](#) and good practices related to this topic, as well as the document [EC2U R&I Agenda](#) in which the positions on the different research and innovation topics of the several Universities have been described and analysed.

### D. RI4C2 Masterclasses

The EC2U Alliance is fully committed to training its community in topics that are increasingly relevant to society by providing specialised training through recorded lectures conducted by experts from the various universities. The aim of these recordings is for knowledge to move beyond physical borders and to contribute to the development of excellent Research and Innovation within and outside the Alliance.

The content of the Masterclasses is therefore subdivided into two main themes: *Open Science* and *Gender Equality* in Research and Innovation Activities.

### E. Mobility

Mobility is at the core of the EC2U Alliance and Research and Innovation can only benefit from the exchange of knowledge, whether physical or not. The 'Mobility' information section therefore aims to inform the EC2U community about the mobility opportunities that result from the combination of the different universities and the Alliance's Virtual Institutes.

If a researcher is looking for opportunities to travel abroad in the framework of their research, there are a large variety of mobility opportunities for researchers within EC2U for the period 2024-2027. Those opportunities range from workshops to PhD training and joint research projects.

Within the EC2U Virtual Institutes (joint Institutes “without physical walls” hosting international inter-disciplinary teams of students, teachers, researchers and innovators from the seven universities composing the EC2U Alliance), the Alliance offered many opportunities to travel and work with peers.

## 1. Virtual Institute for Good Health & Well-being (GLADE)

The “**GLADE Educational Hub**” will provide **thematic trainings** on Health and Well-being for students, staff, professionals, and actors from local administration. This will include the following mobility opportunities: **two thematic Summer Schools organised at the EC2U Alliance-level** on topical matters relevant to the EC2U Community.

The “**GLADE PhD Network**” gathers the expertise of PhD supervisors and jointly supervised PhD students within the GLADE Virtual Institute, bringing them together through physical, blended and virtual mobilities in order to create a multidisciplinary community of experts. PhD thesis topics as well as procedures and results are jointly communicated to frame and scope the GLADE PhD Network. To fully support this network, **three EC2U Alliance-level joint doctoral workshops** will be held. The results and/or topics of the GLADE PhD Network and/or related PhD theses will be accessible to the general public.

## 2. Virtual Institute for Quality Education – Modern Languages (VIQE)

Two research projects will be carried out with the aim to improve **how Higher Education Institutions (HEI) teach foreign languages and cultures and how they address cultural biases and stereotypes in European multilingual and multicultural campuses:**

- a) The first project “Multilingualism, cultural diversity and education for sustainable development in HEI” explores foreign language representations (including lesser used languages) and effective teaching methods from an inclusive viewpoint by conducting surveys, language biographies and semi-structured interviews on learning activities and teaching practices.

- b) The second project “Cultural biases and stereotypes in online and offline communication for sustainable development in HEI” identifies different forms of cultural biases, particularly in social media and in print texts linked to Higher Education Institutions from an interdisciplinary and multimethodological perspective (including psychology, linguistics, literature, cultural studies and educational sciences).
- c) Both research projects include **three conferences for academic communities**. Literature review and publication of papers are done if relevant.

The “**VIQE PhD Network and European/EC2U doctorate adapted mobility schemes**” gathers the expertise of PhD supervisors and jointly supervised PhD students within the VIQE, bringing them together through adapted mobilities in order to create a multidisciplinary community of experts on the topic of Quality Education. **Short physical mobilities for PhD Students** will be organised.

**Two thematic doctoral workshops for PhD Students in education, language and cultural diversity** will be held within the scope of the VIQE PhD Network, on the following topics:

- a. Language and cultural diversity in European society
- b. Educational sciences

PhD students from all partner universities will jointly organise a **workshop on language, education and cultural diversity for young researchers** where they have the opportunity to present their research within the framework of the VIQE.

### 3. Virtual Institute for Quality Education – Digital Pedagogies (VIQE)

**Staff training weeks on innovative digital pedagogy** will be organised to define what innovative pedagogy is and create new ways of teaching and learning. These weeks take place once a year, each time at a different partner university to visit innovative learning labs and learning spaces.



#### 4. Virtual Institute for Sustainable Cities and Communities (VISCC)

In addition to the pilot seed research projects on “Heat Waves in European Cities” and on “Retrofitting Historical Buildings”, **two new seed research projects related to Sustainable Cities and Communities are established:**

- a. **Reducing the adverse effects of natural disasters:** This project focuses on reducing the risks linked to anthropogenic climate change and urban sprawl via multidisciplinary perspectives, novel geomatics, and artificial intelligence technologies.
- b. **Legal and Socio-Political Dimensions of Urban Sustainability:** This project focuses on urban sustainability from a legal and social-science perspective. Rethinking and reorganising for green social policies and welfare – social sustainability – is thus both a crucial task and a major challenge.

A PhD Network is established to foster research excellence within the EC2U Alliance. This network gathers the **expertise of PhD supervisors and jointly supervised PhD students** within the VISCC, bringing them together through physical, blended and virtual mobilities to **create a community of multidisciplinary experts in SCC.**

International **Summer/Winter schools** and training workshops are used to **share knowledge within EC2U** – within and between the Virtual Institutes – and to **reach out to the multidisciplinary scientific community** in the field of SCC. Topics may include Building Sustainable Reuse or Geospatial Data Science for Sustainability, continuing and extending successful activities initiated during the previous funding period. Events focused on the new research seed projects are incorporated. **Links with clusters of research excellence at all partner universities/cities** (e.g., ELLIS Unit Jena on Machine-Learning for Earth system sciences) are leveraged in order to offer cutting-edge training opportunities.

**Joint hybrid events within the “EC2U Sustainable Campus Network”** will be organised: building upon the existing vibrant local networks of partner universities and their respective cities, the SCC Virtual Institute continues designing and **creating campuses that form a living, accessible component of the city structures, promoting sustainability.**

## 5. Virtual Institute for Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (VI-PJSI)

An **interdisciplinary doctoral training network on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions is being created and activated**. New scientific inputs from the different fields of participating disciplines are advanced, including:

- a) **Interdisciplinary topics of research** in the field of PJSI are identified;
- b) Development of a **doctoral training network**;
- c) **Significant links between research and teaching** are identified.

It acts as a forum for doctoral students, with:

- a) **Two Winter/Summer Schools**
- b) **Two research workshops** hosted by partner universities on a rotating basis.

### F. Doctoral Training

Making the EC2U Alliance's research and innovation community increasingly competitive and resilient is a task that must begin in the early years of doctoral studies. As such, the EC2U Alliance is developing a joint approach to doctoral training. In this context, several opportunities are offered for PhD students and PhD supervisors for the period 2024-2027:

1. **An annual colloquium on quality assurance and strategic developments in doctoral education** will be organised by the umbrella structured for doctoral training. This event will bring people together and offer the opportunity to invite a keynote speaker. The goal is to **increase the professionalisation** of doctoral staff and trigger the sharing of best practices in doctoral education.
2. **Support to researchers to apply for funded doctoral research positions** (e.g., EU funded projects such as MSCA Individual fellowships).
3. **Two PhD employability webinars** for doctoral researchers of the UNSDGs-related PhD Networks (c.f. Virtual Institutes) will be organised on "Career paths in academia" and "Career paths outside academia".
4. A **career mentoring programme targeted to early career researchers planning a career outside academia** will be implemented.

This includes the following activities:

- a. Different tracks depending on individual career goals (industry, public sector, science-policy-impact);
- b. An international peer-support group including members from EC2U partner universities and Associated Partners;
- c. Access to transferable skills training through digital certifications.

### III. Concluding Remarks

The EC2U Alliance brings together universities, researchers, and their community, united by a shared vision for a better future. By promoting cooperation and the exchange of ideas, the Alliance enables individuals and their institutions to succeed. The goal of this toolkit is therefore to provide researchers with relevant resources on career development and opportunities within the Alliance.

Through the EC2U Alliance, talents are empowered to drive innovation, shape the future and create a long-lasting impact. Thus, the **Toolkit for Researcher Career Development** aims to be another vehicle for this mission, as it will remain as a legacy of the RI4C2 project within the EC2U Alliance for the upcoming years.

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