Maastricht University

Academic Profiles
for Research Fellow and Postdoc

The overall goal of these academic profiles is to align expectations as to what an academic does in the position of Research Fellow and Postdoc. Understanding this facilitates both the mentoring as well as the assessment approach for Research Fellow and Postdoc.

A UM Core Values

Applicable to all profiles

- Academic citizenship
- Personal / professional leadership
- Team performance
- Impact & Open Science

B Assessment Components

Applicable to Research Fellows

- Conducting research

Applicable to Postdocs

- Conducting research
- Disseminating research

Research Fellow and Postdoc profiles

Profile in the University Job Classification system: Researcher 4 and 3

Basis for this profile: University job classification-profile *Researcher,* UM's vision on R&R, the R&R Narrative Research, the MERLN development track pilot.

Purpose of these profiles
These profiles are established with three purposes:
1. To serve as a guide for academics to develop their own academic career paths in coordination with their leadership.
2. To align expectations as to what an academic does in the position of Research Fellow and Postdoc.
3. To serve as a guide to those assessing and mentoring the academics in their career to demonstrate what a profile could require.

In the past profiles were set up with a restrictive number of criteria which had to be met. This manner has proven to give structure, but also restrictions. In many cases, the assessor and applicant handled this in a way of 'checking boxes' instead of a dialogue focused on development. The way in which these profiles are to be used is in line with the view of Recognition & Rewards: colleagues work together on development, engaging in dialogue. The employee takes ownership of their own development and thus takes on an active role in reflection on their performance, gathering feedback and discussing this with their leadership. The leadership takes on a motivating role and gives honest and open feedback in order for the other to be able to develop. Also, honesty in future career development opportunities is part of this.
You will find that, though the old-fashioned checkbox approach required less time and effort of both parties, it provided for a poorer system as it lacked a focus on quality. This new method asks for dedicated commitment to talent development and providing true feedback (however difficult this may be sometimes).

In order to transform from restrictions into possibilities, these profiles have been written as narratives. Since *some* structure is necessary in order to provide clarity and transparency, there is a minimal set of rules to this profile. These are:
- An academic is assessed on **five to six development components** depending on the profile;
- These components consist of the following groups: one (for a Research Fellow) or two (for a Postdoc) **profile specific development components** and **four UM core values** in which every member of the UM community is expected to develop themselves, being academic citizenship, personal/professional leadership, teamwork and impact & Open Science. The values of impact & Open Science and personal/professional leadership therewith also encompass the basic threshold levels of impact and leadership inherent to the role of any academic within UM.
- **Please note:** The types of evidence listed below for the development components are not meant as *requirements* that you must. These only provide an *example* of proof and inspiration for both applicant and assessors.

Furthermore, the accompanying profile descriptions give a narrative description of the profile. These descriptions are by no means exhaustive, nor are they a checklist of requirements for this profile. These serve only to provide guidance to both the academic in the profile and the assessors. To this end, these profiles are based on a series of sources, being the UFO profile descriptions, the domain narrative(s) drafted by the Recognition & Rewards committees, FSE's flexible performance criteria pilot and MERLN's development track pilot.

UM Core Values

Note that the examples of evidence listed below are meant as a guiding tool and by no means to be interpreted as a listing of activities or criteria one must perform.

The UM core values are values applicable to all of our (academic) staff members. They derive directly from our mission and the vision of the Recognition & Rewards programme. The further you progress your career, the more opportunities you have to display proficiency in these UM core values. In different roles and depending on the selected profile (building block 3), displaying the UM core values may be enacted differently.

1. Academic citizenship[1]

Examples of evidence: internal and/or external service work demonstrating the support of academic life and the wider civic mission of the university; demonstrate efforts in making the university an inclusive environment valuing diversity; set up programmes to involve the community in the university; set up learning or teaching communities within or across the boundaries of the university; or participate in outreach programmes; peer review, monitor academic integrity of external stakeholders; etc.

2. Personal/professional leadership

Examples of evidence: demonstrate self-reflection and personal development (feedback results); regularly request feedback from students, colleagues and others; effective communication (online and offline); academic integrity; demonstrate solid organisational skills; identify the necessary tasks and prioritise them in order to develop an individual schedule and perform the work in an autonomous way, ensuring that the requirements are met; improvement of processes and procedures; take the lead among peers in a project; provide mentorship to others; provide constructive feedback to help others learn; organize feedback sessions; take part in leadership training and put skills learned to use, demonstrate efforts in making the university an inclusive environment valuing diversity; participate in (internal or external) committees, think-tanks, coaching activities or engaging in other forms of talent development, etc.

3. Team performance

Examples of evidence: work confidently within a group with each doing their part in the service of the whole; co-creation in research, teaching or academic citizenship efforts; demonstrate inclusivity and the value of diversity; collaborate with others outside of the standard circle (outside of your group, department, or faculty), use and reward the value of teamwork in teaching; be an active member of or head up network groups focused on collaboration and teamwork, etc.

4. Impact & Open Science[2]

Examples of evidence: make your academic work relevant to society; use research results to help the wider community; produce, store and (re)use scientific data based on FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) principles, making data as open as possible, and as closed as necessary; use open source software; public dissemination of research designs findings, and data; publishing in open access journals; use Open Access resources in education and research; get Open Science grants; set up and participate in Open Science events; educate about the application of FAIR principles; educate about the importance of Open science; contribute to open peer review processes; etc.

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[1] Academic citizenship refers to a wide variety of essential duties that sometimes go unnoticed, but which all members of our community – be it individually or in teams – perform for the institution, the academic community and society.

[2] The interpretation and implementation of Open Science may differ between disciplines.

Researcher 4 / Research Fellow

Requirements
- ✓ Master's degree (in the field relevant to the position)

Profile description
Under the guidance of your seniors, you carry out research on the basis of a pre-defined and accorded research proposal for the benefit of science, society, and –where possible- government or businesses. You may gather, analyze and interpret research data in accordance with the aim of answering the research question(s) of the proposal. You are aware of the existing literature and methodologies within your field and focus on a well-defined subject, theoretical framework, selected methods and target audience. You might therewith maintain or adjust methods and/or instruments during your research.

You have the ability to think conceptually, and employ a conscientious and reflective approach towards your research. You are a target oriented researcher, able to work within and for your team and are in this sense communicative and responsible towards of your (research) environment. You may share your research knowledge with others in your department. You periodically update your seniors about your research. You uphold the integrity and ethical standards of your research, including vis a vis external stakeholders.

Development components
Note that the examples of evidence listed below are meant as a guiding tool and by no means to be interpreted as a listing of activities or criteria one must perform.

1. ***Conducting research***
   Examples of evidence: conduct research for the department or institute; conduct literature reviews, contract research, etc.

Contract agreements
These contracts are based on the applicable funding and/or the duration of research projects with a maximum of three years. After this time period, you may apply for a regular PhD position, a position as a Teaching Fellow (D4), a combined Teaching Fellow and doctoral candidate position, or transition out of the research track.

UFO profile and Salary scale
Onderzoeker 4/ Researcher 4: scale 10

Researcher 3/ Postdoc

Requirements
- ✓ PhD

Profile description
You work on contract funding basis, meaning you are tied to a specific research project or programme through external non-structural funding. You carry out your own research independently for the benefit of science, society, and –where possible- government or businesses. You may gather, analyze and interpret research data in accordance with the aim of answering the research question(s) of your proposal. You are aware of the existing literature and methodologies within your field and focus on a well-defined subject, theoretical framework, selected methods and target audience. You might be responsible for the definition and structuring of your own research.

You might therewith maintain or adjust methods and/or instruments during your research. Where possible, you make your research available to the target audience, publish in journals and as open as possible. You manage your research data and where possible make it available for re-use and dissemination.

You have the ability to think conceptually, and employ a conscientious and reflective approach towards your research. You are a target oriented researcher, able to work within and for your team and are in this sense communicative and responsible towards of your (research) environment. You may share your research knowledge with others in your department. You periodically update your research with your seniors. You uphold the integrity and ethical standards of your research, including vis a vis external stakeholders.

Development components

Note that the examples of evidence listed below are meant as a guiding tool and by no means to be interpreted as a listing of activities or criteria one must perform.

1. **Conducting research**
   Examples of evidence: conduct research for the department or institute; conduct literature reviews, contract research, etc.

2. **Disseminating research**
   Examples of evidence: visit symposia and congresses or other forms of engaging with (international) experts and expertise; publications, maintain overview of relevant (inter)national development in the research field; etc.

3. **Optional: Delivering and organizing education (limited to a maximum of 10% of the contract size)[3]**
   Examples of evidence: positive evaluation in teaching roles; incorporate (new) research results into your teaching; tutor effectively; proof of expertise on the subject taught; etc.

Contract agreements

These contracts are based on the applicable funding and/or the duration of research projects with a maximum of four years. After this time period, you may apply for a UD2 or Academic Teacher (D3) position or transition out of the research track.

UFO profile and Salary scale
Onderzoeker 3/ Researcher 3: scale 11

Assessment process

Your leadership (supervisor/ manager) assesses your performance through meetings, evaluations of your research efforts, feedback sessions, and so forth. The annual appraisal focuses on your performance and development within the applicable assessment components. This conversation also focuses on possible development opportunities. You prepare the evidence/documents/videos/etc. that demonstrate your strengths and points of development. You present these for discussion with your leadership. Together with your leadership, you come up with a plan for development/learning.

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[3] *You may opt for this component on a voluntary basis. This may not be a requirement that is set by your leadership. Whether or not you opt for this component has to be discussed in your contract agreements interview with the HR advisor.*