

Academic careers and assessment

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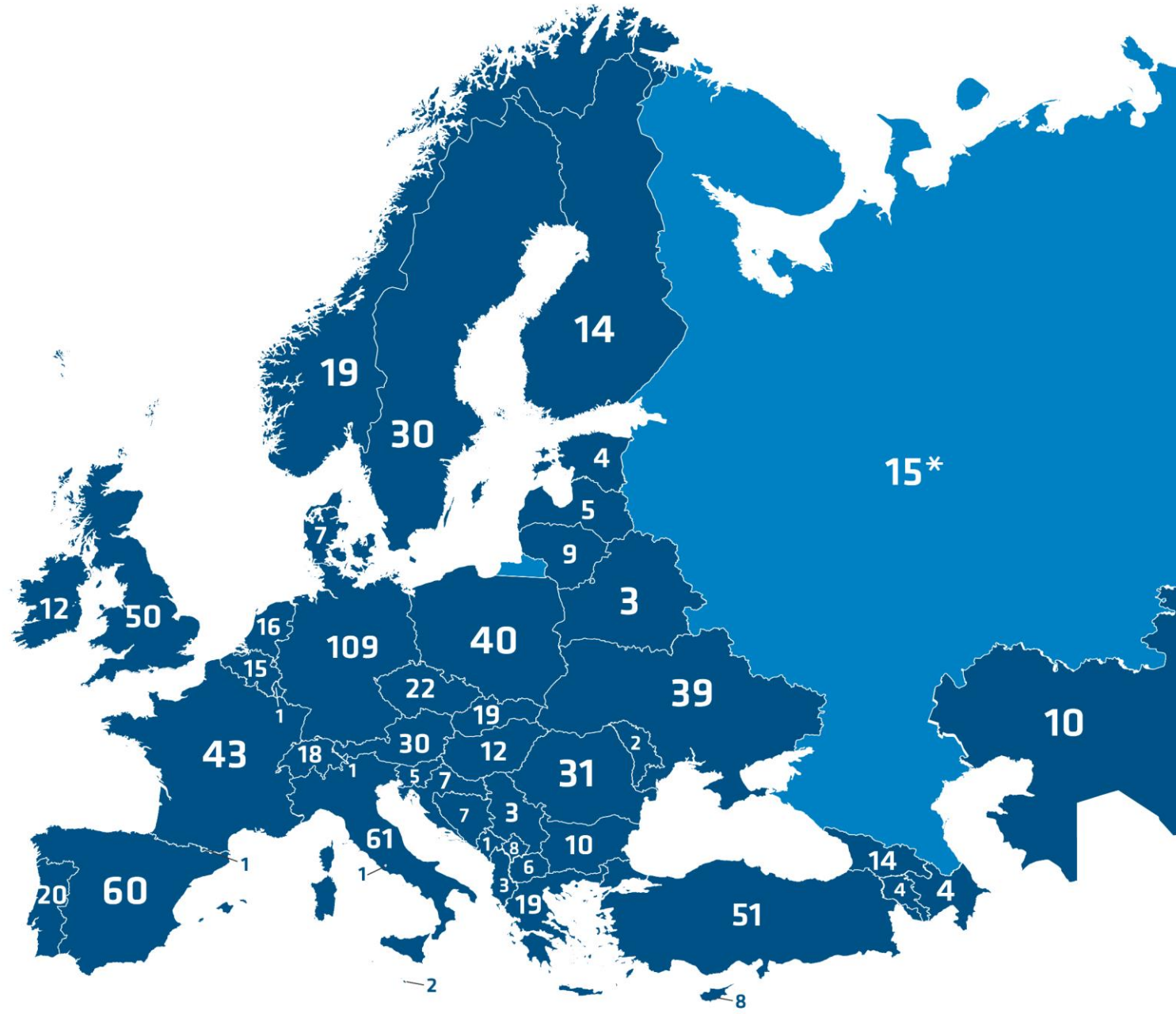
800+
MEMBERS



19
MILLION
STUDENTS



33
NATIONAL RECTORS'
CONFERENCES



- Established in 2001
- Members in the 48 countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
- Non-governmental membership organisation
- Independent voice of universities
- Advocacy for the university sector in European policy-making processes (Bologna Process, EU)
- Forum for exchange, peer learning for members

** Following a statement by the Russian Union of Rectors (RUR) supporting the invasion of Ukraine, EUA suspended Russian member universities whose leaders signed the statement.*

- **Open, transformational, transnational**
- **Sustainable, diverse, engaged**
- **Strong, autonomous and accountable**



... Among the factors needed for success:

REFORM ACADEMIC CAREERS

This vision for Europe's universities in 2030 requires a reform of academic careers. This should be acknowledged and supported by all stakeholders through the following actions:

- using a broader set of evaluation practices for academic careers, which include a wide definition of impact, beyond traditional bibliometric indicators;
- promoting further parity of esteem between different career paths, including parity of esteem between research and teaching;
- enabling and valorising Open Science in career and research assessment;
- incentivising activities with different forms of impact, including innovation or citizen science, dissemination, supervision and mentoring, while retaining the core goal of research activities, which is the expansion of human knowledge;
- making academic careers less precarious and more attractive as life choices in order to develop and retain talent;
- providing more flexibility for academic careers. It must be easier to switch jobs between academia and other sectors, such as start-ups, industry or public administration. Researchers with job experience outside academia must have access to university careers.

The policy context

Council Recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers (Nov. 2024)

- ✓ Better support transnational cooperation activities
- ✓ Better value the variety of academic roles and tasks, incl. teaching
- ✓ Better conditions to attract and retain staff in academia

Council Recommendation on establishing a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents (Dec. 2023)

- ✓ Strengthening research careers in all sectors

Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)

- ✓ Coalition of stakeholders (HEIs, research organisations)
- ✓ Vision: RA to recognise the diverse outputs, practices and activities that maximise the quality and impact of research

Although initiatives exist to tackle this obstacle,⁹⁵ interviewees generally agree that there is still a lot to do for teaching to get fully recognised in the academic profession. Time spent on innovating pedagogy or working on teaching is not always valued or valorised. Institutional support measures may exist, but national regulations may not have evolved accordingly. A better understanding of the academic profession from the policy makers' side, as well as better acknowledgement and support for the needs of academic teaching, would be needed.

LOTUS study on national
developments in L&T (2021)

HEIs repeatedly identify **the lack of recognition for teaching in career progression** as a main, structural obstacle:

- ✓ No parity of esteem with research: research achievements are accounted for, and often mandatory for career progression
- ✓ Reward, recognition and professional development opportunities should be available throughout careers, i.e. beyond their first years into the profession.
- ✓ Capacity building is still needed to design and develop a teaching enhancement offer

Challenges

Interviews with doctoral candidates and postdocs⁵ also confirmed that teaching is not valued as much as is research in academic careers towards professorship. Although the scope and number of interviews was limited, they showed strong common trends. All interviewees were aware that if they want to progress in an academic career, they have to demonstrate outstanding achievements in research. They also brought up the matter of increasing pressure due to multiple requirements relating to academic life (research, teaching, commitment to society and to their institution). Many found it unrealistic to combine and excel at requirements in all these areas. The resulting, overwhelming feelings were insecurity, instability, competition, and stress. However, teaching itself was mostly described as rewarding and interesting, and a way to spread knowledge about their research.

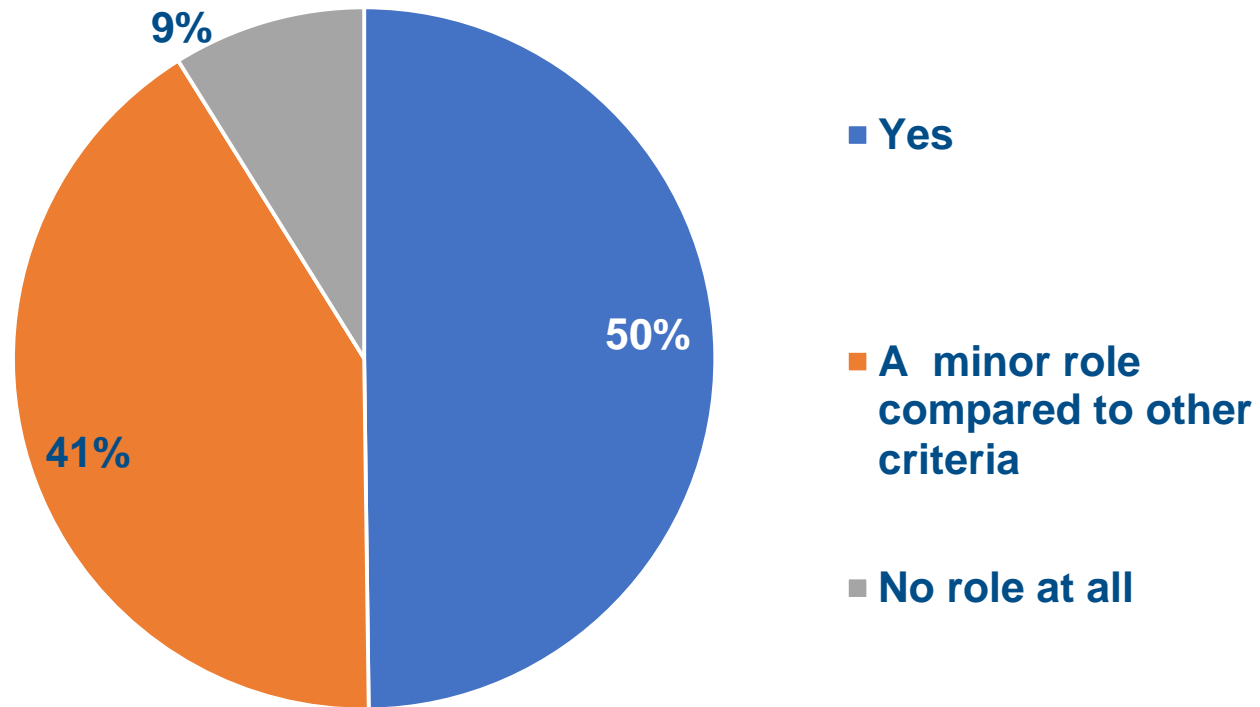
TPG Career paths in teaching
(2019)

The academic profession has evolved in the past years, resulting into **increased workload and pressure to achieve diverse tasks and address multiple university missions** (teaching, research, service to society, coordinating projects, engaging in the university's community, transnational collaboration, etc.)

The pressure on teachers to deliver during the pandemic has also impacted on their « fatigue ».

What is in place at European institutions?

Role of teaching performance evaluations in career progression



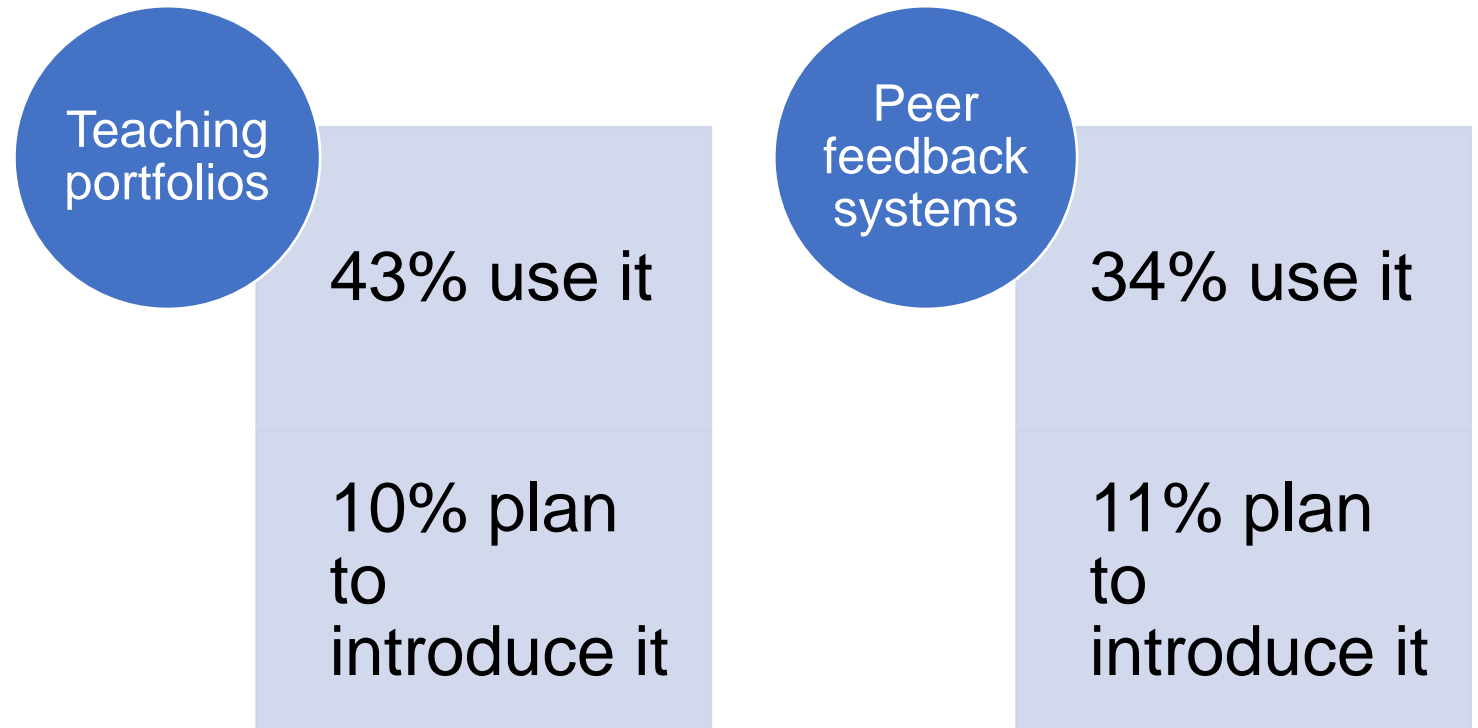
Trends 2024 data (N = 489)



What is in place at European institutions?

- Student feedback:
 - ✓ The most widespread practice (97% of HEIs)
 - ✓ But HEIs also commented that they need to improve how to approach teaching performance evaluation.
- More appropriate (and complementary) tools?

How to assess teaching?



Source: Trends 2024, Trends 2018

To conclude:

A holistic approach

Research and teaching should be **equally** valued in academic career paths, and their importance should be clear through selection and career promotion criteria.

Attention to risk of fragmentation of professional identity and multiplication of demands and duties (R, T, third mission, etc.).

Promoting attractive and sustainable academic careers go beyond assessment policies: 2024 EUA Task & Finish Group

Thank you for your attention!



EUA EVENTS

**Academic assessment, recognition
through careers and staff development
in teaching**

CoARA/STAFF-DEV webinar

12 Dec 2024

Online

[Read more >](#)



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