

Early-stage researchers (ESR)

The network's training aims must be **predominantly directed at early-stage researchers**, including *inter alia* training within Ph.D. programmes.

*Definition: **Early-stage researchers** are defined as those who are, at the time of selection by the host institution, in the first four years (full-time equivalent) of their research careers. This is measured from the date when they obtained the degree which would formally entitle them to embark on a doctorate, either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which the research training is provided, irrespective of whether or not a doctorate is envisaged.*

Example A: a researcher has graduated with a first degree in biology in 2004 and would like to start her Ph.D. studies in 2007. She is eligible as an ESR within the ITN as she has less than 4 years of research experience and no Ph.D.

Example B: a researcher has already been working as a researcher in industry for two years since graduating with his first degree in chemistry. He would be able to benefit from participation in an ITN as an ESR even without pursuing a Ph.D. degree.

Example C: a researcher obtained her PhD after 3 ½ years. She is **not** eligible as an ESR within the ITN even though she has less than 4 years of research experience. However, she would be eligible to be appointed as an ER within the first five years of her career.

Experienced Researchers within their first five years of their career (ER)

While maintaining the training of Early-stage Researchers as the primary objective, **some networks might justify the involvement of experienced researchers within the first five years of their research career** for the purpose of completing their initial training.

*Definition: **Experienced researchers** must, at the time of recruitment **either** be in possession of a doctoral degree, irrespective of the time taken to acquire it, **or** have at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience. This is measured from the date when they obtained the degree which formally allowed them to embark on a doctorate in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the host country (irrespective of whether or not a doctorate was envisaged).*

The research experience of an experienced researcher recruited for initial training may not exceed 5 years at the time of the appointment.

Example A: a researcher obtained her PhD after 4 years and subsequently worked in research for 13 months under a postdoctoral position. She would **not** be eligible to be appointed as an ER within the first five years of her career.

Example B: three years after obtaining his undergraduate degree, a researcher obtained his PhD. He took a career break of two years for family reasons but would like to continue his research career. He is eligible to take part in an ITN as an ER to complete his initial training.

It should be noted that an individual researcher may not be recruited first as an early-stage researcher and subsequently as an experienced researcher in the same network.

2.3.3 Conditions of nationality and mobility of researchers

Researchers are normally required to undertake trans-national mobility (i.e. move from one country to another) when taking up their appointment. Two general rules apply to the appointment of researchers in a network:

- Researchers can be nationals of any country other than the country of the premises of the host organisation where they will carry out their project; however nationals of countries outside the EU and Associated States can only be recruited by hosts that are located in Member States or Associated States.
- Researchers must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the host for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to their recruitment. This rule does not apply in cases where a researcher is subsequently appointed in another node of the same network within the same country.
- A researcher holding more than one nationality will be able to carry out a period of mobility in the country of his/her nationality in which he/she has not resided during the previous 5 years. Short stays such as for holidays are not taken into account. *Returning researchers* will be (for this eligibility criterion) considered as eligible to benefit from support under this action in any Member State or Associated country, including in their country of origin

Example: a French researcher has moved to Germany for the first time and has carried out research there for the last six months. He can be appointed within an ITN team in Germany.

The People Work programme specifies a number of specific exceptions to these rules (WP section I.2)