

Eurodoc Statement on “Commitments to Developing a Eurodoc CoARA Action Plan”

Introduction

The European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc) signed the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) agreement on September 29th, 2022, thereby being among the group of early signatories. Eurodoc is committed to working actively towards reforming the European research assessment system and welcomes the initiatives coming from CoARA.

What values form your premises?

Eurodoc's vision

A fair and sustainable research culture where early career researchers are treated with respect and have access to long-term and stable career pathways.

Eurodoc's mission

To advocate for positive change in the policies, culture and environment that affect the quality of training, well-being, and employment conditions of early career researchers.

What values guide your institutional strategy?

Our strategy is guided by our mission and vision statements with a strong focus on building democratic consensus with our member base as elaborated in our Internal Regulations.

Adapted from Eurodoc's internal regulations and Gender Equality Plan

Eurodoc's daily activity is based on participative democracy and our decision making aims to constructively build consensus. It is a collective endeavour to involve and empower every individual while keeping the best interest of the wider community in mind. The interests of Eurodoc cannot be subsumed by the interests of any individual or subgroup. All members have an equal right to contribute to Eurodoc's activity and must be given a fair opportunity to do so in a transparent manner. Over the course of its 21-year history, Eurodoc has always strived to be a place of moral support in the difficulties of the PhD journey, of mutual help in the development of tasks, of fair collaboration for the achievement of common goals, and of personal career development opportunities. Eurodoc's culture is centred on mutual respect and mutual valorisation of each other's capabilities, skills, and aspirations.

What guiding principles do you apply?

We will equally apply our core values and guiding principles to developing the CoARA Action Plan, namely: transparency, inclusiveness, democratic consensus-building, equality, diversity, professionalism, and mutual respect.

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How will you (together with your community) arrive at developing the action plan with defined milestones?

We will develop the action plan and the defined milestones in meetings with our member associations to ensure that the work aligns with our community and that they are involved in any change processes.

What is the process by which your institution will work on the reform?

Proposals of the action plan, milestones, and assessment guidelines by the administrative board will be drafted in consultation with and on the basis of co-creation sessions with our key internal stakeholders (that is our member associations and relevant working groups). Formal approval and adoption will be confirmed by the Annual General Meeting (AGM), the assembly of the delegates of all of Eurodoc's member associations (the highest decision making body).

Are processes defined for reviewing/developing/evaluating criteria, tools, or processes in line with the Core Commitments?

Yes, see above.

How will you involve researchers?

Eurodoc represents early career researchers: All our active volunteers are researchers and the members of Eurodoc are national organisations that represent early career researchers with many of their active volunteers being researchers as well. We will be implementing our action plan by actively interacting with our international and diverse network.

How will you share good practices (internally and with other CoARA members)?

Eurodoc members (internally): For one, our member associations are involved in the development and revision process through consultation and co-creation. For another, we have institutionalised regular meetings with our member associations that serve as a platform for sharing good practices and facilitate knowledge exchange between Eurodoc and its members as well as between the member associations. Research assessment in line with CoARA will be defined as a set item to ensure regular exchange on the topic as well as to ensure that we can take up new developments and readjust guidelines and priorities.

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Eurodoc members who are CoARA members: In addition to the above, we will actively encourage Eurodoc members who are CoARA members to share their good practices and learning both with Eurodoc and our member organisations.

Other CoARA members: We generally offer open access to our resources which enables any other CoARA member (as well as non-member) to reach our valuable resources. Furthermore, we incentivize and facilitate diverse groups of organisations to exchange their knowledge with each other.

How do you make capacity available (financial/personnel resource)?

Eurodoc is an organisation run by volunteers. We endeavour to support one another and respect each other's time limits. Without any structural funding, we do not have the possibility to tap into financial resources. However, we prioritise the projects we take on based on their importance for our mission and vision and based on where we think greatest impact for improving the careers and conditions of early career researchers can be achieved.

Who needs to meet with whom to discuss a particular aspect and how will you organise this? What is discussed in which consultation with what outcome in mind?

As a volunteer organisation representing early career researchers in Europe, our member associations are our most important stakeholders, with whom we have regular consultation meetings. Final decision on as well as the adoption of milestones and action plans will take place in the Annual General Meeting, our highest decision making organ. Furthermore, we will work in consultation and coordination with respective working groups within Eurodoc.

Which criteria, tools and processes fall within the scope of Reforming Research Assessment?

These will be identified and developed with our member organisations in the next steps.

In what order does the organisation want to review the instruments and develop new criteria, tools and processes where needed?

This will be identified and developed with our member organisations in the next steps.

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Milestones

The development of the action plan and the definition of the milestones are envisioned as an iterative two-year process involving the community. This ensures that we progress through continuous work, as well as that we can take up new developments and re-adjust priorities.

- M0 Formulation of commitments to developing a Eurodoc CoARA Action Plan
- M1 Exchange with our member associations and relevant working groups: informing them of the context for the creation of an action plan as a member of CoARA and as a signatory of the agreement. Purpose: building consensus on and reviewing the process through which we develop the action plan.
- M2 Creating an overview of all occasions of assessment that the organisation is concerned with.
- M3 Receiving feedback from our member associations on assessment areas to be reviewed. Purpose: Uncovering blindspots, building consensus, setting priorities in alignment with our community.
- M4 Drafting assessment guidelines for prioritised areas of assessment.
- M5 Receiving feedback from our member associations on the contents of the draft guidelines, with the revised guidelines sent out to consultation for official confirmation by all member associations.
- M6 Confirmation and adoption of the documents at the AGM, including: Action Plan and Milestones as well as first assessment guidelines for prioritised areas.

Iterative process from first adoption onwards:

- M7 Implementing the adopted documents and testing the assessment guidelines over an entire mandate period.
- M8 Developing the next set of assessment guidelines in accordance to the defined priorities and to the outlined processes.
- M9 Revision of processes and implementation on the basis of feedback and learnings.
- M10 At the following AGM: Confirmation of any revised guidelines and processes at the following AGM, revision and definition of new milestones and priorities.

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Eurodoc, the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers, is a grassroots federation of 25 national associations of early career researchers (ECRs) from 23 countries across Europe. Eurodoc was established in 2002 and is based in Brussels. As a representative of doctoral candidates and junior researchers at the European level, Eurodoc engages with all major stakeholders in research and innovation in Europe.

