



ItalianRSA
Italian Research Staff Association

Careers of
university
researchers: **let's
take stock.**

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Summary

In a decree converted into law by Parliament on June 30, the government headed by Mario Draghi introduced a long-awaited reform of the academic career path leading to the title of professor.

Until now, after doctoral studies, young researchers could get a fellowship, a short-term collaborative contract or a research grant. After these contracts, there were two types of positions: a three-year one, called RTD-A, not followed by a permanent position, or an also three-year but rarer one, RTD-B. At the end of the latter contract, the researcher could be promoted to associate professor.

Now the research grant becomes a two-year research contract, extendable to five if linked to a European project. The new law raises the salary from 19,000 euros to 40,000 euros, including social security and tax contributions.

The distinction between RTD-A and RTD-B is replaced by a single position of researcher: a six-year path that gives access to the title of associate professor, and which can be reduced to four for those who already have a senior level and significant scientific production.

steps

- Article 14, replace research grants, with the new "research contracts," i.e., fixed-term employment contracts aimed at the exclusive performance of specific research projects, the amount of which is determined in collective bargaining, in any case not less than the initial salary due to the confirmed fixed-term researcher;
- the research contract, of a subordinate nature (and therefore with the relevant social security and contribution protections) has a minimum duration of 2 years and can be renewed once for a further two (or by one year, where the relevant funding comes from national or international projects that have a three-year duration). In universities it takes the form of a full-fledged post-doc: therefore, a Ph.D. degree is required to access it. In public research institutions, it is sufficient to have a suitable scientific-professional curriculum (it being understood that a PhD is a preferential qualification);

RTT researcher

- Article 14, replaces the current figures of type A and type B fixed-term researcher with a single figure of tenure track fixed-term university researcher (RTT), holder of a contract with a total duration of six years, nonrenewable. However, as of the conclusion of the third year, a researcher who has acquired the national scientific qualification may apply to be evaluated for the purpose of being called to the role of associate professor0
- -the transitional rules allow, for the 12 months following the approval of the conversion law, to continue to call RTDb on the basis of the extraordinary recruitment plans funded in the past years and for 36 months thereafter to continue to call RTDa, but also the new research contracts, within the framework of the research programs linked to and funded by the PNRR;

Transition provision

- a transitional provision reserves a share of not less than 25 percent of the resources earmarked for the stipulation of fixed-term researcher contracts, for the three years following the approval of the conversion law, for individuals who are, or have been in the three preceding years, holders of RTDa contracts or, for a total duration of not less than three years, holders of one or more research grants;
- in a similar manner, again for a period of time of three years from the approval of the conversion law, a "rebate" of years of service is granted to RTT winners who have been either RTDa (they can apply to be graded in the fourth year, but in this case the evaluation for progression to associate professor is postponed by twelve months), or research fellows for at least three years, even if not consecutive (in this case they can apply to be graded in the third year). Thus, provided they have had at least three years of service, RTDa are granted 3 years, and research fellows 2 years of service
- Article 14, I, allow universities to hire highly professional staff with the status of technologists on a permanent basis, and a reserve is established for the posts advertised in the first application of this provision. The recruitment in question is aimed at carrying out professional and managerial activities in support and coordination of research, promotion of the process of technology transfer, design and management of infrastructure, and protection of industrial property.