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Universität  
Marburg

# Academic Career Trajectories at Marburg University for Early Career Researchers

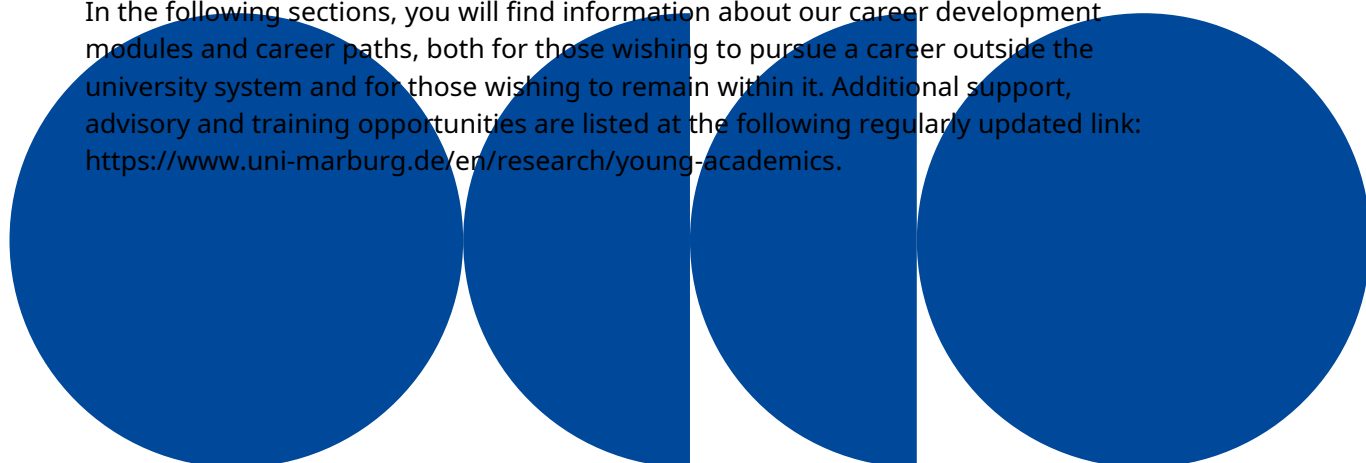
In accordance with our vision of providing individuals and society with enduring inspiration to shape the world of tomorrow, Marburg University facilitates the professional development of its highly skilled employees through contemporary working arrangements. We take into context a variety of factors, including life stages, plans and needs, and offer early-career researchers clear career pathways from the outset.

After completing their studies and receiving their qualifications, it is common for professionals to seek employment opportunities outside of academia. We actively support the transition through advisory services.

We have defined clear guidelines on fixed-term contracts for qualification phases aimed at a doctorate or tenure-track professorships, as well as for an orientation phase following a doctorate or fixed-term research work on projects. These also regulate the minimum scope and duration of contracts, as well as options for extending fixed-term employment to achieve qualification goals.

In order to offer, as early as possible in the career progression, the prospect of a permanent position within the university alongside non-academic career paths, the university has established career pathways with evaluation phases for mid-level academic staff and professorships.

In the following sections, you will find information about our career development modules and career paths, both for those wishing to pursue a career outside the university system and for those wishing to remain within it. Additional support, advisory and training opportunities are listed at the following regularly updated link: <https://www.uni-marburg.de/en/research/young-academics>.





## Academic career paths at Marburg University

### 1. Qualification posts leading to a doctorate

As early as 2016, Marburg University established transparent terms for fixed-term contracts and training objectives for academic staff. These measures provide a reliable basis for planning academic careers prior to obtaining a doctorate. In accordance with the provisions stipulated in the Fixed-Term Academic Contracts Act (Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz), initial contracts are to be concluded for a minimum duration of three years, with any periods of absence, e.g. due to family commitments, being duly taken into account. Further details are set out in Marburg University's guidelines on fixed-term employment for academic staff (Befristungsleitlinie).

### 2. Qualification posts leading to eligibility for a professorship

For researchers who have previously pursued a career at Marburg University, the career goal of a professorship can generally only be achieved at other universities. The pathway is supported by qualification posts that lead to eligibility for a professorship. In accordance with the provisions stipulated in the Fixed-Term Academic Contracts Act (Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz), initial contracts are to be concluded for a minimum duration of four years, with any periods of absence, e.g. due to family commitments, being duly taken into account. Further details are set out in Marburg University's guidelines on fixed-term employment for research staff.

### 3. Career goal: University lecturer specialising in teaching, research or management (lecturer, researcher, academic manager)

In order to meet the professionalisation demands of permanent responsibilities in research, teaching and the diverse tasks within the academia and academic support sectors, it is essential that highly qualified staff are retained at the university on a long-term basis and that their skills are continuously developed. Marburg University is establishing novel career pathways to this end, thereby empowering researchers at the outset of their careers to secure permanent, independent, and autonomous positions within the academic sector, in parallel with a professorship. Following a favourable evaluation, this results in a permanent appointment.

The position profiles are structured on the basis of the profiles for university lecturers defined in Section 72(5) of the Hessian Higher Education Act, with a focus on either teaching, research or management. The career paths are accordingly



designated as Lecturer, Researcher and Academic Manager, each with a probationary period (tenure track).

The position profiles are primarily aimed at researchers in the early stages of their careers (R 2) following their doctorate. Candidates do not yet need to demonstrate independent research achievements following their doctorate, but must show clear potential for career development towards R 3 level.

The probationary period in all three position profiles is intended to serve the purpose of further establishing the candidates' academic profile in relation to their future academic responsibilities. The structure of the probationary period may be adapted in accordance with prior qualifications, in line with the criteria set out in the job advertisement.

Irrespective of their area of specialisation, university lecturers carry out their research and teaching duties independently. Further details are set out in the Statutes governing the procedure for the appointment and probationary period of university lecturers at Marburg University. Notwithstanding the aforementioned career options, the possibility remains to create permanent posts for academic services, for teaching staff for special tasks, or for areas without research and teaching duties in the academic support and administrative sectors.

#### **4. Career goal: W 2 and W 3 professorships (R 4)**

The career goal of a W 2 or W 3 professorship at Marburg University can be achieved with or without a tenure track, depending on the specific terms of the professorship vacancy. The requirements for the professorships are:

- W 1 professorships: Candidates must already have demonstrated initial independent academic achievements and, in the case of tenure-track professorships, show the potential to meet the criteria for the W 2 or W 3 professorship associated with the tenure track. Typically, W 1 professorships are aimed at researchers from Germany and abroad at R 2 qualification level, up to four years after obtaining their doctorate.
- W 2 professorships: Candidates have already demonstrated significant achievements in research and teaching at the highest international level and show the potential to achieve high international standing within leading international research networks. Typically, W2 professorships are aimed at researchers from Germany and abroad at qualification level R3 in the transition to R4.
- W3 professorships: Candidates must demonstrate an outstanding international academic reputation and, in the case of a clinical professorship, the ability to serve as a chief physician; they must have already established an internationally recognised research profile of the highest standard and be active in leading international research networks. Typically, W3 professorships are aimed at researchers from Germany and abroad who already hold a W2 professorship or



have independently led junior research groups and are firmly established at qualification level R4.

Tenure-track models (from W1 to W2 or W3, or from W2 to W3) facilitate the pursuit of a career that can be planned relatively early on with a view to achieving tenure for researchers at career levels R2 and R3. However, these provisions act as an impediment to already established academics who, in other circumstances, would be directly eligible for a professorship.

Marburg University is therefore expanding its open-rank procedure for filling professorships: the aim is to ensure, through open-rank procedures starting at W1 up to W2 or W3, that academics at both early and established career stages can apply and are evaluated appropriately and fairly, with a focus on their suitability and potential.

Marburg University has set itself the goal of continuing to advertise up to 50% of all new appointments as tenure-track professorships or under the open-rank system on an international and broad scale, in order to offer further reliable career prospects through this pathway.

Further details are set out in the regulations governing the appointment of professors at Marburg University.