D07.3 - REPORT ON 3 “TRAIN THE TRAINERS” WORKSHOPS

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CONCEPT

The "Arqus Training Programme for Careers Outside Academia", termed "Career Week" in short, is envisioned as an

> *Intense training of pre-and postdoctoral researchers as well as university staff working with them through different formats (multi-day events, workshops). Strengthening and development of (entrepreneurial) skills to transfer ESR's academic expertise to the non-academic labour market.*

Goals for this format include

> *Supporting ESRs to develop skills necessary for successful careers outside academia. Training awareness of (entrepreneurial) competencies among professional/administrative staff and young researchers. Increase employability of ESRs. Training of professionals to conduct training sessions at their home universities.*

This training programme for pre- and postdoctoral researchers will be combined with "train the trainers" workshops, which are

> *Training events for professionals working with ESRs to offer high quality career support, skills awareness and communication training.*

The joint organisation of these trainings allows for direct contact and exchange between the trainers and the ESRs, which we perceive as very valuable. It also allows the trainers to broaden their expertise by hosting workshops for the ESRs at the Career Week. Participants in the Career Week in turn benefit from international perspectives at the event.

The "train the trainers" workshops have the goal of giving professionals the qualification to conduct training sessions at their home universities. The training events are aimed at professionals working with ESRs to offer high-quality career support, skills awareness and communication training.

As mentioned in the Guidebook for the organisation of the Arqus Career Week, the Career Week also include a "Train the Trainers" segment, which means separate sessions for Career Experts from the Arqus Universities (e.g., working at Doctoral Support Offices, Career Services, Personnel Management). These training sessions should take into account the particular expertise and possible expectations of the participants, offering space for exchange as well as input from local career experts. It is meant to provide the trainers with additional methods, tools and skills that they can make use of at their local university.

The **"Train the Trainers" Workshops** need to be included in the Career Week (Deliverable 07.3 Report on 3 "train the trainers" workshops). This means that, in separate sessions, educational offers should be provided for the trainers as well, taking into account their job field/specific expertise and experience. As the name says, it is meant to offer these career experts the opportunity to get to know new methods, tools, techniques or approaches that they can use in their work. The people leading the workshops for the trainers should be especially qualified and experienced in the field of career support/development. How this is organised (in several blocks on multiple days or a longer training on one day) is open to the host university. The trainers can also have an active part in the main programme, offering their own workshops or participating in discussions with the participants. It is a good idea to contact the trainers who are going to participate in the Career Week early on and get their ideas and input on the sessions.

MAY 2023 IN GRANADA

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The first train-the-trainers sessions were held in tandem with the Arqus Training Programme for Careers Outside Academia (Career Week in short), taking place at the University of Granada from May 8th to 12th 2023.

TRAINERS PRESENT

Members of the Work Package reached out to local experts working in PhD support, career services, human resources, entrepreneurship training and other fields relevant to the contents of the Career Week. They were invited to participate in training sessions with local experts, exchange with others working on similar topics at other universities and to participate in and contribute to the programme for the early-stage researchers. In addition to those trainers at the University of Granada, who were involved with hosting the event, six career experts from 4 other Arqus universities (Graz, Lyon, Padua and Vilnius) participated in the Career Week and the train-the-trainer workshops. The trainers from Lyon had previously been involved in the Career Week when it was hosted at Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1 in Arqus I.

University	Role/Position	Gender	#
University of Granada	Deputy Director of the Knowledge Transfer Office (OTRI)	m	1
	Career Service expert. Employment and Work Placement Office (CPEP)	m	2
	Entrepreneurship Expert from the General Coordination for Entrepreneurship	f	3
	Technician at the International School for Postgraduate Studies (EIP)	f	4
University of Graz	Career Centre Coordinator Consulting, cooperation, PR, training & seminars	f	5
	Working on continuing education at the Department for Staff and Organisational Development	f	6
University of Lyon 1	Service d'Orientation et d'Insertion professionnelle des Étudiantes	f	7
	Service d'Orientation et d'Insertion professionnelle des Étudiantes	f	8
University of Padua	Career Service Counsellor	f	9
Vilnius	Vice-dean for Partnership and Projects and Head of TechHub pre-accelerator	m	10

PROGRAMME

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The following **topics** were considered as bridging points among the participants.

- Career Service: prepare CVs and Interviews.
- Entrepreneurship: start-ups and pitches.
- Knowledge Transfer: patents and licenses.
- Local and International companies that hire PhD profiles: what are they looking for?

The sessions and workshops were developed around these topics, with sessions over the five days in which several representatives from each university participated. This has given participants the opportunity to share interests and goals, exchange ideas and identify common interests that might lead to future joint activities.

A total of 28 doctoral students and 10 experts from the member universities of the Arqus Alliance (Granada, Graz, Leipzig, Lyon 1, Minho, Padua, Vilnius and Wroclaw) attended the activity at the headquarters of the Higher Technical School of Architecture (ETSAG) from 8th to 12th May 2023. The activity also had the presence of four students from our associated partner, the National University of Kyiv- Mohyla Academy, from Kyiv, Ukraine.

The organising team of the Granada Arqus PhD Week for Careers Outside Academia designed a **program** for 5 days, including the following activities:

- Plenary sessions with 10/15 minutes presentations by different companies and former PhD students who exchanged their experiences outside Academia and the path they followed. With regard to the companies, they explained the profiles they are looking for.
- Workshops for Early-Stage Researchers in the field of Career Services, Entrepreneurship and Knowledge Transfer.
- Workshops for trainers (professionals working in Arqus' universities).
- Networking activities that were the most interesting ones in order to create novel research collaborations.

FEEDBACK AND REFLECTIONS

Trainers developed a good rapport with each other as well and discussed continuing collaboration as a Community of Practice within Arqus. Many also expressed their interest in contributing to the next Career Week as well.

The **goals** of this event were also to strengthen and develop entrepreneurial skills to transfer ESRs' academic expertise to the non-academic labour market. Supporting ESRs to develop skills necessary for successful careers outside academia. Training awareness of (entrepreneurial) competencies among professional/administrative staff and young researchers. Increase employability of ESRs as well as training of professionals to conduct training sessions at their home universities.

JUNE 2024 IN WROCŁAW

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The **Arqus Career Week** was a 5-day programme intended to support PhD and postdoctoral researchers in their exploration and pursuit of career paths beyond university research. It was open to participants from all research disciplines from all nine Arqus partner universities.

Professionals working in the field of early-stage researcher support in career services, personnel management, staff development, PhD offices or other areas were invited to participate in the Career Week as well, being involved both as **trainers** and as well as receiving workshops..

The programme offered talks and workshops, led by a group of career experts from international backgrounds, to help participants recognise their labour market skills and give insight into application and hiring processes as well as company cultures outside of academia. It was a combination of expert input and participatory approaches, focused on discussion and self-exploration.

The 4th edition of the Career Week took place at the **University of Wrocław**, Poland, from **June 10th to 14th, 2024**

The trainers were invited to contribute talks or workshops on topics such as

- How to become aware of your skills for the general job market and how to translate your academic skills into non-academic contexts
- How to create a convincing CV
- How to fruitfully use the digital sphere in the job search
- How to navigate the recruitment process, including job interview dos and don'ts
- How to successfully transition from academic culture to the business world
- How to make use of entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial techniques for your career development

This event included "Train the Trainers" sessions, specifically for the invited trainers, led by local career professionals. These workshops allowed participants to exchange best practices with other experts in the field of early-stage researcher development and career support, and to receive training from the host university professionals.

The Arqus Career Week was an excellent opportunity for the trainers to connect with an international group of other career experts as well as early-stage researchers from a diverse range of backgrounds and to hone participants' workshop and presentation skills in a diverse and multicultural environment. It also allowed trainers to get acquainted with other systems, labour markets, and local particularities.

The second train-the-trainers sessions were held during the Arqus Career Week at the University of Wrocław from June 10th to 14th 2024.

TRAINERS PRESENT

University	Role/Position	Gender	#
University of Granada	Entrepreneurship Expert from the General Coordination for Entrepreneurship	f	1
University of Graz	Career Centre Coordinator Consulting, cooperation, PR, training & seminars	f	2
Leipzig University	Career Service for international students	f	3
University of Lyon 1	Service d'Orientation et d'Insertion professionnelle des Étudiantes	f	4
	Service d'Orientation et d'Insertion professionnelle des Étudiantes	f	5

PROGRAMME

On two days, workshops for the trainers took place in the mornings before the sessions for the PhD researchers. The first workshop focused on exchanging best practices and experiences from working in the field of Career Support and Development, with an input on “Innovative tools to support career planning”.

The second workshop continued the conversation, with a focus on self-development as career counsellors and key competencies in guidance.

In addition to these dedicated workshops, the trainers were able to participate in each other’s workshops, learning about others’ content, methods and approaches, which they all highlighted as being incredibly helpful and inspiring for them. There was also a lot of informal exchange between the trainers beyond the scope of the programme, as well as between trainers and participants.

Five trainers from four different Arqus Universities were present for these sessions, which were led by Dominika Buczkowska, the local trainer and organiser. Some of the trainers had already participated in previous Career Weeks, which shows the appeal of these formats for the trainers, and were motivated to build a longer-lasting relationship with colleagues from the Arqus universities. All trainers were female, which might also be due to the overall skewed gender balance in the field of Career Support at the universities.

FEEDBACK AND REFLECTIONS

While there were fewer trainers present at these training sessions, the exchange was deeper and more intense, and the connections that were formed were seen as incredibly valuable, both personally and professionally. We are confident that many of the trainers are motivated to contribute to another round of the event and are also valuable ambassadors for Arqus among the general staff at the universities.

JULY 2025 IN PADUA

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The third train-the-trainers sessions were held during the Career Week at the University of Padua from June 30th to July 4th 2025.

Participants also joined the **Fiasco Fest**, a workshop format developed by the Postdoc Office at the University of Graz, which offers a space for Early Career Researchers to discuss the highlights and "failures" of their careers. The objective is to analyse together what they see as fiascos and explore what resources they have used so far to overcome inevitable setbacks. Trainers also received instructions on how to host a Fiasco Fest themselves.

TRAINERS PRESENT

10 trainers were present, representing the University of Wroclaw, the University of Leipzig, Maynooth University, Graz University, Vilnius University, and Lyon 1 University.

PROGRAMME

The programme of the train-the-trainer session focused on three main parts: (1) About the Career Service office, (2) about the PhD and (3) about the future.

The first item was an exchange about the different ways career services are organised at each partner university. They differ in the way Early Stage Researchers are supported, in the main language used and in the career stages supported (only PhD or also Postdoc). The trainers also exchanged barriers in career development that they encountered at their universities. These included a lack of language skills or a hesitancy by companies to engage in such activities. Secondly, they discussed the way the PhD is organised nationally. Most universities offer workshops and seminars on career development, but mostly focused on careers inside academia. Lastly, they discussed future opportunities. They agreed that it would be important to provide more support to PhD candidates who wish to pursue a career outside academia, including assistance with understanding the local job market. Sara Raponi (Padova) reminded all participants that it is also possible to continue discussing this topic in the Arqus Career Services Network – Community of Practice.

FEEDBACK AND REFLECTIONS

The "Train the Trainer" sessions, both for the Fiasco Fest and other topics, were appreciated by the participating trainers, who found them to be excellent opportunities for exchange and learning.

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Across the three events, we record 25 trainer attendances: 10 in Granada, 5 in Wrocław and 10 in Padua. The tables contain 18 named individuals in total, with several trainers participating in more than one Career Week. Among the 22 trainers for whom gender is explicitly recorded, 18 are women, and 4 are men.

The three events demonstrate a recurring pattern of peer exchange, sharing of practices and methods, and the development of contacts among professionals working with ESRs. The Wrocław and Padua reports explicitly record the value of this exchange and the interest in maintaining professional links across Arqus. It is striking that most trainers involved were women. This is partly because more women work in these fields (e.g. the teams of the Career Service at the University of Graz and the University of

Wrocław are entirely female). It could also be because women are socialised to be more service-oriented and thus more willing to use their own time to participate in trainings and offer their services to others.

In each Career Week organised, the Train the Trainers (TT) component is an integral part of the programme. At least two dedicated sessions are systematically included to strengthen the capacity of career trainers, facilitate the exchange of expertise and good practices, and foster the development of a common Arqus approach to career support:

TT1 – Train the Trainers Session 1: Exchange of challenges and best practices

Arqus trainers prepare relevant challenges, experiences and good practices in advance of the Career Week. During the session, these are presented and shared among the participating trainers, providing a basis for an open and facilitated discussion. The session enables trainers to compare approaches, reflect on common challenges, identify transferable practices and explore possible solutions that can be adapted to different institutional contexts.

TT2 – Train the Trainers Session 2: Expert input and development of a professional community

A second dedicated session gives local experts the opportunity to present a topic of particular relevance to the career trainers participating in the event. The session combines expert input with discussion and peer exchange, allowing participants to further develop their knowledge and reflect on its application in their own institutional contexts.

The establishment of an Arqus Community of Practice for Career Services provides a mechanism for continuing this exchange beyond the individual Career Week events. The TTT format therefore supports the wider objective of strengthening career support for ESRs across the Arqus universities by enabling professionals to share approaches and develop their capacity to provide career guidance and training.

If we were to give an example of content created for TT programme, we could focus on the one proposed by Sara Raponi from the University of Padova.

1. About the Career Service Office

At the University of Padua, the Career Service Office is a central institution that supports current students, recent graduates, and PhD candidates.

The office is divided into three main branches:

- the Internship Office;
- the Job Placement Office;
- the Career Guidance Office.

Each branch provides support to students, recent graduates, and PhD candidates. For example, the Job Placement Office organises job-search events throughout the year, covering different fields of study.

However, the smallest event is the one dedicated to PhD candidates and recent doctoral graduates. Few PhD graduates seek careers outside academia, and only a limited number of companies actively recruit them. Moreover, there are only a limited number of job opportunities in institutional offices in Italy, as these positions generally require a high level of Italian proficiency and often European citizenship.

One of the main challenges faced by the Career Service is supporting international students.

1. Limited knowledge of Italian: Most international students do not speak Italian and/or are not willing to learn it. This represents a significant barrier, since the majority of Italian companies are small- to medium-sized family businesses that require a high level of Italian proficiency.
2. Limited English skills: some international students also have limited English skills, which makes it difficult for them to find information or seek help.
3. Limited English proficiency among university staff: most university staff members do not speak English, leaving only a few colleagues able to effectively assist international students.
4. Language barriers with Italian students and professors: Italian students and professors also often struggle with English, which limits international students' opportunities to interact with their peers outside their own national or linguistic groups.

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In Ireland, Maynooth University does not have a Career Service Office structured in the same way as the one in Italy.

Although the university supports students and PhD candidates in entering the workforce, it aims to create a stronger network connecting universities, students and recent graduates, and companies.

However, one of the main challenges is convincing companies to share information and actively engage in these initiatives.

2. About PhD Support

Supporting PhD candidates and doctoral graduates is particularly challenging. Most of them do not pursue careers outside academia, partly because they receive limited support during this transition. They also often struggle to translate their academic expertise into skills that can be applied within companies.

At the University of Graz, PhD candidates and doctoral graduates receive support throughout their entire academic journey. However, the focus of this support remains primarily within the academic sphere, with limited emphasis on preparing them for careers outside academia.

Seminars, events, and workshops

Most universities offer seminars, events, and workshops to help students pursue their careers. However, these activities are rarely held in English, as offering them in English could exclude local students who are not fluent in the language. As a result, international students are often excluded from these opportunities because they do not speak the local language. In Poland, for example, most university staff members do not speak English, and only around 4% of students are international. As a result, these events are mainly held in Polish.

Last year, for the first time, an event was held entirely in English. It was successful: out of 300 registered participants, 50 attendees completed the course. The decrease in numbers was due to the assessment exams rather than the language used during the event. Moreover, companies in Poland are generally not specifically interested in candidates who speak English, as English proficiency is largely taken for granted. Instead, they tend to prefer candidates who speak an additional language that can be used to communicate with foreign companies.

3. About the Future

In the future, all universities agree on the need to provide more support to PhD candidates who wish to work in companies. This includes helping them understand and access the local job market. However, this requires efforts from both universities and international students. University staff need to have sufficient English skills to support international students and PhD candidates effectively, while international students should also make an effort to learn the local language.

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