

The academic staff in Catalonia

**Recent evolution of the teaching
and research staff in the Catalan
public universities**

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Executive Summary

This report analyses the teaching and research staff (PDI, in Catalan) of the Catalan public universities between the years 2004/05 and 2014/15 and presents its main trends. Private universities have not been included in the report because the characteristics of their academic staff are very different from public ones.

The main conclusions of the report are the following:

- **PDI numbers.** There has been a significant break in the growth trend of the number of teaching and research staff. This number gradually grew until the year 2010/11, but has decreased thereafter. In terms of full-time equivalent employees, the figure shrank in 2010 by 19%. During the last 5 years, the teaching and research staff has decreased by 23%.
- **Type of contract.** Most staff has no longer the status of civil servant (*funcionari*). Civil servants have decreased from 52% to 37% of total PDI during the period under study (2004/05 to 2014/15).
- **Permanent vs. fixed-term contracts.** The share of fixed-term contracts has substantially increased. In 2004/05, 54% of the total PDI was permanent, but this percentage decreased to 46% in 2010/11, although it increased again later on, thanks, first, to the reduction in part-time teachers (*professors associats*), and afterwards to the decrease in assistant professors and lecturers (*ajudants and professors lectors*). As a result, the share of permanent PDI was 49% by 2014/15, having therefore decreased by 5 points during the period under consideration. As a consequence, in the Catalan university system the share of fixed-term PDI is nowadays significantly higher than the legal maximum (40%).
- **Full-time vs. part-time contracts.** The share of part-time contracts has increased over time, with the only exceptions of the year 2006 (due to the regularization of part of that staff) and the year 2011 (due to the budget cuts). Nevertheless, from 2004/05 to 2014/15 the total number of part-time contracts grew from 35% to 47% of the overall number of PDI. The Catalan Public Audit Office has repeatedly warned about the incorrect use of part-time contractual figures (*professors associats*) by the universities.
- **Wage.** In real terms, PDI wages have decreased during the last 25 years, and today are at similar levels as in the 1980s. More concretely, Spanish university full-professors received in 2015, on average, 83% of the wage that was assigned to them in 1991, when the current payment structure was established. In the case of associate profes-

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sors (*professors titulars d'universitat* and *professors titulars d'escola universitària*) these percentages were 81% and 80%. In Catalonia, the equivalent figures in 2013 and 2014 were 77.5%, 73% and 76%.

- **Pre-doc contracts.** While positions of pre-doc assistants have virtually disappeared, the number of other pre-doc contracts has suffered strong cuts during the period of analysis. There have been years when some of the calls of those contracts have not been published, or the number of positions open has been symbolic. Nowadays, their numbers seem to be stabilized at 80% of the level that they had before the budget cuts. In addition, there has been a change in the proportion of each type of contract in favour of those with less pay and duration. By contrast, the type of link between the researchers and the universities is now better, since most of these positions have been transformed from scholarships into labour contracts.
- **Post-doc contracts.** There has been a substantial fall in the hiring of young researchers via national or regional calls. The number of this type of contracts has been reduced by 36% during the last few years. Similarly, the growth trend in the number of lecturers has been reversed. While there were 720 lecturers in the Catalan universities in 2009/10, by 2014/15 this number had been reduced to 417, i.e. 42% lower than 5 years before.
- **Age structure.** As a result of the former problems, there has been a gradual reduction in the presence of young PDI, and a gradual ageing of the teaching and research staff. The share of PDI younger than 40 has been reduced by 8 points, from 30% to 22%. The share of PDI that is 50 or older has increased by 10 points, from 36% to 46%.
- **Students per teacher.** The ratio between full-time-equivalent students and full-time-equivalent teachers was significantly reduced, from 10.49 to 8.98, between 2004/05 and 2008/09. Thereafter this process has been reversed and by 2012/13 that ratio was 10.88, even higher than at the beginning of the period.
- **Incorrect use of certain types of contracts.** The Catalan Public Audit Office has often warned about the incorrect use of the figures of part-time teacher (professor associat) and visiting professor by certain universities. The Spanish Court of Auditors did the same about the figure of emeritus professor. It is likely that both institutions will soon warn about the high numbers of substitute professors (interins) if this problem is not resolved urgently.



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