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**Abstract**

In order to ensure the future of high quality research in some disciplines it may be necessary to provide special consideration in prestigious research funding schemes for early career researchers who will otherwise become disenchanted with academic research and leave it behind in their search for a stable and fruitful future. Milestones in progression through research studies and academic life to establishment as an academic researcher are outlined. Within this context, a range of potential criteria for determining promising early career status are reviewed. The discussion leads to derivation of the definition of early career which has been adopted by the Australian Research Council for its prestigious Discovery ? Projects grants scheme. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Bazeley, Pat, E-Mail: patb@acenet.com.au