

23.8.2025

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Title

Reciprocal commitment in academic careers? : Finnish implications and international trends / Taru Siekkinen ...

Publication year

2017

Source/Footnote

In: European journal of higher education. - 7 (2017) 2, S. 120 - 135

Inventory number

45448

Keywords

Ausland : Finnland : Forschung, Hochschullehrer ; Ausland : Finnland : Auslandsbeziehungen

Abstract

This study explores the nature of reciprocal commitment in academic careers. The article is based on a survey conducted in autumn 2013 among fixed-term employees at eight major universities in Finland (N=7810). The analysis is focusing on researchers who have a doctoral degree and who are working on a fixed-term contract at their university (n=308). According to our study, researchers experience their working conditions are insecure and many of them have considered leaving their universities. Despite the fact that they find their work meaningful their uncertain and poor working conditions are related to their thoughts of leaving the university. In addition in many of the cases leaving the university is not a choice of the researcher – they wish they would not have to leave. Based on our findings, higher education institutions should carefully consider if both the benefits of fixed-term contracts and their transaction costs are related to academics' well-being and motivational issues. Our study highlights the importance of reciprocity and dialogue between employers and employees in the making of academic careers. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)