Human resources strategy for researchers at the University of Barcelona

Principles of an open, transparent, merit-based human resources policy

The University of Barcelona (UB) considers that good practices in the processes of selecting and recruiting its researchers are an essential instrument to ensure excellence in research and the future of the university. In combination with the development of good working conditions and a well-balanced, merit-based promotion policy, they make a research career at our university more attractive and thus guarantee the progress of the institution.

Hence, the objective of the UB is to open its doors to everyone and promote the recruitment of the best candidate for each job, with full respect for equality policies and considering the academic merits of everyone. The University wants to maintain and attract talent, from within and outside the university.

On 5 March 2013, the University of Barcelona signed the "European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers", and thus made a commitment to promote and improve recruitment, working conditions and the career of academic and research staff. This commitment is reflected in the Human resources strategy for researchers (HRS4R) and is put into practice through an action plan with specific proposals for improvement.

The action plan for HRS4R at the UB, which was revised for the 2017-2020 period, is designed to prioritise aspects that ensure hiring is based on open, transparent and merit-based recruitment principles (OTM-R principles). OTM-R is one of the mainstays of the Charter and the Code and one of the main priorities of the European Higher Research Area.

On the basis of the above, these principles have been drawn up to guide recruitment of human resources for research. They are compliant with the "Code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers" and establish selection procedures that guarantee the principles of competition, advertising and merits, in accordance with Royal legislative decree 5/2015, of 30 October, approving the revised text of the Law of Basic Statute for Public Employees and Law 14/2011, of 1 June, on Science, Technology and Innovation (Law 14/2011), and in full compliance with current legislation at all times on access to public employment.

These principles were approved by the UB Governing Council on June 26, 2020.
Scope of application

The provisions described in this document apply to recruitment of research staff at the University of Barcelona.

In accordance with the provisions in Article 13 of Law 14/2011, of 1 June, on Science, Technology and Innovation, research staff are those who hold the required qualification in each case and carry out research activity. The teaching and research staff defined in organic law 6/2001, of 21 December, on universities, who can carry out research activities, is considered research staff. It also includes researchers recruited through predoctoral and postdoctoral calls in the university's programmes, and in recruitment procedures with specifically allocated funds (projects and/or agreements), in which the corresponding calls must always be respected.

Objective

The final objective of the recruitment and selection policy is to ensure that the best candidate for a job is the person who is selected, with a full guarantee of equal opportunities and access for everyone.

Principles

The selection and recruitment of research staff at the University of Barcelona is carried out within the model of the research career outlined in current legislation. It encompasses from predoctoral trainee researchers (R1) to permanent, consolidated researchers (R4), and must be based on procedures that guarantee the principles of advertising, free competition, merit and ability, transparency and accountability, avoiding discretion and respecting in all cases the legal provisions and the calls of funding bodies.

The University of Barcelona understands that selection and recruitment processes require the utmost efficacy and simplicity, which are compatible with the above principles, and they must scrupulously respect current legislation.

The University of Barcelona will ensure that the aforementioned principles are applied in all its selection and recruitment processes.
Commitment

In accordance with the defined principles, the University of Barcelona, in line with its Human Resources Strategy for Researchers, has made the following commitments for all research staff selection processes:

- Advertising of calls and publication of selection results according to international standards, determined in each case on the bases of the call and in accordance with legislation.
- Transparency during the entire process.
- Equal opportunities in staff selection and recruitment.
- No discrimination on the basis of gender; age; ethnic, national or social background; religion; sexual orientation; language; disability; political opinions; or social and economic condition.
- Merit-based assessment.
- Strict compliance with data protection regulations.
- Efficacy and efficiency in the selection process.
- Selection processes adapted to the job conditions.

Advertising and procedure

Advertising of job vacancies

The aim of the University of Barcelona is to look for talented people who can innovate in teaching, research and knowledge transfer, in order to guarantee academic excellence. To meet this objective, job vacancies and calls must be disseminated and advertised as much as possible, in accordance with the best practices that are commonly accepted in the academic world.

The period between the advertisement of a job or a call and the opportunity to submit applications must be long enough, in accordance with the aforementioned standards and complying with legal requirements. In addition, candidates must have access to clear and transparent information on the recruitment process, including the calendar and the selection criteria.

Therefore:

- Job offers and calls will be announced publicly on the electronic office of the University of Barcelona, via international channels, on EURAXESS or through other similar channels, respecting the internationally established practices in each area of knowledge.
- According to the principle of efficiency and transparency, job offers must be concise and, at the same time, refer to documents in which candidates can find all of the relevant information.
- The established selection procedure will be indicated in the job offers.
- Job offers will be classified into one of the four categories established in the “European Framework for Research Careers” (R1-R4).
Administrative simplification

- The procedures will be as flexible as possible. In the selection stages of recruitment, a criterion of trust will be applied. Priority will be given to the use of a statement of compliance for presenting merits and requirements, without detriment to the obligation to submit the required documents when necessary, in accordance with current regulations. Documents that are already held by the University of Barcelona will not need to be submitted if this is stated by the applicant or when they are clearly unnecessary.
- The procedures will not establish time, geographical or other limitations that confer an advantage on local candidates, unless the funding body’s call establishes the opposite situation.

Right to information

- Candidates can access information on the progress of the selection process.

Assessment and selection

Composition of the selection committees

- The selection procedures will be assessed jointly by a committee comprised of at least three people, except in cases in which the current legislation establishes another composition.
- Whenever possible, the committees will be gender balanced, diverse in composition and respect the specialization requirements. When the vacancy is for an R3 or R4 job, the committees must include members from outside the university. This is also recommended for R1 and R2 jobs, according to the categories established in the “European Framework for Research Careers” (R1-R4).

Review of candidates’ documents

- All submitted applications that meet the requirements will be assessed.
- When legally possible, preselection procedures (short lists) or phases may be used.

Assessment of merit, impact and potential of candidates

- The assessment will consider quantitative and qualitative aspects.
- Pauses in the research career will not be penalised and the added value of non-conventional professional pathways will be considered.
- Merits will be assessed in accordance with the job profile.
- Gender policies and criteria of equality will be considered.
- Reference letters may be assessed, and priority will be given to tests and face-to-face or telematic interviews, always in accordance with the provisions in current legislation, if applicable.
Resolution and appointment

- All candidates will be informed of the result of their application.
- Candidates have the right to access their assessment in accordance with the principles of transparency, with respect for the data protection policy.
- As far as legally possible, the confidential nature of reference letters will be protected, in accordance with internationally established practices.
- The selection decision will refer to the procedure for presenting appeals and complaints.

Actions

The University of Barcelona will apply these good practices to the recruitment of research staff at the University of Barcelona, considering the principles indicated above. The principles shall be applied in all regulations and calls and will be disseminated to the facilities and the offices of general affairs, which will be given the support required for their correct interpretation and application.

The University of Barcelona, through the Vice-Rector for Research and the Vice-Rector for Teaching and Research Staff, will monitor the actions derived from the institution’s recruitment policy, in the framework of the action plan of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R).