

HRS4R - The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers

Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC)

Action Plan 2019 - 2023



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

1.- Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

1.1 Ethical and professional aspects

As reflected in the initial evaluation, the strong commitment of the Spanish regulations with the ethical and professional principles included in the law of science, the law of universities, and the Spanish Constitution and the regulations, of mandatory compliance, that develop it, makes that most of the ethical aspects contemplated in the Charter and the Code are included in the rules and procedures of the University.

Specific units have been created and / or promoted, beyond traditional structures, which advise the rest of the community and promote concrete policies and establish measures of analysis and control. In this way, the innovation and community office, which includes the former equality office and the sustainability cabinet, and the data protection office, currently configure recognized units with their own functions within the university.

The Innovation and community office is a strongly consolidated unit supported by the commitment of the rector's management team for the promotion and development of its policies. Within the framework of the equal opportunities plan, a specific action plan has been developed for the 2019-2020 period, promoting equality policies and integration of diversity, with implications in all the fields of activity of the university, including research. (point 10)

From the library service, a great boost has been given to open access policies, by the consolidation of the institutional repository, UPCommons, ranked first and fifth at the Spanish and European levels, respectively. (8)

In 2019 a new unit of scientific culture (@UPCdivulga) has been created as a stimulating and liaison agent for scientific communication (9).

Other specific measures adopted in this area in 2018 are the approval of measures to control plagiarism (point 3) and a new internal regulation of intellectual and industrial property rights (5).

With respect to point 11, it is worth mentioning that there is a well-consolidated external evaluation mechanism for researchers at both national and regional levels, performing its evaluations on a regular and transparent basis.

Weakness: The creation of the new ethical committee is underway, the first mission of which is the edition of a new ethical code that collects all the aspects dealt with in different regulations and promotes research control procedures from the ethical point of view. The launch of the committee has taken longer than planned. Several meetings have been held and the regulations of the committee have been elaborated, but the change of the vice-rector for scientific policy has caused delays in the development of the project. The fact that no research on live animals

is carried out at the UPC, and that the majority of research that requires prior evaluation of the ethical committee are related to the use of personal data, has delayed the launch of the committee. However, the figure of a person responsible for data security has been developed, who, in addition to performing the duties corresponding to the position covering all areas of the university activities, advises the researchers and the research commission for the development of correct research protocols when personal data is involved.

Remarks:

The new challenges in research in artificial intelligence, a field in which the UPC stands out, make necessary the debate on ethics and artificial intelligence that is being promoted from the vice-rectorate of scientific policy.

Likewise, the ethics committee has the mission of complying with Article 125.4 c) of EU 1303/2013, which establishes the obligation to implement the appropriate anti-fraud mechanisms. In this sense, we are working on an action protocol that identifies the control mechanisms and the implementation of a monitoring committee for compliance.

Concerning the protection of personal data, in Spain it has been approved a new Organic Law on the Protection of Personal Data and Guarantee of Digital Rights (3/2018, December 5), adapted to the European Data Protection regulation (EU Regulation 679/2016). The UPC has adopted the necessary measures to comply with the requirements of the new regulations.

1.2 Recruitment and selection

The labour regulations in Spain and Catalonia, together with the rules applicable to human resources selection in public administration and specifically in universities, as well as collective agreements and regulations of the funding programs, guarantee the compliance with most of the requirements of the Charter & Code regarding human resources recruitment. The actions planned aimed to improve the internationalization of the advertising of job offers, by publishing the offers in Euraxess (13), as well as increasing transparency by improving the information provided via Web page.

The improvement of the selection committees (14) including foreign experts, as well as gender equality, was pending for further study and evaluation. The procedures to be followed by the selection committees are ruled by our internal regulations, which includes the mandatory rules. However, some of the aspects highlighted in points 16 to 20 of the code are not clearly specified in the regulations, and the creation of a Code that encourages the inclusion of these particular aspects in the selection committees' criteria could be analysed.

The actions carried out during this period have been aimed at increasing transparency and increasing the dissemination of job offers in research.

UPC has a very extensive staff website, Portal del Personal , which offers very comprehensive and systematized information. The information is organized by groups and provide information about the academic career, working conditions, permits and licenses, evaluation procedures, Union representations, social security system and career development. In addition, the website allows access to the personal electronic file and the management of documents such as obtaining certificates.

The offers are published on the specific website of PDI selection processes, or in the case of recruitments funded by research projects, in the HR section of the research area web.

Regarding international dissemination, the publication of research job vacancies on the Euraxess portal has increased. Currently, all the research vacancies funded by international research projects are posted in Euraxess. The lack of staff and resources means that not all the job vacancies can be published internationally, therefore as a priority all the research job vacancies funded by international research projects are posted in Euraxess.

The high number of selection processes carried out annually by the university for all the research projects in which UPC is involved, means that many committees are set up weekly, without time for adequate training for its members or for offer proper feedback to unselected candidates. The information about the processes and conditions is redirected to the web without a proper personalized attention to the candidates.

1.3 Working conditions

Points 22,23 and 24 of the code, referring to the recognition of the profession, environment and working conditions are widely developed in the UPC both for legal imperative, and for improvements agreed internally in the UPC. These agreements are part of a collective bargaining, both at the university level and within the UPC itself, with the participation of workers' representatives, with agreed regulations related to teleworking, time flexibility or sabbatical periods among many other aspects.

Regarding points 25 and 26 on stability and salaries, these aspects are strictly regulated by the legal framework, without the application of other additional measures by the university being possible.

Opportunities for improvement were detected in the areas of gender balance and the advice on the development of the professional career.

The lack of autonomy of the university in order to determine a career development strategy at all levels was highlighted as a weakness, since it is also strictly regulated by the legal framework.

Highlights include the regulations and measures adopted by the university in terms of promoting mobility (29), intellectual property rights (31), co-authors (32), teaching responsibility (33), complaints/ombudsman (34), and staff participation in the decision-making bodies of the university (35).

Strengths

As evidenced in the initial evaluation, the UPC has fully established and incorporated most of the aspects contemplated in the code regarding section III Working conditions and social security.

During this period, measures have been taken to improve the gender balance. A survey has been conducted on the Glass ceiling that has pointed out the different perception that men and women have in regards of the difficulties of the development of an academic career by women and the need to have an equality plan. One of the measures newly adopted in relation to working conditions has been the approval of a teaching reduction program after a period of maternity leave that allows newly incorporated women to spend more time doing research and, therefore,

avoiding possible penalties due to maternity leaves. The 2019-2020 gender equality action plan is currently underway. There, more activities and measures aimed at promoting equality are planned to be incorporated.

Weaknesses

The University does not have sufficient autonomy, nor independent economic means, to guarantee the stability of jobs (25) beyond the provisions of state legislation itself. Nor does it have autonomy to set the remuneration marked by collective agreements and/or by law, depending on the collective ones.

Points 28 and 30 of the Working conditions section are the two pending points on which the UPC can influence and has some margin of action. There has been an improvement of the information provided on the web at the generic level, and two workshops addressed to ESR about career development have been organized. Nevertheless, there is still a way to go in providing a personalized advisory service especially in regards to the academic career, to researchers R1 and R2, that contemplate further opportunities to continue their careers in other organizations.

1.4 Training and development

The relationship of the ESRs with their supervisors and the representatives of their departments, as well as the senior researchers' supervisory duties are widely regulated in the UPC statutes and doctoral studies regulation.

The UPC has the Doctoral Council, a representative body of UPC doctoral students to enhance their participation in all areas of University and contribute to its aims. Its regulation was approved in 2013 and among its objectives are:

a) Defending the rights and interests of UPC doctoral students. b) Giving advice to UPC doctoral students. c) Participating in the development of the University activity in an active and efficient way. d) Promoting the participation of doctoral students in the governing bodies of the UPC. e) Disseminating the information that may be of interest to UPC doctoral students. f) Promoting the quality of doctoral programs. g) Collaborating with the initiatives created by the UPC Doctoral School and propose new ones.

The UPC Doctoral School was created in 2012 as a result of the Science law's approbation. The regulation on the organisation and functions of the Doctoral School was approved in 2013, but it was still pending to develop the internal regulation that collected the rights and duties of doctoral students, tutors and thesis directors. The internal regulation of the Doctoral School was approved in 2018. This regulate the composition of the academic committee participated among others by representatives of doctoral students, and defines its functions (number 36). In addition, it also regulates the rights and duties of doctoral students set out in the statute of the university students (2010) - and modifications derived from the Science law (2011) -, as well as the duties of tutors and directors of thesis (numbers 37 and 40).

In addition, the UPC Statutes guarantee the ESRs their representation in the UPC collegial bodies.

Regarding numbers 38 and 39, which are related to professional development and access to long life training in transversal skills and despite the many initiatives promoted by UPC units, it was necessary unify the training offer addressed to doctoral students. This offer is now collected in a single portal with redirection to the different training services.

3.- ACTIONS

Action number	1
Title	Survey research project leaders and a sample of our staff
Details	<i>Assess the level of knowledge of their legal and contractual obligations (point 5) Gather suggestions for potential improvements in the selection process (point 14) ,in the assessment process (point 21) Careers advice (point 30) and transparency (point 15)</i>
Unit in charge	Staff and Organisation Area
Indicator	Number of responses
Timescale	Q3 2019 / Q3 2020 Q3 2021 /

Action number	2
Title	Improvement in website contents
Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publication of the selection process - FAQs - Research career - Legislation - Indicators of recruitment <i>Assess the level of knowledge of their legal and contractual obligations (point 5) Transparency (Code) (point 15)</i>
Unit in charge	Staff and Organisation Area Legal Services Area
Indicator	Number of visits to the website
Timescale	Q3 2017 / Q3 2020

Action number	3
Title	Publish job offers in Euraxess
Details	Publication of all UPC vacancies in the Euraxess portal <i>Recruitment (Code) (point 13)</i>
Unit in charge	Staff and Organisation Area
Indicator	Number of job offers published
Timescale	Q1 2017 / Q1 2021

Action number	4
Title	Code of good research practices
Details	PI duties IPR Accountability Dissemination and public engagement Professional standards <i>Professional attitude (point 4)</i> <i>Contractual and legal obligations (point 5)</i> <i>Accountability (point 6)</i> <i>Good practice in research (point 7)</i> <i>Dissemination, exploitation of results (point 8)</i> <i>Public engagement (point 9)</i> <i>Supervision and managerial duties (point 37)</i>
Unit in charge	Vice-rector for Research Research and Transfer Area – Technology Transfer Centre (CTT) Legal Services Area
Indicator	Document
Timescale	Q1 2021

Action number	5
Title	Version of employment contracts in English
Details	Provide a version of the employment contract in English <i>Recruitment (point 13)</i>
Unit in charge	Staff and Organisation Area
Indicator	Document
Timescale	Q1 2019

Action number	6
Title	Improve gender policies
Details	Undertake studies and create proposals on behalf of the glass ceiling committee Incorporate a disclaimer in contracts
Unit in charge	Sustainable Management and Equal Opportunities Office Glass ceiling committee Staff and Organisation Area <i>Non discrimination (point 10)</i> <i>Gender balance (point 27)</i>
Indicator	Number of proposals for improvements % of women hired
Timescale	Q3 2018 / Q2 2020 / Q2 2021

Action number	7a
Title	Welcome process: Welcome Pack (includes an English version)
Details	Information on staff and recruitment Includes the code of good research practices
Unit in charge	Staff and Organisation Area Research and Transfer Area – CTT
Indicator	Number of welcome packs handed out
Timescale	Q1 2018 / Q3 2020

Action number	7b
Title	Welcome process: procedure
Details	Establish a specific welcome process for people from other countries, in coordination with International Relations
Unit in charge	Staff and Organisation Area International Relations
Indicator	Number of researchers welcomed Number of welcome sessions held
Timescale	Q3 2020

Action number	8
Title	Information on cross-disciplinary training for researchers
Details	Bring together in one point information on the cross-disciplinary courses on offer <i>Access to research training and continuous development (point 39)</i>
Unit in charge	Professional Development Service Doctoral School ICE
Indicator	Number of attendees at workshops
Timescale	Q1 2018 / Q2 2019

Action number	9
Title	Open Science: Open access and open data - public engagement
Details	<i>Dissemination, Exploitation of results (point 8)</i> <i>Public engagement (point 9)</i>
Unit in charge	Libraries, Publications and Archives Service
Indicator	Number of consultations dealt with on open access Number of consultations dealt with on open data
Timescale	Q1 2018 / Q1 2019 / Q2 2020

Action number	10
Title	Develop and publish a guide for recruitment evaluation process
Details	Advice group leaders and senior researchers taking part in the selection process about the evaluation criteria according to the C&C <i>(points 16, 17, 18, 19, 20)</i>
Unit in charge	Staff and Organization Area Professional Development Service
Indicator	Recruitment evaluation guide
Timescale	Q2 2020

Action number	11
Title	Improve the Career advice offered to the ESR
Details	Offer the ESRs advice about their career development opportunities organizing workshops about suitable grant calls. <i>Career development (point 28)</i> <i>Access to Career advice (point 30)</i>
Unit in charge	Staff and Organization Area Research Area ICE
Indicator	Number of attendees at workshops
Timescale	Q2 2020 / Q2 2021 / Q2 2022