

UAB - OTM-R Policy

OPEN, TRANSPARENT and MERIT-based Recruitment of Researchers Policy

Updated November 2023

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) is committed to quality and interdisciplinary research that reaches society, attracts talent and external funding, and it is internationally recognised. Enhancing its staff policy is the best way to achieve this strategic objective, since it promotes the quality of its employees and creates the best working conditions for them. The university's staff policy will focus more on providing support in priority areas, to guarantee the quality of its implementation. This means that there will be particular attention to both employees directly engaged in research and education and those directly involved supporting these processes.

To this end, in 2012, the UAB endorsed "The European Charter for Researchers", a set of general principles and requirements which specifies the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of researchers as well as of employers and/or funders of researchers and invites them to act responsibly and as professionals within their working environment, and to recognise each other as such; and "The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers", a set of general principles and requirements that should be followed by employers and/or funders when appointing or recruiting researchers.

In December 2014, the University received the "HR Excellence in Research" award from the European Commission that recognises the institutions which make progress in aligning their human resources policies to the forty principles of the Charter & Code and the OTM-R Principles, setting a customized action plan/HR strategy. In 2016, was appointed a specific working group for OTM-R issues. By following the Euraxess OTM-R checklist, that group has been drafting some documents to determine the status of our OTM-R practices over time and the possible improvements.

Our Human Resources Department is applying those improvements to all the steps of the recruitment process, including creation of the job offer, advertising, application, assessment, publication of the results and appointment.

The UAB recognises the high importance of the principles and requirements of Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R) and is working towards their full implementation.

Spanish General Legal Framework

In the last year, there have been two important Laws with special importance for researcher's careers.

The Law 14/2011 of Science Technology and Innovation has been modified by Law 17/2022, of September 5. The reform provides more guarantees and rights to the Spanish scientific and innovative community and introduces important improvements in the Spanish RDI system.

- Improvement of the scientific and technical career, with the introduction of new labour rights and greater stability.
- Stable and growing public funding for R&D with the aim of reaching 1.25% of GDP in 2030, which guarantees a medium-term horizon funding for public agents of the Spanish System of Science, Technology and Innovation, that will allow Spain to converge with Europe, complying with the financing objective proposed in the EU Pact for Science and Innovation and the Pact for Science and Innovation signed in Spain.
- Promoting transfer of knowledge and public-private cooperation.
- Reduction of administrative burdens. Improvement of the governance of the science, technical and innovation system.
- Fostering gender equality in the RDI system.

On April 12, 2023, Law 2/2023 of the University System (LOSU) enters into force. This new law proposes numerous measures, among which the most remarkable are:

- to guarantee the quality of university studies and teaching staff.
- to reduce the temporality of professors, from 40% in the previous legislation to 8%.
- to improve the conditions and status of associate professors.
- to create the figure of substitute professor.
- to promote lifelong learning.
- to improve the lengths of times of the academic career for teaching and research staff to encourage their stabilisation.
- to develop new qualitative and quantitative professor assessments.
- to increase the transparency in all public processes for professor positions where the organising university will be in the minority and the members will be chosen by lot.
- to promote the internationalisation of the university system, partnerships, and joint degrees.
- to create the figure of Distinguished Professorship to attract professors of academic and research prestige, both national and foreign.
- to guarantee an equal and inclusive university.

The Selection and Recruitment Policy

The aim of this document is to state the UAB policy for the selection and recruitment of researchers, aligned with the principles set out in the Charter&Code, providing more clear and transparent information on the whole selection process, and within the framework of the current Spanish and Catalan employment legislation and the current Collective agreement of the teaching and research staff of the Catalan public universities.

In the Spanish research system, there are two main categories:

- Civil servant: these employees join the administrative service by permanent appointment under the principle of career service. They have a professional relationship with the UAB and are subject to public law with strict rules and procedures established by national laws, regarding the process of selection and recruitment. They are mainly R3 and R4.
- Non-civil service staff: these staff have an employment contract with the UAB (permanent or temporary), and they are mainly R1 and R2.

There is a detailed guide on how to publish call for tenders with dedicated funding. This guide has been translated into English. (<https://www.uab.cat/doc/EuraxessGuide>)

Advertising and application

The UAB is a public university and therefore, vacancies for researchers are published following the official procedures and on the official channels. For civil servants researchers and tenure-track positions there are strict rules and procedures established by national laws. For those researchers contracted with external funding, there is available on the website a detailed guide on how to publish a call for tenders with dedicated funding. (<https://www.uab.cat/doc/EuraxessGuide>)

All selection processes are carried out through public calls for applications on the Employment website of the UAB (<https://seuelectronica.uab.cat/tauler-anuncis-electronic>) and to maximise the coverage of its job offers, the University supports each of the calls for applications published on the job portal with dissemination of the offers on specialised job portals and informative posts on social networks for professionals.

Since 2019 all calls are published on a trilingual application e-tool (Convocatòries UPAC, <https://seleccio.uab.cat/convocatoriesupac/login/auth>) that facilitates the application and the selection process. Apart from allowing a trouble-free application, it is based on providing the minimum documents to lower administrative burden.

Vacancies funded by European programmes (Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, FEDER) must be advertised internationally, being Euraxess one of the most encouraged options. To simplify the advertising process, the HR office has elaborated the following templates and guidelines:

- Tutorial of how to publish in Convocatòries UPAC (only in Catalan)
(<https://www.uab.cat/doc/guia-comissions-concursos-financament-especific>)
- Tutorial on how to apply for a position (<https://www.uab.cat/doc/Applications>)
- Tutorial of how to publish in Euraxess jobs
(<https://www.uab.cat/doc/EuraxessGuideDepartments>)
- Template to publish offers in Euraxess jobs
- Support material/documents in English describing tasks, categories, etc. of different research profiles

All calls for applications to permanent and temporary research positions are also publicly announced at our UABwebsite (<https://www.uab.cat/web/personal-uab/personal-uab/personal-academic-i-investigador/convocatories-1345661836642.html>) as they become available, following the appropriate recruitment procedures. The vacancy announcements shall always include detailed information on selection processes and criteria, as well as on the recruitment conditions offered. In addition, information shall be included about the timeframe and format for the publication of resolutions, and the channels for requesting further information on these resolutions or submitting allegations to them.

Evaluation and selection phase

The processes of evaluation and selection are following practices according to the Charter&Code.

The process related to permanent positions with internal funding, (being civil servants or not), there are clear guidelines established by national rules.

The assessment of candidates' merits by the committees shall consider not only their training, experience, and research potential, but also their creativity and level of independence. Scientific trajectories shall be assessed comprehensively and beyond the number of publications and bibliometric indices, considering aspects such as teaching experience, supervisory tasks performed, experience in scientific transfer and management, or awareness-raising activities conducted. International mobility and multidisciplinary will be considered as positive values in a research career.

1.-Equal opportunities and non-discrimination: candidates who meet the requirements for access to the selection process are evaluated strictly applying the principle of equality, to avoid discrimination on any grounds, such as gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinions and social or economic status.

2.- Transparency: applicants are informed of the receipt of their application, through the publication of the lists of admitted candidates on the University's Employment website, as well as of the development of the process in its distinct phases and the result of the selection process.

3.- Merit and ability: applications will be assessed based on the principles of merit and ability. To this end, the best possible match between the candidate's profile and the profile of the position offered is sought through a combination of a detailed analysis of the CV and interviews, by means of which evidence is sought, proof of the candidate's competencies, as well as contrasting their previous professional experience.

4. Professionalism, objectivity, and impartiality: all selection processes have selection panels composed of members who will act in accordance with the principles set out in the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, respecting the principle of impartiality, and ensuring equal treatment without discrimination of any kind in the exercise of their duties.

Appointment phase

Depending on the professional category, the selected candidates will be announced in different media (i.e. BOE, DOGC).

The definitive scores obtained by each candidate in the evaluation and appointment process will also be made public on the website. The Research Support Service will publish candidates' overall scores within three days of having received them from the corresponding evaluation or selection committee.

The UAB offers all of its employees working conditions that are in line with national legislation in Spain, including full Social Security coverage. It also provides research staff with the technical resources they require to conduct their teaching and research activities.

Furthermore, the UAB is fully committed to the principles established in the European Charter for Researchers, adopting measures to ensure staff members have a healthy work-life balance, sufficient holiday leave, and sufficient support in the event of temporary disability.

Complaints mechanism

The UAB has a robust and transparent complaints procedure in place for applicants who believe they have been treated unfairly or inappropriately. Additionally, if they feel that their complaint has not been appropriately managed through the standard channels, they can submit a complaint to the Rector, in accordance with Law 39/2015 of 1 October on the Common Administrative Procedure in Public Administrations.

The UAB Ombudsman provides all members of the community with confidential, independent, and impartial advice, including on complaints procedures.

This OTM-R Policy, based on the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, shall govern UAB research staff selection and recruitment processes.