



Università di Foggia



The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) 2021-2023

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1. Introduction

The "HR Strategy for Researchers" (HRS4R) aims to promote full implementation of the **European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers** (hereinafter "C&C").

The Charter and Code, adopted by the European Commission in March 2005, have the macro-objective of improving the competitiveness of European research on the international scene through a slow and progressive process of cultural change and exchange of views among all the stakeholders. All of this is accomplished through the achievement of micro-objectives that result in the implementation of and compliance with 40 general principles aimed at **fostering the best management strategies for research staff and making research careers more attractive**, with a view to establishing a dynamic and more inclusive European Research Area (ERA).

Specifically, the C&C sets out the **general principles** that specify the **role, responsibilities, and rights of researchers** (as defined by the OECD) **at all stages of their careers** and the **employer and/or research funders**, as well as the rules and procedures that should be complied with by employers and/or funders when they appoint or hire researchers. The 40 principles contained in the C&C can be summarized as follows:

- freedom of **scientific research**
- respect for **ethical principles**
- **professional and financial accountability**
- commitment to **disseminating and exploiting research** results
- commitment to **continuing professional development**
- **recognition of the profession** of all researchers
- **prohibition** of all forms of discrimination

The organizations that wish to be awarded the "HR Excellence in Research" award can voluntarily endorse the C&C principles by drawing up a statement of intent. Then they are required to conduct an audit of their in-house compliance with these principles and to plan for any corrective measures.

The process provided for by the European Commission to obtain the HR public recognition consists of five steps:

1. Internal analysis (IA) by the applicant organization, carried out by asking researchers to fill out a questionnaire aimed at identifying the level of compliance with the 40 C&C principles of the policies and practices of the organization in question.
2. **action plan** (Human Resources Strategy - HRS4R) developed based on the results of the IA and including detailed, tangible actions to ensure or promote compliance of its internal policies and practices with C&C principles.
3. approval by the **European Commission** of the IA and HRS4R. A positive opinion, if any, entitles the applicant institution to be included among the "HR Excellence in Research" certified organizations and to use the relevant label to gain visibility as an organization that promotes a research-friendly work environment with a positive atmosphere where people feel valued and respected.

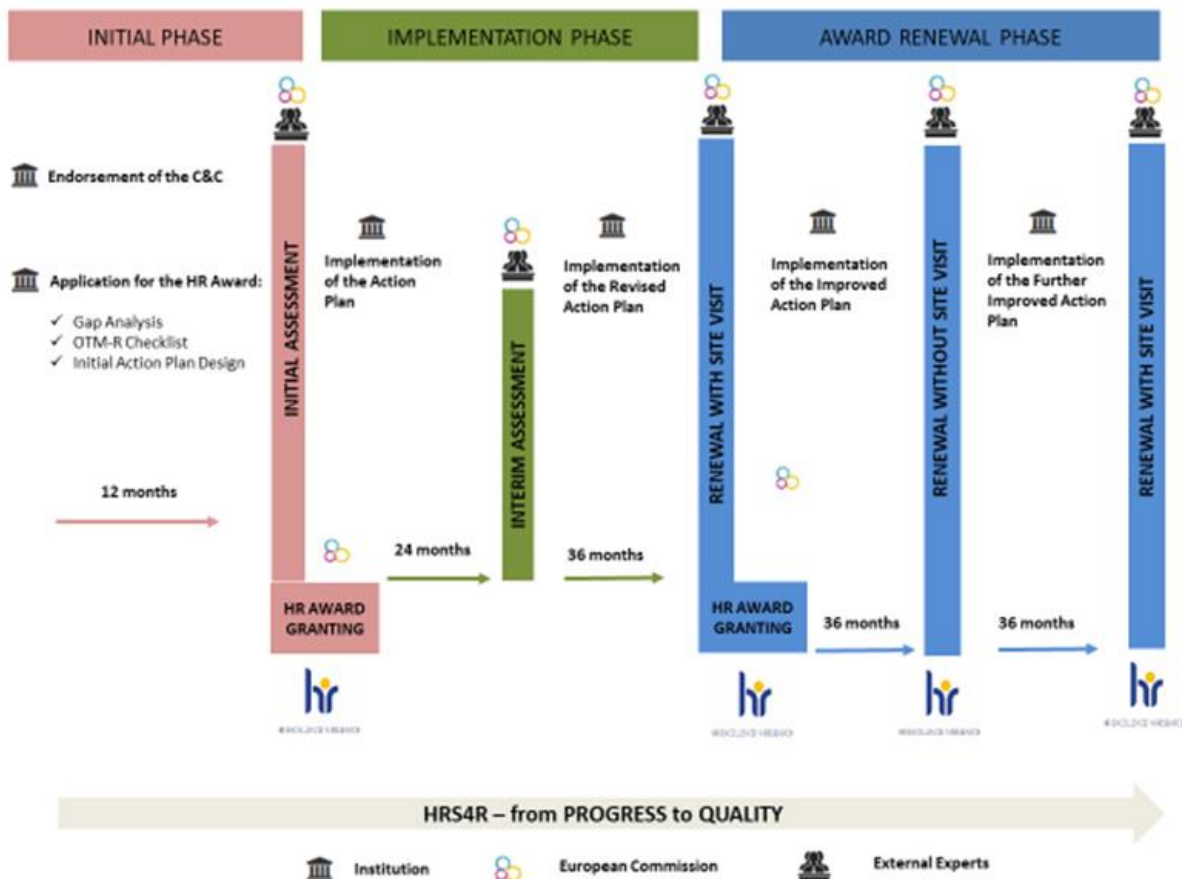


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4. **internal self-assessment review** every two years from the first approval to check the status of implementation of the action plan and update it so that it can continue to make use of the "HR Excellence in Research" label
5. **external review** every four years.

The steps for obtaining HR recognition and its periodic renewal have been reformulated by providing for, already at the *Application stage*, the submission of the Researcher Recruitment Policy (OTM_R), together with *Gap analysis* and *Initial Action Plan Design*. In addition, after the first internal review that must take place within 2 years of recognition, an external evaluation by the European Commission is provided for every 3 years about the progress of the implementation of the Action Plan, the progress made in achieving the goals set in the Action Plan, and those actually achieved. All of this is aimed at obtaining renewal of the "HR Excellence in Research" award. The evaluation process by the European Commission takes place by alternate on-site inspections and remote evaluations every 3 years (Fig. 1).



Fonte: Euraxess (<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/node/5765/#hrs4r-tabs-tab-3-name>)

2. The steps towards HR recognition



On November 17, 2008, our University signed, together with seven other Italian Universities (Camerino, Padova, Palermo, Udine, Urbino, Verona and the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna based in Pisa) the "Declaration of Commitment to the Implementation of a Human Resources Strategy Inspired by the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers,". The Declaration was then signed individually by each University and submitted to the EC on June 18, 2009.



On March 10, 2010, in recognition of the University of Foggia's commitment to promoting human resource management policies consistent with C&C principles, the University of Foggia received from the European Commission the "Excellence in Research" award.



In August 2012, the European Commission approved the two-year self-assessment review, thus authorizing the University to continue making use of the "HR Excellence in Research" label.



In July 2014, the University of Foggia received the inspection of the inspectors of the European Commissioners to be granted the renewal of the HR award, which took place in January 2015. In July 2014, the University of Foggia received the inspection of the inspectors of the European Commissioners to be granted the renewal of the HR award, which took place in January 2015.



In November 2017, the Academic Senate approved the new HRS4R Strategy, supplemented and drawn up in line with the recommendations of the Commission and an enhanced HR procedure (which came into effect on January 1, 2017), which



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also incorporates the principles of open, transparent and merit-based recruitment of researchers (OTM-R).



In May 2018, the Academic Senate approved the revised HR Strategy in line with the recommendations of the European Commission and with the results of the 2015-2017 three-year internal review process, and in May 2019 the University of Foggia underwent another on-site inspection by the European Commission and was granted the renewal of the HR award, which took place in October 2019.



In June 2021, the AS and BoD approved the final monitoring of the HRS4R Strategy 2018-2020, which also includes the OTM-R.

3. The HRS4R of UNIFG

The Human Resource Management Strategy for UniFg Researchers is part of a broader University approach aimed at a major repositioning of the University research efforts in the national and international research landscape in line with new national (MIUR Law 140/2010) and European guidelines. Therefore, it accounts for a plan of action within a broader University strategy that takes place through the i) promotion of the professional development of researchers throughout their careers, the ii) recognition of the value of geographic and interdisciplinary mobility as a strategic asset for strengthening scientific knowledge and enhancing the professional development of researchers, and for motivating both researchers and the institutions/companies that employ them and/or make available research grants to pursue the objectives laid down in the C&C. The University of Foggia conducts an annual assessment of the results of its Strategy and implements a new action plan as part of its long-term strategy. In addition to the annual Strategy, a specific three-year action plan is also implemented, as proposed by the European Commission.



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Importantly, it is worth mentioning that UniFg was the first university in Italy and the second in Europe to receive the *HR* award, having started its certification process in March 2010 with the endorsement of the C&C principles. Immediate recognition by the European Commission as an **"Institute of Excellence in Human Resource Management in Research"** allowed UniFg to make immediate use of the HR label.

The most significant milestones are listed above in the initial section "0. Summary" of this report. From this brief overview a very encouraging element does emerge, which highlights that UniFg has had the capacity to obtain two goals: the first university in Italy to obtain HR certification, and also the first to be confirmed as an HR certified university.

6. 4. The process that led to the development of the HRS4R 2021-2023

The process of development of the new HRS4R 2021-2023 of UNIFG is the result of a multi-stage work and has involved the entire academic community: a participatory, inclusive and constructive process whereby everyone consciously and all in unison, could offer their contribution within their own fields and competence.

This process - coordinated by the HR Board and the University strategy HR Unit - provided for several phases and involved all key stakeholders: researchers, Rector's Delegates, the Administrative Areas that were directly involved in the actions planned, the Rector, the Director General, the Academic Senate and the Board of Directors. For efficient participation, each group followed a procedure adapted to their specific features. The stages of this procedure were as follows:

- April 15, 2021, the webinar "The Charter & Code and HRS4R in the new ERA" was organized for the entire academic community with the participation of Olivier Fontaine and Michele Rosa-Clot from DG Research & Innovation of the European Commission as speakers. The webinar - which was a great success with 177 attendees including Italian and foreign researchers, administrative staff, Rector's Delegates, Director General and Rector - aimed to explain to the Academic Community, especially to newly recruited researchers and administrative staff, the contents of the C&C and the process of revision of these tools within the new European Research Area. At the end of the webinar, an open-ended questionnaire was administered to all participants in order to collect ideas, proposals, best practices tested by other universities, suggestions on new actions to be included in drawing up the HRS4R 2021-2023;

- In June 2021, the monitoring process of the HRS4R (including the OTM-R) of UniFg covering the period 2018-2020 was concluded. The monitoring, process which was approved by the HR Board at its meeting on June 8, 2021 and by the Academic Senate and BoD at their meetings on June 16 and June 30, 2021, respectively, made it possible to confirm the effectiveness of HRS4R 2018-2020 as it showed that most research efforts had been conducted regularly although some indicators were not fully satisfactory compared to previous years mainly due to the Covid-19



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pandemic. Furthermore, it emerged that it was impossible to monitor some of the OTM-R actions for which non-computable indicators had been adopted, in addition to the need to modify or eliminate some actions. The analysis of the results obtained from the monitoring process helped in better targeting the HRS4R 2021-2023 by keeping, alongside new actions, those that had been planned in the previous strategy, which are still underway;

- One of the main observations made during the last visit of the European inspectors (2019) was that the HR strategy should be integrated as much as possible into the University strategy plan. For this reason, most of the new actions can be traced back to objectives provided for in the University Strategic Plan 20-22, some of which have already been achieved, but nevertheless included to enhance the goals of the HR strategy. Most of the other actions, on the other hand, have been provided for by the HR Board, with the HR Unit in many cases directly supervising their implementation;

- The draft of the HRS4R (and the relevant OTM-R) was emailed to all the Heads of the Scientific and Academic Areas involved in the actions provided for who were asked, each according to their respective field of competence, to provide added value by suggesting additional actions or modifying existing ones and/or relevant indicators;

- The HRS4R was then brought to the attention of the Rector, the Director General and all Rector's Delegates.

Now, in consideration of this, it is possible to break down the strategic actions contained in the HRS4R 2021-2023 into three macro-categories:

1. actions planned in the previous HRS4R 2018-2020 and still in progress
2. newly established actions already initiated/in progress;
3. newly established actions not yet started.

The Tables attached hereto show the actions planned under the HRS4R 2021-2023. Table A shows the action plan; Table B shows the OTM-R ().

The C&C PRINCIPLES are in red in Table A. For each of them, the first column specifies, in sequential order, the action number; the second column indicates the TYPE OF ACTION; the third the EXPECTED DATE OF ACTION IMPLEMENTATION in the three-year period 2021-2023; the fourth the AREAS INVOLVED; the fifth the INDICATOR that will be used to assess the results



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achieved and the effectiveness of the action planned; the sixth and last column indicates the TYPE&PHASE of the action (actions planned in the previous HRS4R 2018-2020 and still in progress; newly established actions already started/and in progress; newly established actions not yet started). The sixth column also includes additional information on the origin of the action.

Table B (OTM-R) shows: in the first column, in sequential order, the NUMBER OF THE ACTION; in the second column indicates the ACTIONS planned; the third column gives the DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION; in the fourth column the AREAS INVOLVED are reported; whereas the fifth column contains the INDICATORS, many of them suggested by the EC within the OTM-R template. Finally, the sixth and last column reports THE PHASE OF IMPLEMENTATION of the action (completed or in progress).