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CoARA Action Plan

University of Foggia

2027-2029

The Action Plan has been approved by the the University Reasearch Committee on 25/11/2026 and by the Research Quality Committe (Presidio di Qualità) on …

Introduction, research strategy and commitments

The University of Foggia (UNIFG) is a public, multidisciplinary, research University, in Apulia, Italy. As a public Institution, given its geographic location, UNIFG fulfills its societal responsibility through teaching, research and valorization/exploitation of research results, with a comprehensive multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach offering complete education and research training on STEM, Biomedical, Economics, Agricultural, Engineering, Law and Humanities fields.

Characterized by the transdisciplinary nature of 7 research Departments, UNIFG is committed to support research through strengthening international collaborations, researchers' mobility, attractivity and retention of the talented scholars, as well as participation in European research networks, forefront of institutional commitment to pursue ERA policy, as witnessed by the strategic plan of the Institution and the award in 2010 of the HR Excellence in Research label by the European Commission for the implementation of the European Charter for Researchers principles.

Furthermore, assessment of research quality and impact as well as researchers' performance and recruitment are at the core of UNIFG strategic policy framework.

With this belief, in 2026 UNIFG joined the initiative "Coalition for Advancing Research Evaluation (CoARA)" and signed the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment (ARRA) . UNIFG agrees on the need to reform research assessment practices, specifically considering research quality, ethics, accountability, fairness and impact. Research assessment should consider both appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators via peer review for all disciplines.

Based on that, UNIFG plans its own strategies to recruit and reward best researchers, to support early researchers in the development of their research career, and to offer a vibrant research environment counteracting discrimination.

The present Action Plan translates the ARRA commitments into proportionate, feasible changes to assessment practices within the University's institutional remit, over the period 2027-2029. It complements, but does not duplicate, the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) and institutional Open Science initiatives.

Identify key challenges to address

The early career and the openness of research results have been identified as two domains in which the University intends to follow through on CoARA commitments.

ACTION PLAN WITH DEFINED TIMELINE AND INDICATORS

The University of Foggia, in its effort to fulfil the commitments outlined by the Agreement, has developed the following Action Plan to be implemented within the timeline established in the ARRA. The UNIFG CoARA Working Group (formed within the University Reasearch Committe) will be in charge of: (i) gathering input from the departments; (ii) elaborating a second, more detailed version of the Action Plan; (iii) overseeing the implementation of the Action Plan itself; and (iv) raising awareness on the reform within the academic community.

ARRA COMMITMENTS	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	INDICATOR	OFFICES
Recognize the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research	1) UniFg will plan workshops and seminars tailored for researchers' training needs, according to seniority level and experience, as well as their continuity and refinement on the basis of audience participation and feedback.	To be started in 2027	At least 1 University workshop At least 1 seminar per Department 1 newsletter	University Research Area/Departments
	2) The University will provide research funding only on the condition that output data are opened and shared in FAIR repositories. Potential restrictions or embargoes on data access due to personal data protection, confidentiality, or patent protection requirements, while maintaining data management in accordance with the FAIR principles, should be considered.	2027-2029	Y/N	University Research Area
	3) UniFG will organize training courses for all researchers (R1-R4) on research integrity, intellectual property rights, ethics, professional attitude, and data management to increase awareness over professional responsibility.	2028	At least 1 training course	University Research Area/HR Strategy Unit

	4) Pilot a concise narrative CV in at least one internal funding procedure, allowing applicants to explain selected outputs, their specific roles and relevant career circumstances	2028	Y/N	University Research Area
Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators	1) UniFg will define a standard procedure for evaluating and monitoring the progress of research outcomes for recognised researchers (R2). 2) UniFg will elaborate guidelines for researchers on how to manage and store research data, in compliance with the GDPR, FAIR principles, responsible research and innovation principles, and societal engagement. 3) Revise the assessment framework for a pilot internal research funding call (e.g. PRA), combining expert peer review, explicit qualitative criteria and proportionate contextual indicators	2027-2029 2028 2028	Y/N Y/N Y/N	University Research Area PQA University Research Area
Abandon inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication- based metrics, in particular inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index	1) The development of guidelines for the responsible use of bibliometric indicators, to be piloted in the internal call already outlined under Commitment 2. These guidelines could explicitly	2027-2028	Y/N	University Research Area

	stipulate that the Impact Factor and h-index are not to be used as proxies for assessing the quality of individual outputs, prioritizing peer reviewers' qualitative judgment while accounting for disciplinary specificities. 2) An initial pilot project that will involve three UniFG Departments, on a voluntary basis, testing the mentorship programme by formally assigning a senior researcher or expert to R2 and/or R3 researchers depending on Department priorities. The mentors will provide career guidance by designing a personalized career development plan (PCDP), which should include training needs, research progress monitoring, mobility phases.	2027-2028	Y/N	Departments
Avoid the use of rankings of research organizations in research assessment	1) Adopt a formal commitment not to use rankings of research organizations (e.g. QS, THE, ARWU) as criteria or indicators in the assessment of researchers, candidates, research units and research proposals, and review internal	2027	Institutional Adhesion to the "More Than Our Rank" Initiative and adoption of responsible narrative reporting	University Research Area /General Director

	regulations and planning documents accordingly.			
Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organizational changes committed to	1) Provide administrative support to researchers in drafting the data management plans requested by European projects.	2027	Y/N	University Research Area/Internalization Area
	2) Increase the budget assigned to the Quality, Library Services with additional resources to support Open Access (OA) publications.	2027	Y/N	University Library System
	3) If not already included in the position's funding, provide a starting grant to R3 researchers.	2027	Y/N	UniFG Governance
	4) Award for "Impact in Research" measures for earlystage career researchers (R1 and R2).	From 2025 (to be implemented)	Y/N	HR Strategy Unit/Research Area
	5) Post-Doc Award for young researchers that produced high quality publications. Publications assessed on quality, thus consistent with COARA principles	2027-2029	Y/N	HR Strategy Unit/Research Area
	6) PhD Award for patentable thesis	2027-2029	Y/N	PhD Office/ HR Strategy Unit/Research Area

Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools and processes	1) Developing a standard procedure that applies to all doctoral programmes, which will focus on evaluating and monitoring the research progress of R1 researchers. 2) Update of the Code of Ethics and Conduct by including a commitment to prevent unconscious biases by members of selection committees, as requested by its Gender Equality Plan. Upon members' acceptance of the appointment within the selection committees, make them declare that they have read the Code of Ethics and Conduct and the articles of reference. 3) The University plans to make available to hiring and promotion commissions the videoguides that will be produced by the CoARA WG on gender bias (WG "TIER-Towards an Inclusive Evaluation of Research").	2027 2027 2027	Y/N Y/N Y/N Y/N	PhD Office Unique Guarantee Committee (CUG) Personell Area

Raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use	1) Training activities organized by a UniFg multidisciplinary team for the Faculty staff with managerial positions to develop management, organizational and mentoring skills. Participation in these activities should be mandatory for Faculty members in relevant management positions (e.g., department Heads, PhD coordinators, and supervisors) to ensure good supervision quality.	2027	At least 1 traning course	Faculty Development
	2) UniFg will organize initiatives (seminars, workshops) on the thematic of results dissemination and exploitation, and on public engagement to enhance the awareness of researchers also on the ARRA principles.	2027	A least 1 seminar	Research Area/Third Mission Area
	3) Strengthen synergy between administrative and academic staff in relation to new university policies and strategies on research (continuous update) by organizing regular information seminars held by administrative staff in favor of PhD students, postdocs, researchers to increase an awareness about the different	2027-2029	At least 1 seminar/year (e.g., APRE)	Research Area/Administrative Offices

	research approaches and methods, as well as the main outcomes expected by national and international authorities			
Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition	1) UniFg will organize initiatives (seminars, work-shops) on the thematic of results dissemination and exploitation, and on public engagement to enhance the awareness of researchers. 2) Appointment of the Open Science Committee in charge of the development and adoption of an academic open science policy. 3) Organization of “research days” for early career stage researcher. Organization of “research days” for post doc including PhD. "Departmental and interdepartmental 'research days' for researchers. "Interdepartmental'research days' for postdocs and PhDs.	2028 2028-2029 2027-2029	At leat 1 seminar Y/N At leat 1 “research day”/year for early stage researchers. At least 1 departmental “reasearch day” /year At least 1 interdepartmental “reasearch day”/year	University Reasearch Committe/Research Area University Research Committe/University Library System Research Area/Departments
Communicate progress made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments	1) Implement the University CoARA web site with contents to emphasize good practice in research. 2) The changes to the Regulations for the allocation of research funds will be made public on the University website and shared via	2027 2028-2029	Y/N Y/N	University Research Committe/ Web applications unit Administrative Offices

	email with the entire academic community			
Evaluate practices, criteria and tools based on solid evidence and the state-of-the-art in research on research, and make data openly available for evidence gathering and research	Update of the OTM-R institutional policy and setting up a quality control system	2027-2029	Y/N	Research Area/HR Strategy Unit