

Basic Guide for the Recruitment of Research Staff (PI) and Teaching and Research Staff (PDI), ensuring conformity with the considerations of the HRS4R strategy

Vice-Rectorate for Research, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer

Agreement of the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors of 20/12/2023

	Drafted by	Revised by	Approved by
Name and surnames	Rut Martínez Laura Segarra	Cristina Monforte and Lucas Garcia (VOAP) / Esther Jiménez (VCU) / Conrado Aparicio and Òscar Carbó (VRIT)	Board of Governors
Position/Dept.	VRIT	VOAP / VCU / VRIT	
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INTRODUCTION.....	3
General framework.....	3
Occupational categories covered in this guide.....	3
FOUR-STAGE RESEARCH CAREER MODEL.....	4
R4-Leading Researcher	4
R3-Established Researcher	5
R2-Recognised Researcher	5
R1-First Stage Researcher.....	6
SELECTION PHASES	7
Phase 1: Publication and application.....	7
a) Publication	7
b) Request for documents	8
c) Acknowledgement of receipt and additional information	8
Phase 2: Evaluation and selection	8
a) Creation of selection committees	8
b) Evaluation and interviews	8
c) Assessing qualifications and future potential.....	8
Phase 3: Final phase	8
a) Notification of decisions and resolution on applicant selection	8
b) Claims	9
SELECTION COMMITTEE	10
EVALUATION OF APPLICANTS: QUALIFICATIONS AND TESTS.....	11
Relevant qualifications and skills.....	12
Selection tests.....	12
EVALUATION OF THE SELECTION PROCESS	13
OTHER GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS	13
DIAGRAM	14

INTRODUCTION

In October 2016, the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya signed the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers with a view to promoting the recruitment of researchers and aligning it with its commitment to the European Commission's initiative.

This Basic Recruitment Guide has been created to enhance the quality of the teaching and research activities and establish a framework for ethical and legal practice within which to work.

General framework

The selection process comprises a series of steps that guide the recruitment of both teaching and research staff (PDI) and research staff (PI) at UIC Barcelona. The process begins with the identification of the need to recruit staff to cover a vacancy and ends with the selection of a suitable applicant. The procedure is a nexus between job seekers and the institution.

The objective of the process is to ensure the selection of the individuals best suited to the tasks assigned to the occupational category and/or specialisation, in accordance with the principles of equality, merit and ability. Efforts will also be made to ensure that the procedure is open, public and transparent and that it meets the requirements of the relevant call or funding programme, as well as all applicable labour regulations and recommendations.

The **general principles** on which this guide is based are:

- a) To recruit talent based on specific, published evaluation criteria that must allow for the selection of the best applicant.
- b) To guarantee transparency throughout the process, ensuring equal opportunities and access for everyone.
- c) To meet the standards of quality of the European Union's EURAXESS Human Resource Strategy for Research's "HR Excellence in Research" accreditation and logo and ensure that the recruitment process complies with the European document *Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment*¹ (OTM-R).

Occupational categories covered in this guide

UIC Barcelona staff are divided into research and teaching staff (PDI), research staff (PI) and administration and service staff (PAS). Staff members are assigned to different categories based on the function and content of their work.

A) TEACHING AND RESEARCH STAFF (PDI)

At UIC Barcelona, PDI are divided into three categories: functional, organic and trainee. As indicated in the Internal Regulations for Teaching Staff (Art. 18, paragraph 7), PDI shall be recruited *in accordance with the standards of quality of the HRS4R certification and logo*.

¹ <https://www.uic.es/en/research/politica-cientifica/hr-excellence-research-uic-barcelona/open-transparent-recruitment>

B) RESEARCH STAFF (PI)

Members of the research staff collective include “professionals involved in the conception or creation of new knowledge, products, processes, methods and systems, and in the management of the relevant projects”. Such staff may be recruited: (1) with public funds, in which case recruitment will involve a public competition, as occurs with staff recruited with funds from the Beatriu de Pinós, Juan de la Cierva or Ramón Cajal programmes; (2) or private funds from companies or foundations; (3) or funds from either competitive or non-competitive research projects. This recruitment guide applies in cases (2) and (3).

In the case of both teaching and research staff (PDI) and research staff (PI), the categories outlined in this document are based on the four-stage scientific research career model defined by the European Commission. The four stages of this model are:

R1: First Stage Researcher (up to the point of PhD),

R2: Recognised Researcher (PhD holders or equivalent who are not yet fully independent),

R3: Established Researcher (researchers who have developed a level of independence),

R4: Leading Researcher (researchers leading their research area or field).

FOUR-STAGE RESEARCH CAREER MODEL

R4-Leading Researcher

A researcher and PhD holder who, given their experience and scientific expertise, is capable of leading and coordinating a research group focused on multiple lines. They coordinate a group of people and report directly to the vice-rector for Research, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer at UIC Barcelona.

Necessary competences:

- Has an international reputation based on research excellence in their field.
- Demonstrates critical judgement in the identification and execution of research activities.
- Makes a substantial contribution to their research field or in multiple areas.
- Develops a strategic vision on the future of the research field.
- Recognises the broader implications and applications of their research.
- Publishes and presents influential papers and books, serves on workshop and conference organising committees and delivers invited talks.
- Has all the competences of an established researcher.

Desirable competences:

- Is an expert at managing and leading research projects.
- Is skilled at managing and developing others.
- Has a proven record in securing research resources.
- Beyond team building and collaboration, is focused on long-term team planning (e.g. career paths for the researchers and securing funding for team positions).

- Is an excellent communicator and networker within and outside the research community (creating networks).
- Is able to create an innovative and creative environment for research.
- Acts as a professional development role model for others.

R3-Established Researcher

A researcher and PhD holder who, given their experience and scientific expertise, participates in the lines of research of a group and/or research projects and, on occasion, assumes the tasks of principal investigator. They report directly to the leading researcher or, in the absence thereof, to the vice-rector for Research, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer at UIC Barcelona.

Necessary competences:

- Has an established reputation based on research excellence in their area of expertise.
- Makes a positive contribution to the development of knowledge, research and development through co-operations and collaborations.
- Identifies research problems and opportunities within their area of expertise.
- Identifies appropriate research methodologies and approaches.
- Conducts research with a certain degree of independence and serves as principal investigator for competitive projects.
- Can take the lead in executing collaborative research projects in cooperation with colleagues and project partners.
- Publishes original papers as lead author and, most importantly, as corresponding author, and organises workshops or conference sessions.
- Has all the competences of a recognised researcher.

Desirable competences:

- Establishes collaborative relationships with relevant industry research or development groups.
- Communicates their research effectively to the research community and wider society.
- Is innovative in their approach to research.
- Can form research consortia and secure research resources from research councils or industry.
- Is committed to the professional development of their own career and acts as mentor for other researchers, supervising doctoral theses.

R2-Recognised Researcher

Recognised researchers may be divided into two sub-categories based on the level of independence with which they conduct research:

- Senior recognised researcher (R2a): A researcher and PhD holder who performs research tasks as part of a research group, under the orders of the leading researcher and/or established researcher, and who is beginning to act as principal investigator or co-investigator in research projects.

- Junior recognised researcher (R2b): A researcher and PhD holder who performs research tasks in the initial stage of their career within a research group, under the orders of the leading, established or senior recognised researcher.

Necessary competences:

- Has demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the research skills and methods associated with that field.
- Has demonstrated the ability to conceive, design or create, implement and adapt a substantial programme of research.
- Has made a contribution through original research to the creation of knowledge by developing a body of work, innovation or application that could merit publication or patent.
- Demonstrates critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas.
- Can communicate the outcomes and impact of their research to the academic and research community.
- Co-authors papers at workshops and conferences.
- Has all the competences of a first stage researcher.

Desirable competences:

- Understands the value of their research work in the context of their sector.
- Can communicate with the wider community, and with society generally, about their areas of expertise.
- Can be expected to promote, within professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancements in a knowledge based society.
- Can mentor first stage researchers, helping them to be more effective and successful in their R&D trajectory.

R1-First Stage Researcher

A university degree or undergraduate degree holder who has earned a master's degree or equivalent qualification and is qualified to complete their doctoral thesis as part of a research group under the orders of a thesis supervisor.

Necessary competences:

- Is capable of carrying out research (doctoral thesis) under supervision.
- Has the ambition to develop knowledge of research methodologies and discipline.
- Has demonstrated a good understanding of a field of study.
- Has demonstrated the ability to produce data under supervision.
- Is capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas.
- Can communicate the outcomes and impact of their research to the academic and research community.

Desirable competences:

- Integrates the language and content of the discipline.
- Has communication skills.
- Is capable of thriving in an international context.
- Has knowledge of different languages, particularly English.

SELECTION PHASES

This guide establishes the chronological order of the various steps in the recruitment process. They have been ordered in accordance with the principles of the Code of Conduct for recruitment and are divided into 3 phases: (1) publication and application, (2) evaluation and selection and (3) completion. Phases (1) and (3) apply to all categories of PDI and PI. Phase (2) applies to all organic staff recruitment processes and, where there are sufficient resources, to the recruitment of staff from all other PDI and PI categories.

Phase 1: Publication and application

a) Publication

The job advertisement and description of the requirements should be written as concisely as possible and include links to more detailed information. Applicants should be able to find information on:

- The organisation and recruiting unit
- Job title, specifications and start date
- Researcher career profiles (R1-R4) with the respective “required” and “desirable” competences
- Selection criteria and their respective weight, including knowledge and professional experience (distinguishing what is “required” from what is “desirable”)
- Number of available positions
- Working conditions, workplace, entitlements (salary (where applicable), other benefits, etc.), type of contract
- Opportunities for professional development

It should also include:

- The application procedure and resolution deadline, which should, as a general rule, be at least two months from the date of and take holiday periods into account
- A reference to the institution’s OTM-R policy
- A reference to the institution’s equal opportunities policy (e.g. positive discrimination, dual careers, work-life balance, etc.)²
- Contact details

All vacancies must be published on Euraxess (this means that the advertisement must be published in at least the national language and English).

The offer will be public, and applications will be accepted during a period of at least one month when recruiting organic PI and PDI, and periods adapted to the specific needs of the relevant academic units in the case of functional and trainee PDI.

² Vice-Rectorate for the University Community Equality Unit. UIC Barcelona. 3rd UIC Barcelona Equal Opportunity Plan (2022-2026). https://www.uic.es/sites/default/files/2022-04/CAT_III_Pla_d_igualtat_UIC_Barcelona_web.pdf

b) Request for documents

With a view to keeping red tape to a minimum, only those documents that are strictly necessary shall be requested. Where documents are required by law, applicants must be able to make a statement undertaking to submit such documents upon completion of the selection process.

The electronic transmission of documents is highly advisable.

c) Acknowledgement of receipt and additional information

All applicants must receive an e-mail acknowledging receipt and providing information on the next steps and an approximate timetable.

Phase 2: Evaluation and selection

a) Creation of selection committees

A selection committee must be established for each researcher profile (R1 to R4). The process of appointing this committee will also be transparent and public.

The committees must be independent, and efforts will be made to ensure that the composition of the committees is diverse and representative of the area of knowledge corresponding to the researcher profile being recruited (3 members, gender balance, etc.). *[See next section]*

b) Evaluation and interviews

To ensure that all applicants have equal footing in the application process, all applications must be examined and the interviews shall have the same format, either on-site or online, for all applicants.

Efforts will be made to ensure that the same selection committee members take part in all evaluation phases.

c) Assessing qualifications and future potential

Each applicant's CV must be assessed to identify not only their qualifications but also their potential to grow as researchers and bring merit to UIC Barcelona in the future, particularly in the case of R1 researchers.

The assessment criteria must be compatible with the requirements of the position.

Phase 3: Final phase

a) Notification of decisions and resolution on applicant selection

All applicants must receive notification, preferably via e-mail, indicating whether or not they will move on to the next phase of the selection process. Applicants who reach the final selection phase but are ultimately not selected for the position must also be informed.

The selected applicant will be informed of their selection as soon as possible. The period between the publication of the job advertisement and the final decision must be as indicated in the OTM-R, according to which it should be, as a general rule, at least two months.

b) Claims

A procedure for facilitating, receiving, assessing and responding to the applicants' claims must be established.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

The composition of the Selection Committee must be appropriate to the professional profile of the advertised position. It is also important to keep in mind that the Committee must have between 3 and 5 members, in addition to: (1) a balanced composition in terms of gender, (2) and, whenever possible, external experts, (3) international experts and (4), where applicable, non-academic experts.

The Faculty Board will be responsible for appointing the committees, under the supervision of the VRIT and/or VOAP and with subsequent approval from the relevant vice-rectorate or vice-rectorates, depending on the type of contract.

As a guideline, the Selection Committee may be made up of at least the following staff members:

PROFILE	SELECTION COMMITTEE	
	PI	PDI
Leading Researcher (R4)*	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Director, Dean or head of area (1) 2. External scientific expert (1) 3. VRIT 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Director, Dean or head of area (1) 2. External expert (2)
Established Researcher (R3)*	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Director, dean or head of area (1) 2. External scientific expert (1) 3. VRIT 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Director, Dean or head of area (1) 2. External expert (2)
Senior Recognised Researcher (R2a)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assistant Director or Vice-Dean (1) 2. Scientific expert, preferably external (1) 3. Principal investigator (1) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member of the Board of the Faculty, Department or Institute (1) 2. Researcher, preferably (1) 3. Other PDI** (1)
Junior Recognised Researcher (R2b)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scientific expert, preferably external (2) 2. Principal investigator (1) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member of the Board of the Faculty, Department or Institute (1) 2. Researcher (1) 3. Other PDI** (1)
First Stage Researcher (R1)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. External scientific expert (2) 2. Principal investigator (1) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member of the Board of the Faculty, Department or Institute (1) 2. PDI from the Faculty (1) 3. 4. Principal investigator (1)

*For R4 and R3 positions, in the event the Dean is of a lower category, another member of the teaching staff from their academic unit/department (Faculty, Department or Institute) may be delegated.

** We recommend that they be an external scientific expert

The VRIT will substitute the Selection Committee in the case of researchers recruited through competitive processes based on objective criteria, such as, for instance, Joan Oró-FI AGAUR, Predoc UIC, Postdoc UIC, FPI, etc. These criteria shall be drafted by the VRIT and validated by the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors.

EVALUATION OF APPLICANTS: QUALIFICATIONS AND TESTS

All applicants who are eligible for the position will be evaluated based on their qualifications, research potential and skills.

Firstly, the Selection Committee will evaluate the qualifications and skills presented in the applicant's curriculum vitae and supporting documents, followed by the selection interviews and/or other selection tests.

While the qualifications and skills must fulfil the criteria laid down in this document, they may vary depending on the position and will be specified in the job offer's description, along with the weight of the various selection criteria, where applicable.

The Selection Committee will perform an overall assessment of the qualifications and skills, in accordance with both quantitative and qualitative criteria, without regard for the chronological order of the qualifications presented or any exceptional situations that may alter the CV. These exceptional situations involve researchers:

- Who have been on maternity leave.
- Who have been responsible for caring for children under six.
- Who have been responsible for caring for people with a legally recognised physical, mental or sensory disability who are dependent on the beneficiary and require special attention.
- Who have suffered a serious illness or accident that requires major surgery or treatment in a hospital and results in them becoming temporarily unable to work or perform their normal activity for a continuous period of at least 6 months. This excludes cases of minor or outpatient surgery or rehabilitation treatment performed outside the hospital system.
- Who have experienced any of the situations provided for in Article 1 of Organic Law 1/2004, of 28 de December, on comprehensive protection measures against gender violence.
- Whose refugee status has been recognised under the Geneva Convention of 1951.

UIC Barcelona will be responsible for interpreting the requirements, competences and suitability of the applicants. In the event the Selection Committee considers none of the applicants eligible for the advertised position, the selection procedure may be suspended.

Relevant qualifications and skills

The Selection Committee may evaluate the following qualifications:

- **Academic qualifications:** Regard will be had for any academic qualifications relevant to the position.
- **Training and development:** Training in subjects directly related to the tasks of the position will be taken into account, based on duration, difficulty, programme and any marked assessments. Knowledge of English or any other language that is essential to the tasks assigned to the position will be taken into account.
- **Professional experience:** The applicant's professional background and research potential will be assessed on the basis of scientific publications, teaching experience, activities involving staff supervision, teamwork, participation in research and/or knowledge transfer projects, research and innovation management activities and scientific outreach. The quality of the work will be taken into account, not just the quantity or continuity.
- **Skills and abilities:** Regard will be had for the necessary and desirable professional competences associated with each of the occupational categories, as well as the applicant's suitability with regard to the mission, vision and values of the institution and their adaptability.
- **Mobility:** Regard will be had for the applicant's academic, educational, research and occupational experience at other prestigious international institutions, based on duration, destination, relevance to the position, marked assessments and letters of recommendation.
- **Potential:** A general assessment will be made based on the evaluation of the other qualifications described in this section and, particularly in the case of R1 and R2b researchers, regard will be had for their perceived ability regarding the motivation and skills required to continue with a research career.

The Selection Committee will produce, taking into account the job profile and the qualifications and skills presented by the applicants up to that point, a list of applicants who will be called for an interview or selection test.

Selection tests

The selection tests may include:

- A selection interview and/or public competition, with a view to confirming or more accurately assessing the applicants' qualifications.
- Additional selection tests, including professional aptitude tests or questionnaires and/or other practical tests or exercises that help gauge the applicants' qualifications and abilities. These may include, for instance, professional tests (exams, practical exercises, etc.), psychometric tests (aptitude/efficiency or personality) or group dynamics.

EVALUATION OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

The Vice-Rectorate for Research, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer (VRIT) and/or the Vice-Rectorate for Academic Organisation and Teaching Staff (VOAP) and/or the academic units recruiting the PDI and PI will regularly assess the selection processes, including, where applicable, the selection competitions, in accordance with the standards of the HRS4R Code and Charter and OTM-R, with the option of suggesting improvements and amendments to this guide.

OTHER GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Recruitment processes of this kind are highly reliant on context, the area of expertise associated with the advertised position, the relevant requirements and even the nature of the applicants available at the time. As a result, for all cases that are not provided for in this internal procedure, the department in question shall reach an agreement with the VRIT (in the case of PI) or VOAP (in the case of PDI) as to the best way to proceed.

DIAGRAM

