

Human Resources Strategy for Research

Open, transparent and merit-based recruitment policy for researchers and academic staff

Open Transparent Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R)

INTRODUCTION

Agrocampus Ouest, has adopted a strategic approach to ensure research excellence through improving HR policy with the application for the HR Excellence in Research award.

Based on the guiding principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers, this European award aims to enhance the appeal of academic careers, to promote mobility, and to ensure equal opportunity.

The HRS4R approach also requires an *open, transparent and merit-based recruitment* policy for researchers and academic staff, also known as the OMT-R Policy.

High-quality recruitment procedures and long-term career guidance are essential for researchers and academic staff. This priority is reflected in the core values of Agrocampus Ouest and is manifested by the institution's application for the HRS4R award.

As a public institution for teaching and research, Agrocampus Ouest is subject to French regulations. The principle of equal access to public employment for all is clearly set out in article 6 of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen and reiterated in the Constitution dated 4 October 1958. This principle generates many others: equal access to public service entrance exams, gender equality, and the principle of equality of all candidates for competitive exams.

The various stages of the recruitment process for researchers and academic staff – from recruitment to appointment – are set out in national regulations and in the institution's own regulations and commitments in line with the principles of openness, transparency and selection by merit.

Self-evaluation of researcher recruitment processes by the academic community will result in an action plan for the continuous improvement of practices and procedures.

Agrocampus Ouest's OTM-R Policy

The range of academic and research positions at Agrocampus Ouest is varied and includes permanent and contractor positions: fixed-term contracts for researchers, permanent post-doctoral contracts, and fixed-term and permanent contracts for research engineers.

The Agrocampus Ouest OTM-R policy aims to meet the objectives for each of the phases of academic recruitment listed below, distinguishing between recruitment of contractors and permanent staff.

Recruiting contractors

Contractor profiles are developed and detailed in job descriptions by heads of recruitment departments in the Human Resources division.

In accordance with French regulations, contracts for researchers are for the duration of a project and up to three years, renewable if the project is not completed, and subject to budget availability. Selection committees for research recruitment report to heads of research unit .

A specific procedure exists for contractors recruited for vacant public service academic positions, with the creation of an ad hoc committee. This committee includes heads of Research Unit and the training department and/or management representatives and experts in the discipline.

The recruitment of PhD students is delegated to Doctoral Schools ("Ecoles Doctorales" en French) which process enrolment by institution and issue diplomas.

Recruitment of visiting professors (high-level foreign academic staff) proposed by research units requires approval by the Board in restricted sessions.

These procedures and recruitment committees ensure compliance with regulations, analysis of employability, and employment conditions in line with the guidelines set by senior management and the HR division.

Recruitment of permanent staff

The recruitment process for permanent academic staff:

1. Definition of the job profile
2. Advertising vacancies and applications
3. Selection and recruitment
4. Appointment
5. Evaluation

Each phase contributes to ensuring Open, Transparent and Merit-based recruitment.

1. Definition of the job profile

This phase is OPEN, TRANSPARENT and MERIT-BASED when :

Profiles are defined by a group of stakeholders and experts. Reflection takes place within the institution to assess needs using several tools:

Establishing recruitment needs:

- The need is expressed during consultation between the department and/or the Research Unit and the Human Resources division.

For teaching posts, the group considers:

- Mapping disciplines taught as part of an overall teaching programme,
- Number of hours required in the teaching programme,
- Identification of the potential of academic staff by department and overtime.

For research positions:

- Originality of the research profile associated with the scientific objectives of the unit, differentiating elements in a local, national and international context,
- Organisation with training engineers and PhD students,
- Exchanges and decisions with the executive committee. Job profiles are presented and approved by the pertinent bodies.

HRS4R improvement point :

- Prepare a recruitment guide featuring guidelines (OTM-R policy) and procedures for the entire recruitment process: posting vacancies (including a standard job description in English and French), candidate selection for all types of positions, etc. (Action 7);
- Assist recruiters with establishing OTM-R procedures (Action 8).

2. Advertising vacancies and applications

This phase is OPEN, TRANSPARENT and MERIT-BASED when :

Only documents required by regulations are requested from candidates to alleviate the administrative burden.

Vacancies are posted on the PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PLATFORM which lists the documents required.

The vacancy is also posted on the official Agrocampus Ouest website. Candidates are informed of the selection schedule which is published on the website.

Applications are digital. Candidates can find the documents and forms required for application on the website (or the ministry website for public service positions).

HRS4R improvement point:

- Extend reach of international recruitment by posting more vacancies on Euraxess (Action 12);
- Develop the use of English in HR documents (Action 13).

3. Selection and recruitment

This phase is OPEN, TRANSPARENT and MERIT-BASED when :

- The composition of the selection committee respects gender equality and includes independent experts. The committee's composition is published on the institution's website prior to the selection process.
- A specific reminder is made about observing impartiality.
- The OTM-R policy is presented to the chairs of selection committees who ensure its application during the recruitment process.

Selection committees rank applications according to criteria that establish a hierarchy based on merit.

HRS4R improvement point :

- Ensure ongoing training of selection committees (Action 14)

4. Appointment and integration

This phase is OPEN, TRANSPARENT and MERIT-BASED when :

Agrocampus Ovest informs all candidates of recruitment results. A report on competitive exams is made available to participants in the last phase of recruitment. Means of recourse are always featured in official documents.

Researchers and academic staff are appointed by the institution with this authority at the ministerial or local level. Recruited academic staff are informed that they have one year to request reclassification, which takes into account services prior to this appointment.

Researchers and academic staff are awarded tenure in the public service after a one-year internship. Tenure is awarded based on a tenure report approved by a special committee.

HRS4R improvement point:

- Establish a scheme by which new academics are tutored by experienced academic staff (Action 18).
- Organise an induction day.
- Reduce teaching workloads for new academic staff.
- Put in place a mentoring process to support PhD students in obtaining accreditation to supervise research (Action 20).

5. Evaluation

This phase is OPEN, TRANSPARENT and MERIT-BASED when :

- Candidates can express themselves anonymously in a satisfaction questionnaire. Development of the questionnaire is part of the action plan.
- Ranked candidates can request consultation of their candidature reports prepared by the selection committee and/or the restricted session of the board.

HRS4R improvement point

- Establish indicators for monitoring applications, particularly for the number of tenure refusals.