

Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Policy (OTM-R)

HUMAN RESOURCES
STRATEGY FOR
RESEARCHERS

HRS4R

1. Introduction

The Barcelonaβeta Brain Research Center (BBRC) is the research center of the Pasqual Maragall Foundation. Since its creation in 2012, it has been committed to research into the prevention of Alzheimer's disease and the study of cognitive functions affected in healthy and pathological aging. The aim of the center is to contribute to the forefront of research on Alzheimer's and neurodegenerative diseases through the unique impact on prevention and treatment, always taking into consideration the social aspects of the disease.

The BBRC is committed to excellence in research, innovation, and talent development. An essential part of achieving these goals is the recruitment and retention of highly qualified, motivated, and diverse staff. This Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) Policy ensures that all recruitment and selection processes at BBRC are guided by fairness, quality, equal opportunity, and are aligned with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment.

The Policy defines the procedures, standards, and responsibilities governing the recruitment process, from workforce planning and job advertisement to candidate assessment and appointment. It also incorporates equality, diversity, and inclusion principles, ensuring that all candidates are treated fairly, transparently, and evaluated exclusively on the basis of their merits, competencies, and potential.

2. Principles

- **Openness:** All job opportunities are publicly advertised to attract the widest pool of candidates, ensuring equal access.
- **Transparency:** Recruitment procedures, selection criteria, and outcomes are clearly defined and communicated.
- **Merit-Based Evaluation:** Candidates are assessed based on relevant experience, skills, and competencies related to the role.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** All recruitment activities promote gender balance, inclusivity, and non-discrimination.
- **Confidentiality:** Personal data and evaluation results are treated with strict confidentiality and in compliance with GDPR regulations.

- Proportionality: Recruitment procedures are adapted to the level and nature of the position, ensuring efficiency without compromising fairness.

3. Scope and Responsibilities

This policy applies to all recruitment and selection processes at the Barcelonaβeta Brain Research Center (BBRC). All individuals involved in recruitment and selection activities are expected to comply with this Policy to ensure that their actions are fully aligned with BBRC's principles, values, and established procedures.

The People Area oversees the implementation of this Policy and provides guidance to Hiring Managers and Selection Committees. Group Leaders, Area Directors, and Core Facility Managers are responsible for initiating recruitment processes, ensuring fair and transparent evaluation, and complying with the provisions of this Policy.

4. Recruitment Process

4.1 Identifying the Need

Recruitment begins with the identification of a staffing need, based on strategic priorities, scientific goals, and available funding. All new positions must be justified, approved by Management, and aligned with BBRC's Strategic Plan and Equality objectives. An annual recruitment plan is recommended to anticipate needs, improve efficiency, and ensure alignment with institutional strategy.

4.2 Job Descriptions and Advertising

All positions must have an up-to-date job description clearly defining the purpose of the role, key duties and responsibilities, required qualifications, and evaluation criteria.

Job advertisements must include, at a minimum: the job title, contract type, duration, working hours, required and desirable qualifications, and clear instructions on how to apply.

Vacancies are published in English and Catalan or Spanish on the BBRC website, as well as on external platforms such as Biocat, LinkedIn, and EURAXESS, for a minimum period of 15 calendar days. Where appropriate, positions may also be advertised through specialised job portals and professional networks (e.g. Nature Careers, Spanish Society of Neurology (SEN), ALZ Forum) to ensure broad and targeted dissemination.

4.3 Selection Committees

Each recruitment process shall be conducted by a Selection Committee composed of at least three members, including the Hiring Manager, one representative from the People Area, and at least one additional expert, who may be internal or external to BBRC.

Selection Committees must strive to ensure gender balance, with a minimum of 33% representation of each gender whenever feasible, and all members are required to declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest. Committee members must respect confidentiality throughout the process and act in accordance with the BBRC Code of Conduct.

The composition of Selection Committees may vary depending on the type and level of the position (e.g. faculty or senior research positions). Candidates will be informed of the composition of the Selection Committee in a transparent manner.

4.4 Selection and Evaluation

Applications will be assessed according to pre-defined and published criteria. Evaluation will consider academic achievements, professional experience, skills, motivation, and potential for growth. A structured scoring matrix will be used to ensure consistency and fairness. Interviews will assess both technical expertise and alignment with BBRC's values of collaboration, integrity, and excellence.

4.5 Decision and Communication

The Selection Committee will make a decision based on consensus. People Area will issue written offers and communicate outcomes to all applicants. Feedback will be available upon request. Recruitment documentation, including evaluation forms and final reports, will be retained for 2 years.

4.6 Compliance with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct

In line with the **European Charter for Researchers and its Code of Conduct for their Recruitment**, BBRC ensures that:

- Recruitment procedures are open, efficient, transparent, supportive, and internationally comparable, adapted to the type and seniority of each position.

- Job advertisements include a broad description of knowledge and competencies, the working conditions, benefits, and career development opportunities, and remain open for a realistic application period.
- Selection Committees bring together diverse expertise, with adequate gender balance and, whenever feasible, representation from different disciplines, sectors, and nationalities. Members are briefed on equality and bias-free evaluation.
- Merit is judged holistically, combining scientific excellence with creativity, independence, mentoring, collaboration, and contributions to Open Science, teaching, innovation, and public engagement. Bibliometric indicators are considered within this broader context.
- Career breaks and non-linear career paths are not penalised and are recognised as a legitimate and valuable component of diverse professional development trajectories.
- Mobility experiences—across countries, sectors, or disciplines—are recognised as enriching to a researcher’s profile.
- Qualifications, including non-formal and international credentials, are appropriately recognised in line with EU and Spanish standards.
- The suitability of candidates is evaluated in relation to the requirements of the position; achievements are valued over institutional prestige.
- Postdoctoral appointments are defined as transitional roles (normally up to five years) aimed at fostering research independence and supporting career development.

The application of these principles is reviewed every-three years by the HRS4R Monitoring Committee to ensure continuous compliance with the Charter & Code.

6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

BBRC is committed to providing a fair, inclusive, and respectful working environment where all individuals can develop their professional careers free from discrimination. Recruitment processes must actively promote equality, diversity and internationalisation using inclusive language and avoiding any gender or cultural bias.

These principles are embedded within the [BBRC Equality Plan \(2023–2026\)](#), which aims to promote talent and professional growth by ensuring gender equality and international diversity across all aspects of the organisation — including recruitment, training, development, work–life balance, occupational health, communication, and remuneration.

In line with this commitment, HR will monitor the gender and nationality distribution distribution of applicants and hires at every stage of the recruitment process and will report these indicators annually as part of both the **Equality Plan** and the **HRS4R monitoring process**. Preventive and corrective measures will be implemented whenever imbalances or potential sources of discrimination are identified.

7. Integrity and Conflict of Interest

The institution ensures integrity, impartiality and transparency in all recruitment processes.

All individuals participating in recruitment (including Hiring Managers, Selection Committee members and external evaluators) must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest prior to the evaluation stage.

A conflict of interest may arise in cases involving:

- Family members or partners
- Close personal relationships
- Current or recent collaboration (e.g. co-authorship, joint projects, supervision)
- Hierarchical dependency or any situation that may compromise objectivity

If a potential conflict is identified:

- The individual must immediately inform the People Department.
- People Dept. will assess the situation and determine appropriate measures (e.g. recusal from evaluation, replacement of panel member, limitation of access to documentation).
- The decision will be documented to ensure traceability.

Failure to declare a conflict of interest may result in exclusion from the selection process.

The People Department oversees compliance with these principles to safeguard fairness and equal treatment of candidates.

8. Documentation and Transparency

HR ensures that all stages of the recruitment process are documented. Advertisements, evaluation reports, and decision forms are stored securely and may be reviewed during internal audits or external evaluations. Recruitment statistics will be included in BBRC's annual HRS4R Progress Report.

All recruitment records are retained for a minimum of 2 years and accessible for internal or external audit upon justified request.

9. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

People and the HRS4R Monitoring Committee review recruitment indicators annually. Key indicators include: number of open calls, gender balance, time-to-hire, international participation, and feedback received. Lessons learned will inform process improvements and policy updates. This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Approved in Barcelona, on 8th of October 2024