



EHU Open,Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment policy

(EHU-OTM-R)

University of the Basque Country (EHU)

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1. Introduction

The University of the Basque Country (EHU) is committed to attracting, selecting and retaining the best research talent through open, transparent, merit-based, inclusive and internationally competitive recruitment procedures.

This Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Policy (OTM-R) sets out the principles, rules and institutional responsibilities governing the recruitment of researchers at the EHU.

The policy is fully aligned with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers, the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R), whilst supporting the strategic objectives set out in the EHU's Strategic Plan 2026–2028.

Through this policy, the EHU aims to ensure excellence in recruitment, equal opportunities, diversity, international openness and the fair assessment of research talent at all stages of the research career (R1–R4).

2. Scope of application

This policy applies to all recruitment processes for research staff at the EHU, including:

- Pre-doctoral staff (R1)
- Postdoctoral staff (R2)
- Established researchers (R3)
- Senior professors and researchers (R4)

It applies to recruitment processes relating to projects and public calls for applications funded by the University's own public resources and those of other institutions.

3. General principles

The recruitment of research staff at the EHU is governed by a comprehensive regulatory framework comprising institutional regulations, the EHU Statutes and the applicable regional, national and European principles.

Recruitment procedures are based primarily on the Regulations on the Recruitment of Temporary Teaching and Research Staff (Resolution of 2 May 2011, amended on 18 January 2019), together with the provisions set out in Organic Law 2/2023 on the University System (LOSU), Law 14/2011 on Science, Technology and Innovation, as amended by Law 17/2022, and the legislation of the Basque University System.

In line with the European Charter for Researchers, the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and the HRS4R framework, EHU is committed to ensuring that all recruitment processes are open, transparent, merit-based, equitable and internationally competitive.

OTM-R policy will be overseen by the OTM-R Implementation Working Group, whose role will be the specialised implementation of recruitment-related measures. Its responsibilities are:

- To review and improve recruitment procedures
- To ensure compliance with OTM-R principles
- To promote transparency and fairness in hiring
- To develop guidelines and tools for recruitment
- To monitor the implementation of OTM-R measures

This group, comprising staff from various areas of the university's management and governance, will meet every six months to: analyse trends in the various indicators; monitor the processes carried out and propose improvements for future calls for applications; review the surveys collected following the evaluation and selection processes; and examine other reports or data relating to the objectives of the OTM-R policy. The driving group will spearhead the activities of this group to ensure the effective implementation of the policy.

An analysis of the EHU's strategic plan 2026-2028 reveals that its goal is to optimize hiring policies so that they are guided by the following principles.

3.1 Transparency

- Open publication of requirements, criteria, and phases.
- Information is accessible throughout the process.
- Publication of the policy on the institutional website [HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH - Vicerrectorado de Investigación - EHU](#)

Strategic Plan 2026-2028 alignment: transparency is reinforced through governance actions ensuring access to public information and accountability (Key area, Action 1.4: transparency and access to institutional information; Action 1.1: improvement of communication channels).

3.2 Openness

EHU promotes broad dissemination of research vacancies at national and international level to maximise competition and attract talented candidates from diverse geographical, disciplinary and professional backgrounds.

All research vacancies covered by OTM-R will be published on EURAXESS unless prohibited by specific legal provisions.

EHU actively promotes international recruitment and researcher mobility in accordance with its Strategic Plan and HRS4R commitments.

Strategic Plan 2026-2028 alignment: strengthening international recruitment and mobility (Axis 2, Action 1.1–1.2: attraction of international researchers; Axis 6, Action 2.2: mobility and internationalisation). Support to international onboarding processes (Axis 1, Action 3.1).

3.3 Merit and competence

- Evaluation based on competitive calls for proposals.
- Evaluation based on objective criteria.
- Assessment of scientific excellence and other competencies.
- Each call for applications will publish the criteria and weightings
- standardised assessment forms will be used

Strategic Plan 2026-2028 alignment: development of improved research evaluation models combining quantitative and qualitative criteria (Axis 2, Action 2.2). Consolidation of excellence in research and career development frameworks (Axis 2, Action 1.1–1.2).

3.4 Equal opportunity

- Elimination of any discrimination based on gender, age, origin, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.

Strategic Plan 2026-2028 alignment: quality, inclusion and diversity policies (Axis 5, Action 3.5: diversity recognition; Action 1.4: review of procedures affecting equality and care responsibilities).

3.5 Recognition of diverse career paths

- Consideration of career breaks (maternity/paternity leave, illness, etc.).
- Evaluation of non-linear career paths.

Strategic Plan 2026-2028 alignment: Measures linked to work-life balance and career conditions (Axis 5, Action 1.4: reconciliation and permits; Action 1.1: improving employment conditions).

3.6 Qualitative evaluation

- Comprehensive evaluation of the candidate's profile.
- Not relying exclusively on bibliometric metrics.

EHU has been a CoARA signatory since 8 January 2023, committing to reform research assessment through fairer, more qualitative and responsible practices.

Strategic Plan 2026-2028 alignment: Explicit commitment to responsible research assessment (Axis 2, Action 2.2: qualitative and diverse evaluation criteria).

3.7. Posting job openings

Minimum content

- Job Title
- Required Profile
- Requirements and Qualifications
- Employment Conditions
- Application Process
- Deadlines

Distribution channels

Research vacancies shall be advertised through institutional channels and, whenever legally and operationally feasible, through EURAXESS.

On the EHU website, job openings are posted and categorized by position type in the sections [Convocatorias - Gestión de la Investigación - EHU](#); [Convocatorias - Vicegerencia de Personal Docente e Investigador - EHU](#).

Language

Vacancy announcements shall be published in a manner that guarantees maximum accessibility and visibility.

Information will normally be available in Basque and Spanish and, whenever appropriate for international recruitment purposes, in English.

The language used shall ensure that potential applicants can understand the requirements, evaluation criteria, employment conditions and application procedures clearly and transparently.

3.8. Selection committees

Composition

- Gender balance. Both genders are represented at least 40%.
- Diversity of profiles
- International representation (when possible)

Requirements

- Experience in scientific evaluation
- Training will be provided for committee members—training in OTM-R and unconscious biases

Impartiality, confidentiality and conflict of interest

Members of selection committees shall:

- Act independently and impartially.
- Maintain strict confidentiality regarding applications and deliberations.
- Declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.
- Refrain from participating in the evaluation of candidates where conflicts of interest exist.

EHU will ensure that recruitment decisions are based exclusively on published criteria and objective assessment of merit and suitability.

3.9. Selection process

EHU is committed to ensuring that recruitment and selection procedures are conducted in accordance with the principles of openness, transparency, merit, equal opportunities and non-discrimination. Recruitment procedures are structured to provide clear information to candidates, objective evaluation criteria and timely communication throughout the process.

Recruitment and application procedure

Research vacancies are initiated through a formal recruitment request process coordinated between the Vice-Rectorate for Research and the Vice-Rectorate for Teaching and Research Staff.

The recruitment process is:

I. Submission of recruitment requests

- Recruitment documentation is submitted to the Vice-Rectorate for Research by the 17th day of each month.
- The Vice-Rectorate for Research forwards the documentation to the Vice-Rectorate for Teaching and Research Staff by the 18th day of each month.

II. Publication of vacancies

- Calls for applications are approved by Resolution of the Rector.
- Vacancies are normally published during the first week of the month following submission of the recruitment request.
- All vacancies are published through the institutional recruitment portal: [Convocatorias - Vicegerencia de Personal Docente e Investigador - EHU.](#)

Whenever legally and operationally feasible, they will also be published through EURAXESS.

III. Application period

- Applicants may submit their applications via the channels specified in the call for applications.
- The deadline for submitting applications is usually between 8 and 10 working days from the date of publication.
- Applications must include all the supporting documentation required, as set out in the call for applications.

IV. Admission and eligibility review

- A provisional list of admitted and excluded candidates is published after the application deadline.
- Candidates are granted a three-day period to submit corrections, supporting documentation or appeals regarding their admission status.
- Following the review of submissions, a final list of admitted and excluded candidates is published on the same website.

V. Evaluation phase

- Applications are assessed by a Selection Committee established for each vacancy.
- Candidates are evaluated according to the eligibility requirements and assessment criteria published in the call.
- The Evaluation Committee prepares a reasoned assessment report and submits it to the Vice-Rectorate for Teaching and Research Staff.

The assessment may consider, among other elements:

- Research achievements and scientific excellence
- Quality and impact of scientific outputs
- Teaching and supervision experience
- Knowledge transfer and societal impact
- Participation in competitive research projects
- International experience and mobility
- Leadership and management capacities
- Open Science practices

- Transversal and transferable skills

In accordance with the principles of Responsible Research Assessment, qualitative aspects of the candidate's profile shall be considered alongside quantitative indicators. The evaluation process shall also take into consideration:

- Career interruptions, including maternity, paternity, parental leave, long-term illness or other justified circumstances
- Diverse and non-linear career paths
- Interdisciplinary and intersectoral experience

VI. Selection and appointment

- A list of shortlisted proposals is drawn up on the basis of the Evaluation Committee's report.
- The outcome of the selection process is published on the institution's website and the successful candidate is officially notified.
- The employment contract is normally formalised within three working days of notification.

VII. Evaluation of applications

Selection decisions will be based solely on the published eligibility and assessment criteria.

The decision-making process will ensure:

- Documentation and traceability of all stages of the procedure
- An objective and impartial assessment
- Reasoned and evidence-based decisions
- The ranking of candidates, where applicable
- Justification of the final recruitment proposal
- Compliance with confidentiality and data protection requirements

VIII. Communication with candidates

The University of the Basque Country (EHU) is committed to providing candidates with a transparent, respectful and positive experience throughout the entire selection process.

Candidates will receive:

- Confirmation of receipt of their application
- Information on the progress and status of the procedure

- Notification of the final outcome of the selection process
- Information on the available appeal and complaint procedures.

Wherever possible, candidates may request feedback on the outcome of their application and on the assessment of their merits and skills.

IX. Hiring and onboarding

The University of the Basque Country (EHU) is committed to ensuring transparency and openness in the terms and conditions of employment offered to successful candidates.

Prior to their appointment, candidates will receive information on:

- Terms and conditions of employment
- Duration of the contract
- Salary and applicable benefits
- Working environment and institutional support services

Following recruitment, newly appointed researchers will receive support through institutional induction and welcome procedures designed to facilitate their integration into the university community, the research environment and the available support services. Particular attention will be paid to the integration of international researchers, in line with the objectives set out in the EHU Strategic Plan 2026–2028.

X. Complaints and appeals

Candidates who consider that a recruitment procedure has not been conducted in accordance with the published rules, evaluation criteria or applicable regulations may submit a complaint or appeal through the procedures established in the corresponding call for applications.

- Candidates will be informed of the complaints and appeals procedures available in the vacancy notice and in communications regarding the outcome of the selection process.
- Complaints or appeals must be lodged within the time limits set out in the relevant vacancy notice.
- The complaint or appeal will be examined by the relevant university body, in accordance with the applicable regulations.
- Where appropriate, the case may be examined by a body or committee independent of the original assessment process, in order to ensure impartiality.
- Candidates will be informed of the outcome of the review and, where applicable, of any other available administrative or judicial avenues of appeal.

3.10. Roles and Responsibilities

- Definition of needs and profiles: initially, the IP, and then, office of the Vice Rectorate for Research
- Strategic oversight: office of the Vice Dean for Faculty, Staff, and Researchers
- Administrative management of the process: office of the Vice Dean for Faculty, Staff, and Researchers
- Objective evaluation of applications

3.11. Training

The EHU will organise regular training sessions for all staff involved in selection and assessment procedures.

The training sessions may include:

- Principles and practices of the OTM-R.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Awareness of unconscious bias.
- Responsible research assessment.
- Ethical recruitment practices.
- Management of conflicts of interest.

Participation in these sessions will help to improve the quality and consistency of the recruitment processes.

4. Integration with HRS4R

Compliance with the Charter and the Code is a key objective of the EHU's procurement framework and is explicitly reinforced in the 2026–2028 Strategic Plan. Specifically, the Plan highlights the commitment to renewing HRS4R certification and to the continuous improvement of the quality of recruitment, aligning institutional practices with European standards (Axis 2, Action 1.2: improving the quality of recruitment, including the renewal of HRS4R certification).

This strategic direction ensures that recruitment processes progressively align with the principles of open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, thereby strengthening the institution's overall quality and international competitiveness.

This policy therefore contributes to:

- Compliance with the Charter and the Code
- The continuous improvement of the recruitment system
- Preparation for external evaluations (Award for Excellence in Human Resources in Research)

5. Effective date and review

EHU (OTM-R Implementation Working Group) will monitor the implementation of this policy through a regular review of recruitment practices and indicators, including:

- Number and proportion of international candidates
- Success rates by gender
- Diversity indicators
- Time taken to recruit
- Number of vacancies advertised
- Number of vacancies advertised internationally
- Candidate satisfaction
- Participation of committee members in recruitment training

The results of the monitoring will be analysed and corrective actions will be defined to contribute to the continuous improvement of recruitment procedures and to support the institution's HRS4R reporting activities. This policy will come into force following its approval by the competent bodies of the EHU and will be reviewed at least every three years, or whenever significant regulatory changes occur.

6. Data Protection

Personal data collected during the selection process will be processed in accordance with applicable European and national data protection legislation.

Access to candidates' information will be restricted to those directly involved in the selection process and to authorised administrative staff.