Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) – Strategy and Action Plan 2023–2025

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Office of the Vice-Rector for Quality and Language Policy

Introduction

In December 2021, the Governing Council of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya - BarcelonaTech (UPC) approved its strategic plan for 2023–2025. The strategic plan is structured around seven major strategic objectives, which develop 15 lines of action related to five main blocks of the University's activity. It was drawn up on the basis of a proposal put forward by the Governing Council (elected in 2021) and went through a participatory process involving the university community of the UPC.

Following the launch of the new strategic plan, the Office of the Vice-Rector for Quality and Language Policy decided that the HRS4R strategy and action plan should be integrated and aligned with the UPC's strategic plan. In order to achieve this objective, the Office of the Vice-Rector for Quality and Language Policy assigned a new HRS4R manager with this mission.

With the aim of identifying actions that could improve the researcher experience, a strategic matrix was developed, with a column for each of the six stages of the employee journey (recruitment, selection, onboarding, development, recognition and exit) and a row for each objective set in relation to the following lines of action: staff policy, research, transfer, innovation and entrepreneurship, digital strategy, international policy, gender policy, and communication policy.

Based on the strategic matrix constructed (see Table 1), a proposal for actions to be carried out within the framework of the HRS4R was developed. These actions were proposed, evaluated and selected by the HRS4R Task Force (consisting of eight UPC units). Subsequently, the working group presented the proposal to the HRS4R Steering Committee (consisting of four vice-rectors and two area directors), which eventually gave its approval.

Two lists of actions are presented below. The first contains actions detailed in the 2019–2023 action plan, with a description of their current status. There are three possible statuses for the actions listed:
- The action is maintained because of the need to monitor the indicator over time or because the objective set has not yet been achieved.
- The action is removed because the objective has been achieved or no longer makes sense in the current situation.
- The action is replaced by others because it was too generic or did not fit the current situation in its existing format.

The second list contains new actions under the 2023–2025 action plan. Most of these actions appear in the UPC's strategic plan for 2023–2025, and some replace actions under the 2019–2023 action plan.

Actions under the 2019–2023 action plan

P01_01 - Survey the heads of research projects and a sample of our staff
Status: Replaced by specific action P02_11.
Description: It is proposed that this action be replaced and incorporated into the UPC's data collection policy so that it is not simply a one-off action independent of the University's operations.

P01_02 - Improve website content
Status: Replaced by specific actions P02_02 and P02_03.
Description: The seal page has been completely redesigned and now depends on the root page rather than a sub-service of the UPC. In addition, it is proposed that this action be evolved into two new ones that address more specific problems.

P01_03 - Publish vacancies on EURAXESS
Status: Removed because all research staff vacancies are now published on EURAXESS.

P01_04 - Code of good research practices
Status: Removed because the Ethics Committee has now published the UPC Code of Ethics and the Code of Research Integrity.

P01_05 - English version of employment contracts
Status: Removed because copies of employment contracts in English are now offered.

P01_06 - Improve gender policies
Status: Removed because the UPC Fourth Equality Plan 2022–2026 has now been published.

P01_07 - Welcome process: Welcome pack, and procedure
Status: Replaced by specific action P02_07.
Description: This action was intended to bring all new staff together in one place, but the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that the UPC is a university spread over many different (and widely separated) locations has led us to reconsider the advisability of making face-to-face sessions compulsory. The action has therefore been replaced by one where the initial goal will be pursued in an online format.

P01_08 - Information on cross-disciplinary training for researchers
Status: Replaced by specific action P02_08, and P02_12.
Description: It is proposed that this action be replaced with another that encompasses all the training courses that the UPC currently offers, rather than pursuing it as a separate action that is independent of existing training courses.

P01_09 - Open science: Open access and open data – public commitment
Status: The action is maintained, but the indicators are updated.

- **Description:** The UPC is committed to promoting open science as stated in the UPC Strategic Plan 2022–2025, and in accordance with the guidelines defined by Crue Universidades Españolas and the European Unite! alliance, of which the University is a member. In terms of publications, the UPC has an institutional

[policy](#) and a [mandate](#) that links open-access publishing to evaluation of research activity. In addition, 216 articles were published with immediate open access in 2021 and 273 in 2022 as a result of transformative agreements the University has with various publishers. As regards management of research data, the UPC is promoting the development of data management plans (DMPs) and the publication of datasets in FAIR repositories.

- **Unit in charge:** Libraries, Publications and Archives Service
- **Indicator:** Number of articles published in open access under transformative agreements, number of data management plans developed, number of datasets published in FAIR repositories.
- **Sample:** Q4/2023, Q4/2024, Q4/2025

P01_10 - Develop and publish a guide to the evaluation process used in the recruitment process

Status: Replaced by specific actions P02_04 and P02_05.

Description: The guide to the evaluation process is not sufficient. It is therefore proposed that this action be replaced with two new, more specific ones.

P01_11 - Improve the career advice offered to ERS

Status: Replaced by specific actions P02_09 and P02_10.

Description: The UPC has already implemented an advisory service and a women's mentoring programme. It is therefore proposed to focus efforts on promoting these programmes and ensuring that they reach all staff.

Actions under the 2023–2025 action plan

Based on the UPC's strategic plan for 2023–2025, the following new actions are proposed:

P02_01 - Include in the University's OTM-R policy all contract types offered by the UPC that involve research duties.

- **Description:** The UPC offers a large number of contract types that include research duties. However, the information on each one (legislation, regulations and processes) is presented on the websites of various units within the UPC. For example, information on contracts for teaching and research staff can be found on the Personnel Service website, while information on contracts for research staff can be found on the Research, Development and Innovation website. The UPC's OTM-R policy currently includes the contract types used for teaching and research staff and for research staff. However, it does not include contract types linked to programmes such as FPU-UPC university teacher training. The aim is for the UPC's OTM-R policy to cover all contract types offered: for teaching and research staff, research staff, and grant-funded research staff. The OTM-R policy will be published in Catalan, Spanish and English.
- **Unit in charge:** Talent Recruitment Unit (with the collaboration of the HRS4R Task Force)
- **Indicator:** Publication of a new version of the HRS4R policy at the UPC
- **Timescale:** Q2/2024

P02_02 - Implement a single portal that provides access to information for all contract types offered by the UPC that include research duties.

- **Description:** The UPC offers a large number of contract types that include research duties. However, the information on each one (legislation, regulations and processes) is presented on the websites of various units within the UPC. For example, the description and procedures for recruitment of teaching and research staff can be found on the Personnel Service (competitions) website, while the description and procedures for the recruitment of research staff can be found on the Research, Development and Innovation website. The aim is to create a single portal where all contract types offered by the UPC that include research duties (classified in R1, R2, R3, and R4) are described, with a link to the exact place where detailed information can be found. The portal will be available in Catalan, Spanish and English.
- **Unit in charge:** Talent Recruitment Unit (with the collaboration of the HRS4R Task Force)
- **Indicator:** Publication and updating of the portal
- **Sample:** Q2/2024; Q4/2024; Q2/2025; Q4/2025

P02_03 - Implement a dynamic information portal that includes a description of possible academic career paths within and outside the UPC.

- **Description:** There is currently no single academic career path in universities. Moreover, the various existing career paths may intersect with each other. This complexity, combined with the range of different access requirements and recruitment procedures in place, can be confusing for many researchers. For this reason, it is proposed to create a portal that allows users to visualise the different

academic careers that a researcher can pursue starting from their current position. The goal is for any researcher to be able to visualise the options available to them both within and outside the UPC.

- **Unit in charge:** HRS4R Task Force
- **Indicator:** Publication and updating of the portal
- **Sample:** Q2/2025; Q4/2025

P02_04 - Produce a guide to the process, principles and criteria for the evaluation and selection of candidates for research positions.

- **Description:** Although members of committees responsible for evaluating and selecting candidates to fill research positions are familiar with the world of research, this does not mean that they have the knowledge and skills to manage this process. It is therefore proposed to produce a document with detailed guidance on the process, principles and criteria for the evaluation of candidates for research positions. The web document will only contain the general criteria, as the specific criteria for each position may differ and are published together with the call for applications.
- **Unit in charge:** Talent Recruitment Unit
- **Indicator:** Publication of the guide
- **Sample:** Q4/2024

P02_05 - Design and deliver a course on the process, principles and criteria for evaluating and selecting candidates for positions with research duties.

- **Description:** As a complement to Action P02_04, it is proposed to develop and hold a course to familiarise members of selection committees responsible for the evaluation and selection of candidates for research positions with the process, the principles that should govern it, and the general criteria to be applied.
- **Unit in charge:** Talent Recruitment Unit (with the collaboration of the HRS4R Task Force)
- **Indicator:** Delivery of the course
- **Sample:** Q2/2025

P02_06 - Organise and promote workshops on competitive and non-competitive RDI funding instruments.

- **Description:** There are a large number of funding calls for research projects at the regional, national and international level. Each call has its own specific requirements, procedures and criteria. It is difficult for any researcher to be familiar with all call types and their characteristics and with the various options for obtaining non-competitive RDI funding. It is therefore proposed to organise workshops to train, inform and address questions on the following topics: work programmes and calls; data management plans; plans for the dissemination, exploitation and communication of results; open science; legal aspects of competitive and non-competitive RDI funding; valorisation of RDI results; and entrepreneurship.
- **Unit in charge:** Research, Development and Innovation Support Service
- **Indicator:** Number of workshops held, number of attendees
- **Sample:** Ongoing, depending on national and international calls for proposals

P02_07 - Implement an onboarding process map on the staff intranet.

- **Description:** The UPC's staff intranet provides all the information that newly hired UPC staff need concerning services offered by the human resources department. Currently, UPC staff can find general information on working hours, evaluation and careers at the UPC, personal and academic leave, labour relations, the pay system, recruitment, and social security. They can also find information specific to them, such as their personal data, academic record, financial details, affiliation details, details of their position, evaluations and working hours. All this information is very useful, but it can be overwhelming for newcomers to the UPC. It is therefore proposed that a specific section be created to allow the various elements to be introduced over the course of the first year. In line with general practice, it is proposed that this process be divided into five stages: first day, first week, first month, first semester and first year. In each stage, new recruits will be able to easily find the information most relevant to them at that point.
- **Unit in charge:** Talent Recruitment Unit
- **Indicator:** Publication of the map of the onboarding process
- **Sample:** Q2/2025

P02_08 - Implement an information portal that includes all units offering training to UPC staff.

- **Description:** The UPC has a large number of units that offer training in research, teaching, management, knowledge transfer, etc., including the Institute of Education Sciences, the Libraries Service, the Language and Terminology Service, the Research and Innovation Support Service, and the Doctoral School. Within the framework of HRS4R activities, a website with this information was created (https://rdi.upc.edu/ca/el-centre/formacio-recerca). In order to further simplify the process of searching for training courses that the UPC offers through its units, it is proposed to create a portal with a link and description of the training courses that all these units offer for UPC staff.
- **Unit in charge:** HRS4R Task Force
- **Indicator:** Publication and updating of the portal
- **Sample:** Q2/2025

P02_09 - Promote the mentoring programme for women who wish to pursue an academic career.

- **Description:** The UPC has set up the M2m mentoring programme, coordinated by the Dones Politècniques club, which is aimed at students in the final stages of their studies and female graduates (with a maximum of four years' experience). The programme is intended to help participants in their personal, academic or professional development process. The aim of this action is to promote the programme so that more women can overcome the barriers and the glass ceiling that exist in the world of work.
- **Unit in charge:** UPC Alumni
- **Indicator:** Number of women who have applied to participate in the programme. Number of women who have participated in the programme.
- **Sample:** Q4/2023; Q4/2024; Q4/2025

P02_10 - Promote the career counselling service offered by UPC Alumni.

- **Description:** The UPC offers individual, personalised sessions to help define career goals, plan a job search, manage one's career, and/or facilitate academic and/or professional decision making. This action aims to promote this programme in order to help participants get a clearer idea of the career opportunities that may be open to them, either at the UPC or elsewhere.
- **Unit in charge:** UPC Alumni
- **Indicator:** Number of people who have received advice from UPC Alumni.
- **Sample:** Q4/2023; Q4/2024; Q4/2025

P02_11 - Evaluate the knowledge of teaching and research staff as regards processes related to HR management.

- **Description:** Via the Planning, Assessment and Quality Bureau, the UPC surveys different groups on a range of issues related to teaching, research and employability. Given the large number of different surveys conducted, it is essential that they are well planned. For example, the calendar for future surveys covers the next five years (https://www.upc.edu/qualitat/ca/enquestes-de-satisfaccio/calendari-denquestes). For this action, teaching and research staff are surveyed every three years. Three new categories of questions have been added to focus on how knowledgeable academic staff are about their legal and contractual obligations, selection and promotion processes, and access to career counselling.
- **Unit in charge:** Planning, Assessment and Quality Bureau
- **Indicator:** Number of survey respondents.
- **Sample:** Q1/2025

P02_12 - Improving the economic conditions for interdisciplinary training

- **Description:** The UPC allows people not accepted to an official degree to enrol for some subjects independently. However, the cost of this type of enrolment is high. This action aims to negotiate with the Social Council of the UPC a significant cost reduction for the whole UPC community.
- **Unit in charge:** HRS4R Task Force.
- **Indicator:** Proportional reduction of the cost of credit for the UPC community.
- **Sample:** Q3/2024

Table 1. HRS4R strategic matrix

UPC Strategic Plan		Employee experience					
Line of action	**Objective**	**Recruitment**	**Selection**	**Onboarding**	**Development**	**Recognition**	**Exit**
Policies for UPC staff	Implement a national and international strategy for attracting and retaining talent to meet staffing needs.	P02_01 P02_02	P02_01 P02_04 P02_05		P02_04		
	Define vertical/horizontal career development plans to ensure proper alignment of staff with the needs of the UPC.	P02_02		P02_07	P02_02 P02_03 P02_08 P02_10		
	Implement a training programme aimed at improving personal and professional competencies.			P02_07	P02_08 P02_10 P02_12		
	Promote measures to ensure equality in career access and development for female teaching, research, administrative and service staff.				P02_09		
	Streamline processes and tools to optimise time spent on value-adding tasks.		P02_04 P02_05				
Research	Increase scientific output, dissemination of results and industrial and intellectual property.					P01_09	
	Increase the percentage of female pre- and postdoctoral researchers.				P02_09		
	Increase the number of teaching and research staff involved in RDI.				P02_06		
	Promote open science.				P02_06	P01_09	
Transfer, innovation and entrepreneurship	Increase entrepreneurship training.		P02_06		P02_08 P02_12		
	Increase predoctoral industrial training.				P02_08 P02_12		
International policy	Strengthen international mobility for all groups.				P02_10		P02_09 P02_10
Gender policies	Promote a balanced presence of women and men at the different levels of participation, decision making and representation of the UPC.	P02_09			P02_09		
Communication policy	Promote active transparency according to level of responsibility.					P02_11	