



Ministry of Education
University POLITEHNICA of Bucharest

Open, Transparent, Merit-based Recruitment Policy (OTM-R)

The current document contains the University POLITEHNICA of Bucharest policy regarding the recruitment, selection, and appointment of the research staff being open, transparent, and merit-based.



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

2021

Open, Transparent, Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R) Policy

A. European context

In 2015, the EU member states decided to create an open labor market for researchers working in research-performing organizations across the European Research Area.

In this context, adopting an open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment and selection policy became a priority for the research-performing organizations, especially for the University POLITECHNICA of Bucharest (UPB) which in 2020 received European recognition regarding the efforts made for the incorporation of the principles stated in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct in Recruitment.¹

In April 2019 UPB committed to adhere to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct in Recruitment. In May the application was accepted by the European Commission and work began on the documents for the HR Award. In April 2020 all documents were submitted to the Commission.

Significant efforts have been made to elaborate the UPB's Human Resources Strategy for Researchers and to design an Action Plan for better coordination of actions and objectives' achievements. The internal audit performed to support the HRS4R Strategy design brought into the discussion also the need for an open, transparent and merit-based recruitment policy.

In recognition of all these efforts and actions implemented, the University POLITECHNICA of Bucharest received, on 7 September 2020, the award "*Human Resources Excellence in Research*".

The people are the core of everything that happens in the university. For this reason, it is important to attract people that are resonating with UPB's ambitions and who are expected to boost these ambitions. In this sense, UPB aims to develop an organizational culture oriented to supporting the best performances of research staff and students.²

The UPB OTM-R policy represents one of the components of the Action Plan assumed and the elaboration of this document is the result of wider consultations among all stakeholders: R1-R4 researchers, academic and auxiliary staff, administrative staff etc.

The current document was drafted starting from the guidelines offered by the European Commission through the OTM-R Package (launched in 2015³), taking into consideration all legal provisions existing in Romania, in tertiary education, and also the good practices at national and international levels.

¹ Award *HRS4R Excellence in Research* awarded at 07 Sept 2020

² UPB Strategy 2020-2024 (with RUCDI) https://upb.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Strategie-UPB_RUCDI.pdf

³ <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/content/open-transparent-and-merit-based-recruitment-researchers-otm-r>

The OTM-R policy reflects the UPB strategic vision on human resources development as is stated in the Institutional Development Strategy 2020-2024, chapter 4. People and Community⁴.

B. National context

In Romania, access to higher education positions is strictly regulated. The academic staff is mandatory to conduct research, and the career progression depends to a great extent on their research performances.

At the national level, clear rules and regulations exist regarding appointment to academic positions. The relevant legal provisions are:

- *The Act of Education no. 1/2011 alongside its later modifications, the last one in 2022;*
- Chapter II, section I The status of the teaching and research staff:
 - art 285 (1-4) regulates the academic positions and the equivalence between teaching and research positions;
 - art. 285 (5) establishes the conditions for inviting research/academic staff from abroad through visiting professorship programs;
 - art.286 all appointments must be made through competition
 - art.287 academic workload includes: teaching workload and research workload
- Chapter II , Section II Appointment regulations (Art. 293 to Art. 301):
 - art.295 – a Governmental Act establishes the framework methodology that regulates the competition for appointments as teaching and research staff in HE and research institutions
 - art.301 – The evaluation of the academic staff research performances is done once at 5 years maximum, based on an institutional methodology. The monthly salary is established according to the research performances of the academic staff.

The career progression is based on competition; a set of minimal criteria is established annually by the national authority for education, and research or anytime is considered necessary. Minimal standards to get appointed and to get an academic title (e.g., professor, associate professor etc.) are established by a national body – the National Council for the Attestation of University Titles, Diplomas, and Certificates (CNACTDU)⁵.

The current regulations are provided by the order of the Minister of Education and Research no. 6129/20.12.2016, which listed 35 commissions that elaborated specific evaluation criteria⁶ of the potential candidates for all existing research fields.

C. Institutional context

The UPB Development Strategy 2020-2024 reflects the management's vision for the present and the future of the university (providing answers to the question of *Where the university wants to be in the near and long future?*) taking into consideration the changes in the national and international academic environment such as the impact of

⁴ https://upb.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Strategie-UPB_RUCDI.pdf

⁵ <http://www.cnatdca.ro/>

⁶ <http://www.cnatdca.ro/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/OrdinMECTS4692.pdf>

digital society, changes of the governmental priorities regarding the education funding, etc.

The UPB Development Strategy 2020-2024 has been structured on two dimensions: strategic directions and areas of operations. The University activity is based on four values: **creativity, integrity, respect, and diversity**.

The UPB's mission is to achieve sustainable excellence in research and education in the field of engineering, applied sciences, business, and entrepreneurship with major societal impact and international visibility.

The UPB takes its role as an innovative university seriously, focusing on human capital formation, to not only make the best use of scientific knowledge but also to form powerful partnerships at a national and international level.

Tabel no. 1 The UPB's strategic vision

Operational areas	Orientation Directions			
	Excellence	Impact	Internationalization	Openness
Education and learning environment	- ensuring high-quality education through consolidating the culture of ambitious learning, characterized by content, challenges, and academic coverage	- preparing students to contribute directly to societal challenges solving	-increasing the international attractiveness of the study programs	- encouraging the use of Open Education Resources
Research	- increasing the UPB's success in external competitions, especially in the international competitions for excellent research through ensuring high-quality research performances	- connecting research in a systematic way to the societal challenges and increasing the visibility worldwide	-development and consolidation of long-term strategic partnerships in areas of interest shared with renowned universities worldwide	- facilitating the knowledge sharing through free access to UPB's publications and research data and developing a strong awareness among research and teaching staff on Open Science
Innovation	- creating a framework for stimulating innovation at UPB and faculties level to ensure support for commercialization of patents and building start-ups	- consolidation of the medium and long-term collaboration with the business environment and with the public sector for the valorization of the research results through the technological transfer	- consolidating the university's involvement in regional and European/ global networks, innovation hubs, and/or around research infrastructures at regionally/European	- promoting and facilitating the Open Innovation
People & Community	- updating the standards of high quality for research and academic staff, as well as for the auxiliary staff	- Stimulating students and staff to engage themselves in partnerships with public and private entities for co-creation activities and solutions delivering to the societal challenges	- promoting international recruitment of teaching and research staff, Romanian or foreigners with validated competencies, and increasing the international mobility of UPB staff	- supporting the role of diversity as a background for excellence and innovation
Campus, Services, and Institutional capacity	- increasing the institutional capacity or resources management; - developing services centered on the user, for all UPB users, aligned with the university's ambitions and easing the administrative burden ; - developing the operational systems which will allow better connectivity with a variety of users and members of UPB's community; - continuous improvement of services according to priorities	- developing a „business intelligence“ capability that improves the understanding and the context in which it operates and which is facilitating decision-making based on transparent and reliable information ; - preparation for future developments and risks that might occur in the field of higher education	- supporting and further developing an efficient organizational infrastructure that will allow management engagement for internationalization. The integration of internationalization in all UPB important activities is important	- supporting the implementation of Open Science and Open Education

The **strategic objectives** in the RESEARCH field, with a focus on the human resources, are the following:

1. **Strategic objective:** The continuous advancement and knowledge sharing to be achieved through the capacity of the research and teaching staff to combine

excellence in science and engineering to develop projects with significant technological and social benefits.

2. Strengthening the cooperation in research by encouraging teamwork where the team members has clear roles: supervisors, mentors, students, master students, PhD students and postdoctoral students.
3. The coordination and concentration of research centers' activities to achieve excellence.

Strategic objectives included in the area of **People and Community** are:

1. Encouraging and supporting the UPB students and staff to obtain the best outcomes. Social responsibility represents a strong component of the organizational culture. UPB will provide an attractive and diverse workplace in a sustainable community. The UPB is able to offer an attractive and diverse work environment in a sustainable community.

Development objectives:

- Updating the high-quality standards for UPB staff, the academic and research staff, as well as auxiliary staff.
- Offering a variety of career development paths for the academic staff will allow everyone to contribute in his/her own way to the achievement of UPB values and goals;
- Supporting the role of diversity as a background for excellence and innovation;
- Stimulating students and staff to engage with private and public partners in co-creative activities to deliver solutions to community concerns;
- Consolidating the social cohesion and interaction at the organizational level;
- Creating a more powerful engagement with the alumni and building a true “UPB community” based on common goals and interests
- Raising awareness of the UPB community as being a sustainable one.

Being aware of the fact that HR performance represents the key success factor in all actions implemented at the institutional level, the decision makers established **concrete measures** to stimulate the staff in achieving high performances, such as:

- Encouraging staff to attend continuous professional development (CPD) courses;
- Improving the methods/procedures used in the staff annual evaluation process;
- Supporting the recruitment process to become more transparent and merit-based to attract young talented researchers and teachers;
- Ensuring the conditions to support the career progress starting from the performances achieved in teaching and research.

Internationalization represents one of the four strategic directions alongside excellence, impact, and openness.

Therefore, the main measures foreseen are:

- **enlarging cooperation** at the international level through the development and consolidation of strategic long-term partnerships with renowned universities worldwide(eg. UPB is a member of EELISA alliance ;
- **active participation** in a series o academic and professional networks and alliances carefully selected such as **EELISA EUA**, **CESAER**, **T.I.M.E. Association** etc. but also

with other entities/associations materialized in collaborative projects/programs developed among members;

- **encouraging academic mobility** of young researchers and not only, benefiting from the best training conditions in the field of research;
- **supporting the visiting professorship programs**, open access to UPB's publications, and embracing Open Science principles to be able to foster research cooperation;
- **raising awareness about ethical issues** in all stages of the research cycle.

In conclusion, UPB has established ambitious strategic goals and human resources are at the core of everything, aiming to create an organizational culture based on excellence and a continuous increment of the performance in research and internationalization – cooperation/mobility.

D. Internal audit on OTM-R-related procedures already implemented

To obtain the *HR Excellence in Research* award, the UPB Steering Committee carefully reviewed the OTM-R Package and also the internal methodologies and procedures regarding the personnel policy but also the good practices in staff recruitment and selection available nationally and in partner countries.

A working group was created to proceed with an internal audit of all regulations in place for the recruitment, selection, and appointment of academic and research personnel.

The following regulations, methodologies and procedures have been identified:

- [Methodology for occupying the vacant academic and research positions](#) – periodically updated, whenever legal regulations or institutional interests requested;
- [Instructions regarding the academic & research staff situations](#)
- [Regulation regarding the establishment and functioning of the research centers in UPB](#)
- [Collective labor market currently](#) active in the university
- [Methodology for awarding with Gradation of Merit](#) academic year 2022-2023
- [Methodology for maintaining the full-time position 2022-2023](#)
- [Strategy for preventing and combating plagiarism in UPB](#)
- [Regulation for awarding the title of Professor Emeritus](#)
- [Procedure of occupying vacant positions](#) – included in the Quality Handbook

Apart from this internal audit, the staff involved in the process of recruitment, selection, and appointment (e.g. heads of department, deans, and other categories of academic staff) have been consulted to better understand the current practices and what can and should be improved accordingly.

OTM-R Policy

Having as a starting point the strategic vision of the UPB, the following OTM-R objectives are established:

OTM-R - Objectives⁷:

⁷ To achieve these objectives, the AP and HRS4R Strategy were updated

- increasing the quality of human resources attracted in the field of research: asking for competencies and skills to meet the needs of the research positions (R1-R4), creating instruments to evaluate the creativity and innovation potential of each candidate etc.
- promoting the culture of quality in all recruitment processes through making transparently available information about the recruitment and selection of candidates, to all involved parties;
- ensuring equal opportunities to all candidates, especially for underrepresented groups such as women researchers appointed in technical research areas;
- stimulating researchers and teaching staff to participate in CPD⁸ training courses ;
- eliminating language barriers by promoting multiculturalism in research team formation.

Transparency and Openness

1. The UPB staff involved in recruitment, selection, and appointment must comply with the internal regulations, methodologies, and procedures in place and communicate transparently with all candidates.

All documents referring to OTM-R Policy will be integrated into the Quality Handbook and training sessions will be periodically organized, and dedicated to the staff involved in recruitment, selection, and appointment (eg. publishing the vacant positions in EURAXESS and other European online recruitment platforms for researchers).

2. In addition to the Methodology for occupying vacant didactic and research positions, Guidelines for Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment will be made available to all those involved in the recruitment process.

The Guidelines will enclose relevant information regarding each stage of the process and it will be distributed to all departments and faculties and also to administrative departments involved. The document will be drafted in Romanian and English and made available to all interested parties (e.g. members of the selection committees, management etc.)

3. The candidates will receive assistance throughout the entire process. The Guideline will be posted online on the HRS4R@UPB website www.hrs4r.upb.ro

4. Visible and transparent communication of all academic vacancies.

According to **the Methodology for occupying vacant didactic and research positions** the announcements shall be published at least in the following ways: (a) in a visible place, on the first page of the UPB website; (b) on a specialized website managed by MEN; (c) in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part III (positions filled for an indefinite period). UPB and the Ministry of Education may advertise the competitions by any additional means, including publication in the mass media, in national and international scientific publications, on websites specialised in the publication of job vacancies and the like. Additionally, a Methodology for publishing the vacancies on EURAXESS has been drafted.

5. Quality control applies also to the recruitment process and it is organized in conformity with the current procedures applied by the Quality Assurance Department and Internal Audit.

⁸ CPD= continuous professional development

6. The assurance of good working conditions represents an institutional priority. The staff will be annually consulted regarding the working conditions, an online survey will be conducted and the results will be used to invest in improving working conditions(eg. the investment plan correlated with the research infrastructure requested by researchers).

7. Equality, inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities are priority values for our organization. Starting with January 2022, a Gender Equality Plan will be available. It will cover the 2022-2027 period and will be revised every two years.

8. All candidates will be directly announced and in detail about the selection outcomes. A complaint procedure is in place and the candidates are aware of it starting with the application phase. The details are comprised in the [Methodology for occupying vacant didactic and research positions](#). Where an applicant possesses evidence which may demonstrate non-compliance with the procedures the candidate may lodge an appeal within 3 working days of being notified of the result. The appeal must be formulated in writing, registered at the UPB registry and decided by the Appeals Committee. In order to determine the composition of the appeals committee, the same procedure is followed as for determining the composition of the competition committee. Members of the competition committee may not be members of the appeals committee. Following approval by the UPB Senate, the appeals committee is appointed by decision of the Rector.

Merit-based selection

1. Annually, **all members of the committees of recruitment and selection (competition) have access to training courses**, the attendance is necessary for all nominated members.

2. Academic staff involved in the recruitment and selection process undergo relevant training provided by the head of the department and the vice-rector responsible for human resources management. Staff in the Human Resources and Informatics Directorate are not involved in the recruitment and selection of academic staff, but will receive training to understand the process and provide prompt support in the process of appointment and onboarding.

3. Each member of the selection committee knows in detail the national and institutional selection criteria applicable to each research domain. Periodically it is offered training in this field.

4. The members of the selection committees will be selected to ensure gender balance and they will act complying with the internal and national regulations in force.

5. The competition committee deliberates based on the merit of each candidate referring to the performance criteria established for each research field by CNACTDU.

6. Dissatisfied candidates could complain following the rules established by a specific procedure, the complaint mechanism is described in this procedure (the procedure is integrated into the Quality Handbook)

Monitoring and Implementation

For the implementation of the OTM-R policy at the University POLITEHNICA of Bucharest it is necessary to create a **monitoring system** to allow a fair evaluation of the progress.

The existing quality monitoring system checks if all legal provisions are respected in all competitions organized for appointing research and teaching staff.

Each application file must include the resolution on the verification of the information in the verification form provided for in art. 13 paragraph (1) letter (a) -HG 457/2011, as amended and supplemented. This resolution is established by a commission or a scientific council appointed by decision of the rector, on the proposal of the board of directors.

The faculties/departments make proposals for the competence of the selection committees taking into consideration gender balance as well as job-related expertise. A compulsory requirement is applied to all appointed members and refers to linguistic competence, in the case of foreign candidates (English language). The procedure for setting up selection committees for filling teaching and research posts is described in detail in the **Methodology for occupying vacant didactic and research positions**.

Indicator: % of female members appointed to the selection committees

Vacancy announcements are promoted through traditional channels, to which the Euraxess platform has been added, as well as through social media. The UPB Chancellor is responsible for coordinating the publication and promotion of vacancy notices. UPB's Social Media Office manages social media communication.

Indicators:

% of female candidates of the total number of candidates (calculated annually)

% of foreign candidates of the total number of candidates (calculated annually)

Purpose = audience analysis and the evaluation of the attractiveness of job vacancies

The results are useful to increase the efficiency of the advertising campaigns and to attract candidates suitable for each job vacancy.

The monitoring involves :

- The progress in the area of quality culture is assessed annually in accordance with the **Regulation on the UPB Quality Management System**, approved by Senate Decision no. 148/04.01.2021. The University Evaluation and Quality Assurance Committee and the Quality Council are responsible for coordinating the work and collecting information from the existing committees and officers at faculty level.
- The candidates are evaluated based on their research performance following existing national and institutional criteria. At the national level, the evaluation of research performance is carried out on the basis of the Minimum Required and Compulsory Standards for the award of higher education teaching titles and professional research and development degrees, developed by the National Council for the Accreditation of University Titles, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU). The last update

of the standards was carried out in 2016, by OMENCS No. 6129 / 20.12.2016. All applicants for R3 and R4 posts must meet these criteria. As far as candidates for R1 and R2 level posts are concerned, they will meet institutional criteria, specified in the [Methodology for occupying vacant didactic and research positions](#). Forms detailing compliance with the criteria must be included in the application file.

- After appointment, academic staff are regularly evaluated. The evaluation process for academic staff comprises four components: evaluation against national criteria for R3 and R4 researchers, self-evaluation, peer evaluation and student evaluation, based on forms approved by the UPB Senate. To carry out the self-assessment, researchers have access to the CRESCDI Platform where they can download the pre-filled self-assessment form. The results of the self-assessments are discussed with the researchers and, if the number of points obtained is below the department average, remedial action will be initiated. Similarly, student evaluations are carried out through the curs.upb.ro platform.

Indicator :

-quantitative: minimal number of points for each R1-R4 category shall be acquired, it will be evaluated publications, number of citations, H-index, number of patents etc.

- qualitative – supervision, leadership, multidisciplinary, citizen integration in research, social responsibility;

- Attendance at the CPD training courses

Indicators:

% of attendees of the total number of researchers (R1-R4) ;

% of attendees at specialization programs of the total number of researchers ;

% of researchers who registered significant career progress after the first five years of annual participation at CPD training courses

- Equal opportunity and vulnerable groups monitoring

Indicators :

% of females in the total number of candidates ;

% of females in the total number of members of selection committees

- multiculturalism – the composition of the research teams is monitored, it is performed an annual analysis of statistics regarding the number of researchers hosted coming from abroad and the number of UPB researchers being on research missions in partner universities.