Internal Analysis

The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

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Working Group
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Acknowledgment:
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Outline

• Charter & Code
• HRS4R roadmap
• Actions @ UNICAS
• Internal Survey
• Gap Analysis
Charter & Code

• Recommendation 2005/251/EC of the EU published on March 11, 2005
  • The Charter is a set of general principles and requirements that define roles, responsibilities, and entitlements of researchers and of their employers and funders
  • The Code is a set of general principles and requirements which should be followed by the employers and by the funders when appointing or recruiting researchers

• Goals
  • Improve working conditions
  • Make selection and recruitment more transparent
  • Consolidate career prospects
  • Spur mobility across research institutions
HRS4R roadmap

• The *Human Resources Strategy for Researchers* (HRS4R) is an initiative promoted by the European Commission to support research institutions in the implementation of the Charter and Code

  STEP 1) The **internal analysis** is performed by the research institution to compare the adopted policies and practices against the principles of the Charter and Code

  STEP 2) The research institution publishes its **Human Resources Strategy for Researchers**, which summarizes the main results of the internal analysis and presents a concrete action plan to close any existing gap with respect to the principles outlined in the Charter and Code

  STEP 3) The internal analysis and action plan are reviewed and acknowledged by the European Commission with *“Human Resource Excellence in Research”* award

  STEP 4) The research institution conducts a **self-assessment every second year** after the award is released (step 3) or confirmed (step 5)

  STEP 5) Every four years after the award is released (step 3) or confirmed (step 5), the research institution drafts a **progress report which is evaluated by a panel of external reviewers**
Actions @ UNICAS

• On July 7, 2005, UNICAS, together with other Italian Universities, signed a joint declaration of intent on the adoption of the principles contained in Recommendation 2005/251/EC

• On December 18, 2015, UNICAS embraced the principles outlined in the Charter and Code and committed itself to their implementation within its organization

• On May 17, 2016, a working group, formed by Giuseppe Biondi (administrative officer), Carlo Russo (associate professor), and Luca Venturino (associate professor), was nominated with the task of carrying out an internal analysis
Internal Survey

• As recommended by the EU, an anonymous questionnaire was distributed in June

• The questionnaire contains 29 statements, grouped in 4 dimensions:
  • open recruitment and portability of grants (9 statements)
  • meeting the social security and supplementary pension needs (6 statements)
  • attractive employment and working conditions (9 statements)
  • enhancing training, skills, and experience of European researchers (5 statements)

• For each statement, there are four possible answers:
  1 = disagree
  2 = moderately disagree
  3 = moderately agree
  4 = fully agree

• For each dimension, it is asked to identify the 3 statements with highest priority
## Internal Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>N. Employees</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Coverage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Professors</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professors</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professors (permanent)</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professors (temporary)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-doc/ Fellows</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD Students</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>438</strong></td>
<td><strong>157</strong></td>
<td><strong>35.8%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Internal Survey

![Graph showing survey results for various factors like recruitment, incentives and security, working environment, and professional growth. The graph includes max, average, and min values for each factor.](image)
Internal Survey
Gap Analysis

• The principles of the Charter and Code can be grouped in four areas
  1. Ethical and professional aspects
  2. Recruitment
  3. Working conditions and social security
  4. Training

• The main actions that are foreseen at this stage to close the gaps with the Charter and Code are now summarized (boldface items correspond to the critical aspects arisen from the internal survey)
Gap Analysis: Ethical and professional aspects

- The University should support initiatives aimed at guiding researchers in seeking funds for curiosity-driven research and should provide administrative and legal support in the preparation of the proposal and in the management of the project OK Settore ricerca
- The admission procedure for the recruitment of researchers (including PhDs, PostDocs, and Fellowships) should be made available in English OK Settore ricerca
- The main internal regulations should be translated in English, at least those concerning the research and recruitment aspects fattibile – un traduttore?
- An anti-plagiarism software should be used for the assessment of theses ???
- It should be activated an open archive that collects all thesis in digital format OK Ufficio dottorati – a breve
- A training course on safety rules should be provided to employees and students fattibile
- Best researchers should receive concrete incentives in the form, for example, of prizes and additional research funds OK Starting Grant; here, the professional activities (research, teaching, services, etc.), scientific merit, creativeness, and independence should be evaluated
Gap Analysis: Recruitment 1/2

- Researchers should be better informed on their pension schemes and should receive information on the possible options to integrate the basic plan provided by the national legislation – **Ufficio personale docente? fattibile**

- It should be explored the possibility of providing additional sickness and parental benefits to PhD students, PostDocs, and Graduate Students with Fellowship, so as to overcome the limited assistance granted by the national welfare.

- Internal selection procedures should be improved by:
  - better describing the selection criteria, working conditions, rights, competencies, and skills required by candidates in the call for competition
  - requesting a more general profile so as to encourage the wider participation of potential candidates
  - requesting that creativeness and independence are properly accounted for by the selection committees
  - requesting that the selection committees adequately inform the candidates on their weaknesses and strengths at the end of the evaluation process
  - ensuring international advertising of open positions **delicato**
• The mobility of researchers within Italian and European universities should be promoted and facilitated by introducing incentives for Departments recruiting researchers who have not studied or previously worked at or collaborated with this university.

• Researchers may face difficulties in preserving their pension benefits when moving across different countries; the European Commission is supporting a consortium of employers in creating a single European pension arrangement (RESAVER) that will offer a defined contribution plan, tailor-made for research organizations and their employees. UNICAS may explore the possibility of joining this consortium or adhering to other similar initiatives.

• Researchers should receive adequate and clear information on the internal recruitment policies and on the carrier opportunities which are likely to be foreseen in the near future according to the development plan envisioned by the university.

• Researchers should be supported in their professional activities with internal training courses aimed at increasing the skills and competences needed for their carrier progression.

• Post-doc programs (borse di studio) and research fellowships (assegni di ricerca) should consider specific actions for career development (including access to Job Placement services).
Gap Analysis: Working conditions and social security

• The University should include researchers (and employees) well-being among the general principles of the Statute OK – nuovo Statuto
• New researchers should be informed about well-being, safety, and family-work conciliation
• Training early stage researchers about publication strategies/placement and IPR protection/exploitation OK – Settore ricerca
• Researchers should be better informed about national and international job opportunities
• The University should assign more resources to the Research Office and International Center
• Early stage researchers should receive formal recognition for their teaching activities
• The University should introduce reasonable caps to teaching duties
• Early stage researchers should participate in department meetings and have voting rights
• The participation of the researchers to bodies/boards and committees involved in decision-making and communication activities should be encouraged with specific incentives
• The Statute and the General Rules of the University should be amended to increase participation
Gap Analysis: Training

• A formal teaching training should be provided to early stage researchers
• Communication, information, and promotion of existing training activities (including the development of e-learning platforms for researchers) should be improved