HRS4R Strategy URJC

Revised Action Plan
2022-2025

European Projects Office - OPE

Rey Juan Carlos University
Madrid (Spain)

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INDEX

1. INTRODUCTION

In September 2018, the Rey Juan Carlos University (URJC) signed the endorsement letter of the **European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers** to launch the implementation of the **Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)**. By this, the URJC committed to further develop its human resources strategy according to its internal policies and in line with the recommendations and principles of the Charter and Code to guarantee the transparency, accessibility, equity and the pursuit of excellence in the recruitment of researchers. Thus, the URJC recognises the importance of providing the best possible framework for researchers, to improve the conditions for their incorporation and the development of their research activities, while at the same time contributing to the development of the **European Research Area**.

To implement these recommendations and principles, the URJC developed an Action Plan in February 2020. The Action Plan consisted in 18 actions. This Action Plan was approved by the European Commission in July 2020 and, consequently, the URJC was granted the **HRS4R Award**. This Award identifies the institutions which generate and support the existence of a stimulating environment which enhances research. The URJC is one of the 163 Spanish institutions which has been granted the HRS4R Award.

To implement the Action Plan, 13 working groups (WG) were formed to develop the 18 actions. Both researchers and representatives of the different Vice-rectorates were involved in these WG, thus ensuring that the Strategy is a proactive and participative effort of all the University to foster a successful, dynamic and inclusive research culture. An overview of the 18 actions is included in the figure below.

ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS	RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION	WORKING CONDITIONS	PROFESIONAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
A.1 – Research map *Identifying research capacities – Synergies – Increasing the number of collaborative projects*	**A.2 OTM-R Principles** *Adapting the URJC's recruitment protocols to OTM-R principles*	**A.4 Occupational Health and Risk Management** *Drafting a handbook on occupational health and risk management for research activities*	**A.8 Professional Development** *Developing different tools to explain to researchers' different career path opportunities*
A.3 Translation for researchers *Translating to English all the essential documents for researchers*	**A.10 Researchers' Welcome Handbook** *Drafting a Welcome Handbook to ease the integration of foreign researchers*	**A.5 Remote working** *Drafting a protocol for remote working*	**A.11 Researchers' supervision** *Drafting a handbook on supervision guidelines*
A.17 Coordination of the Strategy *Raising awareness on the principles of the European Charter and Code for Researchers*	**A.15 Researchers' Welcome Office** *Setting up a Welcome Office for foreign researchers*	**A.6 Academic Plan** *Reorganising time dedicated to teaching to minimise the mobility across campuses and increase the time available for research*	**A.12 Evaluation of the researchers' supervision** *Assessing the quality of researcher's supervision in the URJC*
A.18 – Best practices in Research *Drafting a guide on best practices in research*		**A.7 Salaries** *Defining salary ranks for researchers*	**A.13 Mentoring for researchers** *Designing a pilot mentoring programme for the guidance of researchers*
		A.9 Research mobility actions *Improve the internationalization of URJC researchers through mobility actions*	**A.14 Researchers' Training** *Strengthening the training available to researchers*
			A.16 Evaluation system for researchers *Designing an evaluation system for researchers allocated to a specific project*

Figure 1 - Overview of actions of the URJC Action Plan to implement the HRS4R Strategy

In July 2022, the URJC submitted to the European Commission its **Interim Assessment Internal Review** to report on the implementation of the Action Plan and the URJC's performance in integrating the HRS4R Strategy and, consequently, the Code and Charter, in the internal policies of the University.

The URJC reported that out of the 18 actions, **8** Actions (A1, A4, A5, A7, A9, A10, A13 and A18) had been **fully implemented** and **10** (A2, A3, A6, A8, A11, A12, A14, A15, A16 and A17) were still **in progress** at the time of submitting the Internal Review, mainly because the Strategy is a continuous effort and because two of the Actions (A3 – translation of documents key to the development of research activities, and A17 – coordination of the Strategy) have a transversal nature. The URJC proposed to implement **three new actions** with the main objective of improving the communication of the Strategy and, thus, the engagement of researchers. The figure below shows the status of the actions as presented in the Internal Review, including the new actions.

ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS		RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION	WORKING CONDITIONS		PROFESIONAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT	
A.1 –> A. 20 Research map *Developing an e-Tool (dashboard) which allows researchers to identify potential partners within the URJC to participate in EU and international R&D&i programmes.* *Identifying research capacities – Synergies – Increasing the number of collaborative projects*	↻	**A.2 OTM-R Principles** *Adapting the URJC's recruitment protocols to OTM-R principles* ↻	**A.4 Occupational Health and Risk Management** *Implementing the form on occupational health and risk management for research activities in all research projects*	✓	**A.8 Professional Development** *Organise biannual workshops on researchers' different career path opportunities*	↻
A.3 Translation for researchers *Translating to English all the essential documents for researchers*	↻	**A.15 Researchers' Welcome Office** *Setting up a Welcome Office for foreign researchers*	**A.5 Remote working** *Publishing and implementing the protocol for remote working*	✓	**A.11 Researchers' supervision** *Drafting a handbook on supervision guidelines*	↻
A.17 Coordination of the Strategy *Raising awareness on the principles of the European Charter and Code for Researchers* *Monitoring the implementation of the HRS4R*	↻		**A.6 Academic Plan** *Reorganising time dedicated to teaching to minimise the mobility across campuses and increase the time available for research*	↻	**A.12 Evaluation of the researchers' supervision** *Assessing the quality of researcher's supervision in the URJC*	↻
A.18 Best Practices in Research *Drafting a Guide on best practices in research.*	✓				**A.13 Mentoring for researchers** *2nd Edition of EURICLEA mentoring programme*	✓
A.19 Promotion of HRS4R and European Projects in URJC *Raising awareness among researchers of the HRS4R Strategy and the tools and benefits it brings along and to promote the participation of researchers in European R&D&i programmes.*					**A.14 Researchers' Training** *Strengthening the training available to researchers*	↻
A.21 Improve the communication on HRS4R *Continue working on the communication campaign to disseminate the facts and the written documents produced under each of the Actions of the Action Plan.*					**A.16 Evaluation system for researchers** *Implementing the evaluation system for researchers allocated to a specific project*	↻

Figure 2 - Overview of the status of the actions of the URJC's Action Plan and new actions for the revised Action Plan

Symbol	Meaning
↻	Actions still in progress at the Internal Review phase
✓	Actions completed at the Internal Review Phase
▭	New proposed actions

Further to the assessment of the Internal Review, the European Commission issued its **Consensus Report** in November 2022 evaluating the quality of progress in the implementation of the Action Plan. It concluded that the HRS4R Strategy is **fully embedded** in the institution, without

the need to take any corrective measures. As main **strength**, the Commission highlighted the URJC's strong commitment to ensure the realisation of the Action Plan's objectives by engaging both researchers and top management, ensuring that the researchers' voice is heard and investing in the effective communication on the HRS4R Strategy to help researchers to understand the Strategy and to identify its benefits.

The European Commission made the following **recommendations**:

- **Supervision** should constantly be in the organization's attention therefore, training courses for supervisors should be provided and somehow engage supervisors in attending such courses.

- **Work-life balance** needs to be considered at all levels (R1-R4) - special action to be included in the next Action Plan.

- Provide support and advice to **young researchers** in developing their career plans.

- Disseminate **best practices** of others in implementing HRS4R.

- Think and act to **attract and retain talented researchers** nationally and internationally.

- Consider **gender balance** statistics in all activities (e.g. selection committees are gender balanced?). Also, consider PhD students representation in different decision-making bodies related to their work.

- **Plan periodic consultations** so every researcher's voice is heard (e.g. survey on training needs, working conditions, post-pandemic stress, accommodation with work from home, etc.). Made the results public and address these needs with specific actions and programs to everyone to see the prompt reaction of the institution to researchers' problems.

- Encourage **researchers' participation** in communicating science to society; it will be important for the organisation's visibility in the community and will increase prestige and market positioning.

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2. REVISED ACTION PLAN

Further to the Consensus Report and the European Commission's recommendations, the URJC has revised its Action Plan. The following table shows the Actions that at the Internal Review Stage were still in progress (A2, A3, A6, A8, A11, A12, A14, A15, A16 and A17) and the three new Actions proposed (A.19, A.20 and A.21), the time frame in which they will be implemented, the proposal of the people and responsible units which will be involved in the WG in charge of implementing these actions, and the indicator(s)/target(s) of each of the Actions.

PROPOSED ACTIONS	TIMING (quarter)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR(s)/TARGET(s)
ACTION 2. MOVING TOWARDS AN INSTITUTIONAL OTM-R POLICY To achieve this action (mainly to adapt the URJCs recruiting protocols to OTM-R) URJC will: A) Review the current recruiting procedures to include the C&C and OTM-R principles in all the job contracts managed by the University (researchers funded by research projects, self-funded programme, etc.). B) Review the recruiting procedures in accordance with the New Science Law. C) Include the new scores suggested by HRS4R in all the selection process (mention of professional career possibilities etc). D) Publish post-doctoral job offers on EURAXESS. E) Adapt the online job-offering platforms. F) Create templates and a recruiting guideline.	*Q4 2022 – Q1 2025*	*Vice-manager for Human Resources* *Vice-manager for Research, Innovation and Transfer* *Service for the recruitment of researchers* *European Projects Office*	• 100% of selection and contracting procedures follows new procedures C&C and OTM-R compliance, as well as compliance with the new Science Law. • 100% of lists of candidates with scores published. • 100% of offers (i.e., open to applications for foreign researchers) posted on international portals (EURAXESS and others). • Online job offering platforms updated. • Templates and recruiting guidelines available online. • All researchers, especially those responsible for research recruitment, and all human resources personnel are trained in OTMR and C&C
ACTION 3. TRANSLATE THE MOST OUTSTANDING DOCUMENTS TO ENGLISH.	*Q4 2022 – Q1 2025*	*URJC Language Centre (CUI)*	• Main webpages are available in English and Spanish

PROPOSED ACTIONS	TIMING (quarter)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR(s)/TARGET(s)
To achieve this action, URJC will: A) Prioritise the contents: webpages, guidelines, contracts for foreign researchers, main regulations, etc. B) Contract translation services. C) Train key administrative staff to deal with foreign researchers.		*Vice-rectorate for Research, Innovation and Transference*	• All documents relevant for the proper performance of research activities are available in English and Spanish, including contracts for foreign researchers
ACTION 6. ACADEMIC REARRANGEMENT PLAN FOR THE CENTRALISATION OF THE CAREERS PER CAMPUS. The plan is devoted to: - • Reduction in the mobility of professors between campuses since the current academic offer is geographically dispersed among the URJC campuses. • Eliminate the current situation in which different cut-off grades are required for the same degree offered on different campuses. • Detect the demand of degrees and a) concentrate the degrees currently offered on several campuses or in different modalities (face-to-face and online), avoiding duplication of groups; b) propose new degrees. The Plan will have an implementation period of 4 years and annual revisions to correct deviations.	Q4 2022 – Q1 2025	*Vice-rectorate for Academic Planning*	• *Plan published* • *Annual reviews*

PROPOSED ACTIONS	TIMING (quarter)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR(s)/TARGET(s)

ACTION 8. DEVELOP DIFFERENT TOOLS TO EXPLAIN TO RESEARCHERS THE CURRENT OPTIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL CAREER.
 	
To achieve this action, URJC will:
 	
A) Prepare documents (professional career options guide), websites (URJC recruitment calls, and professional careers options guide), etc., exploring the options for professional career for researchers.
 	
B) Hold informative sessions of professional career options for different professional levels and/or professional areas; with experts in HHRR and career development.
 	
C) Reinforce the courses offered at the International Doctorate School, including subjects related to professional career options.
 	
D) Include this information in the Welcome Manual and Welcome Workshop.
 	
An online English and Spanish version of documents and websites will be available.
	Q1 2023 – Q1 2024	*Vice-rectorate for Academic Planning and Teacher Training*
		
		Vice-rectorate for Postgraduate Studies
			• Documents and websites available
			
			• At least 2 informative sessions annually for researchers, including new courses offered at the International Doctorate School and within the Permanent Training Plan for Researchers and Teachers:
			
			   o Opportunities of career development within and outside the academia
			
			   o HRS4R Strategy

ACTION 14. STRENGTHEN THE TRAINING OFFER ADDING OTHER COURSES FOCUSED ON SOFT SKILLS.	Q1 2023 – Q1 2024	*Vice-rectorate for Academic Planning and Teacher Training*	• New training offer on soft skills with at least 50 attendees

PROPOSED ACTIONS	TIMING (quarter)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR(s)/TARGET(s)
The International Doctoral School will strengthen training courses to PhD Students adding other courses focused on soft skills. In addition, training will be offered to researchers and post-doctoral researchers.		*Vice-rectorate for Postgraduate Studies*	
ACTION 11. WRITE GUIDELINES FOR GOOD SUPERVISION. URJC will achieve this goal by: A) Setting a protocol to define the rights and duties of supervisors and supervisees, especially focused on the researchers funded by research projects, including the obligation of a final evaluation report. B) Writing a good supervision guideline.	*Q3-Q4 2023*	*EURICLEA mentoring programme Coordination Committee* *Vice-rectorate for Research, Innovation and Transference* *Vice-rectorate for Quality and Strategy* *Vice-rectorate for Postgraduate Studies*	• Good supervision guidelines published • New training offer including Supervision Guidelines
ACTION 12. EVALUATE URJC'S SUPERVISION QUALITY. URJC will achieve this goal by: A) Performing a survey for R2 researchers to evaluate the supervision quality.	*Q1 – Q2 2023*	*EURICLEA mentoring programme Coordination Committee* *Vice-rectorate for Research, Innovation and Transference* *Vice-rectorate for Quality and Strategy*	• Report on URJC supervision quality • At least 60% satisfaction with supervision quality • If necessary, supervision practices updated and published

PROPOSED ACTIONS	TIMING (quarter)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR(s)/TARGET(s)
B) Analysing the results of the survey and reviewing and modifying the current supervision practices of R2 researchers. C) If necessary, updating the supervision practices. An online English and Spanish version will be available.		*Vice-rectorate for Postgraduate Studies*	
ACTION 15. CREATE AN OFFICE FOR THE RECEPTION OF FOREIGN RE-SEARCHERS. The Centre for the Attraction and Internationalization of Research Talent (CAIT) will have the function of processing and welcoming the foreign, researchers and teaching staff who come to the University. The processing relates to the academic and bureaucratic formalities which foreign students and researchers encounter when entering the country. The URJC will achieve this goal by: A) Defining the required process, and reporting line. B) Allocating human and financial resources. C) Generating contents and SOP.	*Q2 2024 – Q1 2025*	*Vice-rectorate for Research, Innovation and Transference* *Vice-manager for Research resources*	• Services of the Centre for the Attraction and Internationalization of Research Taent available

PROPOSED ACTIONS	TIMING (quarter)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR(s)/TARGET(s)
ACTION 16. DESIGN AN EVALUATION PROCESS FOR RESEARCHERS FUNDED BY RESEARCH PROJECTS. URJC will achieve this goal by: A) Designing a checklist for the evaluation of all R2 researchers based upon other existing evaluations; B) Designing an evaluation software based upon "InvesJob" digital platform; C) Evaluating all R2 researchers whose contract exceeds 6 months; D) Conditioning the contract renewal to a positive evaluation of the work performed.	Q4 2023-Q3 2024	*Vice-rectorate for Research, Innovation and Transference* *Vice-rectorate for Quality and Strategy*	• Evaluation process approved • 100% of researchers funded by research projects are evaluated
ACTION 17. HRS4R PROJECT'S KICK-OFF AND STRENGTH AWARENESS OF THE CHARTER & CODE CRITERIA AT URJC. The goal of this action is to attain increasing involvement of the C&C criteria in the research community and in everyday research practices. URJC will achieve this goal by: A) Including the actions defined in this Action Plan in the Research Strategic Plan of URJC. B) Scheduling periodical briefings in departments and institutions' management to influence the dissemination of the C&C key lessons to research (PDI) and administrative (PAS) staff.	Q2 2020 – Q1 2025	*Vice-rectorate for Research, Innovation and Transference*	• WG HRS4R constituted, including WG OTRM-R • Follow-up of WG • Supervision of the implementation of the Strategy • Communication campaign • Number of attendees at seminars • Surveys to address the awareness

PROPOSED ACTIONS	TIMING (quarter)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR(s)/TARGET(s)
C) Incorporating new researchers that wish to join the Implementation Working Group (IWG) for specific working teams.			
ACTION 19. PROMOTION OF HRS4R AND EUROPEAN PROJECTS IN EACH URJC CAMPUSES The goal of this action is to raise awareness among researchers of the HRS4R Strategy and the tools and benefits it brings along and to promote the participation of researchers in European R&D&i programmes. URJC will achieve this goal by: A) Organising information sessions in the URJC campuses B) Carrying out follow-up meetings with researchers C) Circulating a survey among researchers after the information sessions to detect researchers' specific needs	*Q1 2023 – Q1 2025*	*Vice-rectorate for Research, Innovation and Transference*	• Number of presentations performed • Number of attendees • Number of proposals presented in EU R&D programmes
ACTION 20. UPDATE THE RESEARCH CAPABILITIES MAP The aim of this action to find synergies between research lines and foster the occurrence of common projects. URJC will achieve this goal by:	*Q4 2022 – Q4 2023*	*Vice-rectorate for Research, Innovation and Transference* *IT Department*	• Conversion of the prototype "Research Map" (Action 1) into an established tool • New functionalities added to the research capabilities map. • Number of users

PROPOSED ACTIONS	TIMING (quarter)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR(s)/TARGET(s)
A) Organising meetings with research groups to clearly identify their research lines and their needs B) Developing an e-Tool (dashboard) which allows researchers to identify potential partners within the URJC to participate in EU and international R&D&i programmes			• Number of proposals jointly submitted by different URJC research groups
ACTION 21. IMPROVE THE COMMUNICA-TION OF THE HRS4R AWARD The goal of this action is to raise awareness among researchers regarding the HRS4R Strategy and the tools and benefits it brings along. The URJC will achieve this goal by: A) Continue working on the communication campaign to disseminate the facts and the written documents produced under each of the Actions of the Action Plan. B) Developing tools that make all the information more customised for junior researchers including communication activities at the beginning of the academic year (also in master's and doctoral programs). C) Appointing R3 and R4 researchers as spokesperson for the HRS4R Award, and	*Q3 2022-Q1 2025*	*Vice-rectorate for Research, Innovation and Transference*	• Number of tools developed • Number of users (e.g., if videos → number of views) • Number of R1 and R2 researchers involved in the HRS4R Strategy actions and programmes

PROPOSED ACTIONS	TIMING (quarter)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR(s)/TARGET(s)
D) Taking advantage of the University's infra-structure/services (Master's School, International Doctoral School and mentoring program, University survey system) to specifically reach the R1 and R2 public.			

In addition to the aforementioned Actions, the URJC consistent with its commitment to continue to implement and align its internal policies with the Code and Charter, has decided to further develop the Manual on Best Practices in Research (A.18 from the initial Plan of Action) elaborating a **Best Practices Mini-Guide on gender equality, diversity and inclusivity in research**. A Working Group has been constituted to carry out this activity. It is foreseen that the Best Practices Mini-Guide will be published and available, both in English and Spanish by the first quarter of 2025.

Furthermore, the work carried out in terms of **occupational health and risk management** (A.4 from the initial Plan of Action) endures. The form created to assess possible risks in research projects is used generally by the research community and new training programmes are developed to raise awareness among the research staff on these matters.

In conclusion, although new actions are envisaged and implemented by the revised Action Plan, the work carried out by the 13 Working Groups under the initial Action Plan has permeated into the policies of the URJC to ensure a good working environment for researchers to foster the development of their careers in research in the best conditions, granting them more time to research and that such time is of better quality.