University of Granada OTM-R Policy

Open, Transparent and Merit-based
Recruitment of Researchers (OTM-R)

2019

Contents

1. Introduction

In 2016, the University of Granada (UGR) received the HR Excellence in Research Award in recognition of its continued commitment to adopting the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. These key EU documents establish the guidelines for European universities and institutions to improve the recruitment and working conditions of researchers, making research careers more attractive and accessible in Europe.

The Governing Team of the UGR believes that our University should be deeply involved at all levels to improve the recruitment and employment conditions of our researchers. To this end, a task force created in 2015, formed by the Vice-Rectorates for Research and Knowledge Transfer, for Internationalization, and for Academic and Research Staff, has been implementing a detailed Strategy and Action Plan to apply the requirements established in the Charter and Code at our University.

Our HR Excellence in Research: Strategy and Action Plan comprises 30 steps which, once complete, will contribute substantially to the University's aspirations towards fully adopting the principles of the Code and Charter. We are confident that this on-going process will reap major benefits for our entire research community.

The granting of the HR Excellence in Research Award not only lends support to our proposals to secure international funding and attract talented individuals to our University; it also raises our international profile and demonstrates our commitment to providing a favourable working environment for researchers.

We are currently at stage 4 of 5 of implementing our Strategy and Action Plan and are conducting an internal self-assessment to evaluate our compliance with the EURAXESS Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R). This assessment will enable us to draft an updated and improved version of our Strategy and Action Plan.

The process we are undertaking is also essential to fulfil article 32 of Grant Agreements of projects within Horizon 2020, which establishes the

obligation to take measures to implement the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. If it is not fulfilled, the measures stipulated in article 6A of the Grant Agreement regulating the eligibility of costs can be applied.

Accordingly, we expect the utmost involvement and consensus on behalf of the university community with the process that is being carried out to adapt our conditions to the European guidelines.

In accordance with the HR Excellence in Research Award, the purpose of this OTM-R Policy is to build on the core principles of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. In what follows, we outline, in chronological order, the essential steps involved in the recruitment of researchers at the University of Granada, from the advertising/application phase and selection process to the appointment of candidates.

2. General considerations

In line with the Code of Conduct for Researchers, the University of Granada is committed to ensuring that recruitment and selection procedures are fair and transparent. Furthermore, the researcher's merit should be measured not only by their publications, but also by a wider range of evaluation criteria, such as education and teaching, supervision, teamwork, knowledge transfer, international mobility experience, and public awareness-raising activities.

There are three main stages in the recruitment process at the University of Granada: (i) the advertising and application phase, (ii) the evaluation and selection phase, and (iii) the appointment phase. Each of these stages must be completed in line with the Statutes of the University of Granada (Decree 231/2011 of 21 July).

3. Advertising positions and applications

The University of Granada is a public university. Accordingly, all research positions, as well as the corresponding regulatory framework determining their terms and conditions, are advertised through official and public channels. In accordance with national legislation, civil service research positions (*puestos de personal investigador funcionario*) are advertised in the Official State Gazette (BOE), while research positions without civil service status (*personal investigador laboral*) are advertised in the Official Gazette of the Regional Government of Andalusia (BOJA). Moreover, all of these positions are published in the UGR Official Gazette (BOUGR) and on the "CanalUGR" News website (the University's official news website). Temporary research contracts funded by groups or projects are published on the website of the Vice-Rectorate for Research and Transfer of the UGR. Calls for applications to recruit PhD graduates into specific programmes supported by the UGR Research and Knowledge Transfer Fund (PPIT) are advertised through the EURAXESS job portal.

In accordance with open and transparent recruitment practices, all advertisements for research contracts funded by groups or projects will be kept as concise and clear as possible. These offers of employment must include the following details:

- The research group, unit, institute, department or project recruiting for the position
- job title[1]
- number of available positions
- date of publication
- description of specific role, functions and duties
- minimum requirements and competencies (including language requirements, if necessary)
- selection criteria (depending on the position, this may be weighted differently in terms of professional experience, academic qualifications, specific knowledge or skills, etc.[2])
- application procedure, rules, opening date and deadline
- duration of the contract (and whether it is full-time or part-time etc.)
- evaluation committee (names of the committee members)
- type of contract and salary
- reference to the UGR's OTM-R Policy
- complaint and appeal periods and procedures
- contact details for enquiries

In order to guarantee transparency and good practices in the advertising phase, principal investigators (PIs) and research groups are provided with access to a standardised online template for job advertising. They must fill out the mandatory fields containing the aforementioned job specifications and details, whereupon they can proceed to publishing the offer. As well as serving as a tool to ensure quality control and transparency in the

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[1] Most short-term research contracts funded by groups or projects fall within the "*Personal con cargo a grupos o proyectos*" category and, accordingly, bear this title.

[2] The selection process must adhere to the following weighting system: 60% = transcript of records, 40% = relevant selection criteria. The "relevant selection criteria" can vary depending on the position in question but normally includes professional experience, knowledge, specific skills etc. (except in the case of PhD holders).

advertising process, the template also keeps the administrative burden for PIs and research groups to a minimum.

The University of Granada does not stipulate any specific requirements regarding the nationality or country of residence of the applicants. However, in line with the current legislation, the eligibility of non-EU citizens will be subject to the Spanish Organic Law 4/2000.

Application procedure

In order to reduce the administrative burden for applicants, e-administration tools and processes are employed. Applications can either be submitted in person or online. Original documents and qualifications are only requested in the appointment phase.

Acknowledgement of receipt and communication with applicants

Provided that they supply a valid email address, applicants will be notified that their application has been received properly and can consult the timetable for the ensuing phases and deadlines in the corresponding call for applications.

Once receipt has been acknowledged and compliance with the minimum requirements has been verified, the University will publish a provisional list of candidates who have been admitted to the selection process, as well as those who are required to rectify or correct information in their application for it be accepted (e.g. because the information is incomplete or inaccurate). Candidates in this latter situation will be informed as to why their application has been excluded and will be given a deadline to make the necessary modifications. Applicants must only be excluded from participating in a call in the event that they do not meet these minimum requirements.

To ensure transparency, the definitive list of applicants who have been admitted to or excluded from the selection process will be published on the website of the Vice-Rectorate for Research and Knowledge Transfer.

Each candidate's file will then be sent to the corresponding selection committee for evaluation.

4. Evaluation and selection phase

Transparency, equality and merit

To guarantee that the best person for the job is recruited, the selection process must always be conducted in line with the principles of merit, ability, transparency, openness, equal opportunity and non-discrimination. In particular, candidates are to be evaluated without discrimination based on gender; nationality; ethnic or social background; disability; age; religion; sexual orientation; political opinions or their socioeconomic situation. Additionally, interruptions and variations in a researcher's career (such as career breaks, sabbaticals, maternity or paternity leave, etc.) will not be penalised, as they are considered to be a natural facet of a researcher's professional evolution and, consequently, represent valuable contributions to their professional development in multidisciplinary contexts.

Depending on the specific professional category or position in question, the competitive procedure used to evaluate candidates will either involve a merit-based selection process (*concurso de méritos*) or a civil service competitive examination (*concurso-oposición*).

Evaluation committees

Different regulations govern the selection of applicants by evaluation committees, depending on whether the positions in question are permanent or civil service teaching and research posts, or research contracts, etc. Consequently, the size and composition of each committee tends to vary in accordance with the profile and type of contract or post on offer.

The members of the selection or evaluation committee will be made public in an annex to the corresponding call for applications. The committee will comprise at least three experts in the relevant knowledge areas whose academic qualifications are on a par with those required for the position on offer, or superior. The committee members will be nominated by the person in charge of the project, research group, contract or corresponding agreement. To safeguard objectivity, external experts commonly feature in evaluation and selection committees.

As a general rule, the committee should possess the relevant experience, qualifications and skills required to effectively assess candidates. They should operate independently, must declare any conflict of interest, and their decisions should be impartial and based on evidence rather than on personal preference. Each member of the committee must confirm that they have read the UGR's Code of Good Practice in Research, especially the sections pertaining to conflicts of interest.

Diversity and gender awareness are fundamental throughout the entire recruitment process. In particular, gender balance is sought when it comes to appointing the members of the evaluation and selection committees.

Assessing merit

The specific evaluation criteria to be used are included in the corresponding call for applications. The committee will take the applicant's academic record into account as a primary criterion, except for positions that require a doctoral degree. Other criteria typically include the candidate's research curriculum vitae, professional experience, and specific training related to the position. All applications are pre-screened to check their eligibility (see the "Acknowledgement of receipt" section of this document).

Generally speaking, candidates are also commonly assessed through interview processes. Applicants who make it through to the provisional list of eligible candidates may be called for a remote or face-to-face interview. Where possible, the same evaluation committee will be involved in all of these steps.

5. Appointment phase

Depending on the professional category, the selected candidates will be announced in different media (i.e. BOE, BOJA, BOUGR).

The definitive scores obtained by each candidate in the evaluation and appointment process will also be made public on the website of the Vice-Rectorate for Research and Knowledge Transfer. The Research Support Service will publish candidates' overall scores within three days of having received them from the corresponding evaluation or selection committee.

The University of Granada offers all of its employees working conditions that are in line with national legislation in Spain, including full Social Security coverage, or coverage through the Mutual Fund for State Civil Servants (MUFACE). It also provides research staff with the technical resources they require to conduct their teaching and research activities. Furthermore, the UGR is fully committed to the principles established in the European Charter for Researchers, adopting measures to ensure staff members have a healthy work-life balance, sufficient holiday leave, and sufficient support in the event of temporary disability.

Complaints mechanism

The University of Granada has a robust and transparent complaints procedure in place for applicants who believe they have been treated unfairly or inappropriately. Additionally, if they feel that their complaint has not been appropriately handled through the standard channels, they can submit a complaint to the Rector of the University of Granada, in accordance with Law 39/2015 of 1 October on the Common Administrative Procedure in Public Administrations.

The University Ombudsman provides all members of the University community with confidential, independent and impartial advice, including on complaints procedures.

6. Actions to be developed

The University of Granada recognises the importance of continuously updating and improving our recruitment procedures and human resources strategy. Accordingly, within the next three years (2019-2022) the University will seek to implement the following measures:

- To run workshops for administrative and support staff (PAS) and teaching and research staff (PDI) on open, transparent and merit-based recruitment practices. These training sessions will be aimed especially at researchers and administrative staff involved in recruitment processes.
- To provide staff involved in the recruitment of international researchers with specialised training in conducting interviews in English.
- To provide candidates with a clearer idea of the professional development opportunities and career prospects available to them.
- To offer candidates clearer instructions on how to apply for positions from abroad, simplifying procedures where possible.
- To organise a training day to make the OTM-R policy known in our University to those responsible for recruitment issues.
- To monitor gender balance in selection committees in the medium to long term, implementing relevant actions where applicable. We will also include mention of the UGR's Action Plan for Gender Equality in all offers of employment.
- To enhance the overall quality of the information in English regarding recruitment procedures and employment conditions on our main websites.

Contact details:

If you have any queries regarding the University of Granada's OTM-R Policy please contact the International Research Projects Office (OFPI) at: ofpi@ugr.es.