

HR Excellence in Research

Process Description

Process Description

Case number

2025IT300593

Name Organisation under review

Università degli Studi di Ferrara

Organisation's contact details

Via Ariosto, 35, Ferrara, Italy, 44121, Italy

Date endorsement charter and code

30/01/2025

Process

The HR Excellence in Research strategy should be developed in consultation with stakeholders and involve a diverse group of researchers (from R1 to R4). It should also include the appointment of a committee to oversee the process and a working group to carry out the implementation.

Please provide the name, the position, and the management line / department of the persons who are directly or indirectly engaged in the HR Excellence in Research process in your organisation:

Name	Position	Steering Committee	Working Group	Management line/ Department
Laura Ramaciotti	R4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rector of the University of Ferrara
Giacomo Dimarco	R4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vice Rector for Research and Chair of the Academic Council for Research and Third Mission
Marco Pisano	General Director	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	General Director of the University of Ferrara
Enrico Deidda Gagliardo	R4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vice Rector for Planning, Budget and Public Value creation
Vincenzo Guidi	R4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Director of the University Institute for Advanced Studies
Riccardo Gavioli	R4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coordinator of the Quality Assurance Committee
Luigi Russo	R4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chair of the Ethic Commission
Enrico Bracci	R4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vice Rector for the Third Mission
Tamara Zappaterra	R4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vice Rector for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Cristiana Fioravanti	R4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coordinator of the Evaluation Committee
Annachiara Carniello	Administrative staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Head of Human Resources, Performance and Planning

Name	Position	Steering Committee	Working Group	Management line/ Department
Monica Campana	Administrative staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Manager of the Research Division
Ilaria Fazi	Administrative staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Manager of the Marketing and Communications Division
Cinzia Mancini	Administrative staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Head of the Inclusion Policy Coordination Office
Maurizio Pirani	Administrative staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Head of the Institute for Advanced Studies Office
Massimo Cinini	Administrative staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Manager of the Third Mission Division
Michele Ferrari	Administrative staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Manager of the Teaching Technologies Division
Egidio Grassi	Administrative staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Manager of the Economic Treatment Division
Lavinia Cavallini	Administrative staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Head of the Teaching and Student Services' Area
Anna Fantinati	R3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Department of Environmental and Prevention Sciences
Valentina Albanese	R2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Department of Chemical, Pharmaceutical and Agricultural Sciences
Federico Frattini	R3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Department of Economics and Management
Roberto Formisano	R3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Department of Humanities
Maria Giulia Bernardini	R3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Department of Law

Name	Position	Steering Committee	Working Group	Management line/ Department
Valentina Frighi	R2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Department of Architecture
Mattia Fogli	R2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Department of Mathematics and Computer Science
Saverio Farsoni	R3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Department of Engineering
Giulia Zonta	R2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Department of Physics and Earth Sciences
Francesca Zucchini	Administrative staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Project Manager
Silvia Vecchi	Administrative staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Head of Research and Third Mission's Area

Your organisation must consult its stakeholders and involve a representative community of researchers ranging from R1 to R4, as well as appoint a committee overseeing the process and a working group responsible for the implementation of the HR Excellence in Research process.

Provide information on how the researcher groups were involved in the gap analysis.

Stakeholder group	Consultation format	Contributions
University governance (Academic Senate and Board of Directions)	Academic Senate and Board of Directions appointed members of the Steering Committee in order to implement the HRS4R. Within the Steering Committee was appointed as members the Rector and the General Director. Before the final submission of the requested documents in the Euraxess portal, the Gap Analysis, the OTM-R Checklist, the Action Plan, together and the Process Description, were submitted to the members of the Academic Senate and of the Board of Directions for analysis, discussion and final approval	The Academic Senate and the Board of Directions Board gave feedback on the documents submitted by the team work of administrative experts and the focus group of researchers. They approved all the documents to submit to the European Commission (Process Description; OTM-R checklist; Gap Analysis; Action Plan)

Stakeholder group	Consultation format	Contributions
University Governance (Research Commission of the Council for Research and the Third Mission)	The Council for Research and the Third Mission, as a University body established by the Statute, was involved in identifying the members of the researchers' focus group in order to best implement the HRS4R process.	The Research Commission of the Council for Research and the Third Mission has indicated three researchers, one for each scientific area of the University of Ferrara, as referents for the focus group of researchers who, in turn, have proposed the names of the researchers to be included in the focus group. This allowed for the avoidance of a merely top-down process, involving the researchers themselves in the selection of their colleagues.
University Governance (Rector and General Director)	For the proper implementation of the HRS4R, the Rector, having taken note of the names indicated by the focus group referents, appointed members of the focus group of researchers officially. The General Director appointed members of the Working group. General Manager appointed also a Project Manager for the supervision and the coordination of the entire process and for assure the respect of the objectives and activities related to the HRS4R process. Both the Rector and the Director General were also members of the Steering Committee	The Rector signed the letter of endorsement of the European Charter for Researchers, giving impulse to the implementation of the HRS4R. The Rector appointed the focus group of researchers in charge of processing the survey results and suggesting proposals to foster the implementation of the European Charter for Researchers' principles. The Director General appointed the team work of administrative experts in charge of drafting the Gap Analysis and proposing the Action Plan. The Rector and the Director General, as members of the Steering Committee, contributed to validate the proposed Gap Analysis and approved the Action Plan.
Researchers (R1-R4)	The whole community of researchers was invited to fill a survey about the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers within the University of Ferrara. A representation of researchers was invited to join the focus group dedicated to the HRS4R process. The members of the focus group were chosen from the three scientific-disciplinary areas within the University to ensure the broadest possible representativeness.	The community of researchers expressed their perception of the current implementation of the European Charter for Researchers and their opinion regarding the areas for improvement. The Researchers' Focus Group analyzed the survey results, drafted the report highlighting the findings, identified the existing gaps, and proposed initiatives to fill the identified discrepancies.

Stakeholder group	Consultation format	Contributions
<p>University Governance (Vice-Rectors, Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee, Director of the University Institute for Higher Studies, Chair of the Ethics Committee)</p>	<p>Some of the Vice-Rectors (Research; Third Mission; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Budget and Public Value) together with the Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee, the Director of the University Institute for Higher Studies, the Chair of the Ethics Committee, the Rector's Delegate for the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, the Chair of the University Evaluation Board, the Rector and General Director, were appointed as members of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee participated in the alignment meetings in order to be constantly updated about the preparation of the documents to submit to the Euraxess portal, possibly suggesting amendments.</p>	<p>The Steering Committee reviewed the survey before it was submitted to the entire research community; it evaluated the analyses provided by both the administrative expert team and the researchers' focus group, and proposed the strategic lines of intervention for the Action Plan in synergy with the University's strategic planning.</p>
<p>Administrative staff (Directors and Heads of Office)</p>	<p>Members of the Administrative staff were appointed as members of the expert team. They provided feedback and proposals to the Steering Committee about the HRS4R documents.</p>	<p>Analysis of the national legislation and of the existing internal regulations affecting the principles of the European Charter for Researchers; Analysis of current internal practices and procedures; compilation of the relevant sections in the gap analysis; proposal of the actions to be included in the Action Plan</p>
<p>Project Manager</p>	<p>The Project Manager coordinated the administrative expert team and the researchers' focus group and revised all the produced documents and submitted them to the Steering Committee</p>	<p>the project manager convened and coordinated the meetings of the expert team, the focus group, and the Steering Committee. They collaborated with both the expert team and the focus group in drafting the documents to be submitted to the Steering Committee, specifically the Process Description, Gap Analysis, OTM-R Checklist, and Action Plan</p>

Stakeholder group	Consultation format	Contributions
Foreign University	The HRS4R Project Manager at Unife and the coordinators from the University of Kristianstad (Sweden) met to discuss their respective management of the process and to exchange best practices	They held an online meeting also with a colleague from Unife involved in the CoARA Alliance, to introduce themselves and compare their management of the HRS4R process. They fruitfully exchanged practices, ideas, points of view, and suggestions to improve the process

Please describe how the committee overseeing the process was appointed and how it worked (meetings, decisions, etc.).

The HRS4R process was overseen by a Steering Committee, whose members were appointed by the Rector, in order to represent the governance and to have decision-making power. The Steering Committee was composed of the key figures who contributed to the implementation of the University's strategies, in order to develop an Action Plan that aligned, on the one hand, with University policies and, on the other, with the domains covered by the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers. Indeed, the Steering Committee included the Vice-Rectors in charge of the domains directly or indirectly involved by the HRS4R, both in a short- and in a long-term perspective. The Steering Committee ensured institutional support for the initiative and its integration into the University's broader global strategy regarding the domains covered by the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (research ethics and integrity; freedom of scientific research; open science; gender equality; inclusion and diversity; free movement of researchers; research sustainability; assessment and selection of researchers; valorisation of results; continuous professional development).

Following an initial meeting to present the project, its rationale, objectives, and timeline, the Steering Committee reviewed the survey sent to the entire research community in Spring 2025. The survey served as a key tool not only for the subsequent Gap Analysis but also for the OTM-R Checklist and the Action Plan. Secondly, In the following months, the Steering Committee has examined the results of the questionnaire and the analysis report.

The HRS4R process was developed as follows:

- 1) The OTM-R checklist was drafted by the Administrative Working Group, specifically by the offices most affected by the the OTM-R requiremets
- 2) The Gap analysis was drafted through the parallel involvement of the Administrative Working Group and of the Researchers' Focus Group. Specifically, the working group analyzed national legislation, the internal regulations currently in force, and the survey results, identifying gaps and impediments as well as initiatives already implemented or currently underway at Unife. The Researchers' Focus Group analyzed the survey results, producing a detailed report that highlighted both Unife's strengths regarding the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and

potential areas for improvement. Subsequently, they met to conduct an in-depth analysis of two specific themes: 1) Research assessment: the researchers' perspective and ideas to bridge existing gaps; 2) Research and working environment: how stimulating is it? Ideas for improvement. For each of these themes, they proposed specific actions for the Action Plan. Given the high number of principles contained in the Charter, it was decided to conduct an in-depth analysis of specific themes, prioritizing topics of great interest to researchers—such as research assessment and the working environment. This approach aimed to optimize the focus group meetings and to obtain concrete proposals for improving these aspects, to be subsequently submitted to the Steering Committee.

3) Acting on behalf of the Steering Committee and the Rector, the Vice-Rector for Research (who also chairs the Academic Council for Research and Third Mission) reviewed the proposed Action Plan.

4) The Steering Committee reviewed the various documents, which were submitted at different stages throughout the year to allow sufficient time for evaluation. It subsequently approved the final versions of the Gap Analysis, the OTM-R Checklist, the Process Description, and the Action Plan ensuring its alignment with the University's strategic goals.

5) The final documentation was submitted to the University's Academic Senate and the Board of Directors for formal approval. This step was essential to secure full institutional endorsement of the proposed actions and to guarantee their feasibility within the projected timeline

Please describe how the working group doing the gap analysis was appointed.

Both the administrative expert team and the researchers' focus group were appointed with the aim of ensuring the widest possible involvement of the entire community in the HRS4R process.

The members of the administrative team, appointed by Decree of the Director General, were identified among the heads of the Areas and/or Offices most involved in the HRS4R process (Director of Personnel; Quality Assurance Manager; Director of the Research and Third Mission Area; PhD Office; Payroll Sector; IT Security Sector, etc.). This was done to ensure the participation of those who, based on the evidence emerging from the gap analysis, would also be responsible for the actions planned within the Action Plan of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers.

The members of the focus group, appointed by Rectoral Decree, were identified among Unife researchers with the goal of stimulating discussion and exchange between researchers from different scientific-disciplinary areas, fostering mutual knowledge and appreciation, and defining needs. In order to guarantee the broadest representativeness of the various scientific-disciplinary areas within the University, it was decided to include one representative for each area, who then identified the researchers to be involved within their respective field. The Research Committee of the Council for Research and Third Mission indicated the representatives for the three University macro-areas; these representatives then proposed the names of the researcher representatives for their relative areas.

Finally, it was considered important to identify a Project Manager to ensure the connection between the various groups involved, maintain relations with the European Commission (EC), and monitor alignment with and compliance with the activities required by the EC for the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers. The Project Manager, holding an advanced-level qualification in this field, was appointed by Decree of the Director General.

The complete version of the Gap Analysis was then drafted, taking into account the proposals emerging from both the Researchers' Focus Group and the administrative expert team, to be submitted to the Steering Committee and the University Academic Bodies.