



Institut Hospital del Mar  
d'Investigacions Mèdiques

# HR Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)

Action Plan 2021-2023

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HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

## Table of contents

1.	IMIM HR Strategy for Researchers. Introduction .....	2
2.	Design of 2021-2023 HRS4R Action Plan .....	2
3.	2021-2023 Action Plan .....	3
4.	IMIM OTM-R policy .....	7

## 1. IMIM HR Strategy for Researchers. Introduction.

Inaugurated in 1948 by Dr. Alexander Fleming, the Hospital del Mar Medical Research Institute (IMIM) is a center of excellence for biomedical and health research.

IMIM is part of the Parc de Salut Mar consortium. Thus, the institute counts with more than 700 professionals with a mixed composition of IMIM researchers, clinical researchers from Hospital del MAR, and other academic researchers from UPF and UAB.

Its proximity to Hospital del Mar and the *Campus Universitari Mar*, and its location in a solid scientific ecosystem like PRBB, place it in a privileged biomedical position in Barcelona.

IMIM's translational research is carried out through five well-structured research programs: epidemiology and public health, neuroscience, cancer, biomedical informatics, and clinical translational research.

On December 16<sup>th</sup> 2013, IMIM obtained the accreditation from Carlos III Health Institute (ISCIII) as a Health Research Institute (IIS). Years later, in 2015, IMIM was recognized as a CERCA institute by the Catalan Government. Later that year, IMIM received the 'HR Excellence in Research' logo from the European Commission. The logo identifies the institutions and organizations as providers and supporters of a stimulating and favorable working environment, and committed in developing an HR Strategy for Researchers, designed to bring the practices and procedures in line with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter and Code).

An **action plan** was designed for the **2015-2017** period with the involvement of a working group made up of representatives from research group leaders and Quality and HR Departments. After, the plan was approved by the Director of IMIM. The IMIM 2015-2017 Action Plan enabled the institution to start a process of evaluation, monitoring and continuous improvement in alignment with the European Charter and Code principles. For more information on the IMIM 2015-2017 HRS4R Action Plan, please click [here](#).

A next **2017-2020 Action Plan** was designed with the coordination of HRS4R working group. The HRS4R implementation process was carried out at the same time that discussions about the Strategic Plan 2016-2021, where researchers had the opportunity to participate in specific working groups organized on Research Programme basis. Relevant contributions were received about institutional practices or policies. Those proposals considered to be linked to Ch&C development were taken into account to design the new HRS4R Action plan. This Action Plan included those actions from the Action Plan 2015-2017 that were not completed. For more information on the IMIM 2017-2020 HRS4R Action Plan, please click [here](#).

## 2. Design of 2021-2023 HRS4R Action Plan

With the arrival of a new Direction in March 2020, the institution started a thorough internal evaluation process with a common goal: to increase the international relevance of IMIM as a fundamental contributor to biomedical research aimed to increase healthy human lifespan.

To achieve this, the IMIM has defined three strategic working lines (Scientific Excellence, Efficient Growth, and Contribution to Society), and an action plan to develop them to the highest quality standards.

One of the first actions related to the creation of new areas and committees to promote the progress of strategic lines, was the constitution of an Internal Scientific Committee (ISC) made up of researchers from all stages of the professional career (R1-R4), representatives of the managing direction, innovation, training and quality units and chaired by the Director of IMIM. This Board, which has three main functions (advise the Director in strategic decisions, advise on institutional policies and facilitate internal communication), is also responsible to ensure the definition, integration, evaluation and progress of the HRS4R Action Plan.

The 2021-2023 Action Plan design was coordinated by the Department of Excellence and counted with the support of the ISC. For this design it has been taken into account the Strategic Plan of IMIM 2021-2024 and the recommendations from CERCA and ISCIII. The new Action Plan also includes those actions from the Action Plan 2017-2020 that have not been completed yet.

### 3. 2021-2023 Action Plan

The aim of the **2021-2023 Action Plan** is to ensure that the evolution of IMIM is aligned with the HRS4R standards. The proposed actions have been grouped in four areas according with the European Charter and Code (Ethical and professional aspects, Recruitment and selection, Working conditions and Training and development). A responsible unit, a timing and indicator have been defined for each action. A regular implementation assess of the Action Plan will be carried out, as propose adjustments, whenever applicable. The Direction will be reported twice a year by including a follow-up in the agenda of ISC meetings.

#### Action Plan 2021-2023

ETHICAL & PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS				
	Action	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicator/Target
1	Carry out an internal process of analysis of the institution -with the participation of staff from all professional groups- taking into account the evaluations / recommendations of the funding institutions, scientific, economic, transfer indicators as well as the perception of the institution on the outside.	Q1 2021	Excellence	Internal analysis report.
2	Establish an Internal Scientific Committee with representation of research staff from all career stages and representation from the Innovation, Training and Quality areas to advise the Direction on strategic decisions, advise on institutional policies and facilitate internal communication.	Q1 2021	Direction	Committee constituted.
3	Carry out a process of round tables with stakeholders of the institution to detect opportunities, synergies and points for improvement.	Q2 2021	Excellence	Roundtable minutes.

4	Increase support for research staff in the exploitation of intellectual property by hiring a professional expert in technology transfer.	Q2 2021	Direction	Translational officer incorporation.
5	Establish a Scientific and Technical Infrastructure Users' Committee, including a broad representation of regular users from all research programmes and also involving R1-R4 representatives of the Internal Scientific Committee.	Q2 2021	Direction / Scientific & Technical Services	Committee constituted.
6	Define a new Strategic Plan 2021-2024 with the participation of all professional groups.	Q3 2021	Excellence	IMIM Strategic Plan 2021-2024 defined
7	Implement a system of annual assessment of the administrative services of the institution through a survey of all members of the IMIM to obtain an objective indicator of the performance of administrative services. The survey will include specific sections for support suggestions on how these services can be improved with the aim of adapting them to the needs of researchers.	Q4 2021	Quality	Survey analysis.
8	Implement an annual evaluation system for scientific and technical services through a survey of all IMIM members to obtain an objective indicator of the degree of satisfaction of scientific and technical services. Also, monographic sessions with the users will be carried out for each service to gather specific suggestions for improvement.	Q4 2021	Quality	Survey analysis.
9	Define an internal evaluation system to assess the performance of research groups in attracting competitive funding, drive knowledge and transfer it to clinical practice and the market.	Q4 2021	ISC / ESAB	Evaluation reports.
10	Redefine the current onboarding process with the aim of adjusting it to the real needs of the newly hired staff according to their profile (R1-R4, technicians, management staff).	Q1 2022	Talent & Training	Onboarding protocol updated.
11	Strengthen institutionally responsible research and innovation (RRI) policies to increase and make visible our social responsibility, by hiring a professional expert in scientific information management and performance indicators, open science, scientific communication, etc.	Q1 2022	Excellence	RRI Officer incorporation.
12	Develop an outreach plan in accordance with the Hospital del Mar.	Q2 2022	Communication / Amics del Mar	Number of actions in Outreach plan implemented
13	Promote high-level external collaborations with groups and institutions of excellence, in order to optimise the use of IMIM resources and enable new funding opportunities.	Q3 2022	Direction / RRI	Number of collaborative action with external institutions.

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION				
	Action	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicator/Target
14	Modify the protocol in order to provide adequate feedback to interviewees.	Q4 2021	Talent&Training/ IT	New app implemented. Protocol modified with the inclusion of the new process.
15	Carrying out the description of job positions for research personnel.	Q4 2021	Talent&Training/ Equality Committee	100% work positions described.
16	Modify the job advertisements to include references/links to all the elements foreseen in the relevant section 4.4.1 a). Design and implement an application to automate public call procedures that facilitate access and monitoring of the process by candidates.	Q4 2021	Talent&Training/ HR / IT	New app implemented.
17	Open a register for appeals or complaints	Q4 2021	Talent&Training/ HR / IT	New app implemented.
18	Draw up a training plan for OTM-R procedures and practices among the community of investigators.	Q4 2021	Talent&Training/ HR	Number of staff trained in OTM-R procedures.
19	Carry out the description of the jobs of the technical and management staff following the format and procedure used for the research staff.	Q4 2021	Talent&Training/ Equality Committee	Jobs descriptions process completed.
20	Implement an annual public call for a R4 researcher position, addressed to both internal and external candidates with a proven track record of excellence in raising competitive funds, the generation of high-profile articles impact and the transfer of their findings to clinical practice or the market.	Q4 2021	Talent&Training/ HR	Annual call completed.
21	Carry out the assessment of all the jobs that the institution currently has with a gender perspective, guaranteeing criteria of adequacy, totality and objectivity.	Q1 2022	Talent&Training/ Equality Committee	Jobs assessment process completed.
22	Increase the use of English in all actions, policies and information, in order to improve the international visibility of the institution and attracting talent.	Q1 2022	Excellence / Communication	% of use of English in institutional documentation, communications, etc.
23	Review and update the recruitment and selection policy in line with the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-based recruitment.	Q2 2022	Excellence / HR	New recruitment policy.
24	Develop a plan to strengthen collaboration with universities that includes activities aimed at facilitating the recruitment of staff in the early stages of the scientific career.	Q3 2022	Talent&Training	Number of collaborative actions with universities

25	Update the institutional website with the aim of improving the projection of the institution abroad promoting the attraction of national and international talent	Q4 2022	Communication / IT	Website updated.
26	Promote recruitment of R3 researchers from external competitive calls.	Q4 2023	Talent&Training/ HR	Number of competitive calls.
<b>WORKING CONDITIONS</b>				
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Responsible Unit</b>	<b>Indicator/Target</b>
27	Implement the professional career for researchers.	Q2 2022	Direction / Talent&Training	New proposal of research career approved.
28	Put in place incentives applicable to research activity according to the professional career	Q4 2022	Talent&Training/ HR	Number of staff with PC.
29	Define talent retention/attraction policy.	Q3 2023	Direction	Talent retention/attraction policy defined.
30	Update the Protocol for the prevention and intervention of harassment in the workplace in order to adapt it to the current legal framework and apply improvements in the intervention procedures and actions to be taken by the parties involved. The aim is to guarantee the comprehensive protection of those affected by an alleged situation of harassment at work.	Q2 2021	Talent&Training/ Healthy & Safety	Protocol for the prevention and intervention of harassment in the workplace.
31	Carry out actions to disseminate the new Protocol for the prevention and intervention of harassment in the workplace.	Q4 2021	Talent&Training/ Healthy & Safety	Number of actions carried out.
32	Establish an instrument to carry out an annual salary record of all jobs.	Q1 2022	Talent&Training/ HR	Annual salary record completed.
33	Perform a salary audit with a gender perspective linked with the Equal Opportunity Plan.	Q1 2022	Talent&Training/ HR	Salary audit completed.
34	Design a new Equality Plan 2021-2024 approved by the Equality Commission and the Direction.	Q2 2022	Talent&Training/ Equality Committee	Equality Opportunity plan approved.
35	Define a telework policy that facilitates and promotes family, personal and work conciliation.	Q2 2022	Direction / HR	Telework policy defined.
36	Implement the actions defined in the new Equality Plan 2021-2024.	Q4 2023	Talent&Training/ Equality Committee	Number of actions completed.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT				
	Action	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicator/Target
37	Definition and implementation of a mentoring programme aimed towards research personnel.	Q4 2023	Talent&Training	>15% junior researchers applying mentoring programme
38	Organize specific training for the Equality Commission in order to promote their training and experience in the field of equality in the workplace.	Q4 2021	Talent&Training	Number of actions carried out.
39	Design a program of open institutional seminars aimed at attracting and retaining talent, which includes new researchers, researchers interested in the annual R3 and R4 places, projects related to the possibility of collaborating in large structures, national and international (CIBER, CERCA, IRISCAT centers, etc.), etc.	Q1 2022	Communication	Program of open institutional seminars defined.
40	Develop a policy to support emerging groups that establishes a monitoring system, decisions on initial packages, co-financing in competitive calls and special considerations for emerging groups in internal evaluations.	Q2 2022	Direction / ISC	Policy for emerging groups defined.
41	Implement a plan to advice to research staff in applications for international grants, mainly European calls, through training actions, support with applications, identification of opportunities, etc.	Q2 2022	Competitive funding	Plan to advice in international grants defined.
42	Incorporate training on harassment in the workplace in the compulsory initial training of newly hired staff.	Q1 2023	Talent&Training/ Healthy&Safety	Number of actions carried out.
43	Design and implement a specific training program for new staff, adapted according to their profile.	Q2 2023	Talent&Training/ Scientific& Technical Services	Welcoming training plan according the profile defined.
44	Carry out actions of institutional support for predoctoral staff.	Q4 2023	Excellence	Number of actions carried out.

#### 4. IMIM OTM-R policy

Our recruitment and selection policy is based on the guidelines established by the OTM-R principles, which is one of the pillars of the European Charter for Researchers and in particular the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. It aims to ensure open, transparent and merit-based practices for the benefit of researchers, institutions and the research system as a whole.



#### 4.1 Advertising and application phase

We want to attract the best talent possible at international level, so all calls are disseminated as much as possible. Positions are advertised following established guidelines and templates (e.g., EURAXESS), encouraging external candidates. Thus, positions are shared in international portals, including the EURAXESS portal. To make it possible, our OTM-R policy is in line with institutional policies to attract researchers from abroad. Our OTM-R policy is also in line with our institutional policies to provide attractive working conditions for researchers. The policy is also in line with policies to provide attract underrepresented groups including LGBTQ+, under-represented races or nationalities.

We do a sufficient use of e-recruitment tools. We count with a specific digital tool that facilitates the process of recruitment and keep the administrative burden to a minimum for the candidates

#### 4.2 Evaluation and selection phase

Our OTM-R policy includes clear rules governing the appointment of Selection Committees, as well as concerning their composition. This ensures that the Committees are integrated by members with diverse expertise and competences, and with an adequate gender balance. Members are invited to participate in the Selection Committee by the responsible of the Talent Unit, at the same time they are informed of all principles in the Ch&C and on our OTM-R policy, including OTM-R procedures and practices for all types of positions. Thus, they count with clear guidelines to judge merit in a way that leads to the best candidate being selected.

#### 4.3 Appointment phase

The use of e-recruitment tools also allows applicants to communicate complaints at any moment of the process or request additional feedback, and they are automatically informed at the end of the selection process. This tool, along with the criteria of the Selection Committees, also allow us to monitor whether the most suitable researchers apply to the calls. In addition, an interconnected digital tool works as quality control system for OTM-R, ensuring a right follow up of OTM-R principles, according with the indicators defined during the last HRS4R plan. This system also makes possible to assess whether OTM-R delivers on its objectives.