

HR Excellence in Research award

Guidelines



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

28/02/2025

The last version of this document is published on the HR Excellence in Research portal <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/hrexcellenceaward> and replaces any previous version. In case of divergence, the information provided in the last published version prevails.

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Note on the transition to the implementation of the 2023 European Charter for Researchers.

On 18 December 2023 the Council Adopted the “[Council Recommendation on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe](#)”¹. The new Charter for Researchers (Annex 2 to the Council Recommendation) replaces the old 2005 Charter & Code².

Those organisations that have endorsed the principles of the old Charter and Code for Researchers and have adhered to the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers, are considered as continuing to endorse the Charter for Researchers and to progress without interruption in its implementation process.

On 26 November 2024, in occasion of the HR Excellence info day, the new e-Tool for the implementation of the 20 Principles of the European Charter for Researchers was formally launched.

After the launch of the new HR Excellence in Research initiative e-tool on 26 November 2024:

- **New applications:**
All new HR award cases will be initiated under the revised European Charter for Researcher (20 principles).
- **Ongoing HR award cases:**
 - Cases having completed their interim phase, or having successfully completed the last Renewal phase **after** 26 November 2024 will automatically transition to the new forms under the 20 principles of the European Charter for Researchers
 - HR award cases having completed their interim phase, or having successfully completed their previous Renewal **before** 26 November 2024 will complete the current ongoing phase under the 40 principles of the Charter & Code. Upon successful completion, they will automatically transition to the new forms under the 20 principles of the European Charter for Researchers.

Important Note: The transition to the new forms under the 20 principles will occur automatically: **users do not have the option to choose which forms to use**. The switch from the 40 to the 20-principles e-Tool does not require user intervention.

Final Transition Deadline: By 30 December 2027, all organisations are expected to have completed any pending activities in the old e-Tool. Exceptions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

¹ Council Recommendation C/2023/1640 of 18 December 2023 a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/1640/oj>.

² Commission Recommendation 2005/251/EC of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2005/251/oj>

The European Charter for Researchers.

In 2005 the European Commission recommended the Member States to take duly into account and be guided by the general principles and requirements set out in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter & Code)³

On 18 December 2023 the Council Adopted the “[Council Recommendation on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe](#)”⁴. The new European Charter for Researchers (Annex 2 to the Council Recommendation) replaces the old 2005 Charter & Code.

The European Charter for Researchers is a set of principles underpinning the development of attractive research careers to support excellence in research and innovation across Europe. The focus of the European Charter for Researchers is the rights and responsibilities of researchers, employers, funders, and policymakers.

The European Charter for Researchers is directed at all researchers, research performing sectors and respective umbrella organisations (stakeholders). This includes:

- a) Researchers in all sectors – academia, public and private organisations performing research;
- b) Employers of researchers in the public and private sector;
- c) Funders of research and researchers in the public and private sector;
- d) Policy makers concerned with policies relevant to the Charter.

It addresses researchers across all disciplines including Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) and Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH). It covers all types of research from frontier, targeted, strategic, applied, and close to market.

³ 2005/251/EC , OJ L 75, 22.3.2005, p. 67–77 – <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2005/251/oj>

⁴ Council Recommendation C/2023/1640 of 18 December 2023 a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/1640/oj>.

INTRODUCTION

The HR Excellence in Research e-Tool is the tool for the implementation of the European Charter for Researchers⁵ and it is the sole mechanism to apply, obtain, and maintain the “HR Excellence in Research award” (hereafter HR award). No manual application will be accepted.

The HR award is granted to those research organisation that endorsed the European Charter for Researchers, committed to its implementation, and are making progress towards it. There are no geographic limitations in undertaking the process.

Enrolment to this process is voluntary and free of charges. The award is granted for a three-years period, after which it must be renewed. Applicant Organisations should be aware that this is a long-term commitment involving joint efforts and coordination with various internal and external stakeholder groups.

The HR Excellence in Research process, or “HR award process” (previously called Human Resources Strategy for Researchers, - HRS4R) is based on a structured and monitored auditing mechanism, centred on a three-years cycles continuous assessment based on gap-analysis and action plans for the grant of the “HR Excellence in Research Award. Once an organisation receives the award, this is automatically displayed on the job adverts of that organisation published on EURAXESS portal. Furthermore, the organisation can display the award on its website, publications, and promotional material.

These guidelines are an instrument in support to the organisations interested or already enrolled in the HR award process and will provide the necessary information and the practical steps for the HR award process of implementation of the European Charter for Researchers.

Originally launched in 2008 as a manual based procedure, the HR award process migrated to an IT platform in 2018. Introduced on 15 May 2018, the e-Tool became the sole official platform for the management of the HR award process. The e-tool is an instrument developed and managed by EC/RTD, Unit A2 (ERA, Spreading Excellence and Research Careers). Every aspect of the HR award process (e.g. start of a new HR award case, internal reviews, assessments, management of deadlines, etc.) is managed exclusively via the e-tool.

The Library of the HR award portal provides a collection of useful information and contains examples of a variety documents, either currently in use or that have been used in the past.

The official set of instructions is constituted by the version of the guidelines published on the HR award portal. Any manual template made available in the past, should not be used anymore: the only official forms to be used in the HR award process are contained in the on-line forms in the e-tool.

⁵ Council Recommendation C/2023/1640 of 18 December 2023 a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/1640/oj>.

Should you consider that these guidelines do not address your questions, or in case you need further advice please contact:

- For contacting the Helpdesk on all IT technical issues regarding the e-Tool: support@euraxess.org
- For info and assistance on all non-technical issues and requests for help and support on the HR award process and the use of the e-Tool (e.g. questions on the process, extension of deadlines, clarifications on the HR award Guidelines, etc.): HR-award@euraxess.org

Attention: this mailbox will be activated in Summer 2025. Until then, please use RTD-Charter@ec.europa.eu

- for contacting the RTD-CHARTER team at the EC on all non-procedural and non-technical issues (complaints, policy development, requests to attend to events, etc.): RTD-CHARTER@ec.europa.eu

Please, remember to always include in your correspondence the case number assigned to your file.

1. Getting started

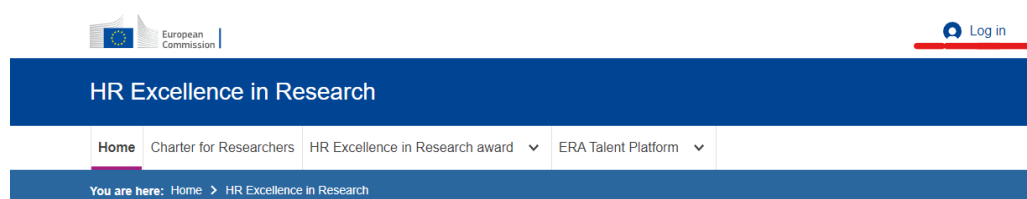
Before starting the application process for the HR award, interested organisations should first analyse the 20 principles of the European Charter for Researchers and proceed to a first self-assessment in terms of how the organisation relates to them and what still need to be done to proceed towards their implementation (see also gap analysis).

Once the organisation decides to endorse the European Charter for Researchers and apply for the HR award, the first steps are:

- to secure access to the e-Tool
- to create an Organisation account
- to assign an HR award Admin

1.1.EU Login

Like other EU initiatives, the HR award e-Tool is accessible via EU Login. This is the European Commission's user authentication service, and it allows authorised users to access a wide range of Commission web services, using a single email address and password. To create an EU Login, register on the [EU Login register page](https://ecas.ec.europa.eu/cas/login) (<https://ecas.ec.europa.eu/cas/login>).



1.2.Your Organisation account

The EURAXESS and the HR award initiatives are tightly linked and integrated sharing the same database, statistical mechanism, and registration process. To start a new application and to access the HR award e-Tool, your organisation must exist on EURAXESS. If it does not exist yet, an “organisation account” can be created from an individual EURAXESS member account as described below. Registration and membership to EURAXESS are free of charge. Below are described the two possible cases:

Join an existing organisation profile

If the URL of an existing organisation profile matches the domain of the email address you have used to register on the EURAXESS portal, you will be allowed to join this organisation as a member.

Navigate to your dashboard, located on MY EURAXESS in the main menu. The system will display the profiles of the organisation(s) of which you are already a member.

[Help on managing your information](#)

[User Account](#) [Researcher Profile](#) [My Research Buddy](#) [My Organisation](#) [Favorites](#) [Saved search](#)

My Organisation(s) Find my Organisation +

Name	Department	Laboratory
Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.v.v.i.		Operations ▾
Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry, v.v.i.	Structure analysis	Operations ▾
Ustav makromolekularni chemie AV CR, v.v.i.	Polymer Gels	Operations ▾
Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry CAS		Operations ▾
Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry CAS	Project department	Operations ▾

You can search for an organisation by clicking on the “Find my Organisation” button.

An official website of the European Union How do you know? ▾

My EURAXESS ▾ Search Search

EURAXESS
Researchers in motion

Home Jobs & Opportunities ▾ Living & Working in Europe ▾ Career Development ▾ Initiatives ▾ Network ▾ ERA Talent Platform ▾

You are here: Home > My EURAXESS > Search for an organisation

Search for an organisation

Important Note: You can search for an organisation by name, department, laboratory and URL. If a match is found you can ask the administrator to add you as a member. If no match is found you can proceed and register your new organisation. [Close this message](#)

Organisation Name *
 URL *
 Department
 Laboratory
[Search](#) [Reset](#)

Relevant Organisations

JREC-IN Portal
 Website <https://localhost.localdomain>
[Contact the Organisation Admin](#)

Since there are no exact matches, you can proceed to register your organisation.

[Register Organisation](#)

Input the “Organisation name” and the website URL starting with “http://” or “https://” and click “Search”. If a match is identified, you can ask the administrator to add you as a member, by clicking on the “Contact the Organisation Admin” option.

Relevant Organisations

JREC-IN Portal
 Website <https://localhost.localdomain>
[Contact the Organisation Admin](#)

Register a new organisation profile

If no match is found, you can proceed to register the new organisation profile by clicking on the “Register Organisation” button. As a rule, an “Organisation profile” should refer to the main organisation, not to a department, institute, or laboratory: the HR award process is in fact addressed to the whole organisation and not a subsidiary entity (which is referred to as a “unit”). Once the main organisation obtains the HR award, all its “units” can display it as well.

The screenshot shows the EURAXESS website's 'Register new organisation' page. The header includes the EURAXESS logo and navigation links. The main content area contains a form with the following fields and options:

- Organisation name:** Text input field.
- Website:** Text input field with placeholder 'http://localhost.localdomain'.
- Organisation Type:** Dropdown menu with a red asterisk and a hint: 'Select from the list the type of the organisation, for instance: "higher Education Institute".'
- Country:** Dropdown menu with a red asterisk and a hint: 'Select from the list the country of the organisation, for instance: "United Kingdom".'
- Street:** Text input field with a red asterisk and a hint: 'Enter the organisation's address'.
- City:** Text input field with a red asterisk and a hint: 'Enter the organisation's city'.
- State/Province:** Text input field with a hint: 'Enter the organisation's state/province'.
- Postal Code:** Text input field with a hint: 'Enter the organisation's postal code'.
- Edit procedure:** Dropdown menu with a red asterisk and a hint: 'Select whether your organisation will use the portal's web interface to submit job offers (Online) / or sending an XML file (Offline)'. The 'Online' option is selected.
- Post to external job platforms:** Dropdown menu with a red asterisk and a hint: 'Agree to making my jobs'. The 'Agree to making my jobs' option is selected.
- Save:** A blue button at the bottom of the form.

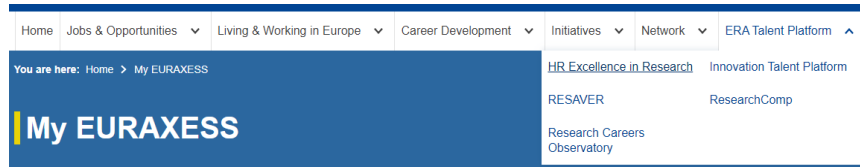
Click on the “Save” button to send the form to the Help Desk for validation. The Help Desk will check if the newly registered organisation’s domain of activity is related to research and if there are duplicate registrations of the same organisation. Once the organisation account passes the administrative check performed by the Help Desk, you will be informed accordingly in a dedicated email (normally registration requests are treated within the same working day).

NB: once registered, the organisation name cannot be changed by the Organisation Admin or the HR award Admin. To change the registered name of the Organisation, please contact the Help Desk support@euraxess.org.

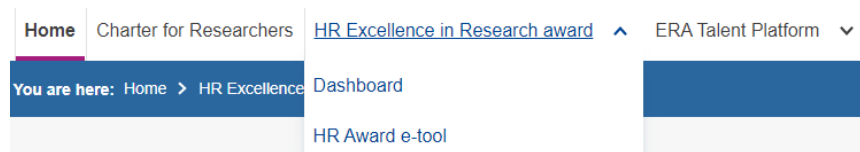
1.3.HR Award Administrator role

Once you have become a member of an existing organisation profile, or have created a new organisation profile for your organisation, you need to select an “HR Award Administrator” (HR award Admin) by following the next steps:

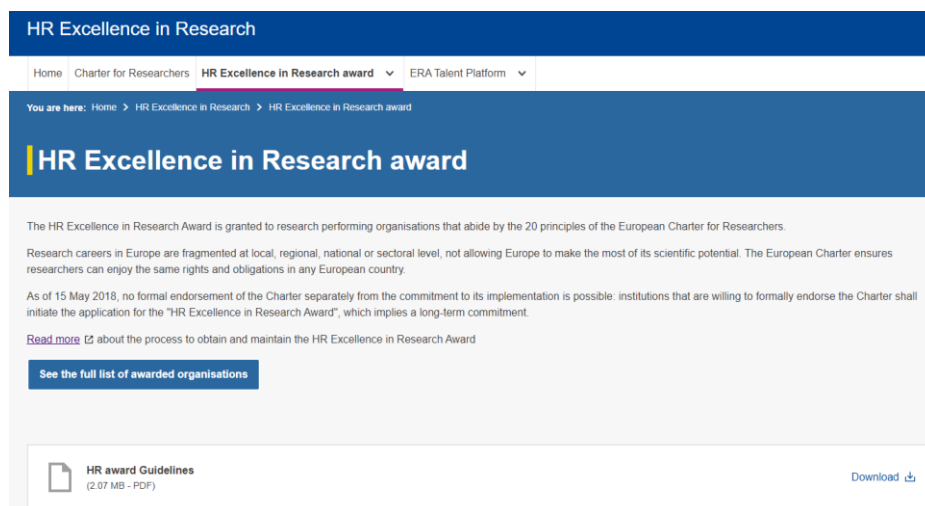
Login to the EURAXESS portal and navigate to HR Excellence in Research subdomain:



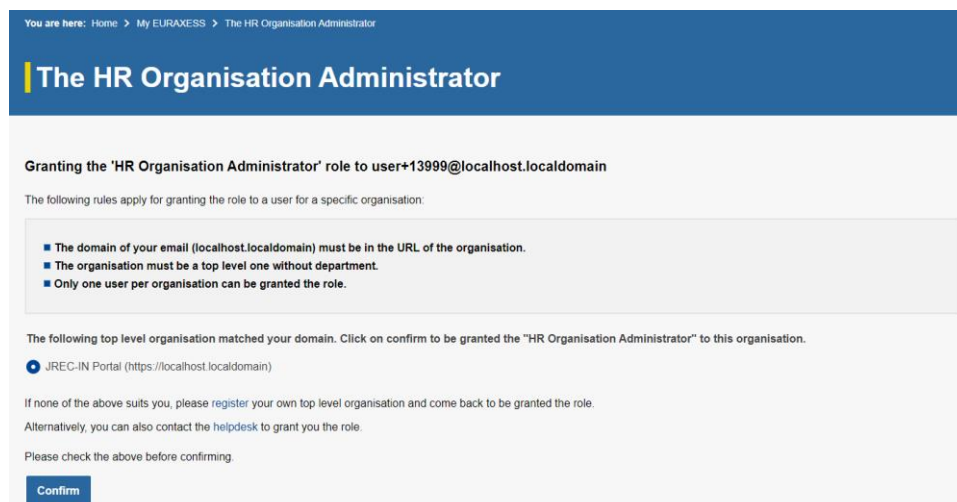
From there navigate to HR Excellence in Research award:



In the page displayed, click on the “Read more” link:



This will display the page where the users can register themselves as a “HR Award Administrator” for any of the listed organisations:



Choose the organisation for which you wish to become the HR award Admin. You will be presented only with umbrella organisation(s) (i.e. without department), if the URL of the organisation profile matches the domain of your email address. For example, if your email is user@organisation.com, the URL of the registered organisation must be <https://organisation.com>.

You can choose only one umbrella organisation, even if multiple profiles are displayed in the form.

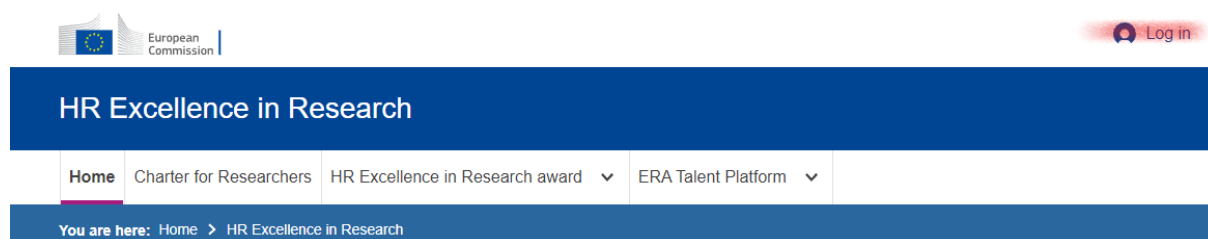
If none of the displayed organisations matches your organisation, you can proceed with registering a new profile or contact the Help Desk (support@euraxess.org) using the email link presented under the form.

N.B.: You may change the contact person appointed as HR award Admin at any time. Send an email to the Help Desk (support@euraxess.org) indicating the name, email address (as registered in the portal), function and contact details of the person that should be granted the HR award Admin role.

Please, note that this role is granted only to one person per organisation, and it is responsibility of the organisation to always ensure a HR award Admin with a valid email. Remember that only the HR award Admin will be the contact point of the organisation on HR award matters and will receive the e-Tool automatic communications

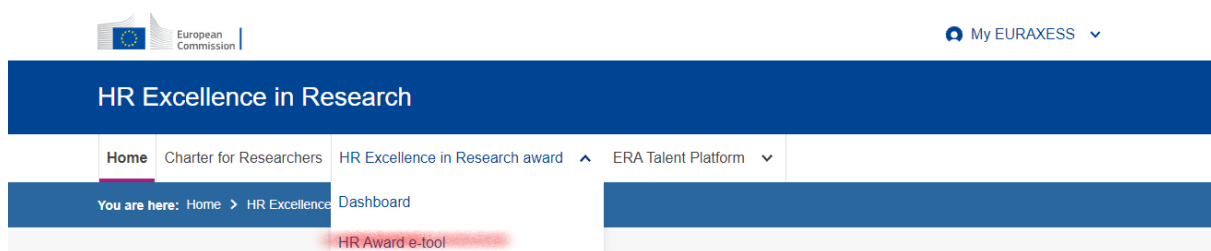
1.4. Management of HR award dashboard for HR award Admins

Once you have been granted the HR award Admin role, you will gain access to the HR award e-Tool to access your organisation case. Click on “Log in” on the upper-right side (see picture below) and enter your EU Login and password.

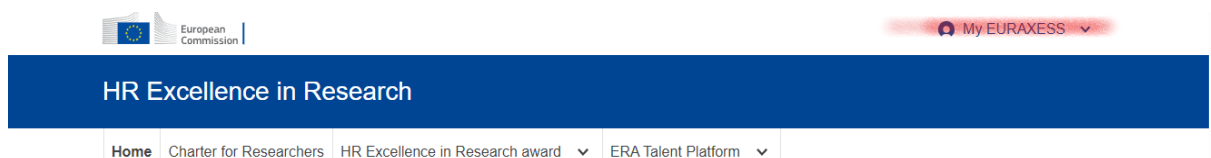


Remember: To access your HR award case, you must login as **HR award Admin** using the credentials of your individual account, not your organisation's ones.

Once logged in, the HR Excellence in Research portal menu will include an additional line called **HR award e-Tool** (see picture below). This is where the HR award Admin will access and manage the organisation's case.



Finally, after login the “Log In” link will be substituted by the “My EURAXESS” one (see picture below) where you can manage your account.



2. The HR award process

The HR award Process is the implementation mechanism of the European Charter for Researchers. It is a voluntary, structured, and monitored auditing mechanism, centred on a continuous assessment in three-years cycles and based on a sequence of assessments, centred on gap-analysis and action plans for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers.

2.1. General description

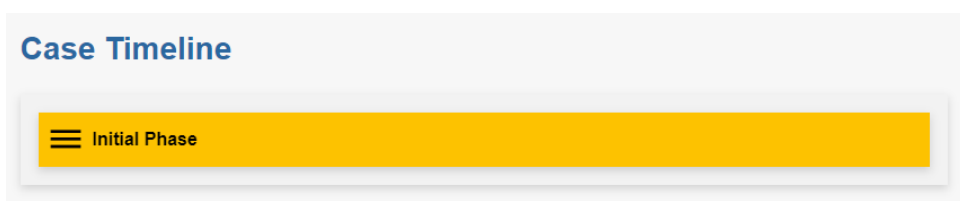
The HR award process comprises three distinct phases:

1. The initial phase, leading to the granting of the HR Excellence in Research award.
2. The interim phase, which is an intermediate phase between initial and renewal phase and is meant to provide guidance in the first stages of the HR award process.
3. The renewal phases for the renewal of the HR award. The renewal phases are based on a three-year cycle alternating site visits and remote assessments.

The Initial phase

- Registration in the e-tool
- Submission of the **application** for the "HR Excellence in Research Award" by uploading the "**Letter of endorsement and commitment**";
- Within a year from the acceptance of the registration of the letter in the e-Tool, the organisation shall complete the four forms **Process Description, Gap Analysis, Action Plan**, and **OTM-R checklist**;
- Initial granting of the HR award.

When in this phase, only the "Initial Phase" tab will show at the timeline

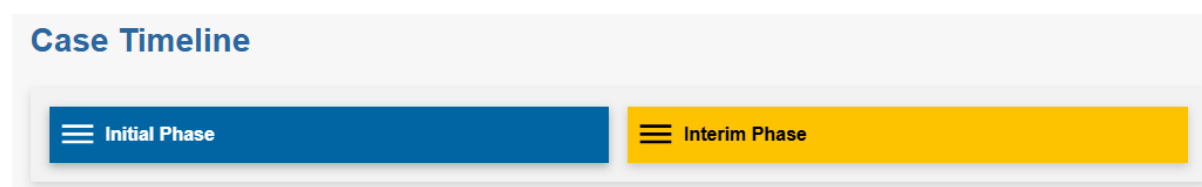


The Interim phase

Two years (24 months) after the initial granting of the HR award:

- Assessment of implementation of the **Initial Action Plan** published at initial phase;
- Publication and assessment of the **Revised Action Plan**, which will cover the upcoming three years (36 months).

When at this phase, both the “Initial Phase” and the “Interim Phase” tabs will show at the timeline:

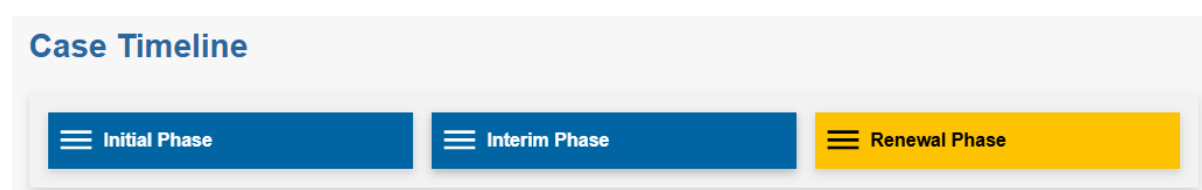


The Renewal phase(s)

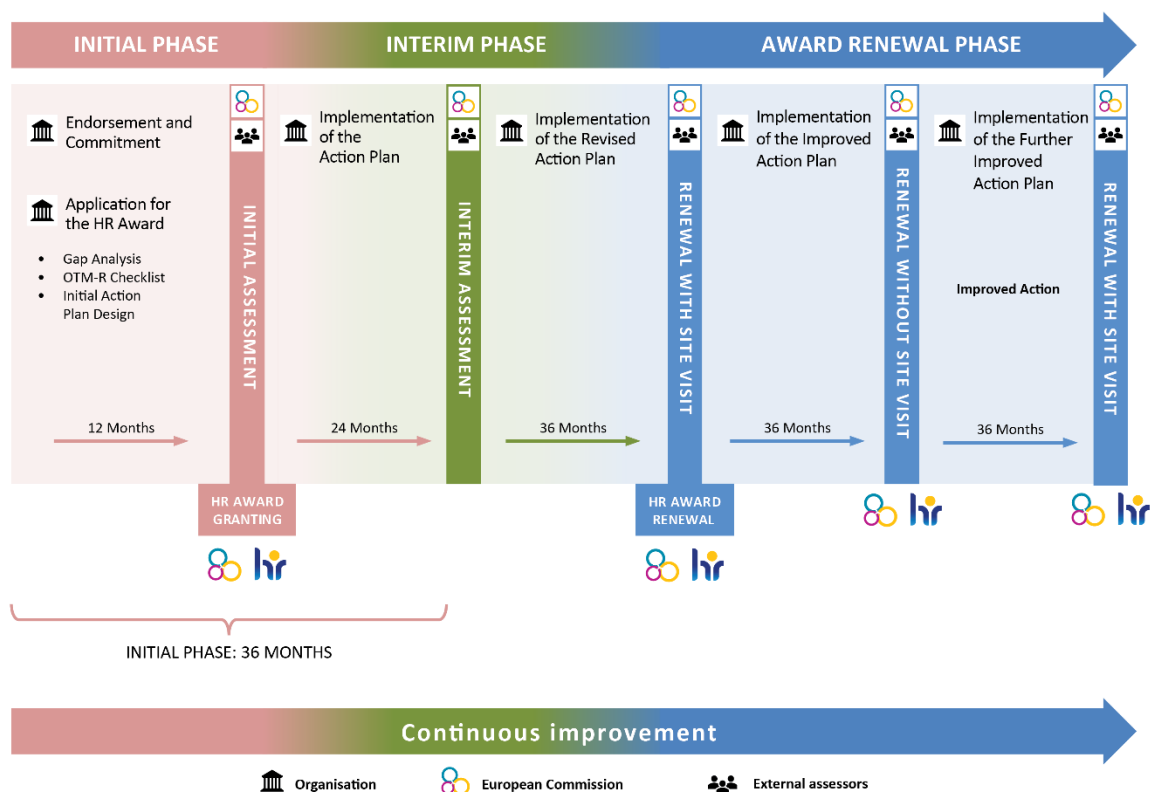
Three years (36 months) after the interim assessment:

- Assessment of the implementation of the **Revised Action Plan** published at interim phase;
- publication and assessment of the **Improved Action Plan**, which will cover the upcoming three years (36 months);
- the first Renewal Phase will also include a **Site Visit** on the premises of the organisation;
- all the subsequent Renewal Phases will keep implementing **Improved Action Plan** alternating every three years (every 36 months) a Renewal with site visit and a Renewal without site visit (i.e. 1st renewal with site visit, 2nd renewal without site visit, 3rd renewal with site visit, 4th renewal without site visit and so on....)

When in this phase, the three tabs for the “Initial Phase”, the “Interim Phase”, and the “Renewal Phase” will show at the timeline.



Below is a synoptic graphic representation illustrating the different phases of the process:



2.2. Deadline extension request

At any phase, in case the organisation needs more time for submitting its Internal Review, it can **request an extension of the deadline**.

The request is submitted **via the e-tool only** using the “Extension request” **section in the GAP Analysis & OTM-R Design or Internal Review tasks** (see example below), which is **activated one month before the deadline**.

The standard extension is **one additional month** from the previously set deadline. This standard extension request is always accepted.

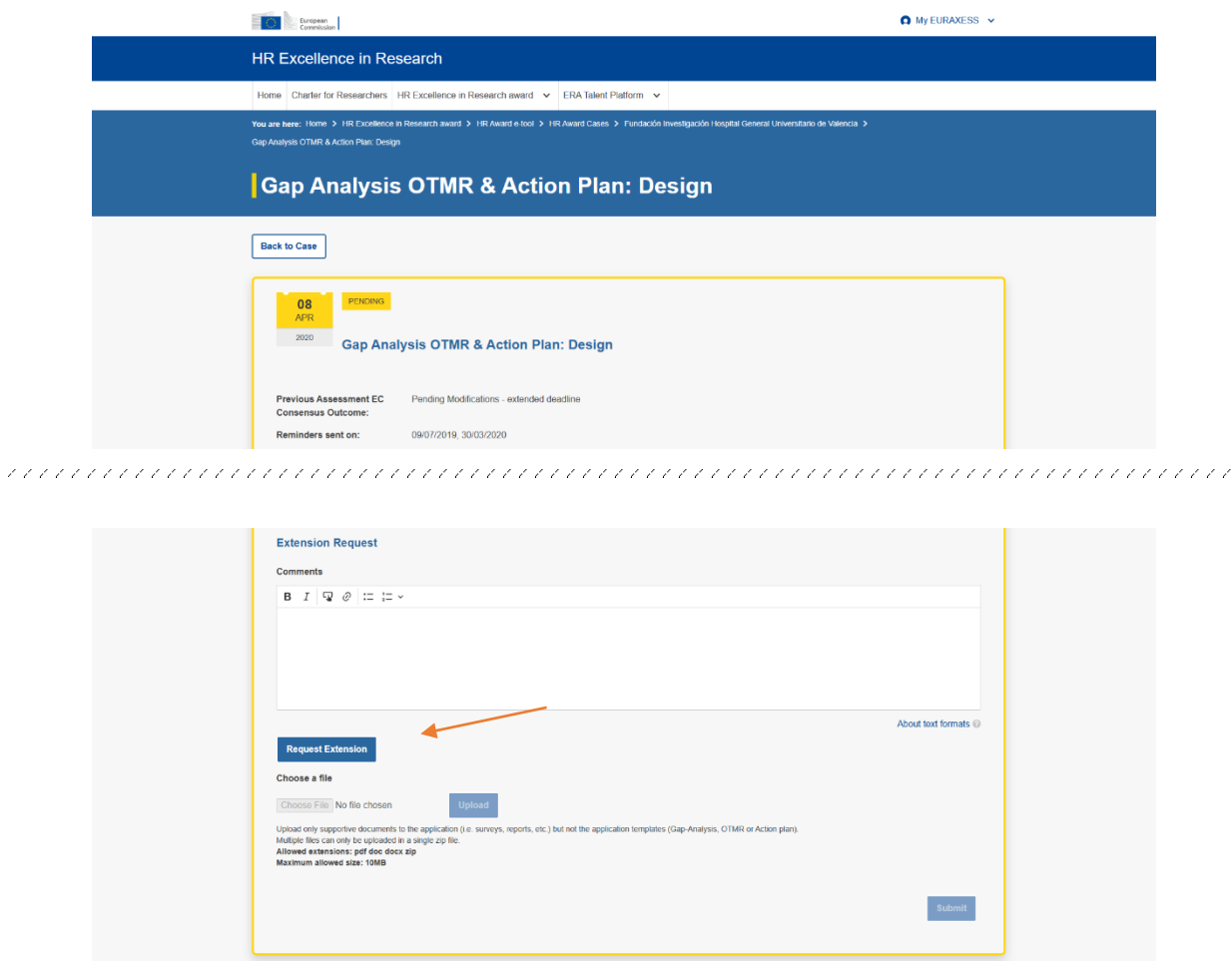
In case the organisation wishes to ask for a longer extension (of two to four months) this request must be detailed and duly justified in the “justification field”.

Longer extensions (up to 8 months) are considered exceptional, and 8-10 months are granted on extremely particular cases.

As a rule, requests for extension beyond 10 months, are not accepted, and an administrative suspension of the case should be envisaged. Please contact RTD-CHARTER@ec.europa.eu

NB organisation at Initial Phase should not require extensions beyond six months. If more time is needed, the organisation should consider restarting the process.

The extension of the deadline via the e-tool can be requested only once. Upon exceptional circumstances, additional extensions may be granted on a case-by-case base. To do this, write a request to RTD-CHARTER@ec.europa.eu



2.3.The “Administrative eligibility check”

Independently from the phase of the HR award process, before a submission in the e-Tool is sent for assessment it will be screened for “administrative eligibility”. This check has the purpose to validate an application in terms of its formal compliance with the application procedure described in these guidelines and will only verify that all the forms are duly completed in the e-Tool, and they contain sufficient information to enable the assessors to proceed to their assessment.

The organisation will be informed of the result of this check within **approximately one month after the submission** via an automatic notification from the e-Tool. The check can have one of the following results:

- in case the eligibility check is positive, the application will proceed further and will be sent for assessment.
- in case the administrative eligibility check is negative, the submission will be re-opened so that the organisation can edit it and implement all the required modifications **within two months from the check**. This is an administrative action and will not impact in any way the assessment of your organisation by the HR award assessors.

2.4. The forms

The following list is the ensemble of the existing forms that an organisation is requested to submit via the e-Tool at each phase. The organisation will be assessed on the base of the information provided, its strategic coherence, and ambition. The specific description of each phase will describe the specific combination of forms to be submitted.

2.4.1. "Process Description"

At Initial phase, in the form "Process Description", the organisation will describe and explain the process of consultation and other type of involvement of internal and external stakeholder groups for the design of the Gap Analysis. Typically, all the management departments directly or indirectly responsible for researchers' HR related issues should be included (i.e. the Vice-Rector for Research, the Head of Personnel, other administrative staff members, etc.).

In addition, the organisation must consult and involve a representative community of researchers ranging from R1 to R4, appoint a committee overseeing the process, and a Working Group responsible for the implementation of the process.

The organisation can choose its own channels and tools to consult and involve stakeholders (i.e. surveys, workshops, etc.), but it should describe the chosen methodology on the Process Description form.

2.4.2. "Gap Analysis"

What is it:

The Gap Analysis seeks to answer the questions "where are we?" (current state) and "where do we want to be?" (target state) as an organisation, with regard to the 20 principles of the European Charter for Researchers.

Why it is important:

The Gap Analysis is a fundamental instrument not only in the frame of the HR award process, but for the management of the organisation itself. A GAP analysis provides an organisation with a clear picture of its own weaknesses, of the developments needed, and helps it setting its own strategy for the implementation of the European Charter for Researchers. Once the gaps are identified, it becomes easier to prioritise the corresponding actions and establish the needed resources and work effort to address them.

Key elements to consider:

It is of the utmost importance that the Gap Analysis is always clearly and systematically linked to the Action Plan.

The Gap Analysis should not be the outcome of a unilateral approach, but of a participative, collaborative, and cumulative feedback. This should comprise the overall views and needs of the stakeholders involved in working groups and committees.

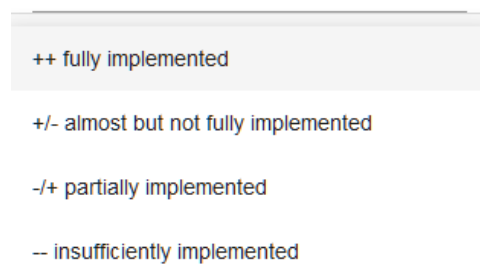
Gap Analysis Overview:

The Gap Analysis compares how the organisation rates its performance towards the 20 principles of the European Charter for Researchers, identifying the existing gaps and barriers to their resolution.

The 20 principles are listed under the four thematic headings of the European Charter for Researchers:

1. Ethics, integrity, gender, and open science
2. Researchers' assessment, recruitment, and progression
3. Working conditions and practices
4. Research careers and talent development.

The Gap Analysis form, has four options to rate the level of achievement in terms of the implementation of the 20 principles of the European Charter for Researchers:



++ fully implemented

+/- almost but not fully implemented

-/+ partially implemented

-- insufficiently implemented

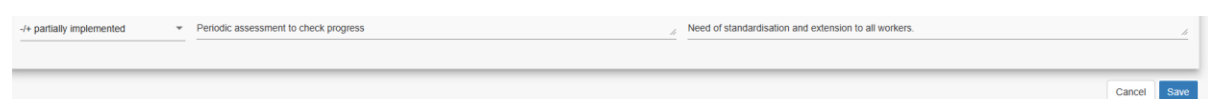
Fully implemented: when the principle is already implemented in full.

In this case, the organisation is required to provide evidence of the specific case (i.e. examples of programmes, policy in practice, etc.)

The descriptors "almost but not fully implemented", "partially implemented" or "insufficiently implemented", should be accompanied by the description of the gap, as well as by details about the measures the organisation will undertake to address the gap.

Comments should be also added on whether aspects of the national or local legislative environment support or constrain the implementation of a specific principle.

The "Save" button, will save the form and allow any eventual later review. This will not finalize the application or send the Gap analysis to the EC for review.



-/+ partially implemented

Periodic assessment to check progress

Need of standardisation and extension to all workers

Cancel Save

The "Submit" button will be enabled only once all the forms will be completed and saved.

[My Favourites](#)

HR Excellence in Research

Home > Charter for Researchers > HR Excellence in Research award > ESA Talent Platform >

You are here: Home > HR Excellence in Research award > HR Award tool > HR Award Cases > HR Award Case for Career Centre for Computational Personalized Medicine > Gap Analysis OTMR & Action Plan Page - Prolog

Gap Analysis OTMR & Action Plan: Design

Back to Case

30 days

Unpublished

2025

Gap Analysis OTMR & Action Plan: Design

Documents

This task requires the following documents to be completed:

- Process Description
- GAP Analysis (Charter and Code Checklist)
- OTMR Checklist
- Action Plan

You can find more information about the document(s) by clicking the button below

Show Document Explanation ▾

You can find more information about the document's statuses by clicking the button below

Show Document Status Explanation ▾

Document	Status	Submission Information
Process Description	Draft - Invald	Fri, 22/11/2024 - 17:30 by Anonymous
GAP Analysis (Charter and Code Checklist)	Valid - Not Submitted	Fri, 22/11/2024 - 17:34 by Anonymous
OTMR Checklist	Valid - Not Submitted	Fri, 22/11/2024 - 17:35 by Anonymous
Action Plan	Valid - Not Submitted	Fri, 22/11/2024 - 17:37 by Anonymous

Pending Actions

- Submissions is possible only when the Gap Analysis and the Action Plan are duly filled in and saved.

Extension Request

You can request an extension 1 month(s) before the task deadline

Choose a file

☒ Choose File
 ☐ No file chosen

Upload

I upload my supportive documents to the application (e.g., surveys, reports, etc.) but not the application templates (Gap analysis, OTMR or Action plan).
 Multiple files can only be uploaded at a single step.
 Allowed extensions: pdf, doc, docx
 Maximum allowed size: 10MB

Submit

19

2.4.3. "OTM-R Checklist"

What it is

It is a specific self-assessment checklist provided to report on the status of achievement in terms of the implementation of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) policies and practices, which aims at making research careers more attractive, while facilitating mobility and equal opportunities for all candidates.

Why it is important

The OTM-R Checklist builds on the European Charter for Researchers principles related to the Recruitment of Researchers. Coupled with the Gap Analysis, it will further provide to organisations a clearer picture of their development needs, which will be prioritised and addressed with concrete actions, part of the Action Plan to be implemented in the upcoming years.

Key elements to consider

The OTM-R checklist consists in a list of questions covering the various steps of the recruitment process, from job advertising through to the appointment phase.

Each specific question mentioned in the OTM-R Checklist should be considered in the self-reflection exercise of the organisation. The state of achievement in terms of each issue will be rated, as above, in the column dedicated to "Answer". For each situation, there should be details included on the indicators to measure performance, either those used or to be further used, at later stages, if applicable.

	Open	Transparent	Meritbased	Answer:	Suggested indicators (or form of measurement)
OTM-R system					
Have we published a version of our OTM-R policy online (in the national language and in English)?	x	x	x	++ Yes completely	web link
Do we have an internal guide setting out clear OTM-R procedures and practices for all types of positions?	x	x	x	+/- Yes substantially	
Is everyone involved in the process sufficiently trained in the area of OTM-R?	x	x	x	-/+ Yes partially	
Do we make (sufficient) use of e-recruitment tools?	x	x		-- No	

OTM-R Checklist Overview

The "Open", "Transparent" and "Merit-based" checkboxes are indicative of the type of policies and practices the questions refer to, as detailed in the European Charter for Researchers. They are pre-set in the e-Tool and cannot be changed. No action is needed from organisations in their respect.

The difference between the ratings "+/- Yes substantially" and "-/+ Yes partially" is that in the first case the volume of the remaining work to be done until completion is little as compared to the effort that has been put so far in that direction. In the case of "-/+ Yes partially", the remaining work is either the same in volume or more than what has been achieved.

For the "Suggested indicators" column, whenever the mouse is hovered on the row dedicated to each question, a small text box will pop up, indicating options of potential indicators to use. However, each organisation should identify their own measurements of the effectiveness of its OTM-R policy, which should be further reviewed and adapted.

It is mandatory for an organisation to publish its recruitment strategy implementing the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment in a visible place on the Organisation's website.

Please, also refer to "**the toolkit: a step-by-step guide to better OTM-R practices**" (see the Annex)

The "Save" button, will save the form and allow any eventual later review. This will not finalize the application or send the OTM-R checklist to the EC for review.

The "Submit" button will be enabled only once all the forms will be completed and saved.

2.4.4. "Action Plan"

What it is

Following the gaps individuated in the GAP Analysis and in the OTM-R checklist, the Action Plan is the set of activities that the organisation will put in place to advance toward the implementation of the 20 principles of the European Charter for Researchers.

Why it is important

The Action Plan establishes the foundation of the organisation's HR award management. Rooted in the Gap Analysis and the OTM-R Checklist, it is the organisation's strategic vision in terms of the priority areas and implementation steps to be undertaken in the next two years (i.e. until the interim phase, when the organisation will submit the new action plan).

Key elements to consider

The Action Plan form to be used for reporting in the e-Tool comprises four separate parts:

1. **Organisational information:**

This section is intended to illustrate the larger context in which the organisation performs, its structure, its impact upon the communities it serves, as well as the resources leveraged.

In this context, there are two **categories** of data required:

- Staff indicators to be presented as full-time positions (FTEs) at the moment of reporting in the e-Tool, and
- Budget and funding, if applicable, to be expressed as amounts in euro. For countries using other currencies than euro, official currency conversion tools should be used, such as currency conversion calculators of national banks.

2. **Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice:**

In this section, the organisation must provide an overview of its current state and practice under the four thematic headings of the European Charter for Researchers

(Ethics, integrity, gender and open science; Researchers' assessment, recruitment and progression; Working conditions and practices; Research careers and talent development). Information on current practices related to OTM-R should be also included here.

Although this section presents only one text block for the two headings, we strongly recommend elaborating on both strengths and weaknesses as they will highlight the organisation's rationale for setting actions as priorities in the Action Plan.

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Please provide an overview of the organisation in terms of the current strengths and weaknesses of the current practice under the four thematic headings of the Charter and Code at your organization.

Note: Click on the name of each of the four thematic headings of the Charter and Code to open the editor and provide your answer.

Ethical and professional aspects*	▼
Recruitment and selection*	▼
Working conditions*	▼
Training and development*	▼

3. Actions

In order to help connect actions to improvement needs easier, all principles with their implementation ratings will be retrieved automatically from the Gap Analysis into the Action Plan. The proposed actions can address either individual or multiple principles and a list of GAP principles not selected in any action is provided.

We propose an approach based on **SMART** Action Planning, which incorporates five characteristics of a goal: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound. More specifically, the Action Plan should:

- ✓ include tasks tackling existing/emerging gaps, as identified in the Gap Analysis and the OTM-R Checklist in a specific way,
- ✓ state the task ownership and detail the responsibilities (i.e. assigned to a specific department, specific person/role within the organisation),
- ✓ have a clear and measurable timeframe for implementation,
- ✓ indicate how the state of achievement will be measured by means of precise and quantifiable key performance indicators (KPIs).
- ✓ The timeline should cover at least two years (up to the interim phase Internal Review). Timing should be indicated in quarters of a year.
- ✓ The actions should reflect a balance between short-term interventions (i.e. such as organising a workshop) and long-term systemic actions (i.e. fostering policy and culture change).
- ✓ The organisation can customise planning based on its own priorities and creativity. There is the possibility to add as many new fields as needed to include the desired volume of actions.

No	Proposed ACTIONS	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
1		Select principle			

Add another row +

3. Actions

Please consult the [list of all actions](#) you have submitted as part of your HR strategy. Please add to the overview [the current status of these actions as well as the status of the indicators](#). If any actions have been altered or omitted, please provide a commentary for each action. You can also add new objectives.

Note: Choose one or more of the principles automatically retrieved from the GAP Analysis with their ratings.

Proposed ACTIONS

Add another row +

Note: Use "Add another row" button to add a new "proposed action".

Unselected principles:

- (++)1. ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY
- (+/)2. FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
- (+/)3. OPEN SCIENCE
- (-)/4. GENDER EQUALITY
- (++)5. EMBRACING DIVERSITY
- (+/)6. THE RESEARCHER
- (+/)7. FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS
- (-)/8. SUSTAINABILITY OF RESEARCH
- (++)9. RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT
- (+/)10. RECRUITMENT
- (-)/11. SELECTION
- (-)/12. CAREER PROGRESSION
- (++)13. WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES
- (+/)14. STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT
- (+/)15. CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS
- (-)/16. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS
- (++)17. VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS
- (+/)18. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE
- (-)/19. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- (-)/20. SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

The Action Plan also includes a dedicated section to OTM-R policy and practices.

The establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HR award strategy. The applicant organisation must also indicate how the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Toolkit (see the Annex) will be used and how the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment will be implemented. Although there may be some overlap with a range of the actions already planned as emerged from the Gap Analysis, the organisation must provide a short commentary demonstrating this implementation. **The organisation will have to make the link between the OTM-R Checklist and the overall Action Plan in a free text section.** If the organisation already has a recruitment strategy that implements the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment, it must provide the web link where this strategy can be found on the organisation's website.

The establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HR Excellence in Research strategy. Please also indicate how your organisation will use the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Toolkit and how you intend to implement/are implementing the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above, please provide a short commentary demonstrating this implementation. If the case, please make the link between the OTM-R checklist and the overall action plan. (max. 1000 words) *

B

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If your organisation already has a recruitment strategy which implements the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment, please provide the web link where this strategy can be found on your organisation's website. Multiple links must be comma separated.

URL:

4. Implementation of the HR award process:

This section will include information on how the HR award process will be coordinated and embedded by the organisation (through working groups, alignment with HR policies or internal mechanisms, etc.)

In addition to a free text to describe the actions, there is also a list of mandatory questions. Each answer should be maximum of 500 words in length.
In case the same answer is applicable to more than one question, please clearly state

How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?*	▼
How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?*	▼
How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? Make sure the HRS4R is recognized in the organisation's research strategy, as the overarching HR policy. *	▼
How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?*	▼
How will you monitor progress (timeline)?*	▼
How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?*	▼

this instead of merely duplicating replies.

Important: The Action Plan and the OTM-R must be published in visible and easily accessible location of the organisation's website. The URL to the organisation's website must be included in the URL field in the e-tool, starting with "https://" or "http://". Ideally, only one URL should be shared. In case multiple emails need to be shared, they should be comma separated and each should be introduced as an autonomous address, (starting with "https://" or <http://>).

The "Save" button, will save the form, and allow any eventual later review. This will not finalize the application or send the Action Plan to the EC for review.

The "Submit" button will be enabled only once all the forms will be completed and saved and will send your application to the EC. After submission, the organisation will no longer be able to update the files, and the action cannot be undone.

2.4.5. "Internal Review"

In the interim and the Renewal phases, the internal review is the form where the organisation indicates how it has embedded into its policies and practices the actions set in the Action Plans of the previous phase and proposes new actions for the next three years.

The organisation must **publish the revised version of the Action Plan and the OTM-R** on the organisation's website and provide the corresponding URL in a dedicated field of the Internal Review form.

It is important to keep in mind that organisations will find that information has been automatically imported in the new phase, and that some of the fields in the Internal Review form are **prefilled** with information retrieved from the previous phase. The imported text shall be adapted or deleted as needed.

The Internal Review forms are very similar in structure to the Action Plan form provided in the Initial Phase. Those organisations that used the e-tool in their application will see some

text blocks automatically filled in with information retrieved from the Action Plan filled in at the Initial Phase.

a. Organisation information

There are two categories of data required:

- ✓ Staff indicators to be presented as full-time positions (FTEs), and
- ✓ Budget and funding, if applicable, to be expressed as amounts in euro.

The dedicated table for filling in the data will already contain the organisational information provided at the Initial Phase, if available, with the possibility to update it for the current situation.

b. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

In this section, the organisation must provide an overview of its current state and practice under the four thematic headings of the European Charter, as already done for the Initial Phase.

The information regarding the “Strengths and weaknesses” expressed at the Initial Phase will be retrieved automatically from the system if the organisation has filled in the initial Action Plan in the e-tool. We strongly recommend elaborating on both strengths and weaknesses, as they will highlight the organisation's rationale for setting actions as priorities in the Action Plan.

If the organisation is willing to provide more information about the way the strengths and weaknesses context evolved or changed from the Initial to the Implementation phase, there is a “Remarks” section within each of the tabs corresponding to the four headings of the European Charter that can be used for this purpose.

The organisation is also required to provide answers to specific questions regarding the way it has operated after the acknowledgement of the HR award. A text block is offered for the following questions, with the indication to elaborate the reply in maximum 500 words for each of them.

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Please review the strengths and weaknesses under the 4 thematic areas of the Charter and Code, as provided by your organisation in the Initial assessment phase. When doing so, you should do not only look back, but also consider new priorities, strategic decisions, etc. which may further influence the action plan. Please also provide a brief commentary in the "Retrainer" column if major changes have occurred versus the initial plan.

Note: Click on the name of each of the four thematic headings of the Charter & Code to open the editor and provide your answers in the Internal Review for Interim Assessment dedicated section.

Ethical and professional aspects*

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)

Text from previous phase

Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment, max 500 words)

Remarks (max 500 words)

Recruitment and selection*

Working conditions*

Training and development*

Have any of the priorities for the short- and medium term changed? (max 500 words)

Have any of the circumstances in which your organisation operates, changed and as such have had an impact on your HR strategy? (max 500 words)

Are any strategic decisions under way that may influence the action plan? (max 500 words)

c. Actions

In this section, the organisation must report on the status of achievement for each of the actions planned in the Initial Phase, alter actions or timing of actions if necessary, and add new actions to be implemented in the next 36 months.

1. Establish the status of achievement of the actions already planned at the previous phase.

The organisations that completed the Action Plan form at the previous phase will find that some information has been automatically transferred to the new form. This

notably includes the list of planned actions, the gaps and the principles they address, the timing, the indicators, and the responsible unit.

NB: the imported actions can be modified ONLY in their status of achievement and in the “Remarks”.

2. Add new actions to the Action Plan for the next 36 months.

The organisation can customise its planning based on its own priorities and creativity. Always keep in mind the importance of the link between the gaps identified in the Gap Analysis and the actions planned in such a way so as to make sure all gaps are addressed throughout the HR award process, based on the organisation’s own priorities and tactics.

It is possible to add as many new actions as needed by clicking on “Add another row”. This will create a new field in the form for the addition of a new action.

It is possible to add as many new actions as needed. The click on “Add another row” will create a new field in the form for the addition of a new action, the Gap principle it addresses, the timing of implementation, the responsible unit and the KPI(s). For the new actions, the “Current Status” will be “New”.

Add another row +

The principle of planning new actions at the Internal Review is the same already used at the Initial Phase. The proposed actions can address either individual or multiple principles. To ensure that all the gap principles are addressed by the organisation based on own priorities, the list of those Gap principles which were not yet selected in any action will be provided for reference. The selected gap will be automatically accompanied by the rating already set in the Gap Analysis:

++ fully implemented
+/- almost but not fully implemented
-/+ partially implemented
-- insufficiently implemented

The Actions timeline should cover at least 36 months up to the following cycle of Award Renewal. Timing should be indicated in quarters of a year.

The actions should reflect a balance between short-term interventions (i.e. such as organising a workshop) and long-term systemic actions that bring about culture change.

The **status of achievement** (“Current State”) of any action must be selected, in a dropdown menu, among the four options below:

- NEW: new action that was not included previously
- IN PROGRESS: an on-going action evolving as planned
- COMPLETED: an action reported as COMPLETED in one phase does not need to be mentioned again in the following phase. This can also be used for an abandoned action. In this case a full explanation for the abandoning of the action shall be provided.
- EXTENDED: If a planned action is taking longer than initially foreseen

If the status is IN PROGRESS or EXTENDED, the organisation shall also update timing of achievement. Details can be included for each action and corresponding status of achievement in the column for “Remarks”.

NB: The actions, as well as the remarks on the status of achievement should be concise but detailed enough for the assessors to evaluate the level of ambition, engagement, and progress of the organisation. The organisation should strive to provide a detailed plan, not only an enumeration of actions, and provide clear, measurable, and punctual indicators.

Although there may be some overlap with a range of the actions already planned as emerged from the Gap Analysis, the organisation must provide a short commentary demonstrating the implementation of the OTM-R policies and practices, since the acknowledgement of the HR Award to the moment of the Internal Review. The organisation will have to make the link between the OTM-R Checklist and the overall Action Plan in a free text section.

2.5. The submission

Once **ALL** the mandatory forms have been duly completed and saved, they will appear as “valid” and the button “Submit” becomes active. If this is not the case, please review the status of each form and fix the possible errors:

- Pending: The form is either empty or needs to be revised because the EC has requested corrections after its submission.
- Draft - Invalid: The form is saved as a draft version. Not all required fields are provided.
- Valid - Not Submitted: The form is duly filled and ready for submission. **Must click “Submit” button to send it to the next task.**
- Submitted: The form has been finalized and submitted to the next task - it is no longer possible to edit it.

NB: after the Initial phase (i.e. at the Interim and Renewal phases), as the modification of the GAP analysis and the OTM-R checklist is not compulsory, the “Submit” button will be visible independently from their revision. HR Organisation Administrators, however, will have to manually open the forms and save them without making any changes.

In case you need to **upload additional documents**, this can be done before the submission: once all the mandatory forms are marked “valid”, the option to **upload additional**

documents becomes available. It is recommended to use this option only to upload sensitive documents or information that cannot be otherwise published on your organisation's website.

Please, note that the upload function allows the upload of only one document: multiple files can be uploaded compressing them into a single zipped folder.

Choose a file

No file selected.

Upload only supportive documents to the application (i.e. surveys, reports, etc.) but not the application templates (Gap-Analysis, OTMR or Action plan).
Multiple files can only be uploaded in a single zip file.
Allowed extensions: pdf doc docx zip
Maximum allowed size: 10MB

After the successful submission, the organisation moves to the next level of the process, which consists of two separate steps: the **administrative eligibility check** and, if successful, the **assessment** of the submission. The HR award admin of the organisation will be able to follow all the subsequent steps on the e-Tool and will receive an automatic notification communicating the result of the assessment.

3. Assessors and assessment process

The assessment process is a cornerstone of the HR award process. The assessors have the responsibility of performing the remote or onsite audit of a case, examining and assessing the submissions of the research organisations, and of providing them with the necessary advice and guidance to progress in the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers via the HR award process.

The assessors are selected by the EC in a transparent process based on the following criteria:

1. Personal competence and experience in the HR award field or any similar HR strategy development and implementation.
2. Geographic distribution over EU-27.
3. Organisational spread (i.e. research organisations, universities, research funders etc.)

3.1. Selection of the assessing teams

Except for the assessment of the interim phase, which involves only one assessor, an assessing team comprises three assessors. In exceptional cases (limited availability, unforeseen events etc.) an assessing team for the initial or the renewal phase may be formed by two assessors only.

Ideally, at interim and at renewal phases, the team is formed by one or more of the assessors who were part of the assessing team of the previous phase. However, this is highly subject to assessors' availability and cannot always be ensured.

An assessing team is normally composed by assessors from a different Country of the applicant organisation. However, in special cases, (e.g. because of local specificities, local regulations, national laws etc.) the assessing team may include an assessor from the same Country of the assessed organisation.

Prior to their involvement in the assessment process, the assessors receive appropriate training on all issues and requirements. Also, prior to any assessment, the assessors sign a declaration of confidentiality covering issues such as performance or obligation of impartiality. These confidentiality obligations are binding on the assessor unless the confidential information becomes public through disclosure of the confidential information by the organisation or the Commission services.

Finally, the assessors must have no conflict of interest with the assigned case.

3.2. The assessment process

The assessment process can only be initiated after an application has passed the administrative eligibility check. In the Initial phase and in the Renewal phases, one of the

three assessors forming the assessing team receives the role of “lead assessor”. At interim phase, instead, the assessing team will be constituted by the lead assessor only.

The assessing team that will examine the internal review of a case and will specifically be interested in finding:

- ✓ Clear information on the context overview in which the HR Strategy is designed (assets and barriers).
- ✓ Strong and clear coherence between Gap Analysis and Action Plan.
- ✓ Concrete actions for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers, with clear, measurable, and punctual indicators (KPIs) and timelines.
- ✓ Clear and concrete examples of how the organisation consulted and involved the required internal and external stakeholder groups in their HR award process.
- ✓ The HR award strategy published on the organisation's website in English, in a visible place.

The lead assessor will be responsible for producing the final report in consensus with the other two assessors. The final consensus report is validated by the EC and will contain the official outcome of the assessment including, if needed, a set of recommendations.

The organisation will have access to the EC Consensus Report within three or four (maximum six in case of site visit) months after the organisation’s submission has received the positive administrative eligibility check.

The new internal review submission at the following phase shall carefully and punctually tackle the recommendations provided by the assessors and address them via tailored actions. This will ensure the completion of a cycle and the transition to the next stage in the implementation process.

3.3.EC Consensus Report

The EC Consensus Report is the final validation that the EC will give to the Consensus report produced by the assessing team assigned to the case and will contain the assessment outcome. The EC Consensus report is officially announced via an automated message sent via email to the HR award Admin of the organisation.

As the **Interim Phase** constitutes a particular case in the HR award process, the EC Consensus report for that phase will be described later in the specific context of the Interim phase. What follows is the description of the EC Consensus report for the Initial and the Renewal phases.

The EC Consensus report will include the result of the general assessment and a set of customised comments and recommendations to the organisation in terms of its ambition towards the principles of the Charter & Code, and their implementation via the HR award process. If relevant, the report will also contain “immediate mandatory modifications”

(which need to be implemented to obtain/retain the award), and “other recommendations” that can be addressed at a later stage (but before the next phase).

The “General Assessment” represents the outcome of the consensus report and will have one of the following three outcomes:

a. **Accepted**

The application meets the required criteria, and the **HR award is granted** (awarded or retained) and the organisation will move to the next phase of the HR award process.

Please, note that while acknowledging that the submission meets the criteria for the granting/renewal of the HR award, the assessors may still provide comments, advice, and guidance on the HR award process (e.g. asking to increase the focus on a particular topic, to address a specific issue etc.). These comments should be addressed by the following phase.

b. **Pending modifications**

The organisation broadly meets the criteria for being granted the HR award, but the assessors have some concerns, questions, or need clarifications on specific areas of the application.

In case of a request for modifications, the organisation is rolled back in the HR award process flow resuming its “draft” status. The organisation will be able to update/amend/modify the documentation in the e-tool and to resubmit the application for review **within two months** from the reception of the request modifications. If the organisation has difficulties in meeting the deadline, it can **request an extension of the deadline**.

After its submission and an administrative eligibility check, the documents will be examined by the original lead assessor only, who will not review the whole application, but only how the organisation has followed up on those previous consensus feedback. It is strongly recommended to act upon the specific recommendations and detail the actions in the revised application as clearly as possible. The organisation is reminded of the importance of paying attention in the consideration of **all** the “Mandatory Recommendations”.

Important: special attention should be paid when resubmitting the revised application: only TWO resubmissions are allowed.

- In case after resubmission the organisation did not tackle the mandatory recommendations, and the assessors still have some concerns, questions, or need clarifications on specific areas of the application a “request for modifications” will be issued. The Organisation can proceed to a second resubmission.
- In case after a second resubmission the organisation did not tackle the mandatory recommendations, and the assessors still have some concerns, questions, or need clarifications on specific areas of the application a “request for modifications” will be issued and **the case will be suspended**

c. Pending modifications with extended deadline

The assessors will issue this request either

- when the organisation does not seem to meet the criteria to be awarded the HR award and is required to make the appropriate changes specified in the recommendations,
- when the assessors deem that the organization will need an extended timeframe to tackle the appropriate changes specified in the recommendations

In either case, the organisation is rolled back in the HR award process flow resuming its “draft” status.

The organisation will be able to update/amend/modify the documentation in the e-tool and to resubmit the application for review **within 12 months** from the reception of the request modifications with extended deadline. If the organisation has difficulties in meeting the deadline, it can **request an extension of the deadline**.

After submission and a successful administrative eligibility check, the documents will be examined by a full assessing team (three assessors). If possible, the same team that did the original assessment, who will not review the whole application, but only how the organisation has followed up on the previous consensus feedback. It is strongly recommended to act upon the specific recommendations and detail the actions in the revised application as clearly as possible. The organisation is reminded of the importance of paying attention in the consideration of **all** the “Mandatory Recommendations”.

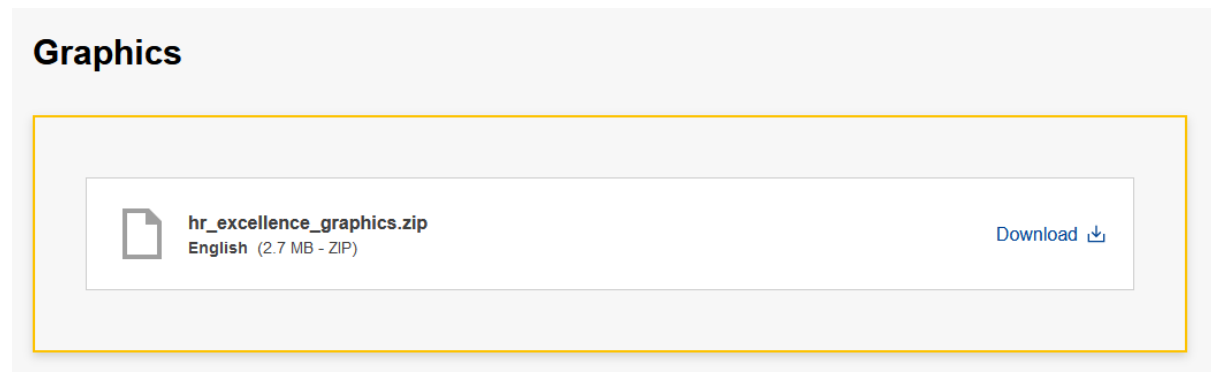
Important: special attention should be paid when resubmitting the revised application: only TWO resubmissions are allowed

- In case after resubmission the organisation did not tackle the mandatory recommendations, and the assessors still have some concerns, questions, or need clarifications on specific areas of the application a “request for modifications with extended deadline” will be issued. The Organization can proceed to a second resubmission.
- In case after a second resubmission the organisation did not tackle the mandatory recommendations, and a “request for modifications with extended deadline” is again issued, **the case will be suspended**
- In case after one of the resubmissions the assessors deem that the Organisation did implement a part of the recommendations, but the assessors still have some concerns, questions, or need clarifications on specific areas of the application, a simple “request for modifications” will be issued.

If the organisation has difficulties in meeting the deadline, it can **request an extension of the deadline**.

3.4.Granted/renewal of the "HR Excellence in Research Award"

After the EC Consensus Report with a General Assessment in position “**Accepted**” is validated, the organisation is authorized to display the "HR Excellence in Research award" logo on the organisation's website, on social media, on marketing materials or other publications of the organisation. The HR award Admin can download the “HR award” logo in different formats along its graphic guidelines at any moment from the HR Excellence in Research portal:



Starting from the first award, the HR award logo will automatically be appended to the organisation name on the EURAXESS portal and to every vacancy that the organisation will publish in EURAXESS increasing the organisation visibility and attractiveness.

An awarded organisation will be also listed on the **list of Awarded organisations** page publicly available on the HR Excellence in Research portal. The listed organisations will be linked to the HR award Strategy page published on their website.

4. The Phases of the process

4.1. Before the Initial phase

4.1.1. Creation of a case in the HR award e-Tool

Before an organisation apply for the HR award, its HR award Admin shall create a “case” in the e-Tool. This will be the space in the e-Tool where all the actions in the HR award process will be taken. To create a case, the HR award admin must access the HR award e-Tool and click on on the yellow button, "Create a case & apply for the HR award".

My HR Excellence in Research Case(s)

HR Excellence in Research Case

 [HR Award Procedure](#) 



JREC-IN Portal

Cui pala sudo ymo. At erat lucidus vulputate. Acsi at capto consectetuer dolor quia
virtus

user+13999@localhost.localdomain

Create a case & apply for the HR Award

4.1.2. Endorsement of the European Charter and commitment to its implementation

When the organisation is ready to start the process, the HR award admin will upload a “Letter of Endorsement and Commitment” to the e-Tool and will complete the contact fields for the HR award Admin and for the management mandated to engage the organisation (see the example below).

Endorse Case for JREC-IN Portal

Endorsement Letter

Endorsement Letter *

Browse...

No file selected.

Please upload Endorsement Letter.

Allowed extensions: pdf

Maximum allowed size: 10000000

Contact Person for the HR Excellence in Research (HR Organisation Admin.)

Full name *

Position *

Email *

Office Telephone *

Management mandated to engage the organisation

Full name *

Position *

Email *

Office Telephone *

Create

The organisations can customize the text and the format of the letter following the mandatory requirements:

- The letter must be in English.
- The letter should clearly state both the endorsement of the 20 principles of the European Charter for Researchers, and the commitment to its implementation via the various phases of the HR Excellence in Research award process.
- The letter must be signed by the current highest management representative within the organisation such as Rector, President, other senior level position (e.g. Vice-President for Research), or another person representing the legal body and authorised to make a commitment on behalf of the organisation.
- The letter must have been issued within the last 12 months prior to its submission in the e-Tool.

An example of endorsement letters is published at the Annex of this document.

Clicking on the "Save" button saves the provided information and still allows the information to be edited. The status of the application will be changed into "Pending" as below:

An official website of the European Union How do you know?  My EURAXESS

HR Excellence in Research

Home | Charter for Researchers | HR Excellence in Research award | ERA Talent Platform

You are here: Home > HR Excellence in Research award > HR Award e-tool > HR Award Case for JREC-IN Portal

HR Award Case for JREC-IN Portal

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- Case Information
- Case Timeline

Case Information

+ Details

Case Timeline

Initial Phase

Step 1 25 November 2024

Letter of Endorsement and Commitment

PENDING

At this stage, the application is ready to be submitted to the EC. To finalize the submission of the application, please do not forget to click on the **Submit** button (see below).

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HR Excellence in Research

Home | Charter for Researchers | HR Excellence in Research award | ERA Talent Platform

You are here: Home > HR Excellence in Research award > HR Award e-tool > HR Award Case for JREC-IN Portal > Letter of Endorsement and Commitment

Letter of Endorsement and Commitment

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PENDING

Letter of Endorsement and Commitment

Endorsement Letter:



lorem-ipsuam_11.pdf

English (75.32 KB - PDF)

[Download](#)

Contact Information:

Contact Person (HR Award Administrator)



Contact Person (HR Award Administrator)

Joe Doe HR

Email: joe.doe@domain.com Office Telephone: ++30 210 1234567

Management mandated to engage the organisation



Management mandated to engage the organisation

Jane Doe HR

Email: jane.doe@domain.com Office Telephone: ++30 210 9876543

Edit

Submit

After clicking on "Submit" the application will be sent to the EC, the application cannot be edited anymore, and the action cannot be undone. The status of the application will change into **"Submitted"**.

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HR Excellence in Research

Home Charter for Researchers HR Excellence in Research award ERA Talent Platform

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Letter of Endorsement and Commitment

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25 NOV 2024

SUBMITTED

Action performed by: Cui pella sudo ymo. Ali erat lucidus vulputate. Acui al caplo consectetur oator qua virtus

Letter of Endorsement and Commitment

Endorsement Letter:



lorem-ipsam_11.pdf

English (75.32 KB - PDF)

Download 

Contact Information:

Contact Person (HR Award Administrator)



Contact Person (HR Award Administrator)

Joe Doe HR

Email: joe.doe@domain.com Office Telephone: ++30 210 1234567

Management mandated to engage the organisation



Management mandated to engage the organisation

Jane Doe HR

Email: jane.doe@domain.com Office Telephone: ++30 210 9876543

Once submitted, the application reaches the EC, which will check its compliance with the requirements. The organisation will be informed whether the application is accepted or within **10 working days** from its submission.

The HR award dashboard will highlight the phase of the application, as well as the current task and the deadline, as shown below:

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European Commission My EURAXESS

HR Excellence in Research

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HR Award Case for JREC-IN Portal

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Case Information

Details

Organisation	JREC-IN Portal								
Case Phase	Initial								
Current Task	C&C Endorsement: Confirmation of Endorsement Letter								
Current Task Deadline	9 December 2024								
Contact Person (HR Award Administrator)	<table> <tr> <td>Full name</td> <td>Joe Doe</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Position</td> <td>HR</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Email</td> <td>joe.doe@domain.com</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Office Telephone</td> <td>++30 210 1234567</td> </tr> </table>	Full name	Joe Doe	Position	HR	Email	joe.doe@domain.com	Office Telephone	++30 210 1234567
Full name	Joe Doe								
Position	HR								
Email	joe.doe@domain.com								
Office Telephone	++30 210 1234567								
Management mandated to engage the organisation	<table> <tr> <td>Full name</td> <td>Jane Doe</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Position</td> <td>HR</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Email</td> <td>jane.doe@domain.com</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Office Telephone</td> <td>++30 210 9876543</td> </tr> </table>	Full name	Jane Doe	Position	HR	Email	jane.doe@domain.com	Office Telephone	++30 210 9876543
Full name	Jane Doe								
Position	HR								
Email	jane.doe@domain.com								
Office Telephone	++30 210 9876543								

Case Timeline

Initial Phase

Step 1 25 November 2024

Action performed by: Cui pata multo ymo. Ali erat luctus vulputate. Acui at capto consectetur. ditor quis velit.

Letter of Endorsement and Commitment

SUBMITTED

Step 2 09 December 2024

Confirmation of Endorsement Letter and Commitment

PENDING

The approval of the endorsement letter by the EC will change the status of the “Confirmation of Endorsement Letter” task from "Pending" to "Accepted". Once this stage is completed, the organisation will be able to move to the next task of the initial phase of the HR award process.

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Confirmation of Endorsement Letter and Commitment

Back to Case

25 NOV 2024

ACCEPTED

Action performed by: RTD Charter

Confirmation of Endorsement Letter and Commitment

Notification of Commitment

Once the Endorsement Letter is approved, a case number will be assigned to the application. An application that has not been confirmed will have a “Pending” status.

Important: The case code number allocated to the organisation will be an essential element in all future interactions with the EC Services in the frame of the HR award process: do not forget to include it in all your correspondence.

If the application is "**Accepted**", the HR award dashboard of the organisation will highlight the case number and the deadline of the next task: Gap Analysis, OTM-R, Action Plan Design, with a deadline for their submission calculated after **12 months** from the approval of the endorsement letter.

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Case Information

— Details

Organisation	JREC-IN Portal		
Case Number	2024JP292718		
Case Phase	Initial		
Current Task	Gap Analysis OTMR & Action Plan: Design		
Current Task Deadline	25 November 2025		
Contact Person (HR Award Administrator)	Full name	Joe Doe	
	Position	HR	
	Email	joe.doe@domain.com	
	Office Telephone	++30 210 1234567	
Management mandated to engage the organisation	Full name	Jane Doe	
	Position	HR	
	Email	jane.doe@domain.com	
	Office Telephone	++30 210 9876543	

The progress of the organisations in the sequence of the HR award process is displayed as a vertical timeline flow:

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HR Excellence in Research

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Case Timeline

Initial Phase

Step 1 25 November 2024
Action performed by: Cui pala sudo ymo. At erat lucidus vulputate. Acisi at capto consectetur dolor quia virtus
Letter of Endorsement and Commitment
SUBMITTED

Step 2 25 November 2024
Action performed by: RTD Charter
Confirmation of Endorsement Letter and Commitment
ACCEPTED

Step 3 25 November 2025
Gap Analysis, OTMR & Action Plan: Design
PENDING

In case the letter is "**Declined**", a notification will appear in the organisation's dashboard.

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HR Excellence in Research

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You are here: Home > HR Excellence in Research award > HR Award e-tool > HR Award Case for JREC-IN Portal > Confirmation of Endorsement Letter and Commitment

Confirmation of Endorsement Letter and Commitment

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25 NOV 2024 DECLINED
Action performed by: RTD Charter

Confirmation of Endorsement Letter and Commitment

Decline Reason(s)

1. The letter should be in English.
2. The letter should be signed by the current highest management representative within the organisation.
3. The letter should be recently dated (not older than 12 months before submission).
4. The letter should clearly state both the endorsement of the 20 principles of the European Charter for Researchers, as well as the commitment to start the procedure and to undergo all subsequent cycles of its implementation

Comments

Extra comments

In this case the organisation shall **resubmit the application** within **two months**. The resubmission must carefully consider the recommendations provided by the EC in the assessment of the original application.

4.2. Initial phase

To constitute the application for the HR award, there are four **mandatory** forms to be completed at initial phase.

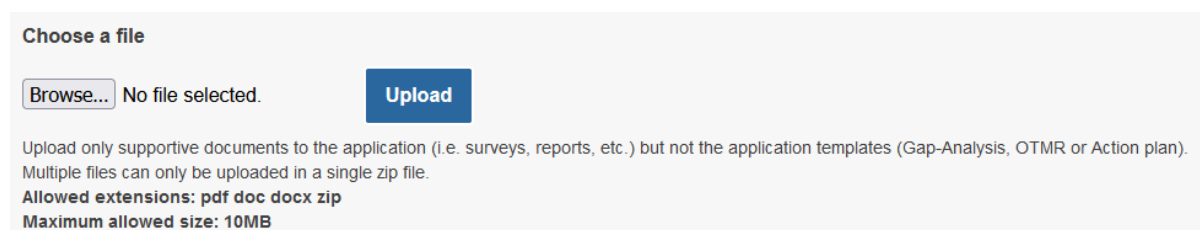
1. Process Description,
2. Gap Analysis,
3. OTM-R Checklist,
4. Action Plan (covering the actions to be implemented until the interim phase)

Please note that this first initial Action Plan should contain at least five actions.

The submission of these four forms constitutes the application for the "HR Excellence in Research Award". The four documents must be submitted **within 12 months** from the confirmation of the endorsement letter.

Once **ALL** the mandatory forms have been duly completed and saved, they will appear as "valid, and the option to **upload additional documents** becomes available. It is recommended to use this option only to submit sensitive documents that cannot be published on your organisation's website.

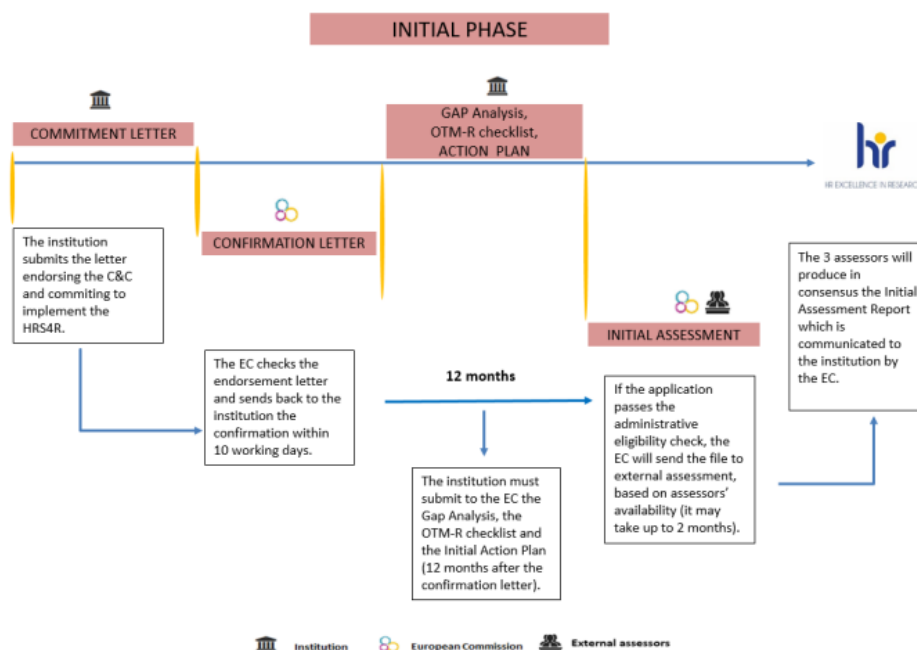
Please, note that this function allows the upload of only one document: multiple files can be uploaded compressing them into a single zipped folder.



The button "Submit" is now visible. If this is not the case, please review the status of each form and fix the possible errors:

- **Pending:** The form is either empty or needs to be revised because the EC has requested corrections after its submission.
- **Draft - Invalid:** The form is saved as a draft version. Not all required fields are provided.
- **Valid - Not Submitted:** The form is duly filled and ready for submission. **Must click "Submit"** button to send it to the next task.
- **Submitted:** The form has been finalized and submitted to the next task- it is no longer possible to edit it.

After the successful submission of the HR award application, the organisation moves to the next level of the process, which consists of two separate steps: the **administrative eligibility check** and, if successful, the **assessment** of the application. The HR award admin of the organisation will be able to follow all the subsequent steps on the e-Tool and at the end of the assessment process will receive an automatic notification communicating the result of the assessment, which will be detailed in the e-Tool in the EC Consensus report.



4.3. The interim phase

After being granted the HR award at the end of the initial phase, an organisation has **24 months** to implement the actions outlined in the Action Plan and to report its progress in the “Interim phase”.

NB: at the Interim phase the organisation is not in jeopardy of losing the HR award.

The purpose of the interim phase is not to renew the award but to assist the newly awarded organisation in steering the HR award process. The role of the assessor in this phase is to investigate the progress and quality of the actions and accompanying measures and provide to the organisation advice and recommendations on how to continue the implementation of the revised Action Plan for the next 36 months.

At this phase, there is one compulsory form to be submitted: the **“Internal Review”**.

The Action Plan is to be updated as needed and filled covering the actions to be implemented until the following phase (1st renewal).

Reminder: once **the internal review** has been duly completed and saved, it will appear as “valid, and the option to **upload additional documents** becomes available. It is

recommended to use this option only to submit sensitive documents that cannot be published on your organisation's website.

Also, the button "Submit" is now be visible If this is not the case, please review the status of each form and fix the possible errors:

- **Pending:** The form is either empty or needs to be revised because the EC has requested corrections after its submission.
- **Draft - Invalid:** The form is saved as a draft version. Not all required fields are provided.
- **Valid - Not Submitted:** The form is duly filled and ready for submission. Must click "Submit" button to send it to the next task.
- **Submitted:** The form has been finalized and submitted to the next task- it is no longer possible to edit it.

After the successful submission the organisation moves to the next level of the process, which consists of two separate steps: the **administrative eligibility check** and, if successful, the **assessment** of the application. The HR award admin of the organisation will be able to follow all the subsequent steps on the e-Tool and at the end of the assessment process will receive an automatic notification communicating the result of the assessment.

4.3.1. EC Consensus report for the Interim phase

As at the Interim phase the goal of the assessment is to assist the newly awarded organisation in steering the HR award process, the consensus report will differ from the initial and the renewal phase ones. The report will display:

- **Quality (of progress):** Here the assessor assesses the level of ambition and the quality of progress intended and obtained by the organisation.
- **Strengths and weaknesses of the HR strategy:** On the basis of the information submitted and taking into account the organisation's national research context, the assessor will weigh/judge the HR strategy's strengths and weaknesses.
- **Recommendations** will be provided referring to the state of the art of organisation's OTM-R policy, with regard to progress and quality of actions and their evidence etc.

The Consensus report will have three possible outcomes:

- **HR Excellence in Research embedded:** The organisation is progressing with appropriate and quality actions as described in its Action Plan. **There is evidence that the HR Excellence in Research is further embedded.**
- **HR Excellence in Research embedded, corrective actions needed:** The organisation is, for the most part, progressing with appropriate and quality actions as described in its Action Plan, but could benefit from alterations as advised through the Assessment process. **There is some evidence that the HR Excellence in Research is further embedded.**
- **HR Excellence in Research embedded, strong corrective actions needed:** The organisation is not deemed to be implementing appropriate and quality actions and this raises some concern for the future efforts to implement actions closely aligned to the Charter and Code. **There is a lack of evidence that the HR Excellence in Research is further embedded.**

In all three cases (successful outcome or need for corrective actions), no resubmissions are needed, and the organisation can progress to the next phase (renewal). It is to be noted that, while after its assessment the Implementation Phase is concluded, any eventual warning from the assessors must be taken in careful consideration when preparing the

internal review submission for the following renewal phase. Failure to do so may have a negative impact on the renewal assessment.

4.4. Renewal Phase

The Award Renewal is the third, recurrent phase of the HR award procedure. The first renewal phase takes place three years after the Interim Assessment, which means five years after the initial granting of the HR award (or 36 years from the initial application).

The assessment process for the first cycle of Renewal and every other cycle afterwards will involve the organisation of a site-visit on the premises of the organisation (see dedicated section below).

At Renewal phase, there is one compulsory form to be submitted: the **“Internal Review”**. The **“GAP analysis”** and the **“OTM-R checklist”** are also present for submission but are not compulsory: they will automatically import the content submitted at the previous phase and can be revised by the organisation in case of major modifications. The HR Organisation Administrator, however, will have to review and save both **“GAP analysis”** and **“OTM-R checklist”**.

The Action Plan is to be updated as needed and filled covering the actions to be implemented until the following renewal phase.

Reminder: once **the internal review** has been duly completed and saved, it will appear as **“valid**, and the option to **upload additional documents** becomes available. It is recommended to use this option only to submit sensitive documents that cannot be published on your organisation’s website.

Also, the button **“Submit”** is now be visible If this is not the case, please review the status of each form and fix the possible errors:

- **Pending:** The form is either empty or needs to be revised because the EC has requested corrections after its submission.
- **Draft - Invalid:** The form is saved as a draft version. Not all required fields are provided.
- **Valid - Not Submitted:** The form is duly filled and ready for submission. **Must click “Submit” button to send it to the next task.**
- **Submitted:** The form has been finalized and submitted to the next task- it is no longer possible to edit it.

After the successful submission the organisation moves to the next level of the process, which consists of two separate steps: the **administrative eligibility check** and, if successful, the **assessment** of the application. The HR award admin of the organisation will be able to follow all the subsequent steps on the e-Tool and at the end of the assessment process will receive an automatic notification communicating the result of the assessment

If the renewal cycle includes a site visit, the organisation will receive the consensus report **within one month after the site visit**. If, instead, the renewal cycle is without site visit, the

organisation will receive the notification of the consensus report **within one month from the assignment for assessment** (delays are indicative and subject to expert's availability).

4.4.1. Renewal phase with Site Visit

The assessment process for the first cycle of Award Renewal involves the organisation of a site-visit on the premises of the organisation.

The following assessments cycles will take place alternating renewals with site visits and renewals without site visit (remote). Odd-numbered cycles (1, 3, 5 etc) take place with site visit, even-numbered cycles (2, 4, 6 etc) take place without site visit.

NB: site visits are limited to organisations based in the European Union. Organisations from other countries, regardless of their renewal cycle, will be assessed remotely (see below “virtual site visits”)

The aim of the site visit is **the renewal** of the HR award three years after the interim assessment. and in every subsequent odd cycle (1, 3, 5, ...). Site visits are limited to organisations based in the European Union and are an opportunity for organisations to display their work and receive a direct, informed, and professional feedback from external assessors, including suggestions for change and improvement. Moreover, the site visit contributes to raise the degree of awareness of HR award within the organisation and to strengthen the engagement of the whole community in this continuous improvement process. The success of the award renewal carries the recognition of the EC of your organisation efforts in implementing the principles of the European Charter for Researchers via the HR award.

The purpose of the site visit is multiple: it allows to reflect and to document progress, to alter actions or timing of actions, if necessary, it also allows to create new actions for the upcoming period. Finally, it provides the opportunity for an in-depth discussion and for a stronger engagement on the work that has been undertaken.

During the site visit, the team of three external assessors will meet all key stakeholders, including researchers, management and practitioners. This is the occasion to confidentially discuss the issues and questions that might have arisen in the analysis of the Internal Review.

During the site visits, assessors need to:

- ✓ be able to confirm the impression they gained during their desk based assessment;
- ✓ identify benefits the organisation receives from implementing the HR strategy ;
- ✓ assess the level of ambition of the organisation with regard to the HR strategy for researchers, taking into account the initial state of play;

- ✓ assess the organisation's efforts to ensure the European Charter for Researchers principles regarding ethical and professional aspects; working conditions, development and training.
- ✓ highlight the organisation's effort in implementing an OTM-R policy;
- ✓ assess whether the European Charter for Researchers principles are being implemented.

After the discussions on site or remotely, the external assessors organise a debriefing session to reflect upon and to discuss the site visit in order to produce a Consensus Report.

This report will also contain:

- ✓ elements of good practice that the assessors would recommend to other organisations
- ✓ examples of difficulties the organisation encountered during set-up or implementation.

Finally, based on the information obtained from the Internal Review and the site visit, and taking into account the national research context of the organisation, the assessors will assess the HR strategy strengths and weaknesses. If relevant, they will provide suggestions for alteration or revisions to the HR strategy of the organisation.

Organizing a Site visit

What follows is a step-by-step checklist of the actions for the organisation of the site visit.

a. Scheduling the Site Visit

Upon reception of the administrative eligibility for the internal review in request for the renewal of the HR award, the organisation shall proactively schedule an **indicative time window for the site visit. This date shall be swiftly communicated to the EC at RTD-CHARTER@ec.europa.eu.**

It is important to keep in mind that the bigger the time window proposed, the easier will be to individuate available assessors. In case the proposal consists of precise dates, they may not match the availability of the assessors.

Also, the proposed time window for the site visit should be comprised between two and four months from the moment this is communicated to the Commission. Delays depending on exceptional circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case base.

Within one month from the reception of the calendar proposal, and depending on the availability of the assessors, the EC will constitute a team of three independent assessors and initiate the communication between the **HR award Admin of the organisation and the lead assessor to finalise the calendar and the agenda for the site visit.** The timing for the formation of the assessing team depends highly on a variety of parameters such as the availability of the assessors, complexity of travel arrangements, etc.

Once the date is finalised and agreed between the organisation and the assessors, the lead assessor officially communicates it to the EC. The EC will register the date in the e-tool.

The organisation will proceed to block out time on the senior leaders' schedule and of the people involved in the management of the HR award process within the organisation. Typically, the senior leaders will need to be available for up to a one-hour opening meeting (inclusive of half-hour presentation) on the day of the site visit and a one-hour long wrap-up discussion at the end of the site visit.

NB: After the date for the site visit has been finalized with the assessors and communicated to the European Commission, in case the site visit is cancelled or rescheduled upon the organisation request, the organisation will be responsible of any reimbursement of the non-reimbursable costs incurred by the assessors.

b. Preparation of the site visit

- Senior management involvement

The organisation should ensure that the **senior management is aware** of the effort and investment in the HR award process throughout the years, what the HR strategy is, the difference it made to the organisation and the impact it has, as well as the need to continue to guarantee their full support. **The senior management must be present in the opening and closing meetings.**

- Communicate with your colleagues and hierarchy.

The organisation staff should be fully aware of what to expect from the site visit: it is very important that the HR award Admin develop a good communication plan in view of the site visit. Usual topics include the site visit calendar and agenda, clarify the reason why external assessors are visiting the organisation, the expected benefit for the organisation, what individual researchers and other staff groups can expect during the site visit. Specific communication (and training) activities should be planned to address different target groups.

- Getting ready for the site visit

Start **assembling the information** needed for the meeting.

The **site visit will have a duration of one day and will take place in English**. If the organisation needs to use an interpreter, this will be included in the organisation's costs. The use of an interpreter is never considered negatively, but a favourable point in support of better communication and wider involvement.

- Additional information to provide to the assessing team

In due time, the HR award Admin should provide the assessors with organisational information including:

- ✓ The current organisational Strategic Plan (if one exists, in English).
- ✓ A current detailed organisation chart.

- ✓ Information on the demographics of research employees in the organisation (i.e. numbers, role title, etc.) should also be provided at this stage if not done yet
- ✓ A list of the key stakeholders - people, leaders, committee members, and others - who have been involved with and have contributed to the HR award process of self-assessment submitted to the European Commission.
- ✓ Any other information that the organisation may consider important for the assessors should also be shared at this stage.

- Logistics

- ✓ The assessing team should be also provided in advance of a map showing the location(s) of the meetings and the email address and telephone number of a point of contact in the organisation should be provided.
- ✓ When organising an onsite visit, the organisation should secure a private meeting room for the exclusive use of the assessment team for the duration of the whole visit. If the assessors visit more than one site, a meeting room at each site is desirable.
- ✓ The meeting room for the opening and closing sessions shall be equipped with a projector and a screen. Additional meeting spaces for interviews can also be helpful, (i.e. additional interview spaces might be needed for individual or group interviews). If the organisation's premises require the visitors to be escorted to the different meetings, make sure someone is available.
- ✓ The assessors should also be provided with beverages, snacks and meals, and access to internet, Wi-Fi, copiers, printers, and telephones.
- ✓ Before the assessing team arrives on site, it is a good practice to review the detailed schedule with the lead assessor.

- The agenda

At least one month before the meeting, the organisation shall finalise the draft agenda **in synergy with the lead assessor**.

The final agenda of the site visit should be agreed between the organisation and the assessors **three weeks** prior to the visit. In preparing the agenda, remember that the assessors will require **15 minutes for private discussion after each meeting**.

During the closing meeting, the assessors will relay their findings verbally to the organisation. The formal consensus report will follow and will be transmitted via the e-tool normally within the next three to four weeks.

At the Annex, you can find for inspiration a sample schedule for the site visit.

c. The day of the site visit

- At the beginning of the visit, the organisation should provide the assessors team with a printed copy of all documents and reports mentioned in the Internal Review

narrative. There is no need to duplicate the documents if the assessors visit more than one site.

- At the opening meeting, the HR award Admin will provide a **half-hour presentation** to the assessors. This first part of the visit should be used for presenting the organisation (who you are and what you do), the reasons it participates in the HR award process, progress so far under Ethical and Professional Aspects, OTM-R, Working Conditions and Training and Development. Explain how your organisation hopes to improve and evolve its service to researchers from continuing with the HR award process.

The presentation should also include information related to **indicators for progress and quality**, highlighting elements such as quality of progress and quality of achievements. The breadth, depth and integration of HR award within the organisation should be evidenced through indicators such as the level of ambition, the level of embedding and the quality of progress. It is recommended that the presentation is kept as short and to the point as possible and does not repeat every detail from the revised HR award Action Plan.

It is important to identify the staff members that will have face-to-face interviews with the assessors (i.e. people involved in the management of the HR award process, staff responsible for implementing actions, researchers representing the different research positions at different level R1 to R4). External stakeholders should also be involved if relevant.

Renewal phase with virtual site visits

When an organization based outside the European Union reaches a Renewal phase including a site visit, the visit will be conducted remotely (using a platform agreed upon by the lead assessor and the organization).

The virtual site visit will adhere to the same requirements as in-person site visits (e.g. will be held in English, will have the duration of one full day, the agenda will be agreed together with the lead assessor, observe as much as possible the same agenda structure, etc.)

About confidentiality and virtual meetings:

All the discussions will be kept confidential and thus meetings will be organized in protected virtual rooms. Recording the meetings or copying the content of the chat is not permitted. Print screen can be allowed on request to participants.

Finally, except in cases of force majeure severely restricting the mobility of the assessment team, virtual site visits cannot be substituted for regular on-site visits.

5. Suspension/Closure of a case

As the HR award is granted in three-year cycles, an organisation that does not renew its award beyond that period (plus any eventual extension of the deadline and request for modification), cannot continue displaying the award.

Initial and interim case cannot be suspended (see “closure of a case”).

5.1.Suspension of a case

The “Suspension” of a case within the HR award process is a **temporary** measure and it is applicable only to organisations in the Renewal Phase.

After the suspension of the Excellence in Research award, the following will take effect:

1. The organisation temporarily loses the HR award and will be removed from the list of Awarded Organisations published on the HR Excellence in Research portal.
2. The HR award icon will be temporarily removed the EURAXESS postings of the organisation.
3. The HR award icon must be removed from the Organisation website, e-publications, and publicity material.

In case of suspension, however, the Organisation is allowed to retain its current position (phase) within the HR award process and is allowed to resubmit its Internal review, which will be reassessed by a HR award team.

In case during the suspension period the organisation will proceed to submit an internal review, this will have to be accompanied with a description of the reasons for the suspension, and the action plan will have to include the actions that took place during the period of suspension, as well as the actions for the following three years (like for a regular submission).

If the assessors in charge of this extra assessment will issue a positive evaluation, the logo will be re-established, and the organisation name will be listed again among the Awarded Organisation and will continue its normal progress in the HR award process.

A “Suspended” status cannot be extended beyond one full renewal cycle (i.e. for a total three years). After this period, the case will be “Closed”.

A “Suspension” applies in the following cases:

- a. If the maximum number of non “Accepted” resubmissions is reached*
- b. If an organisation is unresponsive*

In case an organisation does not take any action in the e-Tool, or interrupts communication with the EC, it is considered “unresponsive”.
Six months after the formal deadline in the HR award e-Tool, the EC will start sending to the organisation a reminder per month. In case the EC does not receive any reply, or no action is taken in the E-tool within one month after the 3rd

reminder, the organisation will be “Suspended”.

In case the organisation does not react within the maximum extent of the “suspension” (i.e. three years), the “suspended” case will be closed.

c. Technical suspension

In some very exceptional circumstances, and upon due and circumstantiated justification, an organisation may ask to temporarily suspend the HR award process. In case the organisation did not reach the deadline for the new submission, it can retain the HR award until the expiration of the deadline. After this, it will continue as under point a) above.

A technical suspension is not automatic, and is only granted on an exceptional, case-by-case basis. It is not intended to simply extend deadlines, but rather to address unforeseen and significant circumstances that are beyond the organisation’s control. Technical suspensions will only be considered in extraordinary situations where the institution is faced with unforeseeable and substantial challenges.

5.2.Closure of a case

This is a **permanent** measure: once a case is closed, the following will take effect:

- The organisation loses the HR award and will be removed from the list of Awarded Organisations published on the HR Excellence in Research portal.
- The HR award icon will be temporarily removed the EURAXESS postings of the organisation.
- The HR award icon must be removed from the Organisation website, e-publications, and publicity material.

After closure, a case cannot continue within the same process flow. If the organisation wishes to re-enter the HR award process, a new case must be opened. This option is applicable to the following scenarios:

- Organisations failing to renew the award within the limits of the suspension as described above.
- Initial and Interim cases: as the history of the HR award process for a case in one of these phases is not sufficiently developed, an organisation cannot be suspended but must be closed.
- Organisation deciding to permanently abandon the HR Process.

5.3.Manual cases

After the digitalization of the HR award process (formerly HRS4R) on 15 May 2018, every institution maintaining a manual case received multiple emails asking to transfer to the e-Tool, the only instrument for the management of the HR award process. The awarded

organisations that did not transfer into the e-Tool, will have to start a new HR Award case as they did not comply with the HR Excellence in Research process.

6. Special cases

Organisations should submit their HR award application when they represent all the other units within its hierarchical composition. When the organisation is awarded, all its departments and institutes can display the HR award logo.

As the implementation of the European Charter for Researchers foresees the active involvement of the HR department and the HR policies of the organisations, the existence of an HR department and an HR policy constitutes a main element for entering the HR award process.

However, the special cases listed below will be discussed on a case-by-case base: please contact us at RTD-CHARTER@ec.europa.eu

6.1.Organisations without an HR department

In case an organisation considers to be a particular case (e.g an organisation without direct application of HR policies or without a centralized HR department such as an alliance or a research centre using a mixed HR policy), an exception to enter the HR award process can be requested.

6.2.Organisations belonging to a group, alliance, or conglomerate.

Individual application

Organisations can individually apply for the HR award when they are part of a bigger group, provided they represent a separate entity and have separate HR and organisational set of practices, distinct and differentiated from the group or the larger organisation to which they belong.

Group application

Multiple organisations can apply for the HR award at group level when they have harmonised or worked towards the harmonisation of their HR and organisational set of practices. In this case, their application can be treated as per the merged scenarios described above.

N.B.: Depending on the size of the larger group, EC Services may consider useful to engage the same team of assessors for consistency purposes.

6.3.Application of an organisation's sub-unit

If the subunit (department, institute etc.) provides sufficient justification such as the intention to apply functioning as pilot for the future application of the main organisation, or because the HR and organisational rules differ from the main organisation ones, the EC Services can decide to accept the application on a case-by-case base.

If accepted, the field for the organisation profile name in the e-tool will include the name of the main organisation in addition to the unit's name. (i.e. Name – main Organisation name).

6.4.Mergers of organisations

In case of a merger of two or more organisations, there are several possible scenarios, depending on the enrolment status in the HR award process of the merged organisations. Possible scenarios are described below.

No merged organisation is awarded yet

If none of the merged organisations has been granted the award yet, the EC services will close all the existing individual applications and will clearly indicate the re-application under a merged organisation profile.

One merged organisations is awarded

The organisation that holds the HR award should be encouraged to retain it, even in case the merger involves one or more organisations not implementing the European Charter for Researchers principles in their HR practices. In this case, the EC Services will extend the deadline for the next Internal Review of the newly merged organisation up to three years. This is to allow the awarded organisation to align with the merged organisation(s) in the HR award process.

At the next assessment cycle, the newly formed organisation will be assessed on the base of the updated Action Plan, which will include all the relevant information on how the new organisation has embedded the HR award process. The team of assessors assessing the merged organisation will then determine whether the application has a positive outcome or the organisation needs to reinitiate the process.

Two or more merged organisations are awarded

If two or more organisations participating in the merger have been already awarded individually, only one case will remain open in the e-tool while the others will be closed. The HR award Admin of the merged organisation will be asked to decide which case should be kept open in the E-tool. Within up to the three years following the merger, the newly formed organisation should combine the existing Action Plans of the merged organisations. The Internal Review that will be produced for the assessment of the new organisations shall include the relevant information about the merger process and on how the HR policies were reorganised. The team of assessors assessing the merged organisation will decide whether their application can proceed further, or if the process needs to be reinitiated.

ANNEX

Example of simple letter of endorsement and commitment

Place and date

Name of the Organisation

Address

City and zip code

Country

Endorsement of the European Charter for Researchers and commitment to its implementation via the HR Excellence in Research award process

.... *Name of the organisation* ... formally endorses the 20 principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and we are committed to implementing these principles in our institution through the HR Excellence in Research award process.

As an organisation dedicated to excellence in research, we prioritise the well-being and career development of our researchers. We recognise the importance of creating a stimulating and supportive environment that fosters researchers' growth, mobility, and success.

By engaging with the HR Excellence in Research award process, we aim to embed the Charter's principles into our institutional policies and practices, ensuring a stimulating and supportive environment for our researchers.

Kind regards

Signature

[*Name and function (Rector/Vice-Rector/Director-General...)*]

The “toolkit”: a step-by-step guide to better OTM-R practices

This guide sets out, in chronological order, the various steps of the recruitment process, from the job advertising/application phase through to the appointment phase. It aims to build on the principles of the European Charter for Researchers, providing more detailed information, practical solutions and includes examples of good practice.

Three phases have been identified:

1. Advertising and application phase
2. - Evaluation and selection phase
3. - Appointment phase

1. Advertising and application phase

1.1 Advertising the post

In line with the "Recruitment" principle of the European Charter for Researchers, it is recommended to keep the job advertisement and description of requirements as concise as possible and include links to more detailed information online. Applicants should be able to find information on:

- organisation and recruiting unit
- job title, specifications and starting date
- researcher career profiles (R1-R4) with the respective 'required' and 'desirable' competencies
- selection criteria (and possibly their respective 'weight'), including knowledge and professional experience (distinguishing the 'required' and 'desirable')
- number of available positions
- working conditions, workplace, entitlements (salary, other benefits, etc.), type of contract
- professional development opportunities
- career development prospects

It should also include:

- the application procedure and its deadline (as a rule, the deadline should fall at least two months from the publication date, taking into account holiday periods)
- a reference to the institution's OTM-R policy
- a reference to the institution's equal opportunities policy (e.g., positive discrimination, dual careers, gender equality etc.)
- all the relevant contact details

All vacancies should be published on EURAXESS. This implies that the advert should be published at least in the national language and in English.

Although possible, any exception to the above should be duly justified in the recruitment procedure.

1.2 Keeping the administrative burden to a minimum

The request for supporting documents should be strictly limited to those which are really needed to make a fair, transparent and merit-based selection of the applicants. Moreover, in cases where certain documents are legally required, applicants should be allowed to make a declaration in which they engage to provide the proof after the selection process is concluded. For example, applicants should not have to provide original or translated certificates related to qualifications with their initial application.

It is strongly recommended to allow the transmission of supporting documents by electronic means and possibly to develop an e-recruitment tool.

1.3 Acknowledging receipt and providing additional information

All applicants should receive an (automated) e-mail acknowledging that their application has been received and providing them with further information on the recruitment process, indicating the next steps and including an indicative timetable (shortlisting or not, interview period, appointment date). Care should be taken to allow sufficient time before the interview for external candidates to make the necessary travel arrangements and prepare properly for the interview. If there are subsequently significant changes or delays to this process, all applicants should be duly and timely informed by (a standard) e-mail.

2. Evaluation and selection phase

2.1 Setting up selection committees

In line with the "Selection" principle of the European Charter for Researchers, selection committees should be established for all profiles (R1-R4), though the size and composition of the committees may differ according to the profile and type of contract. The process to nominate and appoint the selection committee should be transparent and made public.

The selection committees should be independent, members should not have any conflict of interest, and the decisions must be objective and evidence-based rather than based on personal preference. The committee should make best use of the expertise of external members. The composition of the committee should be appropriately diverse. To achieve this, the following elements should be considered:

- a minimum of 3 members;
- gender balance, e.g., not less than one third of one gender in the committee;

- inclusion of external expert(s) in all committees (external meaning outside the institution);
- inclusion of (or contribution from) international experts, who should be proficient in the language(s) in which the process will be conducted;
- inclusion of experts from different sectors (public, private, academic, non-academic), where appropriate and feasible;
- -the committee as a whole should have all the relevant experience, qualifications and competencies to assess the candidate.
- Any derogation for certain positions, types of contract or indeed for specific disciplines should be clearly set out.

2.2 Screening and interviewing

All applications should be screened. Depending largely on the number of applicants as well as the internal human resources available, the process may involve one or more steps, e.g., pre-screening to check eligibility, shortlisting of candidates for interviews, remote interviews by telephone or skype, face-to-face interviews. While remote interviews may often be appropriate, in particular at the first interview stage, they should not altogether replace face-to-face interviews in cases where these are being conducted for internal candidates. All candidates should be treated equally and in the same way.

It is recommended that the same selection committee is involved in all steps, although it is recognised that this may not always be feasible and that, for example, one committee may do the initial screening, and another may conduct the interviews. Accordingly, it is strongly recommended that the process itself is transparent and made known to the applicants, including the various steps.

In case of face-to-face interviews, the institution should cover the (international) travel and accommodation expenses of the interviewees.

2.3 Assessing merit and future potential

The criteria for selecting researchers should focus on both the candidates' past performance and their future potential. The emphasis is likely to change according to the profile of the post (e.g. when recruiting an R1 researcher, future potential is likely to outweigh past performance).

In line with the principles "Selection", "Variations in the order of CVs", "Recognition of mobility Experience" and "Career Progression " of the European Charter for Researchers, the evaluation criteria should be consistent with the requirements of the position as regards research, supervision or, for example, teaching competencies.

Merit should be judged qualitatively as well as quantitatively, focusing on results within a diversified career path, taking into account career breaks, lifelong professional development and the added value of non-research experience.

A wide range of evaluation criteria should be used and balanced, according to the position being advertised. Depending on the specific profile of the post, this may include (in alphabetical and not hierarchical order):

- acquisition of funding;
- generation of societal impact;
- international portfolio (including mobility);
- knowledge transfer and exchange;
- management of research and innovation;
- organizational skills/experience;
- outreach/public awareness activities;
- research performance;
- supervision and mentoring;
- teaching;
- teamwork

It is strongly recommended to make use of the [European Framework for Researchers](#) , which identifies both necessary and desirable competences for each of the four broad profiles for researchers (R1 to R4).

3. Appointment phase

3.1 Feedback

In line with the "Recruitment" principle of the European Code for Researchers, all applicants should receive written or electronic notice at the end of the selection process, indicatively within one month and without any unnecessary delays.

It is strongly recommended to inform all applicants who were admitted to the interview about the strengths and weaknesses of their application. Other applicants, who did not make it to the final stages, should receive a standard mail informing them of the outcome. All applicants must be entitled to further feedback upon request.

3.2 Complaints mechanism

The institution should establish a procedure to deal with complaints made by applicants who believe that they have been treated negligently, unfairly or incorrectly. This procedure should be transparent and made public. It should include an indication of the timeframe within which a complainant will receive a response, which should in principle be no longer than one month.

Suggestions for the organization of a Site Visit

Once the date for the site visit has been finalised with the assessing team, the Organisation should remember to:

- define with the lead expert the dates, agenda, and all the other logistics (e.g. computer system used for the meetings, internal transportation etc.)
- Inform the senior hierarchy that they should be present in the opening and closing meetings
- block out time on all the stakeholders' schedule
- communicate clearly to all participants what they can expect during the site visit
- ensure to have secured all the necessary meeting rooms, logistics, computer infrastructure (e.g presentation, eventual virtual interviews, etc.)

Suggestion for a site-visit agenda

- A maximum one-hour meeting with the steering committee (4 to 6 persons), with a presentation of the institution and its HRS4R progress. At least one leader of the organisation must be present + the HRS4R manager;
- Three meetings of half-an-hour each with groups of stakeholders (4 persons max., researchers from different levels, representative of working groups, admin staff);
- Upon request, an additional meeting with the HRS4R manager can be organized for clarifications;
- A half an hour-long closing meeting. The HR award admin and at least one representative of the upper hierarchy must be present;
- Note that all the meetings on the agenda must take place on the same day.

Example of basic agenda for site visit

TIME	WHO AND WHAT?	WHY?	WHERE?
09:00 – 09:30	Introduction by the lead expert Presentation delivered by the organisation	Inform on how the HR award is embedded in the organisation and highlight progress and quality in implementing the principles of the European Charter for Researchers Discuss challenges faced by the organisation in implementing the European Charter for Researchers principles due to external constraints (e.g. national context and legislation) The most important purpose is to introduce the external assessors to the invited stakeholders and participants of the site visit and vice versa. However, it is also an opportunity to present your organisation to the external assessors.	
09:30 – 09:45	Meeting with	Get an overview of the organisation	
09:45 – 10:00	Assessors private meeting/ reserved discussion	To assess the information provided	To occur after each meeting
	Meeting with ...		
	Meeting with ...		
17:30	Debriefing meeting Assessment Team alone	Exchange of impressions, discuss if further information/clarification are needed.	
18:00	Meeting with organisation leadership	A short presentation by lead assessor with some feedback, thank everybody for the cooperation and fruitful discussions Collect feed-back and recommendations for the future	

Abbreviations and glossary

Assessor: An assessor is the person who performs the remote or onsite audit of a research organisation's case and provides advice and guidance to the organisations towards the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers via the HR award process.

Charter & Code: The 2005 Charter & Code is replaced by the European Charter for Researchers

E-TOOL: The e-Tool is a component of the HR award initiative under the ERA Talent Platform. It is the IT interface that manages the entire HR award process: all new applications, HR award cases and assessors, and is vital for the monitoring of tasks.

European Charter for Researchers: On 18 December 2023 the Council Adopted the "Council Recommendation on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe"⁶. The new Charter for Researchers (Annex 2 to the Council Recommendation) replaces the old 2005 Charter & Code⁷ and contains a set of 20 principles underpinning the development of attractive research careers to support excellence in research and innovation across Europe. The focus of the European Charter for Researchers is the rights and responsibilities of researchers, employers, funders, and policymakers.

HR Award: see HR Excellence in Research Award.

HR Award Admin: this is the person in charge of the administrative management of the HR award e-tool for the organisation and is the contact point of the organisation on all HR award matters. This role is granted only to one person per organisation, and it is responsibility of the organisation to always ensure a HR award Admin with a valid email.

HR award process: previously called HRS4R, this is the process to obtain and maintain the HR Excellence in Research award. The process is based on a structured and monitored auditing mechanism, centred on a three-years cycles continuous assessment based on gap-analysis and action plans.

HR Excellence in Research award: The HR award is granted by the European Commission to those research organisations that endorsed the European Charter for Researchers, committed to its implementation via the HR Award process, and are making progress towards it.

HR Strategy ("Strategy") refers to the overarching plan of an organization for implementing the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. This comprehensive strategy encompasses a thorough GAP-Analysis, an OTM-R (Open, Transparent, and Merit-based

⁶ Council Recommendation C/2023/1640 of 18 December 2023 a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/1640/oj>.

⁷ Commission Recommendation 2005/251/EC of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2005/251/oj>

Recruitment) framework, and a detailed Action Plan, all of which are designed to ensure the organization's human resources policies and practices are striving to align with the European Charter for Researchers' principles

HRS4R: "Human Resources Strategy for Researchers": is the former name of the initiative renamed "HR Excellence in Research process" in 2024 (see HR award process).

HRS4R is today used to refer exclusively to the HR Strategy, which outlines an organization's plan for implementing the principles of the European Charter for Researchers (see "HR Strategy")

Initial Phase: This is the first phase of the HR Award process, and it comprises the registration in the e-Tool, the submission of a letter of "Endorsement and Commitment", the submission of the relevant documentation, and its assessment by a team of assessors. After successful assessment and validation, the HR award is officially granted.

Interim Phase: This phase starts 2 years after the award is granted. This phase is to provide advice and guidance to the Organisation and, at this stage, the award is not in jeopardy.

IT Helpdesk: The IT helpdesk (support@euraxess.org) is managed by the same IT contractor developing and maintaining the e-Tool platform. The IT helpdesk deals with all the technical issues linked to the use of the e-Tool.

Reassessment: In case the outcome of an assessment of an Initial or a Renewal phase result in a request for modification, the Organisation must tackle the recommendations of the assessors and resubmit for reassessment (which is performed by the Lead Assessor, only): within two months in case of simple "Request for Modifications", or within a year in case of "Request for Modifications with extended deadline

Renewal Phase: The renewal phases are based on a three-year cycle alternating site visits and remote assessments. The first Renewal Phase takes place three years after the submission of the outcome of the Interim and will include a Site Visit on the premises of the organisation. All the subsequent Renewal Phases will alternate a Renewal with site visit and a Renewal without site visit (i.e. 1st renewal with site visit, 2nd renewal without site visit, 3rd renewal with site visit, 4th renewal without site visit and so on....). The positive assessment of the Renewal Phase leads to the renewal of the award.

Site Visit: a site visit is an assessment performed on the premises of the research organisation.