



**Policy on Open Transparent and Merit-Based  
Recruitment of Researchers at the  
University of Sarajevo**



**University of Sarajevo**  
**Policy on Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of  
Researchers – OTM-R Policy**

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University of Sarajevo

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## 1. Introduction

In June 2016, the University of Sarajevo officially adopted the European Commission's initiative and the recommendations given in the *European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*<sup>1</sup>. In June 2018, the Senate of the University of Sarajevo adopted the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) with the Action Plan for its implementation, thereby completing the documentation preparation process for the University's application to obtain EC's *HR Excellence in Research Award*. In January 2019, the European Commission positively evaluated the application by the University of Sarajevo and the University received the *HR Excellence in Research Award*, thus further confirming the University's commitment to ensuring the better and stimulating environment, as well as conditions for research activities.

With the aim to internally evaluate the HRS4R process, the University of Sarajevo conducted an analysis and evaluation of the implementation of the Action Plan in the beginning of 2021, and revised the document in line with the key results of the analysis. The revised Action Plan anticipated continuation of the activities to fully implement the HRS4R strategy over the next 36 months, starting in February 2021, as well as monitoring the progress and implementation of activities, based on the set of progress indicators defined by the revised Action Plan. The Commission for Monitoring the Revision Process of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) with Action Plan and its Implementation, monitors the realization of the HRS4R process and periodically recommends activities that contribute to improving the environment for research work.

Open Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment of Researchers (OTM-R) represents one of the important pillars of the European Charter for Researchers, and particularly of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and therefore the actions of research institutions in this area are the focus of the HRS4R process. OTM-R supports the recruitment of the best candidates for research positions, thereby contributing to the effectiveness of national research systems, ensuring equality, especially for underrepresented groups, and supporting trans- and international cooperation. Furthermore, OTM-R promotes the optimal circulation of scientific knowledge, providing opportunities for direct investment in research, increases the attractiveness of research careers, ensures equal opportunities for all candidates, and supports mobility.

Given the above, and in line with the commitment by the University of Sarajevo to the HRS4R process, as well as the range of the activities that this process entails, the University of Sarajevo will strive to harmonise processes for selection and recruitment of researchers with the principles contained in the *Charter and the Code*, as outlined in the University Policy on Open Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers (hereinafter referred to as: **OTM-R Policy**).

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<sup>1</sup> *Charter and Code* – key elements of the EU policy with the aim to support researchers' careers (<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/charter>)

## **2. Policy on Open Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers**

The OTM-R policy aims to further underline the University of Sarajevo's commitment to ensuring fair and transparent recruitment and candidate selection procedures.

Although the OTM-R Policy is focused on employment and career development of researchers, and taking into account laws and regulations that regulate academic and research careers at the University, as well as national rules and requirements in higher education, the University of Sarajevo is committed to aligning its selection and recruitment procedures with the principles of the OTM-R policy and applying them in all segments of recruitment, both for research and teaching positions.

Regarding the engagement of researchers at the University of Sarajevo, it should be noted that according to the national/cantonal Rules and Requirements for Higher Education Institutions in Canton of Sarajevo, teachers and associates of the University of Sarajevo are required to actively engage in scientific research/artistic activities within their 40-hours working week. Therefore, all teachers and associates employed at the University of Sarajevo have to be engaged in scientific activities during half of their working hours, while the other half is devoted to teaching and other academic obligations. On the other hand, in accordance with legal regulations, the University of Sarajevo follows procedures for employment of researchers who can be engaged through award of the following scientific titles: scientific advisor, senior scientific associate, scientific associate, as well as research titles: expert advisor, senior expert associate, expert associate.

The OTM-R Policy represents an important pillar of the European Charter for Researchers, and especially of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Researchers, research organizations, funding bodies who support research activities, and ultimately the entire European Research Area (ERA) benefit greatly from the OTM-R approach to recruitment.

### **2.1 Open Recruitment**

*Open recruitment involves advertising available positions, especially posting on international portals such as EURAXESS. The advertisement of positions should include information about the position itself, academic and other criteria, career development opportunities, and ideally, information about the candidate selection process.*

- Ensuring compliance with the principle of *Open Recruitment* at the University of Sarajevo:

Each University member-institution academic/scientific council regularly plans recruitment needs and submits the plan to advertise academic/research positions to the Senate and the Governing Board. Based on the approved plans, the selection procedure, with the prior consent by the Senate, is initiated by the member-institution (faculty/institute/art academy). Individual proposals to initiate recruitment and advertise academic/research position at the University member-institutions is approved by Senate. After Senate's approval, available positions are advertised, and must be published in minimum one daily newspaper, as well as at the University website, and websites of its member-institutions.

The minimum information that position announcement has to include implies: minimum general criteria for awarding academic, scientific, and research titles with notes and references to the relevant laws and regulations, details on scientific field and area/branch, or a designation of several related scientific branches within the scientific field for which the recruitment is made, the conditions and requirements that candidates must meet, type of employment, necessary documentation to be submitted in accordance with the law provisions, including handwritten and signed application, the deadline for submitting the application, which cannot be shorter than 15 days from the date of the position announcement, and the address to which applications are submitted with the designation of a contact person.

Detailed criteria related to employment at the University of Sarajevo are defined by the Labor Law of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Law on Higher Education of the Canton of Sarajevo, the Law on Scientific Research Activities of the Canton of Sarajevo, the Labor Regulations of the University of Sarajevo, and other legal acts of the University.

The University of Sarajevo publishes its open positions in English on the EURAXESS portal, in accordance with the approval by the University Senate from its 32<sup>nd</sup> session held on June 26, 2024.

## 2.2 Transparency

*Transparency in the context of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, refers to the composition of selection committees and transparent candidate selection practices. After selecting the best candidate, it is necessary to inform the other candidates about the strengths and weaknesses of their applications.*

- Ensuring compliance with the principle of *Transparency* at the University of Sarajevo:

The conditions and procedure of awarding academic/research titles are determined by law, Guidelines for Awarding Academic/Research Titles, the Statute, and bylaws. The Guidelines establish binding generally accepted professional requirements for awarding academic/research titles, set general selection criteria for evaluation of quantitative and qualitative conditions, propose a list of relevant scientific databases, determine general criteria for evaluation of research publications and other forms of research output, evaluation of results related to internationalisation and general social engagement and contribution within higher education institution and in community, and regulate more closely other relevant issues.

Member-institution council appoints a **committee** to prepare the proposal for selection and awarding the academic/research title. The committee consists of at least three teachers coming from the given scientific field for which the candidate is recruited. Committee members have to be senior or of equal academic/research titles as the title of the advertised position. Candidate without prior teaching experience at higher education institution is required to deliver introductory lecture to students and the committee with subject related to scientific field/branch of the advertised position. This procedure is regulated by the Statute. Candidate applying for the position to start academic career in the field of arts, is required to deliver art presentation before the selection committee, which is also regulated by the Statute. Criteria, composition, and procedures related to the work of the committees for selection and awarding of academic/research titles are regulated by the Statute of the University of Sarajevo.

## 2.3 Merit-Based Recruitment

*Merit-based recruitment, as described in the Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, states: "The selection process should take into consideration the whole range of experience of the candidates. While focusing on their potential as researchers, their creativity and level of independence should also be considered. This means that merit should be judged qualitatively as well as quantitatively, focusing on outstanding results within diversified career path, and not only on the number of publications".*

- Ensuring compliance with the principle of *Merit-Based Recruitment* at the University of Sarajevo:

The University is committed to equality in opportunities and treatment of all individuals without discrimination. In its strategic orientation, particularly within the field of research activities, the University of Sarajevo focuses on promoting and supporting scientific excellence and relevance through improvement of management system and empowerment of research activities, with primary goal to increase the intellectual output of individuals as well as institution's research output, in order to promote University of Sarajevo as a reliable and desirable partner institution.

In the recruitment process, the University of Sarajevo complies with legal regulations and recognizes the importance of research excellence. Requirements for recruitment and awarding academic/research titles at higher education institutions are defined across the following four areas: scientific achievements and contributions, teaching skills and contributions, internationalization skills and contributions, and social engagement and contributions, in accordance with the general act of the higher education institution. Additional areas of importance in the selection process include teaching skills and the innovative approaches to teaching process, contributions to the internationalization process, participation in the creation and implementation of study programs, participation in international conferences and editorial boards of international journals, as well as scientific and organizational committees of international conferences. Focus is also at active participation in international projects, as well as overall social engagement. Detailed criteria are regulated by the Statute, particularly taking into account the specificities related to selection and evaluation of output in different scientific fields, disciplines, and branches, due to different requirements of research output evaluation in different research fields.

## 3. Conclusion

University of Sarajevo recognizes the importance of improving the environment for research activities through implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) with its Action Plan. In this way, the University also acknowledges the importance of continuous improvement and revising of recruitment procedures through their alignment with the principles of the OTM-R Policy.

Recruitment of teachers, associates, as well as researchers at the University of Sarajevo is regulated by national legislation in the field of higher education and research, as well as general legal norms adopted by the University of Sarajevo. As such these procedures include

most of the OTM-R principles that employers in the field of higher education and research must adhere to.

The University of Sarajevo shall, through the implementation of the Action Plan for the implementation of the HRS4R strategy, make efforts towards harmonisation of the procedures related to selection and recruitment of researchers. The principles contained in this University Policy shall be further elaborated within the following documents:

- *Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) with the Action Plan for its implementation*
- *Review of achieved indicators of compliance with the OTM-R principles*
- *Guidelines for recruitment and award of academic/scientific/research titles*
- *Labor Regulations of the University of Sarajevo*

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*For any questions or suggestions related the OTM-R Policy of the University of Sarajevo, please contact the Research Support Office via e-mail at [nir@unsa.ba](mailto:nir@unsa.ba).*