



**Administrative Board**  
**Meeting on 30 September 2021**

**The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) in the University of Cagliari: *implementation in UNICA and activities and objectives of EDUC-SHARE project.***

Vice-Rector for Internationalisation

Prof. Alessandra Carucci

Director

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International Research Services Coordinator

Dr. Elisabetta Cagetti



## **The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) in the University of Cagliari: *implementation in UNICA and activities and objectives of EDUC-SHARE project***

The Rector introduces to the components of the Administrative Boards for approval the document on the implementation of UNICA's human resources strategy for researchers and the establishment of an internal structure to manage the process.

Among the strategic policies pursued by European Higher Education Institutions, the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) represents a key policy to pursue the improvement of the working environment for researchers, to render recruitment procedures more open and transparent and to increase the attractiveness of universities. The HRS4R strategy is based on the fulfillment of the 40 principles contained in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their recruitment (C&C), a body of principles established by the European Union that regulate the entitlements and responsibilities of research organisations/universities and researchers at every stage of their career development. The implementation of UNICA's internal strategy enables the integration of the "Charter and Code" principles into its human resources management policy, particularly with regard to researchers, as defined by the European Union.

The European Charter and Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers (C&C) contain 40 principles concerning:

- recognition of researchers' profession
- career development
- recognition of mobility experience
- recruitment
- selection procedures
- postdoctoral appointments

These principles are grouped in 4 macro-areas:

- Ethical and professional aspects
- Recruitment and selection
- Working conditions and social security
- Training and career development

The main aim of the HRS4R strategy is to improve the working conditions of all researchers, which, following the European Union (EU) definition, are classified in 4 groups based on their research experience:

- R1 *First Stage Researcher (up to the point of PhD)*: corresponding to PhD and/or specialization school students;
- R2 *Recognised Researcher (PhD holders or equivalent who are not yet fully independent)*: post-docs, research fellows;



- R3 *Established Researcher* (researchers who have developed a level of independence): Researchers (RI, RTDa e RTDb);
- R4 *Leading Researcher* (researchers leading their research area or field): academic staff with extensive research experience and funded projects<sup>2</sup>.

The implementation of the C&C and the development of an institutional HRS4R strategy will bring several benefits to UNICA, including:

- obvious benefits for researchers;
- greater accountability and transparency of recruitment policies at international level;
- increased credibility (towards internal and external stakeholders and funders);
- increased international visibility as a university that offers a favourable environment for the development of research and researchers, strengthening its ability to attract and retain highly qualified researchers;
- alignment with the principles set out at the Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe research programmes (i.e., compliance with Art. 32 of the Grant Agreement that stipulates the obligation to implement the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct).

In July 2005, the University of Cagliari together with other Italian Universities, gathered at the CRUI in Camerino, subscribed to the commitment to embrace the values and implement the general principles indicated by the European Commission Recommendation of 11 March 2005, inviting the Institutions to transpose the general principles and guidelines of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their recruitment and to elaborate and adopt their own strategies and systems for the implementation of the HRS4R and for obtaining the *HR Excellence in Research Award* from the European Commission.

Since then, although UNICA has included some of the C&C principles in its strategic plan and has been implementing for years numerous initiatives aimed at enhancing the value of their researchers and at pursuing the EU objectives in the framework of the HRS4R strategy (e.g., fostering the mobility of researchers through the Visiting professor programme and Young Researcher Mobility calls, establishing the Guarantee Committee and adopting the Gender Equality Plan), a formal commitment to formulate and implement a comprehensive strategy for the development of researchers' human resources has not been adopted yet.

In addition, due to the participation in the European EDUC Alliance and in the related project EDUC-SHARE –*Research and Innovation with and for Society*–, financed by the European

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<sup>2</sup>EUROPEAN COMMISSION DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION [TOWARDS A EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH CAREERS](https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/europe/career-development/training-researchers/research-profiles-descriptors) 21.07.2011, <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/europe/career-development/training-researchers/research-profiles-descriptors>

programme for research Horizon 2020, the University of Cagliari is committed to achieving one of the objectives of Work Package 5 (WP5), namely that all partner institutions are granted, by the end of the project, the HR Excellence in Research Award from the European Commission (3 out of the 6 universities have already obtained it); this award represents the recognition of the EU for the commitment to implementing the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Worldwide 618 organizations have received the award, while in Italy only 14 universities and 4 research organisations have implemented the HRS4R and have been awarded.

UniCA's candidature for the HR Excellence in research Award is based on a bottom-up approach, with full involvement of researchers in the different stages of career progression (R1-R4), that requires a multiannual commitment organized in several cyclical phases (initial, implementation and award renewal phases) (Figure 1).

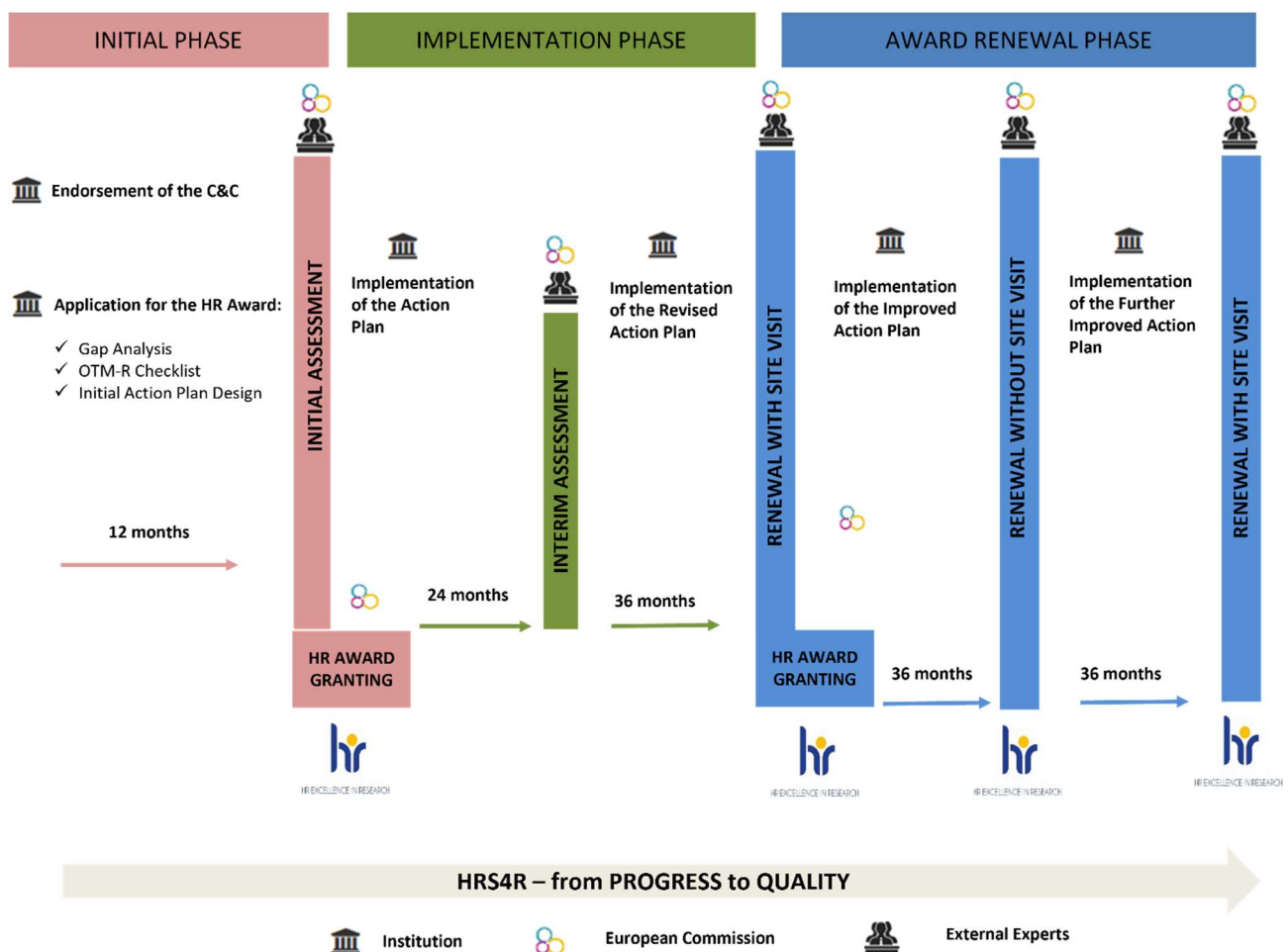


Fig. 1 Graphic presentation of the process for obtaining the HR Excellence Award from the European Commission



As part of a process based on quality and continuous improvement, the first step is an internal analysis to evaluate the current situation (*gap analysis*: analysis of the state of the art of the Institution's internal regulation/situation with regard to the C&C principles) and the formulation of a multiannual action plan (*action plan*: Human Resources strategy to overcome any gaps found during the internal analysis). This will constitute UNICA's strategy for the implementation of the C&C principles through the involvement of researchers from all the career stages, as well as of the university governance and of the various actors in the field of research and recruitment policies, or in any case involved in the processes of human resources enhancement, organised in an articulated structure and representative of the various university figures.

UNICA's structure for the implementation of the human resources strategy for researchers is proposed to the members of the Board of Directors, as follows (Figure 2):

**Governing bodies:** Rector, General Director, Academic Senate, Administrative Board; commitment to pursue the implementation of the human resources for researchers strategy through the discussion and approval of all the documents (process description, gap analysis, OTM-R (Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment) checklist, action plan) to be submitted to the EU through UNICA's application for the HR Excellence in Research Award.

**A Steering Committee** composed of:

Rector  
 Deputy Vice-Rector  
 Vice-Rector for research  
 Vice-Rector for internationalization  
 Rector's Delegate for International Projects  
 Rector's Delegate for Social Integration and Rights of People with Disabilities  
 General Director  
 President of the Guarantee Committee  
 Coordinator of the University Quality and Assurance Presidium  
 Coordinator of the Doctoral Advisory Council  
 Member of the Evaluation Committee (OIV)  
 Head of the Personnel, Organisation and Performance Division  
 Head of the Research and Territory Division  
 Responsible for the management of the HRS4R procedure in UniCA.

The steering committee has the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the human resources strategy for researchers, aimed at the accreditation and awarding of the "HR Excellence in Research" label, and providing the necessary guidance on the implementation process. The steering committee will propose the composition of the technical working groups and may also avail itself of the contribution of all other parties and/or structures, whose participation and/or contribution it deems necessary.

**Four technical working groups (TWG)** composed of experts and representatives of researchers at various career stages, who will work and produce all the documents required by the procedure on the 4 macro-areas covered by the 40 C&C principles (Annex I).

1. Technical working group on **ethical and professional aspects**
2. Technical working group on **recruitment and selection procedures**
3. Technical working group on **working conditions and social security**
4. Technical working group on **training and career development**

In order to fully share the whole implementation process with UNICA's researchers group, as defined by the European Union, the Rector will invite the Heads of the 15 Departments in UNICA to appoint, within each departmental structure, 4 researchers representative of the four career stages of researchers identified by the EU, as previously defined, who will constitute the **researchers' focus groups**, each of them composed of 15 researchers from the same level of career development, representing the different research areas covered by the Departments:

**Researchers' focus group R1:** PhD and/or specialization school students;

**Researchers' focus group R2:** post-docs, research fellows;

**Researchers' focus group R3:** researchers (RI, RTDa, RTDb);

**Researchers' focus group R4:** academic staff with extensive research experience and funded projects.

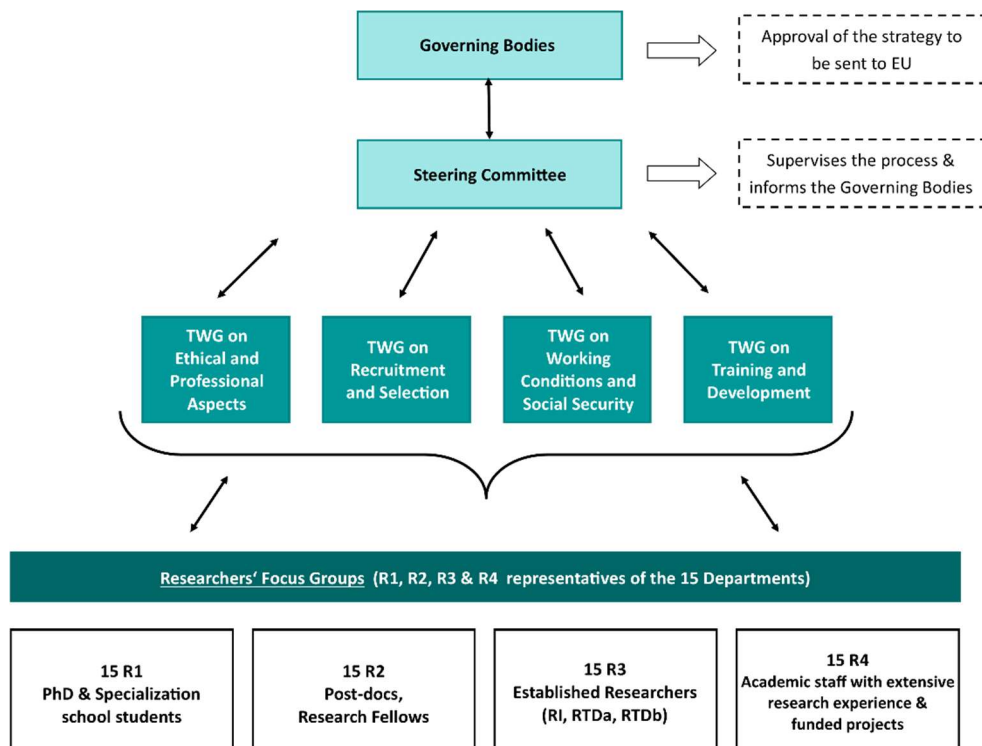


Fig. 2. UNICA's structure for the implementation of the human resources strategy for researchers





Each group of researchers will then identify, among them, the representatives for each Technical Working Group.

Researchers' focus groups will be involved and periodically consulted by the aforementioned technical working groups and all documents will be shared in order to get their comments and gather possible suggestions.

In the gap analysis and definition of the action plan phases, meetings involving a larger number of researchers and/or external stakeholders (related research institutes, other universities, local authorities and companies, etc.) may be organised, as well as surveys with online questionnaires.

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## THE ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

HEARD	the Rector's comments;
HAVING REGARD TO	UNICA's strategic plan for 2017-2022;
CONSIDERED	that the University of Cagliari considers the implementation of the international dimension a priority, through specific initiatives such as the EDUC-SHARE project, under Horizon 2020, and the obtainment of the HR Excellence in Research award label;
HAVING REGARD TO	the European Commission Recommendation of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter of Researchers and the code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers, inviting the European institutions to ratify the documents and endorse the principles contained therein by implementing a human resources strategy for researchers;
HAVING REGARD TO	the electronic procedure on the EURAXESS website for the application and obtainment of the "HR Excellence Research Award" label, recognition by the European Commission to Institutions implementing practices in line with the C&C principles;
CONSIDERED	the discussion and the approval of the implementation of Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) in UniCA



by the Academic Senate members in the meeting held on September 29<sup>th</sup> 2021;

## RESOLVES

1. To approve the launch of the implementation process of UNICA's "Human Resources Strategy for Researchers-HRS4R" that aims at integrating the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct into the University and its strategic plan;
2. To give a positive opinion on the proposed organisational structure in charge of the implementation of the human resources strategy for researchers in UNICA, organized as follows:

**Governing bodies:** Rector, General Director, Academic Senate, Administrative Board; commitment to pursue the implementation of the human resources for researchers strategy through the discussion and approval of all the documents (process description, gap analysis, OTM-R (Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment) checklist, action plan) to be submitted to the EU for UNICA's application for the HR Excellence in Research Award.

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3. To mandate the Rector to define, on the proposal of the steering committee, the composition of the Technical Working Groups, and to make amendments to the above structure if, during the implementation, the involvement of new figures or additional parties interested in the development of the process are required.