



IBEC
Institute for Bioengineering of Catalonia

IBEC Recruitment and Selection Policy based on the OTM strategy

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Introduction

Excellence in the recruitment of researchers is crucial to ensure excellence in research and the future of IBEC. It goes hand-in-hand with the development of good working conditions and international appeal. This document, IBEC's Recruitment and Selection Policy, is an important component of IBEC's Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) [1] Action Plan, and its final objective is to ensure that the best candidate for the job is selected, guaranteeing equal opportunities and access for all.

IBEC is committed to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (The Charter & Code). In 2015, IBEC gained the HR Excellence in Research Award in recognition of our ongoing commitment. At the mid-term evaluation in 2017, IBEC was successful in retaining the award.

Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R) is one of the main pillars of the Charter and Code, and a top priority of the European Research Area. Our Recruitment and Selection Policy is based on the OTM-R strategy. In 2017, a working group formed by Group Leaders, Senior Researchers and Heads of Support Units was established to work on the OTM-R self-assessment tool to benchmark our current selection and recruitment procedures. In 2018, a renewed working group (including some of the former members) met in June, July and September to work in the different aspects of the recruitment and selection process.

The working group has taken as a guide and reference the Report of the Working Group of the Steering Group of Human Resources Management on Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers (July 2015) and the OTM-R checklist for ensuring the completeness of our analysis and to define our Recruitment and Selection Policy.

The Policy is aligned with the principles of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, as well as with the recommendation of the Catalan government intervention to establish selection procedures that guarantee the principles of concurrency, publicity and merit according to Estatut Bàsic de l'Empleat Públic, Law 7/2007 and the Spanish Science Law, Law 14/2011. It was validated and approved by IBEC's Director on November 2018 and is expecting ratification by the Board of Trustees in December 2018, after which it will be made public.

¹ The HRS4R is a process by which IBEC aligns its Human Resources policies with the principles set out in the Charter & Code.

Scope

This Recruitment and Selection Policy applies to the recruitment and selection of candidates applying for positions at IBEC. All those who are involved in the recruitment and selection at IBEC are expected to observe this Policy to ensure that their actions are consistent with IBEC's principles and procedures.

Objectives

The new IBEC Recruitment and Selection Policy has been designed with the main objective of ensuring that the best candidate for the job is selected, guaranteeing equal opportunities and access for all.

Other objectives are:

- Provide the Direction, Group Leaders and Heads of Units with a specialized service, and efficient support in the selection processes, centralizing those aspects of the different selection processes that allow them to be streamlined.
- Maintain, and even increase, the degree of satisfaction of the members of IBEC with the results of the selection processes carried out, by guaranteeing the appropriateness of the profile of the candidates that are recruited.
- Comply with the provisions of the HRS4R action plan.
- Improve IBEC's reputation by attracting the best candidates.
- Make researchers' careers more attractive and enhance mobility.
- Promote gender equality and gender balance within the committees.

Principles of our policy

In line with the principles defined in the OTM-R procedure, selection processes are governed by the following principles:

- Transparency throughout the whole process
- Equal opportunities in the selection and hiring of personnel
- Non-discrimination on grounds of sex, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinions or social and economic condition
- Merit-based evaluation
- Confidentiality as the cornerstone of the selection process
- Principle of public dissemination of selection processes, which must also be internationally comparable
- Efficiency and effectiveness according to the methodology and agreed terms
- Selection processes adapted to the job announcement
- Compliance with the policy as a key element in achieving the objectives of the process
- In line with our values and Strategic Plan (2018-2020)

General considerations and specific criteria according to position

At IBEC we need to differentiate between two types of selection processes, both of which comply with OTM-R procedure. Throughout this document, one or the other will be mentioned to describe the differences that can be found between the two.

- Individual selection processes, where a research group or Support Unit needs to cover an individual vacant position.
- IBEC's Institutional and International Selection Programmes, in which more than one position is offered. Candidates shall be selected according to the procedures and rules established in the corresponding call.

These are the four Institutional and International Selection Programmes:

- » International PhD Programme (<http://www.ibebarcelona.eu/phd/IIPPfellowships>).
- » International Postdoctoral Programme (<http://postdocs.ibebarcelona.eu/>).
- » Master Programme (<http://www.ibebarcelona.eu/master>).
- » Junior Group Leader call (<http://www.ibebarcelona.eu/for-researchers/opportunities-for-pis-and-senior-researchers/>).

Phases of the Recruitment and Selection Policy in chronological order

1. Identification of the need for a post
2. Advertising and application
3. Evaluation and selection
4. Job offer
5. Induction

1. Identification of the need for a post

The Supervisor communicates with the HR Unit to request the start of the recruitment and selection process.

Prior to publishing the job announcement, the HR Unit will check with the Projects Office whether the research group has economic resources to cover the employment contract. They must ensure that facilities or other resources are in place for the successful integration of the candidate at IBEC. Once this has been checked, the advertising phase can start.

2. Advertising and application

All job advertisements are posted publicly on the IBEC's website, and researcher positions are also published in Euraxess. Vacant positions are open to both internal and external candidates. Job adverts are published in free and paid advertising tools and job portals nationally and internationally, and also on social networks such as Twitter and LinkedIn.

IBEC is also present at various career fairs to attract young talent, as well as organizing its own annual Open Day for masters and undergraduate students.

Job advertisement:

All decisions relating to recruitment and selection must be consistent with the criteria outlined in the post. Each job advert is agreed between the supervisor and the HR Unit.

A new job advert template according to the OTM-R strategy has been in use since October 2018.

Job advertisements at IBEC will include the following information:

- organisation unit/research group
- job title, specifications and start date
- researcher career profiles (R1-R4) with the respective 'required' and 'desirable' competencies
- selection criteria, including knowledge and professional experience (distinguishing between 'required' and 'desirable')
- number of available positions
- working conditions, workplace, benefits, type of contract, etc.
- professional development opportunities and career development prospects
- the application procedure and deadline
- a reference to IBEC's OTM-R policy
- a reference to the IBEC's Equal Opportunities and Diversity management plan
- contact details.

The language used in the job advertisement should always be inclusive and should appeal to candidates of diverse backgrounds: a mix of terms² should be used to create a balanced, unbiased advertisement. IBEC uses inclusive language in its job ads through the use of specific tools and software.

The job descriptions for R1 to R4 and technician positions are used as the basis for recruitment, as they describe the objectives of the positions, tasks and responsibilities, as well as required and desirable skills and competencies.

All applicants receive an (automated) e-mail acknowledging that their application has been received. Further information on the recruitment process shall be provided to candidates. IBEC attempts to keep the administrative burden for the candidate to a minimum, so when documents are legally required, applicants make a declaration in which they commit to providing proof after the selection process is concluded.

² Evidence shows that the use of many stereotypically masculine words in job descriptions can result in women perceiving that they do not belong to that kind of job environment.

Neither original nor translated certificates related to qualifications are requested with initial applications.

It is IBEC policy to advertise all research vacancies except in the following cases, according to the internal document “When to publish a job advertisement at IBEC?”

- Official fellowships (with competitive funding) such as the ones from the Catalan and Spanish Government (FI, FPU, FPI, JdC, BP, RyC) and those from the European Commission; Marie Curie.
- Researchers named in:
 - » Granted projects (if compatible with the funding body requirements).
 - » Contracts with Industry.
- Extension of fixed-term (works & services) contracts while the job position and the works & services description remain the same.
- The description of the works & services of the labour contract remains the same, but the project changes (and so does the cost centre).
- Internal promotions regulated by “IBEC’s Remuneration Policy and Professional Scheme”.

Candidates for IBEC’s Institutional and International Selection Programmes apply via IBEC’s on-line job portal. It is envisaged that by the last quarter of 2019, IBEC’s online application system will be extended to all selection processes. To date, candidates are invited to send their full CV and a letter of motivation to the HR Unit using a reference number for the position.

3. Evaluation and Selection

Selection committees (hereinafter also referred to as selection bodies) should be established for all profiles (R1-R4), though the size and composition of these committees may differ according to the profile and type of contract.

Members of the committees should be independent and should not have any conflict of interest.

The selection bodies should be sufficiently gender-balanced. The minimum requirement in IBEC’s Institutional and International Selection Programmes is a 40% ratio of the underrepresented sex, as described in action number 23 of our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Management Plan.

The composition of the selection bodies consists of a minimum of three IBEC members:

- Supervisor: the GL/Head of Unit
- A member of the HR Unit, who also acts as a Chair to ensure that all members understand and execute their roles in the recruitment process.
- A member of the research group / Support Unit with an advisory figure to be determined at the beginning of the selection process. In case this member is not available in the Unit or research group, an additional member of HR can take part.

The members of the selection bodies are provided with standardised assessment forms.

Screening and interviewing

All applications are screened. Normally, due to a high number of applications, a pre-screening may be carried out by the members of the HR Unit following the criteria specified in the job advertisements, such as education or years of experience.

Depending on the number of applicants, as well as the internal human resources available, the process may involve one or more steps:

- pre-screening to check eligibility, managed by the HR Unit,
- behavioural and other tests, managed by the HR Unit,
- shortlisting of candidates for interviews,
- between one and three interviews, depending on the position involved: remotely by teleconference, or face-to-face,
- research presentations.

The process shall be transparent and made known to the applicants.

Assessing Merit

The criteria to assess candidates need to be measurable and should consider past performance and future potential.

The merit should be assessed quantitatively and qualitatively and always adapted to the position to be assessed. An Open Science³ assessment criteria will be integrated taking into account a multi-dimensional approach:

- Quantitative criteria such as academic degree grades, number of publications and impact factor
- Qualitative criteria such as mobility, theses supervision, transferable skills (according to the “IBEC Dictionary of Competencies” for each research level), research management, teaching, knowledge transfer activities, research integrity, publishing in open access journals and dissemination and outreach.

References will be requested only for shortlisted or final candidates, when the supervisor or a member of the HR Unit will contact the referee directly.

Special case: For Institutional and International Selection Programmes, references are requested at the beginning, as they are part of the evaluation process. A letter and an evaluation of competencies⁴ is requested from the referee.

In its **Gender and Diversity Management Plan**, IBEC implements different actions to promote gender and diversity balance. One of these aims to increase the number of women in group leader and postdoctoral positions. As a result, for the selection of women for these positions, it has been agreed that 40% of the shortlisted candidates that are interviewed have to be women. To avoid gender bias, a video from CERCA on “Recruitment Bias in Research” is circulated to all selection panel members.

When assessing a CV, the duration of parental or risk during pregnancy leave should be subtracted from the total duration of the candidate’s research career, and career interruptions due to taking care of children or dependents will be recognised.

³ *Evaluation of research careers fully acknowledging Open Science practices, July 2017, European Commission*

⁴ *Competencies are identified in the job descriptions*

Feedback provided to interviewees

Post-interview, shortlisted candidates for group leader and senior positions will be informed about the strengths and weaknesses of their application.

For the rest of the selection processes, feedback is provided to those who request it.

Request for redress procedure

Candidates may request redress by contacting the HR Unit in writing. The redress procedure will look at procedural shortcomings and possible errors, rather than evaluating the selection body or experts' ratings and comments.

The HR Unit and the supervisor will study each case and re-evaluate the application. The outcome of the redress procedure will be a report of the motivation of rejection, or a letter informing the candidate about their reincorporation into the selection process.

All applicants receive electronic notice at the end of the selection process.

4. Job offer

After the selection of the final candidate and depending on the position, the HR Unit or the supervisor will contact the final candidate to make a job offer.

The margin to negotiate salaries shall be according to the salary bands established in "IBEC's Remuneration Policy and Professional Scheme" approved by the Board of Trustees on June 2018.

Once the negotiation phase is closed, an offer letter with the agreed conditions is sent to the candidate. If the candidate accepts the conditions of the position, the contracting procedure starts.

The employment contract shall be adjusted to the provisions of the Estatuto de los Trabajadores and Convenio de Oficinas y Despachos de Cataluña, Ley de la Ciencia, regulations and current legislation, and any rules established in the corresponding calls. In case the researcher contract is funded by funding organisations, their OTM-R procedure will be followed.

5. Induction

"The Guide for Induction and Welcome at IBEC" is a document that helps the HR Unit and supervisors to carry out the induction phase for IBEC newcomers, whose purpose is to facilitate their adaptation and integration into the institute. The guide goes hand-in-hand with a more comprehensive process of integration which takes place when a newcomer first joins IBEC, whose objective is to give them an overview of the institute – its culture, values, forms of work, environment, quality, health and safety, etc – which can be assimilated progressively to promote their involvement and commitment to IBEC.

Conflict of interest

According to the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, a conflict of interest is a situation in which someone in a position of trust has competing professional or personal interests. Such competing interests can make it difficult to fulfil his or her duties impartially. A conflict of interest exists even if no unethical or improper act results from it.

In relation to the assessment of a candidate for selection, a conflict of interest will be deemed to exist in circumstances such as (but not limited to): The selection committee member has supervised or is supervising an applicant; or has been named as a referee by a candidate.

The selection committee member must notify the HR Unit of the conflict prior to the commencement of the selection process, or at the earliest opportunity thereafter. The HR Unit will discuss with the Chair of the selection body to decide if the member concerned is to be asked to withdraw from any decision about the candidate.

Where the selection committee member is related to the applicant (i.e. spouse, parent), or has or has had a personal relationship with an applicant, the member shall be automatically required to step aside.

Confidentiality

All aspects of the recruiting process shall remain confidential. Materials and details of the candidates shall not be shared or discussed with any other person who is not part of the selection body, other than staff within the HR Unit.

Quality control and monitoring of the OTM-R in place

IBEC pursues the continuous improvement of the OTM-R policy and its procedure.

The HR Unit leads the quality control and monitoring of the recruitment and selection processes.

A tracking system should be put in place to record and store information regarding each stage of the process.

List of periodical quality control entities with independent observers:

- Intervenció General de la Generalitat audits selection processes in periodical audits.
- CERCA evaluation of the selection policy and process every 4 years.
- HRS4R site visits and peer-review in the mid-term self-evaluation report every 3 years.

Monitoring: IBEC has identified following indicators to measure the effectiveness of our OTM-R Policy

- Evaluation by sex, nationality and age at all stages is in place in the IBEC e-recruitment tool for Institutional and International Selection Programmes. For the rest of the recruitment processes gender is monitored, but until the online recruitment tool is in place (T4 2019) the rest of the criteria must be incorporated in all phases of the recruitment process).
- Indicator: % of candidates that don't comply with the eligibility criteria.
- Indicator: time to Recruit.
- Indicator: quality of sourcing: number of eligible candidates, by nationality and gender.
- Qualitative indicator: identify why and how many vacancies remain open.

Actions to be implemented after the OTM-R procedure is approved

- Recruitment and Selection Policy (T4 2018)
- Interviewer guide (T1 2019)
- On-line recruitment tool for all IBEC selection processes (T4 2019)
- Monitoring and Quality control (T4 each year)
- Continue with the training for all supervisors is in place, inclusively unbiased selection training (every second year).

Contact the HR Unit with any questions about IBEC's OTM-R policy or any other HR policies.

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