



## **HRS4R 2022 REPORT**

### **Internal Review for Interim Assessment 2020-2022**

**Submission to the European Commission : december 4, 2022**

**European Commission Consensus Report : april 7, 2023**

## 1. Organisational Information

EC instructions - Please provide an update of the key figures for your organisation.

<b>STAFF &amp; STUDENTS</b>	FTE 2021
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	1 603
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	285
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	332
Of whom are women	775
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	1 014
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	39
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	413
Total number of students (if relevant)	26 295
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	2 083

<b>RESEARCH FUNDING in €</b>	2021
Total annual organisational budget	€ 165 654 663
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	€ 4 9443 676
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	€ 5 407 876
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	€ 1 483 701

### **ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (in brief)**

The University of Angers is structured in conformity with French law. It is headed by a President elected by the Board of Directors who are, themselves, elected by all the staff of the university. All university bodies (Board of Directors, Academic Council, Technical Committee, etc.) derive their legitimacy from a direct or indirect elective system. This electoral system designates the members of the Steering Bodies for all major areas of the institution's life: general, Scientific and Training policy; Financial, Real Estate and Digital Strategies, ...; Academic and Campus life; Human Resources Policy, Occupational Health, and Institutional Administration.

Research at the university is structured around laboratories, which are grouped into 5 research departments. These departments organize and promote scientific life in the major research areas: Law-Economics-Management; Letters-Languages and Human Sciences; Science and technology; Health.

## 2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

*EC instructions - 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 "Remarks" column if major changes have occurred versus the initial plan.*

### 2-1 Pillar 1 - Ethical and professional aspects

#### Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)

**Strengths:** The University of Angers fully respects the ethical principles and freedom of researchers who, within their teams, choose their sets of themes and subjects. Our University is strongly committed to ethical issues, scientific integrity, gender and non-discrimination. A scientific integrity advisor is in place. PhD students receive specific training. An ethics committee has been designed. As such, our University is now used as a benchmark in France (in terms of management of the ethics committee portal). Regarding disability, the University of Angers has opened several specific positions, including for doctoral students. In addition, the University of Angers is mindful of the gender balance in all dimensions of institutional life (internal committees, management functions, etc.) and offers an active policy in terms of parity at work.

The University of Angers has just put in place (in April 2019) a charter on intellectual property and copyrights representing a natural part of its ethical commitment and corresponding to the European Charter adopted in 2007.

Finally, the University of Angers is open to society and disseminates its scientific results through open science devices (Okina, specific to Angers, which must switch to a larger system, HAL-UA).

**Weaknesses:** At the ethical level, the University of Angers lacks a deontologist who would complete the general ethical / integrity / deontology control system.

The University of Angers needs to better train its staff to recognize the weight of stereotypes (gender, disability, etc.) and to combat them. The bodies incharge of recruitment must also be better trained in order to ensure open and fair procedures. The University must, eventually, put in place concrete measures to rebalance the gender and disability balance in career development. The University of Angers is therefore on a line that it must pursue.

In the field of intellectual property and copyrights, the University must, here again, reinforce training and information to make the recently adopted charter operational, and to enhance or develop collaborations of all types between researchers, researchers and companies. etc. The University's data security and process safety also need to be perfected. The development of Open Science, supported by the University through the Research Committee, can only be achieved under this condition.

In terms of management, many things are learned and known empirically. Many researchers express training needs (directors of laboratories, departments, project managers, etc.). Various training

courses are already available for staff who have responsibilities. However, these courses are not mandatory.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)**

The University of Angers (UA) has made progress on its weak points identified in the file submitted in 2019:

- A Professional Conduct Officer has been appointed (Action 14) and an information and training programme has been launched on the issue of relations with the world of business (Action 13). Since February 2020, applications for authorisations for scientific competitions by UA staff have been examined, under the aegis of SATT Ouest Valorisation [1], by an inter-regional commission (Bretagne-Pays de la Loire) which passes its opinions onto the President.

- Actions have been launched on equality issues (gender, disability, remuneration... Actions 19, 20) and have been set up in connection with the Equality Action Plan (PAE [2]), a ministerial plan whose objectives overlap and match those of the European Charter for Researchers. An equality officer has been appointed, and the UA is experimenting with the use of equality focal point officers in the different departments.

The themes that can be found in HRS4R are the fight against the gender remuneration gap, equal access to responsibilities, the fight against discrimination and harassment, training and communication on equality... Since 30 September 2022, a video on sexual and gender-based violence can be viewed on the UA website with a module for PhD students and one for staff. It represents the first brick of a launched process.

The EAP is borne by Ms Catherine Passirani, Vice-President of the UA in charge of equality, and member of the HRS4R Steering Committee (COPIL).

The theme of disability is also addressed, and in particular the Disability Master Plan voted by the Governing Board (GB) on 30 November 2021 for the years 2021-2025 (action 18), establishing the UA's strategic guidelines in this regard.

- Intellectual property issues are completed or in progress (actions 15, 16 and 17)

[1] SATT: Technology Transfer Acceleration Company ("Société d'Accélération du Transfert de Technologies")

[2] <https://www.univ-angers.fr/fr/universite/strategies-et-grands-projets/egalite/plan-d-egalite-professionnelle-femmes-hommes.html?search-keywords=PAE>

### **Remarks**

The self-assessment was undertaken approximately 18 months after the labelling. In such a short period of time, the strengths have not fundamentally changed, and the weaknesses are the subject of ongoing actions identified in the comments. It was therefore decided not to rewrite the headings that will be subject to review for the first assessment in 2025. The same logic was adopted for the OTM-R which remains valid as is.



## 2-2 Pillar 2 - Recruitment and selection

### Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)

**Context:** The University of Angers hires civil servants and state employees according to very strict legal procedures. For recruitment of contract workers (temporary or not), the University has to respect general rules set by the labour and civil service laws. The recent adoption of a law on the transformation of the public service (on July 24, 2019) should provide the University with a new-found leeway and perhaps pose significant challenges. Indeed, this legislative text broadens the derogatory recourse to contract workers for Higher Education and Research institutions. Consequently, questions relating to the control and transparency of the recruitment procedures of these employees could be raised more clearly for the institution. The University of Angers must therefore be vigilant and if necessary, to come up with various tools adapted to the new situation.

**Strength:** The University of Angers is very committed to respecting the rules of recruitment and sets itself the objective of a quality recruitment, carried out in a fair and transparent way. With regard to civil service posts, national rules provide many clear frameworks. Nevertheless, the institution is making progress in harmonizing the practices of the recruitment committees and improving the technical operating systems of its teams. This is not very simple given the diversity of the types of positions to be filled. The policy space mainly concerns the recruitment of researchers, academic teachers and researchers or contractual research assistance personnel for whom the regulatory frameworks are highly variable and sometimes strongly dependent on the institution's initiatives. Although there is still work to be done, the University of Angers nevertheless manages to be sufficiently attractive. In fact, the candidates retained on a position of teacher-researcher with tenure select the University of Angers in turn as a priority, if they are also retained elsewhere: during the campaign 2018-2019, 100% of candidates ranked first accepted the position and came to work at the University of Angers.

**Weaknesses:** Two points stand out clearly: Information and training.

In terms of information, not everything is systematically available to all candidates concerning the selection procedures, the criteria, the composition of the juries, etc. Although these pieces of information exist, they are all too often used internally by recruitment bodies. It may happen that information circulates informally, depending on knowledge networks; which can introduce a difference of treatment between the candidates. This information is particularly flawed for international candidates. The University of Angers once in a while only issues its job ads internationally, using Euraxess, and the information available is in French only. More often than not, job ads are issued abroad through the research laboratories. The University of Angers is fortunate to have many labelled labs (CNRS, INRAE ( National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment) or INSERM) which act as information relays. The effort to communicate job ads more widely abroad is in the pipeline. Thus, the translation of the University site in English and Mandarin is in progress; the information on the jobs open to recruitment and the details of how to apply will naturally follow.

The lack of training is a second point that emerged from both the Strategic Steering Committee's analyses and the surveys and workshops' reports. For many years (in the 1990s and early 2000s), the "commissions de spécialistes" (as the current selection committees were then called) operated in an

empirical manner. There were strong variations in practices across disciplines. When it comes to the recruitment of civil servants, there are regulations which specify the procedure and the composition of the recruitment committees; however, the mastery of the administrative tool and its rules must be the subject of continuous training in order to follow developments in the case law. When it comes to contract workers, it is the institution that, in most cases, has the initiative and must train its recruiters. In general, and beyond the various procedures, the minimal mastery of recruitment techniques is problematic in an environment where the process has become more complex and professionalized. The University of Angers already provides systematic information to the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of selection committees (gathered for the recruitment of academics with tenure). It would be necessary for all local members to be trained, share the same methods and good operating practices. The same principle must also apply to the recruitment of contract staff. In concrete terms, this involves formalizing multiple implicit or unstated points: regulation and recruitment issues, conducting interviews, judgment criteria, pre-existing material repositories to compare disparate information, valuing atypical professional trajectories, merit, etc.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)**

- One important focus is the publication and distribution of positions on EURAXESS. The UA is working to improve international communication and has now reached almost 100% of useful positions to be registered: for 2022, 10/10 teacher positions (PR), 21/21 for senior lecturers /assistant professors (MCF), 33/44 for Temporary Lecturer and Research Assistant (ATER) (does not include the second campaign positions), 3/3 junior professorships open (Action 5). 3 Research engineer positions (IGE) have also been published on Euraxess.

The thinking behind this type of publication has evolved, as not all types of positions are suited to being published on Euraxess. The core objective is to reach 100% for permanent staff and for ATERs as far as technically possible (some positions are opened too late to be published). The core target is to reach 100% for permanent staff and for ATERs as far as technically possible (some positions are opened too late to be published). This is underway for Research Engineers (IGR).

- Notification and training of the chairpersons of the Selection Committees (COS) is in place (action 6). This is a regulatory aspect that has been practised for years. The training on non-discrimination is being set up, requiring time to reflect on the practical implementation. The thinking-off and then the current implementation related to self-training tools comparable to what is being done in other European universities. These tools have the advantage of reaching both members from within the UA and members from outside our university.

- A regulatory focus has allowed for a legal framework for the status of postdoctoral fellows, thus settling an important part of action 8.

### **Remarks**

The self-assessment was undertaken approximately 18 months after the labelling. In such a short period of time, the strengths have not fundamentally changed, and the weaknesses are the subject of ongoing actions identified in the comments. It was therefore decided not to rewrite the headings that will be subject to review for the first assessment in 2025. The same logic was adopted for the OTM-R which remains valid as is.

## 2-3 Pillar 3 - Working conditions

### Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)

**Context:** The University of Angers is an institution placed under very strong constraint. It faces a double deficit in human and financial resources, as defined by the system SYMPA (which is the ministerial system of allocation of resources to academic institutions) carrying out the ratio between the volume of activity and performance. This lack is combined with the increase in teaching costs for demographic and administration reasons, and with the political strategy of answering Calls for Projects which is now the rule of funding for research and pedagogy. This means that the University of Angers must first manage the shortage. This is what leads the University to find solutions that often represent the best of what is possible, in a framework that does not depend on it. It will be the same in our HRS4R goals. On many points (such as salaries, career progression, definition of teaching missions ...), a very strong national framework exists for the incumbents, and serves as a guide to set the framework for contract staff. The law of July 24, 2019 is likely to broaden the thinking about contractors, including the definition of job profiles vacancies, pay scales, promotion, promotions.

**Strengths:** Despite the constraints, the University of Angers offers working conditions and a research environment (jointly with research organizations) positively perceived by a majority of colleagues (a survey was carried out for the project). This fact is probably linked to the democratic and broadly representative functioning of the institution. Hence a large part of researchers and teacher-researchers are or have been involved in the collective functioning (councils, commissions, and working groups). In addition, the AU is developing a substantive strategy for steering research. The creation of federative research structures, the research commission and its board ensure the scientific and financial direction of research. Its financial effort is significant since it has increased doctoral research allowances from 12 to 28 per year since 2013, as it has also increased tenders for newcomers. The University of Angers, whose property portfolio is less than 50 years old, has an ambitious property policy in order to maintain a built environment and research premises of the highest standards.

**Weaknesses:** The weakest point is certainly that of monitoring. There are, certainly, personnel and human resource management structures in the University of Angers. A follow-up is already set up by the institution, which listens to the staff through the EEC (teachers and teacher-researchers) and Board of Directors Vice-Presidents. Still the problem arises with regard to a less institutional relationship, in so far as the researcher needs advice, or because he or she is in difficulty in the exercise of his or her profession, whether for material reasons (teaching expenses, multiplication of administrative tasks ...) or personal (e.g. work-life balance). The institution has difficulty in knowing and / or identifying these situations. Local support should be considered.

In addition, regarding gender issues, many principles are already in place. If material points, such as a strong presence of women in the University of Angers' leadership bodies, are to be noted (we are not talking about the legal obligations that are naturally fulfilled), a long-term effort must be made to rectify representations and stereotypes, and rebalance career development opportunities. The two concrete points that we must face are therefore training and support, which still need to be focused on by observing the good practices that already exist in some universities. An H2020 project has been drafted which makes it possible to lay down the devices to be implemented.

## Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)

- The AU has made a substantial effort on the issue of remuneration. It is on a growth path that will be met by matching funds from the State (Law on Research Programming (LPR)) and by its own income. The salary of PhD students and the conditions of entry into the career of newly recruited MCFs have been improved. IGEs, IGRs and technicians have also had their remuneration increased, as well as various allowances, and promotion conditions improved. The UA has also significantly improved the situation for contractual staff on open-ended contracts (CDI) by applying the fundamental principle of "equal pay for equal work and equal skills" in relation to permanent staff. (Action 3)

- Alongside the salary improvement, the UA has been doing a private individual effort for young ECs. In addition to a welcome day for newcomers and implementation of a specific training course [1], a budget is allocated for professional installation, bounded by a limit on overtime as of the beginning of the school year in September 2022 (action 33). The two years following titularization, systematic professional interviews are carried out with all new MCFs conducted jointly by the vice-presidents responsables for human resources and research. In the medium and long term, the UA's ambition is to generalise the 4-year interviews currently being tested. They will be implemented systematically according to an organisation under study by decentralising them to the components. This line of action will lead to the mobilisation of the action 36 in reserve so far, relating to the implementation of the resource persons in all the working units of the UA and at the central level (mobility and career counselling).

In addition, a thinking-off on training for the different "ages" of the profession is underway (action 22)

- The gender issue is also addressed in the PAE, for which the UA implements mechanisms (e.g., gender focal point officer) already raised in the ethics section. The UA has been particularly focused on improving the W/M ratio in career progression and in particular in hiring at PR level where possible. Indeed, in some cases, the pool is missing. It is also working on using the Leave for Research and Thematic Conversion (CRCT) tool to improve equality within it.

[1] <https://www.univ-angers.fr/intranet/fr/ressources-humaines-1/formation-continue-1/programme/parcours/parcours-mcf-titulaires-1.html>

## Remarks

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## 2-4 Pillar 4 - Training and development

### Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)

**Context:** The University of Angers is now endowed with broad skills, has large responsibilities and is also immersed in a competitive research world. Both of these data make it necessary to continuously improve the training and technical skills of the personnel involved in the research activities, in line with the ever-higher demands of the environment.

**Strength:** The university already has a continuous training service, totally open to researchers and teacher-researchers as well as to technical staff, offering multiple training programmes, concerning university pedagogy, management, project management, etc. The functioning of our Doctoral Schools allows PhD students to benefit from multiple training courses on the same topics but also on ethics and deontology, on scientific communication, etc. These courses are designed to be open to young academics (ATER (temporary teaching and research assistant), Post-doc).

**Weakness:** The first weak element is the lack of clarity in the structuring of the training offer. Currently, a researcher or lecturer is presented with a list of training programmes that are not all open to the same audiences. Thus, some programmes intended for doctoral students may also interest the lecturers. The apparent weakness is the lack of a certain flexibility and a multi-year coherence of the selected courses. This coherence in terms of choice is a strong element for personal development which also has a strategic impact on a person's career, particularly so with young professionals.

The second point has to do with a structuring in relation to a global objective, such as the direction of a Research Unit, the direction of a department or the responsibility of recruitment. There are gaps in training offerings for certain skills, running and well-functioning programmes are optional, etc. It is therefore important to carry out a restructuring scheme allowing an open offer towards specific responsibilities (laboratory management for example) and on certain topics (budget management, creation of diplomas, etc.).

Finally, the issue of training faces problems of means. As for working conditions, the University of Angers lives in a highly constrained environment on the human and financial level. As a result, one of the major sources of difficulties for training and career development is the constant overload of teaching hours and / or the multiplicity of management tasks, in all its forms, on a daily basis. If part of the problem is beyond the control of the establishment, it is possible to somewhat optimize certain modes of operation thanks, for example, to innovation and pedagogical assistance, and training in research project engineering in order to win time for research and develop personal projects. These vocational training projects should be promoted to the benefit of all research staff, especially the younger ones, through the implementation of appropriate information to promote a rich, dynamic and attractive offer.

### Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)

The UA has improved access to training for lecturers and PhD students. The opening up of some training courses in the catalogues should be extended (agreement in principle between the stakeholders) by opening up the previously separate training catalogues (action 29). This topic is very

consistently reworked due to the recent remodelling of the doctoral schools requiring the reorganisation of the courses offered.

- Training opportunities have been expanded and crossed between what was offered to PhD students and researchers.

- Training for certain responsibilities has been developed or is being developed (action 23, 24). Training courses for the department management were thus completed in the first semester of 2022. A training course matching the various career stages is in the thinking-off stage.

- Scientific jobs at the UA will be eligible for special attention over the period 2022-2027, within the framework of the LPR of 24 December 2020, with the founding of new exclusive internal promotion channels (exceptional aptitude lists for university teachers, technicians, assistant engineers, study and research engineers).

## Remarks

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## 2-5 EC additional questions

### **Have any of the priorities for the short- and medium term changed ?**

The priorities of the University of Angers have not changed. The conditions, eligibility and quality of hiring remain the central focus. This implies fundamental work on everything from training to hiring and improving the working conditions and remuneration of researchers. In fact, many actions have been initiated in this direction. The evolution of the regulatory framework (see next question) has led to a focus on themes (gender, remuneration) and to a change in the order of addressing certain actions.

### **Have any of the circumstances in which your organisation operates, changed and as such have had an impact on your HR strategy ?**

Government decisions have changed the order of the actions:

- The law on the transformation of the civil service of 6 August 2019 and its implementing decrees have imposed the completion of an action plan for professional equality between women and men. The UA was already addressing these issues. It therefore built its plan, which in part took up many of the measures that were the subject of the HRS4R project. Some actions therefore started within this framework even before the HRS4R labelling. This plan [1] was approved by the Board in March 2021.

- The implementing decrees for the LPR and the Law on the Transformation of the Public Service (LTFP) have imposed a new regulatory framework setting out both the pace of certain actions and the rules governing the operation of the public service that is the UA (actions 4, 8, 32). Thus, these texts introduce the upgrading of doctoral contracts and a framework on postdoctoral contracts and

remuneration. They are also implementing internal promotion schemes for MCFs and librarians, engineers, administrative, technical, social and health staff (BIATSS), as well as new bonus systems, with insurance policies ensuring that young lecturers (MCF) start their careers with a remuneration equal to at least 2 Index-Linked Guaranteed Minimum Wages (SMIC).

- On the other hand, like all other universities, the UA was affected by covid and operated for many weeks remotely, without the possibility to meet other than by video, and to implement on-the-ground actions. As a result, some actions, and in particular training and communication, could not be launched within the planned deadlines.

- The situation in Ukraine leads, beyond the concrete support provided by the UA (hosting PhD students and researchers), to a possible shift in certain university and research partnerships.

Finally, experience has shown that the separation of COPIL and the Action Group has not proved to be very effective. The two groups with different functions exist, but take part together in steering meetings. A more technical group known as the focal point officers coordinates the many people in the departments working to implement actions.

[1] [https://www.univ-angers.fr/attachment/nouveau-contenu-simple-1077/CA\\_015\\_2021\\_Plan\\_egalit%C3%A9\\_professionnelle\\_femmes\\_hommes.pdf?download=true](https://www.univ-angers.fr/attachment/nouveau-contenu-simple-1077/CA_015_2021_Plan_egalit%C3%A9_professionnelle_femmes_hommes.pdf?download=true);  
<https://www.univ-angers.fr/fr/universite/strategies-et-grands-projets/egalite/plan-d-egalite-professionnelle-femmes-hommes.html?search-keywords=PAE>

### **Are any strategic decisions under way that may influence the action plan ?**

The University of Angers is developing actions within the framework of corporate social responsibility and in favour of sustainable development. This is translated into training on these topics and projects that intersect with HRS4R concerns. This also leads to a more generally strategic wish to be involved in European projects.

The University of Angers is now part of the EU-Green alliance network [1], a consortium of 9 European universities whose objective is to place sustainable development at the heart of teaching, research and innovation. The ambition is to reflect on new university models, and even to move towards a European university logic with the degrees and research units that go with it. In concrete terms, the network must both become a reference for education and promotion of sustainable development, and reinforce common values with policies of equality, inclusion and Corporate Social Responsibility (RSE). This should lead to the DD (sustainable development) and RS (social responsibility) labels.

For the coming years, the AU is naturally involved in all the Work Packages (WP) of the network, and will ensure the steering of the Research WP and co-pilot of the "Sustainable and Healthy Campus" WP. The alliance represents a funding opportunity and an interface for discussion with the European Commission. The Commission seeks advice from the alliances in the development of policies and the implementation of certain tools. The alliance has just been signed (September 2022). Its operation will necessarily lead to changes that impact on the UA's HRS4R action plan.

The UA is a signatory to the Agreement on reforming research assessment produced by the Association of European Universities for the evolution of research assessment criteria, thus drawing up the whole institution towards a qualitative improvement of its productions, assessments and hiring.

The Community of Universities and Institutions (COMUE) Angers-Le Mans (university granted the HRS4R label in 2021) is an organisational innovation which implies a partitioned level of management between universities. The ethics-research committee falls within its scope. It will also soon be setting up a “sustainability centre”, and will have to think about integrating energy transition, the fight against global warming and biodiversity into its scientific, literary and humanities courses. This link between these universities should also allow for the exchange of experiences and practices on a number of common issues, such as the Equality Plan.

[1] <https://www.univ-angers.fr/fr/international/actualites/actus-2022/eu-green-mise-sur-le-developpement-durable.html?search-keywords=eu+green>

### 3. Actions

*EC instructions - 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.*

*The extended version of the reviewed HR Strategy for your organisation for the next 3 years, including the OTM-R policy must be published on your organisation's website.*

*If your organisation has already filled in the OTM-R checklist in the Initial Phase, please also indicate how your organisation is working towards / has developed an Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Policy.*

*Ideally, the extended version of the reviewed OTM-R policy and actions should be published on your organisation's website.*

#### 3-1 Revised action plan for 2023-2026

The revised action plan and details of new action points is available on the institution’s webpage [1].

[1] <https://www.univ-angers.fr/fr/universite/hrs4r.html>  
<https://www.univ-angers.fr/en/international-policy/hrs4r.html>

#### 3-2 OTM-R policy

The institution’s OTM-R charter is available on the institution’s webpage [1]

[1] [1] <https://www.univ-angers.fr/fr/universite/hrs4r.html>  
<https://www.univ-angers.fr/en/international-policy/hrs4r.html>

#### 3-2 Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles

##### Initial Phase

Two of the main goals of institutional policy are to achieve excellence in research and in the training of students and researchers. These will require a demanding recruitment strategy with a high quality level. The OTMR is the synthesis of the principles that must guide our recruitment strategy. The University of Angers (UA) has been concerned with this approach for a long time as shown by its membership to the Charter and Code (from February 2007). If these principles are well known, they have to be implemented. This requires to improve operational effectiveness on multiple points as shown in the OTMR report of the gap analysis.

Many actions will be based on the principles of the OTMR in order to strengthen the existing policies. The most important ones are recalled below:

Action 2: “Improve the information of candidates...” improves transparency and fairness of treatment between candidates. (OTMR 1)

Action 3: «implementation of recruitment...» must improve the quality of recruitment of contractors

Action 4 and 5: it aims a better information on recruitment procedures and available jobs. (OTMR 1; 4; 6; 7)

Action 6: Good recruitment means better training of members of recruitment committees (OTMR 2 and 3). So we need to ensure the same level of information and practice for all members. This is a quality issue for the UA. This is an issue of fairness and transparency for candidates.

Action 10 and 11: The objective of disseminating models and designing a toolbox should enhance equity between candidates (OTMR 4)

Actions 19; 20: the continuation of efforts to fight discrimination (gender, disability...) wants to establish an equality between candidates allowing them to have the same chances of recruitment in the UA (so to be more attractive, OTMR 8)

Action 34: it is cross-cutting (transversal ?) to almost all OTMR principles (in particular OTMR 7) since the dissemination of information in English plays a role in international recruitment for transparency and equity.

After completing its GA and the review of the OTMR, the UA regards the issue of recruitment as one of the most important to be addressed. The UA has therefore made this a priority. The first set of actions to be developed from September 2020 therefore will concern the improvement of recruitment and the implementation or strengthening of the OTMR principles.

The UA will start with these actions because they will be the longest to implement. Technical improvements can be made quickly. But it will take time for them to become an integral part of the culture of our university (time of training and information of people, time of appropriation of tools and methods...)

The principles of the OTMR must guide the selection of the parameters of the dashboard intended to assist in the project follow-up

## **Internal Review for Interim Assessment**



The completion of the OTM-R objectives is progressing at the same time as the actions initiated and other plans such as the PAE are being implemented. For example, Action 6 (training of selection and hiring committee members on gender stereotypes, etc.) allows us to improve our situation for OTM-R items 2, 3 and 16. The effort to file job offers on Euraxess (action 5) affects OTM-R items 4, 6, 7, 13.

Several items are evolving.

- OTM-R1 becomes substantially yes.
- OTM-R2 becomes partially yes
- OTM-R3 becomes substantially yes.
- OTM-R6 becomes completely yes.
- OTM-R7 becomes substantially yes.
- OTM-R13 becomes completely yes.
- OTM-R20 becomes completely yes.

Generally speaking, these multiple developments will be easier to assess for the renewal evaluation in three years, since some actions have only been underway for a few months.

## **4. Implementation**

### **4-1 General overview of the implementation process**

The process of participation and decision-making will be the same as for the completion of the application:

1 - A work group will be set up for each action to be carried out. This group will include at least one member of COPIL and one member of the action group (co-pilots for this action). It will be open to all AU members, PhD or postdoc at the AU, wishing to get involved in the reflection. Each project pilot organises its work group according to the methodology and periodicity that seem most relevant to it.

2 - The objective is to implement the action of the AU plan and to come up with concrete proposals that could lead to internal regulations, new procedures, etc.

3 - The group's work goes back to COPIL, which approves the relevance of the response to the issue at hand. A discussion can take place to fine-tune things.

4 - COPIL's decisions are presented and validated when necessary by the Technical Committee (TC), representing the staff, and the Governing Council (GC), the AU's political governance body.

NB1 : Just as the AU has involved all staff, regardless of status and function, in the questionnaire and workshops, the AU is opening its work groups for action to all interested persons. It also intends to open up to its external partners involved in the scientific life of the establishment, such as CNRS, INSERM, INRAE.

NB2 : We are not in a top-down decision-making process in which the presidential team would impose its views, but in an open and collaborative process based first and foremost on the mobilisation of the entire AU community and its proposals. The COPIL is there to ensure compliance with the policy unanimously approved by the Board of Directors when the HRS4R application was submitted and the institution's elections were held.

The process will be based on a semiannual periodicity. Between these periods, depending on the timeliness of the HRS4R achievements, the groups will be able to meet according to the needs of the project.

The actions can be grouped into 4 major thematic areas that meet the categories of the charter and the code. These are 1. recruitment; 2. ethics, non-discrimination, and gender issues; 3. training tasks; 4. and the welfare of the staff. University of Angers strategy is to focus primarily on fundamental and foundational actions for promoting HRS4R dynamics in each of these blocks.

Initial actions focus heavily on recruitment for two reasons. In the first place, unlike questions of ethics or working conditions, recruitment is one of the areas where the improvements to be achieved are the most numerous, and thus the margins of progress. Secondly, recruitment is the cornerstone of a strong and powerful university. Better recruitment makes many other things easier. This is the entry point chosen by the AU in HRS4R during the first year. More precisely, in September 2020, 7 actions will start. Two are punctual and do not require a lot of organizational work. The other 5, related to the recruitment, are heavy, in the implementation and in their complete realization which will take place over several years, since these new policies aspire to modify habits of work and modes of thought.

Then, more points will be added, very gradually, in the long term. It would therefore not be realistic to stack the 40 actions proposed in this project within two years.

March 2020: Establishment of commissions for the project.

September 2020: start of first phase actions (10 + 2 already in progress in 2019) concerning recruitment (7)

September 2021: start of complementary actions (13)

September 2022: 10 actions launched, including a block of 5 actions for training. Following the first assessment of the HRS4R actions, adjustments will be made in relation to the actions already carried out and in progress, and a set up of a schedule for the second phase.

5 actions are identified but left unresolved. They will be addressed after 2022, depending on the self-assessment and the progress of the actions already undertaken.

#### **4-2 How have you prepared the internal review ?**

The internal assessment arose from two processes: 1/ regular work of the action group and copil. 2/ An involvement of the university community through the Board and the Technical Committee (CT). The self-assessment was not the subject of a specific mechanism. For the UA, it represents the stage at which the project is delivered, with an assessment drawn up by these bodies and an integration of comments and possible improvements. The presentation of this statement was carried out before the Board of Directors on 12 May 2022 and the CT on 5 May 2022.

### 4-3 How have you involved the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?

The start-up phase of the action plan is essentially technical. The partners and staff were associated upstream during the construction phase of the project (survey, workshops). The current stage is one of decision-making, technical completion and the launch of multiple actions appearing from the consultations, co-building and votes of the bodies during the initial filing.

This means that the university's strategic services, on the one hand, and the VPs on the other, have an essential role in implementing the project. The scientific community is involved through the institution's elected bodies, and the training and skills development aspects have a specific consultation body at the University of Angers (the Professional Training Commission for Staff).

The university community is notified of the progress of the project by its elected bodies and by information tools (newsletter, interviews with the project leader, etc.) and communication tools (HRS4R display for all field actions affecting staff)

### 4-4 Do you have an implementation committee and/or steering group regularly overseeing progress ?

The follow-up process of the actions is compliant with what was announced at the time of filing (COPIL + action group). In use, slight adaptations have been made.

1/ The actions have been grouped into 7 thematic clusters. An academic member of the COPIL is thus associated with each group and pilots (or co-pilots, depending on the case) several actions. The purpose of this grouping is to avoid dispersion of effort and to reinforce consistency and complementarities with regard to a given theme.

Action Group	VP pilot	Lead management	Actions No
Training of young researchers	VP Research	DRIED	8; 27; 28; 29; 33; 35
Training for responsibilities	VP HR	DRIED	22; 23; 25
Accompanying the candidates	VP HR	HRD	2; 3; 5; 10; 11; 32
Training on discrimination	VP Equality	HRD	1; 6; 18; 19; 20; 21
Recruitment and management training of COS	VP HR	HRD	4; 7; 9; 24
Ethical training on publications and the corporate world	VP Research	DRIED	12; 13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 26; 30

Technical actions	VP IR	COMD	31; 34
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VP = Vice President; HR = Human Resources; IR = International Relations; DRIED = Research, Innovation and Doctoral Studies Department; HRD = Human Resources Department; COMD = Communication Department.

2/ The strategic departments of the university presidency have organised working groups around each action. A department is associated with each set.

3/ In order to avoid fragmentation, each department has appointed a focal point officer who coordinates the work within his/her department and thinks about the cross-technical organisation between departments when necessary.

**4-5 Is there any alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? For example, is the HRS4R recognized in the organisation’s research strategy, overarching HR policy ?**

The institution's organisational policy is compulsorily aligned with the HRS4R project, since many of the project's actions consist in improving the way we operate. For example, the training of COSs and notifying candidates for hiring meant that the whole UA was organised in such a way as to deliver on this wish and to change practices where necessary.

Labelling also gives the UA a private individuals' role in the framework of the EU-Green Alliance. The 9 universities of the alliance share a common philosophy on the objective of quality of research and financial year, materialised for two of them (UA and Wroclaw) by a HRS4R label, and for the others by a process of entrance in the label for which the UA will be able to partition its experience and its good practices.

On the other hand, HRS4R is a reference point that is published inside the whole UA strategy. Thus, the HRS4R labelling represents a signal of recognition and a tool put forward in strategic orientations and research files. The implementation of UE-Green was carried out between universities partitioning the same referential and values approved by HRS4R, or committing themselves to enter into its logic. All hiring documents now carry the HRS4R reference. Contract negotiations with the ministry are carried out by integrating the label into its action plan. AU is working to develop the integration of the reference to HRS4R.

**4-6 How has your organisation ensured that the proposed actions would be also implemented ?**

The implementation of the actions naturally led the UA to dip into reserve actions to activate them at the appropriate time. Action 36 thus extends the actions to improve working conditions (see previous section). This action, considered from the outset, will be completed under the same conditions as the others, and integrated into one of the Action Groups.

On the other hand, some of the developments with regard to national and international cooperation raised above could relate to the launch of new actions concerning sustainable development and RSE.

**4-7 How are you monitoring progress (timeline) ?**

Depending on the legislative changes and external constraints described above and the project start date (obtaining the label on 4/12/2020), the COPIL-action group merged to review the timing of all the actions, and thus redefine the calendar. Since the labelling, the COPIL has had the opportunity to redefine it once.

The HRD and the DRIED have also produced action sheets allowing a synoptic view of the concrete completions and the timing to be followed.

#### **4-8 How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment ?**

A digital booklet listing the actions carried out allows the completion of each point to be monitored. The initial indicators are sometimes tailored to the field reality. From this information, we build indicators when there are any (some actions match online information, others match UA regulations, appointments, etc.).

#### **4-8 How do you expect to prepare for the external review ?**

The external assessment will be carried out through review workshops whose aim will be to provide an account of what HRS4R has succeeded in doing and what did not work. On these bases, the UA academic community will modify its approach to actions that have not reached the objectives, and introduce new ones that aim to further develop the topics addressed, or to tackle emerging issues.

COPIL will judge in due course whether a fact-finding exercise is appropriate to improve the operation of the UA



## 5- Implementation Phase Interim Assessment - EC Consensus Report (07/04/2023)

### 5-1 EC quality assessment

Questions	YES / NO / PARTLY	EC Recommendations
Has the organisational information been sufficiently updated to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is implemented?	PARTLY	Be more precise and concise in providing organisational information, clearly show the alignment between the HRS4R and the institutional strategy.
Does the narrative provided list goals and objectives which clearly indicate the organisation's priorities in HR-management for researchers?	PARTLY	The description should be more detailed, it's too generic now.
Has the organisation published an updated HR Strategy and Action Plan been updated with the actions' current status, additions and/or modifications?	PARTLY	Action Plan is available under <a href="file:///C:/Users/annsta4/Downloads/HRS4R-2022-CommAction-r%C3%A9vis%C3%A9-GB-1.pdf">file:///C:/Users/annsta4/Downloads/HRS4R-2022-CommAction-r%C3%A9vis%C3%A9-GB-1.pdf</a> but no information is provided regarding timeline, responsible persons/units and indicators - should be revised accordingly
Is the implementation of the HR strategy and Action Plan sufficiently embedded within the organisation's management structure (e.g. steering committee, operational responsibilities) so as to guarantee a solid implementation?	PARTLY	There are several work groups and the responsibility is too dispersed to guarantee a solid implementation. The role of the Steering Committee was not described clearly in the implementation process. Monitoring and reporting should be improved to assure proper implementation of the actions proposed.
Has the organisation developed an OTM-R policy?	YES	

### 5-2 EC evaluation of strengths and weaknesses

The AU set very ambitious goals at the very beginning of the process and a lot of efforts have been put especially in relation to Recruitment and selection pillar (OTM-R) as well as training on gender issues, non-discrimination or ethics. A set of training activities is foreseen and a Professional Conduct Officer has been appointed and an information and training programme has been launched. The AU takes advantage of using EURAXESS portal. The AU strives for leveraging quality at the operational level.

On one hand, the community is widely involved in the process of implementation (open and collaborative process - work groups open to everyone willing to participate) and this approach creates a friendly environment.

On the contrary, based on the information provided in the report it seems that the implementation process lacks proper monitoring and supervision. To achieve the goals set at the initial phase the AU has to pay attention to the implementation process.

**EC suggestions for modifications or revisions to the (updated) HR strategy :**

Modify the way of implementation to assure that accurate and high quality actions will be implemented on time.

The implementation process lacks proper supervision and thus responsibility is too dispersed to enable proper implementation of the actions in the future.

Assign proper human resources and carefully plan the timeline and indicators. Improve reporting and monitoring.

Action plan published on the website should be revised and present the following information: name of the action, status, timeline, responsible people/ units, indicators.

Actions planned should be proposed according to SMART approach - should be realistic and time-bound, so putting in the AP actions 37,38,39,40 with the timeline set as " ideas set aside for the future" is unacceptable.

Prioritise. Choose the most important actions to be implemented. If possible/needed group the actions. Be coherent and concise.

There is inconsistency in information provided in different parts of the report on the number of actions or new actions added [eg. in the additional note there is a sentence " We didn't add any action. This choice is linked to the fact that we originally have 35 actions to start within 5 years of the award, which is a heavy burden" whereas in the AP there are 40 actions [12 extended, 17 in progress, 10 completed and 1 NEW - action 36]

The actions can be grouped into 4 major thematic areas that meet the categories of the charter and the code. These are 1. recruitment; 2. ethics, non-discrimination, and gender issues; 3. training tasks; 4. and the welfare of the staff. University of Angers strategy is to focus primarily on fundamental and foundational actions for promoting HRS4R dynamics in each of these blocks. The actions have been grouped into 7 thematic clusters.

**5-3 EC Recommendations**

HRS4R 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 HRS4R is further embedded.

EC additional comments : enrich information about the process on the website. Right now it is very limited. Provide revised action plan. Describe the cornerstones of the process and people/units involved.