

# Vall d' Hebron Institute of Research: Recruitment Policy

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## Introduction

This Recruitment Policy serves as a baseline for best practice in the recruitment and selection of staff and to ensure that those involved in the recruitment process conduct fairly, free from bias and discrimination.

This policy has been created in accordance with the principles of the "Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers" promoted by the European Commission under the "Human Resource Strategy for Researchers" (HRS4R) and specifically its Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers: OTM-R, Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers. These principles, with which the VHIR is formally committed, ensure that the selection processes are open and transparent, that the candidates are selected using objective and comparable criteria, taking into account meritocracy and respecting equal treatment and opportunities. This policy is also in line with current legislation relating to employment, equality and diversity, and data protection.

Vall d'Hebron Institute of Research embraces Equality and Diversity and we bind these values through our Equal Opportunity Gender Plan. This plan ensures equal opportunity in recruitment, hiring, training, and management for all staff within the organization. Furthermore, it aims to strengthen the relationship between all staff, which represents the main asset of the institution.

We uphold to our motto "The research of today, the medicine of tomorrow". In more than 20 years Vall d'Hebron Institute of Research has achieved leadership in biomedical research among hospitals in our country. In 2020, we want to be recognized as an excellent and competitive European Institute leader in clinical and translational research linked to a university hospital. This success depends on our team. For this reason, it is among our main goals to recruit exceptional individuals to ensure this success and provide the best service to society.

Finally, this policy should be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure its content is regularly up to date and compliant with the law and best practices.

### Scope

The recruitment and selection procedure, as well as the policy on which it is based, applies to all VHIR staff vacancies. The recruitment and selection of trainees is not considered in this document.

Additional criteria and procedures in the recruitment and selection process may be applied or may differ when hiring group leaders or other researchers, including PhD Students within specific

institutional calls or other competitive calls, although the same HRS4R principles will be applied. Specific procedures will be developed in this sense.

### **Legal Context**

VHIR is committed to fulfilling the legislative requirements to promote equality of opportunity and diversity within the Institution. Dignity and Respect for Labor Policy will apply at all phases of recruitment and selection. This policy has been written in accordance with and complies with current national labor law.

In all recruitment and selection processes the following principles will be respected and fulfilled:

- *OTM-R Code, Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers*
- Spanish Constitution
- Statute of Public Worker Act Law
- Workers' Act
- Law of Science
- Law of transparency
- Law of Data Protection
- New Equality Law (Effective Equality Law for Women and Men. July 17, 2015).
- VHIR Institutional Collective Agreement

Failing to comply by the principles stated in this policy is considered as a serious violation and will result in the enforcement of strict disciplinary measures based on the Institutional Collective Agreement.

### **Responsibilities**

All staff involved in the recruitment and selection process should follow the principles and instructions described in this policy.

Head of Units / PIs are responsible for ensuring candidates meet the requirements of the job position (representing the ideal profile) and participate in the approval of processes.

The Human Resource Directorate supervises recruitment and selection processes are implemented correctly.

The Human Resource Department encompasses a variety of roles in the recruitment and selection process. These include but are not limited to:

- Procedure execution
- Meet the legal requirements of each selection process
- Guarantee compliance with the principles of publicity, equal treatment and opportunities between men and women, merit and ability in the selection processes carried out at the VHIR.
- Ensure that VHIR selection processes are in line with the principles and requirements of HRS4R.
- Participate in the selection process: Reviewing / editing and publication of job descriptions, curriculum screening, candidate presentation, conducting in-person interviews, preparation / review of evaluation reports.
- Elaborate and keep a record of up-to-date documentation of all the recruitment processes carried out at VHIR.
- Provide guidance to Head of Units/PIs during the entire recruitment and selection process.

## Recruiting

### Identifying the need

Every recruitment process originates from the need to fill an existing vacant position or create a new vacancy.

To start the process, the Head of Unit / PI should issue a written request via email to HR. The HR department will verify sufficient information is available on the job characteristics and the requirements that the candidate must fulfill. In this sense, it will be based on the existing Job Description, the VHIR scientific career document, the general and specific competences (see “Interview Guide”) and an additional information that the Head of Unit / PI facilitates. Also, the HR department will verify labor conditions are adequate according to legal standards and current institutional context. In addition, it will be recommended to use as a reference the description of professional positions and profiles in the field of Research established by the “European Framework for Research Careers.”

### Evaluation Committee

The Evaluation Committee should be constituted at the beginning of the recruitment process and recorded on the *Pre-Selection Report* document. The Committee should consist of a minimum of three members, one of whom will be the *spokesperson* in the recruiting process and will serve as the Group's Director. This will usually have to be the Head of Professional Development (can be replaced by the PI applicant for the recruitment through the selection processes of Research Staff or to whom is delegated). The Committee composition must remain the same for consistency and should possess adequate training in assessing and selecting candidates.

The Evaluation Committee will have to be made up of experts from different disciplines, competences and abilities, who form a gender balance in the composition of the group and have experience in evaluating

candidates. Members will have no conflict of interest and will make decisions based on verifiable evidence and not personal preference.

All members of the Evaluation Committee must know the Recruitment and Selection Policy. The Group Director is responsible for ensuring that the other members qualify to be part of the Committee. In case of doubt on the part of the Group Director, you can consult the Head of Professional Development before formalizing the group.

The Evaluation Committee may have internal or external specialist advisers if deemed necessary.

### **Job descriptions and Job adverts**

Having a clear and previously agreed job description is essential for successful recruitment. The job description ensures PI/Head of Unit and HR are aligned and aware of the ideal profile needed. Also, this document serves as reference to measure performance. Furthermore, it provides the candidate an overview of the scope of responsibilities and the minimum requirements needed. Any criteria must be free from indirect or direct discrimination.

The standard VHIR Job Advert template describes the overall process and description of the vacancy, including:

- The VHIR and the Unit / Research Group / PI responsible for the process.
- Position offered, specifications and start date of the employment relationship.
- Knowledge and professional or academic experience "required" and "desirable" (where applicable).
- Number of vacant positions
- Working conditions: type of contract, duration, weekly hours and salary. The salary must always be expressed in gross annual figures.
- General information on the selection process (approximate start and closing dates).
- Contact details: The candidates can apply from the VHIR website to the different job offers through the electronic registration form. As a rule, CVs or documents related to the personal data of workers in paper format will not be accepted.

### **Advertising**

All vacancies will be published through the institutional website (<http://www.vhir.org>) and, depending on the profiles to be selected, will be also published on employment portals, specialized websites in the biomedical

field and other relevant specialized fields. In addition, following the recommendations of the HRS4R, they should also be published on the European portal, *Euraxess*.

Integrated into the institutional website, the organization has a secured Applicant Tracking System. This platform allows a structured and trackable system to monitor all recruitment processes. By default, all offers will be published for a minimum of 15 days to ensure equal access for candidates and for a reasonable time between closing and the date of incorporation to be able to complete the recruiting process and selection. By other means of communication, the agreements reached with the regulations of the specialized employment and web portals will be adopted, as long as they meet the previously described principles.

All offers must include VHIR's commitment statement to the principles of the *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*.

## Pre-Selecting

### Curriculum Screening

The Professional Development Unit is responsible of the *Curriculum Screening* for Structure Staff. However, given the high degree of specialization of scientific positions the PI in charge is responsible for this phase in the selection process for Researcher Staff. In any case, the Evaluation Committee is responsible for the skills assessment and in-person interview phase.

In order to adequately screen all applications, the Evaluation Committee will assess all profiles (CVs) based on the elimination requirements described in the job description and the criteria set out in the *Pre-Selection Report*. This report will be completed by the PI/Head of Unit and it will set out the required and desirable criteria with its respective scores. It will be also taken into account those criteria that can supplement, or add additional value or knowledge in the development of the vacancy. Likewise, recognition of mobility, academic qualifications, decriminalization of chronological gaps, over qualification and postdoctoral accreditation should be taken into account.

Once this first screening is completed, there should be a minimum of 3 and up to 6 candidates pre-selected. A phone interview is conducted to verify the adequacy of each candidate and thus optimize the overall selection process. The final pre-selected candidates will be listed on the *Candidates Summary Table*, a document the ATS will automatically create.

These candidates will be contacted to set a date and time for the interviews (face-to-face or video conference), taking into account the availability of the Evaluation Committee and the interested party. All other candidates will be notified of their status in the recruitment process.

## Selection

### Interviewing

This phase will allow the Evaluation Committee to both expand on the information of the vacancy and to deepen the knowledge of the candidate's training and experience, as well as to obtain information on aptitudes, capacities and abilities.

To ensure that the interviews are conducted using the appropriate methodology and lack any type of bias, the *Interview Guide* document will be used. Prior to face-to-face interviews, the Evaluation Committee will meet and review the candidate's profile and agree on the format and questions to ask during the interview (i.e. fit-to-role, competency-based and behavioral questions) and who in the Evaluation Committee will conduct each type of question.

During the face-to-face interviews, the Evaluation Committee should use the *Pre-Selection Report* document, which contains the criteria, required and desirable, for the position. This document will have to be filled out with the scores obtained by each candidate on these criteria.

Psychotechnical tests may be assigned before or after conducting face-to-face interviews to complement the final decision, but they won't be in any case the sole reason to discard a candidate.

In cases where proximity or mobility may prevent the face-to-face interview with the Evaluation Committee, virtual tools (Skype or video conferencing) may be used.

Hiring decisions should be a result of a unanimous choice of the Evaluation Committee and always based on the Open, Transparent, Merit-based principles. Should the PIs make the selection directly, the Professional Development Unit will be able to support in any of the phases described above. The final feedback and evaluation of all candidates interviewed will be summarized in the candidates summary table and properly stored for future reference. In this document a final score is given to each candidate to measure fit to role and fit to institution. This final step determines who is the selected candidate.

In the event that the selection process is not resolved due to the lack of sufficient or adequate candidates, the position will be declared deserted and a new selection process can be started again.

### Open, Transparent, Merit-Based

In compliance with the recommendations of the Open, Transparent, Merit-Based Recruitment Code all hiring will be made strictly on merit and suitability to the requirements of the job.



VHIR tracks and manages all recruitment processes through a secured Applicant Tracking System linked through the institutional website. This platform is open and accessible to all public and it provides detailed and transparent information about the vacancy. It also allows candidates to include any information to place themselves in the job offer while complying with GDPR regulation.

All candidates will be considered for the job without restrictions on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic status or any other type.

All interviews will follow the same methodology. All candidates will be asked a minimum set of standard questions and additional questions agreed by the Evaluation Committee, to avoid any bias.

In compliance with the transparency code, candidates must be informed about the status of the selection process, criteria, number of vacancies and professional development plan throughout the entire recruitment process and are entitled to request feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of their applications.

When selecting a finalist, the Evaluation Committee will use the *Candidates Summary Table* which contains the basic curricular data (personal data, training, professional experience) and the *Pre-Selection Report* (including: interview feedbacks, the Evaluation Committee's comments, candidate scoring by selection criteria and final score) to evaluate the candidates interviewed, ultimately ensuring a fair and merit-based assessment across all candidates. In line with the *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*, judging merit will be based on previous and current experience, interview performance, motivation, and suitability to role.

## Closing

### Job Offer

All employment offers will be notified via phone call, when possible, followed by a written confirmation. The job offer should detail: the job title, team unit, responsibilities, and contractual terms. The new hire will be asked to confirm reception of the offer and send a provisional job acceptance. Upon acceptance of the job offer, HR will request a series of documentation from the new hire necessary to start the employment process. The new employee will be assigned to an HR technician who will manage the employment relation from that moment onward. All documentation related to the recruitment, selection and hiring process, will be kept confidential, securely stored, and retained for a minimum period of six months.

Any job offer will always be conditional on the validity of qualifications, references, identity and any other relevant checks. In case of knowingly withhold of information or false information given, the offer may be

withdrawn or employment terminated. Before a final decision is made, HR should contact the individual to discuss the concerns raised.

### **Recruitment Analysis**

Upon filling a vacancy, Human Resources (in collaboration with PI/Head of Unit, when applicable) should evaluate the recruitment and selection process used and its effectiveness in selecting the right candidate.

The analysis should include a review of the following:

- Job Title and Job Description relevance and prevalence in the job market;
- Success of sources used to advertise;
- Effectiveness of interviewing methodology: format, scoring, and execution;
- Selection criteria & OTM-R adequate implementation .

### **References and Background Check**

References represent a way of verifying the veracity of an individual's qualifications and track record. These can be checked by email or a phone call. References information and contact is available on the ATS application form completed by the candidate.

Ideally, background checks are verified with the most recent employer and/or with the last 2 years of employment. If this is not possible, employment checks will be done with at least two separate employers. References will be requested to include a company stamp or letterhead together with the dates and job title held by the candidate in consideration.

Furthermore, it should be possible to demonstrate academic qualification during the screening call and once the candidate is selected all documents accrediting these qualifications should be requested and filled in the new hire's records.

If qualifications or minimum requirements cannot be proven or verified, the candidate might be disqualified and therefore discarded from the recruitment process.

### **Complaints Management**

For any issues or complaints related to recruitment and/or selection, candidates are entitled to submit their concerns to the institution. The issues or complaint should be in writing and directed to the Head of Professional Development within three months of the closing date of the offer. She/he will study the complaint

and report it, with recommendations, to the Director of Human Resources, who will decide what action to take and will notify the person who made the complaint.

Complaints related to any other topic addressed to the institution, can be communicated through several channels available to the public: telephone, specific email address ([atenciousuari@vhir.org](mailto:atenciousuari@vhir.org)), paper format, institutional website under “Help us to improve our service”.

Depending on the complaint topic, the communication will be referred to the appropriate responsible and keeping the Quality Department on the loop to ensure the issue is handled according to the respective principles. The detailed procedure can be found in the “Client Complaint Management Process” (VHIR-Q-PGR-006) official document.

## Related Topics

### **Conflict of Interest**

According to the institutional Conflict of Interest Policy, hiring family members, with an indefinite labor contract, is only allowed when he/she joins a team unit different from the one the related VHIR staff works in. Meaning, two people that are related, up to second degree of consanguinity, cannot work within the same team unit. However, it is permitted to hire immediate family under any type of labor contract different from an indefinite one, as long as the two relatives do not work within the same team unit.

When hiring relatives or immediate family members, this requests should always be communicated first to the Labor Relation Unit (RRLU).

Furthermore, all staff involved in the recruitment and selection process should avoid participating in the recruitment and hiring decisions made on immediate family. This also includes being a member of the Evaluation Committee.

### **Partner Mobility and Insertion**

Vall d’Hebron Institute of Research offers support in topics related to relocation and insertion to society to spouses or partners of its staff. This support may be given for insertion to the labor market, how to live in Barcelona, among others. All VHIR staff is free to request this type of assistance. This request should be directed to HR who will handle the process.