



# OPEN, TRANSPARENT AND MERIT-BASED RESEARCHER RECRUITMENT POLICY (OTM-R) OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZARAGOZA



# University of Zaragoza's recruitment policies and procedures

***An OTM-R document refers to an "Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment" document, which aims to guarantee fairness and equal opportunities during the recruitment process of researchers at the University of Zaragoza.***

In 2017 the University of Zaragoza (UZ) obtained the "HR Excellence in Research Award" seal of excellence in recognition of its ongoing commitment to implementing the guidelines of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. These key documents of the European Commission set out guidelines for European universities and research institutions to improve the recruitment process and working conditions of research staff, thus enhancing research careers in the European Union.

The UZ Governing Board is committed to the involvement of the University at all levels to improve the recruitment process and working conditions of our research staff. To this end, over the years, a working group has been set up, made up of the main actors involved in researcher recruitment policies, which has been responsible for developing a Strategy and Action Plan for our University to comply with the requirements established in the Charter and the Code. The award of the HR Excellence in Research Award is a major step towards attracting talented people to our University, as well as reinforcing our international profile and demonstrating our commitment to creating a favorable working environment for our research staff.

The University of Zaragoza has continuously opted for recruitment processes merit based, that are open and transparent in all phases of the different calls for applications, respecting the guarantees of applicants in terms of equality, non-discrimination or the possibility of appealing the actions, and that comply with the rules of action that are set out in different agreements of the Governing Council of our University. This is why it is necessary to have a document that embodies our OTM-R policies, those that give rise to an Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment, whose objective is to guarantee fairness and equal opportunities during the recruitment process of researchers at the University of Zaragoza.

## ***Scope of the document***

The recruitment of researchers at the University of Zaragoza, as in any other Spanish university, different aspects to be into account.

On one hand, university lecturers, in any of the forms permitted by legislation (associate lecturer, assistant lecturer, doctoral assistant lecturer, doctoral contract lecturer, collaborating lecturer, university lecturer and university professor) are recognized as having research capacity among their duties, which is, in turn, evaluated in the different calls for the

selection of lecturers. However, the existence of these calls for applications is always based on criteria related to university teaching, i.e. it is the demand for teaching that triggers the call for applications. In any case, these calls for applications are always based on the principles of open and transparent communication, to which any person who meets the specific criteria of each one may apply, assessment of merits (including research merits) under conditions of equality and non-discrimination, transparency for both, in the selection criteria and in the resolutions of the different selection committees and guarantees to candidates at any stage of the process so that their rights are recognized by means of the corresponding appeals. Within this typology of calls, it should be pointed out that there are temporary posts, which we will call contract teaching staff, and permanent posts. Of these, tenured lecturers and university professors are civil service positions which are accessed by competitive examination. The procedures for all these positions are therefore linked to national legislation and are adapted and supervised by the Teaching and Research Staff area (PDI) of the University of Zaragoza, which is part of the Vice-management of Human Resources.

On the other hand, there are other types of calls that respond to the research needs of the research groups and institutes of our University, so these calls are adjusted to the specific needs of specific projects or internal calls, and they are both pre- and post-doctoral positions, temporary in nature. The recruitment procedures have practically the same characteristics as the previous ones, but the selection criteria are related to the specific objectives of the projects, so they are not of a teaching nature and both the selection commissions and the criteria are defined by researchers, with the supervision of a specific office for the recruitment of researchers that reports to the Vice-management of Research, GESPI. When a researcher wishes to recruit staff, he/she must make a specific application to this office using the documents linked on [its website](#). In any case, the procedures of openness, transparency and assessment according to merit are guaranteed in the process through this office.

Lastly, there are recruitment figures that fall between the two, which are fundamentally of a research nature and come from public calls for applications. The clearest example would be the Ramón y Cajal postdoctoral calls or the predoctoral calls for University Teacher Training. Here we can also define two typologies: on one hand, public calls offered by institutions outside the University, such as the Spanish Research Agency, the Government of Aragon, ARAID foundation or the European Commission. Within the university there is a procedure for searching for profiles and applying for candidates, but the call for applications and selection takes place outside the university. On the other hand, there are specific calls for attracting talent from the University itself, which come from the Vice-rectorate for Science Policy, in which both the calls for positions and their selection are carried out within the University itself and are managed by the GESPI office. The number of these in-house

positions is currently much smaller than the external ones, but the University of Zaragoza must ensure that the principles of openness, transparency and merit-based recruitment will be applied.

In this document we mainly focus on the recruitment of temporary researchers in their predoctoral and postdoctoral modalities and the entry positions to the teaching field, such as assistant lecturer or associate lecturer. As mentioned above, the positions that require a competitive examination are regulated by national legislation, as well as requiring specific accreditations granted by the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA).

## 2. Legal and institutional framework

### Legal regulations

- Ley 17/2022, de 5 de septiembre, por la que se modifica la Ley 14/2011, de 1 de junio, de la Ciencia, la Tecnología y la Innovación.
- Ley Orgánica 2/2023, de 22 de marzo, del Sistema Universitario.
- Real Decreto-ley 32/2021, de 28 de diciembre, de medidas urgentes para la reforma laboral, la garantía de la estabilidad en el empleo y la transformación del mercado de trabajo
- Real Decreto-ley 8/2022, de 5 de abril, por el que se adoptan medidas urgentes en el ámbito de la contratación laboral del Sistema Español de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación.

### University-specific regulations

#### Regulation on the recruitment of research staff

<https://zaguan.unizar.es/record/30578>

- [Acuerdo](#) de 21 de diciembre de 2011, del Consejo de Gobierno de la Universidad de Zaragoza, por el que se aprueba el Reglamento de la Universidad de Zaragoza sobre contratación de personal investigador (BOA 38, de 24 de febrero de 2012) .
- [Acuerdo](#) de 24 de junio de 2013, del Consejo de Gobierno de la Universidad de Zaragoza, por el que se modifica parcialmente el Reglamento de la Universidad de Zaragoza sobre contratación de personal investigador.
- [Acuerdo](#) de 21 de enero de 2019, del Consejo de Gobierno de la Universidad de Zaragoza, por el que se modifica parcialmente el Reglamento de la Universidad de Zaragoza sobre contratación de personal investigador, aprobado por Acuerdo de 21 de diciembre de 2011, del Consejo de Gobierno de la Universidad de Zaragoza ("Boletín Oficial de Aragón", número 38, de 24 de febrero de 2012), y sus modificaciones aprobadas por Acuerdo de Consejo de Gobierno de 26 de enero de 2012 y 24 de junio de 2013 (BOA 31 de 14 de febrero de 2019).

Employment contracts for researchers on a temporary basis for the execution of specific scientific and technical research projects (Categories N1, N2, N3.1, N3 and N4)

- [Normativa reguladora](#) (Acuerdo de 22 de febrero de 2019 de Consejo de Gobierno de la Universidad de Zaragoza, BOA núm. 54).
- [Bases Generales](#) de las convocatorias (Resolución de 16 de mayo de 2019, del Rector de la Universidad de Zaragoza, BOA núm. 102).

#### Specific employment contracts for research staff (Pre-doctoral, Access, Distinguished)

- [Normativa reguladora](#) (Acuerdo de 16 de enero de 2017 de Consejo de Gobierno de la Universidad de Zaragoza, BOA núm. 57).
- [Modificación de la Normativa reguladora](#) (Acuerdo de 3 de abril de 2017 de Consejo de Gobierno de la Universidad de Zaragoza, BOA núm. 75).
- [Bases Generales](#) de las convocatorias (Resolución de 22 de mayo de 2019, del Rector de la Universidad de Zaragoza, BOA núm. 110).

### **3. Hiring Principles**

The University of Zaragoza is committed to hire the best person for each position, basing its criteria on the consideration of specific merits for each position, opening opportunities to any candidate and ensuring that its procedures do not discriminate on the grounds of ethnicity, gender or political orientation.

At the University of Zaragoza, absolutely all job vacancies, whether they are related to researchers or not, comply with the principles of equal opportunities, merit and ability. Thus, the Code of Ethics recently approved by our University states: "In staff selection and recruitment processes, we will act with full objectivity, respecting the principle of equal opportunities and in all cases taking into account the suitability of the profiles of the candidates and the needs specified in the call for applications."

This Code of Ethics also makes direct reference to transparency in all areas of action of the University and its employees: "The University of Zaragoza will act with total transparency in the exercise of its functions and in the achievement of its objectives. Society must be aware of the resources placed at its disposal, what they are used for, how they are used and what results are obtained. The members of the university community must be accountable and act with the utmost respect for the obligation of transparency with the exceptions contemplated in the Law. "

On the other hand, regarding to researchers recruitment, the University of Zaragoza Regulations states: "In any case, these procedures for the recruitment of research staff [...] will guarantee compliance with the constitutional principles of equality, merit and ability, as well as that of publicity, being carried out in accordance with the provisions of the revised text of the Law on the Basic Statute of the Public Employee and the rest of the legal system, so as to allow transparent, open, egalitarian and internationally recognized professional development".

Likewise, the University of Zaragoza is fully committed to non-discrimination and to the promotion of equal opportunities, as shown by the recent presentation of the 2nd Equality Plan of our University ([link](#)).

Therefore, the University of Zaragoza is aligned with the following principles in the recruitment of researchers:

- Publicity of calls for applications and selection criteria based on the job position, seeking an open process.
- Complete transparency of actions and procedures, using electronic means and minimising bureaucracy, aiming for a transparent process.
- Selection of candidates based on academic merits related to the characteristics of the job, aiming for a merit-based process.
- Equal opportunities, non-discrimination and disability support.

#### **4. Call for applications**

Vacancy announcement procedures take place in different locations, and are managed by different units, depending on the type of vacancy. Equality and transparency, as well as the selection of the best candidate according to the established selection criteria, are ensured through the different procedures.

In the case of permanent teaching posts, article 62 of the Organic Law on Universities refers to the Statutes of each University for the regulation of the procedure governing competitions for access to posts in the University Teaching Bodies. The University of Zaragoza published, in the Rector's [resolution of 28 January 2020](#), the revised text of the Regulations governing the calls for competitions for access to university teaching posts. According to this resolution, the call for applications must be published in the Official State Gazette (BOE) and the Official Gazette of Aragon (BOA), with the date of the BOE being the reference date for the deadline for submitting applications. The call for applications must indicate:

The general rules of the competition (characteristics of the post and deadlines for applications and decisions).

- Specific requirements to be met by applicants, which will depend on the post in question.
- The composition of the selection committee, which must comply with the criteria established in Article 140 of the Statutes of the UZ.
- Information on the application process, with the necessary documents, and the development of the competition.

The Teaching and Research Staff (PDI) section, which reports to the Vice-management of Human Resources, will manage these calls for applications.

Regarding to temporary positions for non-permanent teaching staff, calls for applications are published in the Official Journal of Aragon (BOA), normally including all those positions

that will be available in an academic year, and which will include information on applications, applicant requirements (including those that may apply to qualifications obtained abroad), information on the admission procedure, the selection commissions and the selection procedure, including in this case the selection criteria, resolution and possible appeals. The regulations can be consulted at this [link](#). The PDI section will also manage this type of vacancies.

Finally, calls for non-permanent researchers will be published in general on the notice board of the University of Zaragoza e-ToUZ (<https://ae.unizar.es/?app=touz>) this call will include the type of non-permanent researcher position, the regulations, the necessary forms as well as the characteristics of the position and the specific requirements of the applicants, the selection body, how to apply, the expected requirements and the documentation to be provided. The specific regulations can be found at this [link](#). In many cases, especially when we are in the field of European projects, the calls for applications are also included through the [EURAXESS portal](#). The GESPI office, which is part of the Vice-president's Office for Research, will be in charge of managing these calls. It should be noted that external and internal calls not associated with projects are also advertised on the [web page](#) of the Research Management Service.

In addition to all mentioned above, the positions of research staff and contracted teaching staff are also published in the daily newsletter at iUnizar, which all University of Zaragoza employees daily receive.

## **5. Application process**

The application procedure and the different documents that must be completed in order to apply for a place are set out in all the calls for applications. Applications must be made electronically through the electronic registration portal of the University of Zaragoza (<http://regtel.unizar.es>), for which the candidate must have sufficient digital accreditation through an electronic certificate. For teaching posts, the documents have to be filled in are in Spanish, but for contract researcher posts is possible to do it either in Spanish and English, especially if the post has been published on the EURAXESS portal. Even so, a large part of the procedure (registration, need a electronic certificate, etc.) EURAXESS office supports any applicant whose mother tongue is not Spanish, Euraxess unite has developed a series of useful guidelines in English to help and give support to any candidate. The documents can be found in the [FAQs of the EURAXESS](#) Office portal at the University of Zaragoza.

## **6. Lists of admitted and excluded persons**

The lists of admitted and excluded candidates, as well as the reasons that may have motivated this decision, are published, as well as any communication to interested parties related to the call, through the electronic notice board of the University of Zaragoza e-ToUZ (<https://ae.unizar.es/?app=touz>), independently of the office that manages the different calls for applications. Those candidates excluded from the procedure may have the possibility to



make allegations if they consider their rights have been violated, through the electronic register, as indicated in the contracting regulations.

## 7. Selection procedure

The selection procedures, as mentioned above, are based in the corresponding regulations. The election of the members of the selection commissions is clearly determined in each of the procedures, and they will be appointed by the Rector at the proposal of the Departments or of the researchers themselves, in the case of temporary contract researchers. These commissions must have a gender-balanced composition, as indicated in the objectives of Axis 3 of the University of Zaragoza's Equality Plan.

In the case of permanent teaching staff, they shall adhere to the [Rector's resolution of 28 January 2020](#), which indicates how the selection commissions shall operate in accordance with the regulations in force. In this case, it will be the commission in its constitution session that will establish the criteria for resolving the competition, and must set the date and time of the sessions with the candidates. All information regarding these decisions will be posted on the e-ToUZ University's electronic notice board. Once the sessions have been held, the committee will deliberate and propose a candidate to fill the post, a decision that will be subject to any possible complaints that the rest of the candidates may lodge.

In the case of contract teaching staff, the selection procedure of the commissions is also included in the current regulations, summarized [in this document](#). The main difference with permanent teaching staff competitions is that the selection criteria have been [published in advance](#), and it is not up to the committee to set these criteria at the constitution session. In this session, the committee shall summon the candidates to the objective tests, if included in the selection criteria, as well as to the interviews that may be held. As in the previous case, the information concerning the decisions taken by the committee that must be communicated to the candidates will be made available on the e-ToUZ notice board.

Finally, in the case of contract researchers, the selection procedure is very similar to the previous one, since the selection criteria must have been included in the call for the specific position and, therefore, the committee must meet to constitute itself, indicate if there is any reason for not being able to take part in the procedure and, after that, receive the documentation from the candidates and evaluate it according to the published criteria. The decisions of the commission are also published on the e-ToUZ notice board.

In all cases, the recruitment proposal is based on the established criteria and the merits of the different candidates in relation to these criteria. The managing offices of each type of recruitment shall be the guarantors that the entire procedure has been carried out correctly. Recruitment proposals will be published wherever is indicated in the regulations, but in the case of temporary teaching staff and contract researchers, it will be published on the e-ToUZ notice board.



Candidates who are not selected in any of the University of Zaragoza's calls for applications will have the right to appeal against decisions with which they are not satisfied, and may do so in due time and form through the University of Zaragoza's electronic registry.

## **8. Diversity and inclusion**

The University of Zaragoza contemplates certain exceptions and favors on behalf in the inclusion of people with a legally recognized degree of disability with measures such as exemption from payment of some fees or the application for adaptation of the job.

## **9. Improved procedure**

The complexity of the different contractual figures that can be established, and their possible link to teaching tasks, means that there are different offices dependent on different Vice-governments when it comes to managing the positions of contracted lecturers and researchers. The HRS4R strategy allows us as a university to have a tool that gives us a global vision and provides a methodology for continuous improvement through the joint work of different key members of the university community and the different evaluations involved in the process of awarding and maintaining the HR seal, including both self-evaluations, which include meetings or surveys where appropriate, and external evaluations, which involve a global vision of recruitment procedures.

## **10. Conclusion**

In short, the University of Zaragoza is fully committed to the principles of open, transparent and merit-based recruitment. Despite the fact that there is a very wide range of contract figures, in all processes these principles are applied to candidates who meet the specific requirements of each of the aforementioned figures. This policy has been applied at the University of Zaragoza for many years, but the commitment to the HRS4R human resources strategy for research allows it to be included in a broad framework in which not only the recruitment processes, but also the working conditions, are included in a single strategy. This provides our University with a scope of operations that benefits both the institution itself and the researchers.