



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



**Universidad
Zaragoza**



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

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Recruitment policies and procedures of the University of Zaragoza

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

In 2017 the University of Zaragoza (UZ) obtained the seal of excellence "HR Excellence in Research Award" in recognition of its constant commitment to the implementation of the guidelines of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. These key documents from the European Commission set out a set of guidelines for European universities and research institutions to improve the recruitment process and working conditions of research staff, thereby boosting research careers in the European Union. The UZ Government Team is committed to involving the University at all levels to improve the hiring process and working conditions of our research staff. To this end, over the years, a working group has been created consisting of the main actors related to the policies of hiring researchers and 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 awarding of the "HR Excellence in Research Award" seal is a great step towards attracting talented people to our University, as well as strengthening our international profile and demonstrating our commitment to creating a favourable working environment for our research staff.

The University of Zaragoza has continuously opted for hiring processes that took into account merit, that were open and transparent in all phases of the different calls, respecting the guarantees of the applicants in terms of equality, non-discrimination or possibility of appealing the actions, and that complied with rules of action that are reflected in different agreements of the Governing Council of our University. That is why it is necessary to have a document that reflects our OTM-R policies, those that give rise to Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment, whose objective is to guarantee equity and equal opportunities during the process of hiring researchers at the University of Zaragoza.

Scope of the document

The hiring of researchers at the University of Zaragoza, as in any other Spanish University, has different aspects.

On the one hand, the majority of university professors, in any of the forms permitted by legislation (Distinguished Professor, Visiting Professor, Assistant Doctor Professor, Contracted Doctor Professor, Permanent Labor Professor, Professor of University School and Professor of University School - when they are in possession of the title of Doctor-, University Professor and University Professor) have recognized among their work the research activity, which is, in turn, evaluated to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the category, in the different calls for selection of professors. In addition, there are other figures of university professors such as Substitute Professor or Associate Professor, among whose functions only teaching activity is contemplated. It should be added that there are other extinct figures, such as Assistant Professor or Contributing Professor, some people are still hired under the figure of Contributing Professor.

In any case, the calls are always based on criteria related to university teaching, that is, it is the teaching demand that causes the call for selection. In addition, these calls are always based on the principles of open and transparent communication, which can be submitted by anyone who meets the specific criteria of each, assessment of merits (including research merits) under conditions of equality and non-discrimination, transparency 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 through the corresponding resources. Within this typology of places it is pertinent to point out that there are temporary figures, which we will call contracted teachers, and permanent figures. Of these, those of full professor and university professor are positions of civil servants that are accessed by opposition. The procedures of all these positions are therefore linked to national legislation and are adapted and supervised by the Teaching and Research Personnel (PDI) area of the University of Zaragoza, which depends on 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 that these calls are adjusted to the specific needs of the lines of research of the same to hire pre and postdoctoral researchers, most of them of indefinite duration, and are only temporary those that by the nature of the funding funds require it. The recruitment procedures have practically the same characteristics as the previous ones, but the selection criteria are related to the specific objectives of the research lines developed at the University of Zaragoza, so they do not have a teaching nature and both the selection commissions and the criteria are defined by researchers, with the supervision of a specific office of recruitment of researchers under the Vice-Management of Research, GESPI. When a researcher wants to recruit staff, he/she must make a specific request to this office using the documents linked on [its website](#). In any case, the procedures of opening, transparency and evaluation according to merit are guaranteed in the process through that office.

Finally, there are recruitment figures that would be between the two, which have a fundamentally research character and that come from public calls to finance research personnel. The clearest example would be the postdoctoral calls Ramón y Cajal or the predoctoral calls for University Teacher Training. Here we can also define two typologies: on the one hand, public calls offered by institutions outside the University, such as the Spanish Research Agency, the Government of Aragon, the ARAID foundation or the European Commission. Within the scope of the University there is a procedure for searching profiles and applying for candidates, but the call and selection takes place outside this scope. On the other hand, specific calls for talent attraction of the University itself, which come from the Vice-Rectorate of Scientific Policy, in which both the calls for the positions and their selection are made within the University itself and are managed by the GESPI office. The number of these own places today is much smaller than the external ones, but in them the University of Zaragoza must ensure that the principles of openness, transparency and hiring based on merit will occur.

In this document we will mainly rely on the hiring of researchers in their pre and postdoctoral modalities and the figures of entry to the teaching field such as those of assistant professor doctor or associate professor. As mentioned, the figures that require a competition are regulated by national legislation, in addition to specifying specific accreditations that are granted within the framework of the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation, ANECA.

2. Legal and institutional scope

Legal regulations

- Law 17/2022, of 5 September, amending Law 14/2011, of 1 June, on Science, Technology and Innovation.
- Organic Law 2/2023, of March 22, on the University System.
- Royal Decree-Law 32/2021 of 28 December 2021 on urgent measures for labour reform, ensuring stability in employment and transforming the labour market
- Royal Decree-Law 8/2022 of 5 April 2022 adopting urgent measures in the field of employment contracts of the Spanish System of Science, Technology and Innovation.

Specific regulations of the University

Regulation on Recruitment of Research Personnel <https://zaguan.unizar.es/record/30578>

- [Agreement](#) of 21 December 2011 of the Governing Council of the University of Zaragoza approving the Regulation of the University of Zaragoza on the recruitment of research staff (BOA 38 of 24 February 2012).
- [Agreement](#) of 24 June 2013 of the Governing Council of the University of Zaragoza, partially amending the Regulation of the University of Zaragoza on the recruitment of research staff.
- [Agreement](#) of 21 January 2019 of the Governing Council of the University of Zaragoza, partially amending the Regulation of the University of Zaragoza on the recruitment of research staff, approved by Agreement of 21 December 2011 of the Governing Council of the University of Zaragoza ("Official Gazette of Aragon", number 38, of 24 February 2012), and its amendments approved by Agreement of the Governing Council of 26 January 2012 and 24 June 2013 (Official Gazette of Aragon, number 38, of 24 February 2019).

Temporary contracts for researchers to carry out specific scientific and technical research projects (categories N1, N2, N3.1, N3 and N4)

- [Regulatory regulations \(Agreement\)](#) of 22 February 2019 of the Governing Council of the University of Zaragoza, BOA No. 54).
- [General rules of](#) the calls (Resolution of May 16, 2019, of the Rector of the University of Zaragoza, BOA No. 102).

Specific employment contracts of research staff (Predoctoral Modalities, Access, Distinguished)

- [Regulatory regulations \(Agreement\)](#) of 16 January 2017 of the Governing Council of the University of Zaragoza, BOA No. 57).
- [Amendment of the Regulatory Regulations \(Agreement\)](#) of 3 April 2017 of the Governing Council of the University of Zaragoza, BOA No. 75).
- [General rules of](#) the calls (Resolution of May 22, 2019, of the Rector of the University of Zaragoza, BOA No. 110).

3. Principles of procurement

The University of Zaragoza is committed to the objective of hiring the best person for each job, basing its criteria on the consideration of specific merits for each position, opening the doors to

any candidate and ensuring that its procedures do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of ethnicity, sex or political orientation.

At the University of Zaragoza, absolutely all jobs, whether related to research or not, comply with the principles of equal opportunities, merit and ability. Thus, the Code of Ethics recently approved by our University states: "In the selection and recruitment processes, we will act with full objectivity, respecting the principle of equal opportunities and taking into account in any case the suitability of the profiles of the applications and the needs explained in the call."

Also in this Code of Ethics there is a direct reference to transparency in all areas of action of the University and its workers:

"The University of Zaragoza shall act with total transparency in the exercise of its functions and in the achievement of its objectives. Society must be aware of the resources made available to it, what they are dedicated to, how they are used and what results are obtained. 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, with regard specifically to the recruitment of researchers, the Regulation of the University of Zaragoza on the recruitment of research staff states: 'In any case, these procedures for recruiting research staff ... shall ensure compliance with the constitutional principles of equality, merit and ability, as well as that of publicity, carried out in accordance with the provisions of the consolidated text of the Law on the Basic Statute of Public Employees and the rest of the legal system, so as to allow for transparent, open, equal and internationally recognised professional development.'

Likewise, the University of Zaragoza is fully committed to non-discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities, as shown by the recent presentation of the 2nd Equality Plan of our University ([link](#)). In fact, in the calls of the Own Program of the Vice-Rectorate of Scientific Policy one of the selection criteria in case of a tie, is that the candidate is female.

Therefore, the University of Zaragoza aligns with the **following principles** in hiring researchers:

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

4. Call for places

Place announcement procedures take place in different locations, and are managed by different units, depending on the type of places. 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 positions, the Organic Law of the University System, in its article 71, refers to the internal regulations of each University the regulation of the procedure that must govern the competitions for access to the places of the University Teaching Corps. The University of Zaragoza published, in [a decision of the Rector of 28 January 2020](#), the recast text of the Regulation governing calls for tenders for admission to university teaching posts. According to the same, the call must be published in the Official State Gazette (BOE) and the

Official Gazette of Aragon (BOA), being the date of the BOE the reference in terms of deadline for submission of applications. The call must indicate:

- The general rules of the competition (characteristics of the place and deadlines for application and resolution)
- Specific requirements that applicants must meet, and that will depend on the position in question
- The composition of the selection committee, which must comply with the criteria set out in Article 140 of the Statutes of the UZ
- Information of the application process, with the necessary documents, and development of the contest.

It is the Teaching and Research Personnel Service (PDI), dependent on the Vice-Management of Human Resources, which will manage these calls.

With regard to temporary non-permanent teaching positions, calls are made through the Official Gazette of Aragon (BOA), usually including all those positions that will leave in an academic year, and where information on applications, requirements of applicants (including those that could apply to degrees obtained abroad), information on the admission procedure, selection commissions and the selection procedure will be included, including in this case the selection criteria, resolution and possible resources. The regulations can be consulted at this [link](#). The IDP Service will also manage these types of positions.

Finally, the calls for non-permanent researchers will be published in a general way on the bulletin board of the University of Zaragoza e-ToUZ (<https://ae.unizar.es/?app=touz>) where the call will include the type of non-permanent researcher position, the regulations, the necessary forms as well as the characteristics of the position and specific requirements of the applicants, the selection body, how to make the application, the expected requirements and the documentation to be provided. The specific rules can be found at this [link](#). On many occasions, especially when we are in the field of European projects, calls are also included through the [EURAXESS portal](#). The GESPI office, under the Research Vice-Management, will be in charge of managing these calls. It should be noted that calls for staff funding, both external and internal, are also advertised on a single website of the Research Vice-Management <https://investigacion.unizar.es/calls>.

In addition to all the above, the positions of research staff and contracted faculty appear, in addition to the aforementioned places, in the daily newsletter iUnizar, which is received by all workers of the University of Zaragoza.

5. Application process

In all the calls, the application procedure is fixed, as well as the different documents that must be completed in order to be eligible for a place. Applications must be made electronically through the electronic registration portal of the University of Zaragoza (<http://regtel.unizar.es>) for which sufficient digital accreditation must be available through an electronic certificate or in the cases of research staff through the [SOLICITA Platform](#). For faculty positions, the documents to be filled in are in Spanish, but for contracted researcher positions they can be in Spanish and English, especially if the position has been published on the EURAXESS portal. Even so, much of the procedure (registration, need for electronic certificate, etc.) is done through portals in

Spanish, so the EURAXESS office supports any applicant whose mother tongue is not Spanish and has developed a series of help documents in English so that anyone can access the procedures without the language being a problem. The documents can be found in the FAQs of [the EURAXESS Office portal](#) at the University of Zaragoza.

6. Lists of admitted and excluded

The lists of admitted and excluded, as well as the reasons that could have motivated this decision, are published, as well as any communication to interested parties related to the call, through the electronic bulletin board of the University of Zaragoza e-ToUZ (<https://ae.unizar.es/?app=touz>), regardless of the office that manages the different calls. Persons excluded from the procedure may plead if they understand that their rights have been violated, through the electronic register as indicated in the procurement regulations.

7. Selection procedure

The selection procedures, as mentioned, are laid down in the relevant regulations. The election of the members of the selection commissions is perfectly determined in each of the procedures, and they will be appointed by the Rector on a proposal from the Departments or from the researchers themselves, in the case of hired researchers. These commissions must have a balanced composition in terms of gender, as indicated by the objectives of Axis 3 of the Equality Plan of the University of Zaragoza.

In the case of permanent teaching staff, they shall comply with the [decision of the Rector of 28 January 2020](#), which indicates how the selection committees must operate in accordance with current regulations. In this case, it will be the commission in its constitution session that will set the criteria to solve the contest, and must set the day and time of the sessions with the candidates. All information regarding these decisions will be posted on the e-ToUZ University's electronic bulletin board. Once the sessions have been developed, the commission will deliberate and propose a candidate to fill the position, a decision that will be subject to the possible claims that the rest of the candidates could lodge.

In the case of contracted teachers, the procedure for selecting the commissions is also included in the current regulations, and can be obtained [in this link](#). The main difference with permanent teaching competitions is that the selection criteria have been **published in advance** and it is not for the committee to set these criteria at the constitution session. At that session, the committee must invite candidates to the objective tests, if they have been included in the selection criteria, as well as to the interviews that may be carried out. As in the previous case, information concerning the decisions taken by the committee that must be communicated to the candidates will be made through the e-ToUZ bulletin board.

Finally, in the case of contracted 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 commission must meet to be constituted, indicate if there is any reason not to be able to be part of the procedure and, after that, receive the documentation of the candidates and evaluate it according to the published criteria. The committee's decisions are also published on the e-ToUZ bulletin board.

In all cases, the recruitment proposal will be based on the established criteria and the merits of the different candidates in relation to these criteria. The managing offices of each type of procurement will be guarantors that the entire procedure has been carried out correctly. Recruitment proposals will be published wherever the regulations indicate, but in the case of temporary contracted faculty and contracted researchers it will be on the e-ToUZ bulletin board. Candidates not selected in any of the calls of the University of Zaragoza will have the right to appeal those decisions with which they are not satisfied, and may do so in form and time through the electronic registration of the University of Zaragoza.

8. Diversity and inclusion

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

9. Improvement of the procedure

The complexity in 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-Managements when managing the positions of contracted professors 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 granting and maintaining the HR label, including both self-evaluations, which include meetings or surveys, as well as external evaluations, which compromise a global vision of the contracting procedures.

10. Conclusion

In short, the University of Zaragoza is fully committed to the principles of open, transparent and merit-based recruitment. Although the casuistry of hired figures is very broad, 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 research human resources strategy allows it to be encompassed in a broad framework in which not only the hiring 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.