

**The principles of Open, Transparent, Merit-based recruitment (OTM-R)  
for evaluating researchers in recruitment  
process and career development  
at the University of Macerata**



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

### **Introduction: principles of OTM-R adopted by the University of Macerata**

In 2005, the University of Macerata signed the **European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter & Code)**. In order for the principles expressed in the Charter to be effectively implemented, in September 2012, the University made a formal commitment before the European Commission to draft a strategy for the actual implementation of the principles, adhering to the **Institutional Human Resources Strategy Group**, and then elaborating the **Strategy and Action Plan “Excellence in Research”**.

On the grounds of the action plan, in 2014 the University was awarded by the European Commission with the [HR Excellence in Research](#) accreditation (one of the first granted in Italy) and with the subsequent recognition by the EU institution.

In 2017, the Strategy was enriched with actions aimed at concretely implementing the principles contained in the Charter and in the Code regarding the [Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers \(OTM-R\)](#).

### **OTM-R principles**

The European Commission recommends that universities and research institutions define strategies and evaluation systems for the recruitment and career development of researchers that are inspired by the general principles of the OTM-R, included in the Charter and the Code. Specifically, actions related to the OTM-R are aimed at ensuring, both for recruitment and for career progressions, open, transparent and comparable procedures at international level, by inserting in the calls for applications clear information regarding the whole selection process, including evaluation criteria (which must be objective and transparent) and an indicative timetable.

In particular, the Charter and the Code include the **following recommendations to be followed in the selection process**:

- the selection process should take into consideration the whole range of experience of candidates. While focusing on their overall potential as researchers, their creativity and level of independence should also be considered;
- merit should be judged qualitatively as well as quantitatively, focusing on results achieved within a diversified career path and not only on the number of publications;
- the importance of bibliometric indices should be properly balanced within a wider range of evaluation criteria, based on the specific figure to be recruited. Such criteria include: teaching, supervision/mentoring, teamwork, knowledge transfer, management of research and innovation, capacity of attracting external funds, impact on society and public awareness activities;

- career breaks should be regarded as a potentially valuable contribution to the professional development of researchers towards a multidimensional career track;
- Any mobility experience, e.g. a stay in another country/region or in another research setting (public or private) or a change from one discipline or sector to another, whether as part of the initial research training or at a later stage of the research career, or virtual mobility experience, should be considered as a valuable contribution to the professional development of a researcher and should not penalised the evaluation;
- recognition and evaluation of qualifications gained by candidates during their careers should focus on judging the achievements of the person rather than the reputation of the institution where the qualifications were gained;
- it is important that candidates are informed after the selection process about the strengths and weaknesses of their applications.

**PLEASE NOTE:** the Charter and the Code use the internationally accepted definition of researchers taken from the [OECD Frascati Manual](#), that is "professionals engaged in the conception or creation of new knowledge, products, processes, methods and new systems and in the management of the projects concerned".

Therefore, this document concerns professionals who carry out professional activities in research and development, at any stage of their career and regardless of their classification and form of contracting. In the case of the University, this document therefore concerns the figures of full professor, associate professor, permanent researcher, type A and type B fixed-term researcher, post-doc (assegnista di ricerca), research fellow, doctoral student.