



**UNamur Euraxess REPORT**  
**2024-2027**



**Report of the UNamur  
Human Resources  
Strategy for Researchers  
(HRS4R) 2024-2027**

## REPORT OF THE UNAMUR HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS (HR4RS)

### 1. Organisational information

STAFF & STUDENTS (2020)	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	971,2
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	274,1
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	182,1
Of whom are women	433,3
Of whom are stage R3 or R4= Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor	179,81
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	136,68
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	429
Total number of students (if relevant)	6421
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	1277,2
UNamur FUNDING (2020)	€
Total annual organisational budget	110561043
Annual organisational direct government funding (block funding, used for teaching, research, infrastructure...)	48335903
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations –including EU funding)	26450125
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	3394382

#### Organisational profile

The University of Namur (UNamur) is the first higher education institution in the Namur region of Belgium. The University is anchored in the Namur educational landscape through close collaboration and association with Namur hospitals and university colleges. UNamur offers bachelor (23), master (44) and doctorate (13) programs in 7 faculties. Through the 11 transdisciplinary research institutes, researchers work on more than 800 applied and fundamental research projects. UNamur is successful in the following areas: nanotechnologies, life sciences, surface and materials physics and chemistry, information systems and information technology engineering, big data, regional economics, development economics and information, law and society.

## 1. Ethical and Professional aspects

Since 2023, the University of Namur, along with the five French-speaking Belgian universities, has signed the Agreement on Research Assessment (CoARA) and therefore commits to respect the 10 following principles:

- 1. Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research;*
- 2. Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators;*
- 3. Abandon inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication-based metrics, in particular inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index;*
- 4. Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment;*
- 5. Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to;*
- 6. Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools and processes;*
- 7. Raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use;*
- 8. Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition;*
- 9. Communicate progress made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments;*
- 10. Evaluate practices, criteria and tools based on solid evidence and the state-of-the-art in research on research, and make data openly available for evidence gathering and research; (Source : <https://coara.eu/agreement/the-commitments/>)*

To celebrate this event and to transpose these 10 principles into the rules of the French-speaking universities, the 5 universities have come together to propose an interuniversity project consisting in 5 workpackages, each one led by a different university and on a different principle of the CoARA Agreement. One of them concerns ethical rules and Ethics trainings.

Besides this great breakthrough, the UNamur is committed to not discriminate between researchers on the basis of sex, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic status and therefore, works to offer good working conditions adapted to anyone, whatever his/her specificities. To confirm its commitments, the UNamur has written several policies and guidelines on the topics of gender equality, parenting, openness and on how to welcome people with specific needs.

On this matter, the UNamur is the first university to offer conferences and courses with sign-language interpretation in Belgium.

Besides that, integrity and ethics are part of trainings delivered to all newly recruited researchers by the Research Administration. An Anti-plagiarism charter was written several years ago, as it was an action of the action plan of 2019-2021. A Quizz on plagiarism is also available for all students and researchers on the website of the UNamur.

## 2. Selection and Recruitment

The action of creating a single recruitment platform has been proposed in the last two action plans, the University has not yet succeeded in achieving this task, this for many different reasons.

First, the Vice-rector to Human Resources had been ill for a while, what put the project on hold. Besides that, what caused a swift in the priorities was the breakdown of the financial software. It has stopped working and it was urgent to replace it, what induced to change the Finance platform, Teaching platform and housing app as well, because they were all connected to the same software. Following that, priorities within the institutions changed as well, putting the numeric transition of the whole university as priority number one. Concretely, all members of the university have migrated to Microsoft Office 365 and towards Teams. It was a big breakthrough and a big change. At the same time, other platforms are being developed to follow students' inscriptions, to give informatic ID and access to new members, visitor researchers included and a portal to follow PhD students' pathway as well. Moreover, a new website has been developed and a new Intranet is on the point of being developed as well.

Within this context, one might understand why the e-recruitment platform has been postponed.

However, despite the absence of an e-recruitment platform for now, the UNamur continues to be a model recruiter as it recruits people based on their merit and recognizes their previous working experiences, the value of their degree and since recently, takes consideration of the soft skills gained either during the studies, the research or during previous jobs. According to a recent survey, PhD students feel recognized and supported by the Institution.

The management has also taken initiatives to systematically publish job offers on the Euraxess Jobs platform as well as on the website of UNamur in French and in English. Furthermore, the job offers are open to everyone and are non-discriminatory as it mentions "H/F/X" (Women, Men, Other). A reflection is currently led to see how to open the job offer to disable researchers too, what constitutes an action of the 2024-2027 action plan.

Last but not least, the Human Resources service has been reorganized in order to have a designated spokesperson by service, who is in charge of the recruitment of the newcomers and of following the employees all along their career at the university, answering to their questions and being present during their first assessments. Although this change is quite new, it is going pretty well and improves the communication between employees, their managers and the HR service.

## 3. Working Conditions

**Values and environment:** the University of Namur is famously known for its strong DNA made of its Jesuit heritage and values. It is also recognized for being welcoming and hospitable. A recent survey has shown that people feel good in the University and enjoy the company of their colleagues. The working atmosphere is thus positive and pleasant.

Several actions of the 2021-2024 plan consisted in increasing the security on the campus, in the laboratories, in carrying out risks analysis in laboratories. These actions are still ongoing, and contribute to improve the working environment of the university of Namur.

**Excellent working conditions:** the UNamur offers several services to its employees and researchers such as the Euraxess researchers helpdesk, which answers to all questions related to the life in Belgium (administrative stuff, medical help, events, tourism), daycare for babies, daycare after school and during school holidays for children up to 8 years old, sustainable mobility policy (train and bus pass), structural homeworking and flexible hours. These last elements allow to find a good balance between the professional and private life. Hence, it allows to have a family while doing research, what also encourages women to start career in research and therefore, supports gender equality.

**Inclusion of all the stakeholders:** the stakeholders' voice is sure to be heard thanks to a democratic procedure, which is a very important step achieved by the Institution. The involvement of everyone in the institution is one of the most important values of the UNamur. This can be seen by the presence of members of the three different bodies (scientific, academic, and administrative staff) in each decision organ at every level. Moreover, two trade unions are present in the company board as well as in the Security and Prevention council. The students have also their own assembly, with a president elected every year.

**Interdisciplinary:** researchers develop their research projects within Research Institutes. These institutes are all interdisciplinary: they gather researchers from different domains and intersect various expertise around a global topic. This way of functioning favors transdisciplinary collaborations and original approaches for research as well as for teaching. Thanks to that, researchers benefit from the experience and knowledge of researchers in other areas as theirs, what broadens the mind and leads to research answering several different societal challenges.

**International collaboration and mobility:** being a small university in the center of Europe encourages international collaboration and mobility of its researchers, staff, and students. The University has therefore created strong partnerships all over the world and participates in many international co-authorships. What is more, in 2022, the UNamur has joined the UniversEH alliance, an alliance of five young and mature universities from five European countries. Its purpose is to develop a new way of collaboration in the field of Space, within the new “European Universities” initiative promoted by the European Commission.

#### **4. Training and development**

The new action plan for 2024-2027 has many actions related to organizing trainings on time management, project management, PhD pathway, team management. These actions were directly expressed by the research community. Indeed, to design this new plan and to have actions that meet researchers' needs, two brainstorming sessions were organized in 2023 with different profiles of researchers to get their opinions on what could be improved and what could be the new actions of the next Euraxess action plan. On top of that, a psycho-social risks survey was conducted among PhD students by the Prevention cell. The ideas of the brainstorming workshops and the results of the survey pointed a need for more trainings, for PhD students, but also supervisors to make them more fit for supervision and therefore, increase the well-being of the research community and increase the success rates and decrease the rate of PhD students drop-outs.

Knowing that, the Euraxess steering committee wanted to make trainings for PhD students as well as supervisors a priority, what explains the large number of actions related to trainings in the new action plan.

As mentioned above, the five university of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation have worked together to submit an interuniversity project on the topic of the Research Assessment Agreement (CoARA). This plan consists in five different projects, one led by each university and each on a different subject, going from ethics, integrity, Open Access, training on needed soft-skills, career development and on supervisors' trainings. The UNamur will oversee the two last aspects by gathering all available trainings from the 5 universities in a shared catalogue, organizing trainings for supervisors and finally host a conference with famous guests to promote the skills of PhDs on the job market and explain why training the supervisors is the key of the PhD's success. The UNamur will of course take this opportunity to rebuild its own training catalogue and to repatriate all trainings in one place. This has been transposed into a new action as well.

What is more, to be in line with the CoARA agreement and the new European Researcher Charter, the UNamur aims at developing its training offers in order to help researchers develop soft skills and encourage career interoperability.

To make sure the catalogue is still up-to-date, researchers are frequently asked to express their needs and demands each year on various occasions: round tables, individual interviews and surveys. The trainings are either organized internally or guest lecturers are invited to give a specific training.

Last but not least, the UNamur has a career development center which offers advice to PhD students finishing their thesis on what are their possibilities of job in academia or beyond. It also helps to write CV and promote one's abilities and soft skills.

## **5. Implementation**

The management of the implementation of the HRS4R and OTM-R process is entrusted to a multidisciplinary and multi-skilled steering committee. This allows for effective monitoring and coordination of the projects. The steering committee is responsible for proposing actions to be included, validating the HRS4R and OTM-R action plans and reporting to the board. The Steering Committee is chaired by the Vice-Rector for Research. Its composition is as follows:

- Vice-Rector for Research;
- Vice-Rector in charge of Academic Affairs ;
- Vice-Rector in charge of Education;
- Vice-Rector in charge of Quality;
- Directors (Human Resources Services SRH, Research Administration ADRE, Rectorate Services);
- Representatives of the three bodies (academic, scientific and administrative);
- 2 Persons in charge of quality;
- Person in charge of the reception of foreign researchers (Researcher's Helpdesk);

The day-to-day management is attributed to the Quality Support Unit, which is part of the rectorate services.

The involvement of the Quality Support Unit in university life and the human size of the structure facilitate exchanges, which allows researchers to address their requests directly to the Researcher's Helpdesk and the Quality Support Unit.

Moreover, the faculty councils collaborate with the councils of the scientific and university bodies whose representatives sit on the steering committee. Depending on the project, working groups are created and reports and information are centralized by the Quality Support Unit. Finally, various events are organized throughout the year to allow researchers to express themselves (round tables, workshops, individual meetings) and to explain the implementation of the HRS4R process (newsletter, annual events on Euraxess).

The new strategic plan of the Rectorate (2021-2024), presented in December 2021 to the university community, integrates the HRS4R action plan in a transversal way in each of its orientations. Integration is facilitated by the strong representation of the institution's bodies in the steering committee. Emphasis is placed on the development of a strong HR policy that enables the implementation of the OTM-R strategy.

**a. How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?**

Progress is presented to the steering committee, which meets four times a year, by a representative of the quality support unit. The monitoring of actions is carried out by the quality support unit. Indeed, a part-time person is dedicated to monitoring and coordinating the actions of the action plan. This person is responsible for initiating projects, monitoring their progress and gathering the necessary information to assess the progress of the project. An internal project management tool is used to monitor progress in terms of time (meeting deadlines) and indicators to be achieved.

**b. How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?**

Researchers are invited to the steering committee through their representatives from the academic and scientific communities. These two representatives act as a link with the boards of both organization's and thus ensure the transmission of requests and projects from both boards. In addition, the Quality Support Unit actively participates in UNamur events and regularly attends information meetings. Thanks to the network that has been set up, researchers can easily get in touch with the contact persons and submit their requests.

What is more, to design the actions of the 2024-2027 action plan, two brainstorming sessions were organized in 2023 with different profiles of researchers to get their opinions on what could be improved and what could be the new actions of the next Euraxess action plan. A psycho-social survey has also been conducted among PhD students and its results were presented to the university afterwards. Some actions were designed based on the results of the survey to make PhD students feel heard and make them involved as well.

The Quality Team has also presented the Euraxess label and action plan to the three bodies (academic, scientific and administrative) during the year of 2023, in order to make people aware of the label and to make them involved in the process.

**c. How do you proceed with the alignment of organizational policies with the HRS4R?**

Ensure that HRS4R is recognized in the organization's research strategy as an overall HR policy. The participation of four vice-rectors in the steering committee helps to integrate HRS4R actions into the institutional strategy.

Thus, the rectoral strategic plan includes actions that contribute directly to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code for the Recruitment of Researchers, such as:

- Knowledge and technology transfer;
- Strengthening international collaboration in teaching and research;
- Strengthening of the quality approach;
- Development of innovative teaching methods through teacher training;
- Improvement of the integration of foreign students (especially doctoral students);

**d. How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?**

Actions are considered completed when the previously defined indicators are reached. This could be a training event, a report or a number of participants to be reached. When the action is completed, the quality support unit makes it permanent by including it in the action plan and by changing its status by "completed". All the pieces of evidence are saved on a private folder and a link is kept for evidence in case the proof is a webIn the case of a report, the quality support unit sets up a watch to ensure the continuity of the project (think tank, survey, evaluation report) and to ensure the data collection when needed (addition to the institutional policy, creation of a working group, official mandate for an administrative service).

**e. How will you monitor progress (timeline)?**

The action plan is monitored and discussed at each steering committee meeting, i.e. at least 4 times a year. Moreover, the Quality Unit regularly contacts the people responsible of actions to know how it is going, collect indicators and gather pieces of evidence. In the project management tool, the Quality unit reports the meetings, dates, indicators and proof collected in order to have everything monitored. How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?

The action plan is monitored and discussed at each steering committee meeting.

**f. How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?**

The action plan is monitored and discussed at each steering committee meeting. Moreover, the Quality Unit regularly contacts the people responsible of actions to know how it is going, collect indicators and gather actions. In the project management tool, the Quality unit reports the meetings, dates, indicators, and proof collected in order to have everything monitored. The Quality unit uses different status to see the evolution of actions: in progress, realized, done, to be repeated... This enables to measure progress and see what the blocking points are, also to see if the action needs to be repeated or maintained in time.

2. Have any of the priorities for the short- and medium-term changed?

The website of the university is going to be entirely redesigned and by doing so, the accessibility to the information will be facilitated to know quickly where to find the information needed or whom to ask.



Currently, all services and information are available on the website, but not easily accessible and we hope to improve this situation. This will benefit everyone: researchers, teachers, students, and employees as well as the external public.

Another priority defined by the authorities is to analyze the procedures currently in place to welcome and follow international staff (researchers, PhD and staff). The purpose is to identify what is already done in different services within the university, the lacks and repetitions for each public, and to propose general welcoming procedures to apply to everybody. Thanks to this analysis, we hope to welcome everybody even more appropriately and to provide everyone with the useful HR information. This will benefit the incoming international staff but will also increase the UNamur's reputation and visibility on the international scene. First steps have already been accomplished on this matter, by creating the PhD portal as well as the Researchers' portal. Both are interfaces listing all the necessary links towards useful information.

On the same topic, as mentioned previously, the UNamur wishes to improve its supervisory management of PhD students. Therefore, the training offers will be widened and some should be compulsory, in order to better equip the supervisors to deal with PhD breakdowns or dropping out. The work has already been started as the Quality Department has organized two training sessions on the PhD Path in November 2023, one for PhD students and another for supervisors. Both sessions were a success and a time to answer questions and to exchange. Another training was proposed in October 2023, during a welcoming session for international researchers, where the Euraxess cell (the RH team and the Quality Team) presented the Euraxess service and all the available opportunities for researchers. The RH team along with international researchers presented useful information on the life in Belgium to newcomers as well.

Finally, another priority will be to redefine the "Job cell". Its name is currently mistaking as one might think this cell provides information on job offers, while it is not. The Job Cell supports PhD students at the end of their thesis and Post-doc researchers on what to do afterwards, either stay in the academia or go to the private sector. It also gives advice on how to write a CV or highlight one's knowledge and assets. The counsellor can also be the person to go to in case of burn-out or another difficult private situation. Currently, these meetings aren't mandatory and happen on a voluntary basis. We would like to make them compulsory and to organize a meeting at the end of the thesis as well. To meet these objectives, the cell should be renamed, and one or more persons should be hired to come to help.

By putting trainings for supervisors and PhD students as priorities, redefining the job cell and wanting to increase the number of careers counseling sessions and recruiting more well-being officers, the UNamur follows and implements the new European Researcher Charter and its principles.

### 3. Have any of the circumstances in which your organization operates, changed and as such have had an impact on your HR strategy? (max 500 words)

The Human Resources service has been reorganized to have a designated spokesperson by service and faculty, who is in charge of the recruitment and of following the employees all along their career at the university, answering to their questions and being present at their first assessments. This new procedure eases the sharing of information and offers employees a safe place to exchange and ask questions.

This spokesperson assists to the evaluation of staff, what is also a new procedure. Every new employee has an assessment with his/her spokesperson and his/her supervisor after 3, 6 and 12 months. This new procedure allows to speak about the positive points, but also about certain problems, points to improve or difficulties encountered. Thanks to these meetings, supervisors and employees can align their expectations and better understand each other, what improves the work collaboration.

Finally, the post of Vice-Rector to the Human Resources has been completely reviewed and the tasks of this portfolio were divided into two roles: a new Vice-Rector has been appointed to the academic Affairs, overseeing works related to academics and researchers, while the General Administrator has taken over the HR portfolio and well-being of employees. Together they tackle many objectives and will ensure that HR projects come to a successful conclusion. One of their objectives, is for instance, to get a e-recruitment platform at last.

On another subject, in 2023, a call to recruit trustworthy persons has been made. Several volunteers have answered it and have received accurate training to deal with all the eventual situations they might encounter. Their names have been shared to the university community. From now on, if anyone suffers from harassment, unhealthy professional relationship, or bad behavior from his/her supervisor, he/she will know where to go to express him/herself and be sure to be heard by an impartial party. This important step makes part of our new action plan.

On the topic of well-being, the Prevention Service has hired new counsellors who are also available to act as mediator in case of conflict or simply to be listening to someone in need. The service will be providing trainings and information several times per year to give information on well-being, prevention, laboratory safety, training to become first-aid worker and on safety at work.

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

Strategic decisions have been taken by the authorities to improve the welcoming and supervision of PhD students and international researchers. Therefore, the Quality Office has been mandated to analyze the procedures in place to welcome and follow international staff (researchers, PhD and staff). The purpose is to identify what is already done in different services within the university, the lacks and repetitions for each public, and to propose further improvement in the general welcoming procedures to apply to everybody. Thanks to this study, we hope to improve the welcome of everybody and to provide everyone with the useful HR information. As it is a priority, it has been added as a priority action in our 2024-2027 action plan. This will benefit the incoming international staff but will also increase the UNamur's reputation and visibility on the international scene.

On the topic of PhD students' supervision, the UNamur wishes to widen the training offers proposed to supervisors and make some compulsory, in order to better equip the supervisors to deal with PhD breakdowns or dropping out, but also be able to better deal with time management and supervision. We hope this will result in supervisors getting the habit of organizing regular appointments with his/her PhD students and getting the ability of keeping the students motivated and on the right path.

As these two points have been defined as priorities, the new action plan contains several actions that follow that direction and thus, consists of organizing trainings in time management, stress management, team management, supervision, ...To strengthen even more these two points, a new Vice-Rector has been appointed to the academic Affairs, overseeing works related to academic, and researchers. She works closely with the General Administrator who has taken over the HR portfolio and

well-being of employees. Together they tackle many objectives and will ensure that HR projects come to a successful conclusion. One of their objectives, is for instance, to get a recruitment platform at last.

At last, the five university of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation have worked together to submit an interuniversity project on the topic of the Research Assessment Agreement (CoARA). This plan consists in five different projects, one led by each university and each on a different subject, going from ethics, integrity, Open Access, training on needed soft-skills, career development and on supervisors' trainings. The UNamur will oversee the two last aspects if the project is approved by the government. If so, the UNamur will gather all available trainings from the 5 universities in a shared catalogue, organize trainings for supervisors and finally host a conference with famous guests to promote the skills of PhDs on the job market and explain why training the supervisors is the key of PhD's success.

## 5. Comments on in the implementation of the OTM-R principles

Following the self-assessment report of the HRS4R Action Plan (2013-2016) submitted by the University of Namur, the European Commission issued recommendations inviting the UNamur to further develop its recruitment policy for researchers based on the OTM-R principles. The year after, a gap analysis was carried out and since then, UNamur has continued to take actions to still improve its recruitment procedures.

Recruitment at the University of Namur is organised in two categories of researchers: the academic staff (R3 and R4 Researchers), the scientific staff (R1 and R2 researchers). Recruitment procedures are written within the status of each category of researchers. Some members of the administrative services may also be recruited for specific research management positions. They are part of a third category of staff, made of administrative, technical or management staff.

Driven by its values of excellence in each of its missions, including research, the current authorities of the University of Namur want to strengthen the attractiveness and welcome both national and international researchers. Thus, the recruitment of researchers, which is intended to be open, transparent and based on the merit of candidates, has become one of the University's strategic priorities.

### **The OTM-R Policy at the UNamur : the improvements though times**

**In 2019-2021, big steps were made :**

- Revision of the procedure for recruiting scientific staff to bring it into line with OTMR principles;
- Revision of the current UNamur Recruitment Charter and drafting of a new Recruitment Charter, common to all three categories of staff, incorporating the new procedure for recruiting scientific staff;
- Update of the VadeMecum of recruitment at UNamur;
- Implementation of an e-recruitment platform;
- Systematic publication of all job offers on the Euraxess Jobs platform.

**Since 2021, other actions have been taken:**

In 2024, our OTM-R policy has been completely re-written to reflect the reality of recruitment at the UNamur. Indeed, if our previous policy dated back to 2019, in practice, the OTM-R policy has been

embedded in all recruitment procedures and documents. For example, our job offers contain different information related to the OTM-R process (<https://unamur.be/fr/universite/travailler>):

- The selection process is fully detailed
- The working conditions are clearly explained
- The salary and advantages are listed
- And a sentence clearly states that the UNamur follows the European Charter principles and the OTM-R guidelines as well.

On all document describing the recruitment procedures for researchers, teaching assistants and academics, the OTM-R policy is explained, as well as the different steps of the recruitment (CV screening, candidate selection, committee selection appointment, selection procedures, complaints, feedback).

To ensure that the best candidate is selected, the one with the most of merit, we do have a four-eyes system to check that the recruitment report is fair and impartial and that the criteria of selection are the same as the ones mentioned in the job offer. To give a proper formalization of these steps, the UNamur has updated its OTM-R policy which you'll find under this link: <https://www.unamur.be/en/research/euraxess/otm-r>

**What is more :**

- The experience of doing research aboard is not as important as it used to be, in order to not discriminate women researchers or researchers who have family and for whom it is hard to live for a long time aboard.
- By advertising as widely as possible in French as in English (via the UNamur website, LinkedIn, the Euraxess Jobs platform, Academic Positions, and the Career Center by Jobteaser), both national and international candidates can be recruited, and job offers can be publicised in 661 famous schools and universities of Europe.
- Job offers are now open to everyone whatever their sexual identity, gender, race or disability. We have indeed added the logo for LGBTQ+ and a wheeling chair. A reflection will be conducted over the next two years to have even more inclusive criteria.
- The UNamur is taking part in an interuniversity project aiming at creating workshops, videos, tool kits and work material to ease recruitment of researchers and especially, for online recruitment. This material will be published in the format of an e-book, but also in an e-learning platform shared by the five Belgian universities and supported by the national Belgian government.
- The HR recruitment procedures have been revised in order to increase collaboration between the services recruiting and the HR Team. Concretely, the service/faculty recruiting is in charge of giving the details of the job offer, the needed knowledge and abilities and the HR team is in charge of the whole legal aspects.
- In order to be even more open and transparent, a new job offer form common to the website of the UNamur and the Euraxess platform has been designed. This new form eases the supervisors' job, who previously needed to fill in two different forms.

- Job offers for researchers from all stages are published in French and English in order to attract candidates from all over Europe and to recruit the best qualified and meriting one.
- Recruitment procedures for academics have been reviewed in 2023, as well as the procedures related to the salary, career promotions and workload of academics. The soft skills developed in previous job experiences or previous research are now considered. The same work will be done for scientists and administrative staff afterwards.
- Recruitment procedures for assistants were reviewed and published internally in 2021. Template reports for recruitment of assistants were also designed and published internally.

The revised OTM-R policy can be found under this link : <https://www.unamur.be/fr/recherche/euraxess/otm-r>

## 6. Context and explanation on the new action Plan 2024-2027

While the previous plan focused on campus and laboratory security and home-working policies and procedures, this new action plan aims at strengthening the training offers proposed by the UNamur to its researchers from all stages on time management, project management, PhD pathway, team management. These actions were directly expressed by the research community. Indeed, to design this new plan and to have actions that meet researchers' needs, two brainstorming sessions were organized in 2023 with different profiles of researchers to get their opinions on what could be improved and what could be the new actions of the next Euraxess action plan. On top of that, a psycho-social risks survey was conducted among PhD students by the Prevention cell in 2023 and released its results in 2024. The ideas of the brainstorming workshops and the results of the survey pointed a need for more trainings, for PhD students, but also supervisors to make them more fit for supervision and therefore, increase the well-being of the research community and increase the success rates and decrease the rate of PhD students drop-outs.

Knowing that, the Euraxess steering committee wanted to make trainings for PhD students as well as supervisors a priority, what explains the large number of actions related to trainings in the new action plan.

As mentioned in the HRSUR UNamur 'strategy, the five university of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation have worked together to submit an interuniversity project on the topic of the Research Assessment Agreement (CoARA). This plan consists in five different projects, one led by each university and each on a different subject, going from ethics, integrity, Open Access, training on needed soft-skills, career development and on supervisors' trainings. The UNamur will oversee the two last aspects by gathering all available trainings from the 5 universities in a shared catalogue, organizing trainings for supervisors and finally hosting a conference with famous guests to promote the skills of PhDs on the job market and explain why training the supervisors is the key of the PhD's success. The UNamur will of course take this opportunity to rebuild its own training catalogue and to repatriate all trainings in one place.

To sum up, to be in line not only with the conclusions of the brainstorming organized to design new actions, the results of the survey on PhD psycho-social risks and also with the CoARA agreement and the new European Researcher Charter, the UNamur has designed a new action plans that main focus is on developing its training offers in order to help researchers develop soft skills and encourage career interoperability. Finally, a big long-term project is also ongoing and aims at better welcoming international researchers at their arrival, but also during their stay and their departure. This project follows completely the Euraxess principles by enlightening the questions of well-being, working conditions, housing, accompanying and entertaining researchers staying at our university.

Nbr	Priority 1 = high 2= medium 3 = low	Official Action	Explanation of the action	Deadline	Responsible Service	Actor	Targets	Statut	Indicator +
<b>Networking for Researchers</b>									
1	3	Offer networking opportunities to researchers by hosting/organizing events	Brainstorming workshops were organized with researchers of all stages (R1 up to R4) to get ideas of new actions that would meet researchers 'needs. They asked for more networking opportunities. It could be job fairs, gatherings, afterworks... that enable researchers from different domains to meet one another.	Continuously 1x/year	PAQ + SRH	PAQ + SRH + Instituts + écoles doctorales	R1 up to R4	TO REDO	Participants
<b>Trainings</b>									
2	1	Training on PhD Education Path for PhD Students	Brainstorming workshops were organized with researchers of all stages (R1 up to R4) to get ideas of new actions that would meet researchers 'needs. Also a psycho-social risks survey was conducted by the PhD students and it showed that PhD Students weren't really aware of all the different steps of their doctorate pathway. <b>PhD trainings for PhD students as well as Supervisors are also objectives from the new European Researcher Charter and are at the heart of the CoARA agreement. Two trainings will be organized per year, one in the beginning of the</b>	Min.2x/year	PAQ	PAQ	R1	COMPLETED	Participants and number of trainings organized

			<b>Academic year, another around Spring.</b>						
3	1	Training on PhD Education Path for PhD supervisors	Brainstorming workshops were organized with researchers of all stages (R1 up to R4) to get ideas of new actions that would meet researchers 'needs. Also a psycho-social risks survey was conducted by the PhD students and it showed that PhD Students weren't really aware of all the different steps of their doctorate pathway. <b>PhD trainings for PhD students as well as Supervisors are also objectives from the new European Researcher Charter and are at the heart of the CoARA agreement. Two trainings will be organized per year, one in the beginning of the Academic year, another around Spring.</b>	Min.2x/year	PAQ	PAQ	R4	COMPLETED	Participants and number of trainings organized
4	1	Training on time management	<b>Trainings are also objectives from the new European Researcher Charter and are at the heart of the CoARA agreement, they allow to develop soft skills and ease the career interoperability of researchers. Our objective is to help researchers to better manage time in order to be more successful in their research and teaching missions.</b>	Min.1/year	SRH	SRH	R1 up to R4	IN PROGRESS	Participants and number of trainings organized



5	1	Training on project management	<b>Trainings are also objectives from the new European Research Charter and are at the heart of the CoARA agreement, they allow to develop soft skills and ease the career interoperability of researchers. This training is really important, in particular for R1 to help them learn to manage their research and different projects, with different timelines and objectives at the same time.</b>	Min.1/year	SRH	SRH	R1, but open to other levels as well	IN PROGRESS	Participants and number of trainings organized
6	2	Gather all training opportunities on a common unique website	The Human Resources Service has created a new website page gathering all available trainings on one single place.	<b>2024</b>	PAQ + ADRE + Adcom	CoARA + Adcom	R1 up to R4, but also for administrative and technical staff	TO DO	Existence of the online catalogue
7	1	Organize leadership and team management trainings for supervisors	One of the priorities of the new Vice-Rector to Academic Affairs is to better equip the supervisors to manage teams in order to improve the success rates among PhD students, but also all the laboratories and departments.	Min 1x/year	SRH	SRH	R4	TO DO	Participants
8	3	Provide master students and BAC students with information on career in research.	The Unamur wishes to increase its number of PhD students and one way to achieve this goal is by making the master students and bac students aware of the possibilities of research careers at UNamur. (We target also bac students, as we don't offer master programs in all the study domains, as Law, and they are forced to study elsewhere)	Min 1x/year	PAQ + ADRE	PAQ + ADRE	R1	TO DO	Number of Students reached

9	2	Increase the number of career counselling sessions.	Currently, there is one career counsellor for all the students and employees. Therefore, the career counselling sessions are organized on voluntary basis. The UNamur would like to broaden the offer and make it more regular.	Continuously	SRH	SRH	R1, but open to other levels as well	TO DO	Nbr of meetings organized
10	1	Propose a list of highly recommended trainings for newly recruited researchers	The possibility that a package of recommended trainings is offered to researchers of all stages is being developed before beginning their research, like training in time management, project management, science popularization, ...	2027	ADRE + SRH	SRH + DPO + Serp + Sertic + CDS + PAQ	R1 up to R4	TO DO	List of proposed trainings by public
11	1	Trainings for teaching assistants: « Possible Mission : a training package to develop my teaching and educative skills". 7 trainings on different subjects.	This program already exists, but the Unamur invites all assistant to follow it in order to better equip teaching assistants with tools for their teaching missions.	Min 1x/year	PUNCH	PUNCH	R1	IN PROGRESS	Participants and number of trainings organized
12	2	Trainings on basic recurrent HR questions (salaries, taxes, vacation, rights and obligations...)	The Human Resources services is launching a series of short trainings on recurrent HR questions (salaries, taxes, rights, vacancies, ...) that are relevant to researchers.	Min 1x/year	SRH	SRH	R1, but open to other levels as well	IN PROGRESS	Participants and number of trainings organized
<b>Recruitment</b>									

13	3	Conduct a reflexion on recruitment criteria to be the most inclusive possible (H/F/X, races, disabled, ie, specific needs...) and implement them if possible.	Conduct a reflexion on recruitment criteria to be the most inclusive possible (H/F/X, races, disabled, ie, specific needs...) and implement them if possible in order to insure that anyone qualified and whatever their disabilities, gender, nationality, sexual orientation will feel welcomed to apply to a job to the UNamur. Policies have been developed on that matter accordingly.	2027	SRH + VRR	SRH	R1 up to R4	TO DO	New criteria
14	2	Communicate and provide trainings on recruitment procedures	Some supervisors and academics (R4) sometimes have to recruit someone and they are not always familiar with the recruitment procedures and the RGPD rules. That's why the Unamur wishes to better equip the researchers with training on recruitment rules and procedures.	2027	SRH	SRH	R4	TO DO	Number of participants and proof of existing procedures
15	3	Have a recruitment platform	Develop a tool to follow all the recruitment steps.	2027	SRH + SERTIC	SRH + Sertic	All staff	IN PROGRESS	Done/Not done
<b>Improved support PhD Students and researchers</b>									

17	1	Improvement of welcoming procedures for international researchers	A long-term project aims at welcoming any international researcher equally, whatever their funding, origin, domain, whether they are paid by the Unamur or by another organism ... At the end, procedures, toolkits, brochures should be delivered to better equip the welcoming services, as well as the international publics coming to the UNamur.	2027	VRR + VRET + VRR	PAQ	R1 up to R4	IN PROGRESS	New procedures New Brochures Toolkits
18	2	Ease access to information by creating a global organigram	A lot of services are provided within the Unamur, but it is not always clear where to find the information or whom to contact. The Unamur wishes to clarify it once and for all.	2025	PAQ	PAQ	R1 up to R4, but also for administrative and technical staff	TO DO	Proof of the organigram
19	2	Improve communication on the roles of trustworthy people and mediators and on how to contact them.	Improve communication on the roles of trustworthy people and mediators and on how to contact them. Make sure to spread the information on who they are, what they do and how to contact them, in order to create a safer place to work where you can find a person to talk to and be listened to.	2024	VRET	AdCoM	R1 up to R4, but also for administrative and technical staff	COMPLETED	Proof of communications
<b>Working conditions</b>									
20	3	Analysis of the link between the thesis drop-out rates and excessively long theses and the role of supervisors.		2027	SERP + PAQ + VRR	SERP + PAQ + VRR	R1 and R4	TO DO	Analysis performed and statistics about success rates
<b>Entertainment</b>									

21	3	Organize informative events for international researchers	The Unamur wishes to organize more events for researchers to make their stay in the university the most interesting and the most unforgettable possible.	Min. 2/year	PAQ + SRH	PAQ + SRH	R1 up to R4	IN PROGRESS	Number of participants and number of events organized
22	3	Organize entertainment events for (international) researchers	The Unamur wishes to organize more events for researchers to make their stay in the university the most interesting and the most unforgettable possible.	Min. 2/year	SRH + Vécu + SRI	SRH + Vécu + SRI	R1 up to R4	COMPLETED, BUT PROOF NEEDED	Number of participants and number of events organized

## 7. OTM-R Checklist

A specific self-assessment checklist is provided for Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R). Please report on the status of achievement, also detail on the indicators and the form of measurement used.

<b>OTM-R checklist for organisations</b>					
	<b>Open</b>	<b>Trans- parent</b>	<b>Merit- based</b>	<b>Answer: ++ Yes, completely +/-Yes, substantially -/+ Yes, partially -- No</b>	<b>*Suggested indicators (or form of measurement)</b>
<b>OTM-R system</b>					
1. Have we published a version of our OTM-R policy online (in the national language and in English)?	x	x	x	++	Yes, see : <a href="https://www.unamur.be/en/research/euraxess/otm-r">https://www.unamur.be/en/research/euraxess/otm-r</a>
2. Do we have an internal guide setting out clear OTM-R procedures and practices for all types of positions?	x	x	x	++	There isn't one single guideline, but different clear OTM-R procedures exist for the following profiles: administrative and technical staff, teaching assistants, researchers and academics. See the links to the procedures hereunder:  Researchers: <a href="https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-04/procedure_recrutement_chercheurs_cpo-vfinale29mars2021.pdf">https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-04/procedure_recrutement_chercheurs_cpo-vfinale29mars2021.pdf</a>  Teaching assistants : <a href="https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-04/procedure_recrutement_assistants-vfinale-19mars2021.pdf">https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-04/procedure_recrutement_assistants-vfinale-19mars2021.pdf</a>  Academics : <a href="https://unamur.be/en/search/profile/senior/career">https://unamur.be/en/search/profile/senior/career</a> The recruitment policy is available on our website here : <a href="https://unamur.be/fr/universite/travailler">https://unamur.be/fr/universite/travailler</a>

					Moreover, the five university of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation have developed an e-book and an e-learning on the OTM-eR consisting in giving guidelines and trainings on how to recruit, select, give feedback to researchers. The tools will be available in September 2024.
3. Is everyone involved in the process sufficiently trained in the area of OTM-R?	x	x	x	-/+	The employees of the HR service are perfectly trained, but the academics or other R4 who have to recruit sometimes are not yet sufficiently trained. That is something the UNamur intends to improve and has turned it into an action of its news action plan of 2024-2027. Moreover, the five university of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation have developed an e-book and an e-learning on the OTM-eR consisting in giving guidelines and trainings on how to recruit, select, give feedback to researchers. The tools will be available in September 2024. These books and guidelines will contribute to training people involved in recruitment process outside the HR service.
4. Do we make (sufficient) use of e-recruitment tools?	x	x		--	The UNamur does not have an e-recruitment platform yet. It was an action of the previous action plan, but, because of a change of priorities and the breakdown of the financial tool, other IT tools have had to be developed first. Nonetheless, the OTM-eR e-book and e-learning will constitute essential e-resources.
5. Do we have a quality control system for OTM-R in place?	x	x	x	-/+	The UNamur does have a four-eyes system to check that the recruitment report is fair and impartial and that candidate competences match the criteria of selection mentioned in the job offer.
6. Does our current OTM-R policy encourage external candidates to apply?	x	x	x	++	The UNamur publishes its job offers on its internal website, but also on the Euraxess platform, on LinkedIn, and Academic Positions, Career Center by Jobteaser to reach researchers from all over the world and publish the offers in 661

					<p>renowned schools and universities of Europe. Here are the number of international members of staff vis-à-vis national members</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Status</th> <th>BE</th> <th>UE</th> <th>HUE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Academics</td> <td>293</td> <td>34</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Technical and administrative staff</td> <td>479</td> <td>10</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Scientists</td> <td>258</td> <td>62</td> <td>62</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>1030</td> <td>106</td> <td>68</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Grade</th> <th>BE</th> <th>UE</th> <th>HUE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>PhD</td> <td>45</td> <td>22</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Post-PhD</td> <td>3</td> <td>25</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Status	BE	UE	HUE	Academics	293	34	5	Technical and administrative staff	479	10	1	Scientists	258	62	62	Total	1030	106	68	Grade	BE	UE	HUE	PhD	45	22	15	Post-PhD	3	25	8
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7. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract researchers from abroad?	x	x	x	+/-	<p>The UNamur publishes its job offers on its internal website, but also on the Euraxess platform, on LinkedIN, and Academic Positions, Career Center by Jobteaser to reach researchers from all over the world and publish the offers in 661 renowned schools and universities of Europe. Here are the number of international members of staff vis-à-vis national</p>																																



					<p>members. See the number of international members of staff vis-à-vis national members in the two tables above.</p> <p>Moreover, in job offers, one sentence especially targets international researchers, that says : <i>“All practical information needed by foreign candidates can be obtained from the website of the European researchers’ mobility portal (EURAXESS): <a href="https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/">https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/</a>.”</i> which is meant to attract international researchers and make them feel welcomed.</p>
8. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract underrepresented groups?	x	x	x	++	<p>The UNamur publishes its job offers on its internal website, but also on the Euraxess platform, on LinkedIN, and Academic Positions, Career Center by Jobteaser to reach researchers from all over the world and publish the offers in 661 renowned schools and universities of Europe. The UNamur proposes fellowships for researchers/PhD Students coming from the South and Asia, see (<a href="https://unamur.be/fr/soutenir/sud">https://unamur.be/fr/soutenir/sud</a>) and proposes loans for PhD and Students with lower incomes. In order to attract women, the UNamur has reviewed its recruitment criteria to be more inclusive and for example, considers any experience in another university as an experience abroad, which results in women being able to reconcile their research and their private life. The UNamur proposes a day care to its employees and activities for children during holiday periods. For more information, see UNamur’s gender equality plan : <a href="https://unamur.be/fr/institution/genre/ressources">https://unamur.be/fr/institution/genre/ressources</a> Also, the UNamur enhances its attractivity for Women in STEAM notably by organizing each year a conference on the subject. It has also produced podcasts on Women working in Sciences. See : <a href="https://wgis.unamur.be/">https://wgis.unamur.be/</a></p>
9. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to provide attractive working conditions for researchers?	x	x	x	++	<p>The working conditions are attractive, transparent and open. They are available on the website : <a href="https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-04/package-salarial-baremes.pdf">https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-04/package-salarial-baremes.pdf</a></p>

					What is more : the UNamur proposes housing solutions for international researchers coming to Namur.
10. Do we have means to monitor whether the most suitable researchers apply?				--	UNamur does have a selection committee that guarantees the chosen candidate is the most suitable candidate based on the recruitment criteria mentioned on the job offer. However, UNamur has no means to control if, in the world, there is another more suitable candidate who hasn't applied to the job. Widely publicizing offers is one way of ensuring that most potential researchers are aware of them and apply if they are interested.
<b>Advertising and application phase</b>					
11. Do we have clear guidelines or templates (e.g., EURAXESS) for advertising positions?	x	x		++	Yes, they are available on the internal website and a unique common template has been developed for job applications on the internal website of the UNamur as well as on the one of Euraxess.
12. Do we include in the job advertisement references/links to all the elements foreseen in the relevant section of the toolkit?	x	x			In all job offers, the following information is given: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The working conditions are clearly explained</li> <li>- The salary and advantages are listed</li> <li>- And a sentence clearly states that the UNamur follows the European Charter principles and the OTM-R guidelines</li> </ul>
13. Do we make full use of EURAXESS to ensure our research vacancies reach a wider audience?	x	x		+/-	The UNamur publishes its job offers on its internal website, but also on the Euraxess platform, on LinkedIn, and Academic Positions, Career Center by Jobteaser to reach researchers from all over the world and publish the offers in 661 renowned schools and universities of Europe.
14. Do we make use of other job advertising tools?	x	x		+/-	The UNamur publishes its job offers on its internal website, but also on the Euraxess platform, on LinkedIn, and Academic Positions, Career Center by Jobteaser to reach researchers from all over the world and publish the offers in 661 renowned schools and universities of Europe.
15. Do we keep the administrative burden to a minimum for the candidate?	x			+/-	Yes, candidates should fill in a form, send a CV and a cover letter.
<b>Selection and evaluation phase</b>					

16. Do we have clear rules governing the appointment of selection committees?		x	x	++	Yes, in each recruitment procedures for all positions the appointment of selection committee is clearly detailed. Researchers: <a href="https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-04/procedure_recrutement_chercheurs_cpo-vfinale29mars2021.pdf">https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-04/procedure_recrutement_chercheurs_cpo-vfinale29mars2021.pdf</a> Teaching assistants : <a href="https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-04/procedure_recrutement_assistants-vfinale-19mars2021.pdf">https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-04/procedure_recrutement_assistants-vfinale-19mars2021.pdf</a>  Academics : <a href="https://unamur.be/en/search/profile/senior/career">https://unamur.be/en/search/profile/senior/career</a>
17. Do we have clear rules concerning the composition of selection committees?		x	x	++	Yes, in each recruitment procedures for all positions the appointment of selection committee is clearly detailed. Researchers: <a href="https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-04/procedure_recrutement_chercheurs_cpo-vfinale29mars2021.pdf">https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-04/procedure_recrutement_chercheurs_cpo-vfinale29mars2021.pdf</a> Teaching assistants : <a href="https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-04/procedure_recrutement_assistants-vfinale-19mars2021.pdf">https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-04/procedure_recrutement_assistants-vfinale-19mars2021.pdf</a>  Academics : <a href="https://unamur.be/en/search/profile/senior/career">https://unamur.be/en/search/profile/senior/career</a>
18. Are the committees sufficiently gender-balanced?		x	x	++	Yes, and it is stated in the UNamur Gender report, see pages 45 and following : <a href="https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-01/rapport_genre_unamur_2020-2021.pdf">https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-01/rapport_genre_unamur_2020-2021.pdf</a>
19. Do we have clear guidelines for selection committees which help to judge 'merit' in a way that leads to the best candidate being selected?			x	++	Yes, indeed, it is clearly explained in the recruitment procedures for each profile. <a href="https://unamur.be/en/search/profile/senior/career">https://unamur.be/en/search/profile/senior/career</a>
<b>Appointment phase</b>					
20. Do we inform all applicants at the end of the selection process?		x		-/+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Administrative and Technical staff : yes</li> <li>- Teaching assistants : yes</li> <li>- Academics : yes</li> </ul>

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Researchers : not systematically. It depends on the number of applicants. If they weren't too many, a feedback is given, but if there was a lot of applicants, it isn't possible.</li> </ul>
21. Do we provide adequate feedback to interviewees?		x		+/-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Administrative and Technical staff : yes</li> <li>- Teaching assistants : yes</li> <li>- Academics : yes</li> <li>- Researchers : Yes, if a candidate asks for a feedback, the person in charge shall give him/her one.</li> </ul>
22. Do we have an appropriate complaints mechanism in place?		x		+/-	Yes, a system exists which consists in contacting the president of the selection committee. Over the last 10 years, 4 complaints were made.
<b>Overall assessment</b>					
23. Do we have a system in place to assess whether OTM-R delivers on its objectives?					We don't have a proper tool, but numbers show that the UNamur welcomes international researchers which implies that OTM-R principles are well applied. Also, a gender committee checks the gender balance among employees is respected and measures are put in place to welcome any researcher based on his/her merits, regardless of her/his gender, disability, sexual orientation, origin... See the gender report : <a href="https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-01/rapport_genre_unamur_2020-2021.pdf">https://unamur.be/sites/default/files/2024-01/rapport_genre_unamur_2020-2021.pdf</a> .

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## 8. Annexe I



**Interuniversity Project on the CoARA agreement:  
developing a common platform on Research  
Assessment, and Ethics and Integrity trainings for and  
by the five universities of the Wallonia-Brussels  
Federation**

## 1. Introduction

Since 2023, the University of Namur, along with the four French-speaking Belgian universities, has signed the Agreement on Research Assessment (CoARA) (see the full text in annex).

To celebrate this great breakthrough, the five universities have come together to submit a proposal for an interuniversity project on the assessment of Research to the Belgian government. This project has been approved and the five universities will receive subsidies to hire a person to conduct a work package dealing with one of the 10 principles stated in the CoARA Agreement. The purpose is to make the agreement known by the researcher's community, share good practices in ethics and integrity, share trainings, and to develop researchers' competences.

The principles of the CoARA agreement are the following :

- 1. Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research;*
- 2. Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators;*
- 3. Abandon inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication-based metrics, in particular inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index;*
- 4. Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment;*
- 5. Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to;*
- 6. Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools and processes;*
- 7. Raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use;*
- 8. Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition;*
- 9. Communicate progress made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments;*
- 10. Evaluate practices, criteria and tools based on solid evidence and the state-of-the-art in research on research, and make data openly available for evidence gathering and research; (Source : <https://coara.eu/agreement/the-commitments/>).*

The project is also based on the new version of the Researcher's Charter, published in December 2023, which is constituted of 4 pillars:

1. Ethics, Integrity, Gender and Open Science
2. Researchers Assessment, Recruitment and Progression
3. Working Conditions and Practices
4. Research Careers and Talent Development

Concretely, this project consists in five different work packages, one led by each university and each on a different subject, going from ethics, integrity, Open Access, trainings on needed soft-skills, trainings on leadership and management for supervisors and leaders, tips on how to develop one's career. The UNamur will oversee the two last aspects, by gathering all available trainings from the 5 universities in a shared catalogue, organizing trainings for supervisors and finally hosting a conference with famous guests to promote the skills of PhDs on the job market and explain why training the supervisors is the key of the PhD's success.

## 2. Presentation of the 5 work packages

Each university will be leading one project on a particular topic and will be helped by the others and will participate in the other projects as well.

As the work packages are connected, there will be a strong collaboration and consultation between the different universities.

Development of an interuniversity platform of good practices for the Research Assessment based on the CoARA agreement		
Work Package	Leading university	Spokesperson
1 – Defining the new ways and means of Research assessment	Université catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain)	Anouk Distelmans <a href="mailto:anouk.Distelmans@uclouvain.be">anouk.Distelmans@uclouvain.be</a>  Xavier Lepot <a href="mailto:Xavier.lepot@uclouvain.be">Xavier.lepot@uclouvain.be</a>
2- Ethics, integrity, and scientific publications openness	Université de Liège (ULiège)	Judith Biernaux <a href="mailto:jbiernaux@uliege.be">jbiernaux@uliege.be</a>  Paul Thirion <a href="mailto:paul.thirion@uliege.be">paul.thirion@uliege.be</a>
3 – Ethics committees organisation: practical common rules around research projects	Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB)	Daniele Carati <a href="mailto:daniele.carati@ulb.be">daniele.carati@ulb.be</a>  Joffrey Baneton <a href="mailto:joffrey.baneton@ulb.be">joffrey.baneton@ulb.be</a>
4 – Dealing with integrity dilemma: <i>authorship</i> concept, debate around the problematic: <i>publish or perish</i>	Université de Mons (UMons)	Céline Thillou <a href="mailto:celine.thillou@umons.ac.be">celine.thillou@umons.ac.be</a>  Cynthia Marchal <a href="mailto:Cynthia.marchal@umons.ac.be">Cynthia.marchal@umons.ac.be</a>
5 – Strengthening the support for researchers and developing talents	Université de Namur (UNamur)	Christine Culot <a href="mailto:christine.culot@unamur.be">christine.culot@unamur.be</a>  Clémentine Jacobs & Jean Dubois <a href="mailto:euraxess@unamur.be">euraxess@unamur.be</a>

### 3. Deliverables

Each work package will produce trainings, general rules and good practices, tips and tricks that will be all gathered on a common unique platform attached to the CRef's platform. The purpose is to create a general common database on best practices regarding the Research assessment available to the five universities of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and to ensure its sustainability as well as its update.

### 4. Methodology, budget, planning

The government of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation has granted a budget to each university in order to hire a full-time PhD graduated for 15 months to lead the work package and to collect the necessary means for the work package realisation.



The people recruited will closely work together, as all work packages are connected. They will make part of a working group that will meet twice every month. Besides that, the newly recruited will be supported by the spokespersons of their university.

A timeline have been defined for the good realisation of this ambitious project :

A) Table explaining the time allocation of the full-time recruit during 15 months

	In month by person (about 8.400 €/mois)	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	WP5	
<b>Recruit</b>	<b>Total (in months)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>630 000 €</b>
<b>Recruit 1</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>126 000 €</b>
<b>UCLouvain</b>	WP1 development	9	0	0	0	0	
	Collaboration with other WP	0	1	1	1	1	
	Interaction with WP5	0	0	0	0	2	
<b>Recruit 2</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>126 000 €</b>
<b>ULiège</b>	WP2 development	0	11	0	0	0	
	Collaboration with other WP	1	0	1	1	1	
<b>Recruit 3</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>126 000 €</b>
<b>ULB</b>	WP3 development	0	0	9	0	0	
	Collaboration with other WP	1	1	0	1	1	
	Collaborations on trainings with WP4	0	0	0	2	0	
<b>Recruit 4</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>126 000 €</b>
<b>UMons</b>	WP4 development	0	0	0	10	0	
	Collaboration with other WP	1	1	1	0	1	
	Work on Rules and good practices with WP3	0	0	1	0	0	
<b>Recruit 5</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>126 000 €</b>
<b>UNamur</b>	WP5 development	0	0	0	0	9	
	Collaboration with other WP	1	1	1	1	0	
	Particular collaboration with WP1	2	0	0	0	0	

B) Task management planning per WP

Axis\month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
WP1 – Analysing and making an inventory of the new research assessment indicators, tools and processes	■	■	■	■											
WP1 – Proposing indicators, tools and process for assessing research (other than scientific publications)					■	■	■	■	■	■					
WP1 – Proposing ways for the WBF universities to get familiar with the new procedures											■	■	■	■	■
WP2 OA – Defining a scientific domain and the scope of the journal	■	■	■												
WP2 OA – building the editorial board, defining the editorial management methods				■	■	■	■								
WP2 Launching a broad call to submit, recruit and review								■	■	■					
WP2 OA – Editing and publishing the chosen articles										■	■	■	■		
WP2 - OA – Study how this model could be expended to other journals and developing a sustainable business model														■	■
WP2 FD – Developing a decision-making policy	■	■	■	■	■	■									
WP2 FD – Defining the web RDM portal structure	■	■	■	■											
WP2 FD – Feeding the FWB RDM					■	■	■								
WP2 FD – Testing phase by the Data Ambassadors and consequently improving the system								■	■	■	■				
WP2 FD – Publishing the test results on the FWB RDM portal, utilisation pour reconnaissance du rôle de Data Amb												■	■	■	
WP2 FD – Developing the sustainable business model (if possible on the CReF platform)													■	■	■

WP3 – General Analysis	■	■	■															
WP3 – Defining committee members				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
WP3 – Trainings and support				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
WP4 – Training of ambassadors/lecturers in each institution	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
WP4 – Organizing debate sessions led by the ambassadors				■	■	■	■	■	■									
WP4 - Trainings (based on the tool “Mind The Gap/VLIR”)							■	■	■	■								
WP4 – Harmonizing the different scientific integrity councils in every university																■	■	■
WP5 – Making an inventory of the available trainings for researchers in all FWB universities	■	■	■															
WP5 – Developing a unique and common website (hopefully based on the CRef Platform)				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
WP5 – Getting the tool « ResearchComp » known and organizing knowledge assessment sessions				■	■	■	■	■	■									
WP5 – Providing leadership and management trainings to R3-R4 researchers										■	■	■	■					
WP5 – Organizing a closing event to show the WP inputs and deliverables provided and to promote researchers’ competencies on the labour market											■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

## 9. Annexe II

[The Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment](#)<sup>1</sup> sets a shared direction for changes in assessment practices for research, researchers and research performing organisations, with the overarching goal to maximise the quality and impact of research. The Agreement includes the principles, commitments and timeframe for reforms and lays out the principles for a Coalition of organisations willing to work together in implementing the changes.

Signatories commit to a common vision, which is that the assessment of research, researchers and research organisations recognises the diverse outputs, practices and activities that maximise the quality and impact of research. This requires basing assessment primarily on qualitative judgement, for which peer-review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators.

The reform movement underpinned by the Agreement and the Coalition aims to be an inclusive and collaborative space to advance together towards a higher quality, more impactful and more efficient and inclusive research system. It offers a platform for piloting and experimentation, developing new assessment criteria, methods and tools, and for joint, critical reflection, exchange of good practices and mutual learning, while fully respecting the autonomy of organisations.

Supported by the work of the Coalition, organisations will decide on the steps to take to implement the commitments and the pace in their reform journey, which can vary depending on the context (for example, national, disciplinary or assessment of individual researchers, research units and research organisations or research projects) and the strategic goals and mission of each organisation.

Organisations involved in research assessment from all over the world are encouraged to [sign the Agreement](#) and to subsequently join the Global Coalition.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://coara.eu/agreement/the-agreement-full-text/>