

Annexe 1: Internal Evaluation of the HRS4R label (2019-2024)

Point 1 – Organisational information:

University profile

Since 2021, the University of Clermont Auvergne has been structured into 6 institutes, including the Clermont Auvergne INP (national polytechnic institute). The UCA is the true leader of the various higher education and research establishments in the Auvergne region. This organization enables it to strengthen innovation in education, research and the integration of its students into the professional world. With the I-SITE label, it is strengthening its position as a key player in regional development (social, economic and cultural), and enhancing the site's international reputation by putting in place a strategy based on areas of excellence and its theme of 'Designing sustainable living and production models'.

Work has begun to stabilise and harmonise HR practices across the EPE. In a letter dated 5 November 2021, Clermont Auvergne INP made a commitment to the European Commission to integrate the experimental institution's HRS4R strategy. The process, action plan and provisions were validated by the Clermont Auvergne INP bodies prior to the decisions of the EPE UCA Board of Directors.

Point 2 – Strengths and Weaknesses of Current Practice:

1- Professional aspects and ethics:

Highlights

- The commission's remit has been extended, and in 2021 it will become the Conseil Ethique et Déontologie de l'UCA, (Ethics and Professional Conduct Council of UCA) including the Clermont Auvergne INP component institution. Chaired by the First Vice-President, this council implements policy in the areas of: i) research ethics (establishment of an IRB research ethics committee), ii) scientific integrity (training and handling of cases of breaches of scientific integrity), and iii) professional ethics (establishment of a professional ethics commission).
- Mandatory training in scientific integrity (including open science) for doctoral students and HDR (an accreditation to supervise PhD research) candidates.
- Adoption by the UCA CAC (deliberation of November 3, 2020) of a set of recommendations to encourage and promote open science among researchers. Recommendations to be included in internal promotion evaluation criteria.
- Clearer communication on the UCA website in 2024, presenting the institution's activities and objectives in terms of ethics, scientific integrity and professional conduct.
- A booklet of summarized documents outlines recruitment procedures, career development and remuneration for all UCA staff.
- Welcome for new recruits: an induction day is organized to introduce newly recruited researchers and lecturers to the institution and its workings. Since 2023, non-French-speaking doctoral students have attended a day-long presentation of the institution in English, organized by the Collège des Ecoles Doctorales, (College of Doctoral Schools), and may also be specifically welcomed by the Euraxess Center.

- Raising awareness of commercial exploitation of research results : from 2021, the Collège des Ecoles Doctorales has proposed a module on technology transfer. A dedicated handbook was produced in 2021 and updated in 2024, presenting the research commercialization ecosystem, including the missions of the UCA subsidiary and technology transfer office Clermont Auvergne Innovation (CAI). Dedicated training courses have been organized in the laboratories to provide information regarding technology transfer.
- The UCA website presents all the services provided by the Department of Research and Doctoral Studies (DRED) to support researchers.

Prospects for improvement

- Continuation of strategies linked to the welcome of new recruits, with the finalization by June 2024 of booklets, in French and English, recalling the terms and conditions of recruitment, career development and remuneration for all UCA staff. The Rights and Obligations of Research Professors will also be available in French and English.
- A reception desk will be set up, with the support of Euraxess, to provide a personalized welcome for foreigners, including administrative procedures that are often complex and time-consuming for foreigners and/or non-French speakers. This project received multi-year ministerial funding in 2023 and will be deployed from 2024.

Comments :

In addition to the prospects for improvement arising naturally from the strategies targeted in the initial plan, new initiatives are proposed, namely :

- In the area of professional ethics: implementing a procedure for the accumulation of activities.
- Commercialization of research results : setting up joint communication initiatives between the university, the ONR (national research organizations: CNRS, INSERM) and UCA's subsidiary Clermont Auvergne Innovation (CAI).
- Research evaluation: reconsidering research evaluation criteria in the light of open science and in line with the CoARA commitment. A "Rethinking research evaluation" working group has been in place since January 2024. The aim is to produce guides to good practice and recommendations for evaluators and applicants by the end of 2026.
- Continuing to raise awareness of commercial exploitation of research results :
 - * Handbook valorization: a version for "Human and Social Sciences" laboratories will be published (DRED, CAI) in 2025. It is also planned to translate the handbooks into English to improve their accessibility (2025).
 - * It is also planned to renew training for laboratory managers on specific themes, in partnership with another department, to maintain the link and provide information from the end of 2024.

2- Recruitment

Highlights

The company has reinforced its strengths in recruitment and selection:

DRH (Direction des Ressources Humaines) documents for recruitment and presentation of the establishment have been created and translated into English. They will be available in June 2024:

- o DELIBERATION CA (Conseil d'Administration) 2020-03-06-13 Missions, rights and duties of university lecturers
- o DELIBERATION CA (Conseil d'Administration) 2020-03-06-13 Missions, rights and duties of university lecturers
- o DELIBERATION CA 2021-06-29-21 remote working charter + Appendix
- o DELIBERATION CA 2022-12-16-15 LDG grade promotion EC
- o DELIBERATION CA 2023-05-05-08 Contract staff charter
- o DELIBERATION CA 2023-06-30-10 LDG mobility BIATSS (administrative and technical staff)
- o DELIBERATION-CA-2023-09-29-09_LDG-etablissement-RIPEC (pay scales for university lecturers)
- o 2 UCA guides for setting up and running selection committees
- o A guide to recruitment procedures for teaching staff
- o Recruitment procedures
- o A form for minutes (PV) and an evaluation grid have been deployed to recruiting departments, to ensure an objective study of applications and to be able to offer feedback to candidates on their applications.
- o A conflict of interest declaration has been created to ensure the impartiality of our recruitment committees. Each potential member must complete it beforehand. If necessary, the HR Department will decide whether or not a member can sit on the committee.

With regard to the recruitment of international researchers, the DRIF (Direction des Relations Internationales et de la Francophonie) (Department of International Relations and French-speaking countries), via the Euraxess Centre, has made its expertise available to the HR Department, particularly in terms of regulations. The aim of this strategy is to facilitate this type of recruitment. A working group between DRIF and DRH has been set up to simplify and harmonize recruitment procedures for this group, and to ensure that they are disseminated.

Prospects for improvement

The following prospects for improvement have been identified:

- The guide to recruitment procedures will soon include Library, Engineering, Administrative, Technical, Social and Healthcare staff (BIATSS).
- An English version of the UCA website's recruitment pages is currently being studied, to make them more accessible to foreign applicants and staff.
- Acculturation and appropriation of the tools (Minutes/Evaluation Grid) by users is currently underway. Recruiting departments are systematically reminded of their usefulness and the need to complete them with the utmost care.
- With regard to the recruitment of international researchers, the working group will be producing support materials (procedures) for this group.

Comments

In addition to the prospects for improvement arising naturally from the initiatives targeted in the initial plan, new strategies are proposed:

- The implementation of a recruitment tool - ATS (Applicant Tracking System) is envisaged. In order to make recruitment more fluid, consideration is being given to the purchase of recruitment software that will enable us to outsource part of the recruitment process to allow greater proximity with the candidates, and to ensure better responsiveness and more individualized follow-up of applications (S2 2024).
- New initiatives are planned to facilitate the integration of new employees, in particular by setting up a mentoring network with the help of qualified volunteer staff. Depending on the population, specific training

courses may be offered, including dedicated tutoring courses, as well as training on teachers' careers, remuneration and promotion opportunities (S2 2026).

- A recruitment guide specific to UCA post-docs/researchers will be produced. This document will be available at the Reception Desk, enabling it to be better distributed to the target audience (S1 2026).

3 – Working Conditions

Highlights

- UCA has structured administrative support for working conditions by recruiting 7 dedicated staff between 2021 and 2024.

- Parity and professional equality: Creation of the equality committee responsible for developing community awareness initiatives (2017), and structuring and legitimizing actions through the professional equality plan (2021 for 2021-23).

- Prevention, health, safety: i) Formalization of the policy for the prevention of occupational risks and psychosocial risks (RPS) in 2018; ii) strengthening of the RPS watch unit in 2023, which is now made up of 13 advisers, iii) Creation of a sexist and sexual violence (VSS)-discrimination helpline in 2021; iv) Production of an exhibition dedicated to women in science in 2024.

- Quality of life and working conditions (QVCT): i) Establishment and deployment of a QWL policy through working groups set up in 2023 and 2024 (work-life balance, recognition and meaning at work, QWL for managers), the annual QWL week begun in 2022, and strategies in favor of staff (voice workshops, prevention of musculoskeletal disorders, wellness activities) ; ii) Carrying out a biennial “Working conditions, health at work” survey in 2023, and a social climate barometer at UCA in 2024; iii) Extending remote working in 2024: from 6 months seniority, and with specific provisions for staff who are close caregivers; iv) Harmonization of the compensation policy for all its staff across the UCA and its internal schools in 2023; v) New charter for contract staff, available in English, in 2023.

- Disability policy: i) a multi-year agreement has been signed with a financing fund (FIPHFP) opening up credits of 1000 k€ for UCA (agreement 2020-2023, renewed 2024-2027) to amplify the deployment of a policy in favor of disabled staff (recruitment, reclassification and retraining, maintaining employment, building and digital accessibility, doctoral disability contract) ; ii) the new 2024-2027 disability master plan was adopted in 2024; iii) dedicated staff and budget (€40k per year from 2023 to 2025) have been targeted for disability awareness.

- Specific support: i) Access to an English-language version of the employment contract for all international staff since 2024; ii) Personalized follow-up of researchers by the EURAXESS center in liaison with local administrations; iii) Offering integration activities and French language courses to researchers, extended to their families since 2022; iv) Career support for researchers : workshops, webinars since 2022; v) Mentoring foreign researchers to supervise or co-supervise theses since 2020; vi) Opening up international recruitment through tenure-track and consolidation following the instigation of the Law on Research Programming (LPR), which includes the creation of Junior Professorships (CPJ).

Prospects for improvement

- Parity and professional equality: i) training is needed for the employees involved to increase their skills; ii) development of support for women's careers; iii) raising the awareness of selection committees of cognitive biases in recruitment.

- Prevention, health and safety: i) continuing to produce and publish once concise document on the assessment of professional risks; ii) reducing the time between a request to be heard and its implementation by the RPS Unit.
- QVCT: update the UCA social aid policy.
- Disability policy: complete the accessibility of building interiors, extending it to all types of disability.

Comments

In addition to the prospects for improvement arising naturally from the strategies targeted in the initial plan, new approaches are envisaged, namely:

- Parity and professional equality (2024-26): i) a training plan aimed at staff and offering a range of courses on the subjects of gender bias and diversity frescoes will be developed; ii) mentoring schemes will be set up to support women's careers; iii) the professional equality action plan will be updated in 2024 to form a 2024-26 plan.
- Prevention, health and safety: i) acquisition of software to centralize and process health data at the SST (Health and Safety Unit) (2026).
- QVCT: i) optimization of social action services and extension to all in-house schools (H2 2024); ii) establishment of a partnership with the Association régionale pour l'amélioration des conditions de travail Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (Regional Association for the Improvement of Working Conditions) (2025); iii) definition of an action plan to deploy a facility-wide QVCT approach (2026).
- Disability: i) implementation of digital accessibility (funding currently being sought through calls for projects); ii) development of a policy to recruit apprentices with disabilities (2024-27); iii) commitment to the Neuro-divergent Friendly label (2024).
- Specific support : i) creation of a one-stop reception desk for international students (2025); ii) creation of a digital tool for researchers to help them identify the administrative procedures they need to carry out (H2 2024); iii) design of a bilingual video capsule to provide information that all doctoral students need to know when accessing their course (2025); iv) awareness-raising initiatives for PhD students to facilitate their professional integration, and continuation of the Job Forum for PhD students (2026).

4- Training and Development

Highlights

The university has reinforced several areas of training and career development:

- the integration day for new staff is open to all (tenured and contract teaching/research staff), and includes human resources information, risk prevention and digital risk awareness.
- Since 2023 the integration day is complemented by a short course for new lecturers, covering career development, training and tutoring.
- the construction of an individual training program for doctoral students was finalized in the 1st quarter of 2021. Individual support is helping to better understand the expectations of the public.
- the introduction of a sponsor for doctoral students was finalized at the start of the 2020 academic year.

- Since January 2020, new lecturers and HDR candidates have been accompanied by a mentor. HDR candidates are given mandatory training in doctoral supervision, in the same module as that covering research ethics, scientific integrity (including open science and the institution's associated commitments) and professional conduct.

- Since 2023 training courses in English for young international researchers on professional integration have been offered by the Euraxess center, and jointly financed with the Human Resources Department.

Prospects for improvement

However, there are a number of areas for improvement:

- Building the individual training pathway: raising awareness among master's students to help them make the transition to doctoral studies, relaunching a survey on doctoral training to help it evolve further and readapt the offering (2025-2026)

- Support for doctoral student sponsors to understand their role (2025-2026)

- Increasing the number of partner universities involved in joint supervision projects abroad (2025-2026)

- Training doctoral students in research careers: this French-English training program has yet to be implemented. A collaborative effort between the HR department, the DRED and the DRIF is underway.

- Deployment of VAE (validation des acquis de l'expérience) (accreditation of prior experiential learning) for doctoral students, to be able to offer a complete range of training courses for the doctoral studies (in 2024).

- A training/information session for laboratory managers on the promotion procedures for BIATSS staff in the laboratories is planned every two years, as well as an annual meeting of unit directors.

- A 1 to 2-hour training module for new MCFs (lecturers) needs to be strengthened, particularly with regard to the careers of university lecturer, in conjunction with the IPPA (Ingénierie Pédagogie Production Audiovisuelle) (teacher training and audiovisual unit), so as to integrate this training into the discharge curriculum for new lecturers by 2025.

Comments

In addition to the prospects for improvement arising naturally from the strategies targeted in the initial plan, new initiatives may be envisaged.

The HR department and DRIF are planning to add French as a foreign language courses for non-French-speaking staff to the staff training catalog, and thus systematically take charge of them (by 2026).

Finally, the company would like to be able to welcome new staff in English and offer them an integration kit in English, in conjunction with the welcome desk (planned for S2 2025).

Have some short and medium-term objectives changed?

Since the initial dossier drawn up in 2018 and the label obtained in 2019, new initiatives have been proposed, validated by the steering committee and then implemented.

These strategies, dictated by certain circumstances, responding to feedback on practical implementations or stemming from a new strategic choice, have focused on the following areas:

- a remote working policy, already underway but reinforced following the Covid19 pandemic. The remote working protocol, defined by a charter, had been adopted by deliberation of the Board of Directors on June 28, 2019, then updated by deliberation of the Board of Directors on December 13, 2019. This protocol was then extended and applied to the EPE by deliberation of the Board of Directors on June 29, 2021. Finally, following the national framework agreement concerning the implementation of remote working in the civil service, UCA's remote working protocol was the subject of a further update adopted by the Board of Directors on December 15, 2023.

- UCA's commitment to the European CoARA coalition has led it to set up a working group to define a roadmap and deliverables for reforming the evaluation of researchers and research by the end of 2026.

- Reinforcement and expansion of declarations of conflicts of interest (introduced in 2018) for members of selection committees in charge of all recruitment, with awareness of gender bias, to ensure transparency and fairness in the analysis of applications.

- Innovation, valorization and links with the socio-economic world strengthened on a site-wide scale: creation of the UCA valorization subsidiary (CAI), in articulation with the DRED, carrying out valorization missions on behalf of UCA and the NROs present on the site (INRAE, CNRS, INSERM).

The strategies carried out between 2019 and 2024 are all intended to be perpetuated and integrated into the work processes of the departments.

Has one of the circumstances in which your organisation operates changed, and as such, has there been an impact on HR ?

The most significant change was the introduction of a new institutional structure as of January 1, 2021. The UCA has become an experimental public establishment (EPE), with expanded powers and perimeters, made up of 6 institutes including an Institut National Polytechnique (INP), a component establishment with legal status. The INP had to embark on a process of harmonizing its HR practices with those of the EPE.

For this reason, the European Commission granted a postponement of the internal assessment, initially scheduled for March 2021, to June 2024, in order to include an updated action plan, extended to the INP, and specifying the process implemented to integrate the INP into the university's HRS4R strategy.

The health crisis linked to Covid 19 had a major impact on the HR department, which was at the heart of the implementation and management of remote working. This has become a priority area of HR policy and has led to the necessary adaptation of services. In addition, the implementation from March to mid-April 2020, of a new HR IT application, a priority of the university's governance, mobilized HR teams.

In order to ensure continuity of teaching services, the health crisis also meant that distance learning had to be introduced quickly, which had an impact on the HR strategy for university lecturers, particularly in terms of training.

The creation of the Clermont Auvergne Innovation development subsidiary in 2019 has led to a redistribution of development activities between the subsidiary and the Direction de la Recherche et de la Valorisation, which has evolved into the Direction de la Recherche et des Etudes Doctorales Department of Research and Doctoral Studies.

On November 10, 2021, as part of the ministerial strategy to promote “Science With and For Society” (SAPS), the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research awarded a label and resources to university sites committed to structuring this public policy.

This label has led to the evolution of the Pôle Promotion de la Recherche (Research Promotion Pole) (and its CCSTI) into a new Center of Excellence for Shared Science in Auvergne. After being designated as a pilot site for the Pôle Universitaire d'Innovation (University Innovation pole) (PUI) label in 2021, the UCA was selected as the winner of this label by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR) in 2023. This project aims to boost relations between the academic and socio-economic worlds.

Finally, the implementation of the I-Site CAP 20-25 label, provisional then definitively awarded in 2022, has influenced the establishment's HR policy. The establishment of research federations (“International Research Centers” in 2021) and training programs (in particular graduate tracks, courses of excellence at master's and doctoral levels) that reflect the identifying concept of “Designing sustainable living and production models”, as well as the deployment of cross-disciplinary projects, have helped to boost the establishment's international visibility and attractiveness.

Are there strategic decisions being made that could influence the action plan?

The university has embarked on a number of strategic initiatives which will have an impact on the action plan, but it is still difficult to measure their full impact:

- exiting from the “experimental public establishment EPE” experiment. The current establishment will become an integrated university in 2027.

- opening of a learning center at the start of the 2024 academic year, with the deployment of high-level equipment and services for researchers in particular, with implications for their teaching practices.

- award of the Pôle Universitaire d'Innovation (University Innovation Pole) (PUI) label by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR). This label marks the start of a process designed to reveal the full potential for invention and innovation of the Clermont-Ferrand area's research, training, technology transfer and start-up support players. Experimental since 2021, it will enable this strategy to be extended as part of the France 2030 national investment plan. In 2023, UCA was one of the finalists of this MESR (Ministry of Higher Education and Research) call for projects.

- integration of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture (National Architecture School) de Clermont Ferrand in January 2024.

- adoption in 2024 of an SD&RS (sustainable development and social responsibility) master plan, and application to the MESR for SD&RS certification for higher education. The master plan will provide the institution with a coherent action plan for social policy, bringing together the various schemes or plans (professional equality, disability, quality of life at work) and ecological policy.

- renewal of the gender equality plan for the period 2024-2026.

- the school's commitment to the national Neuro-divergent Friendly label (means of action for the inclusion of people with neurodevelopmental disorders at university) and to responding to the “inclusive university” call for tenders (projects facilitating access and career paths for students with disabilities), which will have an impact on HR practices.

Intermediary Evaluation of the Policy of Open Transparent Management Recruitment:

Open, transparent recruitment based on the proven skills of researchers is absolutely essential to guarantee excellence in research and the future of the university. This recruitment policy, built on the guiding principles of the European Charter for Researchers, is a major challenge for the University.

Since 2019, the HRS4R steering committee has met up to 5 times a year. It has been enriched by the participation of administrative staff from each department involved (DRH, DRED, DRIF...) to ensure the follow-up and implementation of the HRS4R strategy.

A self-assessment of recruitment processes, particularly for researchers and university lecturers, by this steering committee led to the introduction of an action plan for the continuous improvement of practices. Implementation of this action plan has been somewhat delayed due to the integration of the INP into the EPE UCA and its de facto participation in the steering committee.

Our various stages in the recruitment process are governed by a body of national texts and a set of texts and commitments from the university that are in line with the principles of openness, transparency and merit-based selection.

Numerous initiatives have been made to implement the OTM recruitment principles and guarantee equal opportunities for all candidates, as well as the quality and relevance of recruitment:

- clear drafting of recruitment procedures, keeping them up to date with the latest regulations, and posting them on the UCA website and intranet;
- OTM-R training and awareness-raising for members of recruitment committees/commissions/juries;
- declarations of conflict of interest;
- making available on the UCA website, in French and English, a range of texts relating to the recruitment and careers of staff (Guides to the operation and composition of selection committees, deliberations on the missions, rights and duties of university lecturers, Guide to the recruitment of teaching staff, etc.).
- communication on the UCA website of the European Researcher's Charter and the code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers.

The results of these strategies, relating to OTM recruitment and the updating of the OTM-R checklist, are very positive.

Overall, UCA is implementing the principles of OTM recruitment. The various phases of the recruitment process constitute control elements to ensure OTM mastery of recruitment.

1. Job profile definition phase
2. Advertising and application phase
3. Selection and recruitment phase
4. Appointment phase
5. Evaluation phase

Although the OTM-R policy has not yet been formalized in a single document, the availability on the UCA website, in French and English, of the deliberations, notes and guides relating to the recruitment and careers of staff promotes international openness and transparency in our recruitment.

The revised strategy for 2024-2026 will therefore include initiatives to improve UCA's OTM-R policy, notably with the introduction of ATS recruitment software and a handbook. UCA's OTM-R recruitment policy may be included in the latter.

Point 3 – Implementation of the HRS4R strategy:

How did you prepare for the internal exam?

Internal assessment is the result of a collective effort involving all the members of the steering committee: representatives, operational departments, and corporate governance.

Each representative drew up an assessment of their initiatives, notably in terms of timetable, monitoring of indicators and achievements.

These elements fed into the summary work carried out by the managers (general management, governance) of each of the 4 areas. The analysis of strengths and weaknesses has highlighted areas for improvement, to guide the revision of the strategy with new initiatives. These areas of improvement relate to certain shortcomings still observed in relation to the principles of the Charter and Code, and to improvements to be made in the implementation of the strategy.

The project coordinator acted as a link between the departments, collecting data and summarizing the work.

The work carried out to produce the internal assessment and the revised strategy was cross-functional and enabled the steering committee to validate the assessment and the new revised action plan.

The report and the revised strategy were then submitted to the current establishment's various bodies (Social Administration Committee, Training and University Life Council, Research Council, Board of Directors).

How have you involved your major participants in research in the implementation process?

The involvement of researchers was first reflected in the participation of their representatives on the steering committee. In addition to the researchers who are members in their capacity as vice-presidents of the establishment, seven researchers are members of the committee. Their distribution respected the level of experience defining their profile, from R1 to R4, and the different disciplinary fields of training and research of the establishment. As such, they were able to assess the progress of the action plan at various meetings, the modifications and adjustments made, and participate in the validation of the internal assessment and revised strategy.

After an initial presentation of the strategy, the progress of the action plan was reviewed from time to time at meetings of the Research Council.

Strategies linked to research activities have been deployed with the active participation of laboratories, in particular mandatory training for HDR candidates and doctoral students on scientific integrity and ethics. Open Science workshops have been organized in all research structures to familiarize the community with the idea of depositing scientific productions on the HAL open platform.

However, there is still room for improvement in terms of informing and communicating the HRS4R strategy to the research community. The same applies to the involvement of researchers in the implementation of the strategy, so that they are not only recipients but also players in the process. With this in mind, the Communications Department is planning a progress report on the label in the staff newsletter, as well as a

presentation of the HRS4R label at a meeting of the network of research unit communications correspondents before the end of 2024.

Do you have an implementation or steering committee that regularly checks on progress?

The establishment set up a steering committee after the initial application for labeling in 2018.

While its composition has changed little in terms of representation (governance, operational departments, researchers), some members have changed following the general elections within the establishment in 2021. With the change in governance, the committee's political coordination is now ensured by the First Vice-President, in charge of Steering and Resources. An administrative coordinator was also appointed the same year.

However, the committee has retained its prerogatives: monitoring the progress and timetable of the action plan, and strategic reorientation.

The committee meets at least twice a year, with greater frequency since September 2023, in view of the internal evaluation.

The steering committee's role is to validate the strategic axes, essentially at key moments in the labeling process: submission of the application, internal assessment and revised plan, label renewal phases.

Is there an organizational policy alignment with the HRS4R? For example, is the HRS4R recognized in the research and organization strategy and the overall HR policy?

Commitment to the HRS4R labeling process in 2018 was achieved by putting the principles of the Charter and Code in perspective with UCA's strategic orientations: 2017-2020 and 2021-2026 establishment projects.

The HR policy for researchers fitted well with the principles of the Charter and Code, but there was room for improvement.

As soon as the label was awarded in 2019, the HRS4R strategy was launched.

The strategies selected have been implemented and integrated into work processes by the departments heavily involved in these issues, notably human resources, but also research and international relations.

Mention of the strategy, in the form of certain target actions, is included in the company's 2019 and 2020 activity reports.

In addition, the forthcoming self-evaluation for the HCERES (Haut Conseil de l'Evaluation de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur, an independent administrative authority responsible for regularly evaluating research structures) will examine the HRS4R strategy in terms of results and outlook.

The establishment's aim is to anchor the HRS4R strategy firmly within its overall strategy, seeking to improve the procedures and services offered in line with the label.

How did your organization ensure that the proposed initiatives would be implemented?

The strategies selected and proposed were validated by the steering committee, on which the operational departments and divisions responsible for their implementation are represented. As a result, the involvement and commitment of the various HRS4R strategy representatives in carrying out the initiatives was unequivocal.

With the exception of a few strategies that were already underway, the establishment really began implementing the strategy as soon as the label was officially awarded in March 2019.

The administrative coordinator was able to communicate, as required, by e-mail, telephone or meeting with the departments concerned or their representatives, in order to monitor the progress of initiatives or establish communication between the departments involved in cross-functional strategies.

The steering committee was the main forum for monitoring progress and making any necessary adjustments in terms of timetable, modifying or extending an initiative, or proposing a new strategy.

Action implementation was monitored by means of feedback provided by the various coordinators at committee meetings. Implementation took various forms, depending on the nature of the initiative: production of documents, guides and booklets

How do you monitor progress (time frame)?

Although since 2021, the HRS4R strategy has been coordinated by a dedicated staff member, this function does not represent a full-time position, as the employee also has other cross-functional missions within the establishment and work within their own department to take on.

It is therefore mainly the various meetings of the steering committee that enable us to check that strategies are being carried out. At each meeting, a progress report is drawn up for each initiative, with the representatives concerned, in order to check on the timetable, compliance with the recommendations decided at the previous meeting, and to consider any necessary adjustments and the new timetable planned.

How are you going to measure the progress (indicators) in light of the next evaluation?

The steering committee will retain the same monitoring, control and evaluation prerogatives it has had since the label was awarded.

However, in order to make the committee's work more efficient, it appears necessary to make upstream improvements concerning the monitoring of strategies and their results. Subject to adjustments to be made after implementation, these should include :

- Setting up implementation monitoring sheets and indicators for each strategy to be carried out (in addition to the action plan table, which provides a general snapshot of the strategy).
- More regular meetings between the departments involved and the coordinator.
- Greater synergy between departments involved in cross-functional initiatives.

In addition, information for the university community needs to be stepped up, by regularly updating the HRS4R page on the university website, with monitoring and status of actions, which will enable progress to be displayed.

Lastly, an HRS4R communications plan drawn up by the university's communications department could be of considerable help in monitoring implementation, as well as in the run-up to the external evaluation and renewal of the label.

How do you plan to prepare for the external examination?

Prior to this, a detailed analysis of the European Commission's feedback on the self-assessment and the experts' recommendations will be carried out, in order to draw lessons and fine-tune the revised strategy.

Examination of these elements will be submitted to the steering committee in order to validate the adaptation of the revised strategy, in terms of implementation methodology and initiatives to be taken.

To prepare for the external review, the methodology already in place for the self-assessment will be continued: coordination of implementation between departments, monitoring of work progress and adherence to timetables, and analysis of reports and data by the committee.

Nevertheless, we need to think about ways of involving the research community more closely in the strategy, not so much as recipients but as players. Progress on this aspect would be a step forward in view of the external evaluation.

Similarly, it would appear necessary to intensify communication about the HRS4R strategy, by providing regular information on the progress of its implementation.

Additional comments on the proposed implementation process:

Pending the return of the renewal application (2027- 2029), the facility will continue to implement the strategies undertaken since obtaining the label in March 2019, as well as the revised strategy.

The internal assessment highlighted the progress made by the facility in recent years as part of its HRS4R strategy, but also the progress still to be made. UCA intends to implement its HRS4R strategy with a view to continuously improving its human resources procedures and aligning its strategy with the expectations of the Charter and Code.

To this end, the recommendations of the European Commission's experts will be taken into account. The aim remains to provide the most efficient working environment for researchers, combining the specific characteristics of the integrated university with harmonization with European practices in the research world.

The HCERES internal evaluation period (late 2024/early 2025), and the resulting development priorities, will also enable the HRS4R strategy to take its rightful place in the establishment's overall policy. In the coming years, we must maintain this momentum, which contributes to UCA's attractiveness.