INTRODUCTION

The European Commission has formulated, to its member states, a list of recommendations regarding rights and obligations for researchers and their employers, in order to promote mobility and strengthen best practices in re-search. These recommendations can be found in the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers. They mainly deal with the recruitment, the selection, the working conditions and the professional development of researchers as well as research integrity and ethics.

In 2013, the Université libre de Bruxelles developed, in collaboration with its researchers, a Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) along with an action plan (2013-2018) intended to improve the working conditions and the services for researchers in the following fields: missions of the University and governance, recruitment and selection of researchers, status of research staff and career development, working conditions and internationalisation @ home. The European Commission recognised the quality of this work by awarding the HR Excellence in Research logo to the University in July 2013.

To ensure continuous improvement, the University has developed a revised HRS4R action plan (2018-2021), in collaboration with its researchers. This plan includes, among others, actions in terms of recruitment and selection in research. These actions, as the ones implemented in the initial HRS4R action plan (2013-2018), correspond to the University policy in terms of open, transparent and merit-based recruitment. This policy is clarified in this document.

A. GENERALES CONSIDERATIONS

At the Université libre de Bruxelles, two main categories of researchers are directly recruited by the University. On the one hand, the researchers who belong to the scientific staff and who work exclusively in research, and, on the other hand, the researchers who belong to the academic staff and who work, not only in research, but also on the two other missions of the University: teaching and services to society.

The recruitment rules are homogeneous: any person in a same situation will be subject to the same rules.

The Université libre de Bruxelles recognizes that research units must be in a position to recruit researchers in the most efficient way. Consequently, the University strives for applying clear recruitment and selection rules. Never-the-less, derogations must be authorized in some cases.

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1 The assistants, members of the scientific staff, work at least part-time on their doctoral thesis, and devote the rest of their time to teaching and services to society.
B. OTM-R

1. Publication and advertisement of research positions:

Research units recruit internally as well as externally (e.g.: two « non-profilées »\(^2\) full-time academic position per year) to ensure academic excellence. This research performance is essential for the University, for its development, its reputation and its internationalization.

The vacancies are advertised in newspapers and electronic media by the Faculties or the research units. ULB spurs the publication of job offers on the University website as well as on the e-platform EURAXESS Jobs. Those job offers must include all the required information contained in the report of the European working group on OTM-R. Additional information are available on our webpage dedicated to job offers: https://www.ulb.ac.be/emploi/index.html

The timeframe between the publication of the job offer and the deadline for the application of the candidates must be realistic. The applicants are informed in a clear and transparent way about the recruitment process, its duration and the selection criteria.

2. Selection and evaluation of candidates

Evaluation criteria are made available to the applicants. Those criteria are quantitative (number of publications…) and qualitative (previous experience, thesis supervision…)

Selection committees are established for each step of the recruitment process, considering experience and competences of its members as well as the category of recruited researchers. The committees must be aware of the procedures. Whenever possible, the committees must be gender-balanced.

3. Employment contracts

The contracts at the Université libre de Bruxelles are established in accordance with the Belgian laws. Researchers must be informed of their rights and obligations, including intellectual property rights.

4. International Welcome Desk (EURAXESS Services contact point)

The International Welcome Desk is an internal structure of the University whose role is to inform and support international researchers in their administrative procedures, before and after their arrival.

C. ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

The Université libre de Bruxelles intends to develop the following actions through its revised HRS4R action plan (2018-2021):

- Implementation of an e-recruitment tool
- A better communication on the selection procedures, the working conditions and, where necessary, on the research grants
- Improvement of the welcoming of newly hired researchers

D. DEROGATIONS

Derogations from the recruitment procedures are accepted when it comes to retain, extend and re-integrate researchers or to develop actions related to the University gender and diversity policy.

The derogation process must be clear, transparent, justified and non-discriminatory. It can never be derogated to the obligation of the adequacy between the applicant and the related positions.

\(^2\) Those positions, not linked to a specific teaching field, are opened to all research fields.
E. INFORMATIONS AND CONTACTS

Rules related to the recruitment and the selection of academic staff members and assistants are clearly defined in the University ‘Coordinated regulatory text regarding the scientific and academic staff’. This regulatory text details the composition of the application file, the steps of the selection procedure, the composition of the selection committees, the feedback procedure to unsuccessful candidates and the appeal procedure.

For the researchers recruited on external funding, the Academic Council adopted, on March 25th 2016, recommendations in terms of recruitment and selection. These recommendations include information on the application file, steps of the selection procedure and the feedback procedure to unsuccessful candidates.

For any question related to the recruitment and selection of researchers:
- Academic and scientific staff: http://www.ulb.ac.be/drh/pes/contacts.html
- Researchers on external funding: https://www.ulb.ac.be/drh/prc/contacts.html

For any question related to the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (EURAXESS HRS4R) of the University:
http://www.ulb.ac.be/recherche/presentation/euraxess/en-euraxessrightsken.html.³

³The future implementation of a new website at the University may cause some troubles in the links mentioned in the text. Please contact Bibiane Fréché (bibiane.freche@ulb.ac.be), Project Manager for EURAXESS HRS4R, to obtain the new links.