

IRMO

Institut za razvoj i međunarodne odnose
Institute for Development and International Relations

OPEN, TRANSPARENT AND MERIT-BASED RECRUITMENT OF RESEARCHERS

OTM-R POLICY

Zagreb, July 2026

Introduction

The Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO), by this Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment of Researchers Policy (hereinafter: the OTM-R Policy), confirms its commitment to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the European Commission's HR Excellence in Research Award initiative.

IRMO is currently applying for the HR Excellence in Research Award, granted by the European Commission to research-performing organisations that systematically align their human resources management practices with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. Participation in the HR Excellence in Research process represents an important step in further strengthening IRMO's recognition, the quality of its research environment, and its institutional capacity to attract project partnerships, competitive international research funding, and international researchers.

This OTM-R Policy defines the key principles, responsibilities and stages of the recruitment and selection process for researchers at IRMO, from workforce planning and publication of vacancies to the final selection of candidates. Its purpose is to strengthen further the openness, transparency and quality of recruitment procedures while providing clear and accessible information on IRMO's institutional recruitment practices. Through the implementation of this Policy, IRMO ensures open, transparent and merit-based recruitment procedures, equal treatment of all applicants, and the selection of candidates based on their qualifications, competencies and achievements. The implementation of this Policy also promotes international and intersectoral mobility of researchers, ensures equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and strengthens the overall quality and international recognition of IRMO's research work.

The OTM-R Policy is based on the applicable legislation of the Republic of Croatia, IRMO's internal regulations and institutional acts, and the principles of the European Charter for Researchers.

Objectives of the OTM-R Policy

The development and implementation of transparent, fair and predictable recruitment procedures, together with the successful recruitment of talented researchers and the promotion of all forms of researcher mobility, contribute to strengthening IRMO's research capacity. Excellence in research is fundamental to IRMO's long-term development and to reinforcing its position at the national and European level.

The objectives of the OTM-R Policy are to:

- ensure that every stage of the recruitment process is transparent, well-documented and conducted consistently and chronologically;
- guarantee equal opportunities and fair access to recruitment procedures for all applicants, without discrimination on any grounds;
- ensure that the most qualified candidate is selected for each position through a fair, objective and merit-based assessment process;
- strengthen IRMO's international visibility and attractiveness as an employer for researchers at all career stages;
- align IRMO's recruitment practices with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers.

Scope and Area of Implementation

This Policy applies to:

- the recruitment of researchers to scientific positions;
- the recruitment of researchers to assistant and senior assistant positions;
- the recruitment of researchers employed under research projects;
- all other recruitment procedures relating to researchers at IRMO.

The Policy applies to researchers at all career stages in accordance with the European Framework for Research Careers, comprising the following research profiles:

R1 – First Stage Researcher (up to the completion of a doctoral degree);

R2 – Recognised Researcher (holder of a doctoral degree or an equivalent researcher who has not yet established full research independence);

R3 – Established Researcher (researcher who has developed a sufficient level of research independence);

R4 – Leading Researcher (researcher recognised as a leader in their research field or discipline).

The principles of transparency, equal opportunities and competency-based employment are applied appropriately to candidates and employees in all other positions at IRMO, in accordance with applicable regulations and internal acts of the Institute.

Legal and Institutional Framework

The recruitment and selection of researchers at IRMO is carried out in accordance with the applicable legislation of the Republic of Croatia and the Institute's internal regulations and policies:

- Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity
- Basic Collective Agreement for Employees in Public Services
- IRMO Statute
- Rulebook on the Implementation of Recruitment Procedures
- Rulebook on Additional Criteria for the Selection of Assistants, the Appointment of Mentors and the Evaluation of the Work of Associates and Mentors
- Decision on Additional Criteria for the Selection of Assistants
- Rulebook on Additional Criteria for Appointment and Reappointment to Scientific Positions
- Decision on Additional Criteria for Appointment and Reappointment to Scientific Positions
- IRMO Code of Ethics
- IRMO Gender Equality Policy.

Recruitment procedures

Publication of Vacancies

All vacant research positions are published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia, through the Croatian Employment Service, on the IRMO website, and on the EURAXESS portal in both Croatian and English.

Each vacancy announcement includes:

- the title of the position;
- the eligibility requirements, including mandatory and additional selection criteria;
- the application deadline;
- the list of documents to be submitted with the application;

- information on equal opportunities, non-discrimination and, where applicable, preferential rights in employment under Croatian legislation;
- instructions on the method of application;
- information on the publication of recruitment results.

Submission and Administrative Review of Applications

Applications must be submitted electronically in accordance with the conditions specified in the vacancy announcement.

The administrative burden placed on applicants is kept to a minimum. Applicants are required to submit copies of the supporting documentation with their application, while the selected candidate is requested to provide the original documents only after the recruitment procedure has been completed.

The Selection Committee verifies the completeness and timeliness of applications and establishes the list of applicants who fulfil the formal eligibility requirements.

Selection Committee

For each recruitment procedure for appointment to a scientific or associate position, the Scientific Council of IRMO appoints a Selection Committee consisting of at least three members. The composition of the Committee must comply with the provisions of the Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity. The following principles apply when appointing the committee:

- members must have the same scientific area and field in which the candidate is selected;
- one external committee member (outside IRMO) is included in accordance with the job title;
- the appointment process must be transparent and based on documented criteria.

Candidate Evaluation

The criteria for evaluating the candidates' competencies are structured according to the advertised job position and are assessed qualitatively and quantitatively, taking into account the candidates' previous achievements and future potential. The evaluation applies the European Framework for Research Careers, i.e. criteria and expectations in accordance with the researcher's career levels (R1-R4). The evaluation includes:

- checking formal requirements and documentation;
- assessing professional competencies, previous work and scientific results;
- considering the possibility of a written knowledge test;
- conducting a structured interview with candidates who meet the formal requirements.

Selection Proposal and Appointment Decision

Following the completion of the assessment process, the Selection Committee submits a written evaluation report together with a reasoned proposal for the appointment of the most suitable candidate to the Scientific Council.

For appointments to associate positions, the Scientific Council adopts the appointment decision. For appointments to scientific positions, the evaluation report is forwarded to the competent National Scientific

Field Committee of the Agency for Science and Higher Education for verification that the selected candidate fulfils the statutory requirements for appointment.

All participants in the process are obliged to maintain the confidentiality of data on candidates and the selection process in accordance with the GDPR and internal acts of IRMO.

Notification of Recruitment Results

The outcome of each recruitment procedure is published on the IRMO website. All candidates are notified of the outcome of the competition in writing.

Appointment and Onboarding

Employment at IRMO is established in accordance with the legislation and provides employees with all rights and obligations arising from the employment relationship. The selected candidate is informed of all rights and obligations arising from employment.

New employees undergo an onboarding process that includes:

- introduction to the organizational structure, colleagues and access to the intranet system;
- appointment of a mentor in accordance with the type of job;
- introduction to the Institute's basic internal acts and policies (Code of Ethics, OTM-R Policy, Gender Equality Policy, Work Rules, etc.).

Non-discrimination and Equal Opportunities

IRMO is an employer that guarantees equal employment opportunities. Discrimination on any basis is prohibited, including gender, gender identification, age, marital status, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, social origin or political opinion.

IRMO applies active measures to promote gender equality in accordance with the IRMO Gender Equality Policy. Efforts are made to ensure gender balance in the composition of expert committees for the selection of candidates for all positions at IRMO.

Personal Data Protection

The processing of candidates' personal data as part of the recruitment procedures is carried out in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) and IRMO's internal acts on the protection of personal data. Documentation collected in the recruitment process is kept only for as long as necessary for the purpose for which it was collected, in accordance with the deadlines prescribed by law and internal acts. Data of rejected candidates is not retained without specific consent.

Review and Revision of the Policy

This OTM-R Policy is reviewed whenever necessary and, in any case, at least once every three years or following:

- amendments to the relevant legislation;
- significant organisational changes within IRMO;

- recommendations arising from the monitoring and evaluation of recruitment practices;
- changes in the EURAXESS guidelines or the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the procedures for obtaining the HR Excellence in Research award.