



# **Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers Policy**

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## 1. Introduction

Instituto Superior Técnico (IST), as one of Portugal's leading higher education and research institutions, is fully committed to upholding the principles of Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R), in line with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. The OTM-R policy is designed to ensure that IST attracts and retains the most talented researchers, fosters a diverse and inclusive research environment, and promotes excellence, fairness, and integrity in all recruitment processes.

By implementing this OTM-R policy, IST reaffirms its alignment with the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R), the commitments undertaken at the European Research Area (ERA) level, and the applicable Portuguese legislation governing employment in higher education and public administration, namely:

- ECDU (“Estatuto da Carreira Docente Universitária”, republished by Decree-Law n.º 205/2009, of 31st august, altered by law n.º 8/2010, of 13th may
- Decree-Law no. 57/2016, which regulates scientific employment.
- Law no. 55/2025, Scientific Research Career Statute, which establishes the legal regime for scientific employment in Portugal.
- Law no. 35/2014, the General Labour Law for Public Sector Employees (LTFP) and Law no. 7/2009, the Labour Code (Código do Trabalho).
- Applicable regulations of Universidade de Lisboa (ULisboa), of which IST is an integral part, and applicable regulations of IST.

This OTM-R Policy shall serve as a framework to guide IST's recruitment processes for researchers at all stages of their careers, ensuring consistency, fairness, and compliance with both national and European standards.

## 2. Presentation of the OTM-R Policy and the EU Charter

The OTM-R system promoted by the European Commission emphasizes three key dimensions:

1. **Openness** – ensuring that positions are widely advertised and accessible to the international research community.
2. **Transparency** – ensuring clarity at every stage of the recruitment process, including job descriptions, evaluation criteria, and selection outcomes.
3. **Merit-Based Selection** – ensuring that recruitment decisions are based on objective assessment of candidates' qualifications, skills, and potential.

The [European Charter for Researchers](#) highlights the rights and responsibilities of both researchers and institutions, and sets out best practices in recruitment to improve fairness, efficiency, and mobility across Europe.

IST's OTM-R Policy directly incorporates these principles and ensures their practical application in accordance with Portuguese law. In doing so, IST contributes to the European Research Area (ERA) objectives of improving the attractiveness of research careers, strengthening mobility, and enhancing research quality and competitiveness.

This policy also ensures compatibility with IST's internal regulations, the ethical framework for research, and institutional strategies for internationalization, diversity, and inclusion.

### 3. Ensuring Open Recruitment at IST

- **Wide Dissemination of Vacancies:** all positions are publicly advertised on IST's institutional website, in the official government gazette (i.e., Diário da República), on the Public Employment Platform (BEP) and on the EURAXESS portal. Advertisements are issued in English and Portuguese to ensure accessibility to both national and international applicants.
- **Inclusive Eligibility:** calls are open to applicants of all nationalities, genders, ages, and backgrounds, in line with national and EU non-discrimination laws. Calls are written using a gender-neutral form of language.
- **Clear and Comprehensive Job Descriptions:** announcements include information on job profile, key duties, required qualifications, expected skills, working conditions, and applicable employment regulations.
- **Adequate Application Period:** recruitment calls remain open for a sufficient duration (minimum of 30 workdays, in accordance with Portuguese legislation for public tenders) to allow broad participation.

By applying these measures, IST ensures that its recruitment processes are open to the widest possible pool of qualified candidates.

### 4. Ensuring Transparent Recruitment at IST

Transparency is a cornerstone of IST's OTM-R policy and is achieved through:

- **Clear Procedures:** the recruitment process is governed by publicly available regulations and guidelines, ensuring that candidates understand the sequence of steps from application to final decision.
- **Explicit Evaluation Criteria:** job calls specify the criteria by which applications will be assessed, including weighting of academic qualifications, scientific output, teaching experience, and other relevant factors.
- **Selection Committees:** evaluation committees are composed of independent experts, ensuring gender balance in accordance with Portuguese law. If conflicts of interest are reported after applications for a position are received, the jury composition may be altered following a request by the jury member.
- **Documentation and Communication:** all candidates receive acknowledgment of application receipt and are informed of the final outcome of the competition. Committee members always produce a report justifying their decisions.
- **Appeal Mechanisms:** IST provides formal avenues for candidates to contest decisions, ensuring procedural fairness and accountability.

Through these measures, IST guarantees that recruitment is **transparent at every stage**, building trust and credibility in the institution's recruitment practices.

## 5. Ensuring Merit-Based Recruitment at IST

Merit-based recruitment is ensured through objective and balanced evaluation of candidates:

- **Competence-Based Evaluation:** Assessment is based on candidates' qualifications, research achievements, teaching experience, project management, leadership potential, and contribution to knowledge transfer and innovation.
- **Recognition of Diverse Career Paths:** IST values a broad range of experiences, including academic, industrial, and international mobility, as well as career breaks.
- **Objective Scoring Systems:** Each selection criterion is assigned a weight, and candidates are scored holistically based on the quality, integrity, and broader impact of their research contributions, rather than on narrow metrics, in line with the COARA principles.
- **Gender Equality and Diversity:** Recruitment procedures promote equal opportunities to all.
- **Merit over Seniority:** Decisions are based on quality and impact rather than length of service, ensuring fairness and fostering innovation.

These practices guarantee that IST selects the most suitable candidates, fostering excellence and competitiveness in its research environment.

## 6. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

IST is committed to the **regular review and monitoring** of its OTM-R practices to ensure compliance with evolving European and national standards. Periodic evaluations will be carried out as part of IST's **HRS4R Action Plan**, with input from researchers, administrative staff, and external evaluators. Feedback from recruitment processes will be systematically collected and integrated into future improvements.

By adhering to this policy, IST strengthens its position as a research institution of international standing, ensures fairness and equality in recruitment, and contributes to the broader goals of the European Research Area.