

Human Resources Strategy for Researchers Action plan (2021-2024)



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

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1. IDIBAPS Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R). Introduction

August Pi i Sunyer Biomedical Research Institute (IDIBAPS) – Clinic Foundation for Biomedical Research (FCRB) is a biomedical research centre of excellence in Barcelona (Spain) that addresses the most common diseases in our environment. It is a public consortium comprising the Catalan Government, the Hospital Clínic of Barcelona, the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences-University of Barcelona and the CSIC-Institute of Biomedical Research of Barcelona. Founded in 1996, the Institute has about 1,500 research professionals who undertake translational research. It focuses on ensuring that the questions that arise at the patient's bedside have a response in the laboratory, and that advances made in the laboratory are promptly applied to patients.

IDIBAPS firstly signed a commitment to the principles of “The European Charter for Researchers” and “The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers” (European Charter and Code) in 2011. Following this commitment, IDIBAPS had the chance to become member of the Third Cohort of Institutions aiming to implement its own “Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)”. Since then, IDIBAPS has been involved in implementing the established process:

- As part of the **initial phase**, in 2014, the Institute appointed an HRS4R working group that helped the management team to perform a gap analysis and design the first IDIBAPS HRS4R action plan (2015-2018). This plan was acknowledged by the European Commission on April 25, 2015 providing the Institute with the logo “HR Excellence in Research”.
- During the **implementation phase**, IDIBAPS began work on the actions included in the initial action plan (2015-2018) until the time came to perform the self-assessment in 2017. At this stage, performance was analyzed and a new IDIBAPS HRS4R updated action plan (2017-2020) was designed and published on the Institute's website, ready for subsequent implementation.
- To ensure the success of the **renewal phase of the process**, a follow-up and assessment of the actions completed during the previous years was performed and a new action plan (2021-2024) was drawn up. To do this, IDIBAPS re-appointed a new HRS4R working group that has become permanently established at the Institute since then. This group already has 11 members (Sergi Castellví as R4 researcher, Patrícia Pérez as R3B researcher, Joan Marc Servitja as R3A researcher, Sònia Guedan as R2B researcher, Alba Maiques as R2A researcher, Marc Otero as R1 researcher, Marta Fernández as expert in human resources, Guillem Masdeu as expert in legal issues and data protection, Daniel Arbós as expert in communication, Gemma Llaverías as expert in research career strategy, and Gemma Pascual as the

HRS4R Project Manager). This process has resulted in submitting the required documents using the HRS4R e-tool and publishing the new action plan (2021-2024) on the IDIBAPS website in June 2021.

In this 5-year period from 2015-2021, much has been achieved at IDIBAPS. Progress has been made in aspects relating to “Ethical and professional aspects”, “Recruitment and selection”, “Working conditions and social security” and “Training and development”. Some particularly notable results are listed below:

- An IDIBAPS welcome pack is now available to new employees to ease the arrival at our institute and solve basic questions.
- Two new committees have been created: the Training Committee and the Research Ombuds Committee.
- A new version of the IDIBAPS research career strategy was approved, which provides more details about the procedures, criteria, possible results and requirements for passing different evaluations.
- The "Recruitment Policy – Personnel selection process. Guide for open, transparent, merit-based recruitments (OTM-R)" has been implemented.
- Predoctoral (R1) and postdoctoral (R2) researchers have the opportunity to be trained in non-scientific but complementary areas through the activities organized as part of Stepping–stone, a permanent IDIBAPS training program that was created within the HRS4R.
- The HRS4R is totally embedded in the overall IDIBAPS strategy, as it is part of the IDIBAPS strategic plan (2018-2022).
- The IDIBAPS steering committee and the director's advisory committee has included members to become more inclusive and gender-balanced.
- Gender equality is promoted at IDIBAPS through a communication campaign entitled “Female talent: women scientists speak out” and other initiatives raising awareness about this key issue.
- The institutional “Code of good scientific practices” has been updated and completed with a new action protocol on research integrity as well as a code of conduct of the CERCA institutions.
- The updating of the IDIBAPS Intellectual Property Rights Policy has resulted in the new regulation for the creation of spin-off companies at IDIBAPS.

2. Preparation of the HRS4R Action Plan 2021-2024

To prepare the new 2021-2024 action plan, it was decided to assess the main progress made in the last 5 years and to redo the gap analysis based on the 40 principles of the European Charter and Code. Therefore, the HRS4R management team, together with the HRS4R working group met to design an ad-hoc survey to accomplish the established objectives. The survey was aimed at the entire IDIBAPS research community, regardless of the hiring institution. It was launched at the end of 2020 with the support of a communication campaign to ensure the highest impact possible. The results of this survey would allow IDIBAPS to achieve the following:

1. Determine the level of awareness and satisfaction of the whole HRS4R and also from 10 specific outcomes of the actions implemented in the last 5 years (**assessment process**).
2. Identify the main principles to be prioritized from among the 40 statements of the European Charter and Code in the next action plan (2021-2024) (**updated gap analysis**).
3. Compile comments and ideas for actions from the entire research community to take into account when preparing the new action plan (**brainstorming process**).

This online survey was answered by 255 people out of 1672 members of the research community, giving a participation rate of 15,25%. The staff participating in the survey belonged to different professional categories (Figure 1):

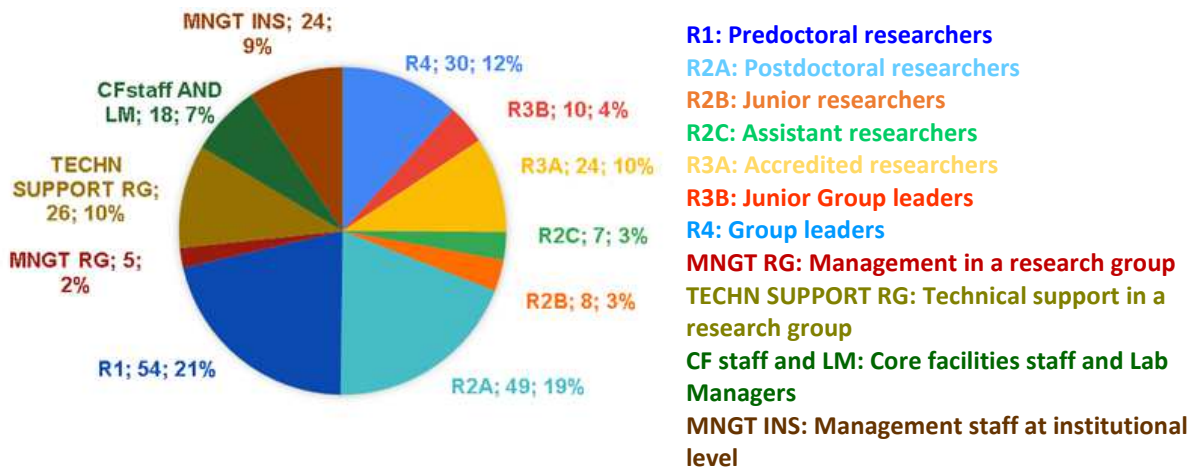


Figure 1. Number and percentage of participants in each professional category.

The main results of the assessment process and the updated gap analysis resulting from the survey are shown for each section:

- **Ethical and Professional Aspects:** 4 main outcomes resulting from the implementation of the plan have been assessed (a) launch of the welcome pack, b) inclusion of the HRS4R strategy and vision in the strategic plan, c) updating of the “Good Practice in Research code” and d) regulations on the creation of spin-off companies):

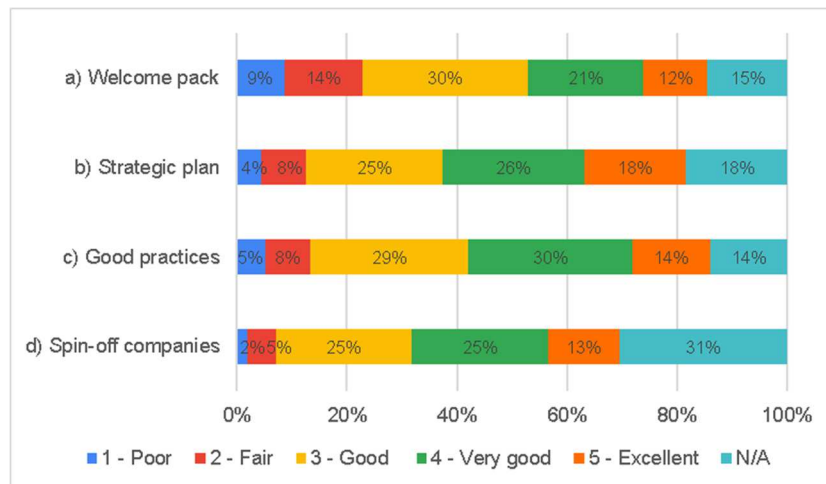


Figure 2. Percentage of respondents assessing each of the actions as 1-Poor, 2-Fair, 3-Good, 4-Very good, 5-Excellent and N/A-Nonapplicable

As can be seen in Figure 2, most of the respondents chose Good, Very good and Excellent as answers (between 63% and 73%) rather than Poor or Fair (between 2% and 9%). Nonapplicable (N/A) was chosen differently according to the action (between 14% and 31%).

In the section “Ethical and professional aspects” the 5 priorities selected were: 1, Research freedom; 2, Ethical principles; 3, Professional responsibility; 7, Good practice in research; and 10, Non-discrimination. Four of those statements are linked to actions included in the new action plan.

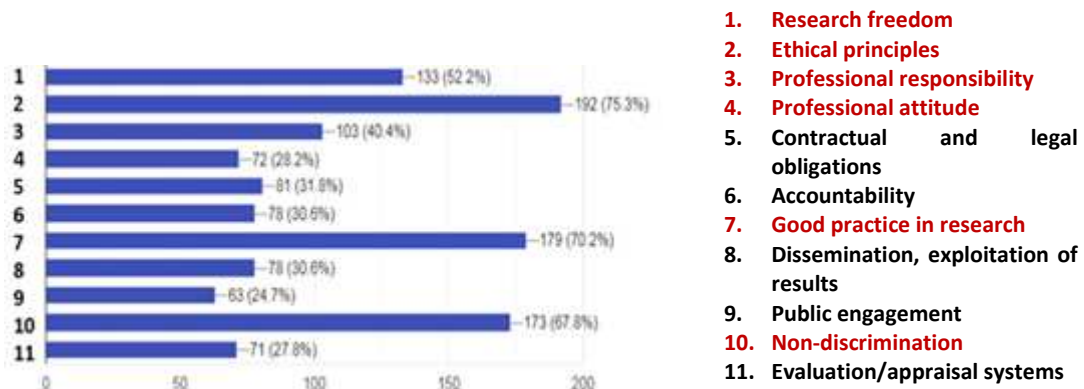


Figure 3. Number of votes given to each statement of the European Charter and Code related to the section “Ethical and professional aspects”. The main 5 selected priorities are marked in red.

- **Recruitment and selection:** From the actions included in this section, 1 main outcome has resulted from the assessment carried out (approval and adoption of the OTM-R Policy):

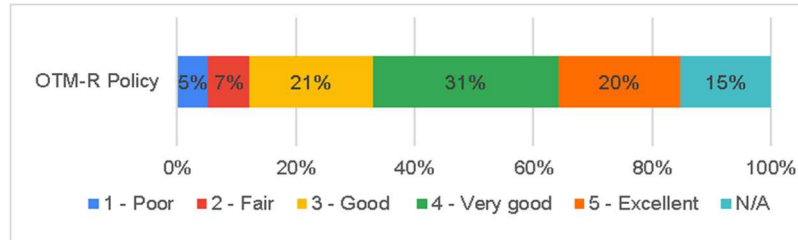
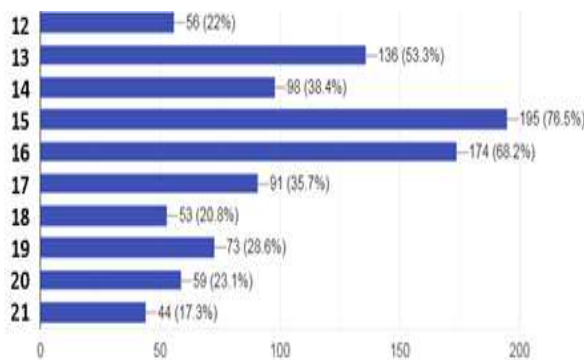


Figure 4. Percentage of respondents assessing each of the actions as 1-Poor, 2-Fair, 3-Good, 4-Very good, 5-Excellent and N/A-Nonapplicable

Seventy-two percent of the survey respondents selected the options Good, Very good or Excellent and 12% selected the options Poor or Fair. Fifteen percent of the people who answered the survey considered that this topic was Nonapplicable to them.



- 12. Recruitment (general)
- 13. Recruitment
- 14. Selection
- 15. Transparency
- 16. Judging merits
- 17. Variations in the chronological order
- 18. Recognition of the mobility experience
- 19. Recognition of qualifications
- 20. Seniority
- 21. Postdoctoral appointments

Figure 5. Number of votes cast for each statement of the European Charter and Code relating to the section "Recruitment and selection". The 4 main priorities selected are marked in red.

- **Working condition and social security:** The actions assessed in this sections are a) Updating the IDIBAPS research career; b) Creation of the Ombuds Committee; c) Appointment of new members to the IDIBAPS steering committee and IDIBAPS advisory board to make them more inclusive and gender-balanced; and d) Launch of the communication campaign "Female talent: women scientists speak out".

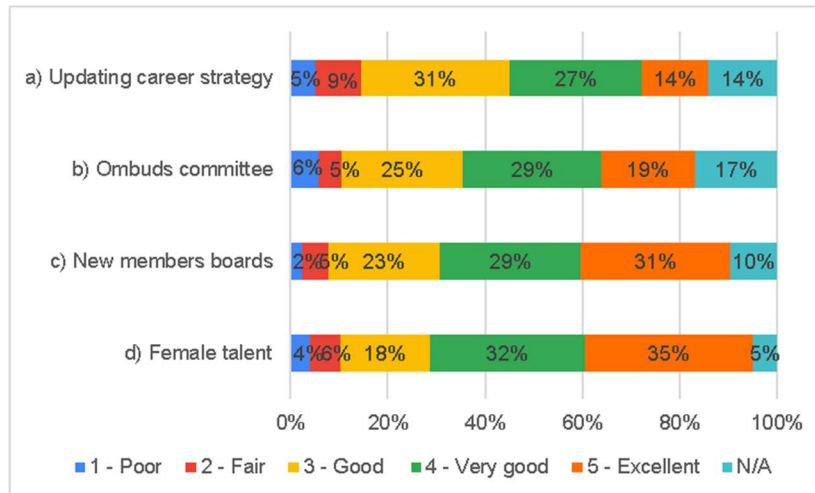


Figure 6. Percentage of respondents assessing each of the actions as 1-Poor, 2-Fair, 3-Good, 4-Very good, 5-Excellent and N/A-Nonapplicable

As can be seen in Figure 6, most of the respondents chose Good, Very good and Excellent as answers (between 72% and 85%) rather than Poor or Fair (between 7% and 14%). Nonapplicable (N/A) was chosen differently according to the action (between 5% and 17%).

The IDIBAPS research community was required to select up to 6 priorities from among the statements in the recruitment and selection section of the European Charter and Code. The most voted principles were: 22, Recognition of the profession; 23, Research environment; 24, Working conditions; 25, Stability on permanence of employment; 26, Funding and salaries; and 28, Career development. Principle 27, Gender balance was also considered a priority, as it received a similar number of votes to the rest of the chosen priorities.

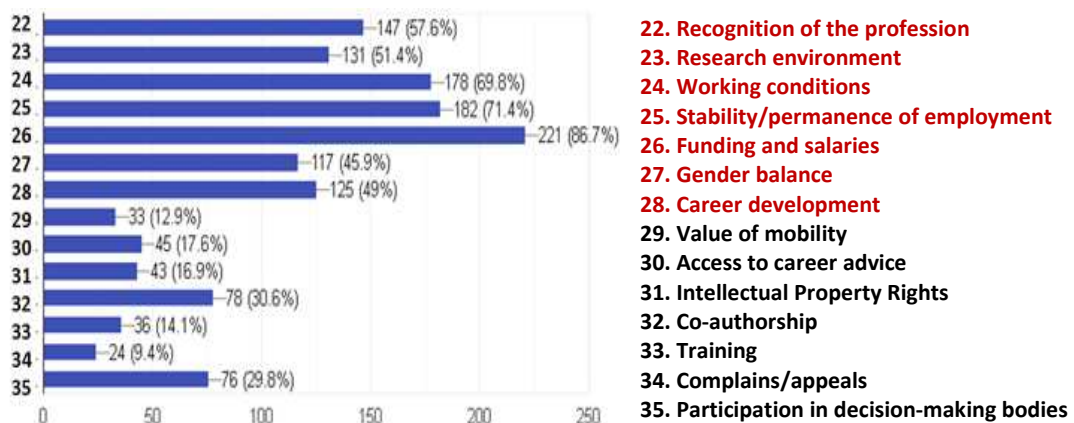


Figure 7. Number of votes cast for each statement of the European Charter and Code relating to the section "Working conditions and social security". The 7 selected priorities are marked in red.

- **Training and development:** The Stepping-stone training program was assessed in the section:

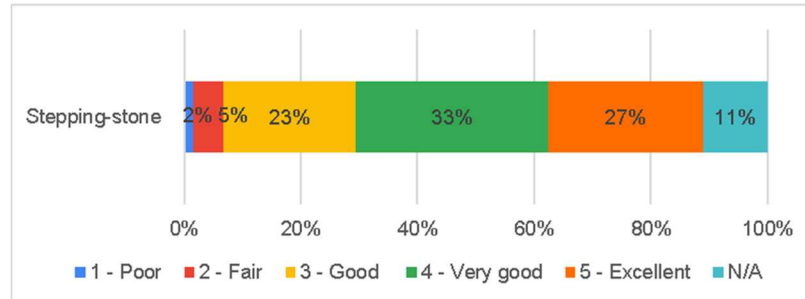
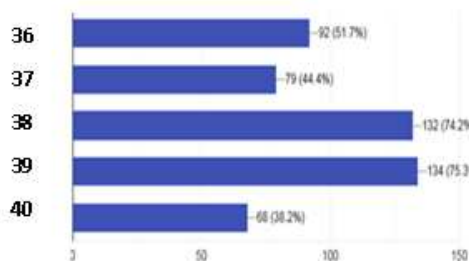


Figure 8. Percentage of respondents assessing the actions as 1-Poor, 2-Fair, 3-Good, 4-Very good, 5-Excellent and N/A-Nonapplicable

In the section “Training and development”, 3 priorities were identified: 36, Relation with supervisors; 28, Continuing professional development; and 39, Access to research training and continuous development.



- 36. Relation with supervisors**
- 37. Supervision and managerial duties**
- 38. Continuing professional development**
- 39. Access to research training and continuous development**
- 40. Supervision**

Figure 9. Number of votes cast for each statement of the European Charter and Code related to the section “Training and development”. The 3 selected priorities are marked in red.

- **General:** Overall, the implementation of the initial action plan (2015-2018) and the updated action plan (2017-2020) were positively assessed by the whole research community. Seventy-three percent of survey respondents thought that the progress made within the HRS4R could be assessed as Good, Very good or Excellent; 11% selected the options Poor or Fair; and 15% selected the option Nonapplicable.

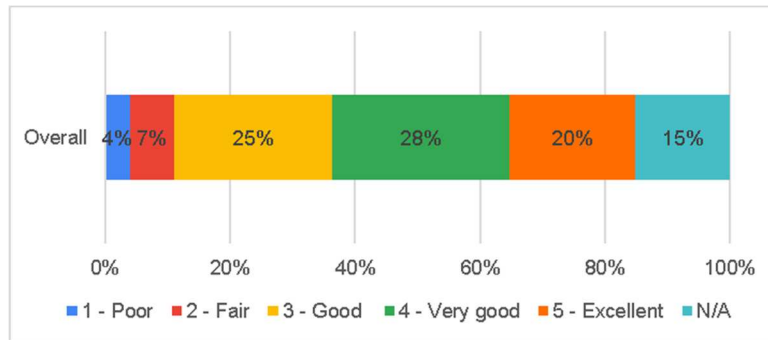


Figure 10. Percentage of respondents assessing the whole HRS4R as 1-Poor, 2-Fair, 3-Good, 4-Very good, 5-Excellent and N/A-Nonapplicable

Another aspect evaluated was the level of awareness that the research community had regarding the existence of the HRS4R (Figure 11). The results showed that 56% of respondents were fully or partially aware that the HRS4R existed, while 44% of the people did not know about it.

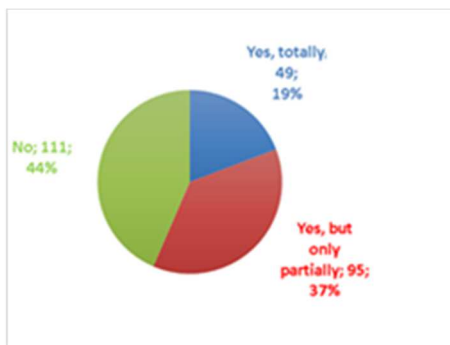


Figure 11. Number and percentage of respondent choosing each of the options available regarding the level of awareness of the existence of the HRS4R.

In one meeting of the HRS4R working group, the preliminary results of the survey were presented and discussed, together with specific ideas for actions that came up both from the survey and from members of the group. Then, in another meeting, a more detailed list of potential actions was presented and the members of the HRS4R working group were asked to vote for them as described: first, they had to establish the degree of priority of the actions (high, medium and low) and then, they had to order the actions identified as high priority from most important to least important.

This process produced a final ranking. With the inputs from the HRS4R working group, the HRS4R management team prepared the final proposal that was finally approved by the IDIBAPS steering committee on May 6, 2021.

Figure 12 summarizes the process and involvement of many different stakeholders in the process followed to obtain the final action plan. The ideas were proposed by the whole research community and the HRS4R working group; the HRS4R management team translated those ideas into actions. The HRS4R working group helped to obtain a list of actions ordered by priority and, once again, the management team translated this list into a specific plan proposal that was finally approved by the IDIBAPS steering committee.

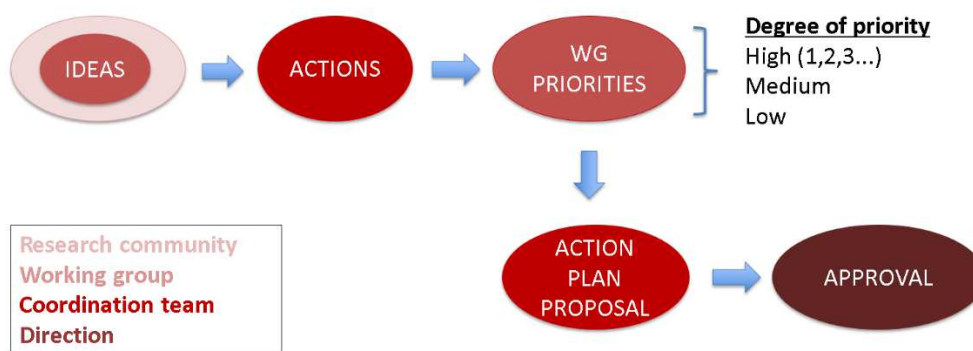


Figure 12. Steps followed to achieve final approval of the action plan (2021-2024) and stakeholders involved (colour code).

3. Human Resources Strategy for Researchers Action Plan (2021-2024)

HRS4R Vision:

IDIBAPS aims to continue implementing improvements according to the statements of the European Charter and Code to further attract talented staff through open, transparent and merit-based recruitments (OTM-R). The members of the research community are also expected to be retained at IDIBAPS thanks to its attractive research environment and promotion of career development.

HRS4R Strategic objectives:

- Complete the welcome process of new staff at IDIBAPS and monitor staff when they leave.
- Provide additional tools and resources to researchers to continue reinforcing the good practices in research.
- Improve practices in recruitment and provide training and supporting materials to ensure the complete implementation of the OTM-Rs.
- Increase training and development opportunities at the Institute to create a more enriching research environment with more opportunities for career development.
- Raise awareness among the research community on the existence of the HRS4R and its benefits.

Implementation of the HRS4R action plan (2021-2024) will take place between Q3.2021 and Q2.2024 as follows:

I. Ethical and Professional Aspects				
Actions	GAP Principles	Timing	Unit Responsible	Indicators/Targets
A1. Implementation of an onboarding process on the IDIBAPS-FCRB intranet	4. Professional attitude/ 5. Contractual and legal obligations / 7. Good practice in research	Q3.2022- Q1.2023	Scientific Coordination Office – Institutional Actions Office	D1.1: List of contents introduced in the onboarding process to welcome new staff
A2. Monitoring the level of compliance and satisfaction of the onboarding process	/ 4. Professional attitude/ 5. Contractual and legal obligations / 7. Good practice in research	Q1.2023- continuous	Scientific Coordination Office – Institutional Actions Office	D2.1: Template of the satisfaction survey KPI2.1: Number of staff completing the process vs number of staff starting a new contract KPI2.2: Level of satisfaction of staff completing the process
A3. Preparation and dissemination of a farewell pack	5. Contractual and legal obligations / 7. Good practice in research / 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results	Q4.2021- Q1.2022	Scientific Coordination Office	D3.1: Farewell pack KPI3.1: Number of dissemination actions
A4. Delivery and dissemination of the farewell pack	5. Contractual and legal obligations / 7. Good practice in research / 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results	Q1.2022- continuous	Human Resources Department	KPI4.1: Number of packs delivered vs number of people leaving IDIBAPS-FCRB

A5. Sessions on open science and public presentation of institutional policies and tools in open science	2.Ethical principles/ 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results	Q3.2021- Q3.2022.	Scientific Coordination Office	D5.1: List of sessions organised KPI5.1: Number of participants of the sessions KPI5.2: Number of dissemination actions before and after the sessions to promote open science
A6. Design of online “training capsules” for employees regarding ethical principles and good scientific practice	2.Ethical principles/7. Good practice in research	Q1.2023- Q3.2023	Institutional Actions Office	D6.1: Online “training capsules” delivered D6.2: Protocol of participation KPI6.1: Number of topics covered
A7. Monitoring the level of participation and satisfaction of the online “training capsules”	2.Ethical principles/7. Good practice in research	Q3.2023- continuous	Institutional Actions Office	D7.1: Template of the satisfaction survey KPI7.1: Number of staff participating in the training capsules vs total staff KPI7.2: Level of satisfaction of the staff participating in the training capsules
A8. Implementation of a public presentation and other communication actions to raise awareness about justice, equality and diversity in research	10. Non discrimination	Q3.2022- Q4.2022	Institutional Actions Office	D8.1: List of actions implemented KPI8.1: Participants in the public presentation organized KPI8.2: Number of other communication actions implemented

II. Recruitment and Selection				
Actions	GAP Principles	Timing	Unit Responsible	Indicators/Targets
A9. Running periodic specific training sessions on conducting OTM-Rs	13. Recruitment/ 14. Selection / 15. Transparency / 16. Judging merits	Q3.2021- continuous	Human Resources Department	KPI9.1: Number of training sessions organized KPI9.2: Number of participants at these training sessions vs number of recruiting staff KPI9.3: Level of satisfaction
A10. Implementation analysis and updating of the OTM-R policy	13. Recruitment/ 14. Selection / 15. Transparency / 16. Judging merits	Q1.2023- Q3.2023	Human Resources Department	D10.1: Report with the analysis of the OTM-R Policy implementation D10.2: Updated OTM-R Policy approved by the Board of Governors KPI10.1: Number of improvements made according to the OTM-R Checklist KPI10.2: Dissemination actions presenting the Updated OTM-R Policy
A11. Support materials preparation and dissemination to promote and conduct the OTM-R policy	13. Recruitment/ 14. Selection / 15. Transparency / 16. Judging merits	Q4.2023- Q1.2024	Institutional Actions Office	D11.1: Support materials prepared KPI11.1: Dissemination actions introducing the support materials produced

III. Working Conditions and Social Security				
Actions	GAP Principles	Timing	Unit Responsible	Indicators/Targets
Actions	GAP Principles	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicators/Targets
A12. Updating of the IDIBAPS-FCRB gender plan	27. Gender balance/24. Working conditions/28. Career development	Q3.2021- Q2.2022	Human Resources Department	D12.1: Updated gender plan KPI12.1: Number of actions implemented
A13. Publication of the approved professional categories description for IDIBAPS and FCRB staff and their corresponding minimum salary thresholds	22. Recognition of the profession/26. Funding and salaries	Q1.2022	Human Resources Department	D13.1: Public information available in the transparency portal
A14. Organisation of career sessions to promote the professional development and social interaction of researchers (for example for R1, R2A, R2B and R3B researchers)	22. Recognition of the profession/ 23. Research environment/ 28. Career development	Q3.2022- Q2.2023	Scientific Coordination Office – Institutional Actions Office	D14.1: Agendas of the sessions organised KPI14.1: Number of participants per session vs number of total members of this professional category at IDIBAPS KPI14.2: Level of satisfaction of the different sessions
A15. Updating of the research career strategy	11. Evaluation/appraisal systems//22. Recognition of the profession/28. Career development	Q1.2023- Q2.2023	Scientific Coordination Office	D15.1: Updated version approved by the Board of Governors KPI15.1: Dissemination actions presenting the new document

<p>A16. Preparation of an exit survey to assess the working experience for IDIBAPS and FCRB staff</p>	<p>23. Research environment/ 24. Working conditions/38. Continuing professional development/ 36. Relation with supervisors</p>	<p>Q3.2023- Q4.2023</p>	<p>Human Resources Department</p>	<p>D16.1: Exit survey template</p>
<p>A17. Implementation of the exit survey</p>	<p>23. Research environment/ 24. Working conditions/38. Continuing professional development/ 36. Relation with supervisors</p>	<p>Q1.2024- continuous</p>	<p>Human Resources Department</p>	<p>D17.1: Report presenting the main conclusions of the surveys compiled</p> <p>KPI17.1: Number of exit surveys answered vs number of staff leaving IDIBAPS-FCRB</p> <p>KPI17.2: Number of corrective actions implemented as a consequence of the surveys' results</p>

IV. Training and Development				
Actions	GAP Principles	Timing	Unit Responsible	Indicators/Targets
A18. Organisation of a peer-mentoring program for postdoctoral researchers (R2A)	23. Research environment/ 30. Access to career advice/38. Continuing professional development	Q1.2022- Q2.2022	Scientific Coordination Office – Institutional Actions Office	D18.1: Action protocol D18.2: List of topics proposed for the peer-mentoring sessions
A19. Implementation of the peer-mentoring program for postdoctoral researchers	23. Research environment/ 30. Access to career advice/38. Continuing professional development	Q2.2022- continuous	Scientific Coordination Office – Institutional Actions Office	KPI19.1: Number of sessions organised KPI19.2: Number of participants KPI19.3: Level of satisfaction
A20. Implementation of Toolbox, IDIBAPS Talks Series, including talks of general interest on different topics	23. Research environment/ 38. Continuing professional development/ 39. Access to research training and career development	Q3.2021- continuous	Scientific Coordination Office – Institutional Actions Office	D20.1: List of IDIBAPS talks series organised KPI20.1: Number of attendants to the activities
A21. Launching of a new permanent training programme for lab technicians	38. Continuing professional development/ 39. Access to research training and career development	Q3.2022- Q1.2023	Scientific Coordination Office – Institutional Actions Office	D21.1: List of lab technicians composing a working group and the action protocol of this training programme D21.2: List of potential topics of interest for lab technicians

A22. Implementation of the new permanent training programme for lab technicians	38. Continuing professional development/ 39. Access to research training and career development	Q1.2023-continuous	Scientific Coordination Office – Institutional Actions Office	D22.1: List of training activities organized KPI22.1: Number of attendants to the activities KPI22.2: Number of attendants to the activities vs total number of lab technicians KPI22.3: Level of satisfaction of attendants
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Transversal				
Actions	GAP Principles	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicators/Targets
A23. Implementation of an overall HRS4R communication strategy	Transversal action	Q3.2021-Q2.2024	Communication Office	D23.1: Report of the communication strategy followed KPI23.1: Number of general dissemination/communication actions KPI23.2: Number of posts made in the “Achievements” section of the IDIBAPS HRS4R webpage

To monitor the overall progress of this action plan (2021-2024), composed of 23 actions, accordingly, we propose continuously monitoring its implementation. A formal review will be made every year by the HRS4R management team and the HRS4R working group.

Below is the Gantt chart associated with the implementation of this HRS4R Action Plan (2021-2024):

			Q3.2021	Q4.2021	Q1.2022	Q2.2022	Q3.2022	Q4.2022	Q1.2023	Q2.2023	Q3.2023	Q4.2023	Q1.2024	Q2.2024
I	A1	SCO-IAO												
	A2	SCO-IAO												
	A3	SCO												
	A4	HR												
	A5	SCO												
	A6	IAO												
	A7	IAO												
	A8	IAO												
II	A9	HR												
	A10	HR												
	A11	IAO												
III	A12	HR												
	A13	HR												
	A14	SCO-IAO												
	A15	SCO												
	A16	HR												
	A17	HR												
IV	A18	SCO-IAO												
	A19	SCO-IAO												
	A20	SCO-IAO												
	A21	SCO-IAO												
	A22	SCO-IAO												
T	A23	CO												

I – Ethical and professional aspects; II – Recruitment and selection; III – Working conditions and social security; IV – Training and development; T – Transversal
 CO – Communication Office; HR – Human Resources Department; IAO – Institutional Actions Office; SCO- Scientific Coordination Office.