

European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the recruitment of Researchers

Internal Gap Analysis and Action Plan (2016-2018) to support the Implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers at the University of Córdoba

Background information of the University of Córdoba (UCO)

UCO is heir to a centuries-old historical and cultural legacy and a passion for knowledge, tolerance and harmony among civilizations. It has a large research tradition on agrifood, which is one of its hallmarks. Some other remarkable research fields include fine chemistry and nanochemistry or biomedicine, through the corresponding Research Institutes IUIQFN and IMIBIC, respectively. Moreover, in line with the above-mentioned historical and cultural legacy, there are also some very competitive research groups working on Humanities, UCO expertise extending to some other fields such as Technology and Communication Technologies.

All in all, UCO is ranked among the top academic institutions in Spain in terms of research. In order to ensure a stimulating and favourable working environment for researchers, UCO has committed itself to the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers.

At a glance, UCO main facts and figures can be summarized as follows:

Founded

- 1972

Management

- National and public

Number of Faculties and Departments

- 10 Faculties.
- 53 Departments.

Number of Students

- Around 15,000 undergraduate Students
- Almost 1,200 in Master's Programmes.
- Doctoral Programmes: ca. 900.
- Over 800 foreign Students.

Administrative Staff

- ca. 700 permanent staff.
- ca. 500 temporary staff working for R&D projects.

Academic Staff

- 1,385 permanent staff.

Summary of the Logo implementation process:**INTRODUCTION**

On July 27th 2016, the University of Córdoba (UCO) signed the 'European Charter for Researchers' (the 'Charter') and the 'Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers' (the 'Code'), thereby emphasising its commitment and determination to support the European Commission initiative with a view to promote and improve the recruitment, the working conditions and the careers of researchers while concomitantly contributing to the development of the European Research Area.

According to the European Commission, Strategy and Implementation, *The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers* – HRS4R has 5 steps:

1. HR Policy Institution Internal Analysis in relation to the Charter and Code principles.
2. Publication of the Strategy/Action Plan.
3. European Commission (EC) approval and Excellence Logo concession.
4. Strategy Implementation and Self- evaluation (at least every two years).
5. External evaluation (at least every four years).

GAP ANALYSIS PROCESS: THE WORKING GROUP AND THE SUPERVISION COMMITTEE

Following the recommendations and in order to define its 'Human Resources Strategy for Researchers' ('HRS4R'), an internal UCO Working Group was formed to carry out the Internal Analysis (step 1 of the Strategy) in terms of assessing the compliance to internal, autonomic, national and European legislation. This internal working group was set up in September 2016 as an initiative from the Vice-Rectorate for Research. This group consisted of the main stakeholders in the process:

Teaching and Research Personnel from several involved Vice-Rectorates:

- Deputy Director of Research
- Director of the Knowledge Transfer Office
- Director for International Programs

Administrative staff:

- 2 Representatives of Administrative staff from Research Management Unit (economic and administrative sections)
- 1 Representative of the Vice-Rectorate for Human Resources
- 1 Representative of Administrative Staff from Knowledge Transfer Office

Researchers at several stages:

- 1 Representative of the Central Research Service (Technician)
- 1 Representative of predoctoral personnel (FPU fellow)
- 2 Representatives of postdoctoral personnel (Juan de la Cierva and Ramón y Cajal fellows)

- -1 Representative of Senior Researchers (University Professor)

Moreover, the WG should inform the Supervision Committee (SC) constituted by the whole Rectoral Board of the University that embodies the Rector, Vice-rectorates, Secretary of the University and General Manager.

The aims of the working group were:

- To analyse the current status of the application of the Charter & Code at UCO, based on the forty principles and the current legislation at European, national, regional and institutional levels.
- To elaborate a proposal for a Human Resources Strategy to be presented to the UCO Governing Team and subsequently to the European Commission with a request for acknowledgment by November 15th, 2016.

The established Working Procedure was as follows:

- To examine in detail the forty principles of the Charter and the Code in various meetings (see timesheet).
- To define the points for analysis.
- To identify available resources and assess strengths and weaknesses.
- To identify the types of initiatives to be undertaken and their level of priority.
- To oversee interactions with other Services/Units within the UCO and projects already underway.
- To write a strategy document HRS4R to be presented to the Rectoral Board for approval.

The Timesheet of the process was as follows:

July 27th, 2016	UCO signs the Charter and Code.
September 14th, 2016	Approval of the WG Composition by UCO Governing Team (SC).
September 15th, 2016	Adoption of the date for the first meeting and submission to WG members of relevant documentation.
September 29th, 2016	First meeting of the WG. Draft Internal Analysis. Questionnaire submitted to Researchers.
September 14th 30th-October	Reception of the questionnaires.
October 17th	Second meeting of the WG. Report submitted to SC.
21-25 October	WG Elaborates the draft Action Plan based on the results of the surveys and internal analysis.
October 26th	Draft Action Plan studied by the SC.
November 2nd	The WG receives the feedback from the SC on the Action and prepares draft documentation to be submitted to the European Commission.
November 7th	The SC analyses and approves the document.
November 14th	UCO Research Commission is informed on the documents, which are submitted to the European Commission.

On February 13th, 2017, the University of Cordoba received the consensus report regarding the HR excellence in research award, requiring some minor modifications.

Those comments were considered by the WG and SC, implemented in the application and submitted again on 13th March, 2017.

The WG was not dissolved but it will oversee the whole monitoring of the realization of the Action Plan and will adjust the plan if necessary.

THE SURVEY

The above-mentioned questionnaire addressed to UCO researchers was sent by email in September, 2016. It was anonymously answered until 14th October 2016, and it allowed us both to understand the current state of UCO regarding the HRS4R principles by area and stakeholders and detect the strengths and weaknesses of our University. A summary of the Survey results can be found in **Annex 1**.

The Survey was filled out online. It was sent to 972 UCO Researchers from 56 UCO Departments of all 10 UCO Faculties/Schools. The sample was a representative selection of people involved in research, including Teaching and Research Staff with a PhD (Full Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors), post-doctoral personnel (Ramón y Cajal and Juan de la Cierva), pre-doctoral personnel (FPI and FPU fellows) and Administrative Staff. The overall participation rate was 21.9%. Results are shown in the Annex 1.

Firstly, the principles associated to the 15 questions for each personnel category obtaining the lowest score in terms of level of achievement were selected for particular attention in the Action Plan. Then, those principles with the highest levels of relevance and levels of achievement ≤ 3.5 (according to any of the researcher category) were added to the Action Plan.

GAP ANALYSIS

The gap analysis (**Annex 2**) showed that most of the principles put forward in the Charter&Code have already been largely put into practice within the UCO. However, the UCO has also identified a number of aspects for which there is needed work for improvement, and has also elaborated an Action Plan to reduce the detected gaps.

THE ACTION PLAN

According to the results of the survey and our internal analysis, the Action Plan is being and will be implemented in the near future (November 2016-November 2018), so that in a sensible timeline, between 2 years, a considerable improvement in the issues that the UCO has to address should be observed.

The different Vice-rectorates, Units and Offices of the University of Córdoba involved in the implementation of the HR Strategy, have already started working in the setting up of the priority actions.

Some of the Actions involve dissemination of already existing procedures and protocols, thus requiring less work. Some other, such as the design of seminars on different aspects of research career, research funding sources, responsible research and innovation (principles 25, 28, 30, 31, 38, 39) will take a bit longer since future UCO trainers will have to be firstly trained. Similarly, the elaboration of a central database of researchers' mobility (principles 22, 23) will take some time but it will be very helpful both for mobility recognition and to facilitate integration of researchers through contacts with people who have been previously in the same situation. Particular attention will be paid to promotion of mentoring which was highlighted by the different sectors participating in the survey as crucial for their professional development.

As a general conclusion, UCO commits itself to put into practice the attached action plan within the next two years (2017 and 2018) and develop the required internal revision protocols to monitor its progress.

All relevant information regarding HRS4R will be accessible at <https://www.uco.es/investigacion/portal/HRS4R/>.

ACTION PLAN based on the analysis performed by the Working Group using the main weaknesses detected in the internal survey, as revised and approved by the Supervision Committee is summarized in the following Tables.

Area 1: Ethical and professional issues

Ref	Principles	Action	Responsible Party	Units in charge	Time Frame	Indicators
E1	1 to 11	Welcome protocol for novel/visiting researchers including aspects such as ethical issues, rights and obligations, accommodation, safety and other relevant information	Vice-Rectorate for International Relations (coordination)	ORI (International Relations Unit) Accommodation Office Legal Advice Office Occupational Risk Prevention Service	S2 2017	Documentation Dissemination
E2	7	Compulsory risk prevention courses before accessing labs	Vice-Rectorate for Institutional Coordination and Infrastructure	Occupational Risk Prevention Service	Q3 2017	Design and Implementacion of the Custom Courses
E3	8	Publication of a portfolio of patents and technologies available at UCO to be licensed	Vice-Rectorate for Innovation, Transfer and Campus of Excellence	KTO, Knowledge Transfer Office	Q3 2017	Documentation
E4	8	Comprehensive support for translation into English of all documents relevant to the HRS4R implementation process	As regards principle Nr 8, UCO-IDIOMAS will give support to dissemination of research results through UCONews Portal (translation into English).	UCO-IDIOMAS (University of Córdoba's language center). Coordination with UCCi (Scientific Culture and Innovation Unit)	Starting Q1 2017 and covering the whole period	Documentation in English
E5	9	UCO Annual Plan for Scientific Dissemination	Vice-Rectorate for Research	UCO Scientific and Innovative Culture Unit (UCCi)	Q3 2017 (and then yearly during Q1 once the annual plans have been approved)	Dissemination

Area 2: Recruitment

Ref	Principles	Action	Responsible Party	Units in charge	Time Frame	Indicators
R1	12, 16	Dissemination of the diverse regulations existing at University of Cordoba	Vice-Rectorate for Human Resources and Vice-Rectorate for Research	Human Resources Service and Research Management Unit	Since May 2017	Documentation Dissemination
R2	13	Publishing at EURAXESS Portal UCO offers intended for researcher staff	Vice-Rectorate for Research	Research Management Unit	As soon as the call has been open (next call scheduled for June 2017).	Publication of contracts at EURAXESS
R3	13, 15	Comprehensive support for translation into English of all documents relevant to the HR4RS implementation process	Vice-Rectorate for International Relations Vice-Rectorate for Academic Planning and Quality Assurance	UCO-IDIOMAS (University of Cordoba's language center)	Starting on December 1st 2016 and covering the whole period	Nr of documents translated into English
R4	14	Advancing in Gender Balance at University selection committees as well as management bodies	Vice-Rectorate for University Living and Social Responsibility	Equality Unit	Q4 2017	Modification of the internal regulation; Documentation and Dissemination

Area 3: Working conditions and social security

Ref	Principles	Action	Responsible Party	Units in charge	Time Frame	Indicators
W1	22, 23 (also for 18, 19)	Central Database for research stays	Vice-Rectorate for Institutional Coordination and Infrastructure; Vice-Rectorate for Research; Vice-Rectorate for International Relations	ORI (International Relations Office) Quality Management Service (Data and Statistics Section)	Q2 2018	Database Implemented
W2	23	Welcome protocol for novel/visiting researchers	Vice-Rectorate for Institutional Coordination and Infrastructure; Vice-Rectorate for International Relations; Vice-Rectorate for Research	Research Management Unit Accommodation Office Legal Advice Office Occupational Risk Prevention Service	S2 2017	Documentation Dissemination
W3	23	Compulsory risk prevention courses before accessing the labs	Vice-Rectorate for Institutional Coordination and Infrastructure	Occupational Risk Prevention Service	Q3 2017	Design and implementation of the Courses
W4	24	Study of architectural barriers at the different UCO Campuses.	Vice-Rectorate for Institutional Coordination and Infrastructure	Occupational Risk Prevention Service	Q1 2018	Report
W5	24	New Editions of Courses on reconciliation of work and family life	Vice-Rectorate for University Living and Social Responsibility	Equality Unit	Every New Academic Year, starting in september 2017	Number of courses

Ref	Principles	Action	Responsible Party	Units in charge	Time Frame	Indicators
W6	27	Advancing in Gender Balance at University selection committees as well as Management Bodies	Vice-Rectorate for University Living and Social Responsibility	Equality Unit	Q4 2017	Modification of the internal regulation ; Documentation and Dissemination
W7	23, 25, 28, 30, 33	Supervision and mentoring of novel research staff	Vice-Rectorate for Research, Vicerrectorate for Human Resources, Vice-Rectorate for Innovation, Transfer and Campus of Excellence	Service for Human Resources Research Management Service	Q2 2018	Number of seminars, Number of novel researchers with a mentor assigned
W8	23, 28	Promotion of advice on mobility by researchers returned at the UCO or UCO researchers currently abroad	Vice-Rectorate for International Relations Vice-Rectorate for Research Vice-Rectorate for Postgraduate Studies and Continuous Training	ORI (International Relations Office) Research Management Service	Q2 2018	Database Implemented; number of seminars
W9	28	Creation of the Employment and Entrepreneurial Culture Observatory	General Secretary Vice-Rectorate for Innovation, Transfer and Campus of Excellence	OTRI (KTO, Knowledge Transfer Office) UCOPREM2 (Office for Student Placement and Employability)	Q4 2017	Implementation and Dissemination
W10	30	Increase the visibility of EURAXESS Portal among UCO researchers	Vice-Rectorate for Research	Service for Human Resources; International Projects Office Research	Q2 2017	Dissemination (web, e-mails, publicity in UCO news)

Ref	Principles	Action	Responsible Party	Units in charge	Time Frame	Indicators
				Management Service		
W11	31	Review of currently available information on OTRI's website in order to adapt it to the new Spanish patent regulation.	Vice-Rectorate for Innovation, Transfer and Campus of Excellence	Legal Advice Office OTRI (KTO, Knowledge Transfer Office)	Q2 2017	Revised website
W12	32	good research practices in publication and authorship	Vice-Rectorate for Research	Responsible Research Practices Committee	Q4 2017	Good Practices in publishing and authoring document; Dissemination of the guide
W13	34, 35	Information on existing mechanisms for complaints/appeals and decision-making bodies	General Secretary Vice-Rectorate for Academic Planning and Quality Assurance	Quality Assurance Service	Q3 2017	Dissemination actions (web, e-mails, inclusion in training courses of all staff levels); surveys

Area 4: TRAINING

Ref	Principles	Action	Responsible Party	Units in charge	Time Frame	Indicators
T1	36, 37, 40	Supervision and mentoring of novel research staff	Vice-Rectorate for Research	Research Management Service	Q2 2018	results of survey among novel researchers
T2	38, 39 (5, 25, 28, 30, 31)	Continuous Training of researchers	Vice-Rectorate for Postgraduate Studies and Continuous Training/Vice-Rectorate for Research	IDEP (Institute of Postgraduate Studies) Research Management Service	Q2 2018	Planification of the courses (report) and number of dissemination activities implemented

TRANSVERSAL (ALL AREAS INVOLVED)

Ref	Principles	Action	Responsible Party	Units in charge	Time Frame	Indicators
ERWT1	TRANSVERSAL (ALL PRINCIPLES INVOLVED)	Repository of documents (Intranet and web) available for researchers containing all the information concerning the European Charter and Code for Researchers.	Vice-Rectorate for Research Vice-Rectorate for Institutional Coordination and Infrastructure	Research Management Service Computing Service	Q2 2017. Regularly updated.	Designed and implemented repository (intranet and web)
ERWT2	TRANSVERSAL (ALL PRINCIPLES INVOLVED)	Dissemination of the whole process of HR4RS	Vice-Rectorate for Research	Research Management Service	Q2 2017 (initial meetings) Q2 2018 yearly general meeting with stakeholders	Nr attendees to sessions; Suggestions received through the webpage; survey

Description of Actions

Ref	Action	Description
E1	Welcome protocol for novel/visiting researchers including aspects such as ethical issues, rights and obligations, accommodation, safety and other relevant information	Prepare a welcome kit for novel and/or visiting researchers pointing out the corresponding relevant legislation (document available both in English and Spanish)
E2	Compulsory risk prevention courses before accessing labs	The Occupational Prevention Risk Office offers custom courses for the different University Departments or research units. This Action is aimed at going a step further emphasizing that attending such courses is mandatory before accessing labs.
E3	Publication of a portfolio of patents and technologies available at UCO to be licensed	Publication of a portfolio of patents and technologies available at UCO to be licensed
E4	Comprehensive support for translation into English of all documents relevant to the HRS4R implementation process	As regards principle Nr 8, UCO-IDIOMAS will give support to dissemination of research results through UCONews Portal (translation into English).
E5	UCO Annual Plan for Scientific Dissemination	Information to researchers of all dissemination activities yearly planned by UCCi inviting researchers to visualize their work; information on the possibility to organize dissemination plans for research project proposals
R1	Dissemination of the diverse regulations existing at University of Cordoba	Dissemination of all existing regulations laying emphasis on evaluation criteria
R2	Publishing at EURAXESS Portal UCO offers intended for researcher staff	The open calls for incorporation of Doctors corresponding to the UCO Research Plan will be disseminated through EURAXESS Portal. A working group will study which other calls should be included.
R3	Comprehensive support for translation into English of all documents relevant to the HR4RS implementation process	All relevant recruitment information will be published both in Spanish and in English. The process will specify what type of documentation will be translated into both languages, as well as the use of English style.
R4	Advancing in Gender Balance at University selection committees as well as management bodies	Gender Balance has been established at the main University bodies such as University Faculty, though advancing in some other cases (e.g. selection commissions) is necessary

Ref	Action	Description
W1	Central Database for research stays	Creating a central database of researchers' mobility including visiting researchers at UCO as well as UCO researchers moving to other Institutions (especially abroad)
W2	Welcome protocol for novel/visiting researchers	Welcome protocol for novel/visiting researchers including aspects such as ethical issues, rights and obligations, accommodation, safety and other relevant information. The above-mentioned database of researchers will be also of help to facilitate integration through contacts with people who have previously been in the same situation.
W3	Compulsory risk prevention courses before accessing the labs	The Occupational Prevention Risk Office offers custom courses for the different University Departments or research units. This Action is aimed at going a step further, emphasizing that attending such courses is mandatory before accessing labs.
W4	Study of architectural barriers at the different UCO Campuses.	Study of architectural barriers at the different UCO Campuses.
W5	New Editions of Courses on reconciliation of work and family life	New Editions of Courses on reconciliation of work and family life
W6	Advancing in Gender Balance at University selection committees as well as Management Bodies	Gender Balance has been established at the main University bodies such as University Faculty, though advancing in some other cases (e.g. selection commissions) is necessary. Diffusion of Equality Plan of University of Córdoba, existence of Equality Commission, seminars on "Research and Teaching from a gender perspective"
W7	Supervision and mentoring of novel research staff	Seminars on research career Study the possibility to specify, in all fellowships and employment contracts of novel research staff, who is going to be the mentor.
W8	Promotion of advice on mobility by researchers returned at the UCO or UCO researchers currently abroad	Seminars on research career (participation of people returned to UCO after a stay abroad) Central database of researchers' mobility including visiting researchers at UCO as well as UCO researchers moving to other Institutions (especially abroad)
W9	Creation of the Employment and Entrepreneurial Culture Observatory	This portal will include information on mentors belonging to Academia and/or Industry (especially former UCO researchers/scholars) which will help the researchers in their career development strategy.

Ref	Action	Description
W10	Increase the visibility of EURAXESS Portal among UCO researchers	Dissemination of information on the portal to researchers.
W11	Review of currently available information on OTRI's website in order to adapt it to the new Spanish patent regulation.	Review of currently available information on OTRI's website in order to adapt it to the new Spanish patent regulation.
W12	good research practices in publication and authorship	The responsible research practices committee will develop a guide to good practices in publishing and authorship
W13	Information on existing mechanisms for complaints/appeals and decision-making bodies	Information on suggestions, complaints and congratulations mailbox, University Ombudsperson, Responsible Research Practice Committee, and promotion of participation of researchers in decision-making bodies
T1	Supervision and mentoring of novel research staff	Promotion of periodical (e.g. monthly) meetings of supervisors with their training research team will be proposed in order to analyze their learning process and propose improvements
T2	Continuous Training of researchers	Continuous training through courses and seminars dealing with research funding sources, responsible research and innovation (RRI), research career and intellectual property among other topics.
ERWT1	Repository of documents (Intranet and web) available for researchers containing all the information concerning the European Charter and Code for Researchers.	Repository of documents (Intranet and web) available for researchers containing all the information concerning the European Charter and Code for Researchers.
ERWT2	Dissemination of the whole process of HR4RS	Initial Meeting with the different stakeholders; General yearly meeting. Depending on the inputs, Action Plan could be adjusted if necessary

ANNEXES

Annex I - INTERNAL SURVEY AND SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS.

Annex II – INTERNAL ANALYSIS (GAP ANALYSIS), according to the EC template.