

## HR strategy and HRS4R at Nantes Université

Human Resources strategy at Nantes Université is based on the European Commission's *Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)*. In March 2022, the University's commitment to this process of continuous improvement was recognised formally through the *HR Excellence in Research* award.

The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (C&C) set the principles of European human resources strategy and the fundamentals of **open**, **transparent**, and **merit-based** recruitment policies which recognise and value candidates' career paths and competencies (OTM-R policy).

Underpinned by these principles, the long-term Human Resources management strategy at Nantes Université is set out in its management guidelines (lignes directrices de gestion - LDG) which establish general policy on transfers and mobility (LDG mobilité) and on promotion and recognising career paths (LDG promotion et valorisation des parcours) for permanent members of academic staff.

The strategy is also set out in the management charter for non-teaching members of staff (BIATSS) on fixed term contracts, which gives prominent focus to providing secure professional career paths and a good quality of working life for fixed-term employees.

Human Resources policy is implemented within the University's four main colleges (Humanities, Health science, Science and Technology, Societies) through localised HR departments. These four colleges all have specialised expertise in recruiting and developing the careers of lecturer-researchers.

This document presents the strategic direction of human resources policy and recruitment policy for lecturer-researcher, PhD student, postdoctoral researcher, and research engineer roles open to permanent and fixed term employees at Nantes Université.

## Founding principles of recruitment policy at Nantes Université

Nantes Université, along with its constituent institutions, has built its HR strategy around common, underlying principles, as stated in the strategic policy document:

- To promote professional equality and parity and to counter discrimination. In accordance with Article 22 of the University's statutes, the institution is committed to establishing a "*cross-departmental policy on professional support and recognition, in order to rebalance the position and representation of women at all levels and in all sectors [...]*".
- To roll out and consolidate policy on disability.
- To develop and implement shared recruitment charters. Article 24 requires all members of Nantes Université to set and adopt "*common policies on human resources*". And more specifically, "*recruitment charters which set common principles and which, in the case of lecturer-researchers, are based on the European Human Resources Strategy for Researchers*".
- To facilitate staff with developing their skills and to support them in their career development, by establishing a training school.

The human resources conference provides a forum for discussion and debate on common human resources policies, especially in relation to joint or collective recruitment practices between member institutions. The matters it covers include: well-being at work, countering discrimination, gender equality, disability, promoting diversity, student and staff health, internal professional training, risk prevention, social and sporting opportunities for staff and students.

## Recruitment procedure

The recruitment procedure at Nantes Université is designed to be as open, transparent and merit based as possible, and is applied consistently to all employee categories.

To guarantee transparency and provide candidates with regular and automatic updates on the progress of their job applications, the University recently acquired Between, a recruitment software package for multi-posting job vacancies and managing applications. The software is still currently under trial but will eventually be used to manage all the University's recruitment needs.

### Advertising vacancies

All vacancies (lecturer-researcher and administrative roles) at Nantes Université are advertised on its website. They can also be viewed on the national app GALAXIE (lecturer-researcher roles) and on the EURAXESS platform (lecturer-researcher and postdoctoral research roles). Vacancies for BIATSS/ administrative and technical staff (including research engineers) are advertised on national job search websites (APEC, Place Emploi Public, LinkedIn, etc.) for a minimum period of 30 days. Having formed an experimental public institution (*Établissement Public Expérimental*) with other education research institutions, job vacancies at Nantes Université's member institutions are also advertised on the University's website.

For lecturer-researchers and lecturers, there are two annual recruitment cycles: one for permanent lecturer-researchers and one for temporary lecturer-researchers (either on temporary teaching and research assistant (ATER) contracts or on LRU – law on Liberties and Responsibilities of Universities – temporary contracts).

The University strives to open applications to an international audience as much as possible. As an outcome, since the 2022 recruitment cycle, all job descriptions for University Professor roles are published in English and in French. From the 2023 recruitment cycle onwards, job descriptions for lecturers will also be published in English and in French, to widen opportunities for applications from other countries. Depending on the disciplinary field, postdoctoral research vacancies are also published in English. Additionally, the University provides staff responsible for recruitment and advertising job vacancies with an English template which they can use for this purpose.

The calendar of key dates (closing date for applications, interview dates, preferred starting date, etc.) is communicated to applicants on job descriptions and on the online platform.

All categories of applicant are informed of the specific arrangements for processing job applications:

Category	Arrangements for advertising roles and informing applicants
Permanent and fixed term lecturer-researchers [R3 and R4]	Procedure managed on the GALAXIE platform Notifications on the progress of applications are sent to candidates
Post-doctoral researchers [R2]	Vacancies advertised on the University's website and on EURAXESS (in English)

PhD students [R1]	PhD students vacancies advertised on the TEBL platform <sup>1</sup> from 2023
BIATSS employees [R2 to R4]	Acknowledgement sent to applicants informing them of the timescale

A guide to writing job advertisements, with resources and advice on writing a clear and relevant job description, is published on the intranet and is available to administrative departments, faculties and laboratories.

*Work in progress:*

- *Harmonisation of practices on publishing job descriptions for postdoctoral roles on EURAXESS*
- *Publication of PhD vacancies on EURAXESS via the TEBL platform*

## **Formation and structure of selection committees and interview panels**

### Lecturer-researchers – R3 and R4

Rules governing the formation and composition of selection committees are explained in the lecturer-researcher recruitment guide which is sent to chairs and members of selection committees and updated annually. This guide outlines all stages in the recruitment process for permanent lecturer-researchers.

In addition to this guide, chairs and vice chairs of selection committees are required to undertake training delivered by the institution. This covers all regulatory matters and the principles of non-discrimination and gender equality and raises awareness of related potential inherent biases. It also draws attention to the principles of receptivity to diverse backgrounds and pathways (cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary, geographic, etc.).

For fixed term lecturer-researcher roles (ATER and LRU contracts), a selection committee is formed either per role or per faculty. Responsibility for organising recruitment procedures lies with the four colleges and recruiting department.

### Post-doctoral researchers – R2

Selection committees for postdoctoral roles follow the same recruitment principles as those for fixed term employees (identical selection committee for all applicants, gender parity on interview panels). Members of these committees have an opportunity to undertake training on how to conduct a job interview.

### PhD Students –R1

Doctoral schools decide and set arrangements for proposing PhD topics and assessing applications. They must publish the composition of the selection committee (members and their status). Candidates who are invited for interview are informed of the composition of the selection committee in advance of their interview.

### BIATSS employees – R2 to R4

The management charter for fixed term employees was updated and approved by the governing board of Nantes Université in March 2023. It can be consulted on the intranet and is available to anyone recruiting temporary members of staff. The structure of selection committees must be identical for all candidates and must also comply with the management guidelines on parity.

Members of selection committees are offered training through the Human Resources and Social Dialogue Department (DRHDS) skills management centre.

*Work in progress:*

- *Development of a common, institution-level procedure on selecting applicants, across all doctoral schools.*

---

<sup>1</sup> PhDs in Brittany and Pays de la Loire

- Publication of a guide for recruiters on how to recruit successfully (sometime in 2023-2024)

**Candidate selection, interview and evaluation – analysis of applications, pre-selection procedures, interviews**

Lecturer-researchers – R3 and R4

After assessing the admissibility of applications, selection committees consider applications, without discrimination and in no particular order of priority. Following discussions, the committee draws up a list of candidates to interview. Before the interview stage, all candidates are informed either that their application has been unsuccessful or that they have been invited to interview. The selection committee then interviews successful candidates in conditions which must be identical for every applicant (including the duration of the interview). Interviews are conducted in French. Every interview includes a short teaching session which will be identical for all candidates with the content set freely by the committee. Resources and document templates are available for members of selection committees in the lecturer-researcher recruitment guide.

PhD students [R1]

Each doctoral school publishes its recruitment procedure, specifying and explaining the different criteria used for selecting and assessing candidates. A common guide highlighting key principles and best practice is being developed for doctoral schools to share. A template advertisement for PhD vacancies will be available for the 2024 recruitment cycle. Laboratories preselect candidates for interview. Every candidate receives a reply, either positive (with an invitation to interview) or negative. At the interview, the panel grades candidates according to assessment criteria set by the doctoral school. All interviewees will receive either a positive or negative response depending on the final grading. Successful candidates who accept the offer will receive an email explaining the procedure for enrolment and establishing a PhD contract.

BIATSS employees [R2 to R4]

An evaluation grid is made available to the recruitment committee and is used to assess each application according to pre-defined criteria. This must be sent to the recruitment office or to the appropriate HR manager so that the final decision can be approved. If this stage is not followed, a formal written offer cannot be sent to the successful candidate. The wording in the grid must be substantiated, so that it can be referred to should an unsuccessful candidate challenge the decision.

For all appointments, recruitment committees and selection panels should make sure they consider a full set of selection criteria, as set out in the evaluation grids.

*Work in progress:*

- Development of a management charter for fixed term lecturers
- Development of a template interview report for doctoral schools

**Candidate feedback and appointments**

Category	Arrangements for advertising roles and informing applicants
Permanent and fixed term lecturer-researchers [R3 and R4]	Candidates are notified via GALAXIE at the end of the process A formal offer is sent electronically to the successful candidate
Post-doctoral researchers [R2]	Colleges inform candidates at the end of the process A formal offer is sent to the successful candidate
PhD students [R1]	Doctoral schools produce a summary of the interview giving the final grade recommended

	<p>The vice president for PhD matters approves the final grading</p> <p>Doctoral schools notify candidates</p> <p>Candidates must accept within seven days. After this timescale the reserve list is referred to</p>
BIATSS employees [R2 to R4]	<p>A formal offer is sent to the successful candidate</p> <p>Candidates have eight days to accept the offer</p> <p>Successful candidates are informed by email with return receipt</p>

### Staff induction at Nantes Université

A welcome guide and guide to HR matters are made available to all new members of staff. Supervisors should ensure that all services, resources and support arrangements are offered to new arrivals (checklist for managers).

Induction days are arranged to facilitate discussion and interaction between new employees and the different teams at the University (policy and administrative).

There are special induction arrangements for PhD students. Each laboratory inducts PhD students on their premises. At institutional level, there is a welcome morning for PhD students every year in November. Doctoral schools organise more specific sessions after the induction period.

*Work in progress:*

- Production of a welcome guide for PhD students, to be made available to laboratories

### Monitoring and continual improvement of recruitment procedures

Various procedures describe the stages in the recruitment process and identify the various actors involved. This helps to improve and harmonise practices (e.g., recruitment procedure outside of designated recruitment sessions, procedure for recruiting postdoctoral researchers).

The Human Resources and Social Dialogue Department (DRHDS), in conjunction with the four colleges and institutions' HR departments, follow a risk management and continual improvement plan. This plan helps to produce reliable HR data, to improve day-to-day practices and to provide more transparency around processes such as recruitment.

### Documents and resources available

- Management guidelines (mobility/recognition of career paths)
- Careers guide for lecturer-researchers
- Guide on recruiting permanent lecturer-researchers
- Recruitment procedure for non-teaching staff (BIATSS)
- Management charter for fixed term non-teaching staff
- Vademecum – writing a job advertisement
- Checklist for managers
- Procedure for recruiting outside of designated sessions
- Procedure for recruiting postdoctoral researchers