



HRS4R

Human Resources Strategy for Researchers

Action Plan 2024-2026

ISGlobal **Barcelona**
Institute for
Global Health

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ISGlobal HR Strategy for Researchers. Foreword

The Barcelona Institute for Global Health, ISGlobal, is the fruit of an innovative alliance between the "la Caixa" Foundation, academic institutions and government bodies to contribute to the efforts undertaken by the international community to **address the challenges in global health**.

ISGlobal is a consolidated **hub of excellence in research** that has grown out of work first started in the world of health care by the Hospital Clínic and the Parc de Salut MAR and in the academic sphere by the University of Barcelona and Pompeu Fabra University. Its working model is based on the **generation of scientific knowledge** through Research Programmes and Groups, and **its translation** through the areas of Education and Training and Analysis and Global Development.

ISGlobal's mission is to improve global health and promote health equity through excellence in research and the translation and application of knowledge.

ISGlobal's management decided to apply the European logo - HRS4R to make the institution a more attractive workplace for researchers at all levels. The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) is conceived by ISGlobal as of a methodology to put the principles of the *Charter & Code* into practice. To achieve this challenge, the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) follows a cycle that iterates once the process is completed. The cycle can be described as follows:

- Internal Gap Analysis
- Strategy and Action Plan
- Revision and acknowledgment by the European Commission
- Self-assessment
- External Evaluation by the European Commission

On July 2015 ISGlobal received the 'HR Excellence in Research' logo from the European Commission. The logo identifies the institutions and organisations as providers and supporters of a stimulating and favorable working environment, and committed in developing an HR Strategy for Researchers, designed to bring the practices and procedures in line with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter and Code).

Since its endorsement, ISGlobal has been working on aligning their human resources policies to the 40 principles of the *Charter & Code*, based on a customized action plan/HR strategy. So far, ISGlobal has designed and executed three action plans. This document outlines the different action plans developed in the past and introduces the new (the fourth one) action plan for the period 2024-2026.

The first Action Plan was designed for the **2015-2018** period with the involvement of a Working Group made up of representatives from all professional categories and approved by the ISGlobal

Direction Committee. The ISGlobal 2015-2018 Action Plan enabled the institution to fulfill the HR Vision and HR Strategic Objectives in alignment with the European Charter and Code principles.

In 2017, ISGlobal submitted the interim assessment and received the following feedback from the external assessors: HRS4R embedded, corrective actions needed.

The second Action Plan 2019-2020 was designed with the coordination of HR and the support of HRS4R Working Group. For the development of the renovated HRS4R Action Plan 2019-2020, we taken into account the Strategic Action Plan 2017-2020 of ISGlobal and the recommendations from the External Advisory Committee (EAC), from its visit on November 2017 (the External Advisory Committee met with the different collectives from the Institution). The main lines of action pursuing in the plan were:

- Develop the Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment Policy.
- Enhance promotion of gender balance and work-life balance.
- Further development of training activities.
- Increase awareness and communication about ISGlobal policies on ethics and good scientific practices.

In January 2021, the HR Excellence in Research seal was renewed following a Remote Visit from external assessors from the European Commission.

The assessors commended ISGlobal for, among other things, its open strategic approach to external evaluations: combining and integrating the results of very frequent external evaluations in a strategic central Action Plan, including HRS4R, Severo Ochoa Programme, CERCA network, the External Advisory Committee, Gender Plan, etc. Also comment on how the HRS4Rs Strategy is strongly embedded in the general strategy of the institution and how the HRS4Rs Working group has been set up in a way that several of its representatives are also part of other existing ISGlobal committees, thematically linked to the HRS4Rs strategy, making sure that there is an actual alignment between the HRS4Rs strategy and the other initiatives and processes coordinated by other working group, avoiding inconsistencies and overlapping of similar actions and guaranteeing the actual and smooth implementation of foreseen actions. Assessors also mention that a strong participatory approach is perceived by researchers in the decision process mechanism of the organisation. Researchers are involved in different roles and through different people in practically all the Committees of ISGlobal, so that there is a very "democratic" participation.

The third Action Plan 2021-2023 was designed with the coordination of HR and the HRS4R Working Group, composed of representatives from all professional categories at the institution. In this case, due to the situation of the COVID pandemic and lockdown, it was considered that it was not a good time to carry out the GAP analysis. However, considering the participatory processes previously carried out in ISGlobal, it was agreed to compile the actions resulting from these processes: the institution's Strategic Plan 2019-2023, in which the strengths and weaknesses of the institution were reviewed in a highly participatory manner, with large working groups and the opportunity for

all ISGlobal staff to participate. Those actions included in the new Severo Ochoa 2020-2023 programme and related to the HR strategy and the principles of the Charter & Code, such as gender issues, selection, research integrity, etc. were also included. And actions derived from the different working groups of the institution (Predoctoral Committee, Postdoctoral Committee, Compliance Committee, etc.), and finally action arisen from the All-hands Meeting celebrated with all staff. The main lines of action pursuing in the plan were:

- Reinforce the Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment Policy for Researchers by establishing a mechanism for suggestions and complaints, monitoring quality of the process and creating specific guidelines for panel composition and selection of Group Leaders.
- Enhance promotion of gender balance and work-life balance by empowering women with leadership training.
- Increase awareness and communication about Data Protection
- Further development of training activities more structured and to focus to the young researchers.
- Ensure continuity of research lines and key positions by developing a succession plan.

All Actions Plans can be found at our website [here](#)

Designing the HRS4R Action Plan 2024-2026

The process of the internal review for the renewal was led and coordinated by the HRS4R Working Group, together with the HR area and the Office for Coordination & Research Management.

To measure ISGlobal's compliance with the Charter & Code, the HRS4R Working Group designed a survey that included questions on the 40 principles.



Charter & Code current pillars and principles. Source: EUROAXESS

The survey, approved by the direction Committee was launched on July 2022, addressed to all staff. The survey was anonymous and 3 dimensions were collected for analysis: seniority + gender + area (research + category). Data was collected from July-August 2022 using Redcap v. Online Survey.

The result analysis should reveal the most relevant principles for the staff and their current level of implementation at ISGlobal. Those considered as most relevant but that are not fully implemented should be detected in the GAP Analysis and included in the Action Plan through measures to achieve their effective implementation in the near future.

- 194 answers received, 43% of all staff.
- 60% work at ISGlobal form more than 3 years
- 69% are women
- 60% are from Research Area, from them:
 - 25% PIs
 - 24% Postdoctoral researchers
 - 24% Predoctoral researchers
 - 27% Research support

You can find the HRS4R Survey report in Annex 1.

During the Gap Analysis following areas for improvement were detected:

Ethical and Professional aspects:

From the Gap analysis emerged that there is a greater or lesser lack of knowledge on the part of employees about existing policies and procedures in the institution. It is necessary to implement measures that help to disseminate them, such as the Intellectual Property Policy, the Compliance Programme, submission to the Ethics Committee, how to patent a result, the Professional Assessment Programme or how to make allegations in case of misconduct.

86% say that an open science policy is needed, and 78% of PIs think that the policy for evaluating tenure track researchers should be updated according to open science principles.

Recruitment & Selection (including OTM-R principles):

The Gap Analysis revealed that also in this area is need more dissemination, for exemple the Selection Policy, only knew by 35% of the staff or the Succession Policy. The same happens with the Predoctoral Guidebook or the Postdoctoral Guidebook for newcomers. The need for better monitoring of selection processes and indicators is also reported. An important part mentions the importance of including open science principles in the selection process.

Working conditions:

There is still a need to disseminate existing in-house policies, such as the salary policy or the Core Facilities Policy, which are little known. It has been identified as a key issue to find ways to improve the wellbeing of our staff, from mental health issues to the improvement of spaces for socialization. It is important to identify the psychosocial risks at the institution and implement measures to avoid them. It is also appropriate to develop a Conflict Management Guide.

Training & Development:

There is a demand to reinforce the information and dissemination of the Internal Training Program, it is important to give to it more visibility. It is recommended to improve the measurement of the

learning at the Institute and its impact on the participants. Identifying the right Indicators is key to understand where to improve.

Action Plan 2024-2026

According to the outcome of our internal gap analysis, and the needs identified in the HR area, as well as in the different ISGlobal participatory groups (PhD Committee, Postdoctoral Committee, Coordination and Research Management, Equity & Gender Commission, Compliance Committee, etc.). Always in line with the new strategic cycle as defined in Our Strategy up to 2027, the strategic lines of actions to follow in our HRS4Rs 2024-2026 Action Plan are the following:

- Awareness raising and training in **research integrity, ethics and good scientific practice**.
- Continue fostering **recruitment** procedures, which are open, efficient, transparent, supportive and internationally comparable by reinforcing procedures and guidance.
- Prepare, develop and monitor the ISGlobal **research assessment** reform action plan 2024-2027 in line with the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment.
- Enhance **Health and Well-being** by designing and fostering a framework that covers the areas: workplace relationships, mental health, work-life balance, and health and safety at the workplace.
- Further consolidation of **onboarding programme, internal training and career development**.

The actions proposed in the Action Plan 2024-2026 have been approved by the ISGlobal Direction Committee in January 2023. They have been grouped in four areas in alignment with the *Charter & Code*: Ethical and Professional Aspects, Recruitment, Working Conditions, and Training and Development. For each action has been identified the Charter & Code principle/s, the areas or unit/s in charge, a timeframe, and corresponding indicator/s.

ACTION PLAN 2024-2026

Ethical and Professional					
Action Nr.	Action	C&C Principle	Areas / units in charge	Timeframe	Indicator
1	Develop a Leadership training program for new PIs. It would include leadership: team management and conflict resolution, gender issues, supervision and mentoring skills; other transversal areas, such as innovation, communication, research integrity and ethics, advocacy strategies among others.	1, 2, 3, 7	OCRM	Q4-2024	- Program - PIs trained
2	Implement a mandatory course to predocs, postdocs and junior PIs on Research Integrity and Ethics, organized twice a year.	2, 3, 4, 7	OCRM	Q-1 2024	- Number of participants
3	Develop an Open Science Policy	8	OCRM	Q4-2025	- Policy developed
4	Develop and implement the ISGlobal Research Assessment Reform Action Plan 2024-27	11, 19,27,28	OCRM	Q3-2026	- Action plan and annual review of actions undertaken
5	Include the Protocol against labor harassment in the Welcome kit for all newcomers	10,24,27,34	Internal Comm.	Q2-2024	- Protocol included in the welcome kit
6	Short practical formation for ISGlobal staff to make people to participate in disseminating science but also to improve the participation of the public in ISGlobal research.	9	Outreach Unit	Q1-2025	- Training done - Number of Participants

Recruitment					
Action Nr.	Action	C&C Principle	Depts. in charge	Timeframe	Indicator
7	Provide training/guidelines to people who participate in selection and hiring processes in line with the commitments of the research assessment reform agreement from an equality, diversity and inclusion perspective with the purpose of eliminating stereotypes; detect abilities in the hidden circuit, use non-discriminatory interview techniques, etc.	10,14	HR	Q4-2024	- Number of staff receiving guidelines/training
8	Continue fostering recruitment procedures, which are open, efficient, transparent, supportive and internationally comparable by reinforcing procedures and advertising campaigns. Visibility of OTM-R commitments covering all aspects of OTM-R as a whole	10,12,14	HR	Q3-2024	- Number of recruitment procedures conducted - Indicators - Dissemination of OTM-R guidelines
9	Implement a new selection platform to improve the process and its indicators.	12,14,27	HR	Q4-2024	-New platform
10	Reinforce competitive international recruitment practices incorporations a plan to attract young talent developing a professional development plan (ISGlobal Experience)	12,14	HR	Q3-2025	-Professional development Plan "ISGlobal Experience"

Working Conditions and Social Security					
Action Nr.	Action	C&C Principle	Depts. In charge	Timeframe	Indicator
11	Review the <i>Parental Leave Guidelines for ISGlobal employees</i> including: 1) advice on the first steps to be taken when having a baby in Spain, a) within the hospital b) once you are at home, and c) in the event you are single family, large family or other family composition;	24, 25	HR E&GC	Q1-2025	- Document
12	Create a Well-being framework at ISGlobal including the following areas of intervention: Well-being (workplace relationships, mental health, work-life balance) and Health and Safety (Risk prevention and management)	24	HR	Q3-2024	- Number of implemented initiatives
13	Carry out a psychosocial risk assessment and a proposal of measures to guarantee psychosocial health at ISGlobal	24	HR	Q1-2024	- Assessment results - Proposal of measures
14	Bring innovation knowledge and technology transfer activities closer to ISGlobal researchers and create a community together with other centers of interested researchers that is connected.	31	Innovation	Q2-2025	- Community-number of participants
15	Drawing up the new equality plan 2025-2028	27, 10	E&GC	Q4-2024	- New Equity Plan
16	Develop a Guide on Conflict management	34	HR	Q4-2024	- Guide developed and disseminated
17	Improve the Onboarding programme with a one-day onboarding training	24	Internal Comm	Q2-2025	- Onboarding program

Training and Development					
Action Nr.	Action	C&C Principle	Depts. In charge	Timeframe	Indicator
18	Develop a ISGlobal Internal Training Policy for individual demands	38, 39	HR-Training	Q4-2024	- Document
19	Conduct a survey to identify internal training needs	38, 39	HR-Training	Q1-2024	-Survey results
20	Improve the dissemination of and access to the in-house training programme by creating a new website with all the information related to the courses.	37, 38, 39	HR-Training	Q1-2024	- Website done
21	Design and implement a training initiative targeted to PhD students in order to take care of their mental health and physical wellbeing as they work towards their PhD	38, 39	HR	Q4-2024	- Number of participants
22	Increase visibility and follow up the effectiveness of the PRBB Career Weeks	38, 39	HR OCRM	Q3-2024	- Number of participants
23	Review the career framework for the Research Managers (EARMA)	22,38	OCRM	2Q-2026	- Career framework

Acronyms

Q: Quarter of the year

HR: Human Resources Department

OCRM- Office for Coord. & Research Management

E&GC- Equity & Gender Commission

Annex 1. Survey HRS4R 2022- report