



EURAXESS – RIGHTS

Human Resources Strategy for Research, incorporating the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

Background to the Development of a Strategic Declaration

The European Commission has developed recommendations for Member States relating to the rights and responsibilities of researchers and their employers and/or funders in order to standardise best practice in terms of recruitment and employment terms, to facilitate mobility and to increase the appeal of research as a career by offering real job prospects (JO L75/67 22 March 2005). These recommendations, known as "The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers" (http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/brochure_rights/am509774CEE_EN_E4.pdf) are not binding but the organisations which adopt them commit to developing their practice in order to achieve the goals proposed by the Charter. A résumé can be found in Appendix 1.

The European Union has created a tool to support those institutions wishing to implement the Charter and the Code of Conduct: the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers incorporating the Charter and Code Principles (<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/strategy4Researcher>). This tool is intended as a way of appraising the situation within the institution, and monitoring its evolution. The underlying processes are:

- implementation by institutions on an individual and voluntary basis;
- institutional self-assessment which respects institutions' autonomy;
- simplicity, flexibility and personalisation appropriate to the institution's overall strategy;
- transparent and ongoing approach

The HRS4R course of action proposed by the European Commission consists of five stages:

1. internal analysis of current practice, involving the main key players ("gap analysis")
2. publication of the main results of this analysis on the institution's website, with proposed initiatives for attaining identified objectives
3. request for acknowledgment of the strategy by the European Commission
4. implementation of the HR strategy within the institution via its own internal quality assurance procedures, with self-assessment after two years
5. external evaluation after four years

The institutions implementing this process can, at their own request, ask for acknowledgment of the procedure by the European Commission. Obtaining acknowledgment is a mark of the quality of the institution and constitutes a real advantage for the development of European projects, particularly for mobility initiatives (for example the Seventh Framework Programme – People).



The Board of Rectors of the Universities of the French-Speaking Community (CReF) has decided to make this dossier a priority and to give the FRS-FNRS the task of overseeing the progression of different institutions making this step (Euraxess Work Groups). The Board has officially informed the Commission of its work and of its intention to submit requests for acknowledgment (which remain individual in conception and form) at the end of 2010.

ULg's Course of Action

Since 2005, the University of Liège (via the CReF) has decided to sign up to the principles of the European Charter and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Many initiatives contributing to this decision have since been developed at ULg, even if their link to the European Charter is not explicit. The *Euraxess Services Mobility Center*, however, has been created specifically to welcome and to provide information for incoming and outgoing researchers and to help them complete the administrative formalities for their stay (http://www.ulg.ac.be/cms/c_25090/centre-de-mobilite-euraxess).

An informal working group was set up by the Rector B. Rentier in March 2010 to formulate a proposition for the HR Strategy for the development of coordinated and structured follow-up initiatives, for the application of the European Charter and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers by ULg, and their assessment.

The Working Group's Course of Action

The working group consisted of Prof. F. Coignoul, Vice-Rector responsible for Quality Assessment, Prof. F. Pichault, Director of Research at HEC-ULg, three researchers, G. Cormann, Senior Research Assistant, V. Pirenne, FRS-FNRS Senior Research Associate, and T. Desai, Senior Research Fellow, and I. Halleux, Executive Director of Research & Development. All academic disciplines were therefore represented. The group met five times between March and September.

Its aims were :

- to analyse the current status of the application of the Charter and the Code of Conduct at ULg, based on the forty principles set out in the Charter and the Code;
- to suggest a version of the Human Resources Strategy for presentation to the ULg Board of Directors and subsequently to the European Commission with a request for acknowledgment by Europe in December 2010.

Established Working Procedure:

- to examine in detail the forty principles of the Charter and the Code;
- to define the points for analysis;
- to carry out an appraisal, identifying available resources and assessing strengths and weaknesses;
- to identify the types of initiatives¹ to be undertaken and their level of priority;
- to oversee interactions with other concerned or competent parties: institutional working groups, official bodies, ULg administration, external working groups (e.g.

¹ Possible initiatives: distribution of information, consciousness raising, training, strategic declaration, budget allocation, ad hoc working groups, follow-up of tools/instruments (development, application), organisation of these initiatives according to various stakeholders.



- Women and Science), projects already underway and their durability (e.g. MIRVAL), other Euraxess working groups (e.g. Jobs);
- to write a strategy document HRS4R to be presented to the Rectoral Board, via the Vice-rector for Quality.

Analysis of the current status of the application of the Charter and of the Code of Conduct

European Charter for Researchers

The legal context of universities of the Belgian French-Speaking Community is particularly encouraging in terms of the Charter and already anticipates a number of the recommendations. It comprises the following elements in particular:

- the autonomy of universities;
- researchers employed under contracts that give access to social security, right from the beginning of doctoral research;
- flexibility for people with disabilities, possibilities for working part-time, parental leave, existence of security and hygiene services, etc.;
- the return of intellectual property rights by the Walloon public authorities; the return of a third of licence revenues to researchers, with attractive fiscal policies;
- the integration of researchers in the decision-making bodies of the institution
- various possibilities for appealing

In addition, specific steps have been taken by ULg in favour of researchers, and are an integrated part of the Rector's strategy (*Projet pour l'ULg*):

- creation of thematic research councils, definition of research units, rationalisation and clarification of the procedures concerning funding of research units and researchers;
- awarding doctoral grants that include a research budget for students in the Humanities and Social Sciences;
- financing post-doctoral positions for incoming foreign researchers ;
- promotion and encouragement of mobility through the creation of ULg mobility grants.
- support for powerful research infrastructures in research units and for interdisciplinary platforms;
- support for Life Long Learning for researchers, either in-house (general) or external (more specialised), with grants for congresses and long-term research stays;
- as soon as legally possibly, signing of the "hosting convention" (scientific visa), with risk-acceptance by ULg.

Despite these efforts, the economic context in which universities are evolving is not favourable either to the recruitment of permanent researchers, or to offering them real career prospects. In 2009, the Board of Directors of the University of Liège voted in a policy relating to the career management of research staff paid by external sources, modelled on that used for statutory academics. This should allow for standardisation, without, however, allowing all researchers under contract to be taken on permanently.

The role and responsibilities of researchers described in the text of the Charter have, for a long time, been a major preoccupation of the university and its professors. Despite the efforts



made (notably concerning doctoral training), it seems that the global research environment, on which the Commission insists, is unrecognised. Researchers are often ill-informed about funding possibilities and not sufficiently trained in the management of research projects. Too many young researchers know little about the strategic objectives of their work and misunderstand the context, generally contractual, in which they work. They are rarely up-to-date with practices and rules in force in the institution, in terms of quality, ethical principles, intellectual property rights, work or training conditions, security and hygiene. The University has a duty to improve the training of researchers in this matter, allowing them to acquire additional skills that promote a “responsible professional attitude”.

Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

In this case it appears that a change in working practice is needed in order to implement this code. It requires, on the one hand, the wide and systematic publication of research positions – this is already the case for teaching jobs – and to support, without hindrance, incoming foreign researchers. On the other hand, it is important to draw up recruitment procedures, to define selection criteria, and to inform candidates of the different steps of the process.

In the short term, calls for applications, offers of grants and positions must be systematically published. In the longer term, it is necessary to improve the method of selecting candidates, given that the number of young researchers trained in our universities will eventually prove insufficient to meet the needs of research.



Objectives and actions to be undertaken

Aims

The strategy comprises three types of actions that can be started or reinforced in the short- to midterm: political strategy actions, actions concerning individual researchers and actions concerning the development of priorities.

Actions to prioritise

Following established European guidelines, the working group identified a number areas in which ULg showed some weaknesses, making these priority actions. The steering committee will be responsible for classifying and dealing with these actions, according to the priorities that are to be established (Addendum in Appendix 2), in order to ensure an effective application and follow-up. Some of these initiatives are already underway.

(1) Political strategy actions (institutional positioning):

- clarification of the internal term ‘research staff’ who are concerned by this declaration and that of the ‘researcher’ given by Frascati;
- policy of systematic publication of job offers and open-minded approach to the recruitment of foreign researchers;
- transparent policy concerning offers to, and selection and recruitment of, researchers and teachers;
- follow up of previous work and definition of ways of applying measures relative to the employment and the career of the researcher, regardless of his or her status;
- policies and terms of development and promotion of all forms of mobility, in particular trans-sector mobility and mixed careers;
- creation of ethical and appeal bodies for all researchers (such as they already exist for academic staff and for students);
- support for the recently created Council of Doctoral Studies (CA 19 October 2010) through a specially dedicated administrative unit for Doctoral Affairs;
- declaration of an integration policy for non-European researchers, with particular attention paid to doctoral students from Developing Countries and to researchers involved in projects with those countries;
- definition of actions aiming at eliminating discrimination, notably in terms of gender;
- improvement of the research environment by a clear strategic policy concerning investment in research infrastructures (movable and immovable);
- policies and methods for self-assessment and external assessment of results, tools and institutional research funding and mobility programmes;
- enhance the national and international participation of research-specific working groups

(2) Actions for researchers on an individual level:

- definition and setting up of a periodic evaluation of researchers, incorporating the different aspects of the profession;
- systematic information for professors, researchers and doctoral students on the ethical and professional aspects of their profession;
- access to training modules run by the institution and development of specific professional modules;
- access to information related to researchers’ rights and their obligations to ULg.



(3) *Actions for the development of priorities (by the administration):*

- specialisation of support units for the orientation and development of researchers' careers, in particular for young researchers;
- systematic publication of job offers for researchers, integrated into Euraxess Jobs ;
- strengthening of Life Long learning for researchers, with a particular emphasis on the development of soft skills;
- implementation of a pay-scale "Doctor" recognising those holding a PhD, for all university jobs;
- strengthening of the services for the management of research projects (R&D Administration);
- development of Euraxess services for all of ULG's campuses ;
- creation of an appendix to the work contract that includes institutional rules and the rights and responsibilities of the researcher;
- flexible working conditions, part-time contracts or temporary reclassification for researchers during difficult or sensitive periods (illness, incompatibility linked to health, pregnancy, etc.);
- integration of the recommendations of various groups working on questions linked to the Charter and the Code (e.g. Women and Science);
- development of and increase in access to information on individual funding for researchers (positions, mobility, various grants);
- information on procedures concerning job offers and the selection and recruitment of researchers at all levels;
- setting up of a 'research' training module for all new researchers, and particularly for doctoral students;
- specific training for new members of the research councils concerning the institution's strategic questions on research;
- practical support for the organisation of congresses and conferences.

Deployment of the Strategy

The creation of an HRS4R steering committee, entitled "GP Euraxess Rights" has been suggested, that will bring together the different groups of key players. This working group will be chaired by the First Vice-Rector. It will consist of the Vice-Rectors for Research and Quality Assessment, the Administrator, the General Director, three researchers (including at least one doctoral student), and administrative bodies (Research and Development - RD, Human Resources - RH, Quality assessment - SMAQ).

The steering committee will be responsible for establishing priorities and periodically examining the progress of the strategy modifying certain aspects if necessary.

The SMAQ, the ARD and the ARH will be responsible for the implementation and the following up of the strategy, under the responsibility of the Vice-Rector for Quality Assessment, by assuring the leadership essential for this work to be successful, and by reporting on progress. The SMAQ will be responsible for organising assessments.

Conclusion

This strategy document was submitted to professors, researchers, and administrative directors of ULg as a means of checking its validity and in order for corrections to be made. The strategy put forward thus integrates different points of view and takes into account those of



other key players, be they university representatives (via the FRS-FNRS working group) or governmental decision-makers (via the Economic and Social Council of the Walloon Region – CESRW - Working Group, in particular).

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The Board of Directors of the University of Liège endorses this document and has decided to make it available to everyone by publishing it on the University of Liège website, on the pages dedicated specifically to the EURAXESS initiative (http://www.ulg.ac.be/euraxess_rights).

It has decided on the creation of GP Euraxess Rights composed of the following members:

- President: Albert Corhay, First Vice-Rector
- Vice-Rector for Research, Pierre Wolper
- Vice-Rector for Quality Assessment, Freddy Coignoul
- Administrator, François Ronday
- General Director, Monique Marcourt
- Research Representatives, Grégory Cormann, Thomas Desaive and Thomas Leuther
- Administration Representatives, Isabelle Halleux (ARD), Linda Agro (ARH), Catherine Vandeleene (SMAQ)



Supporting documents:

- Project for ULg
- Survey and Round Tables
- Report of the working group that prepared the HR Strategy document
- Endorsement of the European Charter (CReF)
- Declaration of interest in the HR Strategy for researchers (CReF)
- European Charter and Code of Conduct for Recruitment

Contacts:

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Appendix 1. The Charter and the Code in Short

The European Charter for Researchers is a set of general principles and requirements which specifies the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of researchers as well as of employers and/or funders of researchers. The aim of the Charter is to ensure that the nature of the relationship between researchers and employers or funders is conducive to successful performance in generating, transferring, sharing and disseminating knowledge and technological development, and to the career development of researchers. The Charter also recognizes the value of all forms of mobility as a means for enhancing the professional development of researchers.

In this sense, the Charter constitutes a framework for researchers, employers and funders which invites them to act responsibly and as professionals within their working environment, and to recognise each other as such.

The Charter addresses all researchers in the European Union at all stages of their career and covers all fields of research in the public and private sectors, irrespective of the nature of the appointment or employment, the legal status of their employer or the type of organisation or establishment in which the work is carried out. It takes into account the multiple roles of researchers, who are appointed not only to conduct research and/or to carry out development activities but are also involved in supervision, mentoring, management or administrative tasks.

This Charter takes as its premise that researchers as well as employers and/or funders of researchers have an overriding obligation to ensure that they meet the requirements of the respective national or regional legislation. Where researchers enjoy a status and rights which are, in certain respects, more favourable than those provided for in this Charter, its terms should not be invoked to diminish the status and rights already acquired.

Researchers, as well as employers and funders, who adhere to this Charter will also be respecting the fundamental rights and observe the principles recognised by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

The Charter is divided into two sections. The first is aimed at researchers, the second at employers and researcher funders.

- Section for researchers: the document deals with the basic principles governing the research profession: freedom of research, responsibility, ethics. It focuses on the guiding role of experienced researchers for good conduct and the sound management of research projects, the dissemination and evaluation of results, and the mentoring of young researchers. It reminds researchers of their responsibilities vis-à-vis society and the wider public.
- Section for employers and research funders: the document suggests that researchers should be seen as professionals and that care must be taken to provide them with an appropriate, stimulating and progressive research environment. It asks employers to recognise the value of geographical mobility as well as that between different fields or disciplines, and to put in place the means necessary to promote such mobility. It also recommends the setting up of regular, transparent assessment methods, taking into account all the important guidelines concerning three roles: teaching, research



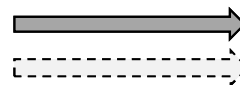
and contribution to the community. Employers and funders should integrate researchers in decision-making bodies. The document finally asks that employers adhere to the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

The Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers consists of a set of general principles and requirements that should be followed by employers and/or funders when appointing or recruiting researchers. These principles and requirements should ensure observance of values such as transparency of the recruitment process and equal treatment of all applicants, in particular with regard to the development of an attractive, open and sustainable European labour market for researchers, and are complementary to those outlined in the European Charter for Researchers. Institutions and employers adhering to the Code of Conduct will openly demonstrate their commitment to act in a responsible and respectable way and to provide fair framework conditions to researchers, with a clear intention to contribute to the advancement of the European Research Area.

Legend :



Action to be developed in priority (10/1/20 11)



Phase of development

Phase of follow-up and improvement

2011	2012	2013	2014	
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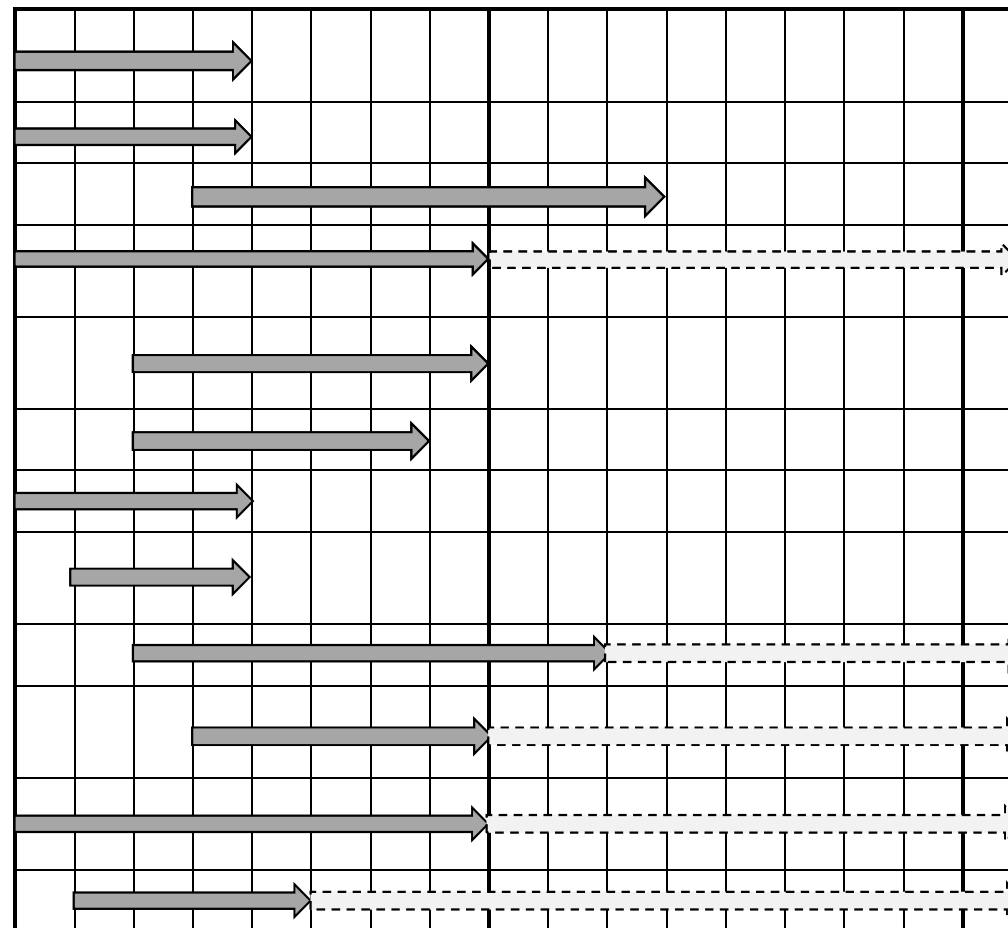
Acknowledgment by the European Commission

R1	Ask for acknowledgment by the EU
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Political Strategy actions :

P1	Clarification of the internal term of "research staff" who are concerned by this declaration and that of "researcher" given by Frascati
P2	Policy of systematic publication of job offers and open-minded approach to the recruitment of foreign researchers
P3	Transparent policy concerning offers to, and selection and recruitment of, researchers and professors
P4	Follow-up of previous work and definition of ways of applying measures relatives to the employment and the career of researcher, regardless of his/her status
P5	Policies and terms of development and promotion of all forms of mobility, in particular trans-sector mobility and mixed careers
P6	Creation of ethical and appeal bodies for all researchers (such as they already exist for academic staff and students)
P7	Support for the recently created Council of Doctoral Studies (CA 19 Oct. 2010) through a specially dedicated administrative unit for Doctoral Affairs
P8	Declaration of an integration policy for non-EU researchers, with particular attention paid to doctoral students from Developing Countries and to researchers involved in projects with those countries
P9	Definition of actions aiming at eliminating discrimination, notably in terms of gender
P10	Improvement of the research environment by a clear strategic policy concerning investment in research infrastructures (movable and immovable)
P11	Policies and methods for self-assessment and external assessment of results, tools and institutional research funding and mobility programmes
P12	Enhance of the national and international participation of research-specific working groups





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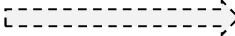
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Action to be developed in priority (10/1/2011)



Phase of development

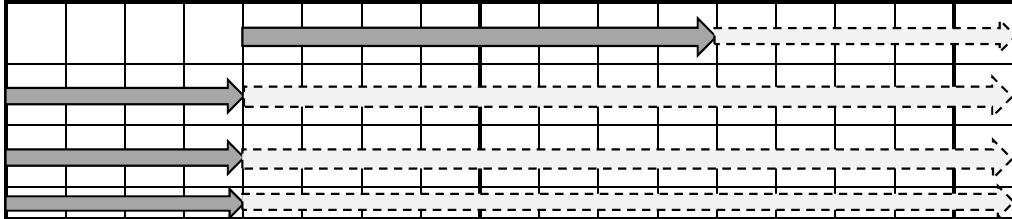


Phase of follow-up and improvement

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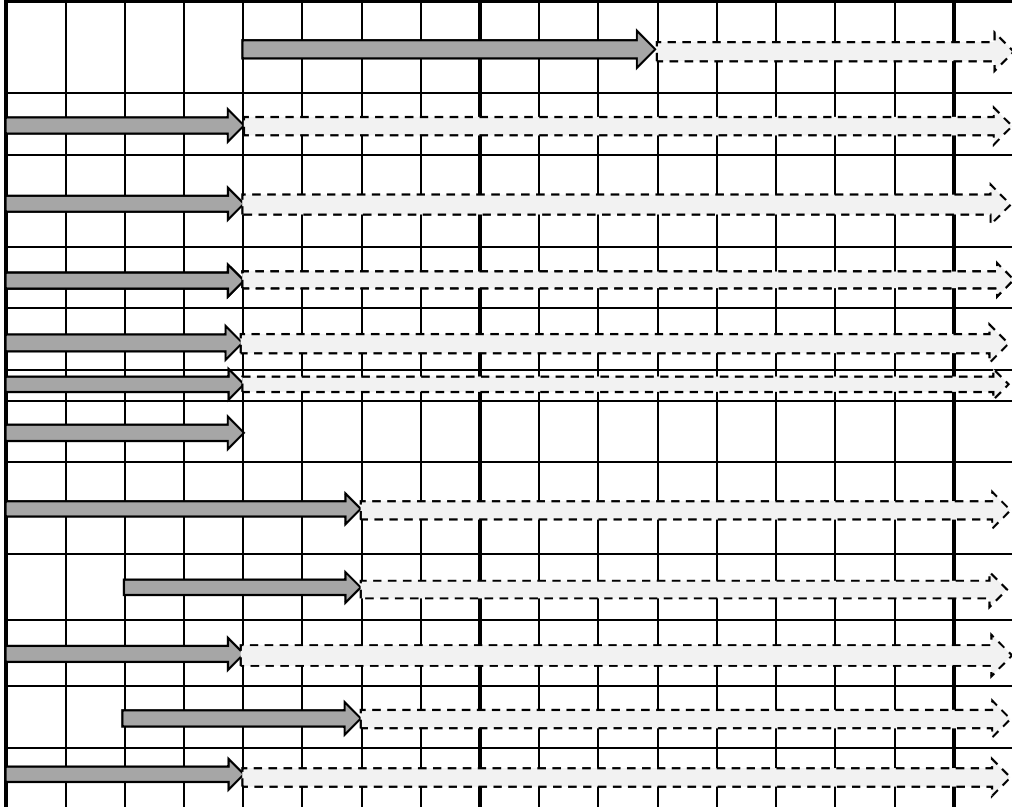
Actions for researchers on an individual level :

C1	Definition and setting up of a periodic evaluation of researchers, incorporating the different aspects of the profession
C2	Systematic information for professors, researchers and doctoral students on the éthical and professional aspects of their profession
C3	Access to the training modules run by the institution and development of specific professional modules
C4	Access to information related to researchers' rights and their obligations to ULg



Actions for the development of priorities (by the administration) :

M1	Specialisation of support units for the orientation and development of researchers' career, in particular for young researchers
M2	Systematic publication of job offers for researchers, integrated into Euraxess Jobs
M3	Strengthening of Life Long Learning for researchers, with a particular emphasis on the development of soft skills
M4	Application of the pay-scale "Doctor" recognising those holding a PhD, for all university jobs
M5	Strengthening of the services for the management of research projects (R&D Administration)
M6	Development of Euraxess Services for all of ULg's campuses
M7	Creation of an appendix to the work contract that includes institutional rules and the rights and responsibilities of the researcher
M8	Flexible working conditions, part-time contracts or temporary reclassification for researchers during difficult or sensitive periods (illness, incompatibility linked to health, pregnancy, etc.)
M9	Integration of the recommendations of various groups working on questions linked to the Charte and Code (e.g. Women and Science)
M10	Development of and increase in access to information on individual funding for researchers (positions, mobility, various grants)
M11	Information on procedures concerning job offers and the selection and recruitment of the researchers at all levels
M12	Setting up of a "research" training module for all new researchers, and particularly for the doctoral students





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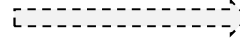
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Phase of development

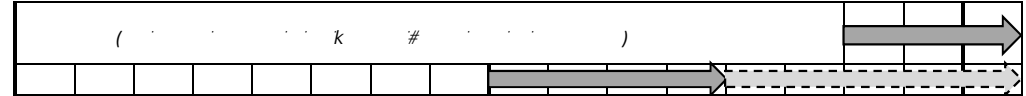


Phase of follow-up and improvement

2011	2012	2013	2014	
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Actions for the development of priorities (by the Administration) - cont. :

M13	Specific training for new members of the research councils, concerning the institution's strategic questions on research
M14	Practical support for the organisation of congresses and conferences



Assessment actions :

E1	Self-assessment after 2 years
E2	External assessment after 4 years

