



CRM HRS4R Action Plan 2022-2024

INDEX

About the CRM.....	3
HRS4R background at the CRM.....	4
Internal Review.....	7
Organisational Information.....	7
Ethical and professional aspects.....	8
Recruitment and selection	9
Working conditions.....	10
Training and Development.....	11
2022-2024 Action Plan.....	13
Open Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Policy	20
ANNEX: SELF-ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS.....	22

Case number: 2018ES343628

Name Organisation: Centre de Recerca Matemàtica

Organisation's contact details: Centre de Recerca Matemàtica, Campus de Bellaterra, Edifici C, Bellaterra, Barcelona, 08193

Submission date to the European Commission: 17/01/2022

About the CRM

The Centre de Recerca Matemàtica was established in 1984 by Professor Manuel Castellet as a centre of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans (IEC, the Catalan Academy), in the premises of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). It is the oldest mathematics research institute in Spain. Presently, the CRM is a consortium between the Generalitat de Catalunya (the Catalan Government), represented by its Minister of Enterprise and Knowledge, the IEC and the UAB. The CRM belongs to the CERCA Agency of research centres sponsored by the Catalan Government, and is a member of ERCOM (European Research Centres in Mathematics), a committee of the European Mathematical Society, together with other European centres of a similar nature. It is also a member of the EPDI (European Post-Doctoral Institute for the Mathematical Sciences) for the promotion of postdoctoral mobility and the International Mathematical Sciences Institute.

The CRM is currently the managing institution of the Barcelona Graduate School of Mathematics (BGSMath) and a promoting institution of Bioinformatics Barcelona (BIB). The CRM is also a node of the Instituto Español de Matemáticas (IEMath). Since 2009, the CRM's budget is part of the public budget of the Catalan Government. Core funding is provided by the Catalan government through yearly contracts. Other funding is obtained through competitive calls of the European Union, the Spanish Ministries or the Generalitat. The CRM was awarded in the year 2000 with the Narcis de Monturiol Plate Award to Scientific and Technological Merit (Picture).

One of the core roles of the CRM is the organisation of international research programmes on selected topics in the field of mathematics, mathematical sciences and all its applications. The CRM hosts every year several leading researchers from all around the world to interact with local researchers over extended periods. The CRM, as a member of the CERCA network of research centre in Catalunya, is strongly committed to fostering and enhancing research throughout the country. Each research programme held at the CRM spawn new collaborations among researchers from different backgrounds and levels of expertise during the lectures, seminars, and informal interaction, which the CRM building has been designed specifically to encourage.

HRS4R background at the CRM

Launched in 2008, the **Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)** was created to support institutions and funding organizations in the endorsement and implementation of [The European Charter for Researchers & The Code of Conduct for Recruitment policies](#). The implementation of the **Charter & Code's** strategy and practices aims to ensure that the nature of the relationship between researchers and employers is conducive to successful performance in generating, transferring, sharing, and disseminating knowledge and technological development, and to the career development of researchers.

The **HR Excellence in Research award** gives public recognition to research institutions that have made progress in aligning their human resource policies with the principles set out in the Charter & Code. Institutions that have been awarded the right to use the icon can use it to highlight their commitment to implement fair and transparent recruitment and appraisal procedures for researchers.

To aid those organizations committed to implementing these guidelines, the **European Commission (EC)** set out a process consisting of five steps:

- ❖ **Step 1:** Preparation of a rigorous internal analysis (Gap Analysis).
- ❖ **Step 2:** Publication of the institution's strategy in the corporate website to maintain and improve the Charter & Code (Action Plan).
- ❖ **Step 3:** Evaluation and approval of the strategy by the EC.
- ❖ **Step 4:** Application and continuous self-assessment of the process by the institution.

❖ **Step 5:** Have the Strategy and its deployment evaluated externally by the EC five years after initiating the process.



The **Centre de Recerca Matemàtica** signed the letter of commitment to the Charter & Code in February, 2014, thereby committing to follow the European Commission initiative towards promoting and improving the centre’s recruitment policy, the working environment and the careers of researchers while also actively participating to the development of the European Research Area. In May of the same year, an examination of the centre in accordance to the 40 principles of the Charter & Code was conducted, resulting in the Gap Analysis.

Since July 2015, the CRM has held the HR Excellence in Research award, with an internal work group being established to implement the actions detailed on the centre’s CRM’s Action Plan (2015-2017), created to reduce the gaps detected in the CRM procedures regarding the professional welfare of its employees, the acquisition of better skills and competences, and the development of their career in agreement with the HRS4R recommendations.

Since the 1st of January 2017, a new and more demanding procedure has been in place, in which institutions apply to the European Commission for this award. The

revised HRS4R implementation process describes a strengthened procedure of organisational implementation and review, supported by continuous external peer assessment, sponsored by the European Commission.

One of the key points of the procedure is that it places a lot of emphasis on the need for institutions to make progress towards the principles of Open, Transparent, Merit-based Recruitment.

In May 2018 the CRM submitted its interim assessment to be evaluated by the European Commission: CRM'S HRS4R Interim Assessment 2018. The assessors from the EC concluded that the implementation of the Action Plan is ensured in a robust and systematic way. According to their report the CRM is progressing with the implementation of appropriate and improved quality actions as described in its Action Plan. You can find the consensus report here: [Implementation Phase Interim Assessment – EC Consensus Report](#).

This document describes the Strengthened Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) through which the CRM aims at improving the working environment offered to its researchers to integrate all the principles of the European Charter and Code in the centre's activity.

Internal Review

Organisational Information

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research *	27
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	16
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	24
Of whom are women *	6
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. *	9
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level *	6
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level *	12
Total number of students (if relevant) *	0
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) *	44

RESEARCH FUNDING

(Figures for most recent fiscal year)

Total annual organisational budget	2.269.713,88
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	1.218.197,10
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	811.877,73
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	239.639,05

Ethical and professional aspects

One of the main accomplishments during the implementation of the HRS4R action plan was the approval of the centre's first [CRM Gender and Equality Plan](#). This plan, along with the creation of the gender equality committee to oversee the implementation of the actions it includes, reinforces the CRM's commitment to actively address the issues that hinder the role of women in mathematics, both within its research structure and in the research activities hosted and organised at the center. As a public research institute, the CRM is concerned about the loss of women from mathematics at higher levels of research and teaching, and the weaknesses and missed opportunities that the absence of female mathematicians represents for the progress of mathematics research.

During the implementation phase of the Charter & Code principles, there are other milestones reached that will impact the progress of the HRS4R programme moving forward. The CRM has strengthened its collaboration with three top universities in Barcelona; the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), which is part of the CRM's patronage, the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) and the Universitat de Barcelona (UB). Researchers from these three universities, who are now officially affiliated to the CRM, regularly conduct research activities at CRM, promote the planning of project applications in partnership with CRM researchers, and serve as supervisors for CRM PhD students. The integration of the Charter and Code

principles regarding ethical and professional aspects is ensured by the fact that these three universities hold the HRS4R award.

Even though the CRM has undergone several positive changes and implemented new policies and initiatives tackling ethical practices and fundamental ethical principles in research, the internal survey conducted in preparation for the elaboration of the next HRS4R action plan has revealed a lack of awareness among the CRM research community regarding some of these actions. This may be caused by the usual turnover among the research staff, specially at junior stages. A more continuous effort is needed to ensure that every new arrival is familiar with national and institutional guidelines regulating research, as well as intellectual property rights, and the requirements and conditions of any sponsor or funders, independently of the nature of the contract.

Recruitment and selection

The principles of the OTM-R have been compared against the current recruitment policies at the CRM thanks to the checklist provided by the European Commission. With the information collected from that analysis, we will elaborate and implement the CRM's OTM-R institutional policy. This new policy must include not only the procedure when establishing the selection/evaluation committee and the guidelines to evaluate merits, but also the dissemination of the openings both at the local and international level (i.e. publishing them on the Euraxess portal). The HRS4R Steering Committee is looking at establishing the needed mechanisms to make sure that there is no discrimination when assessing candidates for a position and that gender balance is one of the priorities of the CRM's recruitment policy.

Many of the selection processes carried out at the CRM are regulated by national and European agencies, since most research positions are financed by public-sourced funding. The Spanish and Catalan research agencies guarantee that the recruitment procedures are open, transparent, and tailored to the type of positions advertised, to prevent any discrimination regarding age, citizenship, language, or ethnic origin. Such a system ensures equal opportunities for all, and it is particularly important for our institution since the CRM seeks to attract international research talent, as proved by the fact that 58% of the research openings created in the last three years have been covered by international researchers, both at PhD and postdoc levels.

All the calls announced give sufficient, accurate descriptions and deadlines for applications. Advertisements of research on the CRM's website, national and international job portals, as well as at the EURAXESS portal. Moreover, the CRM Director is involved in the selection committees, especially for those positions funded by research projects managed by the CRM, to ensure that the standards contained in the Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct are applied to recruitment at CRM. The CRM is in the latest stages of approving an updated set of guidelines to cover all recruitment processes and revise internal procedures. In order to address the evident gender gap at the center's research, female external experts are brought in to be part of the selection committees when needed. Also, to improve gender balance at leadership levels, female researchers have been incorporated to the governing bodies of the center.

Even though the gender equality plan also contains actions to address the visible gender gap at the institution in the next few years, the HRS4R new action plan needs to complement those efforts. In that sense, training actions to address gender bias (both visible and unnoticed) in selection processes and career development has been deemed essential, as can also be observed from the results of the survey conducted among the CRM community regarding the Charter & Code implementation at the institution. A new recruitment tool will be created and implemented to collect and carry out evaluation of candidates, so every step of the process is properly recorded.

Working conditions

Almost half of the actions included in the revised HRS4R action plan implemented during the last three years were related to working conditions offered at CRM. Some of them, as the creation of a new modern and functional website for the institution, may seem superficial at first glance. However, behind these efforts lies the intention of improve the tools at the disposal of the CRM researchers. This has been terribly hampered by the COVID pandemic, as has been the case for the Spanish society at large. However, thanks to the investment in tools and software, the virtualization of research activities has been significantly enhanced. Directly connected to this issue and the lockdown suffered in 2020 and (partially) during 2021 in Spain, and the embracing of teleworking as a means to protect the health and safety of the CRM staff, the institution has implemented new ways to ensure online collaboration and communication among researchers.

Spanish labour regulations establish the common framework to ensure the working conditions and social security of employees, including researchers at the CRM. In order to better integrate the voice and opinions of the CRM staff regarding these matters, employees have organised to create its first works council, a representative organism formed by researchers at every stage of their careers and members of the administrative staff. Its function is to serve as representatives to negotiate with the center's management and improve the working conditions of CRM employees.

The survey conducted among the CRM community has showed some concerns regarding the management of conflicts among members of the CRM research community, specially between supervisors and students. This is a priority for the new action plan and several actions are aimed at safeguarding the wellbeing of the staff. A study of the working environment will be conducted by an external agency and the possibility of establishing psychological assistance and counselling for the research community will be explored, though it is considered essential to find assistance from external experts to identify the best manner to do it. An appropriate mechanism for managing complaints and claims must be developed, as well as a review of the mechanisms so that researchers can have greater participation in decision-making processes.

Again, gender gap is a main concern in this regard. The gender equality plan already covers some of the actions that will be tackled, but some actions require the collaboration from the HRS4R steering committee, such as the creation of the first sexual harassment policy to prevent and eradicate any kind of discrimination suffered by female researchers.

Training and Development

CRM has historically hosted and trained PhD students that conduct their thesis projects with the supervision of senior CRM researchers, while enrolled in the PhD programmes of the Catalan universities with which the CRM has agreements; UAB, UPC and UB. These thesis projects are also co-supervised, in some cases, by researchers from one of these three universities. The CRM also organises and promotes interdisciplinary training activities to complement the skills acquired by junior researchers during the course of their PhD. Compliant with legislative requirements in Spain, each doctoral candidate undergoes compulsory training and is regularly evaluated by a thesis committee.

As stated before, the CRM organises and hosts several international scientific events and invites leading experts to take part as keynote speakers in conferences, advanced courses, and workshops. Any member of the CRM research community, including R1 and R2 researchers, can attend these activities without having to pay any registration fee.

Regarding post-doctoral researchers, principal investigators and project leaders have the freedom to manage and mentor junior researchers in the team within the context of project and research tasks carried out, although this kind of supervision is not formally structured. Each research group has the autonomy to implement its own procedures depending on the background of the person in charge.

The survey conducted among the researchers at CRM has highlighted the need to conduct regular training regarding leadership and mentoring skills. Also, more training actions aimed at addressing career development both at national and European level has been deemed essential to ensure that young researchers that finalise their stay at CRM are ready to move forward with their careers in a successful way. The scientific career needs to be defined, offering the technical and transversal competences associated with each professional stage.

2022-2024 Action Plan

ACTION	GAP PRINCIPLE	TIMING (quarter/year)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR / TARGET
ETHICAL & PROFESSIONAL				
Organization of awareness and training activities (workshops, mailing etc.) about policies regarding ethics and good practices in science.	2, 3, 4, 7	Ongoing action	CRM Executive Committee	Number of training offered during the span of the action plan and number of participants.
Distribution of the CERCA Code of Conduct relevant to all members of CERCA research centers and handing over to newcomers with on-boarding.	5, 6, 7, 31	Q1 2022	CRM Director	Availability of the code on the center's website and the researcher's welcome pack
Improve the outreach and communication dissemination plan.	8, 9	Ongoing	CRM Communication & Outreach department	Number of outreach activities carried out during the span of the action plan and impact indicators.

ACTION	GAP PRINCIPLE	TIMING (quarter/year)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR / TARGET
Improve Open Science awareness (through training, workshops, etc.) and create an institutional strategy for data management.	2, 5, 7	Q1 2023	CRM Executive Committee	Number of training activities carried out and participants. Data management policy available for the research staff.
Create and disseminate internal guidelines for data protection for researchers.	3, 4	Q1 2023	CRM Executive Committee	Availability of the guidelines for the CRM research staff.
RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION				
Offer detailed instructions on the composition of committees in selection processes and elaboration of the 'CRM Recruitment Handbook'.	12, 13, 14, 15	Q3 2022	HR Manager	Minutiae of the selection processes and publication of the handbook.
Set up detailed guidelines for the recruitment of group leaders and disseminate appropriately.	13, 14, 15, 21	Q1 2023	CRM Executive Committee	Publication of the document and minutiae of the selection processes for group leader openings.
Training aimed at group leaders, principal investigators, and selection	13, 14, 15	Ongoing	HR Manager	Number of training sessions carried out and number of participants.

ACTION	GAP PRINCIPLE	TIMING (quarter/year)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR / TARGET
panel members on the relevant principles and regulation for each particular selection process, incorporating the principles of the Charter & Code.				
Training aimed at group leaders and senior researchers in interviewing skills, following OTM-R principles and selection guidelines. Improve awareness on recruitment policies.	10, 13, 14	Ongoing	HR Manager	Number of training sessions carried out and number of participants.
Revise recruitment practices for specific positions to guarantee that standards and recruitment practices are consistent with the OTM-R policy	13, 14, 15, 16	Ongoing	CRM Executive Committee	Number of new policies updated and guidelines created.
WORKING CONDITIONS & SOCIAL SECURITY				
Planing, approval and implementation of the next Gender Equality Plan (2023-2024), incorporating the input from the	10, 27	Q1 2023	CRM Equality Committee	Approval and publication of the plan, including specific actions aligned with the HRS4R programme.

ACTION	GAP PRINCIPLE	TIMING (quarter/year)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR / TARGET
HRS4R programme and the principles of the Charter & Code.				
Set up procedures to collaborate and with the CERCA Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson was created in 2019 for all CERCA institutes to provide impartial and neutral assistance and help resolve conflicts. The internal procedure will establish the steps to be followed when a work-related conflict arises, including the possibility to contact the Ombudsperson in case that the conflict cannot be resolved.	23, 24, 34	Q1, 2023	CRM Director	Elaboration, publication and dissemination of the relevant protocol to contact the CERCA Ombudsperson. Number of conflicts addressed via this procedure.
Study ways to offer psychological assistance for the CRM research community, such as elaborating a list of professionals to be reached by researchers in case of necessity.	23, 24	Q2, 2022	CRM Health and Security Committee	Actions and protocols proposed and undertaken to offer psychological aid to CRM researchers.

ACTION	GAP PRINCIPLE	TIMING (quarter/year)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR / TARGET
Conduct a Work Climate Survey.	23, 24	Q2, 2022	HR Manager	Publication of the survey results and resulting actions.
Create a Sexual Harassment Policy and complaint procedure with the aid of external experts and mediators.	10, 24, 27, 34	Q1, 2022	HR Manager / CRM Health and Security Committee	Publication of the protocol and dissemination among the research community. Number of cases addressed
Publication of the approved professional categories description for staff and their corresponding minimum salary thresholds	11, 26, 28	Q1 2023	CRM Executive Committee	Publication of the salary tables on the institution's transparency portal
Preparation of an exit survey to assess the working experience staff.	23, 24	Q3 2022	HR Manager	Number of responses and ration of satisfaction.
Provide training to increase awareness about Gender bias in academia.	10, 27	Ongoing	HR Manager / Gender Equality Committee	Number of training action carried out and number of participants

ACTION	GAP PRINCIPLE	TIMING (quarter/year)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR / TARGET
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT				
Develop a Training Policy for the different communities at the institution.	28, 38, 39	Q2 2022	CRM Executive Committee	Number of training activities offered and number of participants.
Offer of activities for career development (Career days, workshops, etc.) and targeted career advice in particular aimed last year PhD students and postdocs in transition to next career step, in collaboration with different partners and alliances.	28, 30, 38, 39	Ongoing	HR Manager	Number of activities carried out and number of participants.
Develop an annual program of activities targeted to Early Career Researchers to provide different perspectives of the professional career (seminars on industry, technology transfer, scientific management, journalism).	39	Ongoing	CRM Training Unit	Number of activities carried out and number of participants.

ACTION	GAP PRINCIPLE	TIMING (quarter/year)	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR / TARGET
Offer training on leadership (team management, project leadership, and supervision)	36, 37, 40	Ongoing	HR Manager	Number of activities carried out and number of participants.
Create a mentoring programme addressed to Early Career Researchers and specifically last year PhD students and Postdoctoral Fellows.	30, 37	Q1 2024	CRM Directorate advisory board	Availability of the programme and actions carried out as result.

Open Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Policy

We have completed the *Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment checklist* and during the period encompassed by this Action Plan we are going to work on addressing the weaknesses identified according to the recognized priorities. The centre's HRS4R Steering Committee, together with the centre's Director and Manager, has already started discussing the actions presented in this Action Plan regarding Recruitment & Selection that will be tackled in the short to medium term. The first step in the process will be the dissemination of the principles of OTM-R and the setup of consulting mechanisms to gather the necessary feedback from the all the centre's stakeholders.

The most relevant action that we are now working on is the development of the centre's first OTM-R policy, which will have to be drafted and brought in front of the Governing Board in order to be approved. The other actions that have been planned are related to the manner openings and calls are advertised, evaluated, and notified. Posting the openings on the EURAXESS portal, for instance, is seen as an opportunity to help the CRM reach a broader research community to secure a more international selection process. While the need for more gender balanced selection committees has been also detected and will be addressed with the addition of external experts. Communication with candidates, both at the level of the information that is posted on advertised calls and after the selection process is concluded, is also another aspect that needs improvement.

The main issue that we are facing at the moment is differentiating those recruitment processes where we have the opportunity and weight to apply the OTM-R principles and those that, being funded and/or managed together with other institutions, are beyond the centre's control because these external funding agencies already have their own evaluation systems. We are also analysing those aspects where the Spanish employment legislation may overlap or conflict with the actions that are being discussed in terms of recruitment.

The OTM-R principles that are already met by the centre will also be evaluated as a secondary priority (the emphasis being on working on the weaknesses addressed

on this Action Plan), to prepare for future actions beyond the timeline established in this Action Plan.

CRM OTM-R

ANNEX: SELF-ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS

An anonymous survey was conducted on October 2021, consisting of questions addressing the Charter and Code principles using the Microsoft Office 365 Forms App. A total of 30 statements were provided referring to the CRM's fulfilment of the four groups of principles included in the Charter and Code, divided into the following sections:

- ❖ Profile (2 questions)
- ❖ Ethical and professional aspects (11 questions)
- ❖ Recruitment (5 questions)
- ❖ Working conditions and social security (8 questions)
- ❖ Training (4 questions)

Two basic levels of answer were offered for each question:

1. **how do you rate your level of agreement with the statement?** Score from 1 to 6 (1: less agreement or importance; 6: full agreement or importance) or select N/A (non-applicable)
2. **how do you rate the level of importance of the statement?** Score from 1 to 6 (1: less agreement or importance; 6: full agreement or importance) or select N/A (non-applicable)

You can find the results of the survey on the following link:

[HRS4R SURVEY RESULTS](#)