

**HR Excellence in Research
Strategy / University of
Bordeaux**

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Preamble

As a leading multidisciplinary institution, the University of Bordeaux strives to combine strong international visibility with a deep and sustained engagement in its local and regional ecosystems.

Created in 2014 from the merger of the former Universities of Bordeaux 1, Bordeaux Segalen, and Bordeaux Montesquieu IV, the University of Bordeaux has since established itself as a research-intensive university, widely recognized for its innovative potential and the strength of its partnerships. Over the years, its European dimension has been steadily reinforced through participation in numerous European projects actively contributing to the construction of the European Research Area (ERA). Through this commitment, the University of Bordeaux plays a key role in enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of its region, while fostering the dissemination of knowledge, research, and innovation.

Building on these foundations, and fully aware of the challenges associated with innovation, attractiveness, and the retention of scientific talent, the University of Bordeaux formally launched the HRS4R (Human Resources Strategy for Researchers) process in December 2024, with the objective of obtaining the “HR Excellence in Research” award. This commitment was officially communicated to the European Commission by the President of the University, Professor Dean Lewis, in a letter dated 20th December 2024.

By endorsing the European Charter for Researchers, the University of Bordeaux reaffirms its dedication to promoting research policies aligned with the highest European standards of excellence. Through this process, the University aims to:

- Improve research working conditions and strengthen the attractiveness of scientific careers;
- Integrate innovation, attractiveness, and scientific excellence as core elements of its strategic vision;
- Meet the requirements of European funding programmes.

This document outlines the HRS4R strategy of the University of Bordeaux.

It describes the governance and methodological framework adopted for conducting the process and organising the working groups that carried out the initial gap analysis and contributed to formalising the action plan.

Finally, it details the implementation strategy and action plan, designed to ensure the continuous improvement of institutional practices in the field of human resources management for research.

1. Steering of the HR Excellence in Research Process

To engage the University in the HR Excellence in Research process, the President convened his executive board, composed notably of the Vice-Presidents (including the Vice-President for Human Resources, the Vice-President for Research, and the Vice-President for Innovation), the Director General of Services, as well as the relevant Deputy Directors General. Following consultation, this first body, designated as the Strategic Committee, formally initiated the University's participation in the process.

Subsequently, it was decided to establish a dedicated project team, comprising the Vice-President for Human Resources, the Deputy Director General of Services in charge of General Administration and Human Resources, the Director for Research and Valorisation, the Deputy Director for Talent and Human Resources Development, a project manager, and a project assistant. This team was entrusted with overall responsibility for steering the process, operational planning, the creation and facilitation of working groups, and the preparation and monitoring of the application process during the initial phase.

In support of this team, a Coordination Committee was set up, bringing together directors of structures as well as mission officers directly or indirectly involved in the HR Excellence in Research process. With a total number of three committee meetings, its role was to ensure consistency between the gap analysis, the action plan, and institutional practices. The coordination committee will also provide support to the project team in implementing the process, ensuring proper follow-up of the action plan through to the interim assessment.

After officially launching the initiative, the Strategic Committee met twice during the initial phase with the responsibility for setting the main orientations, approving deliverables, and providing recommendations throughout the process.

In this way, the HR Excellence in Research initiative has been driven by three bodies: the Strategic Committee, the Coordination Committee, and the Project Team.

2. Mobilisation of the University Community

Fully aware of the need to involve all stakeholders and committed to making the HRS4R process a collective endeavour, the University of Bordeaux placed community mobilisation at the heart of its preparatory phase, well before the formal submission of its application to the European Commission. Following the political

endorsement of the methodology and roadmap by the Strategic Committee, the project team held a series of meetings with the various structures directly or indirectly concerned by the **HR Excellence in Research** award, including the divisions related to human resources and research, as well as representative bodies of the research community. The objective was twofold: first, to present the initiative and highlight its strategic importance for the University and its scientific community; and second, to engage all relevant actors in the upcoming stages of the process.

The mobilisation timeline unfolded as follows:

- **22 January 2024:** Presentation and validation of the methodology and roadmap by the President's Executive Committee (CODIR Président)
- **8 February 2024:** Presentation of the initiative to the Social Dialogue Committee (CDS)
- **12 February 2024:** Presentation and mobilisation at the Research Executive Committee (CODIR Recherche)
- **8 March 2024:** Presentation of the initiative to the Social Administration Committee (CSA)
- **11 March 2024:** Presentation of the initiative to the Executive Bureau (CODIR Bureau)
- **12 March 2024:** Presentation of the initiative to the InnovationS Committee
- **19 March 2024:** Presentation and mobilisation at the Executive Committee of the Department of Environmental Sciences
- **25 March 2024:** Presentation and mobilisation at the Executive Committee of the Department of Health Sciences and Technologies (STS)
- **27 March 2024:** Presentation and mobilisation at the Executive Committee of the Department of Matter and Radiation Sciences (SMR)
- **8 April 2024:** Presentation and mobilisation at the Executive Committee of the Department of Biological and Medical Sciences (SBM)
- **9 April 2024:** Presentation and mobilisation at the Plenary Council of Doctoral Schools
- **10 April 2024:** Presentation and mobilisation at the Executive Committee of the Department of Archaeological Sciences
- **16 April 2024:** Presentation and mobilisation at the Executive Committee of the Department of Engineering and Digital Sciences
- **17 April 2024:** Presentation and mobilisation at the Research Commission
- **18 April 2024:** Presentation and mobilisation at the Executive Committee of the Department of Contemporary Change

- **23 May 2024:** HRS4R presentation webinar and mobilisation session for the scientific community
- **27 May 2024:** Presentation and mobilisation at the Executive Committee of the Department of Public Health
- **28 May 2024:** Presentation and mobilisation at the Executive Committee of the Bordeaux Neurocampus Department

3. Engagement of the research community

Throughout the HR Excellence in Research process, the University of Bordeaux has been committed to ensuring the active, balanced, and inclusive representation of its researchers, fostering a spirit of dialogue, transparency, and shared governance. This direct involvement of the scientific community has enabled the development of a realistic and coherent action plan, aligned with the concrete needs and expectations expressed by researchers.

During the initial phase, the steering bodies and working groups included researchers representing all career stages (R1 to R4) and drawn from a wide range of disciplines. This diversity of perspectives enriched the collective reflection, ensuring a comprehensive and shared analysis of existing practices. Through their active participation, researchers made a decisive contribution to both the Gap Analysis and the co-construction of the Action Plan underpinning the University's HRS4R strategy.

In its commitment to involve the entire research community, the University of Bordeaux also conducted an institutional survey targeting all researchers, including those not directly participating in the working groups. The aim was to collect their views, identify their concerns, and gather their suggestions for improvement, thereby reinforcing the participatory nature of the process.

During the implementation phase, the University will continue to build on this culture of ongoing dialogue with the scientific community. Regular information sessions, webinars, and presentations will be organised within representative bodies such as the Research Executive Committee (CoDir Recherche), the Research Commission, the Research Department Councils, and the Doctoral Schools Council.

These exchanges will serve to present the support tools developed within the framework of the Action Plan, monitor their uptake, and collect feedback from the field through surveys and targeted assessments. This continuous feedback loop will make it possible to adapt and improve the measures as needed, ensuring the relevance and sustainability of the actions undertaken.

Finally, to guarantee clear and consistent communication at every stage of the process, the University of Bordeaux is developing a structured communication plan. This plan aims to ensure transparency, enhance visibility, and promote sustained engagement from all stakeholders throughout the HRS4R journey.

4. Working Groups

To establish the working groups, the project team first presented the HRS4R initiative and its objectives to all relevant stakeholders. This information phase involved the research representative bodies, the executive boards of the research departments (including unit heads), the administrative departments concerned, and several consultative groups. These presentations enabled the university community to gain a clear understanding of the scope, rationale, and strategic importance of the initiative.

This information stage was followed by a mobilisation phase, aimed at encouraging voluntary participation from the scientific community in the working groups. Under the coordination of the project team, volunteers were invited to join one of the four thematic sub-groups, corresponding to the pillars of the European Charter for Researchers:

Sub-group 1: Ethics, integrity, gender, and open science

Sub-group 2: Evaluation, recruitment, and career progression of researchers

Sub-group 3: Working conditions and practices

Sub-group 4: Research careers and talent development

Each sub-group brought together researchers from a wide range of disciplines and career stages (R1 to R4), alongside administrative staff from the relevant support services. This balanced and inclusive composition ensured complementarity between academic expertise and institutional and operational knowledge, fostering constructive dialogue and cross-functional collaboration.

Each sub-group was co-led by a pair of coordinators, consisting of one researcher and one administrative representative, jointly responsible for the operational supervision of the group's work.

In total, 79 participants were involved in the working groups, including researchers, professional experts, and resource persons on topics such as scientific integrity, open science, disability, and others. Each sub-group met three times to conduct the initial gap analysis, followed by two additional workshops dedicated to developing the institutional action plan.

5. Implementation strategy

To ensure the full implementation of the Action Plan and to guarantee the overall steering of the HRS4R process, the three bodies established during the initial phase will be maintained beyond that period. Their roles will gradually evolve in order to support the successive stages of the process and ensure its continuity.

The HRS4R project team will oversee the overall coordination of the initiative throughout all phases of the process. It will ensure its deployment and integration within the institutional strategy of the University of Bordeaux. The project team will also be responsible for coordinating communication with all stakeholders involved in the implementation of the process (internal partners, external partners, and the European Commission) up to the interim assessment.

The Coordination Committee, composed primarily of the heads of the administrative divisions directly involved in the process, will ensure the operational implementation of the actions within their respective areas of responsibility. It will support the project team in monitoring the Action Plan, notably through the collection and analysis of the monitoring indicators required for the intermediate evaluation.

The Strategic Committee will assume a political oversight role. It will ensure that the process remains aligned with the institution's strategic orientations and that it is coherently integrated with major ongoing institutional programmes. Finally, it will validate each phase of the process and formally commit the institution to the subsequent stage.

Members of the working groups who contributed to the Gap Analysis and the design of the Action Plan will continue to play a crucial role in disseminating the good practices and commitments defined under this framework, particularly within the research community. Representatives from these groups will serve as key liaison contacts with the Project Team, facilitating communication and supporting the implementation of actions within research laboratories and, more broadly, across the entire academic community.

For clarity and consistency, the Action Plan has been structured around five thematic pillars:

- ✓ Training Strategy and provision (7 actions)
- ✓ Innovation and Research Valorisation (8 actions)
- ✓ Recruitment and Evaluation (10 actions)
- ✓ Career Development Support (9 actions)
- ✓ Environmental and Societal Transitions (10 actions)

These five thematic areas were defined both to meet the requirements of the HR Excellence in Research award and to ensure alignment with the strategic priorities and institutional programmes of the University of Bordeaux. This approach reinforces the University's commitment to a process of continuous improvement grounded in quality, transparency, and collective engagement.