

UNIVERSITY OF SIENA - HRS4R IMPLEMENTATION PHASE
Internal Review: Report on the status of implementation of the Action Plan
(April 2024)

The Human Resources Excellence working group (GdL HRS), established on 18 January 2023, is composed as follows:

- Maria Candida Calvo Vicente (Head of International Mobility Support Services);
- Maria Rita Sbardella (Head of the Teaching Staff Office);
- Patrizia Caroni (Head of the Press, institutional communication and digital printing Office);
- Rossana Cimato (Head of the Recruitment Office);
- Raffaella Vittori (Research and Grants Management Division);
- Simone Cresti (Santa Chiara Lab university services centre);
- Cinzia Carmignani (Head of the Administrative Office at the Department of Philology and Literary Criticism);
- Graziella Sampieri (Head of the Administrative Office at the Department of Medicine, Surgery and Neuroscience).

The goal of the working group is to undertake the implementation of the 15 initiatives included in the HRS4R Action Plan (<https://www.unisi.it/ricerca/hrs4r-human-resources-strategy-researchers>).¹

During the implementation phase, the functions of the steering committee were assigned to the International Relations Committee.

This report was drafted after the activity monitoring completed by the working group at the March 15th meeting. It has the dual purpose of documenting the implementation status of the Action Plan and sharing with the faculty and technical-administrative staff the initiatives implemented and the new goals for the 2024-2027 three-year period.

ACTION 1

Integrate the Code of Ethics with principles of research integrity, external fund management, and Principal Investigator responsibilities

Revised² timing: December 2022 - June 2024

Status: EXTENDED

¹ There will be changes to the composition of the working group due to changes in the personnel assigned to the offices involved in the process and the inclusion of four new actions in the "Revised Action Plan 2024-2027".

² Following the 11 March 2022 notification of HR Excellence in Research accreditation, the implementation schedule outlined in the Action Plan was redefined, making the 1st trimester (first quarter) start in March 2022.

Head administrative structure	Research and Technology Transfer Division
Other facilities/individuals involved	Office of Regulatory Acts and Procedural Simplification Prof. Enrico Diciotti, Teaching staff representative on the Ethics Committee Prof. Oronzo Parlangeli, Chair of the Committee on Ethical Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences Prof. Paolo Piccari, Chief Scientific officer of the ETHOS Observatory Prof. Alessandra Viviani, Rector's delegate for Equal opportunities and Inclusion

The following activities were carried out:

- three operational meetings with faculty members aimed at evaluating the type of modifications to be made to the current Code of Ethics in order to also include issues such as artificial intelligence, responsibility of principal investigators in the management of research projects, plagiarism and self-plagiarism, scientific publications and open science, ethical opinions on issues related to biomedicine, which are currently excluded from the fields of intervention of the AOUS-UNISI Joint Ethics Committee (responsible for clinical trials) and the CAREUS Committee (responsible for the humanities and social sciences). Meetings were held on 10 July 2023, 6 December 2023 and 31 January 2024;
- creation of a shared space on the Drive for document storage, best practices and discussion on drafts;
- appointment by the Council of a Committee for revising the Code of Ethics (Resolution Rep. No. 372/2023 dated 17 November 2023);
- alignment with the revision of general principles contained in the University Community Code of Ethics, coordinated by the Office of Performance Management and Control Systems;
- revision of the current Code of Ethics has been completed. The new version will be brought to the governing bodies for approval by the Office of Performance Management and Control Systems;
- having recognized the need to proceed with the drafting of a special Code for research integrity (which can specifically address the issues identified above) and thus to include faculty representing the two scientific fields-disciplines not covered by the current members

We have set ourselves the goal of drafting a new Code for Research Integrity and proposing its approval to the University's governing bodies by 2025. In addition, we intend to link this action with "Training for researchers" initiatives for disseminating the new codes and individual issues with an "ethical" impact.

ACTION 2

Create a single node for communicating and disseminating Unisi research results online

Revised timing: September 2023 - March 2024

Status: COMPLETED

Head administrative structure	Research and Technology Transfer Division
Other facilities/individuals involved	Sector of Web&Mobile Design and Development Services

Creation of a new portal dedicated to Research <https://research.unisi.it/> where the following content can be found in English:

- research results: open access publications, links to the University's institutional repository ([https://research.unisi.it/research- results/](https://research.unisi.it/research-results/))
- <https://research.unisi.it/technology-transfer-2/> (technology transfer, patents)
- <https://research.unisi.it/projects/> list of research projects funded by external competitive calls (for H2020 and HE projects, link to Cordis with details of specific publications and the results of individual projects).

The Research and Technology Transfer Division, in addition to the usual emails reporting on funding and training opportunities, has also begun to send out a new email newsletter to all university staff, in which they report on news published on the Unisi Research portal: news about the latest research projects, funding opportunities, innovation activities, and other events and initiatives that may be of interest to staff engaged in research.

ACTION 3

Create a website in English dedicated to international researchers called "International Faculty", where the services offered (training, access to laboratories, living and working in Siena) will be described.

Revised timing: March 2022 - June 2023

Status: COMPLETED

Head administrative structure	International Relations Division
Other facilities/individuals involved	Press, Communication and Public Relations Office Division

A website called International Faculty has been created and published in the “International > International Researchers and Visiting Professors” section of the institutional website.

In addition, a link to the International Faculty website has been published in the new Research portal and on the HRS4R page.

The following sections are available on the site:

- Before Arrival in Italy: information about visa application, accommodation and health insurance
- On Arrival to Siena: information about the residence permit, the tax identification number,
- Everyday life: information on learning Italian, public transport and access to the University online services
- Link to the “Researchers Recruitment” webpage
- Link to the EURAXESS National Portal

ACTION 4

Update the Regulations for Research Fellowships and the Regulations for Research Grants from an OTM-R perspective (reference to the European Charter and Code for Researchers, gender balance in the selection committees)

Revised timing: June 2023 - September 2024

Status: EXTENDED

Head administrative structure	Recruitment Office
Other facilities/individuals involved	International Relations Division Teaching Staff Division Grants, Study Incentives and Mentoring Office

In June 2022, Decree Law "Further Urgent Measures for the Implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)," introduced a new type of fixed-term contract called "Research Contract", which supersedes the research fellowship and improves upon it in terms of researcher rights and remuneration. These contracts aim to give value to postdoctoral work on specific research projects.

As research fellowships were being phased out, it was deemed appropriate to wait for the implementation of the new type of contract and then proceed to draft new university regulations.

Through several legislative interventions, the Italian government subsequently postponed the implementation of research contracts.

Considering that Italian universities continue to announce positions for the recruitment of research fellows, which may have a multi-year duration, the objective originally included in the Action Plan has been taken up and will be completed by the end of the implementation phase.

ACTION 5

Revise the template of selection announcements and the regulations in order to standardize the equivalence procedures, adopting the least onerous ones provided for by national legislation

Revised timing: June 2022 - December 2023

STATUS: EXTENDED

Head administrative structure	Recruitment Office
Other facilities/individuals involved	International Relations Division Teaching Staff Division Doctoral Programmes Office Admissions Office

An analysis was made of the national regulations regarding different types of recognition (academic, non-academic and professional qualifications). In this regard, the information provided by CIMEA (Centre for Information on Academic Mobility and Equivalences), which carries out consultancy work on degree recognition procedures and on issues related to Italian and international higher education and training, was particularly useful.

As a result of this analysis, the selection notices for R2-R4 positions were updated: all now allow the applicant to choose between academic recognition (for those holding a declaration of equivalence) or finalized/non-academic recognition (equivalence procedure for the purpose of the selection procedure only).

As for doctoral positions (R1), UNISI has approved a guide for the equivalence of doctoral degrees awarded abroad, which is available here in both Italian and English: <https://www.unisi.it/didattica/corsi-post-laurea/dottorati-di-ricerca/modulistica-e-certificati>
In addition, the selection procedures provide that, in the absence of the declaration of equivalence (*equipollenza*), the suitability of the foreign qualification may be ascertained by the selection committee, in compliance with the relevant regulations in force in Italy and in the country where the degree was awarded and with international treaties or agreements on the recognition of degrees for the pursuit of studies.

By 2025 we have set ourselves the goal of creating a simple, clear guide for recognition procedures according to user category (student, researcher or administrative staff) and the purpose of recognition. By 2026 we aim to organize a training course on recognition issues for staff (faculty and administrative personnel) involved in recruitment processes.

ACTION 6

Measures to support gender equality (Drafting, publication and dissemination of the "Gender Equality Plan", gender equality in R1 and R2 selection committees, communication campaign to raise awareness among researchers of the figure of the trusted advisor)

Revised timing: March 2022 - September 2024

Status: IN PROGRESS

Head administrative structure	Research and Technology Transfer Division / since December 2023 the Gender equality, human rights and integrated policies Office
Other facilities/individuals involved	CUG: Single Guarantee Committee for equal opportunities, promotion of workers' wellbeing and non-discrimination.

- May 2022: official adoption of the GEP (Gender Equality Plan) by Unisi.
- Usiena GEP logo creation and start of implementation activities and dissemination through the [webpage](https://www.unisi.it/ricerca/piano-la-parita-di-genere-gender-equality-plan-gep) IT <https://www.unisi.it/ricerca/piano-la-parita-di-genere-gender-equality-plan-gep> and EN <https://en.unisi.it/research/gender-equality-plan-gep>
- Creation of a page on Equality Policies <https://www.unisi.it/ateneo/politiche-di-parita>
- Creation of a new PAP (Positive Action Programme) 2022/2024 web page <https://pap.unisi.it/> where all new PAP initiatives are reported
- Following guidance received from the HRS4R Working Group at the 25 May 2023 meeting, inter-office linkage and formulation of hypotheses for joint dissemination of activities
- December 2023: establishment of a new office dedicated to gender issues "Gender Equality, Human Rights and Integrated Policies Office" that will be responsible for ensuring a constant communication flow between the various actors and bodies, monitoring the PAP and GEP for the verification of positive actions and strategic lines identified in connection also with the Gender Budgeting, developing recommendations, process analysis, updating of action plans (PAP, Gender Budgeting, GEP).
- The University will organize a Blended Intensive Program in February 2025 on the issues of inclusion and in particular gender equality. The event will be an opportunity to disseminate the GEP and the PAP among the participants.

ACTION 7

Stipulate agreements with housing facilities that can accommodate international researchers (particularly for profiles R2 to R4)

Revised timing: March 2022 - June 2023

Status: COMPLETED

Head administrative structure	International Relations Division
Other facilities/individuals involved	Division of Procurement, Agreements and Property

The implementation of this goal must be placed in the context of the housing crisis that has affected most university towns in Europe for reasons analyzed in the ESN and ESU report "How are exchange students navigating the housing crisis?" - <https://www.esn.org/news/launch-international-student-housing-report>). This crisis was exacerbated in Siena due to the temporary suspension of the agreement with the Azienda DSU Toscana in June 2022, which once provided the University with a fair number of rooms for international mobility.

To cope with this temporary situation and to provide housing solutions, particularly for young researchers (R1), the University has entered into the following agreements:

- 1) Contract with Il Refugio Residence, which had traditionally housed doctoral students and visiting professors. The number of available rooms will increase from September 2024 thanks to the reopening of university student residences
- 2) Agreement with the new TuscaSi facility. Located on the outskirts of the city and well connected by public transportation, it offers quality accommodation in apartments of different sizes. The facility can accommodate both international students and researchers/workers engaged in research both at Unisi and in the private sector (mainly at GSK, a company with which some of the University's scientific laboratories collaborate).

ACTION 8

Define a university policy to enhance mobility paths (international and intersectoral) in the recruitment and careers of researchers (R1 and R2) and recognize professional paths without penalizing any interruptions in their CVs, both at the selection stage and for career development purposes.

ACTION 13

Define a university policy to enhance activities carried out by faculty members in competitive research and internationalization processes, and possibly revise the teaching load

Revised timing: March 2022 - December 2024

Status: EXTENDED

Head administrative structure	International Relations Division
Other facilities/individuals involved	Teaching Staff Division Research and Technology Transfer Division

In reviewing the operationalization of the actions, it was decided to merge the two policy documents provided for under actions 8 and 13 of the Action Plan.

The first step was to bring the matter to the attention of the International Relations Committee, as well as the delegates for International Relations and for International Education, both members of the Committee.

At its 19 January 2024 meeting, the IRC discussed the issue of recognizing the activity in the international arena of researchers and faculty and agreed on the need to activate clear mechanisms for recognition. It was decided that writing a white paper would be the first step in drafting an Internationalization Plan. In this paper, proposals will focus on achieving the goals set out in actions 8 and 13 of the Action Plan.

In addition, the HRS Working Group has identified the revision of the Regulations for Salary Scales as a first useful mechanism for the enhancement of the activity carried out by researchers in competitive research and internationalization processes. To this end, the analysis of regulations of other universities, as well as comparison within the Task Force of Italian institutions holding awards, will help identify appropriate mechanisms.

A new issue that emerged in discussions is the need to recognize the activity of faculty members involved in virtual exchange projects (Blended Intensive Programmes and COIL - Collaborative Online International Learning). The University participated in the European project FRAMES, which led to some interesting results, such as the drafting and publication of a "Strategic framework for the integration of Blended Mobility and Virtual Exchange in Higher Education Institutions" containing a chapter dedicated to accreditation and recognition of all actors involved in virtual exchange processes.

Confirming the University's interest in this issue, we recently joined a new European project, coordinated by the Garagerasmus Foundation, which aims to enhance and recognize the mobility experiences of students and staff (including researchers).

ACTION 9

Promotion and information regarding the awarding and use of the HRS4R badge and communication and dissemination campaign among the university community of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their recruitment

Revised timing: September 2022 - June 2023

Status: COMPLETED

Head administrative structure	International Relations Division
Other facilities/individuals involved	Santa Chiara Lab Service Centre Press, Communication and Public Relations Division

This action was included as an objective in the Performance Plan 2022: Objective 3 INT-ATTR Enhancing International Appeal: A) Dissemination of the plan to apply, sharing it with Departments

On 11 March 2022, the European Commission informed Unisi that it had favourably assessed the HRS4R application and therefore awarded it the HR Excellence in Research badge.

To publicize the awarding of the HR Excellence in Research badge, Unisi completed the following institutional communication actions:

- 1) The logo was published on the University portal (footer)
- 2) The logo was added to the web page dedicated to the HRS4R Strategy
IT - <https://www.unisi.it/ricerca/hrs4r-human-resources-strategy-researchers>
ENG - <https://en.unisi.it/research/hrs4r-human-resources-strategy-researchers>
- 3) The logo was published on the page dedicated to "International Researchers and Visiting Professors":
<https://www.unisi.it/internazionale/international-researchers-and-visiting-professors>
- 4) a press release publicized the outcome outside the academic community
<https://www.unisi.it/ateneo/comunicazione/comunicati-stampa/archivio-comunicati-stampa/aprile-2022>

Following the initial communication, dissemination of the HRS4R strategy and future steps was undertaken inside and outside the University throughout 2022.

- 1) Presentation session of the Second cycle Degree in Business Communication project work (31 January 2022, in person and online).
- 2) Accompanying report to the presentation of the 2021 final budget to the university bodies (19 April 2022).
- 3) Inclusion of the strategy in the USiena Gender Equality Plan approved by the Academic Senate and the Council at their meetings in May 2022, which may be downloaded at:
<https://www.unisi.it/ricerca/piano-la-parita-di-genere-gender-equality-plan-gep>.
- 4) Training course for Unisi researchers, 16 June 2022.

Communication campaign targeting prospective MSCA candidates and applicants:
<https://en.unisi.it/research/unisi-host-institution-apply-us>.

- 5) International Relations Committee, 20 October 2022, widened to include departmental internationalization contact persons.
- 6) Presentation of NRRP projects, 24 October 2022.
- 7) Coimbra Group seminar, "Mobility. Civiness. Sustainability: The Future of European City Campuses", 27-28 October 2022.

The recognition of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers were subsequently included in the event organized by the Santa Chiara Lab as part of Researchers' Night 2023. The SDSN Med Report was illustrated during this event, which featured six international researchers from the Mediterranean area who presented their projects.

The video screened on the sidelines of the SDSN Med/Youth for Bright event:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/18vGoYj5lqgC62JiWbDLs7_jPbc-HlMu0/view?usp=sharing

ACTION 10

Create a web space designed to bring together all initiatives for the professional development of researchers, with the aim of improving visibility and communication

ACTION 11

Schedule and plan courses and training initiatives for researchers on research funding opportunities. Initiatives may include communication events on researcher autonomy for doctoral students (R1) and their supervisors.

Revised timing: June 2022 - December 2023

Status: EXTENDED

Head administrative structure	Research and Technology Transfer Division
Other facilities/individuals involved	Santa Chiara Lab

- Creation of a specific section called "Opportunities" within the new portal dedicated to research, in which research funding on competitive calls from national and international bodies is promoted

- Creation of an additional sub-section of "Opportunities" dedicated to the various initiatives promoted by Unisi for training researchers TRAINING FOR RESEARCHERS - <https://research.unisi.it/training-for-researchers/> in which to:

- collect and enhance what has already been proposed since 2023 (see the report on the number of courses and participants: <https://research.unisi.it/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2024/04/2023-UNISI-Training-Initiatives.pdf>)
- promote new UNISI activities by connecting various University structures/services, also linking them to the new tool "Events calendar" already available on the portal (<https://research.unisi.it/calendar/list/> on which events of both UNISI and other entities are reported)

- Operational meeting on 30 August 2023 and liaison with various agencies/structures/offices
- Development of an online form to collect new initiatives for dissemination and to monitor the number of initiatives implemented and the number of participants: <https://forms.gle/1cuUvsFFZCVXf4dY6>
- Sending emails to the entire academic community to disseminate training initiatives, the new webpage and the online form for reporting initiatives and ex-post monitoring (on 24 November 2023)

Consolidation of the tools developed during the 1st Action Plan and updated information and data on initiatives on an annual basis.

ACTION 12

Draft a guide to illustrate processes related to teaching activities: use of applications for syllabus entry, lecture registration, exam reporting, best practices, etc.

Revised timing: June 2022 - September 2023

STATUS: EXTENDED

Head administrative structure	DFCLAM
Other facilities/individuals involved	Teaching Staff Office DSMCN

When reviewing the implemented actions, it was deemed appropriate to include in the working group the Administrative Secretary and the Head of Course Planning of the Department of Philology and Literary Criticism. In the 2018-2022 five-year period, the MUR awarded this department the "Seal of Excellence" and the corresponding funding. This recognition was confirmed in 2023 for the subsequent five-year period. As part of this project, the department has activated several visiting professorship positions with the aim of internationalizing teaching.

The teaching activity processes related to the compilation of the Syllabus through the U-Gov didactics application and how to implement the new application adopted for lecture registration, activity diary and research project reporting (U-web InTime) were analyzed at the departmental level.

A guide was produced for each process and is already being used for activities offered by the Department of Philology and Literary Criticism.

The goal is to extend the results obtained from the process analysis already carried out to the total educational activities offered by the University of Siena by 2025, respecting the differences in educational offerings.

ACTION 13

See ACTION 8

ACTION 14

Define an OTM-R POLICY "Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment" for the three main stages of recruitment and for the four researcher profiles (R1-R2-R3-R4): 1. publication and application; 2. selection and evaluation, 3. appointment and contracting. The aim is to standardize, formalize and publicize existing procedures and practices, improve them if necessary and introduce any corrective measures (where gaps were found in the OTM-R checklist), enabling international researchers to access such information (all documentation produced and published must be in English)

Revised timing: June 2022 - June 2023

Status: EXTENDED

Head administrative structure	Recruitment Office
Other facilities/individuals involved	Teaching Staff Office DFCLAM and DSMCN (Administrative offices)

The drafting of an OTM-R Policy has been affected by the following circumstances:

- 1) human resources offices have been heavily involved in the recruitment processes under the NRRP, both in the harmonization of procedures and in the management of open calls for proposals
- 2) personnel changes within the Human Resources Area.

It should be noted that the ministerial regulations for the purpose of implementing the NRRP recruitment processes undertake to respect the principles of the Charter and the Code for Researchers.

The activities carried out by the RisUm working group are a good starting point for proceeding with the drafting of the OTM-R Policy, which will then be brought to the governing bodies for approval and published on the web pages dedicated to the HRS4R Strategy and staff recruitment (<https://www.unisi.it/concorsi>).

Ongoing changes within the Teaching Staff Division and Health Service Relations will determine changes in the composition of the HRS4R working group.

ACTION 15

In application of the OTM-R policy, publish a web page in English dedicated to the recruitment of researchers "ERA-European Research Area: researcher recruitment" in which documents, forms, regulations and calls grouped by R1-R2-R3-R4 researcher profiles will be collected

Revised timing: March 2023 - March 2024

Status: EXTENDED

Head administrative structure	International Relations Division - EURAXESS Service Centre
Other facilities/individuals involved	Teaching Staff Office Recruitment Office Doctoral Programmes Office

This ACTION was included as a goal in Performance Plan 2022: "Creation of a web page in English within the International Faculty site dedicated to researcher recruitment, in which researcher profiles and related documentation will be filed according to category."

A web page in English has been created under the "International" menu, in the "International Researchers and Visiting Professors" section. The web page is accessible from both the Italian and English versions of the site: <https://www.unisi.it/internazionale/visiting-professor-and-researcher/research-opportunities>

The page presents a description of the four researcher profiles according to European Commission descriptors.

For each profile, there is a brief description and an indication of the type of visa required for entry into Italy.

Links have then been added to the following pages: open calls, University Regulations, Information on the PICA platform, Information on how to apply for a visa.

This first version of the webpage will be supplemented with:

- 1) the publication of regulations in English;
- 2) the publication in English of all open positions for researchers.

As for indicator 4 (inclusion of a reference to the C&C principles in all contracts and administrative acts of the recruitment process): following the adoption of the new European Charter for Researchers in November 2023, a reference to the principles will be included in documents pertaining to the recruitment of researchers.

Following the internal review of the Action Plan, four new actions to be completed within the next three years were identified.

These actions are in line with the new Unisi Strategic Plan 2024-2026 GROWING OUR FUTURE³.

ACTION 16

Open Science Promotion and Consolidation of Open Access University Press.

Period: June 2024 - December 2025

Supervising structure: University Library System Division

Indicators: 1) number of promotional sessions; 2) number of participants in the sessions

ACTION 17

Enhance support services for incoming and outgoing doctoral students

Period: June 2024 - December 2025

Supervising structure: Doctoral programme office

Indicators: creation of new services yes/no

ACTION 18

Organize a university event for presenting and promoting the University's excellence in research and its different lines of activity to internal and external stakeholders

Period: June 2024 - December 2026

Supervising structure: Research and Technology Transfer Division

Indicators: event organization yes/no

ACTION 20

Promote the participation of Unisi researchers in the Sustainable Development Festival

Period: October 2024 - December 2026

Supervising structure: Best practices service for sustainable development

Indicators: Number of researchers involved; number of activities organized

³ The three-year plan for the period 2024-2026 was approved by the Council at its meeting on 26 January 2024: <https://www.unisi.it/ateneo/programmazione-triennale>