

ACTION PLAN

2025-2028

HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH



Universidad de Valladolid

ACTION PLAN

European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

Case number: 2018ES317987

Name Organisation under review: Universidad de Valladolid

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1. ORGANIZATION PROFILE

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research *	5.257
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)*	573
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)*	505
Of whom are women*	2.683
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.*	1.034
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level*	717
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level*	1.097
Total number of students (if relevant)	21.582
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)*	3.963

RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	338.856.430 €
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	27.681.413 €
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	36.363.445 €
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	2.833.164 €

Universidad de Valladolid (UVa) is one of Spain's most prestigious institutions of higher education, boasting a history spanning over eight centuries. Founded in the 13th century during the Castilian Middle Ages, UVa has cultivated a rich academic tradition and accumulated a significant historical, architectural, bibliographic, ethnographic, museum, and documentary heritage. The university actively engages in the expansion, research, conservation, and dissemination of this valuable legacy.

UVa comprises four campuses situated across the Castilla y León region: Valladolid, Palencia, Segovia, and Soria. The university is committed to the comprehensive education of its students, advancing research, and disseminating knowledge, thereby playing a pivotal role in driving scientific and cultural development in society. Currently, UVa hosts over 3,000 researchers and support staff, and more than 19,000 students.

The academic programs offered by UVa are diverse and multidisciplinary, encompassing 68 officially recognized undergraduate degrees across Arts and Humanities, Sciences, Health Sciences, Social and Legal Sciences, and Engineering and Architecture. At the postgraduate level, UVa provides specialized training through over 65 Master's programs, 29 doctoral programs, and 15 joint degrees, supplemented by extensive international partnerships and distinguished research centers. Research and Innovation (R&I) represent essential pillars of UVa's institutional mission. Scientific research is both a right and a responsibility of UVa's academic personnel, conducted through 58 departments, 12 university institutes, and 195 recognized research groups.


Over the past two decades, UVa has actively participated in numerous European projects. Currently, UVa is the leading university and the third overall entity—including enterprises and technological centers—in Castilla y León regarding the acquisition and coordination of Horizon 2020 and Europe projects. This success is supported by the university's highly experienced European Projects Office.


In terms of innovation, UVa emphasizes the promotion, transfer, and valorization of research outcomes and knowledge dissemination to society and industry. To achieve this objective, UVa established the Fundación Universidad de Valladolid, a unified entity resulting from the merger of the former "Fundación General" and the "Fundación Parque Científico". This entity actively promotes innovation, technology transfer, and an entrepreneurial culture within UVa's scientific community.


The Vice-Rectorate for Research manages the research services, Fundación Universidad de Valladolid, University Libraries, the Scientific Culture Unit, the Publications Service, and the Doctoral School. This integrated approach ensures holistic and innovative research management. The annual funding secured by UVa from national and European projects is approximately 18 million euros annually. Including additional sources, the university's total research budget reaches around 40 million euros annually.


In the last years, the Rector and the governing team have strongly promoted the stabilization of research staff and the recruitment of postdoctoral talent through competitive research contracts such as Ramón y Cajal, Beatriz Galindo, and other internal postdoc and predoc programs. This initiative has significantly supported career development for researchers and enhanced the university's research outputs.


2. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE CURRENT PRACTICE


Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
<p data-bbox="167 683 462 750">Ethical and professional aspects</p>  <p data-bbox="279 1041 359 1075">Ethics</p>	<p data-bbox="491 683 1436 851">Below is an analysis focused on the area of Ethics (ethical principles) within the framework of the European Charter for Researchers, comparing the weaknesses and strengths identified in the Initial and Intermediate phases with actions completed in recent years that reinforce the University of Valladolid's commitment to these principles.</p> <p data-bbox="491 884 1436 952">In the next sections we will use a similar format for the comparison and analysis.</p> <p data-bbox="491 1019 1013 1052">Weaknesses that have become Strengths</p> <ul data-bbox="542 1086 1436 1859" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="542 1086 1436 1388">• Lack of visibility and dissemination of the Code of Good Practices in Research: This weakness has been overcome through Action 4, which consisted of updating and publishing the Code of Good Practices in both Spanish and English. The code is available as a website Spanish/English (https://investiga.uva.es/en/good-practices/research-policies/code-of-good-research-practices-cbpi/) and as a document on the institutional website and the UVaDoc repository. It has been actively disseminated among the scientific community, including presentations at institutional events. <li data-bbox="542 1422 1436 1657">• Absence of a single point of contact for ethical issues: Overcome with Action 3, which established a "single point of contact" for ethical matters (comites.eticos@uva.es) and centralizes the management of inquiries, projects, and applicable ethics codes. This structure facilitates the integration of ethical principles into Bachelor's Theses (TFGs), Master's Theses (TFMs), doctoral theses, and research projects. One person is in charge of the technical office since 2024. <li data-bbox="542 1691 1436 1859">• Outdated regulation of the UVa Statutes with no reference to HRS4R (Charter and Code) commitment: Transformed into a strength through Action 1, which achieved the modification of the Statutes in 2020-2021, explicitly incorporating UVa's commitment to the HRS4R strategy, which includes ethical principles.

Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
 <p>Ethics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of an institutional Open Science policy: This weakness has been addressed by Action 22, which implemented an open access policy, promoted self- archiving in the UVaDoc repository, fostered transformative agreements for open access publishing, and offered training on Open Data and Open Access. • Limitations of institutional protocols to ensure confidentiality of results: A very clear protocol for different stages have been placed, all the documentation is send through the Electronic Site of UVa, with traceability, furthermore a specific document to produce embargo or confidentiality of master and degree thesis is available and in the protocol. • The implementation of advanced digital tools for ethics committee management (Action 50) is on-going and it will significantly enhancing transparency, traceability, and efficiency in ethical review processes, aligning UVa with leading European standards. • Psychological well-being. The Office of the Rector's Delegate for University Social Responsibility (RSU) offers students, faculty, and staff an information, guidance, and psychological counseling service across all four UVa campuses. This service is free, anonymous, and confidential. Its main objective is to improve the psychological well-being of members of the UVa university community, providing support for prevention and early intervention when emotional difficulties arise. The service offers three individual sessions focused on information, guidance, and support regarding emotional well-being, anxiety, depression, study organization challenges, or any other concerns related to university life that may be addressed from a psychological perspective. The service is available on all four Uva campuses. Link: https://rsu.uva.es/orientacion-psicologica/


Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
 <p>Ethics</p>	<p>Weaknesses that need further work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to redefine and specialize the functions of the Research Ethics Committee: a single point of contact has been created and the establishment of four different ethics committees is advancing well, however new challenges appear, e.g. the era of artificial intelligence with generative AI is here and new problems and challenges will appear. • Specialized software for the Research Ethics ecosystem is needed, to help them in the traceability, managing and improvement. This is considered in the new action 47. Despite advances in digitalization, the ethical and responsible use of AI and data management in research requires further attention. Action 50 will need to ensure ongoing ethics training and feedback mechanisms for all users of new systems. • Limitation of institutional protocols to prevent scientific duplication and plagiarism: Although the problem is recognized and studies on appropriate mechanisms have begun, a clear solution has not yet been implemented. UVa has Turnitin and now Compilatio but a clear and easy procedure to help researchers is missing. <p>The analysis of the Ethics dimension within the HR Excellence in Research award renewal process at the University of Valladolid reveals significant progress, as well as areas that require continuous attention. The institution has demonstrated a firm commitment to improving its ethical practices through concrete actions such as the updating and dissemination of the Code of Good Practices in Research, the creation of a single point of contact for ethical issues, and the inclusion of ethical principles in the renewed Statutes. These achievements demonstrate a positive evolution from former weaknesses to consolidated strengths.</p>


Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
 <p>Ethics</p>	<p>Furthermore, the implementation of an Open Science policy and the promotion of open access represent a strategic advance in line with the principles of transparency and ethical responsibility in research.</p> <p>Nevertheless, relevant challenges persist. The redefinition and specialization of the Research Ethics Committee, as well as the development of institutional protocols to prevent scientific duplication and ensure the confidentiality of results, remain pending issues. These weaknesses will be addressed in the Action Plan 2025-2028, which will further strengthen the institution's scientific integrity and align its practices with the most demanding European standards.</p> <p>Maintaining an active and participatory strategy will be essential to consolidate a robust and sustainable ethical culture within Uva's research environment.</p>


Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
<p>Recruitment and selection</p>  <p>Recruitment</p>	<p>The objective of this analysis is to identify advancements and areas still needing improvement within the Recruitment axis of the University of Valladolid's HRS4R process. The focus is on the transformation of weaknesses into strengths and on those weaknesses that still require attention. This axis is essential to ensure open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment, in accordance with the OTM-R principles (Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment) established by the European Commission.</p> <p>Weaknesses that have become Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of an official OTM-R policy: Overcome through Action 6, which allowed for the development, approval, and publication of an OTM-R policy available in both Spanish and English on the UVainvestiga institutional website. • Limited documentation in English in recruitment processes: This weakness was addressed through Action 9, with the translation into English of the most relevant calls for applications and their publication on international platforms like EURAXESS, facilitating access for foreign researchers. It is still under continuous improvement. • Lack of planning in the research career path for R1-R2 researchers: Action 14 promoted specific calls for predoctoral, postdoctoral, and senior researchers, improving conditions for stabilization and inclusion in the research career. • Limited professionalization in the recruitment of postdoctoral profiles: Action 14 allowed for the creation of specific calls for postdoctoral researchers with the possibility of stabilization, strengthening the professionalization of the process and offering more predictable career development paths.


Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
 <p>Recruitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low internationalization of calls for applications: Action 8 promoted the systematic practice of publishing job offers on EURAXESS and other international platforms, which has contributed to increasing UVa's visibility and attractiveness to foreign researchers. • Lack of specific mechanisms to facilitate the participation of international candidates: This barrier was addressed through a special procedure for submitting applications without the need for an electronic signature (an action implicit in 14 and reflected in the described progress), thereby improving the accessibility of the recruitment system for foreign personnel. • Fragmentation in human resources management: Previously, human resources management at the University of Valladolid was fragmented among three separate entities: the University itself, the General Foundation, and the Scientific Park Foundation. There was no unified policy governing personnel management across these organizations. Recognizing this as a strategic priority, the current rectorate's leadership team initiated a process to unify the foundations into a single entity, Fundación UVa. As a result, recruitment and hiring processes are now primarily managed through the University's central Research Support Service, ensuring greater cohesion and guaranteeing equal rights and procedures for all researchers. <p>Weaknesses that need further work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of homogeneous selection criteria: An official guide for merit evaluation has not yet been implemented, nor have procedures been standardized across all recruitment processes. However, work has begun to address this weakness. • Selection committees without specific training or independent experts: Due to the complexity of implementation, there is still a lack of systematic training for committee members, as well as the participation of independent external evaluators in all cases. Nevertheless, work is underway to find a solution to this issue. Actions 30–32 are partly oriented for that purpose.


Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
 Recruitment	<p>Within the Recruitment axis, the University of Valladolid has taken significant steps to improve the quality and transparency of its hiring processes, aligning with OTM-R principles. The approval and dissemination of an institutional policy for open and merit-based recruitment, along with the translation of key documentation into English, reflect a clear commitment to internationalization and professionalization of the system. Furthermore, the introduction of specific calls to attract and consolidate research talent demonstrates progress towards a more structured research career.</p> <p>However, structural weaknesses persist that require greater institutional effort. The fragmentation in human resources management limits the homogeneous implementation of policies and procedures. Additionally, the absence of standardized selection criteria and the lack of training for evaluation committees compromise the fairness of the process.</p> <p>The Action Plan 2025-2028 presented addresses these challenges and will allow UVa to continue advancing to ensure fairer, more transparent, and competitive recruitment processes, which are fundamental for attracting quality talent and strengthening its position in the European research area.</p>


Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
<p>Working conditions</p>  <p>Working Conditions</p>	<p>The University of Valladolid (UVa) reaffirms its commitment to continuously improving the working conditions of its research staff, in accordance with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. Through the implementation of the HRS4R plan, it has addressed structural weaknesses, transforming them into tangible and sustainable strengths</p> <p>Weaknesses that have become Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of teleworking regulation: UVa has developed specific regulations for teleworking post-pandemic, thereby improving work-life balance and flexibility. This transformation directly addresses the initial weakness and has been supported by space reorganization and the promotion of virtualization (Action 15) and VirtUVa environment). https://secretariageneral.uva.es/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/V.11.-Reglamento-Teletrabajo.pdf. For the case of researchers hired in projects they can ask for several periods of smart work to the vicerrector of Research. • Rationalization of space usage: The management of university space usage has been optimized following the pandemics, which has allowed for improved physical working conditions and access to laboratories. • Dissemination of training opportunities in transversal skills: Initially, training opportunities were not widely known. Now, through channels such as VirtUVa, UVainvestiga, and the Doctoral School, training reaches the entire research community, also covering aspects like Open Science, IPR, and data protection (Action 15). • Regulated access to laboratories and security: Access and security protocols in laboratories have been improved and made visible on UVainvestiga, which has been recognized as an example of good practice. This corrects one of the weaknesses identified in the Initial Phase.


Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
 <p>Working Conditions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility of strategic and informative documentation: UVa has improved access to key institutional documentation through the UVaDoc repository and the UVainvestiga website (Action 20), resolving the regulatory dispersion that complicated management for research staff. • Lack of perception regarding a clear talent retention and stabilization policy: Although there have been advancements—such as the introduction of R3 contracts and internal programs—the research community now perceives a clear and consolidated institutional strategy for stabilization. Additionally, the value of the OTM-R policy has been rated highly in the recent survey. • Absence of mental health protocols and psychological support: UVa now has a dedicated unit to support the mental health of research staff (https://rsu.uva.es/orientacion-psicologica/ https://rsu.uva.es/orientacion-psicologica/). Although the website is currently available only in Spanish, plans are underway to update the Social Responsibility Unit's website to ensure full bilingual accessibility. It was indicated in ethical section previously. • The integration of Fundación UVa, while formally established, must still be operationalized through joint training activities, unified procedures, and regular cross- representation in governance structures. Progress should be measured through annual integration reviews and researcher feedback. • Lack of a specific figure or committee for researchers' rights. The ombudsperson for the UVa university community is also responsible for research-related matters.

Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
 <p>Working Conditions</p>	<p>Weaknesses that need further work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited dissemination and use of work-life balance measures: While regulations on work-life balance exist, their impact is limited, as most research staff are neither aware of them nor utilize them. Awareness campaigns on existing work-life measures will be included in Action 35 (institutional training program). • Specific teleworking regulation for researchers: UVa has developed specific regulations for administrative staff, however specific regulation for researchers- academics is still pending. • The formal integration of Fundación UVa into the HRS4R framework (Action 51) consolidates previously fragmented support structures and ensures unified standards and practices for all research staff and affiliated entities. • Limited Flexibility in Reallocating Research Spaces: There is significant difficulty in reallocating research spaces that are underutilized by certain research groups to new groups that require them. The vicerectorate for research has only a limited number of spaces directly under its control, which restricts its ability to assign facilities according to evolving needs. This limitation can hinder the optimal use of research infrastructure and the support of emerging research teams. <p>The University of Valladolid has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving the working conditions of its research staff, aligning with the principles of the Working Conditions area of the European Charter for Researchers. Throughout the HRS4R process, several weaknesses identified in previous phases have been successfully addressed through structured actions, achieving significant progress in areas such as teleworking regulation, space optimization, secure laboratory access, and the dissemination of transversal training.</p>

Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
 <p>Working Conditions</p>	<p>These improvements have contributed to strengthening the work environment and making institutional resources more accessible. Nevertheless, areas requiring priority attention persist, such as the creation of a specific body to defend the rights of research staff, improving the perception of talent retention policies, increasing the visibility of work-life balance measures, and implementing a mental health protocol.</p> <p>Overall, the progress made shows a positive and sustained evolution, although there remains work to be done to consolidate an institutional culture fully oriented towards the well-being and professional development of the research community. UVa remains committed to moving in this direction with responsibility, continuity, and active participation from all involved parties, which will be reflected in the new Action Plan presented in this evaluation process.</p>

Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
<p>Training and development</p>  <p>Training</p>	<p>The University of Valladolid is firmly committed to the professional development of its research staff, promoting continuous, transversal, and high-quality training throughout all stages of the research career. This comprehensive approach aims to foster excellence, mobility, and the consolidation of sustainable scientific career paths.</p> <p>Weaknesses that have become Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of a defined research career plan: This gap was addressed with the development of work towards a "Researcher Career Development Plan" which includes specific actions for postdocs (R2-R3) aimed at their stabilization within the institution (Action 11). • Limited availability and visibility of online courses: The creation of VirtUVa, along with the constant updating of training offerings by the Doctoral School (ESDUVa), has allowed for widespread dissemination of activities and training in transversal competencies, accessible in both in-person and virtual formats (Action 15). • Lack of dynamism in generational turnover: Programs to attract and promote young researchers have been launched, as well as calls for projects led by emerging researchers, contributing to reducing the structural aging of teams (Action 12). • Lack of visibility and structure in RRI, IPR, Open Science training: Training in these areas has been strengthened with resources accessible from VirtUVa, thematic library guides, and awareness-raising activities organized in coordination with the Library, Fundación UVa, and the Research Service (Actions 15 and 22). Action 52 directly addresses previous weaknesses in interdepartmental coordination and the hybrid management of European and international projects, introducing standardized protocols, an online tool for expense eligibility, and regular information sessions for researchers.

Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
<p>Training and development</p>  <p>Training</p>	<p>Weaknesses that need further work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a postdoc mentor figure: A pilot mentoring program was prepared for postdocs, however engagement and further work is still needed in the future (Action 11). It can be included within Action 33. • Lack of a structured protocol for meetings between trainees and supervisors: Although work has begun on its implementation, there is still no institutional system to guarantee these regular meetings as part of academic supervision. • Lack of consolidated indicators to measure the impact of training: It is still necessary to establish monitoring and evaluation tools to measure the real impact of training actions on researchers' career paths and performance. • Practical implementation of interdepartamental research coordination, particularly the adoption of user-centered KPIs such as reduced project processing times, to be regularly monitored for the effectiveness of Action 52. <p>The University of Valladolid has made notable progress in the Training and Development axis, consolidating key actions that have transformed former weaknesses into strengths. This is especially true regarding the development of research careers, the creation of a postdoctoral mentoring program, and the expansion of training opportunities accessible through platforms like VirtUVa. These improvements have contributed to offering more structured, visible, and tailored training to the needs of research staff. However, significant challenges persist. These include the implementation of an institutional protocol for monitoring between supervisors and trainees, the evaluation of mentoring's impact, the personalization of training opportunities, and the creation of systematic indicators to measure learning impact.</p>

Thematic heading of the Charter and Code	STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES
 <p>Training</p>	<p>The New Action Plan will specifically focus on strengthening these areas, integrating more robust mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and segmentation. The goal is to ensure equitable, continuous, and effective training at all stages of the research career. This renewed commitment will allow for the consolidation of an institutional culture based on continuous improvement, ensuring that all UVa researchers have the necessary resources and support for their professional and academic development.</p>

Have any of the priorities for the short- and medium term changed?

No, the Universidad de Valladolid (UVa) has not introduced significant changes to the short- and medium-term priorities outlined in its initial HRS4R strategy. The institution remains committed to the same principles and objectives that shaped its Action Plan during the initial implementation and subsequent interim and review assessments. This continuity reflects the University's strong alignment with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers through UVa's statutes and its new rules of procedure.

The core pillars of UVa's HR strategy continue to focus on improving working conditions for researchers, ensuring transparent and merit-based recruitment processes (OTM-R), enhancing career development opportunities, and promoting ethical research practices. Efforts to strengthen internal communication, increase awareness of HR policies, and support internationalisation and mobility also remain high on the actions.

While implementation timelines for specific actions may have been adjusted to account for internal resource limitations or administrative constraints, the strategic intent and content of the priorities remain unaltered. Moreover, UVa continues to work closely with its research community and relevant stakeholders such as Fundación Universidad de Valladolid (as its linked third party) to monitor the effectiveness of the action plan and adapt procedures without altering its fundamental priorities. Continuity in priorities also ensures the consolidation of processes already underway. For example, the development of a centralised research support office, the strengthening of training and mentoring structures for early-stage researchers, and the refinement of internal evaluation procedures are areas where UVa has seen progress and is focused on achieving sustainable impact.

This consistent approach not only guarantees the effectiveness of the strategy but also demonstrates institutional stability and commitment, especially in a changing national and European landscape. The HR Excellence in Research Award remains an essential part of the University's research strategy and is embedded within the broader institutional mission. With the future changes to the UVa Statutes we intend to further embed the principles of the seal.

In summary, UVa's strategic goals within HRS4R remain unchanged, and the focus continues to be on quality enhancement, researcher support, and sustainable institutional development. The Action Plan is being implemented with a long-term perspective, integrating continuous improvement while remaining loyal to its original vision.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in 2020, had a lasting impact on the implementation of the Action Plan and related activities, extending its effects until early 2022. In parallel, the introduction of new national regulations-particularly those issued by the Ministry of Science and Innovation and the Ministry of Universities, including Organic Law 2/2023 of 22 March on the University System-further contributed to delays in the development of key documents associated with the HR Excellence in Research Award, such as the OTM-R Policy and the Recruitment Protocol.

Additionally, the process of the implementation of the original Action Plan and Internal Review has encountered various challenges. In several instances, these **difficulties have stemmed from technical constraints**. On 12 February 2025, the UVa Foundation was hit by a **ransomware attack**, which had a

significant impact on its core operations and the University's recommended tasks. Nowadays, normal service is being restored, and on this new period, there is an expressed desire to bring to completion any actions that have remained unfinished.

As a result, the UVa has opted to revise and adapt certain actions to align them more realistically with the institution's current capabilities and resources. These revisions aim to ensure more accurate data collection to assess the progress of the respective actions.

Have any of the circumstances in which your organisation operates, changed and as such have had an impact on your HR strategy?

Yes, the University of Valladolid has experienced several significant structural and organisational changes that have had an impact on its Human Resources Strategy for Researchers.

One of the key developments has been the merger of two of the University's affiliated entities: the General Foundation of the University (Fundación General de la Universidad de Valladolid) and the Scientific Park Foundation (Fundación Parque Científico de la UVa). Now it is called Fundación Universidad de Valladolid (Fundación UVa). This integration aimed at streamlining administrative procedures and creating a more cohesive and effective research support ecosystem. However, it has also brought new coordination challenges, especially in relation to the hybrid management of research projects between the University and the unified Foundation.

Additionally, the lack of human resources at the Research Projects Support Office at UVa (SAI) due to unforeseen situations disrupted the support provided for the certain activities for HRS4R. This has led to delays and additional administrative burdens, necessitating urgent measures to restore operational capacity and ensure continuity. Nowadays, the University of Valladolid has reinforced the 'SAI' unit with additional staff members, and two new units have been established: scientific production and cost management. Now, UVa counts with a total of five units have been designated as specialised in the field of R&D&I management within the central R&D services.

Further, the approval of new national legislation has also had a tangible effect on UVa's HR strategy. The March 2021- 2023 reforms to public sector hiring laws have altered recruitment practices and required adaptation of internal procedures. These changes demand increased transparency and compliance with new legal frameworks, which has required significant efforts in legal, HR, and administrative training across the institution.

Furthermore, the published of the reformed Science Law (Ley de la Ciencia) in September 2022 and the approval of the Organic Law of the University System (LOSU) in 2023 have established new standards for academic employment and research careers in Spain. The implementation of legislative changes necessitates that institutions such as UVa align their human resources strategies with emerging national frameworks. This alignment encompasses various aspects, including tenure-track pathways, research assessment criteria, and the configuration of research contracts.

The cumulative effect of these external and internal changes has made it necessary for the University to adopt a more flexible and resilient approach in implementation the HRS4R strategy. While the overall

objectives remain stable, operational and procedural adaptations are ongoing in order to reflect the new institutional reality and regulatory environment.

Are any strategic decisions under way that may influence the action plan?

While no immediate strategic changes are foreseen, it is worth noting that the upcoming rectoral election next year marks a significant moment in the life of the University of Valladolid. Leadership transitions naturally bring fresh perspectives and opportunities for innovation, and the new Rectorate may propose strategic adjustments that could influence institutional priorities—including aspects of the HRS4R Action Plan. However, the University approaches this period of transition with both confidence and optimism, based on a strong record of sustained commitment to the HR Excellence in Research Award across successive leadership teams.

The unwavering support for HRS4R by the last three Vice-Rectors for Research—and its explicit inclusion in the University Statutes—demonstrates that the values of the Charter & Code have become a central, permanent feature of UVA's strategy. The HR Excellence in Research Award is now embedded not merely as a stand-alone initiative, but as an essential driver for research quality, talent attraction, and international competitiveness at the University. This institutionalization ensures that even as new leadership brings fresh vision, the foundational principles of researcher development, OTM-R, and open science remain intact and continuously nurtured.

A robust ecosystem supports this momentum. Implementation teams, technical experts, and administrative units have grown in expertise and autonomy, enabling continuity and adaptability regardless of changes at the highest levels. Biannual meetings with researchers ensure that the HRS4R remains a living strategy—visible, discussed, and renewed in collaboration with the research community. The institutional culture at UVA is now defined by a shared commitment to researcher excellence, transparency, and international standards.

Of course, we recognize that strategic pivots may occur following an election—potentially influencing budget distribution or the pace of certain actions. To anticipate and navigate these possibilities, the HRS4R working group maintains regular, proactive engagement with both current and potential incoming leaders. This dialogue is key to safeguarding the Action Plan's progress and to fostering an appreciation of the tangible benefits that HRS4R brings to the entire institution.

In conclusion, the University of Valladolid faces the coming period with a spirit of constructive anticipation. Thanks to its statutory framework, institutional maturity, and a deeply rooted culture of research excellence, UVA is fully prepared to embrace any new opportunities or perspectives that may arise—ensuring that the HRS4R remains at the heart of its strategic vision, regardless of who is at the helm.

3. ACTIONS

Proposed Actions:

ACTION #	GAP Principle(s)	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Work Package 1: Governance and Ethical Framework				
Action 25. Amendment of the Statutes of the University of Valladolid, incorporating the HRS4R principles	(++) 1. Research freedom (+/-) 2. Ethical principles (+/-) 35. Participation in decision-making bodies.	Sep'23-Sep'28	Vice-Rector for Research	- Statutes approved with explicit reference to European Charter for Researchers (e.g. article 177.2). - Official publication in the Official Gazette of Castile and León (BOCyL)
Action 26. Update of the UVa Code of Good Research Practices, including aspects related to Artificial Intelligence	(++) 1. Research freedom (+/-) 2. Ethical principles (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (+/-) 4. Professional attitude (+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (+/-) 6. Accountability (+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results	Sep'25-Sep'28	Vice-Rector for Research	- Updated version of the Code of Good Research Practices available online (ES/EN) - Approval by the Governing Council.

	(-/+) 15. Transparency (Code) (-/+) 36. Relation with supervisors (+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development			
Action 29. Strengthening the visibility and Institutional adoption of the Code of Ethics and Good Research Practices	(+/-) 2. Ethical principles (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (+/-) 6. Accountability (+/-) 7. Good practice in research (++) 9. Public engagement	Sep'27-Sep'28	Vice-Rector for Research	- Number of annual dissemination activities - Assessment of Code comprehension and usefulness through surveys
Action 47. Implementation of Software Tools for Ethics Committee Traceability	(++) 1. Research freedom (+/-) 2. Ethical principles (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (+/-) 6. Accountability (+/-) 7. Good practice in research (++) 9. Public engagement (-/+) 15. Transparency (Code)	Sep'25-Sep'27	Vice-Rector for Research	- Number of applications managed.

	(+/-) 24. Working conditions (+/-) 31. Intellectual Property Rights (+/-) 34. Complains/ appeals (+/-) 35. Participation in decision-making bodies			
Action 48. Updating Governance of Research Structures in Light of LOSU Reforms	(+/-) 2. Ethical principles (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (+/-) 6. Accountability (+/-) 7. Good practice in research	Sep'24-Sep'28	Vicerrectorate of Research	- Legislation updated
Work Package 2: Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R)				
Action 30. Development the internal instructions for the implementation of an OTM-R Recruitment Code of Conduct based on the University of Valladolid's OTM-R Policy	(++) 10. Non discrimination (-) 12. Recruitment (-/+) 15. Transparency (Code) (+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)	Sep'25-Sep'28	Vice-Rector for Research	- Document containing the OTM-Recruitment Code of Conduct for its implementation - Consultations regarding the OTM-R Code

Action 31. Promoting international dissemination of recruitment processes through EURAXESS	(++) 10. Non discrimination (-) 12. Recruitment (-) 13. Recruitment (Code) (-) 14. Selection (Code) (-/+) 15. Transparency (Code) (+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code) (+/-) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code) (++) 20. Seniority (Code)	Sep'26-Mar'27	Vice-Rector for Research	-Total number of positions advertised internationally - Proportion of calls published in English Internal included the expressions of interest in EURAXESS. - Internal guidelines/procedures for EURAXESS publication - Records of OTM-R training provided to staff
Action 32. Awareness and Training Campaign on OTM-R Principles for the Research Community	(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (-) 12. Recruitment (-) 13. Recruitment (Code) (-) 14. Selection (Code) (-/+) 15. Transparency (Code) (++) 20. Seniority (Code)	Mar'26-Mar'27	Vice-Rector for Research	- Number of training sessions conducted and participants trained - OTM-R guide published and accessible on the website - Inclusion of OTM-R module in onboarding programs (on VirtUVa website) - Perception on the survey
Action 51. Formal Inclusion of Fundación UVa in the HRS4R Strategy	(++) 1. Research freedom (+/-) 2. Ethical principles (+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (+/-) 6. Accountability (+/-) 7. Good practice in research	Sep'24-Sep'26	Vicerrectorate of Research	- Signature of the agreement

	(++) 9. Public engagement (-/+) 15. Transparency (Code)			
Work Package 3: Talent Attraction, Development, and Retention				
Action 33. Consolidation of efforts for the attraction, retention, and recognition of research talent through a Specific Program Including Internal and external funding.	(++) 20. Seniority (Code) (+/-) 23. Research environment (-) 25. Stability and permanence of employment (+/-) 26. Funding and salaries (-/+) 28. Career development (+/-) 30. Access to career advice (++) 40. Supervision	Sep'25-Sep'27	Vice-Rector for Research	- Number of calls launched by category - Number of applications received per call - Number of permanent contracts
Action 34. Establishing an incentive system for Postdoctoral Researchers to help in the research.	(-) 22. Recognition of the profession (+/-) 24. Working conditions (-) 25. Stability and permanence of employment (-/+) 28. Career development	Sep'23-Sep'28	Vice-Rector for Research	- Number of postdoctoral incentives - Feedback on the system provided by applicants and beneficiaries

Action 35. Improve and centralize the information on training activities available at UVa for researchers through the UVaInvestiga Website.	(++) 9. Public engagement (++) 10. Non discrimination (-/+) 28. Career development (+/-) 29. Value of mobility (++) 40. Supervision	Sep'26-Sep'27	Vice-Rector of Communication and University Extension Activities	- Updated and centralised on the UVaInvestiga website
Work Package 4: Research Support and Communication				
Action 37. Campaign to enhance visibility and international accessibility of Research Support Services at Uva.	(++) 10. Non discrimination (+/-) 24. Working conditions (+/-) 26. Funding and salaries (-/+) 28. Career development (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	Sep'25-Mar'26	Vice-Rector for Research	- Number of documents translated into English, accesses to the services portal in Spanish and English -Number of dissemination activities conducted, participation in informational sessions, and knowledge/satisfaction surveys.
Action 38. New Research Communication Strategy based on Open Science principles.	(+/-) 6. Accountability (+/-) 7. Good practice in research (+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results (++) 9. Public engagement (+/-) 23. Research	Sep'25-Sep'28	Vice-Rector for Research	- Number of training workshops held and participants - Percentage of projects with information published on institutional portals - Approved procedure in place for UVaDOC registration and self-archiving - Number of publications and scientific documents self-archived in UVaDOC

	environment			- Repository usage statistics (views, downloads)
Action 39. Rebranding and development of bilingual websites for Research Support Services (ESDUVA and Library)	(+/-) 4. Professional attitude (-) 22. Recognition of the profession (+/-) 23. Research environment (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	Sep'24-Mar'26	Vice-Rector for Research	- Launch of bilingual websites (ES/EN) - Content update frequency
Action 52. Enhancement and Coordination of European and International Project Management at UvA	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (+/-) 4. Professional attitude (+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (+/-) 6. Accountability (+/-) 7. Good practice in research (++) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems (-) 13. Recruitment (Code) (-/+) 15. Transparency	Sep'24-Sep'28	Vicerectorate of Research	- Internal protocol for hybrid management of European projects developed and approved. - Online tool for verifying expense eligibility launched. - At least one annual info session held for researchers.

	(Code) (+/-) 24. Working conditions			
Work Package 5: Infrastructure, Evaluation, and Digital Transformation				
Action 40. Design of a Strategy for the Improvement of Research Scientific Infrastructures.	(+/-) 7. Good practice in research (++) 9. Public engagement (+/-) 23. Research environment (+/-) 24. Working conditions	Mar'23-Sep'28	Vice-Rector for Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diagnostic report completed with research community input - Approved and disseminated strategic plan - Number of planned vs. implemented actions - Budget allocated and funding secured - Researcher satisfaction levels (surveys)
Action 41. Implementation of a Digital System for Continuous Evaluation and Updating of Research Output.	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (+/-) 7. Good practice in research (++) 11. Evaluation/appraisal systems (-) 22. Recognition of the profession	Feb'24-Mar'27	Vice-Rector for Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of researchers updating their profiles in the system - Percentage of records updated annually - Number of Training sessions conducted - Reports generated for internal evaluation
Action 42. Optimization of the UVa Science Portal using Dialnet technology to enhance regional and national dissemination of scientific output.	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (+/-) 7. Good practice in	Jan'23-Sep'27	Vice-Rector for Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of updated profiles on the portal - Number of training sessions conducted and researchers trained - Researcher satisfaction levels

	research (+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results (++) 9. Public engagement (-/+) 15. Transparency (Code)			
Action 50. Implementation of AI-Based Tools and automation for enhanced research services	(+/-) 4. Professional attitude (+/-) 6. Accountability (+/-) 7. Good practice in research (+/-) 23. Research environment (-/+) 28. Career development (+/-) 35. Participation in decision-making bodies	Sep'25-Sep'27	Vicerrectorate of Research	- Number of software tools created and deployed. - Number of researchers trained in related courses.
Work Package 6: Innovation and Knowledge Transfer				
Action 45. Promoting research prototyping and digital manufacturing through the FabLab	(+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results (++) 9. Public engagement (-/+) 28. Career development (+/-) 31. Intellectual Property Rights (+/-) 39. Access to research	Sep'25-Sep'28	Vice-Rector for Research	- Number of prototypes developed with FabLab support - Number of Bachelor's Theses (TFG), Master's Theses (TFM), or Doctoral Theses (Tesis) linked to the program - Training activities

	training and continuous development			
Action 46. Development of the new UVa Library Strategic Plan to enhance accessibility to scientific information.	(+/-) 7. Good practice in research (+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	Sep'25-Sep'26		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approval and official publication of the new strategic plan - Number of researchers involvement in the planning process - User satisfaction ratings (through surveys)
Action 49. Updating regulations for Spin-Offs and Knowledge-Based Enterprises (EBCs)	(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (+/-) 4. Professional attitude (+/-) 7. Good practice in research (+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results (+/-) 23. Research environment (+/-) 24. Working conditions (+/-) 31. Intellectual Property Rights (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development	Sep'25-Sep'27	Vicerrectorate of Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legislation updated

Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles

A new protocol will be established to ensure that all research-related vacancies are systematically published on EURAXESS. By law, official announcements must be posted on the University of Valladolid's Electronic Headquarters (Sede Electrónica). The EURAXESS posting will include an announcement with a direct link to the official call on the Sede Electrónica.

In accordance with legislative requirements, all relevant documents will be provided in both Spanish and English on the Sede Electrónica. This new procedure will enhance transparency, accessibility, and international outreach in the recruitment process, fully aligning UVa's practices with the OTM-R principles.

However, due to a lack of human resources and significant restructuring within the Research Support Service (SAI), it has not been possible to implement this protocol to date. For this reason, its development and implementation are planned as a priority for the next period in Action Plan 2025-28.

4. IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

General overview of the expected overall implementation process of the action plan

The Action Plan is composed for 6 Work Packages with 23 action proposals in total. The numbering for each action follows consecutively from that assigned in the previous Action Plan.

Work Package 1: Governance and Ethical Framework

Focus: Institutional alignment with HRS4R principles, ethical conduct, and conflict resolution.

- 25. Amendment of the Statutes of the University of Valladolid, incorporating the HRS4R principles
- 26. Update of the UVa Code of Good Research Practices, including aspects related to Artificial Intelligence
- 29. Strengthening the visibility and Institutional adoption of the Code of Ethics and Good Research Practices
- 47. Implementation of Software Tools for Ethics Committee Traceability
- 48. Updating Governance of Research Structures in Light of LOSU Reforms

Work Package 2: Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R)

Focus: Reinforcement of transparent, fair, and international recruitment practices for researchers.

- 30. Development and monitoring of an OTM-R Recruitment Code of Conduct based on the University of Valladolid's OTM-R Policy
- 31. Promoting international dissemination of recruitment processes through EURAXESS
- 32. Awareness and Training Campaign on OTM-R Principles for the Research Community
- 51. Formal Inclusion of Fundación UVa in the HRS4R Strategy

Work Package 3: Talent Attraction, Development, and Retention

Focus: Support for researcher career development, training, and institutional support across all stages.

- 33. Consolidation of efforts for the attraction, retention, and recognition of research talent through a Specific Program Including Internal and external funding
- 34. Establishing an incentive system for Postdoctoral Researchers similar to that of faculty staff
- 35. Consolidation of an institutional transversal training program for researchers at all career stages

Work Package 4: Research Support and Communication

Focus: Visibility, accessibility, and international projection of research services and results.

- 37. Campaign to enhance visibility and international accessibility of Research Support Services at UVa
- 38. New Research Communication Strategy based on Open Science principles
- 39. Rebranding and development of bilingual websites for Research Support Services (ESDUVA and Library).
- 52. Enhancement and Coordination of European and International Project Management at UVa

Work Package 5: Infrastructure, Evaluation, and Digital Transformation









Focus: Digital tools, evaluation systems, and support infrastructure for high-quality research.

- 40. Design of a strategy for the improvement of Research Infrastructure
- 41. Implementation of a Digital System for Continuous Evaluation and Updating of Research Output
- 42. Optimization of the UVa Science Portal Using Dialnet Technology to Enhance Regional and National Dissemination of Scientific Output
- 50. Implementation of AI-Based Tools and Automation for Enhanced Research Services

Work Package 6: Innovation and Knowledge Transfer

Focus: Fostering innovation ecosystems and improving access to research outputs.

- 45. Promoting research prototyping and digital manufacturing through the FabLab
- 46. Development of the New UVa Library Strategic Plan to Enhance Accessibility to Scientific Information
- 49. Updating Regulations for Spin-Offs and Knowledge-Based Enterprises (EBCs)

Work Packages	Affected Principles
WP1: Governance and Ethical Framework	 Ethics
WP2: Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R)	 Recruitment
WP3: Talent Attraction, Development, and Retention	 Working Conditions  Training
WP4: Research Support and Communication	 Working Conditions
WP5: Infrastructure, Evaluation, and Digital Transformation	 Working Conditions
WP6: Innovation and Knowledge Transfer	 Working Conditions  Training

As in the previous Action Plan, the HRS4R Implementation Committee (HRS4R-IC), chaired by the Vice-Rector for Research, will be responsible for its execution. Each work package will be developed by a specific working team led by an appointed coordinator and will include the concrete actions to be implemented, with all work being supervised by the HRS4R Implementation Committee (HRS4R-IC).

The timeline has been designed on a semester basis, with the execution of each Action potentially spanning more than one quarter. At the conclusion of each semester, a meeting will be held and a progress report will be prepared to monitor the evolution of each Action. The Work Package (WP) leaders will update the KPIs and submit the interim progress reports to the HRS4R-IC

	SEP'25- MAR'26	MAR'26- SEPT'26	SEP'26- MAR'27	MAR'27- SEPT'27	SEP'27- MAR'28	MAR'28- SEPT'28
ACTION/SEMESTER	1S	2S	3S	4S	5S	6S
Work Package 1: Governance and Ethical Framework						
25. Amendment of the Statutes of the University of Valladolid, incorporating the HRS4R principles						
26. Update of the UVa Code of Good Research Practices, including aspects related to Artificial Intelligence						
29. Strengthening the visibility and Institutional adoption of the Code of Ethics and Good Research Practices						
47. Implementation of Software Tools for Ethics Committee Traceability						
48. Updating Governance of Research Structures in Light of LOSU Reforms						
Work Package 2: Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R)						
30. Development and monitoring of an OTM-R Recruitment Code of Conduct based on the University of Valladolid's OTM-R Policy						
31. Promoting international dissemination of recruitment processes through EURAXESS						
32. Awareness and Training Campaign on OTM-R Principles for the Research Community						
51. Formal Inclusion of Fundación UVa in the HRS4R Strategy.						
Work Package 3: Talent Attraction, Development, and Retention						
33. Consolidation of efforts for the attraction, retention, and recognition of research talent through a Specific Program Including Internal and external funding						

34. Establishing an incentive system for Postdoctoral Researchers similar to that of faculty staff						
35. Consolidation of an institutional transversal training program for researchers at all career stages						
Work Package 4: Research Support and Communication						
37. Campaign to enhance visibility and international accessibility of Research Support Services at Uva						
38. New Research Communication Strategy based on Open Science principles						
39. Rebranding and development of bilingual websites for Research Support Services (ESDUVA and Library)						
52. Enhancement and Coordination of European and International Project Management at Uva						
Work Package 5: Infrastructure, Evaluation, and Digital Transformation						
40. Design of a strategy for the improvement of Research Infrastructure						
41. Implementation of a Digital System for Continuous Evaluation and Updating of Research Output						
42. Optimization of the UVa Science Portal Using Dialnet Technology to Enhance Regional and National Dissemination of Scientific Output						
50. Implementation of AI-Based Tools and automation for enhanced research services						
Work Package 6: Innovation and Knowledge Transfer						
45. Promoting research prototyping and digital manufacturing through the FabLab						
46. Development of the New UVa Library Strategic Plan to Enhance Accessibility to Scientific Information						
49. Updating Regulations for Spin-Offs and Knowledge-Based Enterprises (EBCs)						

How have you prepared the internal review?

To prepare for the internal review, UVa followed a structured, inclusive, and evidence-based approach:

- 1. Core Group Coordination.** Regular meetings were held with the core coordination group overseeing HRS4R implementation. These sessions ensured alignment among various work packages, allowed progress tracking, and identified any emerging issues.
- 2. Consultant and Leadership Involvement.** The core group held regular consultations with external experts to validate our approach and receive best-practice guidance. Simultaneously, meetings with the Vice-Rector for Research, Innovation, and Transfer provided strategic oversight and ensured timely decision-making.
- 3. Co-Design Workshop.** Building on survey outcomes, a full-day co-design workshop engaged representatives from all stakeholder groups—early-career to senior researchers, administrative staff, and governance bodies—in brainstorming and collaboratively refining six to eight key actions. This workshop generated a co-created roadmap grounded in community needs.
- 4. Biannual Research Days.** Every six months, UVa convened Research, Innovation, and Transfer Days, where survey and co-design results were presented to the wider research community. These events facilitated feedback, ensured stakeholder buy-in, and enabled course corrections based on real-time input.
- 5. Evidence Documentation.** The coordination group systematically recorded all steps in a centralized repository. This documentation supports transparency and provides robust evidence of engagement for the internal review.

This methodical process—combining regular core group and leadership meetings, expert consultation, stakeholder workshops, and community-wide events—ensures that the internal review accurately reflects both progress to date and future implementation needs, fully aligned with HRS4R best practices.

How have you involved the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?

Involvement of the Research Community and Main Stakeholders in the Implementation Process

The University of Valladolid (UVa) has placed strong emphasis on actively involving the research community and its main stakeholders throughout the implementation and ongoing development of the HR Excellence in Research award. This engagement has been both broad and structured, ensuring that all perspectives are considered and that the process is transparent, participatory, and aligned with institutional priorities.

Meetings and Working Groups

A key element of the process has been the regular organization of core group meetings, as well as dedicated sessions for various work packages. These meetings foster open dialogue, facilitate the exchange of best practices, and ensure the timely identification and resolution of issues. Working groups are carefully composed to include researchers from different career stages (R1–R4), administrative and support staff, personnel from related entities (such as the UVa Foundation), and representatives from the University's governing bodies. This multidisciplinary and multi-level configuration guarantees that all necessary dimensions of the HR strategy are addressed and that proposed actions are realistic and widely supported.

Digital Collaboration Platforms

To facilitate communication and coordination, **Microsoft Teams** is used as a central collaborative platform.

Each working group is assigned its own dedicated space within Teams, including the core group. This digital environment makes it easy to organize meetings, share documents, and ensure that up-to-date information is readily accessible. Importantly, it also enables collaboration between different organizational “tenants,” such as the UVA and the Foundation, strengthening the integration of efforts across all institutional partners.

Surveys and Stakeholder Feedback

A **comprehensive survey was conducted among the research community** to assess both the implementation of the Action Plan’s tasks and their perceived importance for UVA’s research environment. Survey launched from June 20 to June 30, 2023. Target population: 3,242 researchers (3,162 Spanish; 80 English). Total responses: 562 out of 3,242 (17.33%). Results were presented at the UVA Research Days event (November 24, 2023). As a new feature, research technicians and managers were included in the survey, in accordance with the provisions of the Science Law. The survey covered awareness of the HR Excellence seal, understanding of European principles for research careers, familiarity with ethics codes, strategic lines of research, recruitment procedures, and the accessibility of resources and support services. The findings directly informed subsequent planning, highlighting the community’s high level of engagement and shared commitment to excellence.

Survey results summary: The survey reveals strong support among UVA researchers for the institution’s commitment to the HRS4R process and key European standards, with very high perceived value in maintaining the HR Excellence in Research award. Awareness of specific policies, procedures, and support platforms is moderate to low, but users rate their utility and importance for research activities highly. Initiatives like open science, digital research management, and career development are valued, though participation and awareness can be further improved. Respondents consider training, talent retention, transparency in recruitment, and research integrity tools essential for enhancing UVA’s research environment. Overall, there is a clear endorsement of ongoing HRS4R efforts, but results highlight the need for greater internal communication and engagement, especially regarding new and evolving support services.

Co-Design and Participatory Workshop

Based on the survey results, a co-design workshop was organized, focusing on six to eight key thematic areas identified as priorities. The research community were invited (with special emphasis on R1) and more than 30 participants (representing R1 to R4 and administrative services in research) were in the workshop. The workshop, structured as a brainstorming and design-thinking session, brought together stakeholders from all levels for collaborative problem-solving. This approach ensured that the perspectives and creativity of the entire research community were leveraged to co-create new actions and refine existing ones.

Leadership Engagement and Strategic Alignment

Leadership has played a pivotal role in ensuring alignment between HR strategies and broader university policies. The HRS4R lead (an R4 researcher) became Director of Research Area Production in 2022, while another R4 member of the core team assumed an additional director role. Both meet weekly with the Vice-Rector for Research, ensuring direct alignment and regular feedback between governance and the evolving needs of the research community.

Dissemination and Communication

Finally, the results and progress of the process have been widely disseminated through "Jornadas de Investigación, Innovación y Transferencia" (twice a year as indicated before), further reinforcing transparency and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Through these coordinated mechanisms—regular meetings, digital tools, participatory workshops, structured surveys, and leadership engagement—the UVA ensures that all stakeholders are fully involved and empowered in the implementation of the HR Excellence in Research strategy.

Do you have an implementation committee and/or steering group regularly overseeing progress?

Yes. The University of Valladolid's HRS4R strategy is overseen by a dedicated coordination group that regularly monitors progress and drives implementation across all work packages. This group is responsible for collecting information from the various working groups, preparing progress reports, and ensuring that feedback from across the research community is systematically incorporated into ongoing actions.

Leadership engagement and strategic alignment are central to this structure. The HRS4R lead—an R4 researcher—was appointed Director of Research Area Production in 2022, and another R4 member of the core team now serves as a director in research area. These directors meet on a weekly basis with the Vice-Rector for Research, ensuring that HR strategies remain fully aligned with broader university policies and that the evolving needs of the research community are addressed in real time.

The coordination group brings together a diverse range of expertise. It includes the Director of the European Projects Office (who is affiliated with Fundación UVa and maintains direct contact with European projects and the highest standards for researcher recruitment), as well as key representatives from the library and the Research Service. This multidisciplinary composition ensures that best practices, regulatory requirements, and international expectations are continuously integrated into the HRS4R implementation process.

The coordination group also maintains direct liaison with the rectorate, enabling swift implementation of any necessary regulatory changes. The Vice-Rector for Research has been actively involved at every stage, providing institutional support and leadership for all HRS4R-related actions and work packages. This ongoing oversight guarantees that the implementation process is both systematic and highly responsive to emerging developments, maintaining the University of Valladolid's commitment to excellence in HR strategy for researchers.

Is there any alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R?

Yes, there is a clear and robust alignment between the University of Valladolid's organizational policies and the principles of HRS4R. The HRS4R strategy is not an isolated initiative, but is integrated throughout UVa's governance, regulatory, and strategic frameworks.

The development and implementation of the HRS4R policy is conducted in close collaboration between the coordination group and the university's rectorate. Any decisions that impact university regulations are carefully reviewed and, when appropriate, formally adopted by the University's governing bodies. As previously mentioned, the Vice-Rector for Research, Innovation, and Transfer has played a key role throughout every stage of HRS4R implementation, ensuring ongoing strategic alignment.

Notably, since 2021, the advancement of the HR Excellence in Research Award (HRS4R) has been the first priority in the action lines of the Vice-Rector for Research, as clearly evidenced in all published strategic documents (actuation lines 21/22, 22/23 and 23/24, after that is considered incorporated and most of the actions are in line with the HRS4R but not explicitly mentioned, it is already in the Statutes UVa). This places HRS4R at the core of UVa's research and internationalization strategies.

Furthermore, the principles of HRS4R have been formally incorporated into the recently approved Statutes of the University of Valladolid. Specifically, Article 177.2 states:

"In the recruitment of research staff, the University of Valladolid shall follow the criteria of the European Commission Recommendation of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers."

This statutory recognition demonstrates UVa's deep commitment to the European standards of researcher recruitment and career development, embedding the HRS4R as a fundamental pillar of university policy and practice. In the next modification of the Statutes the new European Charter for Researchers (20 principles) will be indicated.

How has your organization ensured that the proposed actions would be also implemented?

The proposed actions are implemented through structured governance and institutional procedures. The revision of the University Statutes—a critical enabler of HRS4R implementation—was initiated to meet both the requirements of the Charter & Code and the new **Organic Law of the University System (LOSU)**, enacted in March 2023. This extensive process involved legal review and approval by the competent governing bodies, ensuring that the Statutes provide a solid foundation for subsequent regulatory changes. Upon adoption, the revisions allow for the formalization of HRS4R principles across all university regulations and practices.

Oversight and monitoring are coordinated by the HRS4R coordination group. This committee gathers updates from the designated leaders of each work package—who include both recognized researchers and administrative staff—and compiles comprehensive progress reports. Leadership is strategically embedded in the structure: each work package leader holds a position of institutional representation, and these leaders maintain weekly communication with the Vice-Rector for Research, Innovation, and Transfer—who in turn liaises directly with the Rector and other Vice-Rectors. This ensures that actions are reviewed, validated, and adapted in real time.

A formal **annual review** is conducted by the implementation committee. During this review, the coordination group assesses completed actions, measures performance against milestones, and confirms outcomes with the Vice-Rector. This systematic annual cycle guarantees not only accountability but also adaptive governance, enabling the institution to refine its path toward full HRS4R implementation

How are you monitoring progress (timeline)?

To ensure the effective execution of the HRS4R Action Plan, UVa has implemented a comprehensive monitoring framework grounded in structured timelines, clear responsibilities, and regular reporting:

1. Tracking Table

A tracking document captures all actions grouped according to the four thematic areas: Ethical & Professional Aspects, Recruitment & Selection, Working Conditions, and Training & Development. Each entry includes the planned timeframe, assigned team or service, defined KPIs, deliverables, and current status (e.g., new, in progress, extended, completed).

2. Regular Meetings & Reporting

Working group meetings are held every two weeks to review progress on ongoing tasks and troubleshoot issues as they arise.

A steering committee—comprising institutional leadership—conducts quarterly reviews, consulting the tracking table to flag actions at risk and propose resource adjustments.

An annual review session consolidates progress across all work packages. The results undergo validation by the Vice-Rector for Research, ensuring high-level oversight. It will be also presented in the “Jornadas de Investigación” or Research Workshops with the researchers.

3. Measurement & Control

Progress is measured with quantitative and qualitative indicators tied to each action (e.g., documents produced, events held, number of users trained). Before each steering meeting, a performance dashboard highlights actions nearing deadlines or needing intervention.

Additionally, progress is documented via shared platforms (SharePoint/Teams), including evidence for deliverables and audit purposes. In cases of significant delays or obstacles, the steering committee initiates corrective actions, including timeline extensions or additional resource allocation.

How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?

The progress will be measured in this way:

- 0) An exhaustive **survey** open to the **R1-R2-R3-R4 and PTGAS** community will be conducted (similar to the one prepared for the initial phase).
- 1) Information of the **different indicators** of the actions will be asked to the **coordinators** of the WPs.
- 2) The information will be **analysed**
- 3) **Meetings** will be carried out with the **coordinators** of the actions to establish the actions to be taken to finish the implementation of the action plan **Responsible persons** of the remaining actions will be named.
- 4) A **rapid action** will be taken with the help of the vice-rector of research, innovation and transfer.
- 5) A compilation of **final set of the indicators** will be done.
- 6) **Progress report** will be generated.

How do you expect to prepare for the external review?

To ensure a successful external review, the University of Valladolid is implementing a structured approach that balances clarity, transparency, and stakeholder engagement without overreaching in ambition.

First, a formal **agenda** for the review visit will be prepared and circulated in advance. This will outline the review panel's schedule, key topics, and locations—in labs, shared facilities, and digital platforms—demonstrating our preparedness and organizational rigour.

Second, a concise but comprehensive **summary presentation** will be created. It will highlight the HRS4R strategy's key milestones: revised statutes, policy updates, infrastructure enhancements, recruitment changes, and training programmes. This visual summary will help reviewers rapidly understand our progress and institutional context.

Third, to reflect methodical site selection (as recommended in program assessment guides, the review will include **tours of key workspaces**—from central research services (LTI lab, Animalarium) to digital platforms (UVainvestiga, Common Ethics Portal). This provides reviewers with tangible evidence of changes and best practices in action.

Fourth, the review will involve **stakeholder meetings** with representatives from each work-package, research groups and institutes, administrative units (SAI, Fundación UVa), and rector and vicerrectors. These structured discussions will ensure reviewers hear directly from diverse voices across the university –

mirroring best practices in external review processes.

Finally, we will prepare a **self-study dossier**—including timelines, survey results, tracking tables, evidence of policy implementation, and leadership monitoring protocols.

By preparing a clear agenda, committed presentation materials, site visits, stakeholder dialogues, and a well-documented dossier, the University ensures the external review is efficient, informative, and grounded in institutional realities. The agenda will be agreed with the commission.

In summary, UVa has not only addressed the recommendations of the previous assessment, but has taken proactive steps to expand and improve its HR strategy. The new Action Plan provides clear direction, incorporates new actions, and deepens existing commitments in full alignment with European standards. We look forward to ongoing dialogue and external feedback to ensure the sustained excellence of HR management for researchers at UVa.

We firmly believe that UVa's ongoing participation in the HR Excellence in Research Award (HRS4R) process has significantly improved the institution and prepared it for future challenges. The process has not only raised institutional standards, but also strengthened our capacity for internationalization, transparency, and research excellence.