B U L G A R I A N A C A D E M Y O F S C I E N C E S

INSTITUTE FOR POPULATION AND HUMAN STUDIES

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Policy and Actions of the Institute for Population and Human Studies at BAS for the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment of Researchers (OTM-R)

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HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

RESEARCHERS IN MOTION

1. Introduction

In May 2016, the European Commission awarded the Institute for Population and Human Research the right to use the "HR Excellence in Research" logo. The logo contributes to the inclusion of IPHS in the European Research Area, providing better working conditions and career development for researchers, free exchange of knowledge and an open labor market, guided by the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

The OTM-R policy is one of the pillars of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. It aims to ensure that during the recruitment processes the best candidate is selected for a research position. There are three main principles which are Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R), which brings benefits to researchers and the institutions in the sphere of science and research.

Open recruitment: Vacancies should be advertised openly and widely to ensure that a wider reach of candidates.

Transparent Recruitment: The recruitment process should be simple and clear. External applicants must have access to the same information as the internal applicants.

Merit-based Recruitment: Selection should be based on the merit of the researchers. The selection committee must ensure that the best candidate is chosen for an academic position.

2. Description of the policies for recruitment of researchers in IPHS at BAS

The OTM-R process makes research careers more attractive, guarantees equal opportunities for all applicants and facilitates mobility, thus contributing to the development of the European Research Area and to raising the level of scientific excellence in the institutions that applies OTM-R principles. The Institute for Population and Human Studies incorporates the principles of the OTM-R policy and follows the guidelines provided by the European Commission, in several normative documents such as the Regulations on the terms and conditions for occupying academic positions in IPHS at BAS https://www.iphs.eu/n/images/normative-docs/Pravilnik%20IPHS%20nauchni%20stepeni_2022.pdf , Rules for the work of scientific juries for occupying academic positions at IPHS at BAS https://www.iphs.eu/n/images/normative-docs/Pravila%20IPHS%20Juri_2022.pdf and

Regulations for the structure, internal work order and activity of IPHS at BAS: https://www.iphs.eu/n/images/normative-docs/Pravilnik_IPHS_2022.pdf. These documents provide guidelines for the recruitment process and the selection and appointment of researchers in the Institute.

2.1. Advertising and application stage

The vacant positions for researchers (assistant professor, associate professor and professor) are announced after a decision of the Scientific Council based on the proposal of the Head of the Research Unit or the Head of the Department of IPHS. The announcement is published in the State Gazette as well as on the website of the Institute under the section "Competitions"/ "Competitions for academic positions". The announcement includes information on the position (assistant professor, associate professor and professor), the number of vacancies, the deadline for submission of the documents (it must be at least two months after the announcement of the call), the requested list of documents under Art. 19 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the requested list for the fulfillment of the minimum requirements of the Institute for Population and Human Studies at BAS /Appendix No. 1 for the relevant scientific field/ and a link to the Regulations for the terms and conditions for holding academic positions at IPHS, declaration of originality and credibility of the works submitted for assessment under Art. 27, paragraph 2 of the Rules for implementation of the Law on the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. The evaluation criteria are also published also in the announcement. Telephone and mail address for contact with the Institute, in case of question, are also included in the announcement.

At present, the announcements of the academic positions in the Institute are published only in Bulgarian. In future, it is planned to publish also vacancies in EURAXESS, depending on the requirements of the national legislation about the academic positions.

After the deadline for submission of the documents, the names of the candidates are published in alphabetical order and the incoming number of the submitted documents. For the positions of "Associate Professor" and "Professor" summaries of the work of the candidates in Bulgarian and in English are published on the website. For the position of “Chef assistant professor”, information on the planned interview of the candidates with the Scientific Jury is published on the website

2.2. Stage of evaluation and selection

A Scientific Jury is formed before the deadline for submission of the documents for an academic position IPHS. The members of the Scientific Jury are proposed by the Research Unit and approved by the Scientific Council of IPHS. Its members are appointed by an Order of the Director of the Institute. Members of the Scientific Jury can be researchers with habilitation who are employed in universities/colleges or research institutes, working in the relevant academic field and/or having professional experience in the field of the announced competition. In case of absence of members of the Scientific Jury in the relevant scientific field, a selection is conducted from the public register of the National Center for Information and Documentation in the section "Register of academic staff and protected dissertation works"/ "Qualified persons with research performance indicators" (https://ras.nacid.bg/dissertations-search), and/or researchers from foreign universities or research organizations working in the relevant specialty and/or having professional experience in a scientific field of the competition.

For the position of "Chief assistant" the Scientific Jury includes 5 habilitated persons and at least two of the Jury members must not be employed in the Institute.

For the position of "Associate professor", the Scientific Jury includes 7 habilitated persons, at least three of the Jury members must not be employed in the Institute and at least three mush be professors.

For the position "Professor", the Scientific Jury includes 7 habilitated persons. At least four of them must be Professors or Doctors of Science and at least three of them must not be employed in the IPHS. Each member of the Scientific Jury evaluates the candidates individually. If the basic requirements are equal, the scientific jury also takes into account the general assessment obtained from additional indicators that are applicable to the relevant field.

Up to one month before the final meeting of the Scientific Jury, the summaries of the work of the candidates and the reviews of the members of the Scientific Jury (in Bulgarian and in English) must be published on the website of the Institute under the announced academic procedure.

The competition is conducted by the Scientific Jury in two stages: 1) Verification of the submitted documents for compliance with the minimum requirements for occupying the academic position and admission for participation in the competition; 2) Evaluation of the candidates, which for the position of chief assistant professor includes interviews with the candidates and presentation of their work. The evaluation for the positions of "Associate

Professor" and "Professor" includes written reviews of the work of the candidate, published on the website of the IPHS.

The public access to the documents is guaranteed for at least 5 years after the end of the procedure on the website of IPHS in the section "Competitions" / „Competitions for academic positions/ Archive": https://www.iphs.eu/n/2013-05-07-14-16-36/2013-05-07-14-23-06.html".

2.3. Appointment stage

a) In each stage of the procedure, the participants in the competition receive written document about the result from the work of the Scientific Jury within 14 days. The rejection of a candidate must be motivated as well. The documents from the work of the Scientific Jury are delivered personally to the participants in the competition.

b) After the final meeting the Scientific Jury prepares a report signed by all members and submits it to the Scientific Council of IPHS. The report includes a motivated proposal for appointment, and presents it to the Scientific Council no later than 7 days after the final meeting of the Scientific Jury. If more than one candidate passes the competition, the Scientific Jury makes a motivated proposal of the candidates. In the case when none of the candidates is selected, the competition is announced again.

Within 14 days from the submission of the report of the Scientific Jury, the Scientific Council of IPHS votes the results from the selection. At least 2/3 of the members of the Scientific Council of IPHS must participate in the meeting. Decisions are made by anonymous vote of the members of the Scientific Council.

The Scientific Council can, with a reasoned decision, reject the proposal for the appointment made by the Scientific Jury. Candidates participating in the competition are informed by an official letter for the results of the selection within 14 days after the final meeting of the Scientific Council. The candidate who wins the competition is appointed by Order of the Director of IPHS from the date of his/her election by the Scientific Council and s/he is obliged to take up the position within 1 month after that date. Within 14 days after the date of the election, IPHS sends information about the competition to the National Center for Information and Documentation.

c) Complaints mechanism - every participant in the competition can file a complaint, which is considered by the Scientific Council of IPHS. There is a need to develop a clearer procedure for dealing with complaints made by applicants who believe they have been treated negligently, unfairly or unequally. This procedure must be transparent and public. It should

include an indication of the time frame in which the complainant can be considered and can receive a response.

3. Actions for the OTM-R policy of the Institute for Population and Human Studies at BAS

3.1. Have we published a version of our OTM-R policy online (in Bulgarian and in English)?

IPHS uses the document on the OTM-R policy in its procedures and recruitment of the researchers. The document is published on the official website of the Institute in Bulgarian and in English.

3.2. Do we have an internal guide setting out clear OTM-R procedures and practices for all types of positions?

All integral regulations of the OTM-R procedures and practices for all types of positions are implemented in IPHS based on the national legislation and the normative documentation of BAS. They include principles of the European Charter for Researchers. The main legislative documents are the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in The Republic of Bulgaria: https://www.lex.bg/laws/ldoc/2135680028; Rules for Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria https://www.lex.bg/laws/ldoc/2135696665; Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences: http://old.bas.bg/ общо-събрание/приети-документи/220-правилници/7147-правилник-за-условията-и-реда-за-придобиване-на-научни-степени-и-за-заемане-на-академични-длъжности-в-бан; Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for Holding Academic Positions in IPHS at BAS: https://www.iphs.eu/n/2013-05-07-14-16-36/ документи.html; Rules for the Work of The Scientific Juries for Holding Academic Positions in IPHS at BAS: https://www.iphs.eu/n/2013-05-07-14-16-36/ документи.html. All documents for OTM-R procedures of the Institute are available on the website of the Institute: https://www.iphs.eu/n/en/2013-05-07-14-16-36/документи.html

3.3. Is everyone involved in the process sufficiently trained in the area of OTM-R?

The staff of IPHS is informed about the main principles in the area of OTM-R which are embedded in related legislation and the normative documents of the Institute. Additionally,

personal consultations are provided by the HR officer. In the next phase we plan to make the staff of the Institute aware of these principles through organization of a special seminar.

3.4. Do we make (sufficient) use of e-recruitment tools?

According to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, all procedures for recruiting researchers must be published in the State Gazette (https://dv.parliament.bg/DVWeb/index.faces) and on the IPHS website in the section "Competitions"/"Competitions for academic positions"/"Current competitions": https://www.iphs.eu/n/2013-05-07-14-16-36/2013-05-07-14-22-41.html. Archive of conducted competitions: https://www.iphs.eu/n/2013-05-07-14-16-36/2013-05-07-14-23-06.html.

Announcements of the open positions in IPHS are published also in Jobs.bg, which is the biggest job portal in Bulgaria. There is a need to publish calls for PhD and academic competition also in English on different e-portals (incl. EURAXESS), and to provide researchers with information and professional services to apply for them. The possibility to use video conferencing tools for online interviews or other recruitment activities are some of the tasks that we also plan to implement in the next phase.

3.5. Do we have a quality control system for OTM-R in place?

The submitted documents for an open call for an academic position are checked by a Special Committee that includes of the Head of Department, the Scientific Secretary and the Head of the Research Unit. The selection of the candidates participating in the competition is checked by a Scientific Jury appointed for each specific competition. The members of the Scientific Jury prepare reviews on the works of the candidates for "associate professor" or "professor" positions. In the selection for the position of assistant professor the candidates have an interview with the members of the Scientific Jury. In all procedures, each member of the Scientific Jury evaluates positively or negatively each of the candidates. The protocols from the meetings of the Scientific Jury include information on the voting of the members. The minutes are signed by all of them: http://www.iphs.eu/n/2013-05-07-14-16-36/2013-05-07-14-23-06.html

The final decision and the outcome from the competitions is sent to the National Information and Documentation Center at the Ministry of Education and Science, which carries out quality control of the procedures at the national level: https://ras.nacid.bg/dissertations-search.

IPHS publishes vacancies on its website under the heading "Competitions", "Competitions for academic positions" https://www.iphs.eu/n/2013-05-07-14-16-36/2013-05 -07-14-22-41.html

3.6. Does our current OTM-R policy encourage external candidates to apply?

IPHS publishes open competitions for vacancies on the website under the heading "Competitions", "Competitions for academic positions" https://www.iphs.eu/n/2013-05-07-14-16-36/2013-05-07-14-22-41.html. The procedures are open to candidates outside of the IPHS as well.

3.7. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract researchers from abroad?

The interest of foreign researchers to apply for an academic position in the Institute is small but increasing, esp. after the substantial increase of the remuneration in the last year. In the future we plan to submit public announcements for the recruitment of PhD students and researchers on the EURAXESS website as well as other e-portals, depending on the requirements of the national legislation for a research position.

3.8. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract underrepresented groups?

The share of female applicants and the female employees is higher in the Institute. The policies of IPHS and BAS related to the support of gender equality comply with the Anti-Discrimination Act, which prohibits discrimination based on sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, human genome, citizenship, national origin, religion or belief, education, political affiliation, personal or social status, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, property status or any other characteristics: https://www.lex.bg/laws/ldoc/2135506845. The Institute has also an Internal regulation on equality, equal opportunities and protection against discrimination: http://www.iphs.eu/n/images/stories/venera/Diskriminacia.pdf. IPHS follows also the Plan to promote equality between women and men at BAS https://www.iphs.eu/n/images/normative-docs/Plan_ravenstvo_BAS__2022.pdf . We plan to extend our dissemination activities for open PhD and academic positions for involving members from underrepresented groups.

3.9. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to provide attractive working conditions for researchers?

Recruitment competitions are public and aim at attracting the candidates who are the best in their field, regardless of their age, sex or if s/he comes from another institution. We plan to draw up a questionnaire distributed to all researchers once a year in order to monitoring their degree of satisfaction with working conditions and the implementation of the OTM-R principles.

3.10. Do we have means to monitor whether the most suitable researchers apply?

The selection and evaluation of the staff is carried out by Scientific Juries, in which external members (from other universities or research institutions) participate. The members of the Scientific Jury prepare reviews about the work and the achievements of each candidate. The reviews are published on the website of the Institute and can be accessed by interested parties. If there are no objections, the Scientific Jury makes a final decision about the applications. The announcements of all recruitment procedures are present on the website of IPHS in the section "Competitions"/"Archive" section: https://www.iphs.eu/n/2013-05-07-14-16-36/2013-05-07-14-23-06.html

3.11. Do we have clear guidelines or templates (e.g., EURAXESS) for advertising positions?

The templates are prepared according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of this law, as well as the Regulations for the Terms and Conditions for Occupying Academic Positions in IPHS at BAS: https://www.iphs.eu/n/ 013-05-07-14-16-36/документи.html. The data included in the announcement for academic positions allow to fill in electronic forms on the EURAXESS portal and other e-tools.

3.12. Do we include in the job advertisement references/links to all the elements foreseen in the relevant section of the toolkit? [*see Chapter 4.4.1 a) of the OTM-R expert report*[1]]

The announced academic positions include elements from Section 4.4.1. of the 'Report of the Working Group of the Steering Group of Human Resources Management under the European Research Area on Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment of Researchers'.

[1] *http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/services/researchPolicies*

3.13. Do we make full use of EURAXESS to ensure our research vacancies reach a wider audience?

There are no job adverts posted on EURAXESS so far. In the next stage we plan to advertise calls for PhD and academic positions in EURAXESS portal in accordance with the national legislation for these positions.

3.14. Do we make use of other job advertising tools?

All announcements of academic positions are published on the website of IPHS in the section "Competitions"/"Archive" section: https://www.iphs.eu/n/2013-05-07-14-16-36/2013-05-07-14-23-06.html . In the next years we plan to post job adverts on EURAXESS and on other e-platforms such as Jobs.bg in accordance with the national legislation for these positions.

3.15. Do we keep the administrative burden to a minimum for the candidate? [*see Chapter 4.4.1 b)* [45]]

The required documents are in accordance with to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of this Law and the Regulations for the Occupancy of Academic Positions in IPHS: https://www.iphs.eu/n/ 013-05-07-14-16-36/документи.html. In the next phase we plan to use more electronic tools during the recruitment and selection process.

3.16. Do we have clear rules governing the appointment of selection committees? [*see Chapter 4.4.2 a)* [45]]

The composition of the Scientific Jury is proposed by a Research Unit or the Department of IPHS for which the competition is announced. It is approved by the Scientific Council of the Institute an the Director prepares an order for the completion.

3.17. Do we have clear rules concerning the composition of selection committees?

IPHS regulations contain clear rules for appointment and composition of the Selection Committees and the Scientific Juries. Public selection announcements include a link that enables candidates to check the relevant sections about the regulations and the procedures.

3.18. Are the committees sufficiently gender-balanced?

The members of the Scientific Juries are selected on the basis of their academic positions, competences and qualifications in the scientific field for which the competition is announced, and not on the basis of gender.

3.19. Do we have clear guidelines for selection committees which help to judge 'merit' in a way that leads to the best candidate being selected?

There are clear rules for the work of the Scientific Juries for occupying academic positions at IPHS at BAS which are published on the website of the Institute: https://www.iphs.eu/n/images/normative-docs/Pravila%20IPHS%20Juri_2022.pdf

3.20. Do we inform all applicants at the end of the selection process?

According to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, candidates are informed by an official letter for their admission or non-admission /with motivated explanation of why they were not admitted/. At a later stage they are informed also about the results of the competition. The letters are received in person against signatures and the date of receipt.

21. Do we provide adequate feedback to interviewees?

All the interviewees can access the documents for the academic procedures on the website of the Institute and in the HR office of the Institute. The interviewees are informed for the outcomes of the procedures by phone, email and by official letters.

3.22. Do we have an appropriate complaints mechanism in place?

Every candidate can file a complaint in the HR office of the Institute, which is filed with a number and is considered by the Scientific Council.

3.23. Do we have a system in place to assess whether OTM-R delivers on its objectives?

We plan to draw up a survey on researchers' satisfaction with the implementation of the OTM-R policy in IPHS, to organize a seminar and to publish a report with the results of the survey on the website of the Institute.

4. Planned OTM-R Policy Actions in the next assessment period

IPHS recognizes the need to update and improve the procedures and policies related to OTM-R. During the next reporting period, we plan the following activities:

1. We plan to organize a workshop and to present the HR Strategy, the Action Plan and the OTM-R policy of IPHS to the staff of the institute.

2. We plan to publish job advertisements for relevant academic position in accordance with the requirements of the national legislation in the EURAXESS platform, as well as in other electronic platforms.

3. We plan to ensure wider dissemination of the information about open PhD competitions and academic positions among underrepresented groups.

4. We plan to conduct a survey on the satisfaction of the researchers with the implementation of the OTM-R policy in IPHS, including the satisfaction with the working conditions.

5. We plan to expand the possibilities for online submission of the documents for the open competitions and job positions in IPHS. We plan extend the use of online resources such as videoconferencing and online interviews in the process or recruitment and selection of the candidates as well as in other activities related to the implementation of OTM-R policies in IPHS.

6. We plan to organize seminars with the staff of IPHS involved in the implementation of the OTM-R policies regarding the monitoring and implementation of the HR Strategy and its Action Plan.