



SZKOŁA GŁÓWNA
GOSPODARSTWA
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THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS BASED ON
THE COMPETITIVE HIRING GUIDELINES



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

The Process of (OTM-R) Open Transparent Merit-Based Recruitment for Academic Positions on the basis of the Competitive Hiring at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW)

Guidelines



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Introduction - European Charter for Researchers at Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW)

SGGW recognizes the need to create attractive working conditions to motivate the university's academic staff to work actively in the local and international scientific environments. The university should be perceived as a strategic partner for cooperation and an attractive workplace. Based on *The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*, SGGW introduced a policy for the recruitment of academic staff in 2018 to adhere to the highest employment standards. The policy of *Open, Transparent, and Merit-based Recruitment* (OTM-R) has been updated in accordance with the provisions of the Act - The Law on Higher Education and Science (Journal of Laws 2021, item 478, as amended) and the SGGW Statute. The developed document titled *Good Practices Leading to the Implementation of OTM-R Policy at Warsaw University of Life Sciences*, (https://www.sggw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Good-practices-leading-to-implementation-of-OTM-R-Policy-SGGW_final.pdf?x79998s) serves as the basis for implementing further recommendations arising from the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

In order to professionalize the recruitment process on the basis of competitive hiring, the Guideline to Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) at Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW) has been prepared. These guidelines outline the university's activities in implementing the end-to-end recruitment process, from the analysis of organizational unit's needs, preparing candidate profiles, and publishing job advertisements to the organization and conduct of the competition process, closing the competition, publishing its results, and submitting documents to initiate the hiring process.

The Guidelines should facilitate the navigation of the recruitment process for the SGGW staff who plan, organize, and conduct recruitment processes, as well as for candidates interested in working at the university as academic teachers.

The Guidelines describe:

- ✓ The objectives of the OTM-R policy, one of the HR4R pillars implemented by SGGW,
- ✓ Legal regulations of the recruitment process for academic teachers based on competitive hiring,
- ✓ Stages of the recruitment process,
- ✓ Recommendations related to the adaptation of newly hired academic staff,
- ✓ Information for candidates participating in the competition.



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The objectives of the OTM-R (Open, Transparent, and Merit-based Recruitment) policy

The OTM-R policy aims to engage SGGW in creating an attractive, open, and sustainable European labour market for researchers, where the conditions enable the recruitment and retention of highly qualified scientific staff in environments conducive to effective performance and productivity. It is essential to provide researchers with a sustainable professional development system at every stage of their careers and ensure that scientific staff are perceived as professionals who are an integral part of the University. The University provides candidates and employees with open, transparent, and internationally comparable selection and recruitment procedures. The OTM-R policy also takes into account the situations in developing countries as well as in European and non-European regions, so that the development of a scientific base within the European Union does not occur at the expense of less developed countries or regions.

The University is taking steps to create flexible working conditions for researchers to allow for achieving effective research outcomes. Within the framework of existing legal regulations, the working conditions enable both women and men to balance family and professional life, have children, and professional career development, particularly thanks to flexible working hours, part-time employment, and the possibility to work remotely outside the University premises.

By hiring researchers, SGGW aims to ensure a gender balance at all levels of its staff, including research supervisors and management. This goal is achieved through the SGGW Policy of Equal Treatment and Preventing Discrimination, not only during the recruitment stage but also at other stages of their professional careers.

For the purpose of ensuring equal treatment in competition commissions evaluating candidates, it is recommended to apply the principle of gender balance as well as diversity in experience and qualifications. Competition commissions assess the value of geographical, cross-sectoral, inter- and transdisciplinary mobility, as well as cooperation between the public and private sectors, which is an important way to expand scientific knowledge and support the professional development of researchers at every stage of their careers. Competition commissions should follow the principle of non-discrimination in any way against scientists based on gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political beliefs, as well as social or economic status.

Whenever the terms such as candidates, employees, academic teachers, or researchers in the male grammatical form are used in the document, they refer to women and men (m/f).



1. The objectives of the OTM-R policy are:
 - 1) Compliance with the principles and requirements defined in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.
 - 2) Hiring employees with the highest qualifications for the offered position.
 - 3) Facilitating the recruitment of the international staff.
2. The OTM-R policy is based on the principles of openness, transparency, and merit-based recruitment.
 - 1) **Openness** (Open) means conducting the recruitment process in a transparent and publicly announced manner,
 - 2) **Transparency** (Transparent) means providing clear and straightforward information about the entire recruitment process.
 - 3) **Merit-based Recruitment** (Merit-based Recruitment) means selecting candidates in accordance with the University's needs, based on qualification requirements and competencies, regardless of their origin, religion, race, gender, age, and with respect for diverse perspectives, research attitudes, worldviews, cultural traditions, political beliefs, and regardless of social or economic status.
3. The OTM-R policy includes guidelines for commitments, principles, and requirements derived from the Charter and Code. Therefore, at SGGW, we ensure that:
 - 1) Recruitment procedures were open, efficient, transparent, and job offers included descriptions of the required knowledge and qualifications, as well as a description of the researcher's career development prospects (**recruitment**).
 - 2) Competition commissions represented diverse experiences and qualifications as well as appropriate gender balance (**staff selection**).
 - 3) Information about competitions and selection criteria were available. It is recommended to provide feedback to candidates (m/f), especially regarding the strengths and weaknesses of their applications (**transparency**).
 - 4) The assessment of candidates was conducted in a qualitative and quantitative manner, taking into account not only publications but also aspects of teaching, academic supervision, teamwork, knowledge transfer, innovation, and the scientific knowledge dissemination (**assessment of merits**).
 - 5) The employment outside the academic institution was recognized as a valuable contribution to professional development and the multidimensional career path, and



- career breaks were regarded as elements of career development (**deviations from the chronological resume order**).
- 6) Staying in other countries, working in the public or private sector, changing disciplines, and virtual mobility were perceived as valuable contributions to a researcher's professional development (**acknowledging experience in mobility**).
 - 7) Proper assessment of academic and professional qualifications was ensured (**recognition of qualifications**).
 - 8) The required level of qualifications matched the needs of the position and was recognized as part of lifelong professional development (**work experience**).
 - 9) Clear recruitment rules and employment objectives for researchers with a doctoral degree were established, along with the determination of the employment periods for specific positions (**positions for doctoral degree holders**).
4. At SGGW, we take every effort to ensure that recruitment for academic positions allows for a comparison of qualifications at the international level.

The legal basis for the recruitment process conducted in the form of a competitive hiring:

- I. Planning, organization, and course of the recruitment process in the form of a competitive hiring are regulated as follows:
 - 1) Act of 20 July 2018, on Higher Education and Science, Article 119(1) (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 574, as amended). It is stated that the first employment relationship established with an academic teacher in a given public higher education institution, for an indefinite or definite period of time longer than three months, with the number of working hours exceeding half of the full-time working time, shall be established after an open competition.
 - 2) the SGGW Statute, Appendix No. 2, Rules for Competitive Hiring, and Section VIII - SGGW Staff, indicating qualifications required for holding a specific position.
- II. The process of recruiting academic staff primarily serves the following objectives:
 - 1) Attracting the most competent and outstanding academic teachers.
 - 2) Creating an open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment process.
 - 3) Establishing clear rules for the appointment and composition of the competition commission.
 - 4) Creating an attractive working environment.
 - 5) Building a positive image of SGGW as an employer.
 - 6) Reducing the administrative burden on candidates.



- III. During the ongoing competition, SGGW takes into account all the candidates' experiences gained throughout their professional careers. In addition to the overall assessment of scientists' potential, creativity, and the level of independence of the applicants are considered. Diverse criteria for candidate selection, having regard to a wide range of knowledge and experiences, allow for hiring the most qualified individuals in accordance with the profiles.

The course of the recruitment process conducted in the form of a competitive hiring

I. The main stages of the recruitment process are as follows:

1. Stage I - The analysis of the internal needs of the organizational unit and the development of the candidate profile.
2. Stage II - Launching the competition; completing formal procedures, including obtaining the opinion of the Discipline Council regarding the need for employment (not applicable to university-wide units), as well as the approval of the Rector for conducting the competition, establishing the composition of the competition commission, and the content of the job advert.
3. Stage III - Publishing Job Advert; posting information about the planned competition at least 30 days before the deadline for submitting applications.
4. Stage IV - Appointing the Competition Commission.
5. Stage V - Competition Outcome; recommendation of the competition commission, providing feedback to the candidates.
6. Stage VI - Launching the Employment Process; completing formal procedures, including obtaining the opinion of the Discipline Council regarding the employment of the selected individual (not applicable to university-wide units), and obtaining the Rector's approval.
7. Stage VII - Adaptation of New Employee; indicating supervisor.

II. The Detailed Course of the Recruitment Process

1. Stage I - The analysis of the internal needs of the organizational unit
 - 1) The Director of the institute / Head of the organizational unit (including university-wide units) conducts an analysis of the needs and possibilities for hiring an academic teacher in the organizational unit.
 - 2) When conducting the employment analysis, the Director of the institute / Head of the unit, considers the possibility of satisfying the need for employment as follows:
 - a) Reorganizing the unit by rearranging employees and resources within the unit or the University,
 - b) Verifying and balancing tasks within the team,



- c) Undertaking actions aimed at enhancing the competency level of current employees, for example, through their participation in courses or training.
- 3) In case the analysis indicates the necessity of initiating the recruitment process, the Director of the institute / Head of the unit defines the Profile of the candidate, taking into account the key requirements in accordance with the provisions of Section VIII of the Statute and the scope of duties for the specific job position.

2. Stage II - Launching the competition; completing formal procedures

- 1) The Director of the institute / Head of the unit prepares a Request for conducting a competition, specifying the competition procedure (single-stage/multi-stage).
- 2) The Director of the institute obtains the opinion of the relevant Discipline Council.
- 3) The Director of the institute / Head of the unit obtains the Rector's decision regarding the possibility of initiating the competition procedure, as well as the proposal for the composition of the competition commission and the content of the advert.
- 4) The content of the recruitment advert should include, in particular:
 - a) the job title and the organizational unit,
 - b) the required field, discipline, and scientific specialization of the employee,
 - c) specification of the requirements (a detailed description of the required knowledge, qualifications, and professional experience),
 - d) the employer's requirements for the specific job position in relation to the qualification requirements specified by the Act and the Statute,
 - e) a scope of tasks and responsibilities,
 - f) a list of the expected documents confirming compliance with the requirements stipulated for individual positions by the provisions of the Act and the Statute, including:
 - ✓ a candidate's resume including a description of professional work, scientific achievements, and skills and qualifications,
 - ✓ a copy of the diploma,
 - ✓ a list of publications/ongoing projects, in accordance with the requirements for a given position,
 - ✓ a language proficiency certificate, in accordance with the requirements for a given position,
 - ✓ a list of other documents confirming the required qualifications, in accordance with the requirements for a given position.
 - ✓ a personal questionnaire, letter of application, statements about the primary place of employment are required from the persons recommended for employment.
 - g) a form, place, and deadline for submitting documents,
 - h) information on the competition procedure, i.e., whether it is single-stage or multi-stage competition,
 - i) the place and method of obtaining additional information about the position,
 - j) the expected date of competition results,
 - k) the expected date of employment,



- l) the candidate's obligation to sign the information clause and consent to the processing of personal data,
 - m) if possible, it is recommended not to specify narrow and specialized qualifications,
 - n) information regarding the knowledge of the Polish language is possible only if it is justified by the nature of the offered position,
 - o) it is recommended to include informational materials concerning a description of the unit announcing the competition, a description of the leading scientific research conducted by the unit, or other information to encourage candidates to submit their applications,
 - p) it is recommended to consult the content of adverts for the positions of professor and university professor with the Science Services Office.
- 5) It is possible to include the following additional information in the advert:
- a) We kindly inform you that we will only contact individuals who have met the formal requirements.
 - b) Please note that the competition procedure may be cancelled without specifying a reason at any stage.
3. Stage III - Publishing Job Advert; posting information about the planned competition
- 1) Information about the competition should be posted on the university's website in Polish and English versions; on the Ministry of Education and Science's website in Polish; on the European Commission's EURAXESS portal in English Jobs & Funding | EURAXESS (europa.eu). It is also possible to display the advert within the SGGW premises and to send information to other Polish and international universities and scientific institutions.
 - 2) The publication of the advert should be done by an authorized staff of the Institute who has access to the aforementioned websites and online portals.
 - 3) The period between posting the advert and the deadline for submitting applications is no less than 30 days.
 - 4) The period for collecting applications should be at least 14 days, and for competitions for the positions of professor or university professor, at least 30 days, from the date of submitting applications.
4. Stage IV - Appointing the Competition Commission.
- 1) Upon the request of the Director of the institute / Head of the unit, the Rector appoints the competition commission, consisting of:
 - a) the Chairperson and at least three members, including the Head of the organizational unit with the vacancy,
 - b) at least two persons with the title of professor - in the case of a competition for the position of professor or university professor,



- c) at least two persons with a degree of doctor habilitated - for other academic teaching positions.
- 2) The competition commission:
 - a) establishes the detailed procedure and format for conducting the competition,
 - b) conducts the competition procedure, taking into account the criteria established in the Act of 20 July 2018 - Law on Higher Education and Science, the SGGW Statute, the European Charter for Researchers, and in accordance with the guidelines,
 - c) keeps the documentation of the competition procedure.
 - 3) The tasks of the competition commission in a single-stage procedure include, in particular:
 - a) organizing the commission's meeting,
 - b) submitting and evaluating the candidate's application documents,
 - c) reviewing the candidate applications no later than two weeks after the deadline for their submission,
 - d) determining, whether the candidate meets or does not meet the formal criteria specified in the competition job advert, and deciding on admitting the candidate to participate in the competition process,
 - e) rejecting candidates whose applications were submitted after the deadline or did not meet the formal criteria,
 - f) inviting candidates who meet the formal criteria and requirements specified in the Profile to the commission's meeting,
 - g) organizing meetings with candidates to conduct recruitment interviews and to obtain additional information about the candidate, which will allow for an assessment of their ability to fulfil the tasks assigned to the specific job position and to compare them with the abilities of other prospects.
 - h) evaluating the professional experience of candidates in a qualitative and quantitative manner, based not only on the number of publications but also on criteria such as teaching, academic supervision, participation in conferences, teamwork, knowledge transfer, research management, innovation activities, public engagement in promoting scientific awareness, and completed training courses. Career breaks or deviations from chronological resume order should be regarded as career development and valuable contributions to the researcher's professional development and the multidimensional career paths. Experience in terms of mobility (national and international), changing disciplines, or sectors should also be seen as valuable contributions to a professional development.
 - i) the decision about the qualification of candidates for the next stages by the competition commission,
 - j) organizing a seminar to assess the quality of teaching for persons applying for the position of assistant professor in the group of research and teaching staff.
 - k) seeking additional written opinions about candidates participating in multi-stage proceedings.



- 4) It is recommended for the competition commission to include persons who combine their scientific activities at SGGW with experiences from the socio-economic environment of the University and/or those actively collaborating with foreign partner universities.
- 5) The competition organizer should strive to reach gender balance when appointing the competition commission.
- 6) If possible, the competition organizer should strive to ensure diversity in the selection of members of the competition commission, taking into account diversity in specialized knowledge and qualifications, nationality, and experience in the candidate assessment.
- 7) All members of the competition commission should be authorized to process personal data in accordance with the Rector's directive.
- 8) All members of the competition commission are obligated to maintain confidentiality in terms of protecting the privacy of candidates and not to disclose any information to persons who are not members of the competition commission.
- 9) The competition organizer should ensure that members of the competition commission are independent, make objective decisions based on evidence, maintain complete neutrality, and have the freedom to assess candidates and provide opinions.

5. Stage V - Competition Outcome;

- 1) Having conducted interviews with the candidates, the competition commission:
 - a) selects a candidate for employment for the position, in a transparent vote (by a simple majority), or
 - b) decides on the unsuitability of all candidates, providing justification for the decision in the protocol,
 - c) prepares a protocol of the meeting, which should be presented to the respective Director of the institute / Head of the university unit,
 - d) submits the competition documents to the Director of the institute or the Head of the university unit to obtain the opinion of the Discipline Council and the Rector's approval for hiring,
 - e) provides feedback to the selected candidate about the decision and the submission of the employment application to the University, in a telephone, written, or electronic form. Unsuccessful candidates are also informed of the competition results along with appreciation for their participation in the competition. The competition commission makes efforts to identify strengths and weaknesses of the submitted applications to provide feedback to the candidates.
- 2) In the event of invalidation of the competition, lack of candidates or failure to resolve the competition, a new competition may be announced.



- 3) A candidate whose application has been rejected by the competition commission due to participation in the competition after the deadline or not meeting the criteria may submit a request for justification of the decision to the competition commission within 7 days from the date of the commission's decision.

The competition commission prepares the justification within 14 days from the date of receiving the request for the justification of the decision.

6. Stage VI - Launching the Employment Process; completing formal procedures

- 1) On the basis of the recommendation of the competition commission, the Director of the Institute / Head of the Unit prepares and submits to the SGGW Rector, via the HR and Payroll Office, an employment application for the candidate selected in the competition procedure. For the positions of professor and university professor, it is necessary to obtain the opinion of the Science Services Office.
- 2) In the case of hiring a University Professor, the Director of the Institute requests the Rector to appoint two external reviewers from outside SGGW to assess the candidate's achievements.
- 3) The employment of the selected candidate requires obtaining the opinion of the relevant Discipline Council, with the exception of hiring for the position of lecturer or instructor.
- 4) The decision to hire the candidate is made by the Rector based on the submitted employment application.
- 5) The Rector's decision serves as the basis for initiating the employment process.
- 6) The competition organizer provides information about the competition results along with justification on the universities and the Ministry of Education and Science websites within 30 days after the competition's termination. The publication of the information should be preceded by the completion of formalities, including the Rector's decision regarding employment and the candidate's consent to the terms of employment contract.

7. Stage VII - Adaptation of New Employee; recommendations

SGGW cares for its employees throughout their entire professional journey. In the context of ensuring their well-being and welfare, is the onboarding process for newly hired individuals. Therefore, every effort should be made to ensure that the start of their work and their first days at the university constitute a time of smooth integration into the organizational culture. This aim is not only to introduce the employee to the academic community and prepare them for their responsibilities but also to provide a sense of psychological and legal security, reduce feelings of confusion and uncertainty, and offer support in establishing positive relationships and strengthening social bonds.

The actions include four stages placed on a timeline:

- 1) The time between submitting the job offer and the first day of work, which is dedicated to collecting the necessary documents and forms, preparing the workplace and tools such as a desk, computer, phone, configuring email, assigning access, and providing other materials that the employee should review before starting work.



- 2) The first day, which is dedicated to training the employee in health and safety regulations, introducing them to the team, giving them a facility tour, presenting the most important procedures, and the social facilities (e.g., cafeteria, restrooms). It is essential to create a good atmosphere. Team members should be aware of the role the new person is expected to play at the university. If necessary, it is recommended to organize the work of the entire team on the day to give the newly hired employee a sense of being a part of the team.
- 3) The first week is the time for assigning initial tasks, engaging in selected projects, and integrating with the team. The new employee should closely collaborate with their supervisor or a designated employee responsible for the adaptation process, serving as a supervisor, guide, and supporter. That person's role is to onboard the new employee into their responsibilities, university customs, goals, as well as to monitor their performance, provide support, and mitigate any feelings of alienation.
- 4) The first month is a time for providing assistance with any unclear matters, monitoring the employee's progress, and providing feedback.

Tips for Candidates Participating in the Competition:

1. Information about currently conducted competitions at SGGW is published:

- a) on the SGGW website,
- b) on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science,
- c) on the European Commission's website in English, EURAXESS (europa.eu).

Furthermore, information may be posted on notice boards at SGGW and on the websites of other Polish and foreign universities and scientific institutions.

2. Documents required in the competition procedure.

Each competition advert is based on the given template and includes information about the documents required to apply for a job.. Depending on the position and unit, the required documents may vary. Most commonly, the following documents are mandatory:

- a) A candidate's resume that contains information about the candidate's professional experience, qualifications relevant to the requirements included in the job offer.
- b) Copies of documents confirming the academic degree or title held by the candidate.
- c) Lists of publications, internships, and projects.
- d) Necessary statements: *Statement of consent to the processing of personal data for the purpose of recruitment process in accordance with Article 6(1)(a) of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), i.e., Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the*



Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC. A statement of compliance under regulation of the Article 113 of the Act of 20 July 2018 on Higher Education and Science. A Candidate's declaration regarding his/her winning the procedure of the competition, stating that SGGW will be the primary place of work.

- e) A personal questionnaire, and an employment application addressed to the SGGW Rector, declarations about the primary place of work are required from the person recommended for employment by the competition commission.

3. Candidate's competency profile.

Each job offer includes a detailed description of the competencies required, such as knowledge, skills, and experience expected from the prospect. The advert contains descriptions of main responsibilities, bulleted key competencies, as well as required documents.

4. Additional questions regarding the competition procedure.

Additional questions or concerns regarding the competition procedure can be directed to the unit responsible for conducting the given competition process. The advert includes contact information of the person responsible for collecting application documents and providing additional information.

5. Preparation for the job interview.

It is a good practice to prepare for the job interview by recalling one's experiences based on the requirements listed in the job offer, especially focusing on information related to the profile of the employee. During the meeting, additional documents confirming qualifications, such as knowledge, skills, and experiences not mentioned as mandatory, should be prepared and presented if needed. The job interview with the Competition Commission is a great opportunity to ask questions and clarify doubts.

6. Course of the job interview.

Candidates are invited for the job interview by the Competition Commission, which, with sufficient notice, indicates the date and format of the meeting. The interview can be conducted in person or remotely using available IT tools. The job interview is conducted by the Competition Commission, the composition of which depends on the position for which the recruitment process is conducted. All questions asked by the Commission should be related to the information provided in the submitted application documents and should clarify any uncertainties, specifying essential aspects relevant to the position. In the case of hiring for the position of assistant professor in a research and teaching group, the candidate is required to give a scientific presentation at a seminar organized for this purpose.



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7. After the job interview

Following the qualification interviews with the candidates, the Commission selects the candidate who best meets the requirements stated in the job advert. The final thing regarding hiring is obtaining the Rector's approval. Once the employment procedure is initiated, the Competition Commission contacts the candidates. Depending on the decision made, they provide feedback by offering the job to the candidate recommended for employment or reject gracefully for the time and effort invested in the process by candidates whose qualifications did not match the expectations of the job profile.

8. Development Opportunities

SGGW, as an employer, continually strives to provide its employees with an attractive and stimulating work environment. University staff members participate in study visits, national and international conferences and training sessions, and engage in research groups. They have access to extensive laboratory infrastructure. The University also implements programs and research funded by national and international institutions. SGGW has been recognized with the HR Excellence in Research award, confirming its commitment to establishing the highest standards of work.