

## Guideline to the HR logo 'Excellence in Research'

*Additional information for Dutch universities about the HR logo  
'Excellence in Research'*

## Employment best practices at Dutch universities

To promote the development of a solid Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R), the European Commission has laid down 40 principles for good HR practices. In order to qualify for the [HR logo 'International Excellence'](#), European universities must integrate these principles into their own HR policies. The logo serves as a quality mark which indicates that the university has earned plaudits as an employer of academic staff. In order to continue bearing the quality mark, universities must demonstrate every five years that their HR policies meet the 40 criteria set out elsewhere in this document.

This guideline offers hints for university staff who are responsible for the HR logo process (hereinafter referred to as 'the staff responsible for the process'). The objective of this guideline is to make the process of applying for and retaining the HR logo easier for the staff responsible for the process at Dutch universities. In this way, SoFoKLeS hopes to make a contribution to all Dutch universities attaining and retaining the HR logo. The HR logo is a step towards a strong pan-European quality mark for employers of academic staff, thus safeguarding employment best practices at Dutch universities. The HR logo serves the following interests<sup>1,2</sup>:

The interests of employers:	The interests of academic staff:
- They represent a stimulating and appealing working environment	- Their rights as professionals are recognised and improved
- They take good care of their academic (and other) staff	- Experience of mobility is considered an asset
- They form part of a pan-European network	- The transparency of the recruitment process is guaranteed
- Their organisation benefits from increased international visibility	- They form part of a pan-European network

The guideline is intended for all Dutch universities and helps the staff responsible for the process determine which aspects of the process apply to their university. As a consequence of ongoing developments in the sector, this is a living document. The staff responsible for the process are expected to keep the guideline up to date by making their own modifications. The exchange of knowledge between universities may assist them in this task.

This guideline has the following components:

- A. Online tool to apply for and retain the HR logo
- B. Phases in the HR logo application and retention process
- C. Explanation of the inventory document

<sup>1</sup> European Research Area, (2008). *The European Charter for Researchers and The Code for Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*. [https://cdn5.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/brochures/rights\\_leaflet\\_highres\\_en.pdf](https://cdn5.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/brochures/rights_leaflet_highres_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> European Research Area, (2010). *Creating an environment of excellence for researchers in Europe*. [https://cdn2.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/brochures/euraxess\\_rights\\_leaflet\\_en\\_high.pdf](https://cdn2.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/brochures/euraxess_rights_leaflet_en_high.pdf)

## A. Online tool to apply for and retain the HR logo

Universities apply for and retain the HR logo with the aid of an online tool<sup>3</sup>: <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/my>. The staff responsible for the process at each university complete the online forms in the tool and submit them to the European Commission. The European Commission then appoints an external committee made up of colleagues from other European universities. This external committee assesses the quality of the completed forms.

In the online tool, the 40 HR logo principles are divided across four themes:

- Ethical and professional aspects (principles 1–11)
- Recruitment (principles 12–21)
- Terms and conditions of employment and social security (principles 22–35)
- Education (principles 36–40)

The sector inventory follows the same four themes.

## B. Phases in the HR logo application and retention process

<b>Phase 1 Internal analysis</b>	
	In cooperation with the stakeholders directly involved <sup>4</sup> , the university conducts an internal analysis to compare the relevant legislation, relevant regulations and the university's practices with the 40 HR logo principles. This analysis comprises two parts: a theory analysis (overview of legislation and regulations with regard to the principles) and a practice analysis (overview of local regulations and working methods regarding the principles). It is recommended to compile a report describing how the applicable legislation and regulations and daily practice relate to the principles.
<b>Phase 2 Action plan</b>	
	On the basis of the internal analysis and its HR strategy with regard to academic staff, the university draws up an action plan. This document is then published on the university's website.
<b>Phase 3 Recognition</b>	
	The staff responsible for the process describe the internal analysis and the action plan in the online tool, following which they are assessed by the external committee. If it reaches a positive verdict, the university is recognised as a bearer of the HR logo 'Excellence in Research'.
<b>Phase 4 Self-assessment</b>	
	Universities must carry out an interim assessment every 2.5 years. As part of this assessment, the staff responsible for the process consider the university's progress regarding the implementation of the principles. The current status of the action plan is discussed internally, after which the action plan may be amended. An internal list of action items for the next implementation stage is drawn up.
<b>Phase 5 External evaluation</b>	
	<p>An external evaluation based on the self-assessment and the action plan is carried out every five years. The staff responsible for the process assess the action items in the action plan, their effects, any additional measures that were required and any follow-up (actions and implementation). They then describe this in the online tool. Based on the information in the online tool, the external committee determines whether the university may retain the HR logo. After delivering its verdict, the external committee visits the university in question.</p> <p>The external committee visit is expected to start with a plenary session consisting of a presentation, followed by separate conversations with the various stakeholders (including the HR directors and academics). The committee assesses the extent of the commitment to carrying out the action plan and whether the university's ambitions match the requirements of the HR logo 'Excellence in Research'.</p>

<sup>3</sup> Please note that the tool is in English. This guideline helps the staff responsible for the process determine which aspects of the process apply to their university.

<sup>4</sup> It is important to involve various stakeholders throughout the cycle, including academics, directors of operations, the HR director and the executive board.

### *C. Explanation of the inventory document*

SoFoKleS has compiled an inventory at the sector level of the requirements for the 40 HR logo principles. This inventory (in the appendix) offers tips for completing the forms in the online tool. It provides an overview of the information documents (e.g. legislation and national codes) that may be referred to during the HR logo application and retention process. The 40 HR logo principles have been linked to these information documents. The format of the inventory is as follows:

<b>Number</b>	<b>Principle</b>	<b>Legislation and CAO-NU</b>	<b>National codes and university policies</b>	<b>What the universities are doing or can do themselves (description of own university)</b>
Number of the principle.	Description of the principle.	The laws and sections of the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities (CAO-NU) that apply to the principle.	National codes and policies that the universities are applying or can apply themselves regarding the principle concerned.	This is where the staff responsible for the process at the university describe how the university meets the requirements for the principle, using the questions and comments in this column (intended as a line of reasoning) as a guide.