



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

HRS4R work aimed at renewing the label « HR Excellence in Research » 2026-2029

President's Policy Framework Letter

The University of Angers has made the development of the scientific potential of its research units one of the major challenges of its multi-year institutional contract 2022-2027. Providing its researchers with the means and conditions conducive to the development of quality public research is therefore a strategic priority of the institution for these coming years.

This priority is accompanied by objectives including increasing the visibility and recognition of research activities within society, and supporting UA projects in competitive national and international calls for proposals. In this regard, the “**HR Excellence in Research**” quality label awarded to UA by the European Commission on December 4, 2020, for an initial period of five years, in recognition of its **Human Resources Strategy for Research (HRS4R)**, secures access to European funding until 2025. **It is therefore essential for the institution to consolidate its HRS4R approach in order to preserve its European label.**

The UA made the choice almost 20 years ago to adhere to the recommendations of the European Union set out in the [European Charter for Researchers and in the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#). It has been implementing its [HRS4R action plan](#) for the past four years. 2020-2025, collective continuous improvement process aimed at the working conditions of its researchers and staff contributing to research, career support and professional development, the achievement of ethical and responsible research, non-discrimination, the implementation of an open, transparent and merit-based recruitment policy (OTM-R).

The year 2025 is therefore a pivotal year for the University of Angers' HRS4R initiative. During this time, together with its research community, the university will need to review its 2020-2025 action plan and define its strategy for the next three years. This review and the 2026-2029 HRS4R action plan will be assessed by experts from the European Commission, first through a written report and then through a site visit to our research facilities in spring 2026. The quality of our HRS4R approach, its objectives, and our ability to successfully implement our actions with the support of our researchers will determine the renewal of the "HR Excellence in Research" label for the next three years.

It is essential that the next HRS4R 2026-2029 action plan reflects the ideas and wishes of UA researchers and staff involved in research, so that they embrace it and participate fully in its implementation, in line with the recommendations of the European Commission as renewed in the new [European Charter for Researchers of 2024](#) and supported by its 4 pillars: ethics, integrity,

gender and open science; evaluation, recruitment and career progression of researchers; working conditions and methods; scientific careers and talent development.

It is equally essential that the HRS4R 2026-2029 action plan be integrated into the institution's overall policy. Ensuring coherence and efficiency between the various master plans and structuring projects of the University of Angers, both current and planned, guarantees the optimization of the human and financial resources necessary for the deployment, maintenance, and monitoring of these projects and, ultimately, frees up time and energy for research.

This letter aims to reiterate the institution's strategic orientations related to HRS4R and to establish the framework and methodology for the work on renewing the 2026-2029 approach

The HRS4R 2020-2025 initiative stemmed from a gap analysis (2019) between the operational framework used at the University of Angers and the recommendations of the 2005 Charter and Code, with corrective actions defined accordingly. Most of the planned actions are completed or nearing completion. The majority of these targeted procedures intended to be permanent. The first priority will therefore be:

- to analyze our practices (gap analysis 2025) in light of the new *European Charter for Researchers* and the progress made during the period 2020-2025;
- for completed actions intended to be sustainable, to ensure, including where appropriate through an action included in the 2026-2028 approach, the consolidation of associated procedures and to define simple and stable monitoring indicators, ideally included in the social database;
- for actions not completed, to revisit them in light of developments in the institution's policy and the 2025 gap analysis.

Secondly, and without being exclusive, future HRS4R actions for 2026-2029 must take into account, or be intended to be an integral part of, the following strategic elements:

1. The future **Human Resources Master Plan** (SDRH). One of its cornerstones, included in the institutional project, focuses on Workforce Planning and Skills Management, followed by Job and Career Path Management. Addressing these issues through research and translating them into HRS4R actions appears essential given the significant number of retirements expected over the next five years. The expected benefits will focus in particular on a clear and shared vision leading to recruitment campaigns (pillars 2 and 3 of the 2024 Charter), as well as on identifying training needs and, more generally, on supporting staff involved in research in their professional development (career advancement, mobility, retraining, etc., pillars 3 and 4 of the 2024 Charter). Other themes will necessarily be included in the HRD, such as recruitment procedures (OTM-R policy and pillar 2 of the 2024 Charter), quality of life and working conditions (pillar 3 of the 2024 Charter), simplification and digitization of HR processes, etc., for which HRS4R 2026-2029 actions could be considered.
2. The future **Sustainable Development and Social Responsibility Master Plan**. It is part of the University of Angers' strategy to be exemplary and a driving force on issues related to Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition (TEDS) by fully integrating them into all its decision-making processes, in education as well as in research. These issues are also supported by our EU

Green alliance. The University of Angers (UA) is the lead partner in the EU Green initiative, focusing on research on sustainable development. Furthermore, research sustainability is now an integral part of the recommendations outlined in the European Charter (Pillar 1 of the 2024 Charter) and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie (MSCA) European Action Programme. These converging factors necessitate the definition of specific actions on this theme within the institution's HRS4R 2026-2029 strategy.

3. The Action Plan for Professional Equality between Women and Men **PAE 2025-2027**, the **Disability Master Plan (SDH 2021-2024 and future 2025-2028)**. The HRS4R 2020-2025 action plan and the PAE 2021-2024 have enabled significant progress in favor of gender equality in the workplace, in the fight against discrimination and against gender-based violence (pillars 1 and 4 of the 2024 Charter). Apart from the necessary sustainability of actions and their amplification set by the PAE 2025-2027 and which will be translated into the HRS4R 2026-2029 approach, the issue of disability in the research sphere must be a field of reflection to be addressed (pillar 1 of the 2024 Charter) and translated into new actions, particularly on the issues of training, access to employment and the framework for practice.
4. The **International Strategy 2023-2027**. The European Charter 2024 establishes the principle of free movement of researchers (pillar 1 of the Charter 2024), implying the importance of high-quality support systems. This is one of the objectives that the University of Angers (UA) has set for itself in its International Strategy 2023-2027, aiming to improve support for international researchers, culminating in the development of a career development advisory service for international researchers who intend to remain in France (pillar 4 of the Charter 2024). This strategy must therefore be reflected in the HRS4R 2026-2029 action plan.
5. The University of Angers (UA) signed the **European agreement on research evaluation and joined CoARA** in March 2023. By committing ourselves alongside our French (including CNRS, INRAE, INSERM, etc., as well as HCERES) and European partners in actions undertaken to reform research evaluation, the UA aims to adopt a more qualitative approach that is more respectful of the diversity of scientific output, disciplinary specificities, and the profiles and career paths of researchers. This commitment echoes pillars 2 (particularly on the evaluation of researchers) and 1 (particularly on open science and citizen science) of the 2024 Charter, as well as certain obligations set by the French National Research Agency (ANR). These commitments and regulatory measures must therefore be reflected in our HRS4R 2026-2029 approach.

Any action considered within the framework of the HRS4R 2026-2029 initiative must have a maximum duration of 3 years, and ideally 2 years. Each action must therefore be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). The human and even financial resources required to achieve the set objectives, and where applicable, their sustainability, must be assessed, as well as the workload and scheduling implications for the support services, and even the laboratories and other departments if relevant. The indicator(s) associated with an action must be easy to implement; ideally, they will be among the existing indicators, particularly those in the social database.

The President of the University of Angers,
February 28, 2025