

esade

HR Excellence in Research

Human Resources Strategy for
Researchers (HRS4R)

2026-2028 Action Plan & OTM-R Policy
Award Renewal Submission



About this document

This document presents Esade's updated Action Plan submitted to the European Commission as part of the HR Excellence in Research Award renewal process (2026). It reflects the progress made since the initial award (2020) and the interim review (2022) and sets out the institution's commitments and planned actions for the next award cycle. The plan is structured around the four pillars of the European Charter for Researchers and the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R).

Institutional profile

Esade is a global academic institution known for the quality of its education, its international outlook, and its focus on holistic personal development. It has been one of the world's top-ranked Business & Law School for over 60 years, operating within Universitat Ramon Llull (URL). Esade's research units support interdisciplinarity to create impact in crucial areas of business, and law, and encourage the transfer of knowledge to the classroom where it can be used to develop future professionals capable of leading projects that generate economic value and at the same time have a positive impact on the environment, on people and in society.

OTM-R Statement

Esade is committed to open, transparent and merit-based recruitment at all researcher career stages (R1–R4). Recruitment procedures are differentiated by researcher category and supported by institutional regulations, quality assurance mechanisms, and dedicated administrative oversight. Key features of the current OTM-R framework include:

- All R1/R2 vacancies are published on EURAXESS using a standardized format; R3/R4 positions are publicly advertised on the institutional Faculty Positions portal and international academic job boards.
- Selection committees are regulated in their composition and trained on OTM-R and Charter & Code principles.
- Gender-sensitive measures are embedded throughout the hiring process: inclusive job descriptions, gender-balanced shortlists, and tie-break preference for the under-represented sex.
- Career interruptions, non-linear CVs, and parental or care-related leave are formally recognised and do not penalise candidates.
- Seniority-differentiated salary ranges for junior and senior postdoctoral researchers (R2) are applied institution-wide.
- PhD and tenure-clock freeze for parental, care, or medical leave are formalised and applied consistently.

In the renewal phase, Esade will further strengthen OTM-R alignment through the development of a centralized Research Talent Portal, the publication of a concise OTM-R statement, standardized candidate communication timelines, and light monitoring KPIs including EURAXESS coverage, time-to-decision, and gender balance indicators (see Action 20).

Summary of completed actions (2020–2025)

During the implementation period, Esade completed 17 of the 19 actions originally planned. The table below summarizes the main areas addressed. Action 15 (Intellectual Property Rights policy) remains in progress and is addressed in the renewal phase through Action 21. Action 19 (mentoring programme for R2 researchers) has been extended and is incorporated into Action 25.

#	Action area	Key outcomes
1	OTM-R policy & recruitment update	Standardized recruitment procedures for R1–R4; 100% of vacancies published on EURAXESS; e-recruitment tool deployed; internal stakeholders trained on OTM-R.
2	Evaluation aligned with Charter & Code	Professional Development Process (PDP) for R1/R2 launched (2021); annual and triennial reviews for R3/R4; PhD programme restructured (2025–26).
3	Public engagement – Do Better platform	Digital dissemination platform launched in Spanish and English; Communication Department supports researchers in outreach and knowledge transfer.
4	Employability of R1 & R2 researchers	100% of R1/R2 profiles published online and in annual yearbook; MERIT portal (URL) integrated; individual consultations and exit-interview pilot deployed.
5	Access to research databases	Intranet Knowledge tab centralized access to databases, journals, ethics guidelines, and research tools; tailored onboarding session with Library services.
6	Website & intranet improvement	Intranet reorganized with dedicated Research Toolkit, competitive grants information, ethics procedures, and seminars sections.
7	Gender Equality Plan (GEP 2022–2026)	GEP adopted; DEI committee active; sexual harassment protocol and mandatory training in place for all staff.

#	Action area	Key outcomes
8	Participation in decision-making bodies	R3/R4 represented in Executive Committee; task forces and ad-hoc committees include researcher representatives.
9	Sabbatical leave policy	Policy formalised, available on intranet, and integrated into annual performance conversations.
10	Training offer for researchers	CETL delivers ongoing training (AI, inclusive language, communication skills); onboarding redesigned transversally for all employees.
11	Welcome Manual & onboarding	Renewed onboarding framework with differentiated tracks per career stage; Welcome Seminars delivered jointly by all strategic areas.
12	Good Research Practices / RRI	Responsible Research Practice policy published online; Data Management Plan guidelines and on-demand counselling available.
13	Ombudsman & Ethics Channel	Ethics Channel and Ombudsman role clearly visible on institutional website; information included in all onboarding sessions.
14	Seniority policies for R2	Seniority-sensitive salary ranges for junior and senior R2 profiles introduced and applied institution-wide.
16	HRS4R governance & awareness	Bilateral oversight model (Research Office + People Management) ensured operational continuity throughout the implementation phase.
17	Gender-sensitive recruitment measures	Inclusive job descriptions, gender-balanced shortlists and committees, tie-break preference for under-represented sex: all fully embedded in hiring procedures.
18	Women's career progression measures	PhD and tenure-clock freeze for parental/care leave in place; remote working and flexibility policies implemented under the GEP.

New and updated actions – Renewal phase (2026–2029)

Six new actions have been defined for the renewal phase, addressing the main areas identified for further development. These actions build directly on the completed implementation phase and are fully aligned with Esade’s Ambition 2035 framework and forthcoming Strategic Plan.

#	Action title	Main objectives	Time frame	Responsible
20	Unified Researcher Lifecycle Framework (R1–R4)	Creation of a Single Research Talent Portal consolidating recruitment criteria, career pathways (R1–R4), legal and tax information, ethics guidance, salary bands aligned with Spanish salary-transparency regulations, and a concise OTM-R statement.	2Q 2027	Research Office, People Management, Communications, Vice Deans
21	Responsible Research Framework & Institutional IPR Policy	Adoption of an institutional Intellectual Property Rights policy covering ownership, authorship, exploitation and commercialization pathways. Creation of a centralized Responsible Research Hub integrating RRI guidance, ethics procedures, Data Management Plan templates, and AI and data ethics guidance.	4Q 2027	Deputy Director, Deans, Vice-Dean Research, Legal Department, Research Office
22	Open Science, DEI, impact measurement & societal engagement	Research Impact & Engagement Strategy with measurable KPIs; impact dashboards with Altmetrics tracking; Open Science incentives and FAIR data practices; systematic monitoring of gender-sensitive recruitment and DEI indicators across R1–R4.	2Q 2027	Research Office, People Management, Communications

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#	Action title	Main objectives	Time frame	Responsible
23	Esade Research Training & Capability Academy	Tiered curriculum (R1–R4) with stage-specific learning pathways; annual Research Skills Week; training integrated into PDP and evaluation processes; centralized training portal for all researcher development activities.	Q1 2027–Q4 2029	People Management, Research Office, CETL, Library, IT/Data Governance
24	Harmonize R&I funding management principles	Unified guidelines on eligibility, responsible data management, dissemination, open science, legal compliance, and valorization for competitive and non-competitive R&I funding, covering all researcher career stages.	4Q 2026–Q4 2029	Research Office
25	Structured long-term career pathway for R2 researchers	Formal career progression pathways for postdoctoral researchers; Individual Career Development Plans (ICDP) for 100% of R2; transparent progression criteria published; annual one-to-one career development meetings.	1Q 2027–2Q 2028	Research Office, People Management

Key commitments by pillar

The following table summarizes Esade’s main commitments and achievements under each of the four pillars of the European Charter for Researchers, together with the priorities identified for the renewal phase.

<p>1. Ethical & Professional Aspects</p>	<p>Esade upholds research freedom within the URL Code for Research Integrity framework. Ethical review is provided by the CUHSR committee, with escalation to the URL Research Ethics Committee for higher-risk studies. An ISO 27001/27701-aligned Information Security Management System and GDPR-compliant Data Protection framework are in place. Responsible Research & Innovation guidance, Data Management Plan templates, and training on the ethical use of AI are available to all researchers. An institutional IPR policy will be developed in the renewal phase (Action 21).</p>
<p>2. Recruitment & Selection</p>	<p>Structured, merit-based recruitment procedures adapted to each career stage (R1–R4) are in place and publicly available. R1/R2 vacancies are systematically published on EURAXESS; R3/R4 positions are advertised on the Faculty Positions portal and international academic job boards. Gender-sensitive measures, recognition of career interruptions and non-linear CVs, and seniority-differentiated salary ranges for R2 are fully embedded in hiring processes. The renewal phase prioritizes a centralized Research Talent Portal, a published OTM-R statement, standardized candidate communication, and monitoring KPIs (Actions 20, 25).</p>
<p>3. Working Conditions</p>	<p>The Research Office provides specialist support for grant applications, financial reporting, ethics coordination, and knowledge management. The Esade Library grants access to over 13,000 journals, 80,000 books and ebooks, and specialized databases. The Professional Development Plan covers all researchers (R1–R4). The Gender Equality Plan 2022–2026, biennial climate surveys, psychosocial wellbeing monitoring, and a DEI committee are active. Ethics and complaints mechanisms include the CUHSR process, an Ethics Channel, and an Ombudsman. Sabbatical leave, research leaves, and flexible working policies are formalized and communicated to all researchers.</p>

4. Training & Development

Doctoral supervision is formalized through signed agreements and annual reviews under RD 99/2011. The Professional Development Process (PDP) provides structured two-way annual reviews for R1/R2 researchers. A renewed onboarding programme, the CETL training offer, and regular research seminars and workshops support continuous professional learning. A Responsible Research Practice policy and Data Management Plan guidelines are published online. The renewal phase will introduce a tiered Research Training & Capability Academy (R1–R4) with stage-specific learning pathways fully integrated into PDP processes (Action 23).

Governance & monitoring

Implementation is coordinated by a multidisciplinary working core comprising the Research Office, People Management (HRBP), and the Vice Deans for Faculty and Research of the Business and Law Schools. Progress is monitored through:

- Quarterly coordination checkpoints to review deliverables and address issues.
- Periodic briefings to institutional leadership (Deans) to maintain strategic alignment.
- Annual aggregation of participation and completion metrics (onboarding coverage, PDP completion rates, ethics review timelines).
- Biennial institutional climate surveys including items on working conditions, equality, and research support.

Researcher input is systematically gathered through the Professional Development Process (PDP), R3/R4 evaluation interviews, climate surveys, and support-unit appraisals. The implementation structure reports to the Deans and is aligned with Esade's Ambition 2035 framework and forthcoming Strategic Plan.