OTM-R Policy

October, 2024

Index

1. General considerations

1.1. **Background**

With aim of strengthening the Basque Science and Technology System, BCAM was The University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) and Innobasque (Basque Innovation Agency) joined BCAM as founding members and the Provincial Council of Bizkaia joined later as an institutional member. Petronor Innovación S.L. joined in 2017 as an industrial partner. In 2024, Bilbao City Council became a member.

BCAM is part of the BERC (Basque Excellence Research Centres) network. Located in Bilbao, the Basque Country, it benefits from a long industrial tradition, and is linked with the French Atlantic Corridor, a region with a tradition of excellence in Applied Mathematics,being the coordinator of the TRANSMATH UPV/EHU - U. Bourdeaux joint cross-border research laboratory TRANSMATH.cross-border TRANSMATH.

Mission

BCAM is a **world-class research centre on Applied Mathematics** created with the support of the Basque Government and the University of the Basque Country, which aims to strengthen the Basque science and technology system, by interdisciplinary research in the frontiers of mathematics, talented scientists' training and attraction, so the excellence of our results are recognized by the Society.

Vision

Focus on **interdisciplinary research** in the frontiers of mathematics, **attraction and training** of talented scientists, **development of new numerical and simulation methods**, interaction with industry, health and social institutions, and promotion of scientific and technological advances worldwide. BCAM aims to **generate synergies among different stakeholders** working on mathematical research so as to become the reference at a national and international level in Applied Mathematics.

Figure 1. BCAM mission and vision

Since its beginnings, the Centre has travelled a long and intense road, full of high-quality scientific activities and hard work, while remaining true to its principles. We currently have a staff of more than 200 people, made up of researchers, staff and young interns and trainees. It is a young and multicultural environment, given the international origin of our research staff.

Researchers, and especially young researchers, are the main assets of a knowledge intensive center like BCAM. The BCAM strategy for attracting and retaining talented researchers was established in 2008 and reflects the commitment to excellence, openness, flexibility, pan-European focus, ethical awareness and ethical and human values. Ever its founding, BCAM is committed to using open, transparent and merit-based recruitment practices concerning research positions.

1.2. Objective

The main goal of this document is to define the OTM-R policy, reviewing the recruitment procedure in line with the principles and requirements established by the European Commission on what an OTM-R system shall consist of. Below is the process that has been undertaken for the implementation of the OTM-R, the proper execution implies an important challenge, thus, it is relevant to mention the steps that have been followed in the elaboration of OTM-R policy.

01 Requirement to implement the OTM-R

02 Reviewing the current recruitment procedure

03 Identify and detect the improvements needed to comply with the principles defined in the OTM-R

04 Drawing up the OTM-R policy

In this regard, it is worth noting that open, transparent and merit-based recruitment (OTM-R) guarantees recruitment of the best person for the job, ensures equal opportunities and access for all, makes it easier to develop an international portfolio and enhances the attractiveness of research careers.

Moreover, OTM-R is a mainstay of the European Charter for Researcher and in particular of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, where a set of general principles and guidelines which specifies the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of researchers as well as of employers and/or funders of researchers are defined.

1.3. The Code of Conduct for Recruitment

As mentioned, BCAM is fully alligned with the Code of Coduct for Recruitment. Thus the Center makes sure to follow the set of general principles and requirements stablish by this Code.

In this sense, BCAM always secures that:

- **Recruitment:** BCAM's hiring procedures are open, efficient, transparent, supportive and internationally comparable with other analog institutions. Also, these procedures are always tailored to the type of positions advertised, adapting them to category, call or knowledge field.

- **Selection:** BCAM's selection committees are always adapted to the knowledge field, bringin in professionals that are aligned with the requirements of the call. Thus, the Center always make sure that the professionals involved are always the most suitable ones.

- **Transparency:** Candidates are always informed of the recruitment process and the selection criteria, the number of available positions and the career development prospects. This information is available in BCAM's job offers site and the communication with the Recruitment team is permanent

- **Judging merit:** The selection process takes into consideration the whole range of experience of the candidates, judging merit always qualitatively as well as quantitatively.

- **Variations in the chronological order of CVs**: BCAM takes into consideration career breaks or variations in the chronological order of CVs, making sure that they are not penalized and evaluating them as potentially valuable contributions to the professional development of researchers, and therefore, to BCAM.

- **Recognition of mobility experience:** BCAM considers any kind of mobility experience, wether it is national or international, as a valuable contribution to the professional development of a candidate.

- **Recognition of qualifications:** BCAM makes sure to provide appropriate assessment and evaluation of academic and professional qualifications.

- **Seniority:** When filling a position, both the Recruitment team and the selection committee thoroughly check that the levels of qualifications required are in line with the needs of the position. Also, this evaluation is always focused on the achievements of the researcher.

- **Postdoctoral appointments:** BCAM stablished Clear rules and explicit guidelines for the recruitment and appointment of postdoctoral researchers.

1.4. Equality in the hiring process

On the one hand, BCAM is committed to guaranteeing equal access to employment for all potential candidates, implementing a human resources policy based on principles of equality, non-discrimination and respect for the dignity of employees.

This policy applies to the current staff, as well as to future job applicants, with no discrimination of any kind in their selection and hiring, whether for reasons of gender, race, religion, disability, marital status, age, ideology, pregnancy, identity or place of residence, among others. This principle will inspire the entire HR policy in relation to recruitment, the receipt of CVs, the screening or selection of candidates, job interviews, the setting of schedules, and the establishment of the particular conditions to which the contract will be subject.

In this way, the selection process will be carried out following objective criteria of merit, experience, knowledge and ability, according to the characteristics and needs of each position offered. All candidates will have the same opportunities and the final hiring will be made according to the aptitude and adaptation of the employee to the position. The working conditions will be established without any type of discrimination, and there will be no discriminatory differences between employees and future recruits. Employees undertake to facilitate the incorporation and integration of new recruits into the workforce, helping as far as possible their adaptation and training and respecting in all cases the principle of equal access and non-discrimination mentioned above.

2.BCAM's selection and recruitment policy

Considering that researchers are the main assets of a knowledge-intensive centre, BCAM has been working on the definition of the most suitable policies to support researchers' work aligned with the European Human Resources Strategy for Researchers. The BCAM HR Strategy for attracting talented researchers is based on excellence, openness, flexibility, pan-European focus, ethical awareness and ethical and human values. In this sense, in 2016, BCAM received the HR Excellence in Research Award (HRS4R). This recognition by the European Commission identifies the universities and institutions that generate and support the existence of a stimulating and favourable environment for research work by adapting their human resources policies to the 40 principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Additionally, in 2019, BCAM successfully passed its first Internal Review of the HR award, which measures the progress and quality of the actions carried out. One of the actions of the HR award, the Open Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R), has a direct impact in the recruitment of new researchers. The OTM-R, makes research careers more attractive, ensures equal opportunities for all candidates and facilitates mobility.

For this reason, the aim of this document is to explain the BCAM's policy and methodology for the attraction of talented researchers and, therefore, through This guide sets out the procedure for the evaluation and selection of proposals in the BCAM selection process and contains the guidelines and evaluation criteria to be followed when scoring a selection process.

We firmly believe that in order to ensure that we recruit the best candidate (for all our center) and therefore improve the effectiveness of our organization, our processes must be open, transparent, fair, efficient and of high quality.

BCAM has established that the following principles should govern all assessment processes for the Center:

- **TRANSPARENCY:** Information on the basic principles governing the proposal evaluation and selection process and the procedures followed for this purpose are available to applicants, evaluators and the general public.

- EQUITY: Proposals are evaluated solely on their merits in relation to the evaluation criteria explicitly defined for each phase of the process:
    - ✓ Academic background
    - ✓ Technical and professional competencies

- ✓ Motivation

- ✓ Skills and knowledge

All Proposals are treated equally and according to the same evaluation criteria, and are subject to an evaluation process carried out by independent expert evaluators, promoting non-discrimination on grounds of race, colour, age, sex, marital status, ideology, political opinions, nationality, religion, sexual orientation or any other personal, physical or social condition among its professionals.

- EFFICIENCY: the process of evaluation of the Proposals is carried out with thoroughness and rigour in compliance with the stipulated procedures. Timeliness in meeting the established deadlines, all of which are known to the Project Managers, is of paramount importance. The system has been designed to allow evaluators sufficient time to carry out their scoring to a high standard.

- QUALITY: To ensure that evaluators perform their duties properly, with scientific excellence, competence and assessing the researcher's potential, they are appointed according to their area of expertise.

01. CM D. Pardo | M. Barton Computational Mathematics	02. M3A Mathematical Modelling with Multidisciplinary Applications	03. MP Mathematical Physics	04. APDE Analysis of Partial Differential Equations	05. DS Data Science & Artificial Intelligence
001 MATHDES Mathematical Design, Modeling and Simulations	001 MSLMS E. Akhmatskaya Modelling and Simulation in Life and Materials Sciences	001 QM J-B. Bru Quantum Mathematics	001 WAVE L. Vega Linear and Non-Linear Waves	001 CO C. Coello Combinational Optimization
002 CFDMS M. Ellero CFD Modelling and Simulation	002 MTB M. Aguiar Mathematical and Theoretical Biology	002 SP G. Pagnini Statistical Physics	002 HA C. Pérez | P. Caro Harmonic Analysis and inverse problems	002 AS D-J. Lee Applied Statistics
	003 MCEN S. Rodrigues Mathematical, Computational and Experimental Neuroscience	003 STAG J. Fez de Bobadilla Singularity Theory and Algebraic Geometry	003 AA A. Zarnescu Applied Analysis	003 ML J.A. Lozano Machine Learning

Figure 2. BCAM Organizational Strategy

- MERIT AND ABILITY: applications will be assessed based on the principles of merit and ability. To this end, the best possible match between the candidate's profile and the profile of the position offered is sought through a combination of a detailed analysis of the CV and interviews, by means of which evidence is sought, proof of the candidate's competencies, as well as contrasting their previous professional experience.

The scope of the OTM-R policy at BCAM covers the recruitment procedures to incorporate the following profiles:

❖ **Early Stage Researchers (R1)**

    ✓ Professional category: PhD students.

    ✓ Requirements: e bachelor's and master's degree studies; eligibility for PhD scholarships; motivation by a BCAM research field;

❖ **Experienced researchers (R2)**

    ✓ Professional category: Postdoctoral researchers.

    ✓ Requirements: PhD degree in an area related to the centre's research programme; research interest aligned with the centre's strategic objectives; excellent metrics, support or letters of recommendation from previous employers or colleagues.

❖ **Established Researcher/Group Leaders (R3-R4)**

    ✓ Professional category: Senior Researchers.

    ✓ Requirements: proven research experience in an area related to the research programme of the center; research interest aligned with the strategic goals of the center; excellent metrics, support or recommendation letters from previous employers or colleagues.

3. BCAM Recruitment Process

The OTM-R policy is formulated with the aim of dealing with the reality and particularities of the situation of staff researchers in a way that is coherent with the general approaches adopted for the scientific community. The elaboration of the OTM-R policy is transversal and really acts as an effective tool in conjunction with other human resource strategies.

During these last years, the selection process that has been followed, guarantees equal opportunities for all candidates, and always including the promotion of gender balance. All vacancies go through the following predefined process:
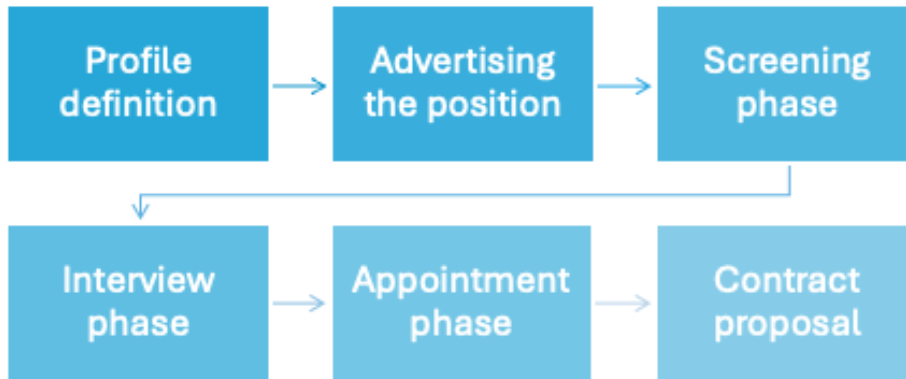
1. Profile definition:

To fulfil the requirements of the OTM-R, BCAM has a template indicating the data that must be completed to publish a job offer. The required data for a completed job description is as follow:

- ✓ Organisation and recruiting unit
- ✓ Job tittle, specifications and estimated starting date
- ✓ Required competencies
- ✓ Selection criteria, including knowledge and professional experience
- ✓ Number of available positions
- ✓ Working conditions
- ✓ Application procedure and deadline
- ✓ Contact details

2. Advertising the position:

The job offers are published on BCAM´s website: Join us, and on different platforms that favour the dissemination of it, such as Euraxess, AMS or Ikerbasque, among others BCAM´s distribution list, specialized

media. The whole recruitment processes up to assignment of researchers to positions is run via BCAM portal and in fully transparent to avoid discriminating against candidates based on their geographical location.

Figure 3. Job advertising platforms

3. Screening phase:

After receiving the applications, the Evaluation Committee is responsible for evaluating and selecting the person who will become part of BCAM according to the defined evaluation process.

The Evaluation Committee considers different criteria for the evaluation:

- ✓ Recommendation Letters (30p)
- ✓ Adaptation to the profile (20p)
- ✓ Publications (25p)
- ✓ Other merits (10p)
- ✓ Letter of interest (15p)

The required application documents are CV, letter of interest, 2 letters of recommendation (for the Research Technician position these are desirable and not mandatory) and statement of past and proposed future research, as can be seen in the image below:

In resume, these are the files that will be available from each applicant:

Profile	Interest letter	CV	RM1	RM2	Research statement	Academic records
Research Technician (R1)	M	M	Op	Op	Op	Op
PhD Student (R2)	M	M	Op	Op	NR	M
Postdoc Fellow (R3)	M	M	M	M	M	NR
Senior Researcher (R4)	M	M	NR	NR	NR	NR

RM: Recommendation Letter
M: Mandatory
Op.: Optional
NR: Not required

Figure 4. Required document list

The mentioned evaluation process meets the requirement defined by OTM-R. applications received, provided that they meet the requirements of each call.

Only the candidates received by the website should be evaluated.

All the members of BCAM who are involved in our internal recruitment processes have experience in the evaluation and assessment of applications, both internal and external (for instance, evaluating for funding agencies). All of them have received specific training on HRS4R and OTM-R principles.

4. Interview phase

After the evaluation of the candidates by means of the written material provided, the committee (at least two evaluators) will interview at least the three best evaluated candidates. This evaluation is always done keeping the Gender Balance and the OTM-R, which ensures that the selection is made avoiding any conflict of interest.

After the interviews, the committee will close the Consensus Report containing:

✓ The final result of each candidate: evaluation, proposed to be hired, on reserve list, and proposed to be rejected.
✓ The candidate proposed to be hired.
✓ The candidate or candidates on reserve list
✓ The argue for the choice of the candidate (it must be clear)
✓ The signatures of the evaluators.

The Evaluation Committee have 2 weeks to fill in the Consensus Report to the Scientific Director, General Manager and Recruitment Team.

The assessment of candidates' merits by the committees shall consider not only their training, experience, and research potential, but also their creativity and level of independence. Scientific trajectories shall be assessed comprehensively and beyond the number of publications and bibliometric indices, considering aspects such as teaching experience, supervisory tasks performed, experience in scientific transfer and management, or awareness-raising activities conducted. International mobility and multidisciplinary will be considered as positive values in a research career.

5. Appointment phase

All the candidates who took part in the selection process will be contacted by e-mail to confirm the outcome of the recruitment process. Throughout the recruitment process, candidates are able to contact Recruitment Team if they want to enquire about:

- ✓ Technical problems with the plataform
- ✓ The status of the recruitment process.
- ✓ Decision on selected candidates.
- ✓ Feedback on the process to all participants

6. Contract proposal

Once BCAM has a candidate for the position, the General Manager sends the offer in order to inform him/her of the conditions of the vacancy. This proposal includes the information about the position offered, conditions and starting date.

Once the offer is signed, Recruitment Team inform him/her about the process that must be followed to prepare the required documents for the contract. For any candidate who is coming to live in Spain, they make the process to obtain the work permit for her/him and her/his direct family and give support to administrative tasks to settle in Bilbao.

4. Policy review process

As the last step, BCAM is continuously seeking to increase its level of attractiveness. Hence, BCAM will revise and analyse the recruitment procedure yearly to improve the process and the quality of the same under principles and requirements defined
in the OTM-R.

In this process the following bodies will participate directly:

- ✓ BCAM Recruitment
- ✓ HRS4R Working Group
- ✓ HR Logo Committee

5. Complaint channel

BCAM has a robust and transparent complaint procedure for applicants who feel they have been treated unfairly or inappropriately. This reporting channel is made available to informants who work in the private or public sector and who have obtained information about violations in a work or professional context, in the terms provided for in article 3 of Law 2/2023, of 20 February, regulating the protection of individuals who report regulatory violations and violations against corruption.

In addition, if they feel that their complaint has not been handled properly through the standard channels, they can submit a complaint to the centre.