



**UNamur Euraxess REPORT**  
**2024-2027**



**Report of the UNamur  
Human Resources  
Strategy for Researchers  
(HRS4R) 2024-2027**

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## REPORT OF THE UNAMUR HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHES (HR4RS)

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### 1. Organisational information

STAFF & STUDENTS (2020)	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	971,2
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	274,1
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	182,1
Of whom are women	433,3
Of whom are stage R3 or R4= Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor	179,81
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	136,68
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	429
Total number of students (if relevant)	6421
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	1277,2
UNamur FUNDING (2020)	€
Total annual organisational budget	110561043
Annual organisational direct government funding (block funding, used for teaching, research, infrastructure...)	48335903
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations –including EU funding)	26450125
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	3394382

#### **Organisational profile**

The University of Namur (UNamur) is the first higher education institution in the Namur region of Belgium. The University is anchored in the Namur educational landscape through close collaboration and association with Namur hospitals and university colleges. UNamur offers bachelor (23), master (44) and doctorate (13) programs in 7 faculties. Through the 11 transdisciplinary research institutes, researchers work on more than 800 applied and fundamental research projects. UNamur is successful in the following areas: nanotechnologies, life sciences, surface and materials physics and chemistry, information systems and information technology engineering, big data, regional economics, development economics and information, law and society.

## 1. Ethical and Professional aspects

Since 2023, the University of Namur, along with the four French-speaking Belgian universities, has signed the Agreement on Research Assessment (CoARA) (see the full text in annex) and therefore commits to respect the 10 following principles:

1. *Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research;*
2. *Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators;*
3. *Abandon inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication-based metrics, in particular inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index;*
4. *Avoid the use of rankings of reseacaarch organisations in research assessment;*
5. *Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to;*
6. *Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools and processes;*
7. *Raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use;*
8. *Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition;*
9. *Communicate progress made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments;*
10. *Evaluate practices, criteria and tools based on solid evidence and the state-of-the-art in research on research, and make data openly available for evidence gathering and research; (Source : <https://coara.eu/agreement/the-commitments/>).*

To celebrate this great breakthrough, the five universities have come together to submit a proposal for an interuniversity project on the assessment of Research to the Belgian government. This project has been approved and the five universities will receive subsidies to hire a person to conduct a work package dealing with one of the 10 principles stated in the CoARA Agreement. The purpose is to make the agreement known by the researchers community, share good practices in ethics and integrity, share trainings, and to develop researchers' competences. You'll find the complete description of the project in annex.

Besides this great breakthrough, our university is committed to not discriminate between researchers on the basis of sex, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic status and therefore, works to offer good working conditions adapted to anyone, whatever his/her specificities. To confirm its commitments, the UNamur has written several policies and guides on the topics of gender equality, parenting, openness and on how to welcome people with specific needs.

On this matter, the UNamur is the first university in Belgium to offer courses in sign language and to propose interpretation in sign language during conferences.

Besides that, integrity and ethics are part of trainings delivered to all newly recruited researchers by the Research Administration. Moreover, within the frame of the interuniversity project on CoARA,

trainings on integrity and ethics will be proposed to the five universities of the Brussels-Wallonia Federation.

## 2. Selection and Recruitment

Even if the action of creating a unique recruitment platform has been proposed in the last two action plans, the University has not yet been able to develop it, this for many different reasons. However, despite this lack, the UNamur continues to be a model recruiter as it recruits people based on their merits and recognizes their previous working experiences, the value of their degree and since recently, takes consideration of the soft skills gained either during the studies, the research or during previous jobs. According to a recent survey, PhD students feel recognized and supported by the Institution.

The management has also taken initiatives to systematically publish job offers on the Euraxess Jobs platform as well as on the website of UNamur in French and in English. Furthermore, the job offers are open to everyone and are non-discriminatory as it mentions “W/M/X” (Women, Men, Other). The inclusive writing is also used in many other documents, such as, the feedbacks and interview reports. What is more, a reflection is also currently led to see how to open the job offer to disable researchers too.

Last but not least, the Human Resources service has been reorganized in order to have a designated spokesperson by service, who is in charge of the recruitment of the newcomers and of following the employees all along their career at the university, answering to their questions and being present during their first assessments.

## 3. Working Conditions

**Values and environment:** the University of Namur is famously known for its strong DNA made of its Jesuit heritage and values. It is also recognized for being welcoming and hospitable. A recent survey has shown that people appreciate working at the University and enjoy their colleagues' company. The working atmosphere is thus positive and pleasant.

**Working conditions:** the UNamur offers several services to its employees and researchers such as the Euraxess researchers helpdesk, which answers to all questions related to the life in Belgium (administrative stuff, medical help, events, tourism), daycare for babies, daycare after school and during school holidays for children up to 10 years old, sustainable mobility policy (train and bus pass), structural homeworking and flexible hours. These last elements allow to find a good balance between professional and private life. Hence, it allows to have a family while doing research, what also encourages women to start career in research and therefore, supports gender equality.

**Inclusion of all the stakeholders:** the stakeholders' voice is sure to be heard thanks to a democratic procedure, which is a very important step achieved by the Institution. The involvement of everyone in the institution is one of the most important values of the UNamur. This can be seen by the presence of members of the three different bodies (scientific, academic, and administrative staff) in each decision organ at every level. Moreover, two trade unions are present in the working council as well as in the Security and Prevention council. The students have also their own assembly, with a president elected every year.

**Interdisciplinarity:** researchers develop their research projects within Research Institutes. These institutes are all interdisciplinary: they gather researchers from different thematic and intersect various expertise around a global topic. This way of functioning favors transdisciplinary collaborations

and original approaches for research as well as for teaching. Thanks to that, researchers benefit from the experience and knowledge of researchers in other areas as theirs, what broadens the mind and leads to research answering several different societal challenges.

**International collaboration and mobility:** being a small university in the center of Europe incites international collaboration and mobility of its researchers, staff, and students. The University has therefore created strong partnerships all over the world and participates in many international co-authorships. What is more, in 2022, the UNamur has joined the UNIVERSEH alliance, an alliance of seven young and mature universities from seven European countries. Its purpose is to develop a new way of collaboration in the field of Space, within the new “European Universities” initiative promoted by the European Commission.

#### **4. Training and development**

The continuous training of staff, not only of researchers but of all staff members, is a key of the UNamur policy. This can be seen through the implementation of a constantly evolving HR training catalogue, (a new version has been published in March 2023), and the implementation of a transversal skills training specifically dedicated to researchers. This catalogue is constantly updated to meet the changing needs of researchers and their new demands.

To make sure the catalogue is still up-to-date, researchers are frequently asked to express their needs and demands each year on various occasions: round tables, individual interviews, and surveys. The trainings are either organized internally or guest lecturers are invited to give specific training.

Moreover, within the frame of the interuniversity project on CoARA, trainings will be developed on ethics, integrity, Open Access best practices, leadership and management and proposed to researchers from R1 up to R4 of the five French-speaking universities in Belgium. The trainings will be gathered on one common and unique platform for the universities of the Brussels-Wallonia Federation. This project will help develop researchers’ talent in Belgium.

Last but not least, the Job Cell of the university offers advice to PhD students finishing their thesis on what are their possibilities of job in academia or beyond. It also helps to write CV and promote one’s abilities and soft skills.

#### **5. Implementation**

The management of the implementation of the HRS4R and OTM-R process is entrusted to a multidisciplinary and multi-skilled steering committee. This allows for effective monitoring and coordination of the projects. The steering committee is responsible for proposing actions to be included, validating the HRS4R and OTM-R action plans and reporting to the board. The Steering Committee is chaired by the Vice-Rector for Research. Its composition is as follows:

- Vice-Rector for Research;
- Vice-Rector in charge of Academic Affairs ;
- Vice-Rector in charge of Education;
- Vice-Rector in charge of Quality;
- Directors (Human Resources Services SRH, Research Administration ADRE, Rectorate Services);
- Representatives of the three bodies (academic, scientific and administrative);

- 2 Persons in charge of quality;
- Person in charge of the reception of foreign researchers (Researcher's Helpdesk);

The day-to-day management is attributed to the Quality Support Unit, which is part of the rectorate services.

The involvement of the Quality Support Unit in university life and the human size of the structure facilitate exchanges, which allows researchers to address their requests directly to the Researcher's Helpdesk and the Quality Support Unit.

Moreover, the faculty councils collaborate with the councils of the scientific and university bodies whose representatives sit on the steering committee. Depending on the project, working groups are created and reports and information are centralized by the Quality Support Unit. Finally, various events are organized throughout the year to allow researchers to express themselves (round tables, workshops, individual meetings) and to explain the implementation of the HRS4R process (newsletter, annual events on Euraxess).

The new strategic plan of the Rectorate (2021-2024), presented in December 2021 to the university community, integrates the HRS4R action plan in a transversal way in each of its orientations. Integration is facilitated by the strong representation of the institution's bodies in the steering committee. Emphasis is placed on the development of a strong HR policy that enables the implementation of the OTM-R strategy.

**a. How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?**

Progress is presented to the steering committee, which meets four times a year, by a representative of the quality support unit. The monitoring of actions is carried out by the quality support unit. Indeed, a part-time person is dedicated to monitoring and coordinating the actions of the action plan. This person is responsible for initiating projects, monitoring their progress and gathering the necessary information to assess the progress of the project. An internal project management tool is used to monitor progress in terms of time (meeting deadlines) and indicators to be achieved.

**b. How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?**

Researchers are invited to the steering committee through their representatives from the academic and scientific communities. These two representatives act as a link with the boards of both organization's and thus ensure the transmission of requests and projects from both boards. In addition, the Quality Support Unit actively participates in UNamur events and regularly attends information meetings. Thanks to the network that has been set up, researchers can easily get in touch with the contact persons and submit their requests.

**c. How do you proceed with the alignment of organizational policies with the HRS4R?**

Ensure that HRS4R is recognized in the organization's research strategy as an overall HR policy. The participation of four vice-rectors in the steering committee helps to integrate HRS4R actions into the institutional strategy.

Thus, the rectoral strategic plan includes actions that contribute directly to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code for the Recruitment of Researchers, such as:

- Knowledge and technology transfer;
- Strengthening international collaboration in teaching and research;
- Strengthening of the quality approach;
- Development of innovative teaching methods through teacher training;
- Improvement of the integration of foreign students (especially doctoral students);

**d. How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?**

Actions are considered completed when the previously defined indicators are reached. This could be a training event, a report or a number of participants to be reached. When the event is completed, the quality support unit makes it permanent by including it in the action plan: general training for the HR department and researcher training for the research administration department, official annual communication, staff orientation day. In the case of a report, the quality support unit sets up a watch to ensure the continuity of the project (think tank, survey, evaluation report) and to ensure the use of the data collected (addition to the institutional policy, creation of a working group, official mandate for an administrative service).

**e. How will you monitor progress (timeline)?**

The action plan is monitored and discussed at each steering committee meeting, i.e. at least 4 times a year. Moreover, the Quality Unit regularly contacts the people responsible of actions to know how it is going, collect indicators and gather pieces of evidence. In the project management tool, the Quality unit reports the meetings, dates, indicators and proof collected in order to have everything monitored. How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?

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**f. How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?**

The action plan is monitored and discussed at each steering committee meeting. Moreover, the Quality Unit regularly contacts the people responsible of actions to know how it is going, collect indicators and gather actions. In the project management tool, the Quality unit reports the meetings, dates, indicators, and proof collected in order to have everything monitored. The Quality unit uses statistics to see the evolution in the status of action: in progress, realized, done, to be repeated... This enables to measure progress and see what the blocking points are, also to see if the action needs to be repeated or maintained in time.

**6. Have any of the priorities for the short- and medium-term changed?**

One of the priorities on the agenda is to update and modernize the university website. By doing so, the accessibility to the information will be facilitated to quickly know where to find the information needed or whom to ask. Currently, all services and information are available on the website, but not easily accessible and we hope to improve this situation. This will benefit everyone: researchers, teachers, students, and employees as well as the external public.

Another priority defined by the authorities is to analyze the procedures currently in place to welcome and accompany international staff (researchers, PhD and staff). The purpose is to identify what is already done in different services within the university, the lacks, and repetitions for each public, and to propose general welcoming procedures that apply to everyone. Thanks to this analysis, we hope to

welcome everybody even more appropriately and to provide everyone with useful HR information. This will benefit the incoming international staff but will also increase the UNamur's reputation and visibility on the international scene. First steps have already been accomplished on this matter, by creating the PhD portal as well as the Researchers' portal. Both are interfaces listing all the necessary links to useful information.

On the same topic, the university authorities wish to improve the supervisory management of PhD students. Therefore, the training offers should be widened and some should be highly recommended, in order to better equip the supervisors to deal with PhD breakdowns or dropping out. The work has already been started as the Quality Department has organized two training sessions on the PhD Education Path in November 2023, one for PhD students and another for supervisors. Both sessions were a success and a time to answer questions and to exchange. Another training was proposed in October 2023, during a welcoming session for international researchers, where the Euraxess cell (the RH team and the Quality Team) presented the Euraxess service and all the available opportunities for researchers. The RH team along with international researchers presented useful information on the life in Belgium to newcomers as well.

As already explained, the interuniversity project on CoARA has of course changed the priorities and will put the emphasis on trainings for researchers and on collaborations between the five universities on research, ethics and integrity.

Finally, another priority will be to redefine the "Job cell". Its name is currently misleading as one might think this cell provides information on job offers, while it is not. The Job Cell supports PhD students during their PhD and also, at the end of their thesis and post-doc researchers on what to do afterwards, either stay in the academia or go to the private sector. It also gives advice on how to write a CV or highlight one's knowledge and assets. The counsellor can also be the person to go to in case of burn-out or other difficult private situation. Currently, these meetings aren't mandatory and happen on a voluntary basis. We would like to make them compulsory and to organize a meeting at the end of the thesis as well. To meet these objectives, the cell should be renamed, and one or more persons should be hired to extend the services offered to the researchers, such as for example by supporting postdocs in the definition of their Career Development Plan (CDP).

Have any of the circumstances in which your organization operates, changed and as such have had an impact on your HR strategy? (max 500 words)

The vice-rector to Human Resources was forced to leave the office for medical reasons. Following her departure, the rectoral Council and the Rector have decided to rethink the portfolios distribution and to create a new one, dedicated to Academic Affairs. Consequently, a new Vice-Rector has been appointed and is in charge of the Human Resources aspects for the academics and scientists whereas the General Administrator is responsible for the Human Resources for the administrative staff.

The creation of this new portfolio of Academic Affairs allows to address important questions: the highly recommended trainings to follow for leaders, the well-being of researchers, the supervision of PhDs, the workload of teaching assistants, and many others.

The Human Resources service has been reorganized to have a designated spokesperson by service and faculty, who oversees the recruitment and follows the employees all along their career at the university, answering to their questions and being present at their first assessments. This new procedure eases the sharing of information and offers employees a safe place to exchange and ask questions.

This spokesperson participates to the evaluation of staff, also a new procedure. Every new administrative employee has an assessment with his/her spokesperson and his/her supervisor after 3, 6 and 12 months. The same process applies to teaching assistants who are assessed every two years. This new procedure allows the new employee and his/her manager to speak about the positive points, but also about certain problems, points to improve or difficulties encountered. Thanks to these meetings, supervisors and employees can align their expectations and better understand each other, which improves work collaboration.

Besides, in 2023, a call to recruit trustworthy persons was made. Several volunteers have answered the call and have received accurate training to deal with all the possible situations they might encounter. Their names have been shared with the university community. From now on, if anyone suffers from harassment, unhealthy professional relationship, or bad behavior from his/her supervisor, he/she will know where to go to express him/herself and be sure to be heard by an impartial party.

On the topic of well-being, the Prevention Service has hired new counsellors who are also available to act as mediator in case of conflict or simply to listen to someone in need. The service will be providing trainings and information several times per year to give information on well-being, prevention, laboratory safety, training to become first-aid worker and on safety at work.

## 7. Are any strategic decisions under way that may influence the action plan?

As mentioned above, the creation of a new portfolio dedicated to the Academic Affairs within the rectoral council allows to address important questions that will influence the action plan, such as : establishing a list of highly recommended trainings to follow for leaders and supervisors, tackling the well-being of researchers, improving the supervision of PhDs, analyzing the workload of teaching assistants, and many others.

Strategic decisions have also been taken by the authorities to improve the welcoming and supervision of PhD students and international researchers. Therefore, the Quality Team has been mandated to analyze the procedures in place to welcome and follow international staff (researchers, PhD and staff). The purpose is to identify what is already done in different services within the university, the lacks and repetitions for each public, and to propose further improvement in the general welcoming procedures to apply to everybody. Thanks to this study, we hope to improve the welcome of everybody and to provide everyone with the useful HR information. This will benefit the incoming international staff but will also increase the UNamur's reputation and visibility on the international scene.

Concerning PhD students' supervision, the authorities wish to widen the training offers proposed to supervisors, managers and to PhD support committees and to strongly recommend them to follow trainings in management, supervision, PhD Education path and leadership. The purpose is, *in fine*, to better equip the supervisors and other managers to deal with PhD breakdowns or dropping out, but also be able to better deal with time management and supervision. We expect this will result in supervisors getting the habit of organizing regular appointments with his/her PhD students and getting the ability of keeping the students motivated and on the right path.

At last, the five universities of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation have worked together to submit an interuniversity project on the topic of the Research Assessment Agreement (CoARA), which has been approved for funding by the government. This plan consists in five different work packages, one led by each university and each on a different subject, going from ethics, integrity, Open Access, trainings on needed soft-skills, trainings on leadership and management for supervisors and leaders, tips on how to develop one's career. The UNamur will oversee the two last aspects, by gathering all available trainings

from the 5 universities in a shared catalogue, organizing trainings for supervisors and finally hosting a conference with famous guests to promote the skills of PhDs on the job market and explain why training the supervisors is the key of the PhD's success.

As these points have been defined as priorities, the new action plan contains several actions that follow that direction.

## 8. Comments on in the implementation of the OTM-R principles

Following the self-assessment report of the HRS4R Action Plan (2013-2016) submitted by the University of Namur, the European Commission issued recommendations inviting the UNamur to further develop its recruitment policy for researchers based on the OTM-R principles. Between 2016 and 2024, several steps were taken to improve the recruitment procedures in order to have them comply with the OTM-R principles. That is why the UNamur adopted "OTM-R toolbox" proposed by the European Commission. The "OTM-R Gap analysis", which systematically includes the 23 questions of the checklist, was also carried out by the Euraxess team and was followed by different action plans, all aiming to improve the recruitment procedures.

Here is a summary of key actions carried out in before 2023 :

- Revision of the procedure for recruiting scientific staff to bring it into line with OTM-R principles;
- Revision of the current UNamur Recruitment Charter and drafting of a new Recruitment Charter, common to all three categories of staff, incorporating the new procedure for recruiting scientific staff;
- Update of the VadeMecum of recruitment at UNamur;
- Implementation of an e-recruitment platform;
- Systematic publication of all job offers on the EuraxessJobs platform.

The University of Namur recognizes that research entities must be able to recruit researchers in the most efficient way. Therefore, it strives to apply strict recruitment and selection rules. However, derogations should be allowed in certain specific cases, in particular to retain, extend or reintegrate researchers who have already carried out their activities within UNamur. The derogation process is intended to be clear, transparent, justified and non-discriminatory.

Driven by its values of excellence in each of its missions, including research, the present authorities of the University of Namur want to strengthen the attractiveness and welcome both national and international researchers. Thus, the recruitment of researchers, which is intended to be open, transparent and based on the merits of candidates, has become one of the University's strategic priorities.

What is new since the last assessment in the OTM-R field of 2020, are the following improvements:

- New procedures have been put in place for the recruitment of academics. The soft skills developed in previous job experiences or previous research are now considered.
- It is no longer compulsory to have performed research abroad, but it is highly recommended to have a research experience in another university or institute than the home university, to gather a new way of thinking, be confronted with another mindset. By changing this recruitment criteria, we wish to not discriminate women

researchers or researchers who have family and for whom it is hard to stay for a long time aboard and we wish to encourage them to pursue career in research.

- Job offers are now open to everyone whatever their sexual identity, gender, race, or disability. We have indeed added the logo for LGBTQ+ and a wheeling chair.
- The UNamur is taking part in an interuniversity project aiming at creating workshops, videos, tool kits and work material to ease recruitment of researchers and especially, for online recruitment. This material will be published in the format of an e-book, but also in an e-learning platform shared by the five Belgian universities and supported by the national Belgian government.
- The HR recruitment procedures have been revised to increase collaboration between the recruiting services and the HR Team. Concretely, the service/faculty recruiting oversees the details of the job offer, the needed knowledge and abilities and the HR team takes care of all the legal aspects.
- The recruitment procedures and assessments for PhD assistants have been harmonized and recalled to the academics in order to be fully compliant with the OTM-R principles.

## 2. UNamur 2024-2027 Action Plan

Nbr	Official Action	Deadline	Responsible Service	Indicator +
<b>Networking for Researchers</b>				
1	Offer networking opportunities to researchers by hosting/organizing events	Continuously 1x/year	PAQ + SRH	Participants
<b>Trainings</b>				
2	Training on PhD Education Path for PhD Students	Min.2x/year	PAQ	Participants
3	Training on PhD Education Path for PhD supervisors	Min.2x/year	PAQ	Participants
4	Training on time management	Min.X/year	SRH	Participants
5	Training on project management	Min.X/year	SRH	Participants
6	Gather all training opportunities on a common unique website	2025	PAQ + ADRE + Adcom	Done/Not done
7	Organize leadership and team management trainings for supervisors	Min 1x/year	SRH	Participants
8	Provide master students and BAC students with information on career in research.	Min 1x/year	PAQ + ADRE	Done/Not done
9	Increase the number of career counseling sessions.	Continuously	SRH	Nbr of meetings organized
10	Propose a list of highly recommended trainings for newly recruited researchers	2026	ADRE + SRH	Done/Not done
11	Trainings for teaching assistants : « Possible Mission : a training package to develop my teaching and educative skills". 7 trainings on different subjects.	Min.X/year	PUNCH	Participants

12	HR Lunches on basic recurrent HR questions (salaries, taxes, vacation, rights and obligations...)	Min.X/year	SRH	Participants
<b>Recruitment</b>				
13	Conduct a reflexion on recruitment criteria to be the most inclusive possible (H/F/X, races, disabled, ie, specific needs...) and implement them if possible.	2027	SRH + VRR	Done/Not done
14	Communicate and provide trainings on recruitment procedures	2027	SRH	Done/Not done
15	Have a recruitment platform	2027	SRH + SERTIC	Done/Not done
<b>Improved support PhD Students and researchers</b>				
17	Improvement of welcoming procedures for international researchers	2027	VRR + VRET + VRR1	Done/Not done
18	Ease access to information by creating a global organigram	2027	PAQ	Done/Not done
19	Improve communication on the roles of trustworthy people and mediators and on how to contact them.	2024	VRET	Done/Not done
<b>Working conditions</b>				
20	Analysis of the link between the thesis drop-out rates and excessively long theses and the role of supervisors.	2027	SERP + PAQ + VRR	Done/Not done
<b>Entertainment</b>				
21	Organize informative events for international researchers	Min. 2/year	PAQ + SRH	Done/Not done
22	Organize entertainment events for (international) researchers	Min. 2/year	SRH + Vécu + SRI	Done/Not done

### 3. Annexe I



**Interuniversity Project on the CoARA agreement:  
developing a common platform on Research  
Assessment, and Ethics and Integrity trainings for and  
by the five universities of the Wallonia-Brussels  
Federation**

## 1. Introduction

Since 2023, the University of Namur, along with the four French-speaking Belgian universities, has signed the Agreement on Research Assessment (CoARA) (see the full text in annex).

To celebrate this great breakthrough, the five universities have come together to submit a proposal for an interuniversity project on the assessment of Research to the Belgian government. This project has been approved and the five universities will receive subsidies to hire a person to conduct a work package dealing with one of the 10 principles stated in the CoARA Agreement. The purpose is to make the agreement known by the researcher's community, share good practices in ethics and integrity, share trainings, and to develop researchers' competences.

The principles of the CoARA agreement are the following :

- 1. Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research;*
- 2. Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators;*
- 3. Abandon inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication-based metrics, in particular inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index;*
- 4. Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment;*
- 5. Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to;*
- 6. Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools and processes;*
- 7. Raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use;*
- 8. Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition;*
- 9. Communicate progress made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments;*
- 10. Evaluate practices, criteria and tools based on solid evidence and the state-of-the-art in research on research, and make data openly available for evidence gathering and research; (Source : <https://coara.eu/agreement/the-commitments/>).*

The project is also based on the new version of the Researcher's Charter, published in December 2023, which is constituted of 4 pillars:

1. Ethics, Integrity, Gender and Open Science
2. Researchers Assessment, Recruitment and Progression
3. Working Conditions and Practices
4. Research Careers and Talent Development

Concretely, this project consists in five different work packages, one led by each university and each on a different subject, going from ethics, integrity, Open Access, trainings on needed soft-skills, trainings on leadership and management for supervisors and leaders, tips on how to develop one's career. The UNamur will oversee the two last aspects, by gathering all available trainings from the 5 universities in a shared catalogue, organizing trainings for supervisors and finally hosting a conference with famous guests to promote the skills of PhDs on the job market and explain why training the supervisors is the key of the PhD's success.

## 2. Presentation of the 5 work packages

Each university will be leading one project on a particular topic and will be helped by the others and will participate in the other projects as well.

As the work packages are connected, there will be a strong collaboration and consultation between the different universities.

Development of an interuniversity platform of good practices for the Research Assessment based on the CoARA agreement		
Work Package	Leading university	Spokesperson
1 – Defining the new ways and means of Research assessment	Université catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain)	Anouk Distelmans <a href="mailto:anouk.Distelmans@uclouvain.be">anouk.Distelmans@uclouvain.be</a> Xavier Lepot <a href="mailto:Xavier.lepot@uclouvain.be">Xavier.lepot@uclouvain.be</a>
2- Ethics, integrity, and scientific publications openness	Université de Liège (ULiège)	Judith Biernaux <a href="mailto:jbiernaux@uliege.be">jbiernaux@uliege.be</a> Paul Thirion <a href="mailto:paul.thirion@uliege.be">paul.thirion@uliege.be</a>
3 – Ethics committees organisation: practical common rules around research projects	Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB)	Daniele Carati <a href="mailto:daniele.carati@ulb.be">daniele.carati@ulb.be</a> Joffrey Baneton <a href="mailto:joffrey.baneton@ulb.be">joffrey.baneton@ulb.be</a>
4 – Dealing with integrity dilemma: <i>authorship</i> concept, debate around the problematic: <i>publish or perish</i>	Université de Mons (UMons)	Céline Thillou <a href="mailto:celine.thillou@umons.ac.be">celine.thillou@umons.ac.be</a> Cynthia Marchal <a href="mailto:Cynthia.marchal@umons.ac.be">Cynthia.marchal@umons.ac.be</a>
5 – Strengthening the support for researchers and developing talents	Université de Namur (UNamur)	Christine Culot <a href="mailto:christine.culot@unamur.be">christine.culot@unamur.be</a> Clémentine Jacobs & Jean Dubois <a href="mailto:euraxess@unamur.be">euraxess@unamur.be</a>

### 3. Deliverables

Each work package will produce trainings, general rules and good practices, tips and tricks that will be all gathered on a common unique platform attached to the CRef's platform. The purpose is to create a general common database on best practices regarding the Research assessment available to the five universities of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and to ensure its sustainability as well as its update.

### 4. Methodology, budget, planning

The government of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation has granted a budget to each university in order to hire a full-time PhD graduated for 15 months to lead the work package and to collect the necessary means for the work package realisation.

The people recruited will closely work together, as all work packages are connected. They will make part of a working group that will meet twice every month. Besides that, the newly recruited will be supported by the spokespersons of their university.

A timeline have been defined for the good realisation of this ambitious project :

A) Table explaining the time allocation of the full-time recruit during 15 months

	In month by person (about 8.400 €/mois)	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	WP5	
<b>Recruit</b>	<b>Total (in months)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>630 000 €</b>
<b>Recruit 1</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>126 000 €</b>
<b>UCLouvain</b>	WP1 development	9	0	0	0	0	
	Collaboration with other WP	0	1	1	1	1	
	Interaction with WP5	0	0	0	0	2	
<b>Recruit 2</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>126 000 €</b>
<b>ULiège</b>	WP2 development	0	11	0	0	0	
	Collaboration with other WP	1	0	1	1	1	
<b>Recruit 3</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>126 000 €</b>
<b>ULB</b>	WP3 development	0	0	9	0	0	
	Collaboration with other WP	1	1	0	1	1	
	Collaborations on trainings with WP4	0	0	0	2	0	
<b>Recruit 4</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>126 000 €</b>
<b>UMons</b>	WP4 development	0	0	0	10	0	
	Collaboration with other WP	1	1	1	0	1	
	Work on Rules and good practices with WP3	0	0	1	0	0	
<b>Recruit 5</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>126 000 €</b>
<b>UNamur</b>	WP5 development	0	0	0	0	9	
	Collaboration with other WP	1	1	1	1	0	
	Particular collaboration with WP1	2	0	0	0	0	

B) Task management planning per WP

Axis\month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
WP1 – Analysing and making an inventory of the new research assessment indicators, tools and processes	■	■	■	■											
WP1 – Proposing indicators, tools and process for assessing research (other than scientific publications)					■	■	■	■	■	■					
WP1 – Proposing ways for the WBF universities to get familiar with the new procedures											■	■	■	■	■
WP2 OA – Defining a scientific domain and the scope of the journal	■	■	■												
WP2 OA – building the editorial board, defining the editorial management methods				■	■	■	■								
WP2 Launching a broad call to submit, recruit and review								■	■	■					
WP2 OA – Editing and publishing the chosen articles										■	■	■	■		
WP2 - OA – Study how this model could be expended to other journals and developing a sustainable business model														■	■
WP2 FD – Developing a decision-making policy	■	■	■	■	■	■									
WP2 FD – Defining the web RDM portal structure	■	■	■	■											
WP2 FD – Feeding the FWB RDM					■	■	■								
WP2 FD – Testing phase by the Data Ambassadors and consequently improving the system								■	■	■	■				
WP2 FD – Publishing the test results on the FWB RDM portal, utilisation pour reconnaissance du rôle de Data Amb												■	■	■	
WP2 FD – Developing the sustainable business model (if possible on the CReF platform)													■	■	■

WP3 – General Analysis	■	■	■															
WP3 – Defining committee members				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
WP3 – Trainings and support				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
WP4 – Training of ambassadors/lecturers in each institution	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
WP4 – Organizing debate sessions led by the ambassadors				■	■	■	■	■										
WP4 - Trainings (based on the tool “Mind The Gap/VLIR”)							■	■	■	■								
WP4 – Harmonizing the different scientific integrity councils in every university																■	■	■
WP5 – Making an inventory of the available trainings for researchers in all FWB universities	■	■	■															
WP5 – Developing a unique and common website (hopefully based on the CRef Platform)				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
WP5 – Getting the tool « ResearchComp » known and organizing knowledge assessment sessions				■	■	■	■	■										
WP5 – Providing leadership and management trainings to R3-R4 researchers									■	■	■	■						
WP5 – Organizing a closing event to show the WP inputs and deliverables provided and to promote researchers’ competencies on the labour market											■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

## 4. Annexe II

[The Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment](#)<sup>1</sup> sets a shared direction for changes in assessment practices for research, researchers and research performing organisations, with the overarching goal to maximise the quality and impact of research. The Agreement includes the principles, commitments and timeframe for reforms and lays out the principles for a Coalition of organisations willing to work together in implementing the changes.

Signatories commit to a common vision, which is that the assessment of research, researchers and research organisations recognises the diverse outputs, practices and activities that maximise the quality and impact of research. This requires basing assessment primarily on qualitative judgement, for which peer-review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators.

The reform movement underpinned by the Agreement and the Coalition aims to be an inclusive and collaborative space to advance together towards a higher quality, more impactful and more efficient and inclusive research system. It offers a platform for piloting and experimentation, developing new assessment criteria, methods and tools, and for joint, critical reflection, exchange of good practices and mutual learning, while fully respecting the autonomy of organisations.

Supported by the work of the Coalition, organisations will decide on the steps to take to implement the commitments and the pace in their reform journey, which can vary depending on the context (for example, national, disciplinary or assessment of individual researchers, research units and research organisations or research projects) and the strategic goals and mission of each organisation.

Organisations involved in research assessment from all over the world are encouraged to [sign the Agreement](#) and to subsequently join the Global Coalition.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://coara.eu/agreement/the-agreement-full-text/>