Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) Policy

for the Effective Recruitment and Selection of Resident Academics and Research Support Officers at the University of Malta

L-Università ta' Malta

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

The University of Malta (UM) received the HR Excellence in Research Award on 31 July 2021, which shows the institution's commitment to bring its human resources policies and practices in line with the 40 principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter & Code[1]). The concrete implementation of the Charter & Code by the UM will render the institution more attractive to researchers.

The implementation of the Charter & Code ensures the long term commitment of the UM to recruit Resident Academics and Research Support Officers/Assistants in a timely manner, whilst adhering to transparent recruitment and selection practices in compliance with the Institution's protocol and Malta's Employment and Industrial Relations Act[2] (EIRA). The UM strives to ensure equal opportunities for all candidates, and bases the selection on meritocracy regardless of the gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, and race. This reflects an open, fair and transparent process.

The Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) policy is one of the most important support measures of the Charter & Code. The UM's OTM-R Policy offers guidance to those who are involved in the recruitment and selection process of researchers. It is specifically aimed at building on the principles of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, providing more detailed information on the recruitment and selection process for researchers at the UM.

This OTM-R Policy is based on the "Recruitment and Selection Guidelines of the UM", and the "Standard Operating Procedure for Recruiting Research Support Officers on Externally Funded Projects".

---

[1] https://cdn2.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/brochures/am509774cee_en_e4.pdf
[2] https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/452/eng/pdf

Objective of the Policy

The University of Malta (UM) aims to attract high calibre Researchers. To this effect, the University's objective of the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) policy is to attract and retain Researchers by fostering an attractive working environment. The UM also aims to adopt an open, transparent and merit-based recruitment process for researchers to render its careers in research more appealing, whilst ensuring equal opportunities for all candidates.

The OTM-R policy was drafted by the working group of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers following the guidance of the Institution's Office for Human Resources Management and Development (OHRMD). The term "Researchers" refers to all Resident Academics and Research Support Officers/Assistants who are at any stage of their career and position at the UM.

The policy aims to build on the principles of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, providing more detailed information on the recruitment and selection process and the various steps, starting from the job advertising phase through to the offer of employment phase. More specifically, the policy aims to:

a) provide clear and transparent details on the overall selection process, including the selection criteria;
b) post a clear job advertisement including the required qualifications, skills and competencies, list of tasks, working conditions, remuneration, training opportunities, career development, gender equality policies, etc.;
c) ensure that the qualifications, skills and competencies required are specific to the needs of the position;
d) assist in the administrative tasks for the candidate (work permits, translations of degree certificates, etc.); and
e) guide the Selection Board members to a non-biased interview process.

The Research Community at the University of Malta

The members of staff who are directly involved with research at the University of Malta (UM) include mainly Resident Academics ranging from Assistant Lecturer to Professor, Research Support Officers (RSOs) or Assistants (RSAs), and other Researchers who are directly appointed by the EU or other sources of funding such as the Marie Curie Researchers, Postdoctoral Fellows and Research Fellows. Resident Academics usually take on the principal investigator (PI) role in a project, which is complemented by a range of staff in administrative and technical support roles.

Research at UM is mostly funded by external sources. The institution is involved as coordinator and partner in research funded under various EU programmes such as Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, Interreg EU-MED-Italia Malta, and other international and national programmes. The UM is also represented in a number of European and International University networks and groups.

Furthermore, research at the UM is supported by a number of directorates and offices, namely (i) Research Support Services Directorate; (ii) Project Support Office; (iii) Knowledge Transfer Office; (iv) Marketing, Communications and Alumni Office; (v) Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Incubation; (vi) Legal office; (vii) IT services; (viii) Office for Human Resources Management and Development (OHRMD); and (ix) the Open Science Department of the University Library.

The Recruitment Process

The process consists of the following seven steps and each step is outlined in detail in the sections that follow:

    1.1 Preparation of the Call for applications;

    1.2 Advertising the Call for applications;

    1.3 Processing the Applications;

    1.4 Selection Board Preparations;

    1.5 The Selection Board;

    1.6 Processing Selection Board Decisions; and

    1.7 Processing the Offer of Employment.

1.1 Preparation of the Call for Applications

In general, when a vacancy arises, the respective Director or Dean, in consultation with the Head of Department or Division (HOD), liaises with the OHRMD and a call for applications is drafted. The recruitment of Resident Academics usually stems from the requirement of additional members of staff within a department to carry out research and teaching duties in a particular discipline. The recruitment is always subject to approval by the Rector.

The recruitment of Research Support Officers (RSOs) or Assistants (RSAs) is dependent on the availability of research project funds administered by the Project Support Office of the UM. Therefore, prior to issuing a call for applications, the HR Manager within the Project Support Offices liaises with the responsible Project Support Officer to confirm that funds are available. The HR Manager then prepares and sends a draft call for applications by email to the Principal Investigator (PI) of the project.

The call for applications should include the following:

- The title of the post;
- Whether full-time or part-time;
- Skills and qualifications required for the post;
- An accurate job description with a list of duties and responsibilities;
- Remuneration and duration of the post;
- Deadline to apply;
- Criteria for shortlisting and selection.

In the case of a call for applications for a RSO or RSA the following details are included in addition to the above:

- Project acronym;
- A short description of the project;
- Grant agreement number (where applicable);
- Relevant logos.

The call also includes a statement that the RSO or RSA may work on other projects which may be coordinated by the department. This gives the prospective candidate the possibility to work on other projects undertaken by the same department. For part-time posts the rate per hour is indicated whilst for full-time posts the annual salary is stipulated. In some cases, the call may also include a statement indicating that the RSO or RSA may be offered the possibility of enrolling in a Master's degree or a PhD related to the project.

Remuneration for the Resident Academics is in line with Appendix B of the Collective Agreement[3] whilst for the RSOs or RSAs remuneration is based on the salary structure as approved by Council during its meeting on 13 July 2023 and which is reproduced in Appendix A of this policy. This

---

[3] https://www.um.edu.mt/hrmd/secure/policies/CollectiveAgreement-Academics.pdf

illustrates a fair and transparent method of remuneration that is dependent on the post title and qualifications.

1.2   Advertising the Call for Applications

A clearly defined post in an advert helps to maintain objectivity, and avoid bias and discrimination. In addition, potential applicants may decide whether they have the qualifications and capabilities required to submit an application.

Once the call for applications is authorised by the Rector, Finance Director and countersigned by Line Management, it is advertised on the UM web-site. In the case of a call for applications for a RSO or RSA, upon mutual agreement between the PI and the HR Manager regarding the call details, the HR Manager forwards the call for applications to the central OHRMD for advertising.

In addition to the UM's website, the call for applications is advertised by the Recruitment Officer on Facebook, LinkedIn and EURAXESS, and other international portals as necessary. A notification of the advert is sent by email to the Head of Department and, in the case of RSOs or RSAs, the PI copying the HOD or Dean (the latter is necessary when the PI is the HOD).

The deadline for the submission of applications is usually after three weeks, but this may be longer to make it possible for a wider group of potential candidates to become familiar with the advert and properly prepare their applications.

1.3   Processing the Applications

All applications, CVs and related documents are received at the OHRMD through a Google form and an automatic email acknowledgement is sent to each applicant. Following the deadline of the call for applications, the HOD concerned or the PI (in case of a Research Support Officer [RSO] or Research Support Assistant [RSA] post) will review the applications and the CV of the applicants in order to produce a shortlist report. This report specifies those candidates who have not met the objective criteria of the call, or any other valid reason. Such candidates will be marked as '*not shortlisted*'. All other candidates will be marked as '*shortlisted for interview*'. In the case of RSOs and RSAs, if there are more than 5 applicants, an initial screening takes place to select a maximum of 5 candidates as per Article 6.4.2 of the Standard Operating Procedure 'Recruiting Research Support Officers on Externally Funded Projects'.

1.3.1   Initial Screening - RSOs and RSAs

An initial screening meeting is organised between the PI and the HOD. In the case where the HOD is the PI, the screening meeting is carried out by the PI and the Dean/Director of the Institute. From this initial screening, a maximum of five (5) candidates are selected to be interviewed by a Selection Board. A scoring sheet and a screening report are produced by the PI wherein a justification is provided for the inclusion and noninclusion of candidates on the list of persons to be interviewed by the Selection Board. This information is then forwarded to the Recruitment Officer in order to set up the Selection Board meeting. Preparations for the second Selection Board are outlined in Section 1.4

of this policy. During this initial screening, the PI may opt to ask the candidates to carry out a task related to the project or to deliver a presentation.

In cases where RSOs are required to work on a part-time basis with flexible hours up to a maximum of 400 hours, only one selection board will take place, with the board composed as above, except that the selection board shall select and shortlist candidates. The selected candidates are screened by the Pro-Rector or his/her delegate. If the Pro-Rector or his/her delegate approves the outcome of the selection process, then the decision of the selection board will be final. Otherwise, a second Selection Board is organised as per section 1.4 of this policy.

1.4 Selection Board Preparations

Prior to a Selection Board meeting to conduct the Interviews, the Chairperson will consult with the HOD or PI who has drawn up the shortlist report, and where applicable, the HR Director or Pro-Rector or HR Manager, to discuss and confirm the shortlist for interview. Candidates are to be shortlisted for interview or otherwise, on objective grounds in direct relation to the requirements specified in the call for applications or for a valid reason. Only candidates satisfying all the criteria will be called for an interview.

When the Selection Board meets to conduct the interviews, the Chairperson will request the HOD or the PI, who has drawn up the shortlist, to explain the decisions contained in the shortlisting report, particularly in relation to those applications that have not been shortlisted. The shortlist report must be unanimously accepted and endorsed by all the Selection Board members before interviews can proceed.

If any member of the Selection Board disagrees with the shortlist, the Selection Board member may request that an excluded applicant be included. The Chairperson will ensure consistency for all applications and with the consensus of the Selection Board, agrees to amend the shortlist. If the Selection Board cannot reach consensus on the shortlist, all applicants will be interviewed as a matter of prudence. Any such changes will be documented in the selection board report.

1.4.1 Composition of the Selection Board for Resident Academics

The composition of Selection Boards for Resident Academics for vacancies arising in Faculties, Centres, Institutes and Schools is as follows:

1. Rector or his delegate (as Chair);
2. The Dean or Chairperson of Centre, Institute or School involved;
3. The HOD or Director of Centre, Institute or School involved;
4. If 2 and 3 above are the same person, then another member of the Department/Institute/ Centre/School is selected;
5. An academic member of staff from outside the Faculty, Centre, Institute or School concerned as approved by Council;

6. A member of Council who is not employed with the UM;
7. Any other technical expert(s) appointed by the Rector at his discretion when such expertise is deemed beneficial to the selection process. Technical expert(s) act as an observer(s) and have no voting rights. The technical expert(s) role is limited to questioning during the interview and they must withdraw from the room during the deliberations on selection and ranking.

1.4.2 Composition of the Selection Board for RSOs and RSAs

In the case of RSO or RSA posts, the Recruitment Officer sets up the second Selection Board meeting in accordance with the University Statutes. The board members should include the Pro-Rector for Research and Knowledge Transfer or a delegate acting as the Chairperson, the PI of the Project, and the HOD or Dean/Director of the Institute. If the PI is also the Dean/Director, a third member is appointed to ensure a minimum of three persons on the Selection Board.

1.4.3 Informing All Parties of the Selection Board Date and Other Preparations

In the case of the a Resident Academic post, once the Rector confirms the composition of the Selection Board in accordance with the above, and once a list of applicants eligible for interview is drawn up by the respective Head as described, all members of the Selection Board are notified in advance about the date for interview and every effort is made to ensure that all members of the Selection Board are present.

Should any member of a Selection Board be unable to attend due to unavoidable circumstances and the HOD or the Dean and a member of Council is present, the Chairperson of the Selection Board may decide to proceed with the interviews provided that they deem that the members present collectively have sufficient technical and administrative competence to conduct the interviews, and provided that no Selection Board conducting interviews is composed of less than four (4) persons. If the Chairperson chooses to proceed with the interviews, any members of a Selection Board who are absent for all or some of the interviews, automatically forfeits their participation in the selection process. In such a case, only the members of the Selection Board who were actually present for the interviews of all interviewed applicants constitute the Selection Board for the post(s) in question.

In the case of a RSO or RSA post, the Recruitment Officer informs all members and the shortlisted applicants by email of the determined interview date. Selection Board meetings may be held online or in-person. The Recruitment Officer prepares a folder for the Chairperson, which includes the scoring sheet and Selection Board report of the selected candidates from the first Selection Board meeting, letter of application, CV and a copy of the certificates in English, a copy of the call and a list of the short-listed applicants with their qualifications and experience. All other members are provided with the information via Google drive.

On the day of the Selection Board, prior to the commencement of interviews, the Chairperson ensures that the members of the Selection Board agree on the criteria for selection as follows:

qualifications, experience, aptitude and suitability, performance during interview. The maximum points allocated to each criterion have to be established and agreed between the members.

1.5   The Selection Board

1.5.1   Responsibility of the Selection Board Members

1.5.1.1 Conflict of Interest

Members of the Selection Board, who at any stage in the selection process, deem that their ability to conduct their duty fairly has been compromised, or when a perceived conflict of interest may arise, shall inform the Chairperson immediately. A declaration does not imply release from a conflict of interest.

The following non-exhaustive list identifies situations leading to a conflict of interest; namely when a member of the Selection Board:

1. is the spouse, or is in or has been in an intimate relationship with, or is a close relative of an applicant[4]
2. is a business associate, who in the last twelve (12) months has conducted business with, or has been an employer or employee of an applicant;
3. is currently in any litigation with, has had any serious dispute or conflict with, or is a rival of an applicant;
4. has been coerced, solicited, or intimidated by any applicant or others acting on behalf of an applicant;
5. (a) has in the past twelve (12) months, acted or is currently acting as a supervisor/co-supervisor/advisor of a thesis/dissertation to any of the applicants or

   (b) for Selection Boards of RSOs or RSAs only, is currently acting as a supervisor/co-supervisor/advisor of a thesis/dissertation to any of the applicants.

If the Chairperson confirms a member's declaration of a conflict of interest, or in any way becomes aware that a conflict of interest subsists due to situations 1 to 4 in the above list, and possibly any other valid conflicting circumstances, then such members shall recuse themselves and be replaced.

Where a member of the Selection Board is conflicted by virtue of situations 5(a) or 5(b) (as applicable), but the member's expertise is seen to be crucial to the selection process, the member may be allowed to participate in the interviews and deliberations of the Board; but withdraw from the Board when the other members proceed to make the final decision. Alternatively, the Rector or Pro-Rector may decide to replace the conflicted person by another expert where this decision is appropriate and practical.

---

[4] https://www.um.edu.mt/registrar/secure/staffstudents/Consanguinity.pdf

The Chairperson and all Selection Board members are required to sign a declaration form confirming that they have no conflict of interest. Members conflicted by situation (5) but who are still allowed to participate in the interviews and deliberations except for the final decision, are to sign a declaration to that effect.

In the event that the Selection Board, in the course of its work, realises that a conflict of interest subsists, the Chairperson shall stop the proceedings and shall consult with the Rector and HR Director in order to resolve the matter.

The member of a Selection Board must state in advance of the interview that they have a conflict of interest and must not participate in the Selection Board. If the Chairperson realises at any point in the process that a conflict of interest exists, even if the Selection Board member does not realise or declare the conflict, the Chairperson has the authority to request the member to exclude themselves from the Selection Board.

1.5.1.2 Ethical behaviour

The interviewing process is expected to appraise the competence and suitability of candidates. While any member of the Selection Board can ask any question or request any information which is intended to assess a candidate in terms of the predetermined criteria as described, members of the Selection Board should ensure that:

1. candidates and other Selection Board members are treated in a cordial and respectful manner;
2. no questions are asked that are sexist; ageist; racist; or are unlawfully discriminatory in nature;
3. no information on the outcome or proceedings of the selection process is divulged to third parties other than Council, as authorised by Council, or as required at law;
4. no candidate is given an unfair advantage over others or is treated unfairly; and
5. they report to the Chairperson any cases of solicitation, intimidation or any other cause that may hinder them from conducting their duty equitably, or which may be perceived to be a conflict of interest.

In some cases, the Chairperson has the prerogative to request members of the Selection Board to withdraw from a selection process and ask for a replacement, if in their judgement, the behaviour of the members may compromise the fair conduct of a selection process or if this constitutes a conflict of interest. In the case of a Resident Academic Post, the Chairperson may request the Rector to appoint a suitable replacement to serve on the Selection Board.

The following ethical issues list can serve as guidance:

Confidentiality: The confidentiality of the candidates needs to be protected at all times; interviewees details should not be discussed or disclosed outside of the Selection Board.

Shortlisting: Any Selection Board member who has queries or disagrees with the shortlist as drawn up by the HOD, should immediately contact the Chairperson (before the actual interviews are held).

Conflict of Interest: Selection Board members are to ensure that they have no conflict of interest on receiving the list of candidates by the OHRMD. Selection Board members who think that they have a conflict of interest as established in the 'Guidelines for Members of UM Selection Boards'[5] should immediately inform the Chairperson. A declaration confirming the absence of a conflict of interest is to be signed by all members.

Presence: Selection Board members are expected to be present for all interviews and they should never leave the room whilst an interview is under way. In case of emergencies, the Selection Board member should seek permission from the Chairperson to leave the room between interviews; interviews will not continue unless all board members are present.

Timekeeping: All Selection Board members should be at the interviewing venue at least ten (10) minutes prior to the start of the interviews.

Electronic devices: Electronic devices should only be used to refer to the electronic version of the application and CV of the interviewee. Mobile phones should be switched off or put on silent mode. No calls should be taken (or sms/emails sent) during the interviews especially whilst a candidate is present. Any urgent calls should be made in between interviews.

Preparation: Selection Board members should consult the interviewee's application and CV prior to the interviews taking place in order to familiarise themselves about each candidate.

Introduction: The Chairperson will welcome each candidate to the interview, introduce the Selection Board members and explain the vacant position for which the interview will be held. A general question will be asked by the Chairperson aimed at helping to settle the candidate and provide Selection Board members with an initial indication of the candidate's preparation for the interview.

Interview questions: No questions concerning the candidates' personal life or circumstances are permitted.

Bias: All candidates should be given the same opportunity during the interview. Any bias or favouritism towards a particular interviewee/s is not permitted.

Unconscious bias/discrimination: Selection Board members must be aware of their unconscious bias/discrimination during an interview. This refers to questions based upon circumstances such as age, social background, education, gender, nationality, religion, marital status.

Selection Board conclusion: The final decision must be made with all the eligible Selection Board members present. The Chairperson will prepare the final result sheet and ensure that this is signed by all board members.

Confidentiality of selection board decision: Selection Board members must not disclose any information pertaining to the selection process or results; neither to the candidates themselves or any other individual who did not form part of the Selection Board.

---

[5] https://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/510693/RecruitmentandSelectionGuidelines.pdf

1.5.2   Scoring Sheet and the Marking Procedure

The Selection Board has to agree on the selection criteria and the appropriate weighting for each according to the requirements of the call for applications. Typically, the selection criteria adopted are as follows:

- Relevant Academic Qualifications;
- Relevant Academic/Work Experience;
- Aptitude and Suitability; and
- Performance in Interview.

The Selection Board will use a total mark of hundred (100) and allocate a proportion of the total to each criterion. These marks will form the basis for the ranking of candidates.

In principle, the selection process shall rely on the combined skills and competences of the persons constituting the Selection Board to arrive at a fair and correct conclusion.

Once the criteria and respective marking scheme have been established, the interviewing process can begin; each member of the Selection Board is given the opportunity to ask questions and is expected to mark each candidate separately. The Chairperson, as the moderator of the interviewing process, must ensure that the questions asked are fair, equitable and not advantageous to any candidate, and are intended to assist the Selection Board to evaluate the respective candidates in accordance with the set criteria within the context of the call for applications.

1.5.3   Points to be considered by the Selection Board Members during the Interview

The following points can be considered by Selection Board members during the interview, according to the post advertised.

1.5.3.1 Resident Academic posts

In the spirit of transparency, it is important to expand further on what one is looking for when assessing applicants during interviews.

Relevant Academic Qualifications

When assessing Relevant Academic Qualifications, one should consider the:
1. relevance of the qualifications concerned to the field targeted by the Call for Applications;
2. calibre and prestige of the awarding Institution/s particularly in the field in question;
3. various qualifications obtained at undergraduate; post-graduate and doctoral level; and
4. performance and where relevant degree-classification of each qualification.

Selection Board members must be aware of the Collective Agreement provisions regarding the possession of a PhD or equivalent research-based doctorate, and the University's position on professional doctorates.

Furthermore, the Council decision regarding the award of the grade of '*Associate Professor*' or '*Professor*' must be applied. Only applicants who already hold the professorial grade at the UM or at another University or Research Institute of repute, can be forwarded for Council approval at professorial grade. A University of repute is defined as one which ranks with the first one thousand (1,000) universities in the World.

<u>*Relevant Academic/Work Experience*</u>

Five main components of Academic experience shall be assessed as follows:

1. *Teaching and Lecturing:* duration and scope of overall teaching experience; training received in pedagogy and student evaluation; course work and assessment developed; experience with educational technologies.
2. *Research Portfolio:* including the quantity and quality of publications, patents, research grants secured; research projects managed; and Masters and PhD students supervised.
3. *Academic Administration and leadership:* candidate's contribution to academic processes at a higher educational institution in a supportive or leadership position and/or the education system in general and other related duties and/or to society through one's academic and related professional expertise.
4. *Outreach Portfolio:* international contacts and cooperation; participation/ membership of international peer-groups; collaboration with industry and civil society; knowledge and technology transfer; professional consultancy.
5. *Professional Experience:* gained from outside academia which brings added value to the academic role.

Some Calls for Application require a Selection Board to give due recognition to the technical/practical work experience of a candidate – e.g. when choosing to recruit a Resident Academic in Engineering or the Performing Arts. In such cases, the practitioner related skills of a candidate evidenced by years of technical/practical experience in the related respective field shall be valorised alongside academic achievements.

<u>*Aptitude and Suitability*</u>

When determining a candidate's Aptitude and Suitability the Selection Board should take into account the following:

1. *Mastery of field of interest*: how confident, well-versed and authoritative a candidate is in the field of interest stipulated by the Call;
2. *Mobility experience:* the UM recognizes the value of all forms of mobility, within the candidates' career, as a means for enhancing their own professional development;
3. *Intellectual calibre*: how critically insightful, argumentatively robust, and informed a candidate is with regards to scholarly argumentation or when expressing an opinion even beyond the scope of the Call;
4. *Commitment to academia*: exhibit commitment to research and student achievement; committed to the academic life-style and the responsibility that this entails;

5. *Aptitude towards teaching*: determined by a positive disposition towards teaching (are students likely to be inspired by this candidate's delivery in class?);
6. *Aptitude towards research*: demonstrated by an appetite for scholarship and an innate inquisitiveness (are the candidate's research objectives stated clearly and are they aligned with the post?);
7. *Aptitude towards outreach*: disposition and capacity to apply knowhow for the betterment of society and the economy and to conduct international cooperation;
8. *Team-work*: how well disposed a candidate is to working with others or in a group;
9. *Communication skills*: how well a candidate can communicate with others – how well candidates listen and convey their opinions, knowledge, and beliefs.
10. *Availability*: the person's availability to start the employment in a timely manner.

The considerations above must be made in the light of the curriculum vitae and any other written statements submitted by the candidates; the references received on behalf of each candidate; and the information conveyed and opinions expressed by the candidates during the interview.

Performance in Interview

This criterion goes beyond the substance of what is said in the interview, but should concentrate mostly on the verbal and nonverbal communication of each candidate during the interview. Proficiency and competence in the English language is essential and will be assessed during the interview. For posts related to other languages, expertise in those languages are also required. A candidate is expected to convey confidence, but not arrogance; to convey clarity of thought without being patronising or pedantic; to project a presence and to do so naturally; to be truthful; respectful; prepared to listen but also to defend their views with vigour and conviction.

Additional Selection Criteria

A Selection Board may decide to adopt additional selection criteria beyond those described, should they feel that the nature of the discipline is such that it warrants special treatment. For example, in the case of the Performing Arts, an audition may be deemed necessary; in the case of Fine Art and Design, a portfolio of works may need to be presented.

Moreover, a Selection Board may decide to ask interviewees to prepare a technical presentation on some pre-selected theme or to submit a technical paper to facilitate short-listing or final selection.

A Selection Board also has the prerogative to call candidates more than once for interview, before making its final recommendation to Council.

1.5.3.2 RSO and RSA Posts

During interviews for these posts, Selection Board members should take into consideration the following.

Relevant Academic Qualifications

When assessing Relevant Academic Qualifications, one should consider the:

1. relevance of the qualifications concerned to the field targeted by the Call for Applications; and
2. the grade obtained or the classification of each qualification achieved.

Relevant Work Experience

The Selection Board members have to look into the relevance of a person's work experience to be considered in the context of the scope of the Call for Applications.

Aptitude and Suitability

When determining a candidate's Aptitude and Suitability, a Selection Board should take into account the following:

- *Mastery of skills of interest*: how confident, well-versed and authoritative candidates are in the skills required for the job;
- *Team-work*: how well disposed candidates are to working with others or in a group;
- *Commitment:* how determined candidates are to excel in the role and to accommodate and adapt to the exigencies of the job; and
- *Communication skills*: how well candidates interact with others – how well candidates listen and convey their opinion, knowledge, and beliefs.
- *Availability*: the person's availability to start the employment in a timely manner.

The considerations above must be made in the light of the curriculum vitae and any other written statements submitted by the candidates; the references received on behalf of each candidate; and the information conveyed and opinions expressed by the candidates during the interview.

Performance in Interview

This criterion goes beyond the substance of what is said in the Interview, but should concentrate mostly on the verbal and nonverbal communication of each candidate during the interview. Proficiency in language(s) and particularly in Maltese and English is essential, but, nonverbal communication is equally crucial, including body language, posture, and eye contact amongst others. A candidate is expected to convey confidence, but not arrogance; to convey clarity of thought without being patronising or pedantic; to project a presence and to do so naturally; to be truthful; respectful; prepared to listen but also to defend their views with vigour and conviction.

Additional Selection Criteria

A Selection Board may decide to ask interviewees to prepare a presentation to facilitate the final selection. A Selection Board also has the prerogative to call candidates more than once for an interview in the quest to make its final recommendation.

1.6 Processing Selection Board Decisions

At the end of the interviewing process, when all members of the Selection Board are satisfied that they are in possession of the information necessary to facilitate their judgement, each member is expected to list the interviewed candidates in order of merit according to the percentage marks attributed to the candidates – this is referred to as the *initial ranking* of the candidates.

At this stage, the Chairperson allows each member of the Selection Board respectively to present to the other members the candidates they feel deserve further consideration based on their initial rankings. Each member of the Selection Board is invited to motivate why they feel certain candidates deserve further consideration and why others do not.

The opinion expressed by each Selection Board member and the discussion that ensues, is intended to allow the Selection Board to converge towards a common decision about the ranking of the successful candidate(s). The definitive ranking of candidates will reflect the result of this internal discussion.

If consensus is not reached on the ranking of the most suitable candidates, and further information is required to assist with the decision, the Selection Board may decide to call the most suitable candidates for further interviews. If consensus is still not reached and the process of discussion has been exhausted, the most deserving candidate is decided by a simple majority of Selection Board members. Any member of the Selection Board is free to write a minority report addressed to the President of Council should they feel that any matter of substance or procedure should be brought to the attention of Council when it is considering the Selection Board's recommendation.

At the conclusion of the interview process, the Chairperson will request each member to sign to confirm the definitive ranking and order of merit of successful candidates.

In the case of a Resident Academic post, the Selection Board will indicate the Grade in the Post assigned to the successful candidate. The Chairperson may consult with the HR Director to assist where necessary.

The Recruitment Officer then prepares a selection board report and forwards it to the Chairperson for signature. One copy of all the documents concerned is kept in the file at the Recruitment Office. These documents include: Selection board report, scoring sheet, call for applications, advert, CVs, letters of application, nominations and regrets.

The Selection Board report typically provides a summary of the whole selection process including details of all applications, criteria and weighting, interviews held and final results. The report may also include any reference to related minority reports. All selection board members will be required to sign the final report.

All documents pertaining to the process of the Selection Board are subject to the UM retention policy[6].

---

[6] https://www.um.edu.mt/hrmd/childcare/privacy

1.7   Processing the Offer of Employment

__1.7.1   Recommendations for Council Approval in the Case of Resident Academics__

Recommendations of Selection Boards are presented to Council for approval, and if Council agrees, the selected candidate/s will be offered employment in accordance with the ranking order, when applicable, and subject to the number of vacancies at the time, or as may arise within a period of twelve (12) months from the date of approval by Council.

__1.7.2   In the case of a RSO and RSA post__

An email with the offer of employment is sent to the selected candidate/s in accordance with the ranking order, when applicable, by the Recruitment Officer. The email to the selected candidate is sent within one (1) week from the interview date and is copied to the PI, the HR Manager and the Contracts Officer.

Upon receipt of the acceptance from the candidate, the Contracts Officer sends a set of forms to the successful candidate to be duly filled and returned via email. The forms include a data card, the UM commencement form, and the JobsPlus engagement form. The Contracts Officer also refers the candidate to the Salaries Section, in order to fill in the necessary FSS and bank details forms. Where a candidate is a non-EU national, the Contracts Officer advises the candidate on the procedure in terms of work permit and Visa as necessary. The Contracts Officer also advises the candidate to make arrangements for the employee's first day of work with the PI.

The Contracts Officer informs the Personnel Management Unit within OHRMD of the new employee/s in order to set up the vacation leave approvers via Agresso. When the final selection of a candidate has been made and the extended offer of employment is accepted, the Recruitment Officer sends an email to all unsuccessful/waiting list/not eligible candidates and late applicants. The typical time frame of a waiting list in which a person can be offered employment is 12 months.

Complaints and Appeals

In line with OTM-R EU guidelines, the UM has established a procedure to facilitate appeals made by candidates who believe that they have been treated negligently, unfairly or incorrectly in relation to the application of OTM-R procedures in the Recruitment and Selection process. Any candidate who is not satisfied with any aspect of the recruitment or selection process may contact the HR Director.

In this case, applicants are invited to write to the HR Director clearly stating their query or basis for complaint within ten (10) working days from the email with the notification of result. The UM will strive to reply within thirty (30) working days from the complaint date.

In some cases, the HR Director may request the reconvening of a Selection Board to address any issues, such as following up on complaints, that emerge from the recruitment process and where necessary to prepare a report as approved by the Rector.

Quality Control System

The UM identified measurements of the effectiveness of the OTM-R Policy and they are reviewed on a regular basis. The UM established a quality control mechanism, including supervision of the whole recruitment process, to be administered by internal auditors. To monitor and assess the extent to which the OTM-R system is being implemented, the UM has adopted some forms of internal reporting for all phases of the recruitment process.

kc/Updated 1 December 2023

Appendix A - Remuneration for Research Support Officers and Research Support Assistants as from 1st January 2024

	Salary Year 2024		Salary Year 2025		Salary Year 2026	
	rate	annual equivalent	rate	annual equivalent	rate	annual equivalent
	per hour	EUR	per hour	EUR	per hour	EUR
Senior Research Support Officer I (Post Doc with minimum 6 years *FTE research experience post-PhD qualification)	25.38	52,791	25.76	53,581	26.14	54,372
Research Support Officer IV (Post Doc with minimum 3 years *FTE research experience post-PhD qualification)	21.88	45,511	22.26	46,301	22.64	47,092
Research Support Officer III (PhD)	16.88	35,111	17.26	35,901	17.64	36,692
Research Support Officer II (Masters)	13.86	28,829	14.22	29,578	14.58	30,327
Research Support Officer I (Bachelor)	12.36	25,709	12.72	26,458	13.08	27,207
Research Support Assistant (no degree)	8.34	17,348	8.68	18,055	9.02	18,762

*FTE stands for full-time equivalent. Thus, for example, someone with only 3-years *part-time* research experience post PhD would not qualify for RSO IV since this would be equivalent to 1.5 years FTE.