



Università  
degli Studi  
di Palermo

# OTM-R GUIDELINES

**for recruitment and upgrading of Researchers**



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH



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# INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes the **guidelines** on the recruitment **system of the researchers** of the University of Palermo, which aims to strengthen Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R). This document is part of a broader plan of interventions aimed at implementing the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, which enabled the University to receive the "**HR Excellence in Research**" award.

The University of Palermo selects the following categories of researchers, which are distinguished based on the requirements for accessing

careers and various research contracts:

- **R1 First Stage Researcher:** PhD students, post-lauream junior researchers and research fellows not holding a PhD degree;
- **R2 Recognised Researcher:** post-doctoral fellows – Short-Term Researchers with Tenure Track (RTT), and, at this transitional stage, RTD (b) and RTD (a);
- **R3 Established Researcher:** Associate Professor;
- **R4 Leading Researcher:** Full Professor.

The selections for the different categories of researchers are regulated differently according to the national regulations and the contractual arrangements.

Where possible, the rules governing the selection procedures and the composition of the evaluating committees aim at respecting gender equality.

The University regulations set specific and detailed rules to ensure recruitment procedures and career advancement procedures that are open, except in the case of RTD (b) and RTT, which require special procedures. In any case, such rules ensure transparent and merit-based procedures.

Regulations on the procedures for

recruitment and career advancements are public and available online on the institutional website under section "**Regolamenti**", i.e. "Regulations". Such regulations are also published online on the webpages of the administrative offices that are responsible for the procedures. Currently, regulations are published online in Italian, while most of the calls for applications are also published in English, either in full text or in the form of an abstract. Calls for applications published on the institutional website under section "**Albo di Ateneo**", i.e. "Official Register of the University". They are classified by type, and also published under section "**Amministrazione trasparente**", i.e. "Transparent Administration".

# APPLICATION FOR R1 FIRST STAGE RESEARCHER

## POST-GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS

### University regulation

The University awards postgraduate scholarships aimed at **deepening specific research topics and methodologies.**

Scholarships are granted through funds that are made available by public or private entities, both national and international, within the framework of research projects or based on specific research agreements or conventions.

The calls for application specify the candidate requirements, the deadlines, the procedures for submitting applications, the documents to be attached, the examination procedures, the evaluation of relevant qualifications for the competition, as well as the rights and obligations of the winners.

The calls for application are published online under section **“Albo di Ateneo”**, i.e. “Official Register of the University”, and [here](#).





## 2

## APPLICATION FOR R1 FIRST STAGE RESEARCHER

### PhD PROGRAMME

#### University regulation

Admission to PhD courses is subject to a **public selection process that shall be held at least once a year**.

The application may be submitted by Italian or foreign citizens who – at the deadline for the call – have a master's degree or an equivalent qualification obtained abroad.

The application can also be submitted by those who obtain the required degree by the deadline for enrollment in the PhD program.

The eligibility of the foreign degree is assessed by the PhD admission committee.

The call for applications is drafted both in Italian and English and is published for at least thirty days on the University's website and on the Official Register of the University as well as on the websites of the Ministry of University and Research and the European Union, and on the European Union websites (euraxess).

The call provides information on:

- the total number of positions and scholarships, specifying the entities funding the scholarships;
- scholarships for which a specific research theme is not indicated ("open theme scholarships") and scholarships with a specific theme tied to specific funding ("themed scholarships");
- "vincolato");

- the number of positions and/or scholarships reserved for students who have obtained their degree abroad;
- the amount of the scholarship;
- the access criteria and for the evaluation of CV, qualifications and skills;
- the procedures for carrying out the admission tests, including any written tests (which may involve internationally recognized tests), and the conduct of interviews, which may also involve the presentation and discussion of a research project;
- the admission test in English for all candidates or upon the request of individual candidates;
- the amount of fees for admission and course attendance.

The application for participation in the selection must be submitted online. The call for applications and a brief guide is published on the Unipa **webpage**. Candidates may submit applications to participate in the admission tests for various doctoral programs.

The examination committees for admission to the PhD courses are composed in accordance with Article 11 of the PhD Courses Regulation. They are proposed by the PhD Boards and are appointed by the Rector. The composition of each examination committee is published **online**.



## 2

## APPLICATION FOR R1 FIRST STAGE RESEARCHER

The selection methods are specified for each PhD program in the sheets of individual PhD courses, which are an integral part of the annual call. The competition involves the evaluation of the project and qualifications and an interview. The interviews are public and conducted online through the Microsoft Teams platform.

All acts and minutes related to:

- the appointment and composition of the examination committee,
- the committee's proceedings,
- accepted or rejected applications and final results

are open and public. The minutes are published [online](#).

### JUNIOR FELLOWSHIPS TYPE B

#### University regulation

Junior Fellowships Type B are

awarded through a public selection procedure, and their duration ranges from one to three years, with the possibility of renewal. The call for applications provides detailed information about the specific responsibilities, rights, and duties associated with the position, as well as the corresponding economic and social security treatment.

Eligible for selection are scholars holding a master's degree (both "Laurea V.O." according to the old Italian regulation and "Laurea specialistica/magistrale" or "Laurea magistrale a ciclo unico" according to the new Italian regulation) or equivalent qualification. Scholars should also possess a professional and scientific curriculum suitable for conducting research activities.

The selection aims to verify the scientific and professional requirements necessary to carry out the research programs to which the recipient of the grant is expected to collaborate.

The call for applications, the application submission procedures, the appointment of the Evaluation Committee, the evaluation criteria and the outcome of the procedure are published [online](#).

The call for applications, with a refer-

ence to the University's website and the platform for submitting applications, is also published on the websites of the Ministry of University and Research and the European Union. Candidates are informed of the evaluation conducted by the Committee through publication with restricted access (for privacy reasons settled by national rules) of the final report and annexes on the University's website, specifically on the page of the relevant office.



# APPLICATION FOR R2 RECOGNISED RESEARCHER

## JUNIOR FELLOWSHIPS TYPE A

### University regulation

Junior Fellowships Type A (Post-Doc) are awarded through a public selection procedure. **They are based on a two-year term contract, renewable only once for two more years.**

The call for applications provides detailed information on the specific functions, rights and duties related to the position, as well as the economic and social security treatment applicable.

Eligible for selection are scholars

holding a PhD degree or, for relevant fields, a degree of specialization in medical area. The PhD degree and/or the medical specialization must be accompanied by a suitable scientific production.

Italian and foreign citizens with a PhD obtained abroad, which has been declared equivalent to an Italian PhD, are also eligible for the public selection process.

The selection also includes the evaluation of the research project submitted by the candidates.

The call for applications, the application submission procedures, the appointment of the Evaluation Committee, the evaluation criteria and the outcome of the procedure are published on the University's website.

Candidates are informed of the eval-

uation conducted by the Committee through publication with restricted access (for privacy reasons settled by national rules) of the final report and annexes on the University's website, specifically on the webpage of the relevant office.





### 3 APPLICATION FOR R2 RECOGNISED RESEARCHER

#### SHORT TERM RESEARCHER WITH TENURE TRACK (RTT)

##### University regulation

It is an employment contract for the performance of research, teaching, integrated teaching, and student service activities. **The contract has a total duration of six years and is non-renewable.** However, it is possible to implement a tenure track mechanism if the researcher obtains national scientific qualification for the position of associate professor during this period and receives a positive judgment of suitability from a committee that is specifically appointed by the Department where the researcher is employed.

The selection is open to scholars holding a PhD degree or equivalent

qualification, obtained in Italy or abroad, or, for relevant fields, a degree of specialization in medical area.

The call for the evaluation procedure provides information on:

- the proposing Department;
- the scientific-disciplinary sector and any specific profile exclusively through indication of one or more scientific-disciplinary sectors;
- the requirements and admission criteria for the selection;
- the foreign language chosen in relation to the University's multilingual profile or to the teaching requirements of courses held in foreign languages;
- the maximum number, not less than twelve, of publications that each candidate can submit;

- the deadlines for submitting the application and the documents to be provided by the candidates;
- the specific functions, rights and duties, and economic and social security treatment;
- the indication that the selection procedures may also be conducted online through specific platforms.

The calls for applications are published in the Official Register of the University on the institutional website, on the website of the Ministry of University and Research, on the European Union websites (euraxess) and in the Official Journal of the Italian Republic (Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana). A fixed percentage (approximately 30-35%) of the advertised positions is reserved for researchers who have

not had any employment relationships or contracts with the University of Palermo in the past 36 months.

Applications for participations in the selection process, along with the CV and qualifications held, documents, and publications deemed relevant for the procedure, must be submitted electronically using the dedicated **online platform (PICA)**.

Each application is assigned a unique identification number, which, together with the competition code identified in the software application, must be specified for any subsequent communication.

The documentation required from candidates is limited to what is strictly necessary, and self-declarations and affidavits are admitted.



### 3 APPLICATION FOR R2 RECOGNISED RESEARCHER

The committee consists of three members, with one appointed by the Department announcing the position and two who are not affiliated with the University of Palermo. They are selected by drawing lots from a pool of 6 individuals meeting the requirements established by the National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research System (ANVUR). Candidates have the right to submit motivated requests for recusal within thirty days of the appointment.

The members of the Evaluation Committee must declare the absence of any causes of incompatibility (including familial or affinity relationships up to the fourth degree, and/or conflicts of interest) between themselves and the candidates. The Committee may carry out its

activities remotely, and decisions are made by a majority vote of its members. The Committee pre-establishes the general criteria for evaluating candidates, in accordance with the regulations and the call for applications. Such criteria are published in the Official Register of the University for at least seven days before the continuation of the proceedings.

The procedure includes a discussion of qualifications and publications, as well as an oral examination to assess the candidate's proficiency in the foreign language specified in the call for applications. The notice indicating the days for the discussion and the oral exam is published in the Official Register and on the webpage of the relevant administration office, along with other information related to the procedure.

The Committee assigns scores to qualifications and publications, allocating to the latter a score within the range of 60-80% of the maximum score specified in the criteria report. At the conclusion of the proceedings, the Committee, with a decision approved by the majority of its members, designates a winner only if he/she has achieved an overall score that is not lower than 70% of the maximum score.

The records consist of minutes from individual meetings and the collective judgments expressed by the Committee for each candidate, as well as the final report on the conducted proceedings. The accuracy and completeness of records is verified through a decree issued by the Rector and published on the University's Official Register.

Candidates are informed of the evaluation conducted by the Committee through publication with restricted access (for privacy reasons settled by national rules) of the final report and annexes on the **University's website**, specifically on the page of the relevant office.

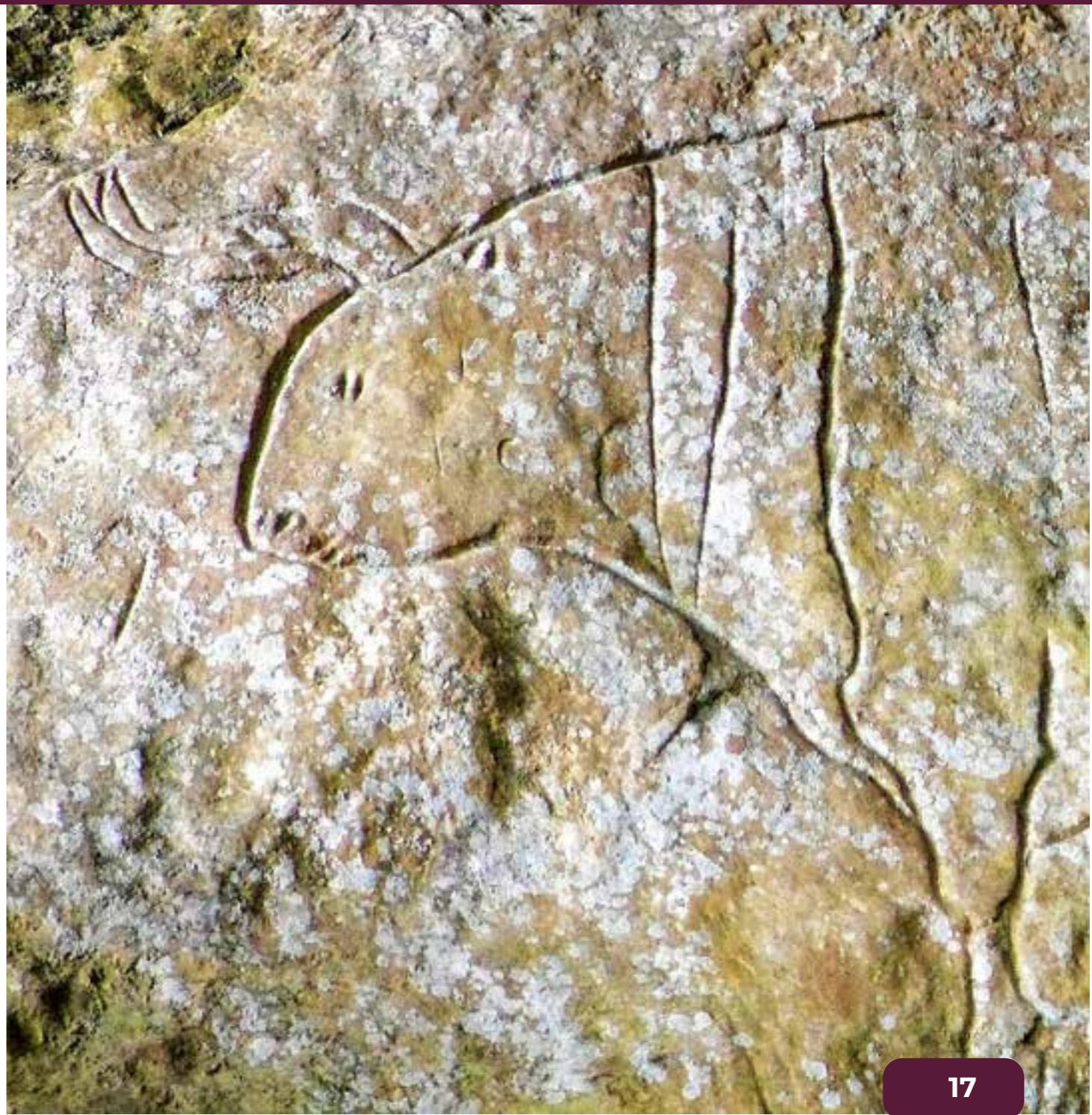
Starting from the conclusion of the third year and for each subsequent year of the contract, upon the request of the individual who has obtained the national scientific qualification, the Department may propose the initiation of the evaluation of the researcher for the purpose of placement in the role of associate professor.



### 3 APPLICATION FOR R2 RECOGNISED RESEARCHER

In the event that the tenure track procedure is activated for the transition to the role of associate professor, an Evaluation Committee is appointed, consisting of professors from within the University. The Committee is appointed by the Department announcing the procedure and to which the Tenure Track Researcher is affiliated. Only one candidate is admitted to the procedure, and there is no comparative evaluation. Instead, the Committee provides a judgment of suitability for the role for which the procedure is activated. Therefore, this is a tool for the stabilization of the researcher who has obtained the national scientific qualification and has a scientific production, teaching experience, and a profile deemed suitable for the role of associate professor.

Currently, procedures are also announced for the signing of fixed-term contracts for RTD(a) researchers with a duration of three years and extendable for two more years. Additionally, there are procedures for the signing of fixed-term contracts for RTD(b), reserved for individuals who in the past have signed RTD(a) contracts and/or have had research grants and/or and are in possession of the national scientific qualification for the functions of either associate or full professor. However, some researcher positions are expected to disappear with the full implementation of the reform that introduced the RTT (Short-Term Researcher with Tenure Track) figure.





# APPLICATION FOR R3 ESTABLISHED RESEARCHER

## ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

### University regulation

The selection procedure is open to:

- a. (a) scholars who have obtained the national scientific qualification in accordance with Article 16 of Law 240/2010 for competition sector or one of the competition sectors included in the same macro-sector, and for the second level (associate professor) or for the first level (full professor), provided that they are not already in a permanent position as full professor;
- b. candidates who meet all eligibility criteria according to Law No.

210/1998 for the second level (associate professor), limited to the duration of such eligibility;

- c. associate professors already in service at other universities for the competition sector specified in the call for applications;
- d. scholars permanently engaged abroad in research or university-level teaching activities in positions equivalent to those subject to the announcement, based on correspondence tables updated every three years and defined by the Ministry of University and Research.

The calls for applications are published in the Official Register of the University, on the institutional webpage, on the Ministry of University and Research, on the European Union websites (euraxess), and on the Official Journal of the Italian Republic (Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana).

Applications for participations in the selection procedure, as well as the qualifications held, documents, and publications deemed relevant for the procedure, must be submitted electronically using the dedicated **online platform (PICA)**.





## 4 APPLICATION FOR R3 ESTABLISHED RESEARCHER

Each application is assigned a unique identification number, which, together with the competition code identified in the software application, must be specified for any subsequent communication.

The documentation required from candidates is limited to what is strictly necessary, and self-declarations and affidavits are admitted.

The committee consists of three evaluators who are selected by drawing lots from a pool of 10 individuals meeting the requirements established by the National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research System (ANVUR).

I Candidates may, within thirty days of the appointment, submit motivated requests for recusal.

The members of the Evaluation Committee must declare the absence of any causes of incompatibility (including familial or affinity relationships up to and including the fourth degree, and/or conflicts of interest) between themselves and the candidates.

The Committee may also conduct its activities remotely, and decisions are made by a majority vote of its members.

The Committee pre-establishes the general criteria for evaluating candidates, in accordance with the regulations and the call for applications. Such criteria are published on the Official Register of the University for at least seven days before the continuation of the proceedings.

The evaluation procedure includes a teaching test (a lecture to the commission), a discussion on the submitted scientific publications, and a possible assessment of language proficiency.

The notice for such activities is published on the **Official Register** of the University and on the webpage of the competent administration office, along with further information about the procedure.

The records consist of minutes from individual meetings and the collective judgments expressed by the Committee for each candidate, as well as the final report on the conducted proceedings. The accuracy and completeness of records is verified through a decree issued by the Rector and published in the Universi-

ty's Official Register. Candidates are informed of the evaluation conducted by the Committee through publication with restricted access (for privacy reasons settled by national rules) of the final report and annexes on the University's website, specifically on the page of the relevant office.

According to national regulations, 20% of the calls for applications for this position are reserved for researchers who have not served or have not been holders of research grants or have not been enrolled in university courses in the same university (Art. 18, c. 4, of Law No. 240/2010).



# 5

## APPLICATION FOR R4 LEADING RESEARCHER

### FULL PROFESSOR

#### University regulation

The procedure is open to:

- a. scholars who have obtained the national scientific qualification for the first level (full professor) in accordance with Article 16 of Law 240/2010 for the competition sector specified in the call for applications or one of the competition sectors included in the same macro-sector;
- b. candidates who meet all eligibility criteria according to Law no. 210/1998 for the first level (full professor), limited to the duration of such eligibility;
- c. full professors already in service in other Universities for the specific competition sector;
- d. scholars permanently engaged abroad in research or university-level teaching activities in positions equivalent to those subject to the call for applications, based on the correspondence tables updated every three years and defined by the Ministry of University and Research.





## 5 APPLICATION FOR R4 LEADING RESEARCHER

The calls for applications are published in the Official Register of the University, on the websites of the Ministry of University and Research, on the European Union websites (euraxess), and in the Official Journal of the Italian Republic.

Applications for participations in the selection procedure, as well as the CV and qualifications held, documents and publications deemed relevant to the procedure, must be submitted electronically using the dedicated online platform (PICA).

Each application is assigned a unique identification number, which, together with the competition code identified in the software application, must be specified for any subsequent communication.

The documentation required from candidates is limited to what is strict-

ly necessary, and self-declarations and affidavits are admitted.

The committee consists of three evaluators who are selected by drawing lots from a pool of 10 individuals meeting the requirements established by the National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research System (ANVUR).

Candidates may, within thirty days of the appointment, submit motivated requests for recusal.

The members of the Evaluation Committee must declare the absence of any causes of incompatibility (including familial or affinity relationships up to and including the fourth degree, and/or conflicts of interest) between themselves and the candidates.

The Committee may carry out its activities remotely, and decisions are made by a majority vote of its members.

The Committee pre-establishes the general criteria for evaluating candidates, in accordance with the regulations and the call for applications. Such criteria are published on the Official Register of the University for at least seven days before the continuation of the proceedings.

If the candidate does not already hold the position of associate professor, the procedure also includes a teaching test (a lecture to the commission), the discussion on the presented scientific publications and a possible assessment of language proficiency. The notice for these activities is published in the Official Register of the University and on the webpage of the competent administrative office, along with other information related to the procedure.

The records consist of minutes from individual meetings and the collective judgments expressed by the

Committee for each candidate, as well as the final report on the conducted proceedings. The accuracy and completeness of records is verified through a decree issued by the Rector and published on the University's Official Register. <https://www.unipa.it/albo.html>.

Candidates are informed of the evaluation conducted by the Committee through publication with restricted access (for privacy reasons settled by national rules) of the final report and annexes on the University's website, specifically on the page of the relevant administration office.

According to national regulations, 20% of the calls for applications for this position are reserved for researchers who have not served or have not been holders of research grants or have not been enrolled in university courses in the same university (Art. 18, c. 4, of Law No. 240/2010).



## DIRECT RECRUITMENT OF NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL HIGH-SKILLED RESEARCHER

It refers to the recruitment of highly qualified professors from outside the University through their specific "expression of interest". Candidates express their interest in joining the faculty of the University of Palermo to take up positions – as either PO (full professor), PA (associate professor), or RTT (tenure-track researchers) – that they have consistently held in their respective institutions for a minimum number of years, ranging from three to five. The difference between three and five years is linked to the applicable national regulations for employment classifications (GELMINI or NATTA Chair).

Renowned scholars, winners of specific high-quality research programs, research leaders, or senior researchers at public research institutions are also eligible to participate in this procedure.

The Committee in charge of proposing this form of recruitment is composed of five full professors serving at the University with internationally recognized high scientific qualifications. The Committee is directly appointed by the Rector, representing the 5 macro-areas of the University.

The Committee establishes preliminary criteria in line with the University's development and internationalization policies and compiles a list of candidates for direct appointment, specifying the Sector of Competition, the scientific-disciplinary sectors, and the research areas related to the manifestations of the highest qualitative excellence.

Subsequently, the Departments are called upon to express their interest in one or more procedures to be activated from among those indicated in the list produced by the Committee. The Board of Directors (CDA), with the opinion of the Academic Senate

(SA), resolves to activate the procedures, which are then completed by the Evaluation Committee following a public seminar. For each procedure to recruit professors and/or fixed-term researchers, if candidates are equally evaluated in terms of merit, the candidate from the less represented gender at the university is selected for the advertised competition sector.



# FOR ALL POSITIONS OF R1, R2, R3 AND R4

## SIGNING THE CONTRACT AND TAKING UP THE SERVICE

At the conclusion of the evaluation procedures, the concerned Department proposes to the Board of Directors the appointment of the winner. The appointment proposal shall be approved by the Board of Directors. Subsequent steps, depending on the position, involve either the issuance of an appointment decree (for associate professors and full professors) or the signing of the contract (in the case of RTTs). Taking up the service occurs at the concerned Department.

## ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS AND ACTS OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

All individuals with a direct, concrete and current interest, corresponding to a legally protected situation connected to the document for which access is requested, may ask to review and/or obtain a copy of the procedure documents from the competent Director of the administration office, which is responsible for the procedure, using the form available at [this link](#).

The administration office is required to respond within 30 days from the date of request.

The regulation on the right of access to the documents of the procedure is available [online](#).

The competent body for judicial protec-

tion against acts and/or measures deemed harmful to rights/interests is the Regional Administrative Court of the Region of Sicily, where mandatory legal representation is required.



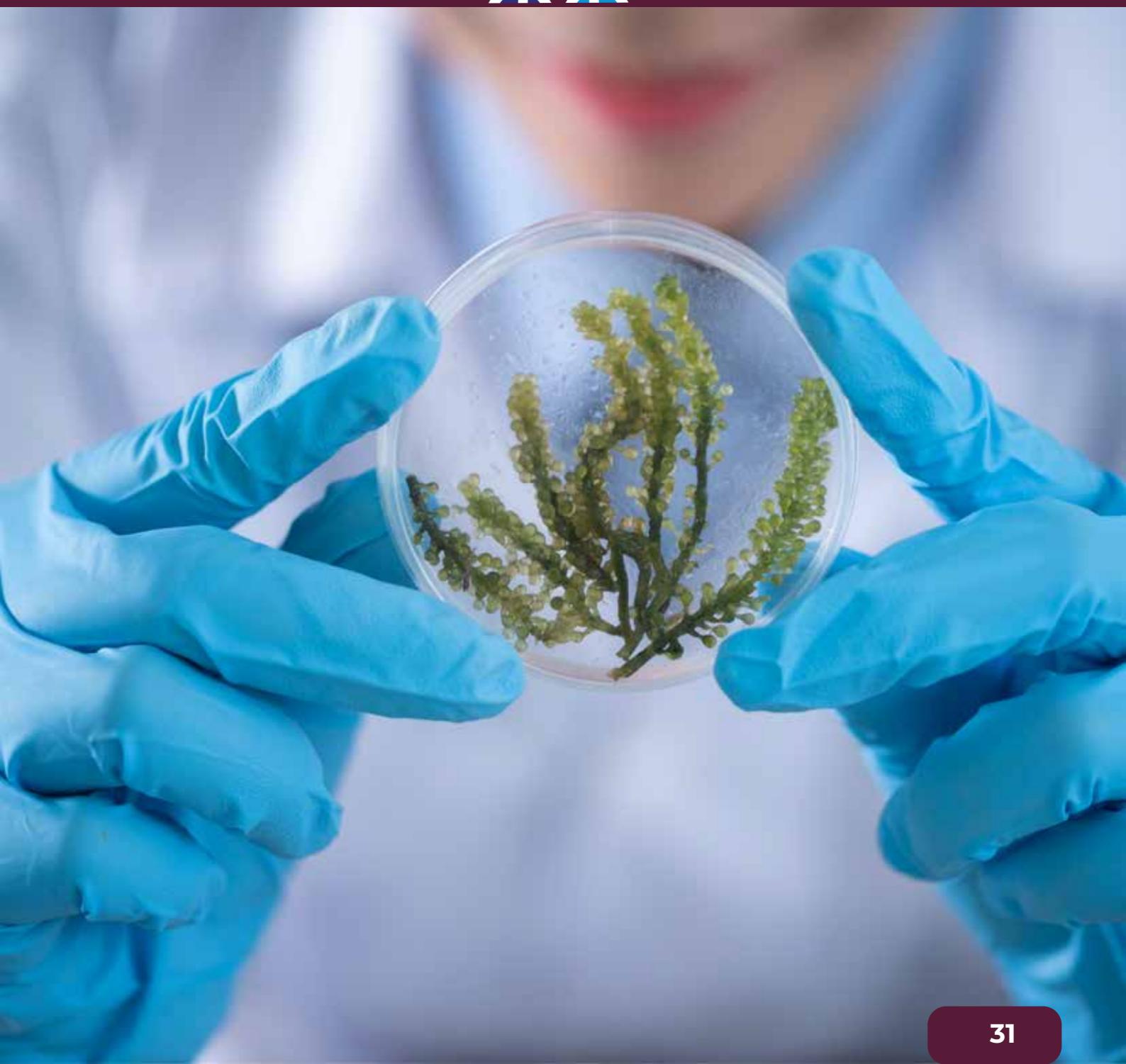
## FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND RECRUITMENT POLICY

In the system of state universities, resources for recruitment and career advancements are allocated annually by ministerial decree taking into account:

- the national maximum limit related to the turnover established by state regulations (80% in 2017, 100% starting from 2018);
- the assurance for each university to have a minimum annual budget equal to 50% of the resources derived from its own cessations in the previous year;
- the financial indicators of each university.

In order to make recruitment planning flexible in terms of positions to be filled and simultaneously ensure the sustainability of the budgets of the universities over time, each university is allocated an annual budget in terms of Organic Points.

Organic Points. The Organic Point (hereinafter PO) represents the average system-level value of the cost attributed to the I level (full professor), which serves as a reference parameter to scale the cost of other qualifications.





## 8 FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND RECRUITMENT POLICY

For the academic staff, Organic Points translate into:

- 1 Professor I level = 1 PO;
- 1 Professor II level = 0.7 PO;
- 1 Researcher type b) = 0.5 PO;
- 1 Researcher type a) = 0.4 PO.

### SOURCE MUR

After the allocation by the Ministry, the Board of Directors distributes a share of organic points to each Department. Each Department, as part of the three-year planning of staffing needs, requests the filling of positions for the first level (full professors), the second level (associate professors), and for the RTT (researchers) to the Board of Directors, indicating the type of procedure to be announced. The Board of Directors, after consultation with the Academic Senate, approves the annual planning based on the

departmental requests.

The financial resources to support recruitment and career advancements are used by the University consistently and in compliance with the three-year planning tools for the staffing needs within the resources allocated for this purpose. The resources are allocated to the Departments based on the proposals for three-year and annual planning submitted by them to the university's governing bodies (Board of Directors and Academic Senate), which deliberate accordingly and in compliance with the financial sustainability of the programs.





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