

TOWARDS HRS4R

December 2020

MAIN FINDINGS

Strengths & weaknesses

Ethical and professional aspects (1/2)

- **Integrity and ethics/professional aspects**

French legislation extensively protects the freedom of research as well as the intellectual property of researchers. Legal provisions regarding research as well as a researcher's status, social protection, working conditions and professional recognition are well defined.

Sorbonne University is a signatory of the **National Charter of Scientific Integrity** which covers most of the ethical items mentioned in **the European Charter**. It has appointed a **Scientific Integrity Referent**, an **Ethics of Research Committee** as well as a **legal advisor specialized in deontology**. Training and workshops on ethics and scientific integrity are regularly offered to PhD candidates as well as researchers.

The institution also provides **extensive support to its researchers**. Researchers who benefit from funding (notably from donors) are supported by dedicated departments that assist them with the necessary reporting and obligations towards donors:

- **The Research & Innovation Department**, including a legal department for projects and intellectual property and a financial department for the management and reporting of funding.
- **The Research and Development Departments** within each of the faculties.

However, even though legislation and the dissemination of standards is progressing well within laboratories, legislation is still not largely known amongst researchers. An effort has to be made to improve accessibility of information, overall communication of legislative texts towards researchers, as well as formal adherence to aforementioned principles. Although Sorbonne University is already a signatory of several key texts, we aim to ensure that every researcher formally and individually acknowledges these principles.

Strengths & weaknesses

Ethical and professional aspects (2/2)

- **Dissemination of research**

Dissemination of research work to the public is at the heart of Sorbonne University's approach, ever since its creation. The institution has developed an **ambitious Open Science policy**, cultivating strong relationships and partnerships with several media. It is also very involved in the public debate and organizes regular events for the general public. Even taking into consideration the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Sorbonne University has chosen to conduct its 2020 Fête de la Science entirely online. Open science is amongst Sorbonne University's top priorities in the coming years, leading to the organization of several events as well as a leading role on this matter amongst peers.

- **Non-discrimination**

Sorbonne University has nominated several officers (notably for Gender Equality and Inclusiveness). It also benefits from a **Gender Equality Charter**. Completing existing texts, a dedicated Professional Equality action plan will also be formalized.

- **Evaluation**

Under the rules provided for by French legislation, Sorbonne University's researchers must comply with the French research evaluation system. This system includes an external audit by a national body (HCERES) of all the research laboratories of the university at least every 4 years. Regarding the evaluation of associate professors and professors themselves, it is strictly regulated by French legislation and is carried out at national level via a dedicated authority, the Conseil National des Universités (CNU, National University Council)).

Strengths & weaknesses

Recruitment and selection

Tenured associate professors and full professors are recruited according to a process provided for by legislation, aiming to prevent any discrimination regarding age, citizenship, language or ethnic origin.

Regarding contracted researchers, not managed at the state level, Sorbonne University is implementing a set of recruitment measures to guarantee transparency and equity, based on similar requirements and processes (for permanent positions) and within the frame of a Post-Doctorate Charter. Formalizing procedures and providing contract positions with adequate support, particularly in career management, is also amongst the university's top priorities in the coming years.

Our gap analysis has revealed some weaknesses and disparities in recruitment procedures:

- Requirements are not systematically formalized by recruitment committees, which are not specifically trained, regarding cognitive biases for example. Feedback is only partially given to candidates.
- There is no formal document or set of measures to verify that OTM-R principles, such as diversity, mobility of candidates, chronological variation in CVs, are respected. A recruitment guide is to be drawn up, supplemented by specific monitoring systems.
- Specific work on recruitment procedures for certain populations (contracted researchers) is also included in the Action Plan. These actions include the provision of templates and standardized processes for contracted researcher recruitments.

Although best practices already exist and are implemented, the dissemination of these best practices is still to be improved.

Strengths & weaknesses

Working conditions & Social Security

Sorbonne University places Quality of Life at Work at the core of its HR policies. Sorbonne University aims for excellence in the working conditions provided to researchers. The Sorbonne University Research & Innovation Department (DR&I), as well as the Research and Development Departments support researchers within the institution. Following national laws, Sorbonne University researchers also benefit from social protection in the event of illness or accidents, and have unemployment rights.

However, some researchers do not benefit from physical workspaces and co-working spaces, partly due to disciplinary traditions and partly due to the difficulty of creating new buildings in historical campuses (lack of space and protection of historical buildings).

Regarding gender balance, Sorbonne University has appointed an Equality Officer, in charge of creating and implementing a gender equality plan.

Career management is mostly performed at the national level. Indeed, according to French regulation, career monitoring and evaluation of researchers is carried out by the Conseil National des Universités (CNU, National University Council). Sorbonne University is proactively taking into consideration the most recent evolutions in legislation in order to improve researchers' career management and mobility.

Strengths & weaknesses

Training & Development

Sorbonne University's training department is dedicated to developing and building the training offer for all staff. A complete training offer is already made available. Moreover, French legislation provides for a right to training for all. Access to training is thus facilitated.

However, despite the large number of training courses available and ample communication around this offer, researchers are not always familiar with them: specific communication actions aimed towards certain populations (specifically training programs for doctoral researchers and post-doctoral researchers) should be created in order to ensure that researchers are made aware of the training possibilities they are provided with.

In terms of supervision, in accordance with legislative requirements and our Doctorate Charter, each PhD researcher is assigned a PhD supervisor, follows compulsory training and is regularly reviewed by a thesis committee.

Other researchers (grades R2 to R4), on the other hand, are not systematically mentored, although informal practices exist in some research laboratories.

THANK YOU

