

## What does open, transparent and merit-based recruitment (OTM-R) mean for VUB?

VUB has always embraced the basic principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for recruitment: open, transparent and merit-based. These principles are entirely in line with VUB's values — welcoming, open, learning and connected as a university community — and the principles of the Enlightenment: critical thinking, free inquiry and humanism. In applying these values, VUB chooses growth, innovation and internationalisation. The university aims to create an attractive and supportive work environment in the heart of the city of Brussels and Europe. It should be the ideal workplace for pioneering and high-tech research and meaningful career development for researchers, both Belgian and international.

In practice, OTM-R within VUB's recruitment process is:

**OPEN & TRANSPARENT:** Anyone who meets the requirements of the position and is eligible for the job is invited and welcome to apply. This means that every potential candidate, researcher or member of teaching staff, junior or senior, gains an open and transparent insight into:

- our uniqueness and what it means to be part of the university community;
- the minimum requirements or selection criteria to be considered for the job ('need to have');
- other expectations or selection criteria that are taken into consideration and that add value ('nice to have');
- what the selection, onboarding and evaluation process looks like for researchers and teaching staff, and how we guarantee equal opportunities for all potential candidates and researchers, including groups with specific needs. See also the VUB Gender Action Plan, available via [our general Equality Page](#).

We undertake to communicate all relevant information to the potential candidate, researcher or teaching staff member as proactively as possible, especially in the event of unforeseen circumstances or situations that deviate from the normal process.

Feedback at every stage of recruitment and, by extension, throughout the careers of researchers and teaching staff is essential to ensure the relationship between candidate, employee and employer remains clear, healthy and productive. The importance and value of this is substantial and essential for all stakeholders, from the beginning to the end of the employee's career.

**MERIT-BASED:** Recognition and appreciation of acquired knowledge, expertise and skills are essential in a university in which we want to create equal opportunities for students while expecting excellence from our academic staff.

**The objective** is to create a fruitful learning and working environment that facilitates and attracts excellent research and teaching.

In our **selection criteria** at the beginning and throughout the further career of researchers and teaching staff, we take into consideration both important bibliometric research indicators and a broad range of other experiences and skills. Together, these quantitative and qualitative criteria help identify the ideal match between person and position.

This also requires us to have the courage not to award a position when it is clear that mutual expectations cannot be aligned and that our university is not the ideal learning, working or research environment for a candidate or colleague who appears on paper to be very valuable. This sometimes

requires unconventional and nuanced choices, but VUB would not be VUB if this was not a part of our identity.

## How do we monitor the quality of our recruitment and selection process?

The European Charter and the Code motivate VUB to continue to evolve and grow in translating these principles into HR processes, as expressed in our action plan, HR Strategy for Researchers. These efforts have been recognised several times with the HR Excellence for Research Award.

The ideal recruitment process at VUB focuses on open, transparent, inclusive and supportive communication that provides a positive experience for each applicant. We are committed to the following:

1. **Recruitment:** Improved communication about the values and identity of VUB via our employer branding on various publishing and social media channels, national and international, and on our job site in both Dutch and English.

With this, we aim to attract a pool of candidates that will allow us to choose the applicant who is the best match for the position. In practice, this means:

- a. the pool should not have too many or too few candidates;
  - b. a majority of candidates meet all the minimum requirements for research, teaching, language and growth potential;
  - c. there is a positive cultural fit with VUB, the faculty and the research group or department.
2. Use of an **e-tool and digital application platform**, in both Dutch and English, with sufficient monitoring of our intake. The e-tool is an important support to the recruitment and selection process at VUB. Using this digital tool and the platform, we can professionalise, streamline and facilitate access to our process for all candidates and members of the selection committee(s) in a uniform and comparable manner. We are also investing heavily in training for all members of selection committees about their role in recruitment, leadership, equality and diversity (e.g. bias training). Lastly, we are able to better monitor our intake numbers and use them as a foundation for targeted improvement and quality initiatives.
  3. Development of a **toolbox** that supports managers and members of selection committees with practical guidelines, tips and methodologies for carrying out the selection process in an open, transparent, qualitative, fair and inclusive manner. The OTM-R principles are an integral part of this.
  4. **Quality control and compliance** of the recruitment and selection procedures by specialised staff from People&Organisation.
  5. **Feedback** to all candidates about the selection process and the result of their application. This is done by email, but may be expanded and personalised on request.

## What do our recruitment and selection processes look like in practice?

## Online applications

- We **publish** all academic vacancies on our own job site and on the sites of Euraxess and Academic Positions.
- We are committed to clear Dutch and English communication in our **job postings** that we publicise via several national and international channels. In these postings, potential candidates will find details of:
  - our individuality as VUB and the department, research group or service in which they will work;
  - the specific teaching or research area of the position;
  - the specific duties of the position;
  - the selection criteria;
  - the selection procedure.

Every Dutch and English job posting will contain a link to our job site.

- Via the **job site**, candidates apply directly for the position that suits them best or can send a spontaneous application. After creating an account, they can:
  - create an alert for jobs that interest them;
  - manage their application;
  - apply for a new open vacancy.
- A complete **application file** contains a CV, motivation letter and a copy of the requested qualifications. Other attachments can also be uploaded.
- In the event of problems with online applications, candidates can contact a member of the People&Organisation staff via [rekrutering@vub.be](mailto:rekrutering@vub.be).

## Selection procedure

- Applications cannot be submitted after the deadline.
- Members of the selection committee make the first **pre-selection** of candidates based on their CV and motivation letter.
- Candidates chosen in this pre-selection stage are invited to an interview with the selection committee via email through the application platform.
- The members of the selection committee are all experts in the relevant discipline and all apply the OTM-R principles in carrying out their duties.
- VUB strives to be an inclusive workplace. Candidates with specific needs can always ask for reasonable adjustments where necessary by contacting the People&Organisation service via [rekrutering@vub.be](mailto:rekrutering@vub.be).
- During the **structured interview**, the selection committee discusses with candidates the expectations of the position as described in the job posting. This is done for every candidate in a standardised and skills-based manner.
- If teaching duties are part of the role, the candidate must provide a written vision of education and give a **trial lesson** for members of the selection committee and a relevant audience.
- The selection committee may also use **other selection methods** to ensure optimal screening.
- Based on all the information provided about the retained applicants, the members of the selection committee discuss and rank the candidates.
- Questions about the **content of the position, the procedure and outcome of the selection process** should be directed to the contact person mentioned in the job posting.
- Unsuccessful candidates are informed via email at the end of the selection process.

## Onboarding

- Following a final interview and mutual agreement, the highest ranked candidate is nominated to fill the position.
- The People&Organisation service invite the chosen candidate by email to provide all the data required for the **preparation of the personnel file and the contract**.
- Once all details have been provided and the necessary documents delivered, People&Organisation process the file, draw up the contract and provide the candidate with information by email about signing the contract and other useful information.
- On the **first day of employment**, reception staff and the relevant manager greet the candidate.
- People&Organisation organises a **general welcome day** four times a year that allows new staff to get to know all the services provided by VUB.
- Centralised and decentralised training initiatives relating to security form part of the onboarding process. It is important that new staff members participate in these initiatives.