

Action Plan Human Resources Strategy for Researchers

The Action Plan is a key element of CEMFI's adoption and implementation of the principles of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers ([HRS4R](#)), and part of the initial phase of the process of application to the "HR Excellence in Research" award.

This document summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of the institution's current human resource practices in relation to the 40 principles of the [European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#) ("Charter and Code") and to the implementation of the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R) in CEMFI's [Personnel Selection Rules](#) and the [Appointments Committee Rules and Procedures](#). The entire CEMFI research community was involved in this evaluation, and all members were asked to (anonymously) report on the degree of implementation of these principles. The involvement of our community is quite high, as witnessed by the 74% response rate to the survey.

Based on this Gap Analysis, the Action Plan describes a concise set of actions and timelines for implementation to address the identified weaknesses.

The Action Plan has been produced by the CEMFI's HRS4R Steering Committee and Working Group, which involve a representative group of researchers and members of CEMFI's administration personnel with extensive experience in human resources and management:

Name	Position	Steering Committee	Working Group	Department
Dmitry Arkhangelsky	Associate Professor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research
Samuel Bentolila	Deputy Director and Professor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research
Daniel López	General Manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Administration
Monica Martinez-Bravo	Associate Professor with Tenure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research
Isabel Redondo	Programs Manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Administration
Víctor Sancibrián	PhD Student	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research

The Steering Committee will regularly oversee progress, make sure that the units responsible for implementation are on track to achieving the key indicators and targets, and monitor that the proposed time frames are being satisfactorily met.

A. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Ethical and professional aspects

Based on the Gap Analysis, which is itself primarily based on an anonymous survey we run on the entire research community, CEMFI stands out as an institution that provides adequate means for researchers to focus on pushing the research frontier, ensures freedom of thought and inquiry, and is firm in its commitment to avoid any discrimination against researchers in any way on the basis of demographics, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability or political opinions. In fact, the two articles of the Charter and Code within this section with the highest average grades in our survey are those regarding “non-discrimination” and “research freedom”.

On the other hand, we have identified two weak points in this section. The first one refers to whether CEMFI provides adequate means for researchers to be familiar with and to accomplish their obligations with their national and institutional regulations, and while the survey averages indicated a high level of satisfaction on average to the question on “contractual and legal obligations”, we received additional anonymous feedback from our community regarding lack of familiarity with some basic details about labor rights and regulations. We propose actions to close this gap below.

The second weakness refers to CEMFI's efforts to make the research efforts of its researchers known to society and contributing to the dissemination of science to the general public, which can be mapped to the article on “public engagement”. Survey averages here were relatively high, but below the cutoff we deem appropriate to consider a principle to be fully implemented. Whereas CEMFI carries out many activities to ensure dissemination of the research produced in the institution, as detailed in the Gap Analysis, many of these are relatively new and thus their effects on CEMFI's public standing are yet to come — and, we believe, will help close this gap. Nonetheless, we also propose additional initiatives below to strengthen our commitment to improving the public's understanding of economic science.

Recruitment and selection

The results of the Gap Analysis — and thus ultimately the perceptions of CEMFI's research community itself — reveal that our organisation excels in establishing clear, merit-based rules for recruitment and promotion of its researchers. Survey results indicate a very high level of agreement with questions on whether CEMFI judges merits focusing on qualifications and results that go beyond the mere number of publications and recognizes and includes diversified career paths and non-formal qualifications. Indeed, the articles of the Charter and Code within this section with the highest survey averages are those corresponding to “judging merit”, “postdoctoral appointments” and “seniority” (referring here to whether CEMFI recognizes and evaluates qualifications focusing on the achievements of the person).

Based on the objective cutoff criteria with which we mapped survey averages to identifying gaps in the Gap Analysis, no weaknesses were identified in this section. This cutoff criterion was relaxed (only to identify new gaps, not to “close” them) if we received additional suggestions on the different articles of the Charter and Code (for instance, in the survey comments), and this was not the case either.

Working conditions

CEMFI stands out as an institution that treats all its individuals engaged in research as professionals, regardless of their classification and career stage. More specifically, CEMFI is recognized by its own community as an organisation that ensures that the performance of its researchers is not undermined by the instability of employment contracts and is committed to fostering such stability. In this regard, survey averages were particularly high when assessing the articles of the Charter and Code referred

to “stability and permanence of employment” and “recognition of the profession”. These practices are recognised by our community: for example, one of the survey comments highlighted that “CEMFI has outstanding HR practices, especially because of its emphasis on cooperation instead of competition”.

Regarding potential weaknesses, the gender composition of the CEMFI research body is clearly imbalanced, with subpar representation of women (12 out of 59 researchers). Although our community believes that CEMFI is an equal-opportunity employer (see, for instance, the discussion on strengths in “Recruitment and selection”), representativeness at all levels is far from parity. Moreover, this imbalance (which, more generally, affects the entire academic economics profession) has practical implications on the hiring process, implying a lack of balance of selection and evaluation committees — something that also emerges from our analysis regarding the OTM-R checklist. We propose specific measures to address this gap below, including long-term actions.

Additionally, CEMFI seems to have room for improvement regarding the presence of formal and appropriate procedures to deal with complaints and appeals coming from our research body, as evidenced by a subpar survey satisfaction regarding matters related to “complaints/appeals”. We commit to closing this gap in the section on Actions below.

Training and development

CEMFI stands out as an employer that provides adequate means for researchers of all career stages to continually improve themselves and to expand their skills and competences, as evidenced in our Gap Analysis and survey results. Our community values that CEMFI ensures that all researchers are given ample opportunities for professional development and to improve their employability. In fact, survey averages regarding “continuing professional development” and “access to research training and continuous development” were the highest in this section of the Charter and Code.

On the other hand, we introduce actionable measures below to ensure good practices in student-supervisor relationships. This responds to anonymous feedback from our community suggesting the need for a more explicit procedure for PhD students to change their main supervisor and to survey results indicating a satisfaction regarding the principle on “relation with supervisors” that was slightly below the cutoff we deem appropriate to consider a principle to be fully implemented.

B. Actions

Action 1

To produce and make available a document summarizing the most relevant regulations and rights (for example, on parental leave) pertaining to CEMFI's researchers. This action will address feedback from our community regarding lack of familiarity with some basic details about labor rights and regulations.

Additional, specific characteristics of this proposal are:

- 1) To update the document to reflect major regulatory changes with direct impact on the day-to-day lives of CEMFI's researchers.
- 2) To include links and references to sources of additional information.
- 3) To include information and contact details of the relevant administrative unit to facilitate obtaining an additional copy of the researcher's labor contract or answer any possible question.

Charter and Code principle: 5. Contractual and legal obligations.

Timing: The time frame for implementation covers two years and is divided in four semesters:

- 1) Up to April 2023: first draft of the document and approval by the Committee.
- 2) May-October 2023: deadline for implementation and evaluation according to whether the key performance indicators below are met; implementation of potential modifications in view of the next round of community-wide consultation.
- 3) November 2023-April 2024: monitor implementation.
- 4) May-October 2024: monitor implementation.

Responsible Unit: Administration.

Indicator(s)/Target(s):

- 1) The document contains all information mentioned here.
- 2) The document is published on CEMFI's Intranet.

Action 2

To improve CEMFI's social media presence by posting brief descriptions of recently published research work by CEMFI's research community.

Charter and Code principle: 9. Public engagement.

Timing: The time frame for implementation covers two years and is divided in four semesters:

- 1) Up to April 2023: implementation of the proposed action across all relevant social media accounts.
- 2) May-October 2023: evaluation of implementation according to the measure proposed in indicator 1).
- 3) November 2023-April 2024: monitor implementation according to indicator 1).
- 4) May-October 2024: monitor implementation according to indicator 1).

Responsible Unit: IT.

Indicator(s)/Target(s):

- 1) A substantial increase in the number of posts in social media regarding research produced by CEMFI's research community.

Action 3

To elaborate, complete and publish a Gender Equality Plan, and to monitor the implementation of the measures proposed therein.

The Gender Equality Plan will put forward a set of commitments and actions aimed at promoting gender equality in the organisation. Such Plan will be in line with the European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy, but also intended to follow additional guidelines to accommodate recent national legislation in Spanish law on these matters.

Charter and Code principle: 27. Gender balance.

Timing: The time frame for implementation covers two years and is divided in four semesters:

- 1) Up to April 2023: kick-off of the project by the responsible unit and first draft of the Plan.
- 2) May-October 2023: final version of the Plan, including all actionable proposals and specific time frames for implementation.
- 3) November 2023-April 2024 : monitor implementation of the proposed measures.
- 4) May-October 2024: monitor implementation of the proposed measures.

Responsible Unit: Gender Equality Committee.

Indicator(s)/Target(s):

- 1) The Gender Equality Committee has successfully elaborated the Gender Equality Plan.
- 2) The Gender Equality Plan is published on CEMFI's webpage.
- 3) The specific proposals made in the Gender Equality Plan are being satisfactorily implemented according to the time frame proposed by the Gender Equality Committee.

Action 4

To renovate the mandate of the Internal Compliance Unit and increase the awareness in the community of its existence among the community.

The [Internal Compliance Unit](#) is the key body in the system that CEMFI has in place to monitor the standards established in the Code of Conduct. It assists all researchers, including PhD students, in resolving conflicts. To improve the presence of formal procedures dealing with complaints and appeals, we are proposing to:

- 1) reevaluate this unit and renovate its mandate,
- 2) increase awareness in our community of the existence of this unit — emailing all research staff,
- 3) and make it more easily accessible, by explicitly communicating who are the permanent members of this unit.

Charter and Code principle: 34. Complaints/appeals.

Timing: The time frame for implementation covers two years and is divided in four semesters:

- 1) Up to April 2023: renovate the mandate of the Internal Compliance Unit and incorporate the changes stated in indicator 3) below to the corresponding section on the website, and increase the awareness of the existence of this unit as stated in indicator 2).
- 2) May-October 2023: monitor implementation.
- 3) November 2023-April 2024: monitor implementation.
- 4) May-October 2024: monitor implementation of the proposed measures.

Responsible Unit: Internal Compliance Unit.

Indicator(s)/Target(s):

- 1) The mandate of the Internal Compliance Unit has been successfully renovated and updated if deemed necessary.
- 2) The existence of this unit has been broadly publicized among CEMFI's research community.
- 3) The composition of this unit is clearly stated on the corresponding [section](#) of the website.

Action 5

To formalize and implement a process of regular consultation to PhD students through which they can submit anonymous feedback prior to meetings of the PhD Program Quality Committee.

This action is oriented towards providing additional confidential means to identifying issues and potential conflicts affecting PhD students. Such consultation process has already been implemented in the past by the PhD Representative prior to the aforementioned meetings; this action aims at formalizing and ensuring its regular implementation. Anonymous surveys have been found to work well and are the suggested means of consultation.

Charter and Code principle: 34. Complaints/appeals.

Timing: The time frame for implementation is necessarily closely linked to the frequency of PhD Program Quality Committee meetings (usually two per year).

We are requiring that these apply to all meetings of the PhD Program Quality Committee, with immediate effect.

Responsible Unit: PhD Director.

Indicator(s)/Target(s):

- 1) An anonymous form/survey has been circulated to all PhD students prior to a meeting of the PhD Program Quality Committee.

Action 6

To improve student-supervisor relationships by

- 1) producing a “good practices for supervision” document, and
- 2) modifying the “Guidelines for PhD in Economics” document to explicitly discuss main supervisor changes.

The good practices document should be widely distributed among the research community and made easily accessible through CEMFI's Intranet.

Charter and Code principle: 36. Relation with supervisors.

Timing: The time frame for implementation covers two years and is divided in four semesters:

- 1) Up to April 2023: draft of the documents by the responsible unit according to indicators 1) and 3).
- 2) May-October 2023: deadline for implementation and evaluation of the “good practices for supervision” document according to indicator 2).
- 3) November 2023-April 2024: monitor implementation.
- 4) May-October 2024: monitor implementation.

Responsible Unit: PhD Director.

Indicator(s)/Target(s):

- 1) The responsible unit has elaborated a “good practices for supervision” document.
- 2) The “good practices for supervision” document has been distributed among the research community and is easily accessible to all its members.
- 3) The “Guidelines for PhD in Economics” explicitly mentions the possibility and suggested procedure for main supervisor changes.

Action 7

To make available in English the rules governing the selection of personnel and those regulating the mandate of the Appointments Committee.

These documents pertain to most of the articles of the Charter and Code that relate to the section on “recruitment and selection” and they include principles and rules in line with an Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment policy. These are already published on CEMFI's website, although only in Spanish — see [here](#) for the Personnel Selection Rules and [here](#) for the Appointments Committee Rules and Procedures.

Charter and Code principle: 11. Evaluation/appraisal systems; 12. Recruitment; 13. Recruitment (Code); 14. Selection (Code); 15. Transparency (Code); 16. Judging merit (Code); 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code); 20. Seniority (Code); 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code).

Timing: The time frame for implementation covers two years and is divided in four semesters:

1. Up to April 2023: draft of the documents by the responsible units according to indicators 1) and 2).
- 1) May-October 2023: deadline for implementation and evaluation according to indicator 3).
- 2) November 2023-April 2024: monitor implementation.
- 3) May-October 2024: monitor implementation.

Responsible Unit: Administration.

Indicator(s)/Target(s):

- 1) The [document](#) governing selection of personnel is fully translated into English.
- 2) The [document](#) governing the Appointments Committee is fully translated into English.
- 3) These two documents are uploaded and accessible on the "[Transparency](#)" section of the website.

C. Actions specific to the implementation of the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R)

CEMFI's recruitment strategy is published on its website, in the link provided below, although it is so far available only in Spanish. Specifically, the recruitment policy is governed by two main documents: a [document](#) governing the selection of personnel and a [document](#) regulating the mandate of the Appointments Committee.

The organisation's recruitment strategy is in line with the main principles of OTM-R, although some areas for improvement have been identified. On top of the actions mentioned above that relate to the principles of the Charter and Code on the section on "recruitment and selection" (such as Action 7), three additional proposals specific to the principles of OTM-R are to:

- 1) Circulate via email our recruitment strategy among all researchers, thereby improving the community's awareness of these rules and principles,
- 2) inform rejected candidates at both the interview and "flyout" stages,
- 3) and post CEMFI's new vacancies for research staff on EURAXESS.