

## Mid-term review (Internal Review) of the HRS4R roadmap

Université Le Havre Normandie

July 2026

### 1. A few reminders :

The HRS4R (Human Resources Strategy for Researchers) label, now known as **HR Excellence in Research**, comes from the desire to build the European Research Area by:

- attracting and retaining the best scientific talent in Europe,
- promoting the international mobility of researchers throughout their careers,
- ensuring that European researchers have a working environment conducive to scientific work.

To this end, a European strategy aimed at improving the practices of organisations and institutions working in the field of research – in terms of recruitment and the working environment for researchers – has been put in place, including:

- The drafting of a European Charter for Researchers (2005)
- The drafting of a European Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers
- The **creation of a quality label to recognise institutions that are committed to continuously improving their practices** – particularly in the area of human resources – based on these two texts, thereby enhancing their attractiveness and securing European funding for research projects

**The European Charter for Researchers** was revised in 2023 (the new charter took effect from 2024). It now incorporates aspects of sustainable research and is supplemented by a **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity** (itself revised in 2023).

The Charter consists of four pillars:

#### ✓ **Pillar 1 – Ethics, integrity, gender and open science**

Research ethics and integrity

Freedom of scientific research

Open science

Gender equality

Diversity

The research profession

Free movement of researchers

Sustainability of research

✓ **Pillar 2 – Evaluation, recruitment and career progression of researchers**

Evaluation of researchers

Recruitment

Selection

Career progression

✓ **Pillar 3 – Working conditions and methods**

Working conditions, funding and salaries

Job security

Contractual and legal obligations

Dissemination and promotion of results

✓ **Pillar 4 – Scientific careers and talent development**

Promoting diverse scientific careers

Career progression and guidance

Continuing professional development

Supervision and mentoring

**Université Le Havre Normandie was awarded the HRS4R label in July 2024 for a period of five years. An interim review and a revised action plan must be submitted after two years (i.e. in July 2026).**

Renewal of the label will be subject to a new application, including a progress report and a new roadmap, as well as an on-site audit at the end of the accreditation period, i.e. in 2029. Thereafter, a new application will be required every three years, accompanied by an on-site audit.

## **2. Changes in the context at Université Le Havre Normandie and their impact on the action plan**

The implementation of the Maritime and Port Territories Polytechnic Campus project has led to internal reorganisation, including the setting up of cross-functional units (research, international affairs and creation and innovation), the arrival of new staff in the departments, and even the creation of a new department (Culture, Art and Science Directorate). This resulted in a period during which those in charge of the actions had to familiarise themselves with the files, the monitoring of actions (using indicators) was sometimes delayed, and certain tasks were reassigned to other departments, leading to delays in the scheduling of certain actions.

Conversely, some unplanned actions were implemented.

The establishment of the Culture, Art and Science Directorate in January 2026 has been a major driving force in the development of our activities with and for society, notably through a rich programme of events promoting scientific culture and through support for participatory research activities – two key components of citizen science.

ULHN has been a member of the Euraxess network since 2025 and now hosts an Euraxess Centre, with a dedicated team. A campaign to promote this centre amongst laboratories and departments is currently underway, with the aim of raising awareness of the support available for hosting international colleagues.

Furthermore, the EUNICoast European Alliance project led by ULHN has been approved, leading to new recruitments, notably to establish the head office. Among the priorities planned for the implementation of this partnership are actions to promote international mobility, environmental transitions, open science and citizen science.

At the same time, the EUNICoast partners have been awarded a Horizon Europe / Coordination and Support Actions, named RISE, which will begin in autumn 2026. This includes, in particular, the forthcoming adoption of a CoARA roadmap by each partner institution, measures to promote the development of international careers, and actions to accelerate the transition to open science and digital transformation through training and the adoption of FAIR practices for research data.

The work carried out within the Alliance – whether through joint discussions or the sharing of best practice – will help to raise the standard across the entire consortium, and we can expect to see an increase in mobility within the Alliance, for educational and scientific purposes as well as for professional reasons (for instance, the recruitment of PhD students or contract staff for research projects, for example).

ULHN is also one of the initial signatories to the Barcelona Declaration on Research Data and is involved in one of the working groups (WG4 – Replacing closed systems for research information).

As for Université Le Havre Normandie itself, internal discussions began in 2026 on the implementation of a global strategy addressing issues of ethics, scientific integrity, professional conduct and academic freedom, which until then had been dealt with separately. This involves a reorganisation of the actions related to these values, which will be better coordinated during the second phase of this roadmap.

A redesign of our websites and intranet is currently under consideration, which will improve the visibility of our actions and the resources produced.

The institution has decided to implement a proactive policy in favour of sustainable development with the aim of obtaining a sustainability label by 2028. A sustainable development master plan was adopted for this purpose in 2026. To support this initiative, awareness-raising and training activities related to research – and more specifically to mobility and responsible digital practices – have been added to the HRS4R roadmap.

The institution has also been selected as a winner of the ‘Health-Promoting Campus – Active Campus’ call for proposals. It therefore promotes the health of both students and staff as a shared priority across the campus, with a strong focus on sport.

Finally, the institution is currently undergoing a self-assessment in preparation for negotiations on the COMP – the Multi-Annual Contract for Objectives, Resources and Performance – with the relevant government department. Implementation of the COMP will begin in January 2027 and will involve strategic decisions regarding management and human resources that may influence future actions.

### **3. Steering of the process and methodology followed for the preparation of the interim review**

The preparation of the interim review was carried out under the operational coordination of the Project Manager for Creation and Innovation and the Director-General of Services, with strong political backing from the First Vice-President and the Chief of Staff.

The team responsible for the project comprised a project officer dedicated to HRS4R, recruited at the end of 2025 to strengthen the monitoring and coordination of the initiative within the organisation, as well as the colleague responsible for the initial submission of the application. The team was supported by survey specialists, the Data Protection Officer (DPO) and the Communications Department.

The method employed was as follows:

- Comparison between the old and new European Charter for Researchers, and mapping of our actions against the sections of the new Charter to ensure that our action plan is consistent with the Charter’s revised guidelines
- A reminder of the key issues and a presentation of the approach and its deadlines to department heads.
- Arranging individual meetings with department heads to identify key contacts to meet. A list of planned actions was sent to each department in advance for reference.
- Gathering information on the various planned actions to confirm their progress and any expected developments.

- Launch of an online survey of the university community to assess awareness of the label and the visibility of the actions undertaken, and to gauge colleagues' (both researchers and support staff) knowledge and needs regarding topics to be developed during the second accreditation period.
- Preparation of a series of semi-structured interviews (to be held) with international colleagues to identify and confirm the strengths and weaknesses of the support provided by the university
- Compilation of a review of, and adjustment to, the roadmap for the remainder of the accreditation period
- Presentation to the university's authorities (Social Administration Committee on 23 June 2026, followed by approval by the Executive Board on 2 July 2026).

At the same time, work has been carried out on communication aspects relating to the label, including an update to the website. Information will be shared in internal newsletters (research, human resources) in autumn 2026 (which will enable us to reach new arrivals). A list of all documents requiring translation into English has also been drawn up. Two major translation phases will be organised: the first in late 2026 (for documents that are ready) and the second in early 2027 (for those currently being proofread or undergoing validation).

#### **Focus on the survey:**

As this was a mid-term review, the aim of the consultation was not to identify new lines of action but rather to:

- assess awareness of the HRS4R label two years on and the community's perception of the progress made
- gauge the extent to which researchers are aware of and have embraced the values set out in the charter and the label
- ensure awareness of the existence of the ULHN's Euraxess centre and the support services it offers for international visitors

The survey received 128 complete responses, with respondents falling into two main categories: 55 researchers (PhD students, postdocs, early-career researchers, engineers) and 73 support staff and non-laboratory staff. A survey report has been widely shared with the academic community.

## **4. Summary of progress and developments in the action plan**

2 general observations:

- Work relating to the various actions targeting contract staff on research projects has shown that this group needs to be considered in a more joined-up way. A new priority has emerged, aimed at gaining a better understanding of this group, its needs and specific characteristics. This will be the subject of a coordinated inter-

departmental study in the second half of 2026, with a view to better managing the planned actions, which will therefore be postponed until early 2027.

- Another new priority has emerged. The ULHN's long-standing international network was strongly rooted in the Francophone world. This has resulted in a marked need to learn and consolidate the use of English. Courses are being offered to staff, and a major translation project is being prepared for late 2026 and early 2027 to make up for lost ground in this area. A translation of the organisation's website is also planned.

The remainder of the summary is organised by theme.

### **Drafting of the guides and procedures set out in the action plan**

Overall, work is progressing well (recruitment process, updating the work placement guide, drafting an intellectual property guide, etc.). However, there is a delay in the translation of documents into English, and the actions relating to contract staff on research projects are the least advanced. The survey showed that the intended users of the documents are struggling to locate them, even though the roadmap includes a large number of guides and practical information sheets.

Adjustments:

- Carrying out a major, global translation exercise into English in late 2026 and early 2027 to make up for the delay;
- Consolidation of measures relating to research contract staff for a more global approach, with cross-departmental coordination, in 2026–2027;
- Consideration of how to organise digital access to available information and documents, in line with the charter, by the end of the accreditation period.

### **Recruitment**

A software programme designed to improve the management of recruitment (BEETWEEN) is currently being rolled out. It will enable the monitoring of all recruitment processes carried out within the institution, as well as applications. This tool will help to resolve some of the difficulties encountered during the implementation of the roadmap. Indeed, information on applications – particularly in the case of contract staff on research projects – is currently scattered across various systems.

Work has largely been completed on the documents for selection panels and the information to be provided to candidates regarding recruitment procedures. The situation regarding contract staff on research projects still needs to be improved.

Work on the visibility of research-related job vacancies has revealed a lack of internal coordination between the various departments involved and significant differences in practice from one laboratory to another. An assessment of current practices and a comparative study of the various channels used to publish job vacancies proved

necessary as a preliminary step to the planned action. This work is now underway and is expected to be completed in the autumn. It will enable us to propose a more efficient process to the academic community, incorporating the use of Euraxess and BETWEEN.

Adjustments:

- Addition of the action on the BEETWEEN software, which was not included in the roadmap;
- Review of the action on the visibility of job vacancies, including a preliminary assessment of current practices and a clearer identification of publication channels;
- Increased communication regarding the Euraxess centre for recruitment and the induction of international colleagues.

### **Career monitoring**

The roll-out of a new software module for the information system, FEVE, will support the career management of BIATSS staff through improved monitoring of career development interviews. Department heads have already been trained in its use.

Adjustments:

- Addition of the FEVE software roll-out to the action plan, which was not included in the roadmap;
- Postponement of actions (not yet commenced) relating to the professional integration of ATERs, postdoctoral researchers and other research contract staff and their inclusion in the overall review of research contract staff.

### **Research project management**

Activities relating to research project management and providing information to project leaders largely began in 2026 (with a slight delay due to the reorganisation of departments).

The roll-out of the SANGRIA software took longer than anticipated as the organisation of the data was revised to better meet requests for indicators (particularly from the Ministry).

Adjustments:

- Delay in activities.

### **International mobility:**

EUNICoast has had a clear impact on increasing international mobility. In addition, a new tool, AMARRE, has been created; this was not included in the roadmap and is designed to facilitate access to financial aid and optimise support for staff and PhD students' mobility by consolidating applications and reporting, regardless of the funding source.

#### Adjustments:

- Addition of the roll-out of the AMARRE platform to the list of actions;
- Addition of the organisation of an annual workshop designed to promote Erasmus exchanges amongst staff and PhD students ;
- Separation, to enable better monitoring, of mobility schemes linked to the alliance's operations and those for scientific and educational purposes (with separate indicators).

#### **Ethics, integrity, freedom of research, discrimination, open science and citizen science**

Progress on establishing an institutional ethics committee and an institutional ethics charter is behind schedule, and the separate handling of issues relating to ethics, scientific integrity, professional conduct and freedom of research has shown its limitations.

Actions related to open science and the fight against discrimination are progressing well, as is raising awareness of personal data management. These areas are addressed through dedicated roadmaps.

Efforts towards citizen science are well underway with the creation of DirCAS and support for science communication and participatory research.

The institution has also launched a proactive initiative to encourage its researchers to adopt an ORCID identifier, in order to facilitate the formation of international research teams.

#### Adjustments:

- Move from a theme-by-theme approach to a more structured programme including discussion sessions on issues of ethics, scientific integrity, professional conduct and academic freedom;
- Step up awareness-raising activities on these issues.

#### **Disability**

Measures relating to the consideration of disability amongst staff are progressing well, and the organisation is pursuing a proactive policy in this area which has exceeded the initial targets. The adjustments aim to take account of the measures that have emerged and been developed in the meantime.

#### Adjustments:

- Inclusion of the 'Atypie Friendly' initiative, which is well under way but was not included in the original roadmap;

- Introduction of specific monitoring of workplace adaptations and requests for individual ergonomic assessments (specific indicator).

### **Sustainable Development**

This component was not included in the initial roadmap. It has been added to bring the plan into line with the new charter.

Adjustments:

- Addition of awareness-raising and training initiatives in line with the organisation's RSDD (Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development) master plan.