



The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

INTERNAL ANALYSIS AND QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The Institution at a glance

The Euro-Mediterranean Institute of Science and Technology (IEMEST) is a non-profit research organization as defined in the art. 30, paragraph 1, of the EC Regulation 800/2008, recognized by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR), and registered in the relevant National and European databases for research associations. It has been established in June 2009 and in 2012 it applied for and was granted the designation of a legal entity. The IEMEST pursues, as its institutional goals, the production, transfer, sharing and dissemination of knowledge and technological innovation. It supports high-quality scientific and technological research, encouraging and supporting the research and training of graduates and researchers in the Euro-Mediterranean Area, as well as promoting the career of such researchers. Its main objectives are to carry out basic and industrial research as well as experimental development, and to disseminate the results obtained through publication, technology transfer and/or teaching. All profits are reinvested in these activities. The research activities of the IEMEST are documented in numerous scientific articles published in international journals with bibliometric indicators and surveyed by databases acknowledged by the international scientific community. These publications have bestowed the Institute with a growing visibility in the international scientific scene, encouraging the development of valuable partnerships and the creation of high-level scientific networks. The training activities include conferences, master's programs, seminars and workshops, many of which are executed in English, on various topics related to the scientific activities of the different Departments. The training activities involve numerous students and teachers in the Mediterranean area. The IEMEST has already signed several framework agreements with public and private research centers and Universities in Europe and overseas. Thanks to these agreements, the Institute has been able to take part in projects that have applied for funding through European calls, and is currently participating to two projects funded by the PON 2007-2013 grant. The website of the IEMEST is updated daily, and contains information on research and training projects, scientific publications and international exchange activities, national and international research funding calls, lists of active partnerships and scientific cooperation, as well as key institutional information (Board of Directors, Scientific Committee, Advisory Board, etc.). The institutional structure of the IEMEST comprises



a Directory Council and a Scientific Committee. The Institute currently has 32 group leaders.

The HRS4R Background

The IEMEST is a young research organization, and in 2013 it decided to implement the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers to fully commit to the proposed Charter & Code principles, with the ultimate goal to obtain the "HR Excellence in Research" logo.

The approach and methodology applied

The internal analysis process was initiated by a meeting (June 2013) to inform all the members of the IEMEST about the actions involved in our participation to the Institutional HR Strategy Group and the importance of its implementation. Subsequently, a working group was constituted. The committee chosen for the internal analysis included Prof. Francesco Cappello, Dr. Giosuè Lo Bosco, Dr. Stefano Ruggieri, Dr. Fedele Termini and Dr. Claudia Campanella. The committee met on July 10th, 2013 and July 24th, 2013, to carry out an internal analysis of the regulations and the principles that the Institute has applied so far, following the guidelines established by the European Charter for Researchers and, in particular, the four fundamental principles that characterize it:

- I. Ethical and professional responsibility of researchers;
- II. Recruitment;
- III. Working conditions;
- IV. Research career training and development.

An accurate point-by-point analysis following the Charter highlighted several insights. The committee used the 'standard template for the internal analysis' as can be seen below.

I. "Ethical and professional aspect"

Researchers from the IEMEST carry out their research work in the field following the principles of freedom and expression necessary for their scientific activities. At the same time, they are aware of the technical limitations linked to circumstantial events, funding problems or lack of infrastructure. The IEMEST bases its rules on the ethical principles and moral code applied at a national and European level. The research carried out by the IEMEST researchers is valuable to society due to the emphasis placed on issues related to the improvement and protection of environmental and living

conditions. During the course of their research, the researchers use scientific methodology, taking into account the ethical and moral principles enshrined in the national and international code regarding plagiarism and intellectual property. During their research, the IEMEST researchers are increasingly aware of the fundamental objectives of each individual project, and understand research funding mechanisms. The use of funds is always subject to strategic planning and resource assessments to ensure a proper and efficient use of the funds available. Our researchers know and abide by the training- and work-related national and institutional regulations, including intellectual property rights. The IEMEST researchers are required to divulge the acquired results in the form of publications, patents, etc. As a private institution, the IEMEST has internal regulations regarding transparency and the use of research funds that adhere to current national and European regulations. The financial resources that researchers obtain through national and European grants are intended for scientific research, but such funding is also used to create job opportunities for young researchers. The IEMEST researchers follow good safety practices during their research activities. They know the national and European workplace safety regulations. They are also aware of the national legal requirements regarding data protection and confidentiality. The website of the IEMEST was completely refurbished last year and it is one of the most important tools used by the Institute to inform the general public and the scientific community of the research activities carried out by the different Departments and Sections. Within the IEMEST, there is no discrimination based on gender, religion or political orientation as per the relevant national and European regulations. The IEMEST researchers are evaluated on the basis of the minimum criteria set out in the Institute's internal rules, such as the number of publications, projects submitted, patents, etc.

II. Recruitment

The IEMEST is divided into Departments, which are further divided into Sections. The researchers belonging to the IEMEST can be divided into two groups:

I - group of senior researchers who are also members of the Scientific Committee and in charge of the various Departments and Sections (Group Leader – Head of Section).

and

II- a second group consisting of research fellows and volunteers (Component of Research Section).

The first group is selected through a rigorous assessment of merit and excellence in order to maintain high quality of research and development. The second group is also selected through an interview performed by the President, the General and Scientific Director and the putative interested group leader(s). The Institute used its website to launch new available positions as well as to give the opportunity to all interested people to submit their c.v. and candidature for being enrolled. However, from now it intends to advertise announcements for grants, award programs and new job positions also through



the EURAXESS website. The evaluation criteria in place are clear, transparent and internationally comparable. The scholarship and contract announcements are published on the IEMEST website and contain a comprehensive description of the knowledge and skills required, as well as working conditions and possible job prospects.

III. Working conditions and social security

A new headquarter with research facilities and laboratories will be opened within this year. The new headquarter is being built, thanks to a E.U. contribute, in full respect of the relevant working condition regulations, and consist of an area of about 1200 square meters that will accommodate research laboratories and offices for managers, researchers and administrative staff.

The researchers meet up regularly to discuss and assess the results obtained in order to maintain a stimulating work environment. The IEMEST ensures that the working conditions provide the flexibility necessary to properly conduct research activities in accordance with national regulations. The contracts that are entered into always comply with national and international legislation. The members of the IEMEST are considered independently from the title(s) they may or may not have obtained in their previous or current position within the public or private sector. All researchers are focused on finding research funds for research and for the recruitment of new personnel, ensuring the social security measures required by national and international legislation. The IEMEST favors permanence within the Institute whenever the researcher meets the requirements for contracts based on the EU directive on fixed-term employment. As regards to the gender balance within the Institute, the current female presence among our members is around 25%, but we are hoping to bring it up to 50% by 2016. However, gender discrimination is not an issue in terms of the perceived ability of women to occupy leadership positions within the IEMEST. Within the IEMEST, internal mobility is encouraged and the researchers can create networks linking the various departments, as well as between the IEMEST and other national or international institutions. Although the Institute's internal rules do not contain any notes on the management of internal conflicts, the supervisors are required to handle these issues. Moreover, members are continually consulted and updated on any organizational issues or novelties that relate to the activities of the institute.

IV. Training

The IEMEST is divided into different Departments coordinated by researchers with proven scientific expertise. The Department directors also manage the work of researchers within the individual Sections of their Departments. All Sections converse between each other and create the collaboration networks necessary for the research activities of the IEMEST. Interdepartmental meetings are constantly encouraged to enhance the collaboration between different groups working in related fields or



collaborating in joint projects using the different skill sets available. Contract researchers are supervised by and must report to the researcher who coordinates the relevant project or scholarship activities. At the same time, the researchers in charge of the Departments are required to assess and monitor the activities of all research Sections, with particular attention to young and newly contracted researchers. All IEMEST researchers work constantly to improve their scientific skills.

Questionnaire

Following the completion of the internal analysis, the working group also created a questionnaire (see ANNEX 1) that was handed to all members of the IEMEST, anonymously. The questionnaire was prepared following the four principles of the Charter & Code and the internal analysis. Through the questionnaire, each researcher could state his/her opinion on their "researcher" status within the IEMEST based on a pre-defined satisfaction scale. The data analysis (ANNEX 2) highlighted a number of important aspects vital to achieve the parameters required by the Charter & Code. Researchers from the IEMEST feel that they can carry out their research work in freedom, according to the principles of freedom of thought and expression. They also think that the research carried out within the IEMEST complies with and abides by the rules relating to freedom of thought, and the ethical principles concerning plagiarism from the Charter & Code. The IEMEST researchers also believe that the vast majority of research topics studied by the various research groups are of great importance to the society, also in terms of marketability and understanding by the general public. The scientific discoveries derived from various projects are considered to be financially advantageous. The researchers also believe that the communication channels made available by the IEMEST are optimal for the dissemination of the obtained results. Moreover, the majority of researchers stated that within the IEMEST, there is no gender, racial, political or economic discrimination. The evaluation system was generally considered appropriate, and the researchers think that the recruitment process follows the rules on transparency and clarity sanctioned by the C & C. The IEMEST researchers agree that the Institute encourages the creation of networks and national and international scientific collaborations. In addition, the researchers believe that the working conditions within the Institute provide the flexibility needed for conducting research in accordance with the current national legislation, and that the types of contracts that are entered into always comply with the relevant national and international legislation. Intellectual property is also guaranteed, while studies are always encouraged and supported. 80% of researchers also feel that a continuous communication is maintained between the researchers of the sections and department Directors, including between different scientific fields, also when it is necessary to assess the feasibility of projects and change them during the planning phase. From the questionnaire it is evident that researchers are encouraged to publish works born from the collaboration between different departments and sections. In addition, researchers also feel encouraged and supported by the IEMEST when they decide to spend their

time for educational activities. On the other hand, the critical issues that emerged from the analysis of the answers to the questionnaire involve the following points:

- The career advancement opportunities are perceived as quite circumscribed;
- A proper gender balance has not been achieved within the various positions among structured researchers.

Conclusions

Internal analysis shows that the IEMEST may apply for obtaining certification EUROAXESS, because the rules that regulate the activity of its researchers follow the directions of Charter & Code. It also plans to improve those points from the analysis of the questionnaire that they now appear as critical.

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President



Prof. Francesco Cappello

Director

