

OTM-R Checklist

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Name Organisation under review: Institute of Thermomechanics of the CAS (official name: Ústav termomechaniky AV ČR, v. v. i.)

Organisation's contact details: Dolejšková 1402/5, 18200 Praha, Czech Republic

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OTM-R Checklist

A specific self-assessment checklist is provided for Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R). Please report on the status of achievement, also detail on the indicators and the form of measurement used.

<i>OTM-R checklist for organisations</i>					
	Open	Trans- parent	Merit- based	Answer: ++ Yes, <i>completely</i> +/- Yes, <i>substantially</i> -/+ Yes, <i>partially</i> -- No	*Suggested indicators (or form of measurement)
OTM-R system					
1. Have we published a version of our OTM-R policy online (in the national language and in English)?	x	x	x	++	Yes. The OTM-R policy (the internal regulation on Filling of Positions for University-Educated Staff in Research Departments) is published in full on the Institute website both in English (https://www.it.cas.cz/en/hrs4r/) and Czech (https://www.it.cas.cz/cs-hrs4r/).
2. Do we have an internal guide setting out clear OTM-R procedures and practices for all types of positions?	x	x	x	++	Yes. Clear OTM-R procedures covering all research positions (grades V1–V6, including PhD candidates–V2) are set out in Internal Regulation

					on Filling of Positions for University-Educated Staff in Research Departments (see question 1) and summarized in a practical guide published on the Institute website as “OTM-R Policy Explained” both in English (https://www.it.cas.cz/en/hrs4r/) and Czech (https://www.it.cas.cz/cs-hrs4r/). The guide details selection stages, committee requirements, evaluation principles, communication, and complaints handling. A practical handbook for selection committees is being further elaborated under Action A42.
3. Is everyone involved in the process sufficiently trained in the area of OTM-R?	x	x	x	-/+	The Institute does not maintain permanent selection committees; instead, committees are appointed by the Director on an ad-hoc basis, which makes formal prior training of all members difficult. However, in accordance with our OTM-R policy, every selection committee must include at least one member <i>'who is familiar with the recommended recruitment and selection procedures of the Institute and who shall oversee the quality of the selection process'</i> . This role is typically fulfilled by the HR Manager, who is well-versed in OTM-R principles and briefs committee members prior to candidate evaluation. To further strengthen this practice, we have introduced Action A42 to develop a practical handbook and briefing package covering all OTM-R criteria, structured interviewing, and unconscious bias guidelines, building on the previously implemented Action 19.
4. Do we make (sufficient) use of e-recruitment tools?	x	x		+/-	Yes. Digital tools are utilized across all stages of the recruitment process. Recruitment is initiated via an electronic requisition form on the intranet and approved digitally by the Deputy Director for Finance and Operations prior to formal signature by the Director in accordance with CAS Statutes. Vacancies are advertised on the Institute website, the CAS portal, LinkedIn, and the EURAXESS portal.

					Applications are received at a dedicated HR email address and managed in a structured electronic repository equipped with digital tools, including standardized advertisement builders, communication templates, and the Candidate Evaluation Sheet. Online interviews for international and remote shortlisted candidates are routinely conducted via Zoom.
5. Do we have a quality control system for OTM-R in place?	x	x	x	+/-	Yes. Quality assurance is embedded in Article 7 of the internal recruitment regulation and operationalized through a centralized HR Award Resources Hub on the intranet. Compliance with OTM-R procedures is actively monitored by the HR Manager, while selection committees ensure adherence to core principles. To guarantee standardization across every recruitment step, the hub provides a comprehensive suite of tools, including a Recruitment Checklist, a Job Ad Generator with unconscious bias identification tools, standardized communication templates, Conflict of Interest declaration forms (available for applicants and committee members to declare conflicts if they arise), a Candidate Evaluation Sheet, a Selection Committee Report template, and a List of Language Requirements for Support Staff roles.
6. Does our current OTM-R policy encourage external candidates to apply?	x	x	x	+/-	Yes. The OTM-R policy (Section 3.2) mandates open external advertising of research vacancies on the Institute's website in both Czech and English for a minimum of 21 calendar days, ensuring external and international candidates have sufficient time to discover vacancies and prepare competitive applications. In practice, to fulfill the policy requirement of utilizing channels suited to the specific nature of each position, vacancies are systematically published on external platforms including the EURAXESS portal, LinkedIn, the Czech Academy of Sciences Career portal, and other

					targeted job boards. The policy also defines specific, transparent exceptions (Section 2.4) where direct appointment is permitted, such as for short-term project-bound roles or researchers explicitly named and evaluated in successful project proposals. Overall, this combination of a clear policy framework and active external dissemination encourages applicants from outside the Institute, with EURAXESS listings attracting predominantly international researchers.
7. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract researchers from abroad?	x	x	x	+/-	Yes. The OTM-R policy is aligned with institutional and national strategies to attract researchers from abroad. Research vacancies are systematically published in English on the EURAXESS portal and LinkedIn for a minimum of 21 calendar days, providing candidates worldwide with equal visibility and sufficient time to apply. To support incoming talent beyond the selection phase, the Institute collaborates closely with the EURAXESS contact point at the Czech Academy of Sciences to enable a streamlined visa issuance process for foreign researchers. The tangible impact of these updated recruitment procedures and support mechanisms is demonstrated by our growing international diversity, with the number of foreign researchers at the Institute rising from 4 (1.7 FTE) in 2014 to 20 (16.7 FTE) today.
8. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract underrepresented groups?	x	x	x	+/-	Yes. The OTM-R policy strictly guarantees equal opportunities and non-discrimination across all protected characteristics, including gender, age, ethnicity, disability, and family status. To attract diverse talent, job announcements must use gender-neutral language, and gender balance is actively sought in selection committees. Committees evaluate candidates holistically, explicitly recognizing career breaks (such as parental leave or caregiving duties) and non-linear career paths without penalizing productivity.

					Additionally, selection procedures remove practical barriers by accommodating candidates with caregiving responsibilities or from different time zones through flexible and remote interviewing options.
9. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to provide attractive working conditions for researchers?	x	x	x	++	Yes. Our OTM-R policy and recruitment practices strongly emphasize attractive working conditions, which are transparently detailed in our standardized job announcements. Applicants receive full upfront information regarding remuneration, performance bonuses, flexible start dates, and career progression under the CAS Career Development Rules. To support work-life balance and professional growth, the Institute offers a wide array of employee benefits, including for instance flexible working hours, teleworking up to 40 hours per month, 5 weeks of vacation, paid personal leave, income top-ups during paternity leave, supplementary foreign travel allowances, access to CAS children's groups, subsidized language courses, pension contributions, and dedicated ombudsperson support, among others.
10. Do we have means to monitor whether the most suitable researchers apply?				-/+	The suitability of the applicant pool is monitored during the selection process by the Selection Committee, which evaluates incoming candidates against predefined merit criteria. To ensure a sufficiently competitive pool, our framework allows for operational adjustments such as extending the application deadline, a practice we have successfully used when needed. Furthermore, ranking candidates during the evaluation process ensures continuity; in cases where top-ranked candidates declined offers for personal reasons, the Institute was able to proceed smoothly with the next suitable candidate from the evaluated list. While we aim to systematically track recruitment statistics, full implementation is not currently possible due to capacity constraints.

Advertising and application phase					
11. Do we have clear guidelines or templates (e.g., EURAXESS) for advertising positions?	x	x		++	Yes. Our internal regulation sets clear rules for vacancy announcements, mandating essential elements such as detailed job descriptions, qualification criteria, salary information, and contract terms. To ensure compliance, standardized job advertisement templates in both Czech and English, fully aligned with EURAXESS requirements, are available. These tools guarantee that all job postings are non-discriminatory, transparent, and structured consistently across the Institute.
12. Do we include in the job advertisement references/links to all the elements foreseen in the relevant section of the toolkit?	x	x		++	Yes. Standardized job advertisements systematically cover all core elements required by the OTM-R toolkit, combining comprehensive direct information with active hyperlinks. Announcements explicitly detail position specifics, salary structures, performance bonuses, qualification requirements, selection committee composition, and application deadlines. Furthermore, ads incorporate direct references and links to our dedicated web pages for the HR Excellence in Research Award (HRS4R), full employee benefit packages, and GDPR privacy notices, ensuring complete transparency for all applicants.
13. Do we make full use of EURAXESS to ensure our research vacancies reach a wider audience?	x	x		++	Yes. Full-time research vacancies are published in English, with almost all of them posted on the EURAXESS portal to maximize international reach and support researcher mobility. This strategy proves highly effective, as the majority of applicants for full-time positions come from abroad.
14. Do we make use of other job advertising tools?	x	x		++	Yes. In addition to EURAXESS, we utilize other advertising channels to reach prospective candidates. All open positions are published on our official website in Czech and English and on the Czech Academy of Sciences job portal. Depending

					on the profile and target audience of the vacancy, positions are also advertised on commercial job boards such as Jobs.cz or LinkedIn. Furthermore, researchers leverage their international disciplinary networks and direct contacts to inform potential applicants.
15. Do we keep the administrative burden to a minimum for the candidate?	x			++	Yes. Our internal regulation explicitly mandates keeping the administrative burden on applicants to a minimum. During the selection procedure, we request only the most necessary documents and information. The Selection Committee is responsible for determining exactly which documents are needed and at what stage of the process. Typically, the required documentation is limited to a structured CV, copies of relevant academic degrees, and, where appropriate for the specific role, a cover letter, letters of recommendation, or selected scientific publications.
Selection and evaluation phase					
16. Do we have clear rules governing the appointment of selection committees?		x	x	++	Yes. Our internal regulations set clear rules for appointing Selection Committees, which act as advisory bodies to the Director. Committees are formally appointed by the Director for each recruitment procedure according to the specific needs of the position. In accordance with the Statutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences, the committee evaluates applicants and recommends the most suitable candidate. Strict conflict of interest rules are enforced: any member with personal, family, or professional ties to a candidate must declare it to the Director, and their evaluation of that candidate is fully excluded from the process.
17. Do we have clear rules concerning the composition of selection committees?		x	x	++	Yes. The OTM-R Policy strictly defines the composition of Selection Committees (minimum of three members) to guarantee independence and quality. Composition rules require at least one

					member with expert qualification at or above the target position (with external experts recommended, particularly for Senior Scientist roles), a representative from the hiring unit, and a designated member overseeing the quality and fairness of the procedure.
18. Are the committees sufficiently gender-balanced?		x	x	-/+	While gender balance is formally enshrined as a goal in our internal regulations and female researchers are regularly represented on selection committees in practice, we do not yet systematically track or evaluate these statistics due to capacity constraints, although we aim to implement systematic monitoring in the future.
19. Do we have clear guidelines for selection committees which help to judge 'merit' in a way that leads to the best candidate being selected?			x	+/-	Yes, our internal regulations establish guidelines to evaluate merit, and to ensure consistent application, committees are currently briefed before interviews by referencing the relevant sections of these regulations. However, we recognize the need for more comprehensive practical support. To address this, we have introduced Action A42 in our Action Plan to develop a comprehensive Handbook of Good Practice for Selection and Interviewing—covering advanced criteria like judging merit, career breaks, mobility, and unconscious bias.
Appointment phase					
20. Do we inform all applicants at the end of the selection process?		x		-/+	While we actively communicate important updates during the selection process (such as deadline extensions), we do not automatically notify all applicants at the very end due to capacity limits. At the conclusion of the selection procedure, we systematically inform candidates who participated in interviews of the final results, while other applicants receive information upon request by e-mail.
21. Do we provide adequate feedback to interviewees?		x		-/+	Interviewed applicants are systematically informed about the outcome of the selection process.

					Furthermore, candidates ranked as 2nd and 3rd best are informed of their specific placement and are offered the option to be notified if the position becomes available again should the winning candidate reject the offer.
22. Do we have an appropriate complaints mechanism in place?		x		-/+	Yes. We have a formal complaints mechanism in place for selection procedures, though it is centralized. In accordance with our internal regulation—reflecting the advisory status of the Selection Committees and the Director's ultimate authority—any complaints concerning the conduct of the selection process are submitted to, handled, and resolved directly by the Institute Director.
Overall assessment					
23. Do we have a system in place to assess whether OTM-R delivers on its objectives?				-/+	As a small institution with a low volume of annual recruitments, we do not have a dedicated, automated system specifically designed to measure OTM-R impacts. Instead, we rely on basic annual HR statistics and personnel planning to track general trends in staff structure, which are reviewed in cooperation with research department heads and institute management on a long-term perspective.