



Institute of Organic Chemistry
Polish Academy of Sciences

PROCEDURES AND PRINCIPLES OF
OPEN, TRANSPARENT AND MERIT-BASED RECRUITMENT (OTM-R)
PROCESS OF RESEARCHERS
AT THE INSTITUTE OF ORGANIC CHEMISTRY PAS

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General Information

The Institute of Organic Chemistry PAS has established first version of the Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment for Researchers procedures, in 2017, after being awarded with HR Excellence in Research Award. This document has been updated to reflect changes in law and internal regulations.

The OTM-R policy (Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment for Researchers) is based on the up-to-date internal regulations¹ which were established according to Polish Academy of Sciences regulations and other national level acts. The indicated document includes specific criteria and knowledge, which should be known by candidates for the research positions at the IOC PAS.

Recruitment for PhD School at the Institute of Organic Chemistry is conducted in accordance with the PhD School terms and conditions and with the principles stipulated in this document.

The document describes detailed information of the individual elements of the recruitment process, such as:

- job advertisement and receiving applications
- competition committee
- selection of the candidate: analysis of submitted documents
- screening and interviewing
- preparation of a report / memo from the recruitment procedure conducted
- making a decision about employment
- feedback
- complaints mechanism

Recruitment Process

The competition procedure is conducted by the Competition Commission, appointed by the Institute's Director at the request of the head of the team/organisational unit/grant manager.

¹ The recruitment procedure is established in the internal document: Order No. 7/2025 of Director of the Institute of Organic Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences, *Detailed procedure for conducting recruitment to scientific positions in the Institute of Organic Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences*, which is easily available to all the persons holding the Head of Unit/Grant post at the IOC PAS intranet.

Job Advertisement and Receiving Applications

At first stage of the recruitment process at the IOC PAS, the Head of Team/Unit/Grant submits a request to initiate the recruitment process on the basis of which, a job advertisement is created. The template of the request is established in the Appendix to the internal rules: *Detailed procedure for conducting recruitment to scientific positions in the Institute of Organic Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences*.

IOC PAS includes the following information within the job advertisement:

- a. name of the organisational unit;
- b. name and description of the position, including information on the subject of the research in which the Candidate would be involved;
- c. information on the number of vacancies;
- d. the preferred date of commencement and the planned duration of employment;
- e. information concerning the nature of the contract;
- f. description of the employment conditions, workplace, allowances (salary, working time, other benefits etc.);
- g. Candidate's professional profile in accordance with R1-R4² classification;
- h. list of required and desired competences, including the requisite education, professional experience, degree or academic title;
- i. description of the Candidates' selection criteria, taking into consideration their scientific achievements, professional mobility, level of excellence in conducting scientific research;
- j. prospects for professional development at the IOC PAS;
- k. list of documents required for the application;
- l. procedure and closing date for submitting applications;
- m. date of determining the outcome of the competition;
- n. a verbal and/or graphic statement concerning the inclusiveness of the recruitment process, encouraging all Candidates to apply regardless of gender, origin, nationality, or membership in minority groups

The competition announcement shall be published at least at the following websites:

- the website of the minister competent for higher education and science in the Public Information Bulletin, in both Polish and English,
- the IOC PAS website, in both Polish and English,
- the website of the European Commission, in the European portal for mobile researchers dedicated to publishing job offers for scientists (Euraxess), in English,
- in the case of employment in grants financed by institutions such as the National Science Centre, Foundation for Polish Science or other external institutions - placing the announcement on the websites of appropriate institutions or dedicated portals, in conformity with the requirements of a given institution,

² R1 First Stage Researcher (up to the completion of PhD),

R2 Recognized Researcher (PhD holders or equivalent who are not yet fully independent),

R3 Established Researcher (researchers who have developed a level of independence),

R4 Leading Researcher (researchers leading their research area or field).

The information about competition shall be made available to the broader public by placing information about the competition in social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc.) with a link to the full content of the announcement.

The closing date of submitting applications shall be no less than 7 working days after the competition has been announced to the public.

Competition Committees

The Competition Committees at the IOC PAS are characterized by diverse specialist knowledge and competences. It is chaired by the person requesting the opening of the competition procedure. There are several minimal requirements for its composition:

- shall consist of at least three persons;
- be independent and objective;
- be gender-balanced;
- provide for an interview in the Polish or English language;
- consist of members representing at least two different scientific teams at IOC PAS;
- consist of members with relevant experience, qualifications, and competence in the area in which the Candidate is to be assessed.

The Competition Commission may include additional persons who are external experts from outside the Institute.

In case of a conflict of interest between a member of the Competition Committee and a Candidate, such a member should be dismissed from the Committee or, if impossible, excluded from assessing and giving his/her opinion on a given Candidate.

Committee members shall be trained in fair recruitment principles and familiar with unconscious biases and have knowledge of how to handle them to fulfill fair recruitment requirements.

Selection of the candidate: analysis of submitted documents

The recruitment procedure consists of a maximum of two stages:

- a. Stage one - assessment of competition applications by the Competition Committee;
- b. Stage two - interviews with the Candidates selected by the Competition Commission.

All candidates shall submit the following application documents:

- a. curriculum vitae of the Candidate;
- b. description of scientific achievements, including a list of publications, conducted projects etc.;
- c. diplomas and certificates confirming qualifications, completed courses, training etc.;
- d. cover letter;
- e. letters of recommendation and recommendations from previous employers/research supervisors (optional);
- f. consent to the processing of Candidate's personal data for the purposes of the competition.

In the first stage of the recruitment procedure, the Competition Committee shall:

- a. review the competition applications of all Candidates;
- b. verify the completeness of all submitted applications in formal terms;
- c. assess all submitted applications.

In the event that the Competition Committee finds incomplete application the Candidate shall be requested to complete the competition documentation within 7 working days.

The IOC PAS abides by the provisions of the Labour Code, particularly Article 18^{3a} Section 1, which stipulates that “employees shall be treated on equal terms with regard to employment and termination thereof, conditions of employment, promotion and access to training so as to improve professional qualifications, particularly in terms of gender, age, disability, race, religion, nationality, political views, trade union affiliation, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, as well as irrespective of definite or indefinite, full-time or part-time employment”.

The non-discrimination principle is respected at each and every recruitment stage, from posting a job advertisement, throughout the recruitment process, the duration of employment and its termination. Employees are treated equally and reasonably without any differences at each stage.

Screening and interviewing

Prior to the interview, the members of the Selection Committee carefully review the candidate’s documents, highlighting every item of particular interest according to our requirements, including issues that raise our doubts.

In assessing the applications submitted by the Candidates, the Competition Committee shall take into account:

- a. Candidate's scientific achievements measured by the quality and quantity of scientific publications of which the Candidate is a co-author, as well as patent applications/patents granted and/or implementations;
- b. professional experience of the Candidate in conducting scientific research, with particular focus on research topics similar to those in which the Candidate would participate;
- c. independence in conducting research and creativity of the researcher measured by the number of projects managed and originality of the research topics;
- d. career mobility measured by the number of completed internships, long and short-term stays, work in industry, change of scientific profile;
- e. capacity to work in a team, ability to transfer knowledge and leadership qualities (if applicable);
- f. opinions expressed in letters of recommendation enclosed by the candidate;
- g. received awards and distinctions;
- h. knowledge of English sufficient to conduct independent scientific work;
- i. other factors indicating that the Candidate is suitable to take up the post offered in the Competition procedure;

During the assessment of the academic achievements and professional experience of the Candidate, the Competition Committee shall consider interruptions in their careers by converting the achievements into the effective working time of the Candidate.

The Competition Committee shall not consider during the assessment:

- a. reputation of scientific institutions where a Candidate gained knowledge or professional experience;
- b. reputation of the supervisors and mentors of the scientific work performed by the Candidate.

The Candidates are assessed in the following manner:

- a. in the first stage in a point-based system;
- b. in the second stage in a descriptive system, considering the marks awarded for the questions asked during the interview.

The point-based system for the assessment of applications is made from 5-point scale (0-4) and covers 4 different areas which are assessed: Candidate's scientific achievements (40% weight in assessing), professional experience of the Candidate (20%), mobility in the Candidate Career path (10%), general competences to carry out tasks specified in the competition (30%).

After the first stage the Competition Committee prepares a ranking list of the Candidates, which is the base for the qualify selected Candidates to the interview stage of the recruitment procedure.

The list of Candidates qualified for the second stage of recruitment should take into account the need to maintain gender balance. This rule shall not apply only in cases where: a) no applications from persons of a given gender were submitted in the competition; b) the evaluations obtained by persons of a given gender are significantly lower (by at least 1 point) than the evaluation of the first person in the ranking.

The Candidates whose applications were negatively assessed by the Competition Commission during the first stage receive information on the negative recruitment result along with the score in the point scale adopted by the Competition Commission.

The interviews may be held at the Institute of Organic Chemistry PAS or by means of direct remote communication – through videoconference. Information concerning the mode, place and date of the interview will be provided by the Competition Commission to each invited Candidate via e-mail. The interviews with Candidates selected for this stage are conducted not earlier than 7 days after the invitation of the candidates.

The selection of candidates is open, competitive and non-discriminatory. All candidates should be treated equally and in the same way. A recruiter may not ask for personal information, such as marital status, parenthood plans, religion, diseases, etc.

The second stage of the recruitment procedure ends with the preparation of a list of Candidates recommended for employment in the offered position.

Preparation of a report / memo from the recruitment procedure conducted

Having completed the interviews with candidates, discussed and voted on each/particular candidate, the committee shall reach a decision regarding recommending the candidate to be hired or declining such recommendation. After each stage of the recruitment process the Committee is preparing the protocol from relevant stage.

Making a decision about employment

The highest ranked Candidate is notified of the positive decision of the Competition Commission immediately after making the ranking.

In the case where Candidates of different genders obtain a similar total score from the Competition Committee, the person recommended for employment in the given position should be the one representing the underrepresented gender in that position.

Feedback

Information regarding the closure of recruitment is sent to all candidates meeting the formal requirements. Extending gratitude for participating in the recruitment process is a rule which should always be observed. An e-mail to every candidate is a sign of respect for those who devoted their time contacting the Institute.

The Candidates who are not offered job offer are notified of the negative decision of the Competition Commission along with justification, i.e., description of advantages and disadvantages of their application.

Candidates who are not selected should feel they are being treated professionally; providing clear reasons for the decision ensures a transparent process. Such manner of building relations with candidates, and presenting the IOC PAS image this way, is deemed as beneficial in terms of employer branding.

Complaints mechanism

Any candidate who is not satisfied with the result of the recruitment decision and has claims about the evaluation made by the committees, may contact the Institute's Director within 7 working days from the date of being notified about the results. The complaint shall be submitted in writing to the Director of the IOC PAS. Each case is considered individually.

Information on the appeal procedure should be provided to the Candidates together with the decision of refusal.

Guidelines for Competition Committees

The Competition committee plays a vital role in recruiting, evaluating, and recommending the most qualified candidates for employment by the IOC PAS. Competition committee members are often the first IOC PAS representatives that a candidate will meet. Each member has an opportunity to represent the IOC PAS as a diverse and welcoming community, while carrying out the search in accordance with the Institute policies and procedures.

Composition of the Competition Committee

The Competition Committee shall comprise of at least three members. They are appointed by the Director of the IOC PAS on a case-by-case basis. This shall also apply to appointing the president of the committee. The committee shall have the following obligatory members: head of a Unit/grant or other appointed by him/her representative.

The structure of search committees will vary depending upon the position to be filled. The composition of a committee is the key to a broad and inclusive search. The committee should:

- Include individuals with different backgrounds, perspectives, and expertise,
- Include individuals with knowledge of the substantive area and the technical expertise to effectively evaluate candidates' qualifications
- be gender-balanced
- provide for an interview in the Polish or English language.

Committee Members

In the event that a committee member knows a candidate, or there is a conflict of interest between them, the member is obliged to:

- notify the president of the committee, and its members, of the nature of the relationship; and
- if they are unable to conduct an objective and fair candidate selection, disqualify themselves from the commission; or
- following the presidents' approval, and that of the remaining committee members, refrain from assessing and participating in the interview with the candidate whom they know.

Information regarding what transpired will be duly noted in the commission proceedings report.

Committee Responsibilities

The competition committee is responsible for recruiting for the position, evaluating applicants, participating in the interview process, and recommending finalists. Members should be available to participate fully and consistently in the entire process and to perform duties as assigned by the selection chair.

Confidentiality

Members of the selection committee need to maintain a strict level of confidentiality, to protect the privacy of the candidates, and to preserve the integrity of the whole search process. Each committee member is obliged to keep any information obtained in the course of the recruitment process in strict confidence, and to refrain from disclosing any information regarding said recruitment, to any individual who is not a committee member.

Recruitment

Competition committees are responsible for fulfilling the Institute's requirement to demonstrate "good faith efforts" to diversify the applicant pool, by proactively and assertively recruiting for all open positions. A recruitment plan should include strategies for attracting a diverse and qualified pool of applicants.

All Competition committee members should be actively engaged in executing the recruitment plan, including utilizing professional contacts, engaging in formal and informal networking activities, utilizing non-traditional advertising such as on-line publications, discussing the position among members of relevant membership in professional organizations, and attending conferences.

Competition committee members should also be aware of recruitment goals for the position, in order to determine recruitment strategies and sources to attract applicants from these underrepresented race and gender groups.

Applicant Evaluation

Members should discuss and agree on the criteria to be used in evaluating each qualification, prior to reviewing application materials. While assessing the received applications, the committee members may only take into consideration the previously defined requirements. All applicants must be objectively screened against the same criteria

There is no rule regarding the number of candidates a search committee must interview. Only candidates meeting or exceeding minimum qualifications should be ranked as "Interview invited".

Assumptions in Candidate Evaluation

The evaluation of applicants should be objective and equitable, based solely on the qualifications in the job description/advertisement, and the quality of the application materials.

Good practices to counterbalance the effects of unconscious bias include:

- Learning about research on biases and assumptions, and striving to minimize their influence on the evaluation of candidates;
- Developing criteria for evaluating candidates, and applying them consistently to all applicants;
- Spending sufficient time evaluating each applicant;
- Evaluating each candidate's entire application, and not focussing too heavily on one element, such as the prestige of the degree-granting institution or postdoctoral program or the letters of recommendation;
- Explaining the decision for rejecting, or retaining a candidate, based on evidence in the candidate's file as related to the qualifications;
- Determine whether underrepresented groups are considered for positions at the Institute, and whether prejudices and assumptions may have a bearing on these decisions.

Interviews

All members of the committee are to participate in all interviews³, to provide an objective and consistent assessment of each candidate. Prior to conducting each interview, all members of the committee ought to discuss the goal(s) of the interview, principal issues and areas to be addressed in the course of the interview, along with its plan and arrangements regarding each candidate. Questions asked during the interview must refer to work and be instrumental in determining qualifications for the position.

Committees should develop a core set of questions for all applicants. Such questions ought to require detailed answers, to be able to ascertain the qualifications of candidates and compare them objectively. In order to ensure a fair recruitment process, the interviews ought to be consistent, so that the candidates have an equal opportunity to present themselves. The members of the committee must be made aware that certain questions are illegal and may not be asked during the interview.

Everyone participating in the interview process should be made aware of inappropriate topics and questions⁴. Also, one should bear in mind that the same questions that are inappropriate or unlawful

³ Barring the situations referred to in the committee proceedings report and pertaining to a private relationship of a committee member with a candidate and/or a conflict of interests.

⁴ Article 22 Section 1 of the Labor Code stipulates which information an employer may require of a candidate, i.e.: name(s), surname, date of birth, residence address (mailing address), education and course of career to date. A recruiter may not ask personal questions regarding, e.g. marital status, family planning, religious views, diseases, etc.

during a formal interview are also inappropriate and unlawful in a social or less formal interview session with an applicant.

Recommendation of Final Candidates

While assessing a candidate, the members of the selection committee shall use the „Candidate assessment questionnaire” form, which describes and standardizes the scope and model of candidate assessment.

In the report, following the conclusion of the interview stage, the committee ought to indicate the candidate(s) recommended to the Director of the IOC PAS for hiring. Depending on the guidelines for the committee, the recommendation may be in the form of a ranking list and may include explanations regarding each candidate’s strengths and weaknesses, in terms of the qualifications for a particular position.

The candidates who were not selected ought to be notified of this fact as soon as such a decision is made, if possible, prior to the conclusion of the recruitment process.

Candidates from the ranking list recommended to be hired are notified of the refusal, as soon as the offer is officially accepted by the highest scoring candidate.