

APPROVED
Director of Utenos kolegija Higher
Education Institution
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OPEN, TRANSPARENT, MERIT-BASED RESEARCHER RECRUITMENT POLICY OF UTENOS KOLEGIJA HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

INTRODUCTION

Utenos kolegija Higher Education Institution (hereinafter referred to as the Utenos kolegija HEI) is the only higher education institution in Eastern Lithuania that provides college-level higher education studies focused on practical activities. Utenos kolegija HEI trains specialists in technology, informatics, engineering, healthcare, social welfare, business and public management, law, and agricultural sciences, who are needed for the regional and national labor market. Utenos kolegija HEI's **mission is** to train specialists with higher college education, conducting applied scientific research, developing lifelong learning, and creating value on a regional, national, and international scale. Utenos kolegija HEI's **vision is to** be an innovative, nationally and internationally recognized regional higher education institution that trains specialists with higher college education, conducting applied scientific research, solving modern societal and business challenges, and actively contributing to the sustainable development of the region and the country.

The purpose of the Utenos kolegija HEI's scientific and applied activities is to develop applied scientific research, experimental development (applied activities) and consulting, solving relevant social and economic problems of the country and the region. The goals of Utenos kolegija HEI's scientific and applied activities:

- to develop applied scientific research and experimental development relevant to the country and the region, involving students, representatives of business and other social partners;
- to strive for unity of science and studies by training specialists in all fields, implementing the results of applied scientific research and the most advanced scientific knowledge in the study process;
- to strive for the application of practical solutions to the results of applied scientific research and experimental development work carried out by the Utenos kolegija HEI's researchers to solve specific problems of companies, government and public organizations;
- to develop applied scientific research commissioned by business enterprises and organizations that can influence changes in society;
- to advise local authorities and economic entities;

- to disseminate the results of applied scientific research and experimental development in the scientific, popularization of science, and other press and at scientific events;
- integrate into the national and international research space.

The study areas implemented at the Utenos kolegija HEI are closely linked to the areas of applied science activity, focused on regional and national issues and the needs of specialist training. Utenos kolegija HEI strengthens the connection between studies and scientific research by implementing innovative teaching methods and applying research results in the study process. Researchers, lecturers and the administration organize scientific events, carry out publishing activities, read papers at conferences, and actively involve students and Utenos kolegija HEI partners in scientific activity. Utenos kolegija HEI not only participates in applied scientific research and experimental development (hereinafter - TMTEP) activities, but also consults regional and national entities, develops project activities and provides non-formal education services.

The main documents guiding Utenos kolegija HEI in conducting its research are: **The European Charter for Researchers** (The European Charter for Researchers ¹); **Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania** ; ²**Horizon Europe** Programme (Horizon Europe , 2021–2027 ³); **Lithuanian Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2050”** ⁴; **Utenos kolegija HEI Applied Research and Experimental Development Strengthening Strategy 2024-2029** , ⁵approved by the Utenos kolegija HEI Director’s Order No. V-94 of 13 May 2024; **Utenos kolegija HEI Scientific Activity Regulations** ⁶, approved by the Utenos kolegija HEI Academic Board’s Decision No. AT-5 of 9 January 2019; **Utenos kolegija HEI Activity Strategy 2025-2030** ⁷, approved by Utenos kolegija HEI Board’s Decision No. T1-9 of 18 December 2024.

In the European context, great attention is paid to the creation of the European Research Area (ERA) by 2030, in order to ensure the free movement of researchers, knowledge and technology. European priorities include open science, inclusive recruitment policies for researchers without

¹The European Charter for Researchers , <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/hrexcellenceaward/european-charter-researchers>

²Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.343430/asr>

³ Horizon Europe , https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

⁴Vision of the State's Future "Lithuania 2050" , <https://lrv.lt/lt/lietuva-2050/>

⁵ Utenos kolegija HEI Applied Research and Experimental Development Strengthening Strategy 2024-2029, 0 [https://www.utenos-kolegija.lt/upload/file_manager/Kolegija/Dokumentai/2024/Utenos%20kolegijos%20taikom%C5%B3j%C5%B3%20mokslini%C5%B3%20tyrim%C5%B3%20ir%20eksperimentin%C4%97s%20pl%C4%97tros%20\(TMTEP\)%20stiprinimo%20strategija%202024-2029%20m.m..pdf](https://www.utenos-kolegija.lt/upload/file_manager/Kolegija/Dokumentai/2024/Utenos%20kolegijos%20taikom%C5%B3j%C5%B3%20mokslini%C5%B3%20tyrim%C5%B3%20ir%20eksperimentin%C4%97s%20pl%C4%97tros%20(TMTEP)%20stiprinimo%20strategija%202024-2029%20m.m..pdf)

⁶ Regulations on scientific activities of Utenos kolegija HEI, https://www.utenos-kolegija.lt/upload/file_manager/Kolegija/Dokumentai/2019/Mokslin%C4%97s%20veiklos%20nuostatai_2019.pdf

⁷ Utenos kolegija HEI Activity Strategy 2025-2030, https://www.utenos-kolegija.lt/upload/file_manager/Kolegija/Dokumentai/2025/Teisiniai%20dokumentai/Utenos%20kolegijos%20veiklos%20strategija%202025-2030%20m.pdf

discrimination, career development of researchers and promotion of mobility. The European Union, through the implementation of the Green Deal and digital transformation policies, promotes research in the areas of sustainability, renewable energy, climate change, digital technologies and other areas. These priorities are focused on when developing Utenos kolegija HEI's R&D&I.

In the national context, the wording of Article 52, paragraphs 4, 5, 9 of the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, which will enter into force on 1 January 2029, ⁸highlights the strengthening of research quality indicators, the application of open access principles, the strengthening of the impact of research on society and the economy, the promotion of researcher mobility and establishes that by 2029 colleges must achieve a quality of TMTEP of at least a satisfactory level in a certain (certain) scientific (art) field (fields). In order to strengthen the potential of researchers and their integration into the European Research Area (hereinafter referred to as the ERA), the country has increased the requirements for researchers, which are established In the description of mandatory competencies for career stages of researchers in research and study institutions ⁹. **The National Science Development Program sets the goals of sustainability, innovation, strengthening regions and regional science centers**, commercialization of research results , and active participation in the development of the green and digital economy.

Utenos kolegija HEI, based on the best practices of foreign higher education institutions, and guided by the Utenos kolegija HEI's Human Resources Strategy for Research (HRS4R) and the documents discussed above, seeks to strengthen the potential of researchers, their careers, and their academic and professional development. For this purpose, this **open, transparent, merit-based recruitment policy of Utenos kolegija HEI (hereinafter referred to as the Policy) has been developed.**

1. POLICY OBJECTIVE AND PRINCIPLES

This Policy is a precedent to strengthen the Utenos kolegija HEI's competitive position in the field of research, improve the quality of research and develop. Therefore, Utenos kolegija HEI is committed to promoting intersectoral, geographical, interdisciplinary and virtual mobility of researchers, as well as mobility of researchers between the public and private sectors, as one of the ways to improve scientific research, technology transfer, innovation and develop researchers' careers.

The policy aims to attract and retain promising researchers and to create and maintain an attractive working environment for them.

⁸Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania (current version, in force from 1 January 2029. <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.343430/NSrqnrPJTk>

⁹Description of mandatory competencies for career stages of researchers in research and study institutions, <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/73b90eb0169511ee9f7ec2ffce8b47bc>

Policy principles:

- Utenos kolegija HEI recognizes that open, transparent and merit-based recruitment of researchers increases the attractiveness of a career in research, ensures equal opportunities for all candidates, and promotes mobility;
- The policy is guided by the principles of the European Charter for Researchers, which emphasize openness, transparency, assessment of achievements, and selection of the best candidates in the recruitment process of researchers;
- The policy covers all researchers, regardless of their career stage (including early-stage researchers), role and position within Utenos kolegija HEI;
- Utenos kolegija HEI strives to recruit the best candidate for the intended job, all recruitment procedures are based on the principle of equal opportunities for all candidates (including internal and external);
- Utenos kolegija HEI ensures that the researcher's achievements are assessed not only based on education and publications, but also on teaching, leadership experience, teamwork, knowledge transfer, international mobility experience, and public outreach activities;
- The policy covers the recruitment of scientists and other researchers, that is, the procedures for filling vacancies, rather than career advancement, the procedures for which must in any case be transparent and merit-based;
- Utenos kolegija HEI ensures that the selection of candidates, when a public competition is held, will be carried out by a Competition Commission formed by order of the Director of Utenos kolegija HEI, which will consist of national and/or international experts with appropriate education, and that an appropriate gender balance will be maintained in the composition of the Commission;
- The policy ensures that all recruitment procedures will responsibly adhere to the principles of academic ethics, as enshrined in the Utenos kolegija HEI's Code of Academic Ethics.

The policy primarily aims to attract candidates from outside:

- providing clear and transparent information about the candidate selection process, including selection criteria and expected timelines;
- by publishing clear and concise information about the positions to be filled;
- ensuring that the level of required skills and competencies meets the needs of the position and that overly strict and/or excessive requirements are not set;
- including elements enabling candidates from underrepresented, disadvantaged groups to participate in the selection process;
- reducing the administrative burden on the candidate (documents proving qualifications, translations, number of copies required, etc.).

2. CRITERIA FOR RECRUITMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF AND OTHER RESEARCHERS

All categories of research staff and other researchers are recruited in accordance with the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania - through a public competition or by decision of the Director of Utenos kolegija HEI.

When announcing a public competition for the positions of researchers and other researchers in cases provided for by the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, the following criteria shall be met:

- **Openness:** information about vacant positions (of academic staff, other researchers) is published in Lithuanian on Utenos kolegija HEI's website, the website of the Research Council of Lithuania (hereinafter - RCL), in the national media, and in order to recruit candidates from foreign countries - in English on the Utenos kolegija HEI's website and the Euraxess portal. The advertisement must be freely accessible to all potential internal and external candidates;

- **Transparency :** the announcement clearly describes the requirements for applicants, the criteria for evaluating applicants, and the deadline for submitting documents;

- **Equality :** the advertisement must ensure that no applicant is excluded, except in cases where the applicant does not meet the requirements specified in the advertisement. All application documents that meet the requirements are reviewed without discriminating against applicants on the grounds of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinions, social, economic status or other grounds unrelated to the performance of their work functions. When assessing candidates, different requirements cannot be imposed on researchers from different scientific fields;

- **Selection based on achievements and abilities :** selection must be based on the assessment of CVs and other documents specified in the job advertisement, using pre-established evaluation criteria, evaluation templates, scoring scales, interviews or other system to ensure the objectivity of the process. Career breaks or chronological inconsistencies in the candidate's CV are not considered a disadvantage, but are considered part of professional activity, a contribution to the researcher's professional development, and a diversified career;

- **Compliance with the Utenos kolegija HEI's mission, vision, values and strategic goals :** when selecting and assessing internal candidates - Utenos kolegija HEI researchers and other researchers, their potential contribution to the implementation of the Utenos kolegija HEI's mission, vision, strategic goals, ability to contribute to the Utenos kolegija HEI's TMTEP, entrepreneurship, and development of quality studies are taken into account;

- **Promotion of international competitiveness** : when selecting external and internal - Utenos kolegija HEI researchers and other researchers, special attention is paid to the international competitiveness of the candidates' research. The highest positions (senior researcher, professor) can be occupied only by candidates who meet the requirements of the leading researcher level, publish their work in internationally recognized scientific publications, and carry out international-level scientific projects. When selecting candidates for the position of research assistant, this criterion means that preference is given to those candidates who can contribute to the implementation of international scientific and other projects, and communicate in foreign languages.

3. WORKING CONDITIONS

When employing research staff and other researchers, Utenos kolegija HEI offers working conditions that comply with the provisions of the Labor Code of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, and the principles of the European Charter for Researchers.

Utenos kolegija HEI ensures that the requirements of health and safety standards established in the European Union and the Republic of Lithuania in the field of scientific research are met.

Academic staff and other researchers are ensured access to Utenos kolegija HEI's modern technologies, laboratory equipment, library and other resources, thus creating conditions for conducting applied scientific research, implementing scientific and other projects, and carrying out other scientific activities.

Utenos kolegija HEI undertakes to ensure working conditions that would allow academic staff and other researchers to work qualitatively and effectively in a physically and emotionally safe environment, create opportunities to combine professional and family life, and create conditions for flexible working hours, part-time work, remote work, and creative vacations.

Utenos kolegija HEI ensures flexible working conditions for scientists and other researchers with disabilities, in accordance with the current legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania.

Utenos kolegija HEI provides lifelong learning and professional development opportunities for academic staff and other researchers.

Utenos kolegija HEI does not tolerate any manifestations of violence and carries out violence prevention.

4. POSITIONS AND CAREER LEVELS OF ACADEMIC STAFF AND OTHER RESEARCHERS

All lecturers who meet the requirements for researchers established in the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania and hold the positions of professor, associate professor, assistant, junior assistant, senior lecturer, lecturer (except for teaching assistants) **and research staff** holding the positions of chief researcher, senior researcher, researcher, junior researcher participate in applied scientific research and experimental development at Utenos kolegija HEI.

In accordance with Article 67, paragraph 2, paragraph ¹ of the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, **Utenos kolegija HEI students may occupy the position of research assistant.**

In accordance with the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, According to the description of the mandatory competencies for career stages of researchers in research and study institutions ¹⁰, when performing TMTEP, the categories of researchers of Utenos kolegija HEI are: novice, approved, recognized, leading researchers;

Specific requirements for researcher positions and responsibilities are specified in the job advertisement and employment contract.

5. RECRUITMENT PROCESS OF ACADEMIC STAFF AND OTHER RESEARCHERS

(applies when a public competition is announced for specific positions of scientists and other researchers)

The recruitment process for Utenos kolegija HEI researchers and other researchers includes: three stages:

- public tender and submission of application documents;
- assessment and selection;
- appointment, which also includes appeal procedures.

5.1. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TENDER AND SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

5.1.1. PUBLIC TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Director of Utenos kolegija HEI announces a public competition for specific positions, taking into account the strategic goals of Utenos kolegija HEI, study and research and development needs, and vacant positions for research staff and other researchers.

A public competition is announced for the positions of lecturers (professor, associate professor, assistant, junior assistant, senior lecturer, lecturer) and researchers (senior researcher,

¹⁰Description of mandatory competencies for career stages of researchers in research and study institutions, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/0d62c2b216b211eea9b3de7dd350a34e?jfwid=-uwm4cbzly>

senior researcher, researcher) of Utenos kolegija HEI. Persons are hired for these positions for a minimum of 0.25 working hours.

The qualification requirements for teaching and research staff positions established by Utenos kolegija HEI, the mandatory competencies of researchers, this Policy, and the Utenos kolegija HEI's equal opportunities policy are publicly published on the Utenos kolegija HEI's website.

A public competition for the position is announced no later than 6 months before the intended start of work on the websites of Utenos kolegija HEI, RCL, in the national media, and when announcing an international competition - on the Euraxess portal.

The terms of the public competition shall specify the title of the position, workload, place of work, main functions, required documents, evidence, qualification requirements and competencies of the position, taking into account the relevant career stage of researchers, *inter alia*, it shall be provided that the applicant submits his/her activity plan for a period of 5 years, the criteria for evaluating candidates, the deadline for submitting documents, the place, date and time of the competition shall be specified. When announcing an international competition, the terms of the competition shall also provide information on employment and working conditions at the Utenos kolegija HEI.

5.1.2. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

Applicants for the position shall submit the necessary documents to the employee designated by the Director of Utenos kolegija HEI by the date specified in the Competition Announcement in person or by e-mail specified in the Competition Announcement. In cases where it is necessary to submit evidence or notarized copies of documents, applicants are allowed to submit a declaration in which they undertake to submit it within a reasonable period before the meeting of the Competition Commission.

After submitting documents, applicants are informed by email that their documents have been received.

5.2. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

After the deadline for accepting documents has expired, the documents of the candidates participating in the competition are transferred to the Utenos kolegija HEI Competition Commission.

5.2.1. FORMATION OF THE COMPETITION COMMISSION

A Competition Commission is formed by order of the Director to conduct a public competition for scientific staff and other researchers. The Competition Commission is composed of 9 members. Of these, 4 members are from other institutions, of which: – 1 member must be a

university scientist who meets the requirements of the recognized researcher career level, 1 member – an international expert who meets the requirements of the leading researcher career level, 2 members holding leading positions in Lithuanian and/or international companies and institutions. At least half of the Competition Commission members must be academic staff of the Utenos kolegija HEI appointed by the Academic Board of Utenos kolegija HEI with the highest pedagogical and/or scientific qualifications and extensive work experience, 1 – a delegate of the Student Representative Council, if there is none, – a delegate of the general meeting (conference) of students. When forming the Competition Commission, gender balance is also taken into account, and the aim is that the members do not have a conflict of interest, are able to communicate in a foreign language if an international competition is being held, and are familiar with the Utenos kolegija HEI's strategic goals, the HRS4R strategy, and this Policy.

The decisions of the competition committee must be objective and based on evidence, not personal preferences.

The process of forming the competition commission must be transparent and publicly announced. The members of the competition commission are introduced to the competition procedures and documents before the evaluation of candidates begins.

5.2.2. EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES

Upon receipt of the candidates' documents, the Competition Commission assesses the formal suitability of each candidate for the position according to the evaluation criteria. If the candidate does not meet the requirements, he/she is informed about this by e-mail and does not participate in the further stages of the public competition.

An employee appointed by Utenos kolegija HEI Director shall draw up a list of candidates who will participate in the Competition Commission meeting. When planning interviews with candidates who are not citizens of the Republic of Lithuania, their ability to participate in person is taken into account and, if necessary, the interview is organized remotely.

At the time specified in the public competition announcement, the Competition Commission organizes interviews with candidates at its meeting to assess their achievements and competencies.

The assessment is carried out according to criteria that must meet the requirements of the position sought, related to research, leadership and/or teaching competencies. The selection criteria for candidates must focus on their previous results and research potential.

The competition committee qualitatively and quantitatively evaluates all of each candidate's experience, all of their professional, research and/or teaching achievements, and competencies, taking into account the candidate's creativity, level of independence, and overall potential as a researcher.

Any career breaks or efforts to develop a diverse career should not be seen as a negative aspect, but as career development and a potentially valuable contribution to the candidate's professional development.

When evaluating candidates, the following are taken into account:

- exceptional career results - publications, lifelong learning, professional development, added value of experience related to and not related to scientific activities, experience in teaching, leadership, teamwork, knowledge transfer, research and innovation management, and public awareness;
- any mobility experience that is considered a valuable part of a researcher's professional development - being in another country/region or in another research environment, changing from one discipline or sector to another, whether it is an initial stage of a researcher's career or a later one, virtual mobility experience.

The interview with candidates is conducted in Lithuanian, and in the case of a foreign candidate, in English.

During the interview, the Competition Commission, based on the selection criteria, focuses on the candidate's suitability for the position to be filled and may request more detailed explanations from the candidate.

5.2.3. SELECTION OF CANDIDATES

The Competition Commission uses an approved scoring system to evaluate candidates. Each member of the Commission evaluates each candidate individually, assigning him/her points according to the established criteria. If several candidates score the same number of points, the Competition Commission discusses and selects the potentially best candidate, taking into account his/her achievements.

5.3. APPOINTMENT

After the Competition Commission meeting, candidates are informed by email about the results of the public competition, identifying the candidate's strengths and weaknesses, no later than within five working days.

The Director of Utenos kolegija HEI, based on the decisions of the Competition Commission, shall, within two working days after the end of the consideration of appeals, make a decision on signing an employment contract with the person who won the public competition. The Director's decision shall be formalized in an order on appointment to the relevant position.

5.4. APPEALS PROCEDURE

The results of the public tender may be appealed .

In the event of a public competition for the positions of researchers or other researchers, all candidates who disagree with the results of the competition have a two-working day period after the announcement of the results to file an appeal. The appeal is submitted to the Academic Board of the Utenos kolegija HEI, which must examine the appeal no later than within two working days. The decision of the Academic Board when considering appeals is final and cannot be appealed.

6. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The policy quality assurance system is partially provided for in the Utenos kolegija HEI's study quality management system. In 2025-2026, a new Utenos kolegija HEI study quality management system will be developed, which will include provisions ensuring the assessment of the effectiveness of the Policy, periodic monitoring of the entire recruitment process, provision for responsible employees appointed by order of Utenos kolegija HEI Director, and an internal reporting scheme.

Relevant training will be organized as needed for Utenos kolegija HEI administration staff, researchers, social partners, and students participating in the policy implementation process, in order to keep up with innovations and improve competence.

Candidates will be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the transparency and quality of the recruitment process. The data and recommendations received will be used to systematically improve the recruitment process in order to achieve the objectives of the ERA.
