



OTM-R Checklist

Self-assessment of FWO’s implementation of an Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R). This document reflects on the status of achievement in December 2025. Indicators and the form of measurement used can be found in the table.

<i>OTM-R checklist for organisations</i>					
	Open	Trans- parent	Merit- based	Answer: ++ Yes, completely +/- Yes, substantially -/+ Yes, partially -- 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, completely	https://www.fwo.be/nl/over-fwo/onderzoeksbeleid/hr-strategie/ and https://www.fwo.be/en/about-fwo/research-policy/hr-strategy/
2. Do we have an internal guide setting out clear OTM-R procedures and practices for all types of positions?	x	x	x	++ Yes, completely	Yearly updates of instructions for FWO staff and panel members regarding the selection procedure, including training videos and a webinar https://www.fwo.be/en/evaluation-process/i-am-a-panel-member/instruction-videos-for-panel-members/ and written guidelines (available upon request).
3. Is everyone involved in the process sufficiently trained in the area of OTM-R?	x	x	x	++ Yes, completely	FWO policy advisors are all closely involved in the preparation of key steps in the selection procedure and are all made aware of possible biases in the

					selection procedure. Panel members are trained on the merit-based dimension of this criterion and policy advisors monitor this aspect during the procedures using explicit tools such as the scoring grids (e.g., https://www.fwo.be/media/5jdctmuq/asp-fo-preselection-scoring-grids.pdf). About 50% of all panels members takes part in the training.
4. Do we make (sufficient) use of e-recruitment tools?	x	x		<i>++ Yes, completely</i>	All calls for fellowships are published online and shared via EURAXESS. The entire application procedure makes use of the FWO e-portal (https://fwoweb.fwo.be).
5. Do we have a quality control system for OTM-R in place?	x	x	x	<i>++ Yes, completely</i>	Following each evaluation round, all key stakeholders (i.e. applicants, panel members as well as FWO policy advisors) are surveyed regarding several aspects of the recruitment and selection procedure. This feedback informs changes in policy for consecutive calls. A report is made for each evaluation including suggestions for improvement (available upon request).
6. Does our current OTM-R policy encourage external candidates to apply?	x	x	x		Not applicable.
7. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract researchers from abroad?	x	x	x	<i>++ Yes, completely</i>	Our programmes attract researchers internationally, as evidenced by the high number of funded non-Flemish PhD fellows (31%) and postdoctoral fellows (51%).
8. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract underrepresented groups?	x	x	x	<i>++ Yes, completely</i>	We encourage all researchers who are eligible for our PhD and postdoctoral programme to apply. As we are aware that some groups may be discouraged to apply, we have adapted our regulations taking into account specifically the personal or family context (e.g. adapted eligibility rules taking into account disability or illness, extensions of fellowships in case of pregnancy, etc.). The share of women who apply for PhD or postdoctoral fellowships has been stable and is 50% and 40% respectively. With the adaptations made to the regulations, we have not managed to

					resolve the underrepresentation of women in the postdoctoral scheme. Specific biases, e.g. with respect to nationality, are permanently monitored but have not been observed.
9. Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to provide attractive working conditions for researchers?	x	x	x	<i>++ Yes, completely</i>	Although the workplace for FWO fellows is one of the Flemish host institutions, FWO provides a competitive salary for PhD (https://www.fwo.be/en/support-programmes/all-calls/phd/phd-fellowship-fundamental-research/) and postdoctoral fellows (https://www.fwo.be/en/support-programmes/all-calls/postdoctoral-researchers/junior-postdoctoral-fellowship/)
10. Do we have means to monitor whether the most suitable researchers apply?				<i>+/- Yes, substantially</i>	Our selection procedure relies on international experts who belong to the top 30% of their respective field (they are also screened for their scientific expertise: https://www.fwo.be/en/support-programmes/regulations/internal-and-external-peer-review/). We ask panel members to evaluate the applicants according to international standards and as such we have an implicit means to monitor whether the most suitable researchers apply for our very competitive schemes. Additionally, the survey that is sent after each evaluation explicitly gauges whether the panel members believe that our evaluation procedure allows the selection of the best possible candidates.
Advertising and application phase					
11. Do we have clear guidelines or templates (e.g., EURAXESS) for advertising positions?	x	x		<i>++ Yes, completely</i>	The call text on our website (https://www.fwo.be/en/support-programmes/all-calls/postdoctoral-researchers/junior-postdoctoral-fellowship/) has a fixed format and informs the candidate on each step of the application and selection procedure. For external communication of our calls, we refer to our own website.

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, substantially	Our HR strategy page contains all information on FWO's OTM-R policy, our equal opportunity policy as well as other HR-related policy action plans. As of the call who open in 2026, we will explicitly link on the call webpages to our HR policy page.
13. Do we make full use of EURAXESS to ensure our research vacancies reach a wider audience?	x	x		+/- Yes, substantially	All calls for PhD and postdoctoral fellows are published on EURAXESS.
14. Do we make use of other job advertising tools?	x	x		+/- Yes, substantially	Publishing our calls on our own website and EURAXESS already ensures a wide spread of the funding opportunities for PhD and postdoctoral fellows. Furthermore, we inform potential applicants via our newsletters and actively request to spread the call via the Flemish universities.
15. Do we keep the administrative burden to a minimum for the candidate?	x			++ Yes, completely	All applications can be submitted via our e-portal. In case of successive applications, all administrative data remains available. Measures are in place to make sure that context specific information (e.g. study results) can be provided and interpreted correctly.
Selection and evaluation phase					
16. Do we have clear rules governing the appointment of selection committees?		x	x	++ Yes, completely	Our regulations clearly set out the selection and appointment of our panel members (see Chapter II: https://www.fwo.be/en/support-programmes/regulations/internal-and-external-peer-review/). The composition of our panels is published on our website (https://www.fwo.be/en/evaluation-process/fwo-expert-panels/).
17. Do we have clear rules concerning the composition of selection committees?		x	x	++ Yes, completely	Our regulations clearly set out the composition of our panels, for example in terms of gender (https://www.fwo.be/en/support-programmes/regulations/internal-and-external-peer-review/). Statistics regarding gender are published on our website under the equal opportunities section (https://www.fwo.be/en/about-fwo/research-

					policy/hr-strategy/#a4d760029-a3fe-435e-ae75-d011add8d79a).
18. Are the committees sufficiently gender-balanced?		x	x	+/- Yes, substantially	At least 1/3 of all panel members are of the underrepresented gender. Efforts are being made to increase this proportion.
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, completely	Panel members are trained, are made aware of unconscious bias and are instructed to use specific score grids, also available to the applicants (e.g. https://www.fwo.be/media/5jdctmuq/asp-fo-preselection-scoring-grids.pdf) to ensure that only relevant and merit-based information is used during the selection procedure.
Appointment phase					
20. Do we inform all applicants at the end of the selection process?		x		++ Yes, completely	All applicants are informed via e-mail regarding the outcome of the selection procedure.
21. Do we provide adequate feedback to interviewees?		x		++ Yes, completely	After the decision has been communicated, all applicants receive feedback regarding their application via e-mail. During the procedure, a score is given by the panel (i.e. the selection committee) for each of the evaluation criteria. These scores can be linked to the requirements set out in the score grid. Together with a substantiation the scores are communicated to the applicants. The feedback typically includes the main strengths and weaknesses of an application as well as suggestions to improve.
22. Do we have an appropriate complaints mechanism in place?		x		++ Yes, completely	We both have a complaints (https://www.fwo.be/en/about-fwo/organisation/complaint-procedure/) as well as an appeal procedure (https://www.fwo.be/en/about-fwo/organisation/the-review-procedure/).
Overall assessment					
23. Do we have a system in place to assess whether OTM-R delivers on its objectives?					To ensure equal opportunities, the background of applicants and their potential impact on success rates are permanently monitored in order to detect

					and avoid possible bias. Two indicators are available to assess whether the best candidate has been selected for the position. For PhD fellows we monitor time to degree as well as scientific output by means of a final report that is submitted by the fellow. The latter is also assessed by a panel of international experts. Similarly, for postdoctoral fellows, the scientific achievements are assessed by an international expert panel.
--	--	--	--	--	--