

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURE  
OF STAFF SELECTION AND CONTRACTING FROM THE  
INSTITUT D'ESTUDIS ESPACIALS DE CATALUNYA**

**Based in: HRS4R  
Strategy for the Institut d'Estudis Espacials de Catalunya  
Open, transparent and merit-based recruitment of researchers (OTM-R)**

## **Principles and Procedures of Selection and Personnel Recruitment**

**Document version: 01**

**Brief description:**

Definition of the principles and procedure for the personnel selection and hiring at the Institut d'Estudis Espacials de Catalunya.

**Extensive to:**

All persons of the Institution involved in the selection processes, as well as candidates interested in participating in our processes

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**Approval date:**

June 2022

**Revision date:**

June 2023 and February 2025

**Languages of the documents:**

Spanish, Catalan and English

## 1. OBJECTIVE

One of the most significant achievements of the IEEC was obtaining the "HR Excellence in Research" seal in 2017. This recognition, awarded by the European Commission, identifies institutions and organisations that foster a stimulating work environment and provide favourable working conditions. It reflects a strong commitment to the continuous improvement of human resources (HR) strategies, in accordance with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct outline a comprehensive set of principles and requirements that define the roles, responsibilities, and rights of researchers, as well as those of hiring institutions and funding bodies. Their primary objective is to establish an open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment (OTM-R) process, ensuring fair and efficient selection and hiring procedures.

As a fundamental pillar of the European Research Area (ERA), OTM-R brings significant benefits to researchers, institutions, and national research systems. It enhances the quality and impact of research while promoting equal opportunities, international mobility, collaboration, and competition. By ensuring that the most suitable candidate is selected for each vacancy, OTM-R contributes to the cost-effectiveness of research investments and strengthens the attractiveness of research careers.

## 2. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This recruitment and selection procedure, along with the principles on which it is based, applies to all vacancies at the Institut d'Estudis Espacials de Catalunya (IEEC) for both research staff and research support staff (including technicians, management team, etc.).

**2.1. Research staff:** Research staff are professionals engaged in the conception and creation of new knowledge, products, procedures, methods, and systems, as well as the management of related projects. Based on their level of independence and career progression, research staff are classified into four professional groups, as defined by the European Commission's four-stage research model.

**2.2. Research support staff:** Research support staff provide technical, instrumental, project management, or service-related assistance essential for research development. Their role is defined by their specialised theoretical and practical training, enabling them to support research activities effectively.

### 3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE SELECTION POLICY

The recruitment policy of the Institut d'Estudis Espacials de Catalunya (IEEC) is limited in scope due to the institute's structural framework. All senior personnel are affiliated through agreements with the trustee institutions, and IEEC does not directly hire permanent scientific personnel. Additionally, all IEEC members, including those employed on fixed-term contracts, must be associated with one of the institute's research units. As a result, the recruitment of new permanent scientists is conducted exclusively through these units, primarily as university associate professors or staff scientists at CSIC.

For ICREA researchers, while IEEC plays an active role in identifying potential candidates, their sponsorship is ultimately handled by the research units where they will be based. Consequently, the candidate selection process is carried out in coordination with the management structure of the respective unit. If the process is successful, the researcher is then affiliated with IEEC. Similarly, for "named" research fellowships such as Ramón y Cajal, MSCA Individual, and Juan de la Cierva Incorporation, IEEC researchers actively seek and invite candidates to apply. Once applications are received, a screening process is conducted within each unit.

For junior researchers funded through competitive projects, predoctoral and postdoctoral vacancies are internationally advertised on leading job portals (e.g., American Astronomical Society Job Register), distributed via email lists, and posted on the IEEC website, on CIDO and on the DREU website, as well as its social media channels like Twitter, and if requested by the PI, it is published on LinkedIn.

Engineering positions are advertised also on the IEEC website, on CIDO and on the DREU website.

For structural personnel, including engineers, administrative staff, and support staff (e.g., knowledge transfer office, communication team), the advertising procedure follows the same approach.

Since 2022, the IEEC Human Resources Office has been responsible for managing the entire recruitment process, ensuring consistency and adherence to high-quality standards. The procedure follows the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the CERCA Code of Conduct:

#### 3.1 Selection Procedure

The lead researcher of the project must notify the Human Resources Office ([recursoshumans@ieec.cat](mailto:recursoshumans@ieec.cat)) of the need to hire a new employee. The notification must include a brief justification, the profile needed, group, subgroup/category and salary level planned for the position, the duration of the contract and the project that will fund the contract.

### 3.2 Calls and announcements

Once the availability of sufficient funds within the designated project has been confirmed, authorisation to proceed with the selection process is granted.

The researcher must then complete the IEEC job offer form and submit it to the Human Resources Office, requesting its publication—at a minimum—on the IEEC website and social media platforms. The job announcement, along with its terms and conditions, will be published on the Institut d'Estudis Espacials de Catalunya website and any other relevant channels. Each job posting will remain open for a minimum of 15 working days, during which applications will be accepted.

In order to attract a broader pool of candidates, the IEEC website has been modernised and updated. Additionally, the communications team has been strengthened to enhance promotional efforts across a range of social media platforms and events. Job postings are published by default in Catalan; however, upon request by the Principal Investigator, they may also be made available in English to ensure the widest possible reach, including to international candidates.

Recruitment announcements should clearly outline the required knowledge and skills without being overly specialised to avoid discouraging potential applicants. They should also include a detailed description of working conditions and employment rights and highlight the professional development opportunities available for the position.

### 3.3 Equality

The selection process must ensure that no candidate is excluded because of birth, race, sex, religion, opinion, or any other personal or social status or circumstance. To promote inclusivity, a non-discrimination clause will be explicitly stated in all job announcements, encouraging applications from international candidates, individuals who have paused their scientific careers due to parental leave or other personal circumstances, and those with disabilities.

The IEEC is continuously improving its recruitment procedures to better align with the principles of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R). This includes the development of a comprehensive action plan addressing various aspects that impact staff members. Key initiatives include:

- The Equity Plan, in effect for the period 2024 to 2028.
- The Sexual Harassment Protocol, which was approved in November 2023.
- The Psychosocial Risk Survey, which was conducted in 2023.

### **3.4. Transparency**

Candidates must be fully informed about the selection process before it begins. Each call for applications must clearly outline the selection criteria and the number of available positions. Following the selection process, candidates should be notified of the final resolution. Whenever possible, interviewed candidates should receive constructive feedback, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of their applications.

### **3.5 Merit and capacity**

The selection process must strictly adhere to the requirements outlined in the call for applications and be appropriate for the position's level. The evaluation should consider the candidate's overall academic and professional achievements and their potential, creativity, and independence as researchers. This approach ensures a fair, transparent, and merit-based recruitment process.

The assessment of research staff should take both quantitative and qualitative factors into account, prioritising outstanding achievements across a diverse professional trajectory rather than focusing solely on the number of publications. Therefore, bibliometric indexes should be evaluated within a broader framework, which includes other criteria such as training and teaching experience, teamwork and collaboration, leadership in pioneering research, project management, and knowledge transfer. For specific funding calls, such as those from AGAUR and AEE grants, the weighting criteria established by the respective funding bodies will be considered.

### **3.6 Evaluation and selection commission**

Once the application period concludes, the researcher responsible for the project, or an appointed representative, will initiate the candidate selection process. After the process is complete, a comprehensive report must be submitted to the Human Resources Office. This report should include a link to the published job offer, details of the selection committee members, the timeline of the selection process, the number of applications received, the selection criteria applied (which must match those stated in the job announcement), the evaluation of the candidates who were interviewed, the name of the selected candidate, and a contact address for all interviewed candidates. The report must be signed by all members of the selection committee.

The Human Resources Office will then contact the selected candidate to request the necessary information to formalise the contract. Additionally, an email will be sent to the candidates who were not selected, thanking them for their participation and informing them of the outcome.

Once the selected candidate joins the IEEC, they will receive an email containing the HR regulations, including information on their annual leave entitlements, the teleworking policy, and the official work calendar. Currently, the IEEC offers flexible working hours and two days of teleworking per week, allowing for a better balance between personal and professional life.

Evaluation and selection committees for research career profiles must include at least two members who possess the necessary knowledge and expertise to assess candidates effectively. These committees should be gender-balanced and employ a range of selection methods, such as external expert evaluations and interviews, whenever possible. Additionally, the candidate's language preference should be taken into consideration when forming the committee to ensure a fair and effective evaluation.

### 3.7 Recognition of qualifications

The qualification levels required for each position must align with the specific needs of the job. It is essential to ensure the proper evaluation of both academic and professional degrees, including non-official qualifications, particularly in the context of international mobility and professional development. The regulations governing the recognition of these qualifications must be clearly communicated, and the process for validating academic degrees should be made accessible. If necessary, the Principal Investigator (PI) may request the Human Resources (HR) Office to verify the validity of the academic degrees presented through an official body.

### 3.8 Variations in the chronology of the CVs

Interruptions or variations in a professional career timeline should not be penalised but rather considered as part of the researcher's professional development. These interruptions may offer **valuable insights** into their multidimensional trajectory, contributing positively to their career evolution. Achievements and qualifications relevant to the position applied for should be given due consideration.

### 3.9 Recognition of mobility

All forms of **mobility experience** should be valued as a significant contribution to a researcher's professional development. This includes, but is not limited to, experiences such as stays at other institutions, both domestically and internationally, or the exchange between different disciplines, during both the **predoctoral** and **postdoctoral** stages.

### 3.10 Career

The qualification levels required for a position should reflect the specific needs of the role and not serve as an obstacle to accessing the position. The recognition and evaluation of qualifications should be based on a **judgement of the candidate's achievements**, rather than their circumstances or the reputation of the institution where the qualifications were obtained. Additionally, as professional qualifications may be acquired early in a long career, it is important to recognise the **lifelong professional development** model, which values continuous learning and growth throughout a career.

### 3.11 Postdoctoral Appointments

Institutions responsible for appointing postdoctoral researchers must establish clear rules and explicit guidelines, including a defined maximum duration for postdoctoral contracts, which should not exceed five years. These guidelines must consider the time researchers have already spent in previous postdoctoral positions at other institutions. It is essential to recognise that the postdoctoral status is temporary, with the primary objective being to provide additional professional opportunities for researchers to further develop their careers in a context that offers long-term professional prospects.

### 3.12 Allegations and appeals

Allegations and appeals play a crucial role in these procedures, ensuring that candidates are provided with a fair opportunity to address any concerns regarding the evaluation process. These principles for the recruitment of research personnel should also serve as a fundamental framework for the recruitment of scientific, technical, managerial, and research support staff.

### 3.13 Research support staff

These principles for the recruitment of research personnel should also serve as a foundational reference for the recruitment of scientific-technical, management, and research support

### 3.14 Internal policy of lifelong learning/training for the institute's personnel?

The IEEC is fully aware that its greatest asset is its exceptional team of professionals. As such, it actively promotes lifelong learning at all levels. The IEEC takes a proactive approach by collaborating with university departments that coordinate graduate and postgraduate programmes in space-related subjects.



These collaborations offer opportunities for practical projects, final degree projects, master's projects, and PhD projects. The IEEC also sponsors and supports schools organised by its units, as well as specialisation courses and master's programmes related to space. Recent examples include ICE's Summer School (three editions), ICCUB's Technoweeek (four editions), and Young Professionals in Space at UPC (2018). Additionally, the IEEC sponsored part of the Executive Space Business Master's at Luiss Business School in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, for one of its project managers. Furthermore, the IEEC has established agreements with the International Space University, facilitating staff participation either as teaching staff or as attendees in learning activities.

For junior research and technical personnel, the IEEC promotes attendance at international specialised schools and conferences, particularly those involving oral presentations. Predoctoral and postdoctoral research stays at internationally renowned institutions are also encouraged. For technicians employed at the IEEC, training initiatives are offered to enhance their knowledge of emerging technologies. Collaborations with companies such as GTD and SENER have facilitated short-term visits for IEEC engineers, as well as the exchange of personnel in specific technical areas. As part of the NewSpace Strategy, the IEEC has also funded short-term training periods in companies, offering staff the opportunity to apply for such positions.

Internal staff members can benefit from various training activities promoted by the IEEC, including those linked to Horizon Europe projects (such as SpaceSUITE, where the IEEC is an Associate Partner), events organised by associations of which the IEEC is a member (e.g., NEREUS), and NewSpace Strategy programmes hosted by the IEEC (such as complementary grants for "industrial PhDs" or the aforementioned company internships). Finally, the IT personnel frequently produce documentation and deliver seminars (and even courses) on new internet tools and safe internet practices for all institute members, including administrative staff. Recent examples include training on Python programming and VPN settings. Additionally, they have offered training on the new tools adopted by the IEEC in recent years, such as Google Workspace, JIRA, Confluence, and others.

## 4 PERSONNEL SELECTION PROCESS

### Fundamentals

The selection process encompasses the series of stages that guide the recruitment of personnel, starting from identifying the need to fill a vacant position and culminating in the selection of the most suitable candidate for the role.

This process is structured in several phases, aiming to ensure that the vacancy is filled by the most appropriate individual to carry out the duties defined, in alignment with the principles of equality, merit, and capacity. The process is conducted in a manner that is open, public, and transparent.

Vacant positions must be advertised through both internal and external calls, following the procedure outlined below to ensure compliance with the OTM-R principles. The internal call is specifically designed to promote internal career development, encouraging both vertical and horizontal mobility within the organisation.

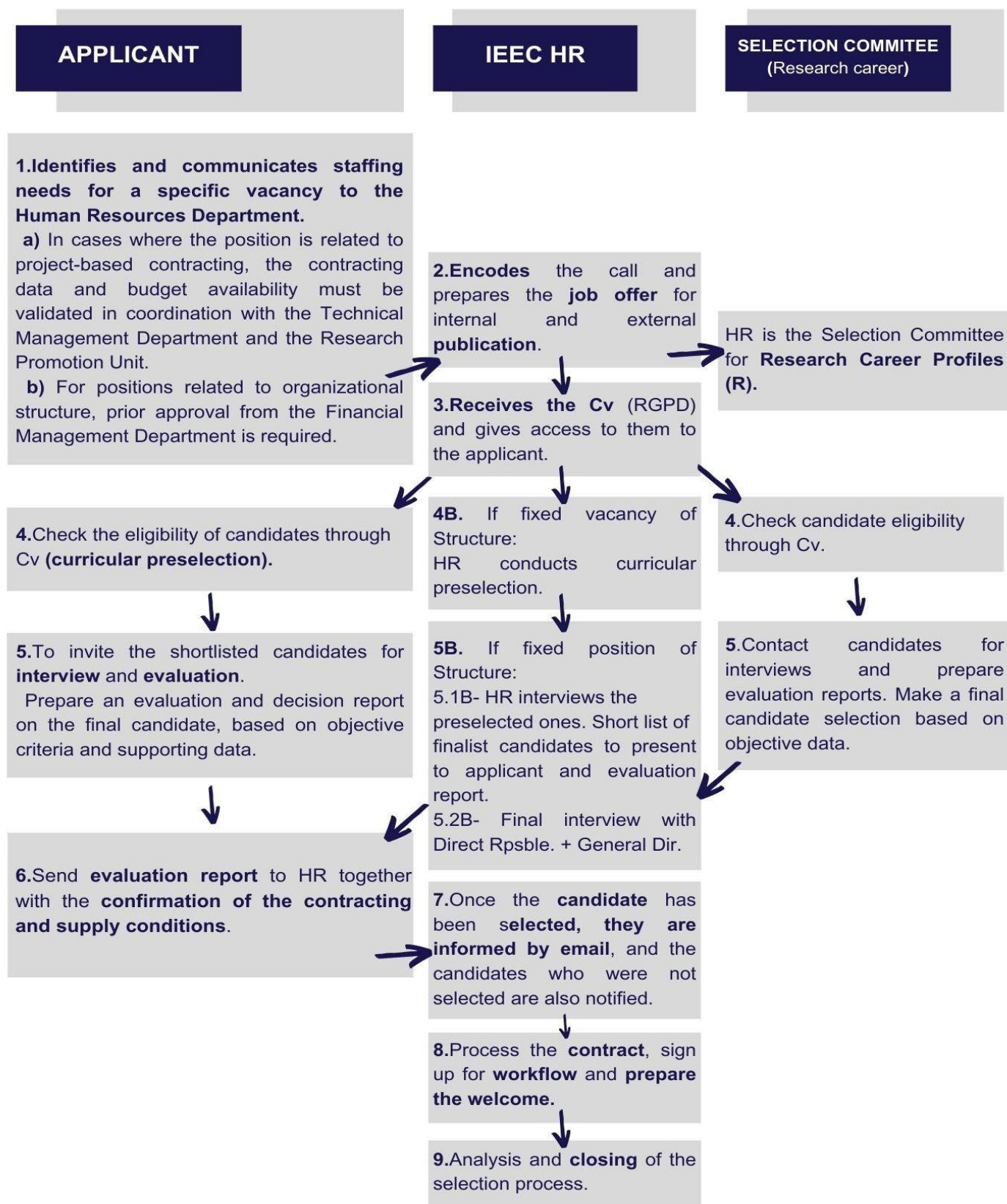
This process applies mandatory to:

- All positions funded through structural funds (including management or other roles related to organisational structure).
- All positions linked to research projects (including both research and management staff).

This document does not apply to staff who, through a scholarship, undertake training placements at the Institut d'Estudis Espacials de Catalunya under an Educational Cooperation Agreement with an external educational institution.

For Research Career Profiles (excluding predoctoral research staff recruited through a grant), it is mandatory to form a Selection Committee. This committee must include the principal investigator of the project, along with other suitably qualified members, to ensure the objectivity of the evaluation process. The evaluation committee for selection processes is mandatory for all recruitment procedures, including those for administrative and support staff, researchers, and engineering personnel."

## PROCESS SCHEME



## DETAIL OF THE PROCEDURE

### 4.1. Identification of the need and definition of the offer:

The recruitment applicant must inform the Human Resources (HR) department of the need to hire new staff and request authorisation to initiate the recruitment process.

#### How to communicate it:

- For project staff: The Principal Investigator (PI) and the Technician, in coordination with the Research Promotion and Management Department, will define the characteristics of the position, considering the specific requirements, available funding, and any conditions set by the sponsor.
- For staff in structural roles: The applicant must first obtain approval from the General and Financial Direction.

In both cases, a request email should be sent to HR at [recursoshumans@ieec.cat](mailto:recursoshumans@ieec.cat), with a copy sent to the person who authorises the selection process.

- For project staff: The Research Technician and PI should be copied in the email.
- For structural staff: The person requested should copy the Financial Management and/or General Director.

Contractual conditions must always be aligned, at a minimum, with the current Labour Agreement.

### 4.2 Publication of the Call

The Human Resources Department (HR) of the IEEC is responsible for formalising the job offer and making it publicly available. This publication will be made on the Institut d'Estudis Espacials de Catalunya website and any other relevant channels that could help promote the offer.

The offer will be published for a minimum of 15 working days for calls associated with public funding.

The following essential information will be included in each job posting:

- ✓ Required degree
- ✓ Professional experience required
- ✓ Additional training required
- ✓ Characteristics of the position (functions and organizational structure)
- ✓ Contractor and project code (if applicable)

The website where job offers are published will prominently display the principles established in this document, including **HRS4R**, **Equality**, and **GDPR** compliance, ensuring transparency and accessibility for all candidates

#### 4.2 B. Constitution of the Evaluation and Selection Committee (if applicable)

A Selection Committee (comprising three members) must be established for calls related to profiles listed in the European Commission's Research Framework (R1-R4). The committee will be responsible for assessing the candidates' qualifications and fit for the position offered. The composition of the committee must reflect gender balance. The HR department will coordinate the formation of the committee.

Whenever possible, the committee may include external experts and, in certain cases, an international expert. The Selection Committee for all R1-R4 profiles at the IEEC will consist of at least three individuals with relevant scientific expertise. Depending on the position, representatives from the HR Department and/or the Research Promotion and Management Department may also participate, although this will not be mandatory.

#### 4.3 Reception of CVS

During the period specified in the job announcement, CVs from both external candidates and internal employees wishing to apply for the position will be collected. All CVs will be processed in accordance with the **Data Protection Law**, ensuring appropriate filing, destruction, and notification protocols are followed.

#### 4.4 Curricular preselection

Once the application deadline has passed, the applications will be reviewed, and a pre-selection will be made to shortlist those who meet all the requirements. In the case of unsuccessful candidates, an informational email will automatically be sent to notify them of the outcome.

**4.4 B) For fixed Structure positions, HR will conduct the curricular pre-selection.**

#### 4.5 Selection interview

The Selection Committee (for research profiles) or the requesting person will select the candidates who meet the position requirements and will conduct interviews as deemed appropriate. The selection criteria will focus not only on the candidate's past performance but also on their future potential. An interview guide and a merit and competency assessment template will be provided to interviewers. Depending on the profile, reference letters may also be required before candidates proceed to the interview stage.

The score assigned to each candidate will play a decisive role in the final selection of the chosen candidate. A comprehensive interview report must be completed and submitted to the Human Resources Department. It is recommended to interview at least four candidates to ensure a thorough evaluation.

**4.6 B) For fixed positions within the Structure:** HR will conduct an initial selection interview and narrow down the pool to 3-5 candidates, who will then be interviewed by the Responsible. A final interview with the Head of Department and General Director will take place, ideally involving 2-3 shortlisted finalists.

#### **4.7 Resolution of the call**

Once the final candidate has been selected, all applicants will be informed of the outcome of the selection process. Unsuccessful candidates will automatically receive a notification email, expressing gratitude for their participation. In the event of any conflicts or disagreements during the selection process, candidates should send an email to **HR** ([recursoshumans@ieec.cat](mailto:recursoshumans@ieec.cat)), outlining the issue and their reasons for dissatisfaction.

#### **4.8 Processing of the contract and reception plan**

Once the finalist candidate is chosen, HR will contact them to request the necessary documentation to initiate the contract process. Simultaneously, the implementation of the IEEC Welcome Plan will begin.

#### **4.9 Closing of the Process**

**HR** will conduct an analysis of the entire selection process and formally close the process.