



THE CYPRUS INSTITUTE OF NEUROLOGY AND GENETICS

THE HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS INCORPORATING

**The European Charter for Researchers and The Code
of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (C&C)**



List of Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1 The Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics (CING)	3
1.2 The Charter and Code (C&C)	3
1.3 Human Resource Strategy for Researchers Incorporating the Charter & Code	4
1.4 The Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics and the Charter & Code	4
2. Internal Analysis.....	5
2.1 Process description	5
2.2 Results	5

1. Introduction

1.1 The Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics (CING)

The Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics (CING) was established in 1990 as a bi-communal, non-profit, private, academic, medical centre. It began its operations with approximately 20 employees and has now grown to employ over 160 employees in a number of areas of expertise.

CING aims to function as a National Centre of Excellence and a Regional Referral Centre in the areas of Neurology, Genetics, Biomedical, Medical and other similar and related Sciences.

Its operations are based on three main pillars:

1. the development and provision of high level medical and clinical laboratory services;
2. the development and pursuit of advanced research; and
3. the provision of education.

CING's ultimate scopes are to improve and upgrade the quality of life of all Cypriot citizens, irrespective of religion or national origin, and strengthen its international role in the areas of its specialty.

1.2 The Charter and Code (C&C)

The European Charter for Researchers provides a framework for the career management of researchers, while the Code of Conduct for their recruitment promotes open and transparent recruitment and appraisal procedures.

More specifically, the European Charter for Researchers is a set of general principles and requirements which specifies the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of researchers as well as of employers and/or funders of researchers. It aims to ensure that the nature of the relationship between researchers and employers or funders is conducive to successful performance in generating, transferring, sharing and disseminating knowledge and technological development, and to the career development of researchers. The Charter also recognizes the value of all forms of mobility as a means for enhancing the professional development of researchers.

The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers consists of a set of general principles and requirements that should be followed by employers and/or funders when appointing or recruiting researchers. These principles and requirements should ensure observance of values such as transparency of the recruitment process and equal treatment of all applicants.

Together, the Charter and Code are aimed at developing an attractive, open and sustainable European labour market for researchers.

1.3 Human Resource Strategy for Researchers Incorporating the Charter and Code

The European Commission gives its support to the implementation of the C&C through a mechanism called the “Human Resource Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) Incorporating the Charter & Code”. This is, essentially, an implementation process formulated by the Commission in an effort to assist those research institutions that would like to incorporate the C&C in their human resources strategy. It is also used to provide recognition of the systematic uptake of the Charter and the Code and, hence, increase the transparency of employment conditions and the attractiveness of research institutes.

1.4 The Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics and the Charter and Code

The Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics was one of the first Cypriot organizations that were involved in the C&C initiative. In November 2010 it signed a declaration stating that it accepts the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their recruitment, so expressing its determination to support the European initiative and to develop and implement a human resources strategy aimed at improving the recruitment, working conditions and careers of researchers.

In June 2011, CING attended the Mutual Learning Seminar (MLS) in Dublin, Ireland. The objectives of the seminar were to ease the completion of the first two steps of the HRS4R, that is, the Internal Analysis (Step 1) and the Publication of the HR Strategy (Step 2) and, thus, ensure a smooth path to the Acknowledgement (Step 3). In June 2012, CING also attended the second Mutual Learning Seminar (MLS) in Varna, Bulgaria. The objectives of this seminar were to prepare for Step 4 of the HRS4R – Continuous improvement and self-assessment.

In accordance with the guidelines of the European Commission, CING conducted a gap analysis in order to evaluate its policies and practices against the Charter and Code principles. In light of the findings of the gap analysis, CING concluded that, although current practices in the institution are generally in agreement with the C&C principles, there are still some areas where there is room for improvement. Corrective actions were proposed and developed into an action plan which was later discussed by the CING’s Scientific Council and Board of Directors. The action plan was approved by the CING’s Scientific Council on 26 September 2012 and the Board of Directors on 30 October 2012.

2. Internal Analysis

2.1 Process description

Taking into account the recommendations of the European Commission and following the successful examples of other European research institutions, CING decided to conduct the internal analysis through a staff survey. The survey consisted of 26 statements divided into 4 dimensions:

1. Dimension 1 – Ethical and Professional Aspects
2. Dimension 2 – Recruitment
3. Dimension 3 – Working Conditions and Social Security
4. Dimension 4 – Training

The questionnaire was designed to assess the degree of application of the C&C principles in CING, as well as to identify what the respondents considered to be the most important statements from each of the dimensions. Respondents were, therefore, asked to answer each statement on a 4-point Likert scale, with the following possible answers: 1 = fully disagree, 2 = moderately disagree, 3 = moderately agree, and 4 = fully agree.

A 5th option of “I don’t know” was also given in order to increase the accuracy of responses by avoiding “forced” answers. Moreover, respondents were also asked to indicate what they considered to be the 3 most important statements from each dimension (See Appendix 1 for a sample of the questionnaire).

The survey was sent on 14 September 2011 via e-mail to all research staff of the institute and to selected administrative staff involved in recruitment and selection procedures. A cover letter was included in the body of the e-mail which provided information on the purpose of the survey, on the importance of the Human Resource Strategy for Researchers mechanism and how this relates to the Charter and Code initiative. A link to the online survey was added at the end of the e-mail.

2.2 Results

The response rate was high, with 82% of the target population completing the questionnaire (Table 1).

Table 1: Participation rate and group distribution

Position	Answers	Total in the category	Response rate %
Principal Investigators	12	16	75%
Post-doctoral fellows	7	7	100%
PhD candidates	7	11	64%
Researchers	26	30	87%
Administrative staff	4	4	100%
Total	56	68	82%

Figure 1 below shows the average, minimum and maximum level of agreement in each of the 4 dimensions. It is important to note here that the scores are relatively high, with the average score for all dimensions being over 2.5, which is the “neither agree nor disagree” point.

Figure 1: Agreement in each dimension

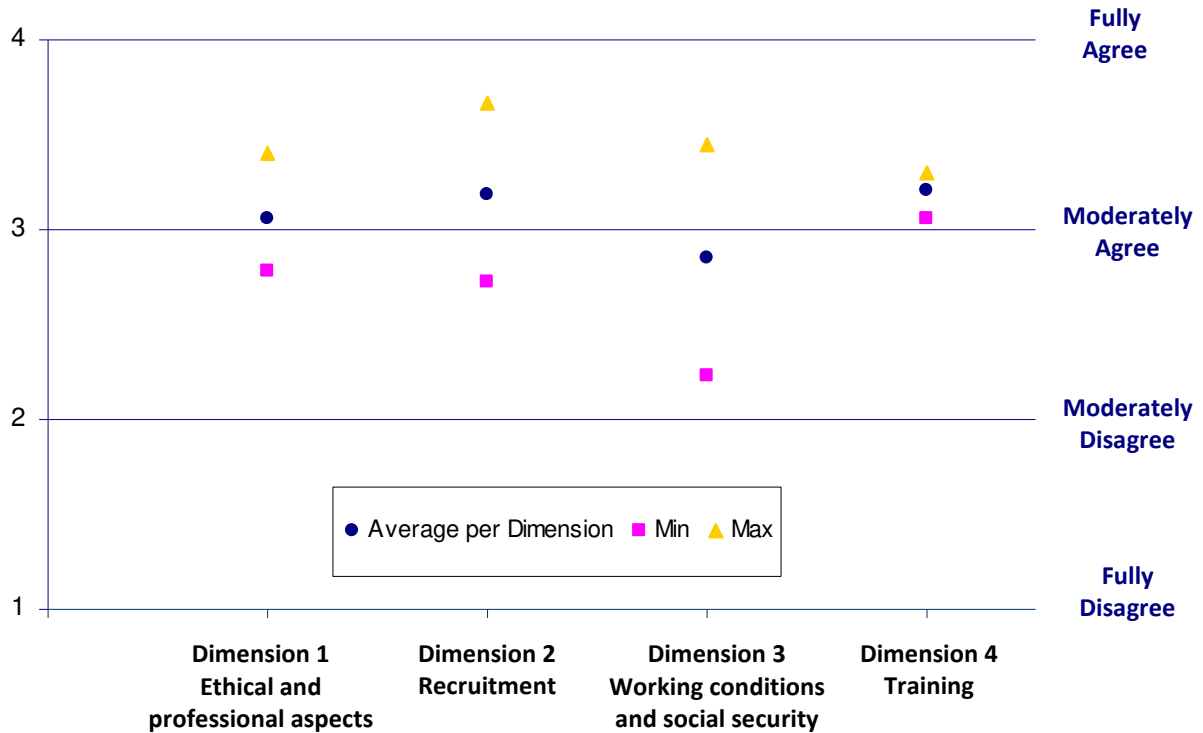


Figure 2 below shows the average level of agreement for each dimension by category. The data here suggests that general researchers indicated the lowest level of agreement out of the 5 categories of employees for all dimensions.

Figure 2: Average agreement for each dimension by category

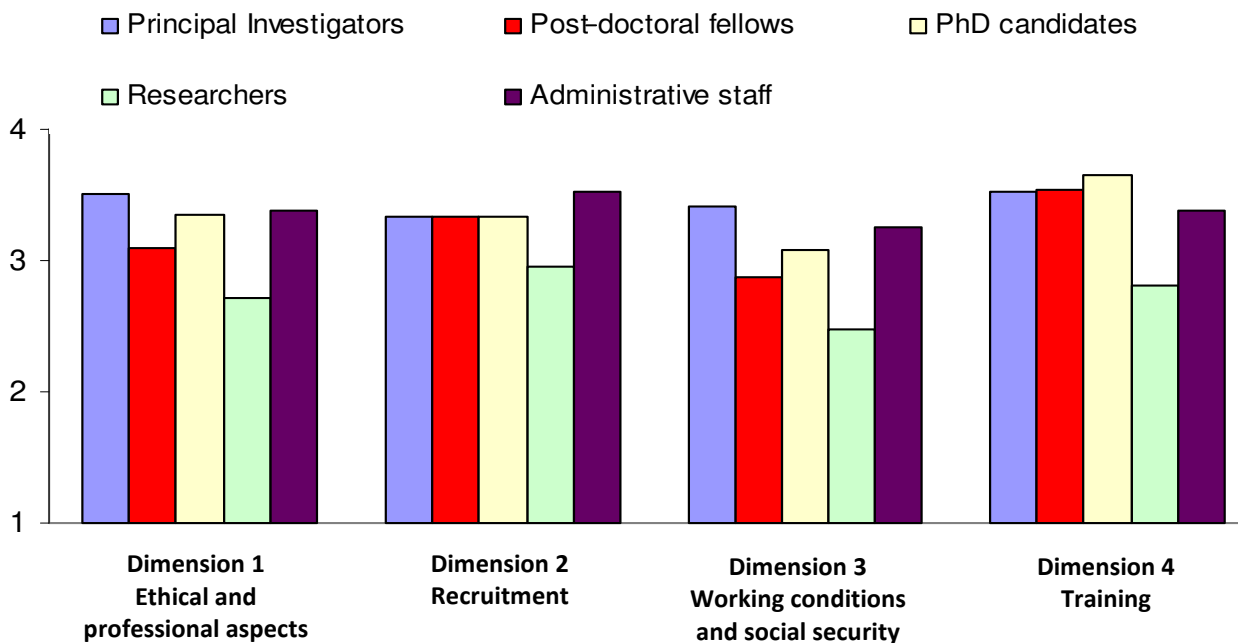


Figure 3 below shows the average level of agreement for the single statements. Again, it is important to note that the average level of agreement for almost all the statements is above 2.5, which is the “neither agree nor disagree” point.

Figure 3: Average agreement for the single statements

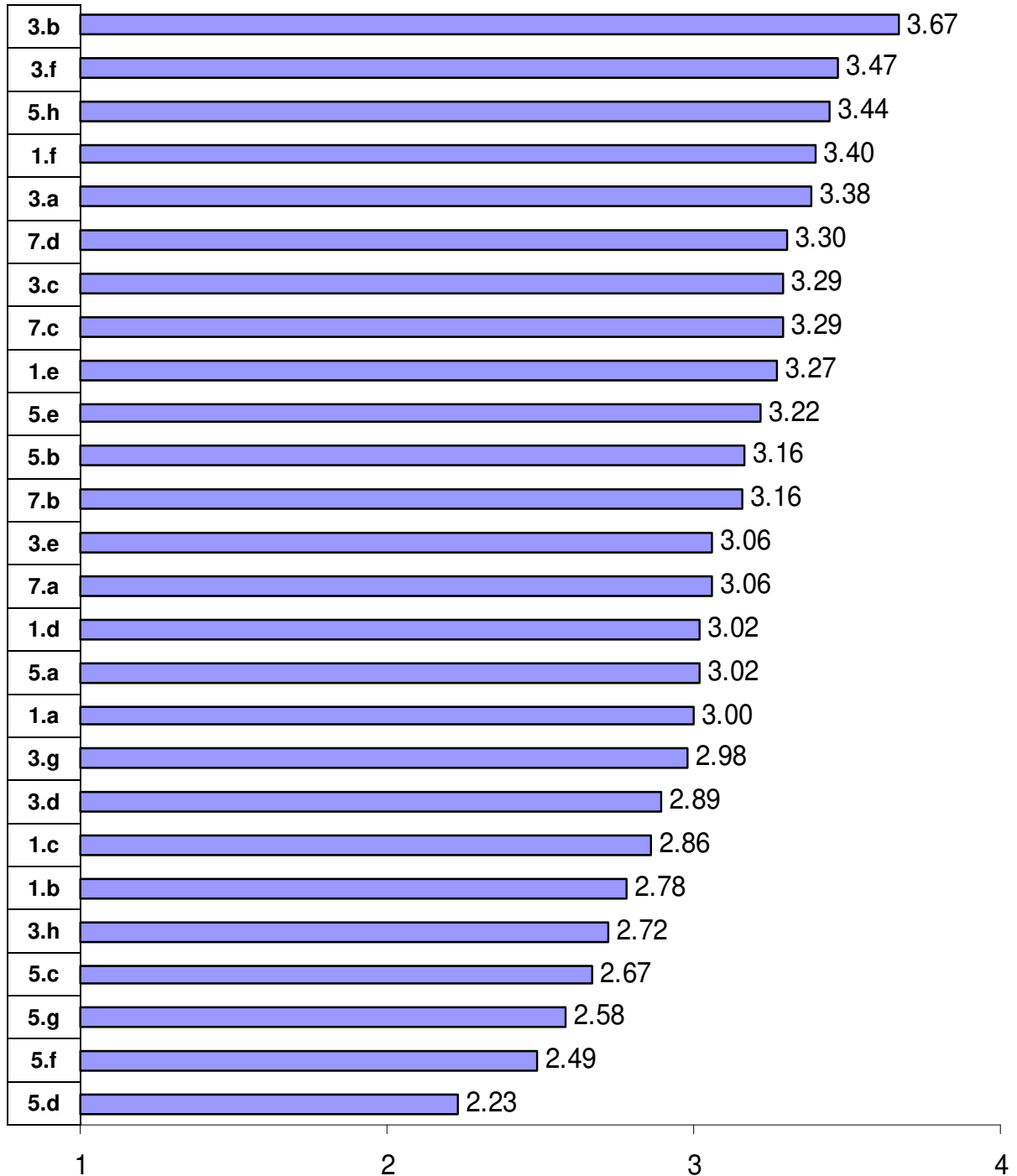


Figure 4 below shows the percentage of employees that indicated each statement as a priority. So, for example, 82.1% of respondents identified statement 1.c “*Autonomy and creativity of all researchers is actively promoted*” as a priority. Any statement that has been indicated as a priority by more than 33% of respondents is considered as a high priority, while statements indicated as a priority by less than 33% of respondents are considered as low priority.

Figure 4: Priority of the statements

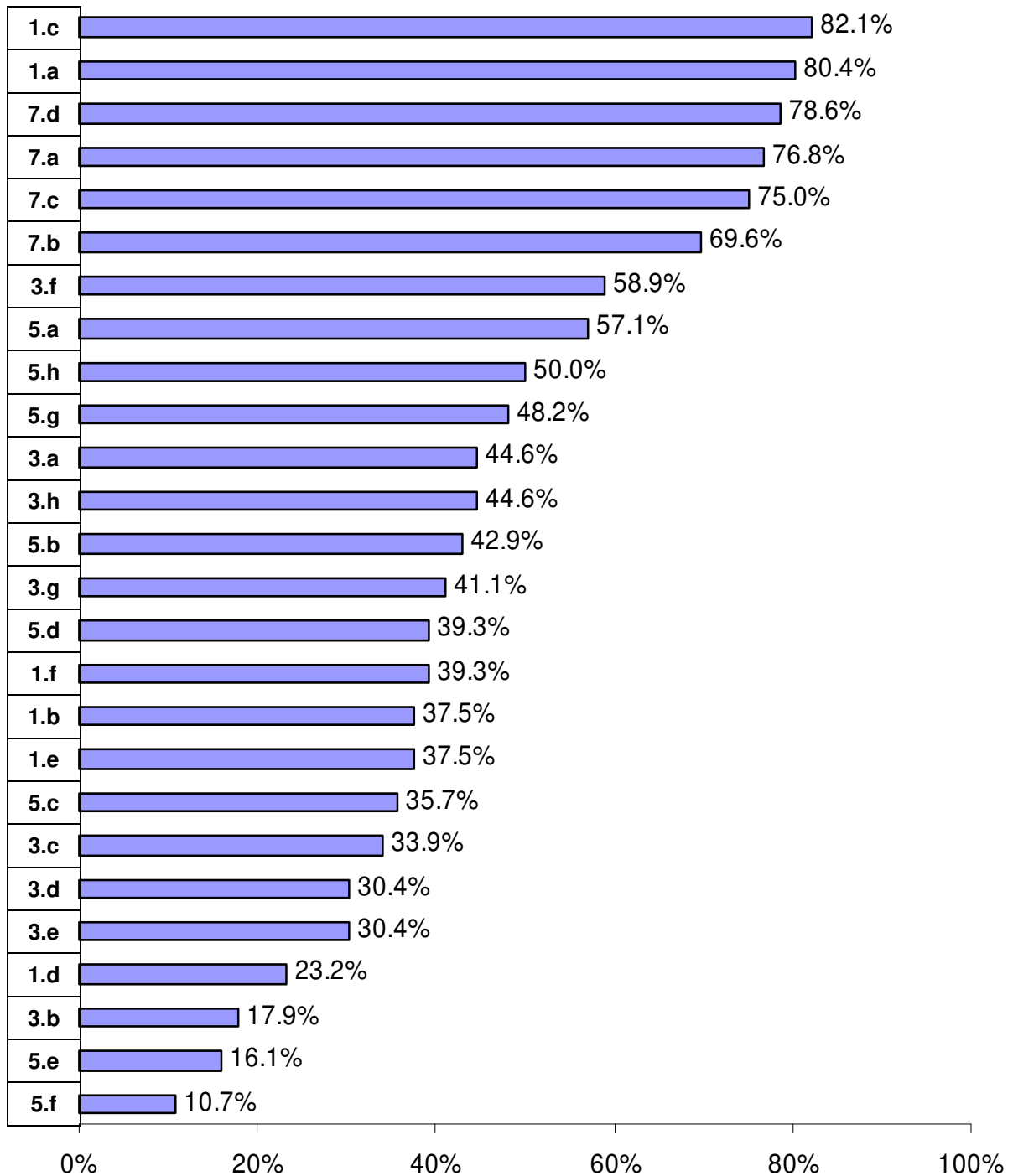


Figure 5 shows the relationship between the level of agreement and priority for each of the statements. The green points are the statements for which the level of agreement is over 3. The red points are the statements rated as high priority (i.e.: chosen as a priority by > 33% of respondents) and for which the level of agreement is low (i.e.: ≤ 3).

Figure 5: Relationship between agreement and priority

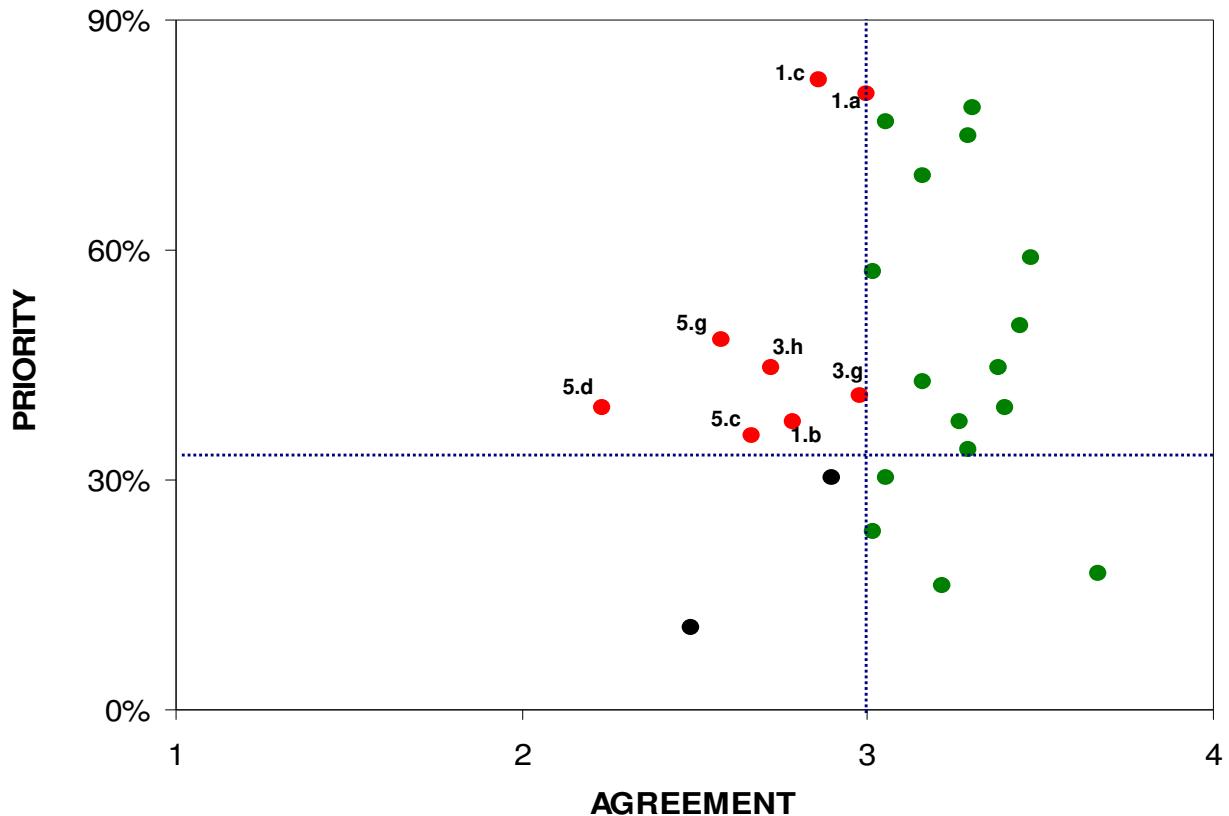


Table 2 lists the statements for each of the red points on the graph, which are the high priority – low agreement areas. An action plan has been developed in order to improve these areas.

Table 2: High priority – low agreement areas

1.c	Autonomy and creativity of all researchers is actively promoted.
1.a	Researchers adopt safe working practices at all times, in line with the national legislation, including taking the necessary precautions for health and safety and for data protection (including information technology disaster recovery) and confidentiality protection.
5.g	Appropriate and attractive conditions in terms of salary and other benefits are assured to researchers regardless of their level and type of contract.
3.h	It is understood that post-doctoral status appointments are transitional with the primary purpose of providing additional professional development opportunities for a research career in the context of long-term career prospects either at CING or other institutions.
3.g	The members of selection panels are adequately trained.
5.d	The Institute ensures that career advice and job placement assistance, either in the Institute or through collaboration with other structures, is offered to researchers at all stages of their careers, to ensure that fixed term employees, at some point, become permanent employees either at CING or other institutions.
1.b	An effective evaluation/appraisal system of the professional performance of all researchers is equally performed regardless of their type of contract.
5.c	Working conditions allow both female and male researchers to combine family and work (e.g. flexible working hours and part time working).

APPENDIX 1 – QUESTIONNAIRE

Dimension 1: Ethical and Professional Aspects

1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding their application in the CING.

(1 fully disagree, 2 moderately disagree, 3 moderately agree, 4 fully agree):

		1	2	3	4	Don't know
a.	Researchers adopt safe working practices at all times, in line with the national legislation, including taking the necessary precautions for health and safety and for data protection (including information technology disaster recovery) and confidentiality protection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	An effective evaluation/appraisal system of the professional performance of all researchers is equally performed regardless of their type of contract.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	Autonomy and creativity of all researchers is actively promoted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	Researchers make sure that their research activities are published to society at large in such a way that they can be understood by non-specialists and therefore improve the public's understanding of science.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	Researchers are familiar with the strategic goals governing their research environment and funding mechanisms and seek all necessary approvals before starting their research or accessing the resources provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f.	Sufficient attention is paid to avoid discrimination on the basis of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language disability, political opinion, social or economic condition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Please mark what you consider to be the three (3) most important statements from above:

<input type="checkbox"/> a	<input type="checkbox"/> b	<input type="checkbox"/> c	<input type="checkbox"/> d	<input type="checkbox"/> e	<input type="checkbox"/> f
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

Dimension 2: Recruitment

3. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding their application in the CING.

(1 fully disagree, 2 moderately disagree, 3 moderately agree, 4 fully agree):

		1	2	3	4	Don't know
a.	Available positions at all levels are adequately advertised nationally.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	The time allowed between the advertisement of the vacancy and the deadline for reply is realistic.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	Candidates, should they ask, are informed prior to the selection about the recruitment process and the selection criteria, the number of available positions and the career development prospects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	Rejected candidates after the selection process, if they ask, are informed about the strengths and weaknesses of their applications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	The required skills have a satisfactorily broad spectrum to encourage as many candidates as possible to apply.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f.	Selection panels have the knowledge and competences needed to assess the candidate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g.	The members of selection panels are adequately trained.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h.	It is understood that post-doctoral status appointments are transitional with the primary purpose of providing additional professional development opportunities for a research career in the context of long-term career prospects either at CING or other institutions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Please mark what you consider to be the three (3) most important statements from above:

<input type="checkbox"/> a	<input type="checkbox"/> b	<input type="checkbox"/> c	<input type="checkbox"/> d	<input type="checkbox"/> e	<input type="checkbox"/> f	<input type="checkbox"/> g	<input type="checkbox"/> h
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

Dimension 3: Working Conditions and Social Security

5. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding their application in the CING.

(1 fully disagree, 2 moderately disagree, 3 moderately agree, 4 fully agree):

		1	2	3	4	Don't know
a.	All researchers are recognized as professionals and are treated accordingly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	Resources such as appropriate equipment, facilities and opportunities, including for remote collaboration over research networks, are adequately provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	Working conditions allow both female and male researchers to combine family and work (e.g. flexible working hours and part time working).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	The Institute ensures that career advice and job placement assistance, either in the Institute or through collaboration with other structures, is offered to researchers at all stages of their careers, to ensure that fixed term employees, at some point, become permanent employees either at CING or other institutions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	Policies and practices specify what rights to intellectual property belong to researchers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f.	There is a standard complaints procedure and there is a mechanism to handle any work-related conflicts, disputes and grievances of researchers, including those concerning conflicts between supervisors and new researchers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g.	Appropriate and attractive conditions in terms of salary and other benefits are assured to researchers regardless of their level and type of contract.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h.	Researchers enjoy the right to be recognized and listed and/or quoted as co-authors of papers, patents, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Please mark what you consider to be the three (3) most important statements from above:

<input type="checkbox"/> a	<input type="checkbox"/> b	<input type="checkbox"/> c	<input type="checkbox"/> d	<input type="checkbox"/> e	<input type="checkbox"/> f	<input type="checkbox"/> g	<input type="checkbox"/> h
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

Dimension 4: Training

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding their application in the CING.

(1 fully disagree, 2 moderately disagree, 3 moderately agree, 4 fully agree):

		1	2	3	4	Don't know
a.	There is a structured and regular relationship between supervisor(s) and researchers (e.g.records of work progress and research findings are maintained and feedback is obtained and applied by means of reports and seminars).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	Senior researchers have a constructive and positive relationship with new researchers, and they set the conditions for efficient transfer of knowledge and the researcher's development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	The Institute ensures that all researchers at any stage of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, are given the opportunity for professional development through formal training, workshops, conferences, e-learning, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	The supervisor(s) for each new researcher is directly defined and they have the time, knowledge, experience, expertise and commitment in order to be able to train and to offer support, guidance and feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Please mark what you consider to be the three (3) most important statements from above:

<input type="checkbox"/> a	<input type="checkbox"/> b	<input type="checkbox"/> c	<input type="checkbox"/> d
----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

9. Please mark the correct statement.

I am:

<input type="checkbox"/> a. a permanent employee
<input type="checkbox"/> b. a fixed-term employee
<input type="checkbox"/> c. none of the above

10. Please mark the correct statement.

I am:

<input type="checkbox"/> a. Principal Investigator
<input type="checkbox"/> b. Post-doctoral fellow
<input type="checkbox"/> c. PhD candidate
<input type="checkbox"/> d. Researcher (if neither a, b or c above apply)
<input type="checkbox"/> e. Administrative staff

Thank you for your participation.