nibrt
National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training

HRS4R Future Action Plan 2026 - 2029

Case number: **2018IE319766**

Name Organisation under review: **NIBRT**



Future Action plan at a Glance 2026 - 2029		
Status	**Action**	**Title**
Extended	18	Up-skill Supervisors to have more open and diverse career conversations with researchers
Extended	26	Opportunities for researchers to work with Business Development
Extended	31	Publish Career Progression Matrix on website
Extended	37	Review complaints and appeals processes for researchers
New	43	Research Bites refresher programme
New	44	NIBRT Safe Labs initiative
New	45	Researcher support and supervisor relationships
New	46	Career development discussions in Performance Review
New	47	Sage HR career conversation reminders
New	48	Gender Pay Gap reporting
New	49	Formal Mentoring Framework and Supervisor Capability Programme
New	50	Inclusive Research Culture and EDI Programme
New	51	Researcher Voice Forum
New	52	Formalise career development in alignment with Research Comp : European Research Competence Framework
New	53	Review and strengthen Steering Committee representation and clarify member roles

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Strategic Narrative for the Future Action Plan 2026-2029

The focus of this action plan is on strengthening researcher career development, enhancing supervision and mentoring practices, fostering an inclusive and supportive research culture, and ensuring that researchers have meaningful opportunities to contribute to organisational decision-making. This will support continued alignment with the next phase of the European Charter for Researchers while reinforcing NIBRT's position as a leading industry-academic research environment.

As NIBRT enters the next phase of its HR Excellence in Research journey, many of the commitments underpinning the Charter remain embedded within NIBRT's policies, practices and organisational culture. NIBRT is already strongly aligned with the principles through its ongoing investment in researcher support, career development, equality, diversity and inclusion, wellbeing, training, mentoring, recruitment practices and research culture. The focus of the next cycle is therefore on strengthening and embedding existing good practice while addressing areas identified through researcher feedback and organisational review.
Over the coming years, particular emphasis will be placed on building supervisory capability, expanding mentoring opportunities, promoting an inclusive and equitable research environment, amplifying the researcher voice through structured engagement mechanisms, and supporting researchers to navigate diverse and sustainable career pathways. NIBRT will also continue to strengthen its ability to measure researcher experience and evaluate the impact of initiatives implemented through the HR Excellence in Research framework. By 2029, NIBRT aims to further embed the principles across organisational culture, researcher experience and strategic decision-making, demonstrating clear evidence of continuous improvement and a mature, researcher-centred environment.

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Action Numbers	Action	Principle	Time	Responsible Unit	Indicator	Status 2026	Remarks Nov 2026
18	Up-skill Supervisors to have more open and diverse career conversations with researchers	(-/+) 28. Career development (+/-) 30/ Access to career advice	Q4 2027	HR	Researchers to draft more realistic CPD plans as part of PR process and rate it accordingly in annual staff survey.	Extended	The Training and Development section of the PR form must be completed by the researcher supported by their reviewer (manager). This is audited by HR and any gaps or area lacking in a plan are highlighted and notified to the Manager. NIBRT Job banding Structure further supports this area. It clearly lays out the competencies required of a researcher to move to the next band level. **Update: Nov 2026** - our latest survey of researchers suggest that further work is required to close the gap identified in Career Development and Access to career advice. While researchers are content that CPD is adequately catered for by NIBRT, it is the focus on longer term career development that remains a gap. NIBRT introduced a Mentoring Programme in 2024 which has greatly improved this for researchers. The next action is to further tailor the Researcher Performance Review form to prompt PIs to have longer term career discussions with researchers at least once per year.
26	Provide opportunities for researchers to work with Business Development to secure more diverse business for NIBRT	(-/+) 29. Value of mobility	Q1 2027	Business Development	5% increase in number of researchers working on Bus Dev projects	Extended	This was fulfilled somewhat by Researchers writing on their own grants, supported by PI and Director of Projects where appropriate, we have specific examples of researchers (not just PIs) developing business through their own Grant writing e.g. Characterisation and

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							Comparability Lab – Manager (Janssen grant success) Senior Manager - Characterisation and Comparability Lab (Thermo lead). With the creation of a new role in NIBRT- Business Manager for research reporting to the CCO, this action can be extended as it will likely receive much enhanced focus from the new Business Manager for Research. **Update: Nov 2026:** NIBRT have now appointed a Business Manager for Research specifically focused on working directly with PIs and the research community to support them secure funding opportunities to enhance their research.
31	Publish Career Progression Matrix on our website	(++) 12. Recruitment (-/+) 13. Recruitment (Code) (-/+) 28. Career development (+/-) 30. Access to career advice	Q4 2027	Marketing	CPM on website in new Careers section	Extended	NIBRT Job Band Structure and Career Framework was launched in 2022. The Structure is published on our website. The Framework will be updated in 2027 to reflect the additional elements of relevance from EU Competence Framework for Researchers, known as Research Comp.
37	Complaints/appeals are handled by our Grievance Procedure which is a published (HR) Policy - it is not Researcher specific but applies to all	(++) 34. Complains/appeals	Q4 2027	HR	Review the Grievance Procedure and Research Handbook - make a decision on any improvements or communication needed to ensure Researchers are aware of their route if	Extended	**Update: Nov 2026:** while the original iteration of this Action Item is complete (i.e. the Research Handbook does link to the Grievance Procedure, and all research staff have access to this) the most recent HRS4R survey highlights a nuance of this that requires more

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	NIBRT employees. We will review the Grievance Procedure and the relevant sections of the Researcher Handbook with a view to ensuring researchers are very clear on how to raise a complaint - and how it will be dealt with once raised. We may reference the Grievance Procedure specifically in the Researcher Handbook, this will be considered as a remedy action.				travelling a complaint.		consideration. Researchers highlight the inherent power imbalance between a Supervisor and a PhD student which renders these traditional employment-based processes impractical for this working relationship. NIBRT are exploring other avenues to allow PhD students to have supervision concerns addressed without fear of repercussion.
43	Introduce recurring agenda item to the monthly Research Bites meetings to provide for refresher training/discussion on various topics covered in the Research Handbook.	(-/+) 2. Ethical principles (-/+) 5. Contractual and legal obligations (+/-) 31. Intellectual Property Rights (-/+) 32. Co-authorship	Q1 2026-2029	Research Office	Improved scores on related topics in 2026 HRS4R survey	New	**Update: Nov 2026:** The Research Office reviews, updates and communicates research-related guidance and resources, including the Research Handbook and delivers regular awareness and refresher sessions through the monthly Research Bites forum to promote a strong culture of research integrity and responsible research conduct.
44	Through the NIBRT Safe Labs initiative, improve documentation, training and equipment	(++) 7. Good practice in research	Q2 2027	H&S	All action items identified in the 2025 H&S Internal Report closed	New	**Update: Nov 2026:** There has been a continued focus on Health and Safety (H&S) matters across the organisation in 2026. This includes the establishment of the H&S Steering Committee (Sept

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	maintenance support to Lab Points of Contacts to implement consistent safety standards and practices across all NIBRT labs.						2024) which meets on a monthly basis to review aspects of H&S. One of the areas the committee has focused on Risk Assessments, particularly in labs. To supplement internal knowledge, NIBRT has also secured an external safety consultant for expert advice and guidance in this area. 1. Increase need for Risk assessments 2. Addition of external consultant into the steering committee and that helps with an external Guidance. 3. Director of Technology, Digital and Data was introduced to the team as the custodian of technology and data expertise.
45	Describe, communicate and reiterate at regular intervals and through multiple channels the options and supports available to researchers, and particularly PhD students, who are experiencing challenges with their NIBRT supervisor.	(++) 34. Complaints/ appeals (++) 36. Relation with supervisors	Q4 2027	HR, Research Office	Improved scores in 2026 HRS4R survey	New	**Update: Nov 2026:** Since the previous review, HR has further strengthened support for PhD students through regular information and engagement sessions, providing dedicated opportunities to discuss researcher supports, career development and the wider PhD experience. In addition, dedicated Microsoft Teams channels have been established to bring PhD students together as a connected community, promoting peer networking, knowledge sharing, collaboration and access to information and support across NIBRT. These initiatives have enhanced communication, visibility of supports and the overall researcher experience.
46	Update the Performance Review	(-/+) 28. Career	Q1 2027	HR	Improved scores in 2026 HRS4R survey. Completed	New	**Update: Nov 2026:**

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	form for researchers to include a section specifically related to long term career discussions that prompts PIs to not just focus on annual upskilling but assisting with career planning.	development (+/-) 30. Access to career advice (++) 38. Continuing Professional Developmen t (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development			forms returned to HR from researchers		The original action was implemented through the introduction of a dedicated Performance Review form for researchers, which included a specific section on long-term career development discussions between researchers and PI's encouraging a focus beyond annual training and skills development. Since then, the process has been further enhanced through the implementation of the paperless Sage HRIS platform. Performance Reviews are now completed digitally, and a dedicated section is included within the system to record career development conversations between researchers and PIs, ensuring that long-term career planning and progression are discussed and documented as part of the annual review process.
47	Add a task to Sage HR that sends reminders to PIs to have targeted career conversations with researchers who are on fixed term contracts 6 months before their contract end date	(-/+) 28. Career development (+/-) 30. Access to career advice (++) 38. Continuing Professional Developmen t	Q2 2027	HR	Tasks being completed on Sage HR	New	**Update: Nov 2026** : Automated reminders/tasks are embedded within the Sage HR system to support annual and mid-year review processes and prompt managers and PI's to engage in career planning discussions with their researchers. Together, these HR communications, HRIS reminders help ensure that career development remains an ongoing and visible priority across the research community. In addition, researchers approaching the end of their contracts are proactively

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							supported by the HR team through engagement with our external recruitment partner. This includes CV screening and review, interview preparation, and guidance on current job market trends to support career transition and future employment opportunities.
48	Complete and publish NIBRT's Gender Pay Gap report internally and externally.	(++) 27. Gender balance	Q4 2026	HR	Report available	New	**Update: Nov 2026 :** NIBRT gender pay report 2025 is published on the website. 2026 Report will be published in November 2026 in line with legislative requirements.
49	Formal mentoring framework and supervisor capability programme	(+/+) 28. Career development (++) 38. Continuing Professional Development (+/+) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	Q2 2027 – Q1 2029	HR, Research Office, Lead Researchers	- Annual mentoring participation and satisfaction levels measured and reported each year. - A percentage of PIs and senior (lead) researchers trained. - Improved survey results relating to supervision, mentoring and career development support.	New	
50	Inclusive Research Culture and EDI Programme	(++) 10. Non discrimination (++) 27. Gender balance (++) 23. Research environment	Q1 2028	HR, SLT, Research Office.	- Inclusion and belonging scores in the employee and HRS4R surveys. - Participation in EDI activities will be monitored annually.	New	**Update: Nov 2026 :** Continue to strengthen an inclusive research culture through engagement with national initiatives, including active participation by the Research Office in the All-Island Research Culture Network (AIRCN). This participation supports alignment with emerging research culture standards, researcher development,

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							inclusion, and institutional best practice across Ireland and the UK.
51	Researcher Voice Forum	(++) 23. Research environment (+/+) 24. Working conditions	Q1 2027 – Q1 2029	HR with the RIC Manager, CSO, Research Office and the HRS4R Steering Committee	- Annual forum held with feedback documented and reviewed by the HRS4R Steering Committee. - Number of researchers attending and submitting topics, with representation across career stages, including PhD candidates. - Feedback report ("You said, we did") published internally.	New	
52	Formalise career development in alignment with Research Comp :European Research Competence Framework	(+/+) 28. Career development	Q4 2028- Q1 2029	HR, Research Office, Senior Leadership Team.	- Updated career framework approved and communicated. - Revised role descriptors published. - Career progression guidance available to researchers and managers. - Positive feedback on career clarity in researcher surveys.	New	
53.	Review and strengthen Steering Committee representation and clarify member roles	(++) 23. Research environment (+/+) 40. Supervision and managerial duties	Q2 2027	HR, Research Office, HRS4R Steering Committee	- Steering Committee membership reviewed and documented. - Representation from researchers across job bands and career stages achieved. - Roles, responsibilities and terms of reference	New	

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					communicated to members.		

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