

# Ethical and professional aspects

## Highlights

Oniris has had an ethics advisor since 2021, and all new staff at the school undergo in-house training on "the ethics and duties of public officials". The school enforces obligations of neutrality, obedience and integrity, and prohibits plagiarism, discrimination, cheating and conflicts of interest. Oniris regularly updates its gender equality plan. Training on gender equality was provided to members of the enlarged management committee in June 2022, and Oniris cooperates with the Centre d'information sur les droits des femmes et des familles (CIDFF) on these issues.

Oniris works with two ethics committees: CERVO (Comité d'éthique de la recherche clinique vétérinaire et de l'épidémiologie) for veterinary clinical and epidemiological research, and CREA (Comité régional d'éthique animale) for the review of animal research applications.

Oniris has quality control processes at school level and a quality advisor in each of its units. Oniris' Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) department draws up procedures and organizes training sessions (on chemicals, first aid for first-aiders, etc.). Oniris has a personal data protection delegate and a plan monitored by the objectives and performance contract. Oniris has a financial information system for forecasting and controlling expenses.

Oniris promotes the results of its platforms and research units both internally and externally. For all research projects involving industrial partners, Oniris works with a technology transfer acceleration company (Ouest Valorisation). Researchers receive support (including model contracts) from Oniris support functions. Oniris takes part in scientific outreach events (e.g. Fête de la Science) and contributes to public policy.

Research technicians, engineers and administrative staff are subject to an annual professional appraisal. Mid-career researchers and teacher-researchers are required to pass the Habilitation à diriger des recherches (HDR) in order to supervise doctoral students and be eligible for promotion. Each doctoral student has an Individual Follow-up Committee (Comité de Suivi Individuel - CSI) which annually reviews his or her progress and discusses his or her future professional integration.

## Areas for improvement

Researchers' rights and duties in terms of ethics could be more systematically communicated and reiterated, and a referent on questions of research ethics and scientific integrity could be appointed. Oniris could also draw closer to existing ethics committees for research involving human beings in food testing such as sensory analysis. The community could be better informed and monitored in the event of inappropriate concurrent activity or conflict of interest. Signature delegations could be improved. The community suffers from a lack of training in intellectual property.

Scientific results could be better shared with the school's community, regardless of status, and original, dynamic communication formats could be developed to enhance outreach initiatives. The community also believes that dialogue between the school and its main industrial and institutional partners should involve researchers to a greater extent.

Lecturers are not evaluated by the establishment, in accordance with their status. The HDR creates several problems when evaluating foreign candidates. Although Oniris allows its researchers to use Peer Community In (PCI) (a non-profit open science evaluation and open access publication process), these publications are not yet taken into account by the Ministry.

# Recruitment and selection

## Highlights

Oniris' HR department applies the recommendations of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty's recruitment guide (2019), which provides guarantees against discrimination and unequal treatment of applicants. The HRD ensures that no sexist stereotypes are conveyed on published job/position offers (with gender-neutral job listings) and shares

its recruitment data on gender diversity. It also ensures transparency vis-à-vis internal and external candidates, and can justify and document its recruitment procedures.

As indicated by the Ministry, Oniris organizes interviews with at least two recruiters, including the relevant manager. Each interview is conducted to assess the objective criteria (skills and motivation) of the application and its suitability to any constraints/specificities of the position, by filling in an individual assessment grid.

Oniris clearly details the tasks and corresponding skills required in the job descriptions. The Ministry's job description template is used in particular for mobility programs, and indicates the candidate's career path (category, pay group), professional environment, the purpose of the position, its missions and the related skills expected, as well as the contact details of the people in charge of the recruitment process. For staff recruited by Oniris, the selection committee objectively values non-linear career paths. The contract staff charter provides a harmonized framework for the recruitment, contracting and remuneration of contract staff.

In terms of mobility, Oniris applies the "Congé pour Recherches ou Conversions Thématiques" (CRCT) scheme, which enables teaching staff to spend 6 or 12 months in external research laboratories (including foreign ones) as visiting researchers to deepen, begin or finalize research projects. Doctoral students are strongly encouraged to spend at least a few months abroad during their doctorate, with Oniris favoring co-supervision stays with a foreign laboratory, as well as three-month international stays for doctoral students without international co-supervision. More broadly, Oniris is in line with French law, which sets out the conditions for post-doctoral work and is currently introducing specific post-doctoral contracts.

Finally, Oniris recognizes foreign diplomas as required by French law: European diplomas are automatically recognized, while non-EU diplomas can be recognized by the school.

### **Areas for improvement**

Recruitment processes are largely harmonized, but some selection panels do not include members from the private sector or members from other countries. Problems can also arise when departments target specific agents in their recruitment requests. Finally, the recruitment process for new positions within Oniris remains poorly understood.

Although recruitment standards are well established and respected, they remain unclear to many members of the community, which can lead to misunderstandings and tensions. Oniris is also unable to provide candidates with a salary estimate (due to the complexity and specificities of the administrative salary grid), which can lead to recruitment difficulties. More generally, job descriptions could be communicated earlier and be more exhaustive.

Finally, while Oniris postdoctoral researchers emphasize the clarity of their missions, they regret the difficulties in coordinating with their supervisors, leading to peaks in activity of varying degrees. Similarly, certain aspects of post-doctoral contractual conditions could be better explained or presented in contracts and collective agreements.

## **Working conditions**

### **Highlights**

Oniris researchers benefit from a network of partner institutions of higher education and research, enabling them to interact with other high-level experts. Oniris benefits from high-quality technical equipment, and efforts to digitize protocols have been effectively implemented. Oniris' two campuses encourage the pursuit of a wide variety of missions, and the space available for office work is satisfactory.

The community recognizes the quality of the support services provided by Oniris. Local managers have facilitated internal processes, and the Comité d'Hygiène, de Sécurité et des Conditions de Travail (CHSCT) (now the Conseil Social d'Administration (CSA)) is considered effective. Oniris staff are also supported by the SATT "Ouest valorisation", and by Oniris' research and legal affairs departments on intellectual property issues.

All staff are paid according to their status. All researchers and IATOS are entitled to the same social security benefits. Foreign researchers are systematically referred to the Maison des Chercheurs Etrangers for help in accessing social security rights.

The HR Department ensures that no sexist stereotypes are conveyed in the information provided on published job offers. More broadly, Oniris is committed to quality and needs, and contributes to the professional and personal development of its employees.

In the event of a breach of employee safety or working conditions, permanent employees can call on the COCT (Cellule d'Observation des Conditions de Travail). Contract staff may refer the matter to the Joint Consultative Commission. More generally, employees can lodge a hierarchical complaint and/or an appeal with Oniris' general management. Oniris can also call on the support of third parties (coaches, work psychologists, support structures). For conflicts between PhDs and their supervisors, the doctoral school provides support and can appoint a mediator.

Finally, research teams are fully integrated and represented in decision-making processes (central decision-making bodies, management bodies and steering support bodies).

### **Areas for improvement**

Performance indicators are not fully communicated and shared within the community. More generally, staff recognition could be improved, particularly for IATOS and R1 researchers.

Researchers R2, R3 and R4 would like to see improved technical support and project administration. Researchers R1 and R2 would like to be more involved in research projects, while IATOS are looking for better project communication. The community stresses the difficulty of identifying the right contact person for each department, including career development issues.

As far as working conditions are concerned, the infrastructure suffers from recurrent heating and insulation problems, and social spaces may be lacking. The Oniris memo on remote working is not applied uniformly in all units.

Community members could be better informed about internal mobility opportunities and available training sessions and, conversely, they could better inform the school of their needs.

Finding the right balance between teaching and research is a major problem, with teaching hours encroaching on research hours. Meanwhile, in some teaching teams, the overall volume of compulsory teaching hours exceeds 192 hours per year. Exceptions to overtime limits also remain unclear for some teachers.

Finally, 66% of Oniris staff are women, which means that there is still progress to be made in encouraging women to occupy key management and supervisory positions.

## **Training and development**

### **Highlights**

A "training kit for managers" has recently been created for all newcomers with managerial responsibilities. A memo made this training kit mandatory for all new managers. It trains managers in skills such as professional interviews, running meetings, ethics, the professional environment. The Regional Institute of Public Administration (IRA) also offers management training open to Oniris public officials.

Oniris develops excellence and the permanent adaptation of its skills, but also contributes to the professional and personal development of its employees. The school relies on a quality approach and consideration of needs.

Oniris offers a wide variety of continuing professional development programs. The school thus offers the possibility of developing ad-hoc training sessions in order to provide its community of researchers with adequate knowledge and know-how. The current registration system allows agents to register directly for training sessions.

### **Areas for improvement**

Although recent managerial efforts have greatly improved the relationship between supervisors and agents, the community emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships which continue to play a major role in the development of an agent's career. Managers, who are often teachers, often lack managerial training, which leads to potential difficulties in their responsibilities and in managing the career development of their team members. Beyond the new Manager package, the annual training campaign is not sufficiently followed.

More specifically, Oniris postdoctoral fellows emphasize the clarity of their missions, but regret the difficulties of coordination with their supervisors, which lead to more or less high peaks of activity. Certain aspects of the contractual conditions of doctoral and postdoctoral agents could be better explained or presented in contracts and collective agreements, in order to clarify the specific situation and thus avoid possible management difficulties. In addition, thesis supervisors are not systematically trained in the supervision of doctoral students.

Finally, members of the community could be better informed of the training sessions available and could reciprocally better inform the school of their training needs, for example on intellectual property rights when dealing with external actors within the framework of industrial collaborations, which has been identified as currently insufficient.