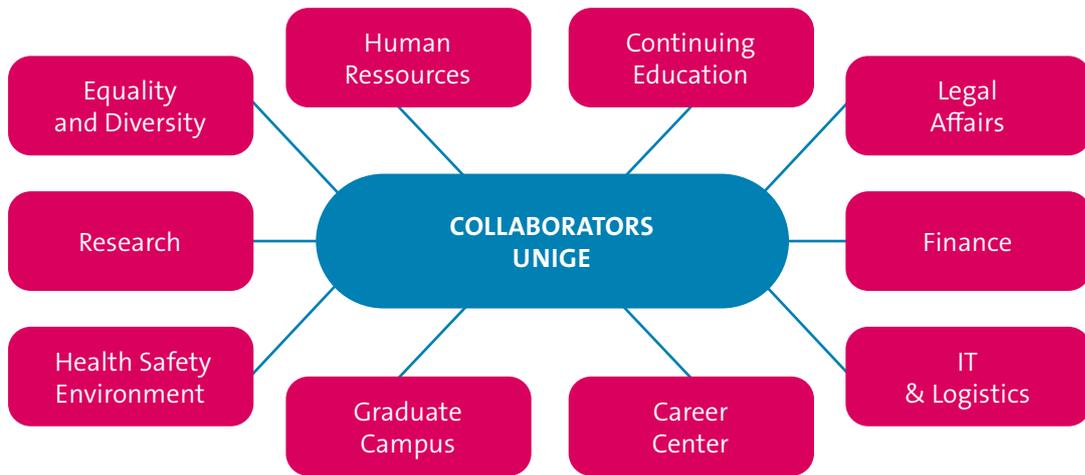


# **HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY**

**PEOPLE AND CULTURES  
WORKING TOGETHER  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA**



**UNIVERSITÉ  
DE GENÈVE**



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## WHY A HUMAN RESSOURCES STRATEGY AT UNIGE?

Human resources (HR) at the University of Geneva (UNIGE) play a key role in the success of the institution's missions, namely teaching, research and service to the community. The UNIGE is proposing a strategy which, backed by the [Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct](#) for the Geneva Institutions of Higher Education, specifies and develops the vision expressed in the agreements on objectives in terms of excellence in human resources management, focused on the development of the University's missions while supporting the quality of the working climate and the professional development of individuals. This strategy fixes 28 objectives articulated around the following four axes:

1. Defining and driving forward a strong shared managerial culture
2. Ensuring a caring, stimulating and inclusive working environment
3. Promoting and enhancing user-oriented HR management
4. Supporting talent and career development

The UNIGE is committed to defining, disseminating and applying a set of good managerial practices, based on the values of the UNIGE, namely loyalty towards colleagues, superiors and the institution, pride in the qualities and performance of the institution in the fields of teaching, research and administration, zero tolerance of any inappropriate behaviour (sexism, homophobia, racism, etc.), and commitment to the general interest whatever the position.

In all entities, the working environment must be imbued with these values and the fundamental principles of work, i.e. respect for people and trust, a sense of the general interest, a collaborative spirit and a spirit of initiative, which must be shared by all collaborators whether they belong to the teaching, research administrative or technical staff.

This strategy aims to achieve objectives such as the harmonisation of HR processes, the improvement of working conditions, the fight against situations of job insecurity or precariousness, the prevention of conflict situations, the handling of inappropriate behaviour, the development of skills throughout a career, mobility within the UNIGE, the enhancement and retention of talent, and the integration of greater diversity among members of the University community. The implementation of the resulting policies will have to be based on a profound transformation of digital tools. By reducing administrative burdens, these tools will make it possible to apply clear, transparent, consistent, fair procedures, and to develop HR functions.

The impact of this strategy will have to be regularly assessed, with staff being consulted on a regular basis, in order to measure the performance of HR processes, the quality of the working climate, skills development, career evolution and the elimination of harassment situations, for the benefit of staff development, the efficiency of the various entities and the influence of the University.

## WHAT ARE THE SPECIFICS OF WORK AT UNIGE?

### STRENGTHENING HUMAN CAPITAL AND IMPROVING WORKING CONDITIONS IN UNIVERSITIES

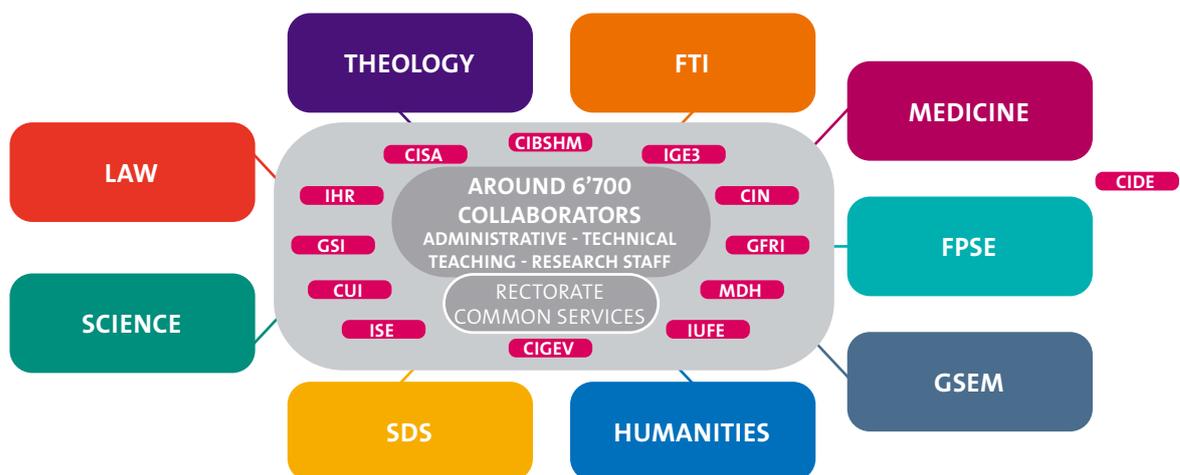
This is an objective that most European universities are facing today. The HR culture in universities has not evolved at the same pace as in other sectors, probably because this aspect of academic life was rarely considered a priority. Universities are complex organisations, made up of faculties and centres with their own cultures, whose activities are based on a very diverse set of professional skills linked to teaching, research, infrastructure management, logistics and communication, to name but a few. The management of Human Resources is therefore particularly complex!

## IDENTIFYING AND RETAINING THE TALENT NEEDED TO DEVELOP THE UNIVERSITY'S MISSIONS

To develop their missions in a competitive environment at national and international level, universities need to improve the human framework in which they produce new knowledge, develop technology and pass on knowledge to students and the general public. With this in mind, HR policies must ensure effective and attentive management of human capital, offer smooth administrative management to users, contribute to improving the managerial skills of line managers, and support the development of staff skills and their mobility. On the other hand, line managers must maintain a healthy and creative working environment, regularly assess the performance of their staff and support their career development, whether academic, administrative or technical.

## INTEGRATING THE COMPLEXITY OF PROFESSIONS AND STAFF STATUSES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

UNIGE employs around 6,700 people with a wide range of skills in more than 80 different professions. The administrative complexity is particularly high because staff members are attached to two distinct statutes, that of administrative and technical staff (PAT) or that of teaching staff (PENS), which are governed by two different sets of regulations. Another level of administrative complexity is the financing of salaries, which relies mainly on public funds (Department of Public Education of the Canton of Geneva) but also largely on external funds obtained by researchers from national or international research institutions (Swiss National Fund, SEFRI, European Funds, etc.), foundations or other entities. Given this complexity, a high-performance HR management information system is essential to support smooth and efficient administrative operations as well as objective, rigorous HR management based on data that reflects reality.



Structure of the University of Geneva, the big rectangles represent the nine Faculties and the small pink rectangles, the 13 inter-faculty centers. 64% of employees are teaching staff (PENS = Research and Teaching staff including doctoral students and postdocs, Professors), 36% Administrative and Technical staff (PAT). Almost 70% are part-time, and 49% are international ([Stat'UNIGE](#)).

## WHAT ARE THE HUMAN RESSOURCES MISSIONS OF UNIGE?

### TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION, ESPECIALLY INTELLECTUALLY

As part of its mission to produce and transmit knowledge, the University is responsible for the training, particularly the intellectual training, of the next generation that society needs to ensure its development and meet the social, environmental and scientific demands to which it is subject. To fulfill these missions, the UNIGE must ensure the acquisition, provision and retention of human capital endowed with the know-how and interpersonal skills needed to achieve them.

### PROMOTING COMMITMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY TO SOCIETY

In implementing its HR missions, the UNIGE demands and values the commitment and responsibility of each employee, particularly regarding societal and environmental issues. Staff members have a duty to promote, both internally and externally, a way of thinking that is based on a rational approach. UNIGE is committed to the expression of a diversity of opinions and encourages constructive dialogue in a debate that respects all individuals, whatever their views.

### ENCOURAGING OPEN COLLABORATION, BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY

The UNIGE must encourage open collaboration between the various players within the institution, with national and international academic institutions, with non-academic partners from the economic, social and/or associative spheres, and between the university community and the community at large. These collaborations open the door to mobility.

#### THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF WORK AT THE UNIGE

**Respect and trust:** All employees are respected and regarded as honest, responsible, committed and motivated.

**Service:** Everyone works for students, the academic community and/or the community at large.

**Collaborative spirit:** Everyone works in a spirit of collaboration, both internally and externally.

**Initiative:** Everyone's spirit of initiative is encouraged for the benefit of the institution.

### PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN HUMAN RESOURCES

The UNIGE has a duty to promote excellence in the field of human resources, whether this means ensuring quality recruitment that encourages a diversity of skills and experience, strengthening the university's performance through flexible and efficient organisation, providing the best possible framework for student and doctoral training as well as research activities, supporting the professional development and career evolution of those involved in academic, technical or administrative careers, or protecting those whose personal integrity has been compromised.

### ENSURING A HIGH-QUALITY, APPROPRIATE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

UNIGE staff must benefit from a high-quality, ergonomic working environment that guarantees safety as well as physical and mental health. This environment must foster professional fulfillment for all, as well as the emergence and recognition of talent.

### DEVELOPING MODERN, DYNAMIC ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT

The UNIGE must implement a modern and dynamic administrative management system for HR processes, independently guarantee the proper functioning of HR processes and ensure the security of information concerning staff members.

## PROMOTING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

UNIGE management, in synergy with line managers and representatives of the Faculties and Interfaculty Centers, must promote the ongoing development of mission-related skills, in particular business skills, as well as the management and leadership skills of team leaders and unit managers. Staff training and mobility must maintain their employability, both internally and externally.

## SUPPORTING EVOLUTION IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

UNIGE management must anticipate transformations in the HR field, in particular by contributing to digital, technological, social and environmental innovations. In synergy with the heads of the various entities, who identify the evolution of the professions that concern them, HR experts must contribute to the development of skills in the management of new working modes such as teleworking.

## WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES FOR EACH OF THE STRATEGIC AREAS?

### 1. Defining and driving forward a strong shared management culture (6 objectives)

The UNIGE makes every effort to provide the university community with a pleasant and respectful working environment. To a large extent, this environment is conditioned by the type of management of the person(s) in charge, and the UNIGE management wishes to foster a strong shared managerial culture.

## BASING HIERARCHICAL AUTHORITY ON EXEMPLARY BEHAVIOUR

Line managers are expected to behave in an exemplary manner, in line with the values of the UNIGE and its fundamental principles of work.

## TRAINING IN POSITIVE MANAGEMENT

The UNIGE values respectful and effective management, which, whatever the size of the work group, favours an organisation of work that supports the motivation of team members, their spirit of collaboration and initiative, and the effectiveness of teams. The UNIGE asks PENS and PAT managers to develop their management skills and organises appropriate training.

## SUPPORTING LINE MANAGERS IN THEIR MANAGERIAL TASKS

In addition to management training, HR experts inform and advise line managers, particularly on the rights and duties of their team members. They raise their awareness of conflict prevention, inform them of the resources available, help them adapt to changes such as teleworking, and provide them with appropriate support in the event of managerial difficulties.

## ENSURING THAT APPOINTMENT PROCESSES ARE FAIR AND COMPLIANT

Whatever the nature of the position, the conformity and fairness of the appointment process is guaranteed, in particular by asking members of committees, boards and colleges to systematically apply rules of transparency designed to avoid conflicts of interest, and by relying on independent external experts where necessary.



## VALUING THE QUALITY OF HR MANAGEMENT DURING TENURE, RENEWAL AND PROMOTION PROCEDURES

The quality of management is now part of the process for evaluating the performance of faculty members. This evaluation is based on information provided by the deans, and when appropriate, on the opinions of collaborators and students, which reflect the quality of the group's management. High-quality management and mentoring activities (personalised support for young researchers) should be valued alongside administrative, teaching, research and community service activities.

## COMMUNICATING CASES OF SANCTIONS LINKED TO TRANSGRESSION OF HR RULES

Cases of transgression of HR rules by members of the UNIGE are examined by the Rector's Office and, if necessary, investigated by an external expert. In its annual management report, the Rectorate anonymously discloses cases that have led to sanctions in order to combat the feeling of impunity within the UNIGE.

## **2. Ensuring a caring, stimulating and inclusive working environment (8 objectives)**

### ENSURING A SAFE AND CARING WORKING ENVIRONMENT

HR experts contribute to a safe working environment by checking that the contractual terms and conditions of employment offered to each employee are compliant, and by ensuring that line managers exchange views with their employees at regular intervals to assess the services provided and mutual satisfaction or lack of satisfaction with services and/or the working climate. HR experts intervene promptly in conflict situations.

### ENSURING THAT WORKING CONDITIONS ARE ADAPTED TO THE INDIVIDUAL AND TO SPECIFICATIONS

HR experts analyse working conditions, notably in collaboration with STEPS, the service in charge of occupational health, environment, prevention and safety, which is responsible for site ergonomics. In conjunction with external resources (occupational medicine, mediators, psychologists from the Cellule Confiante, etc.), HR experts ensure the quality and suitability of structures to prevent physical or mental health problems linked to working conditions and, where necessary, to deal with them.

### PROMOTING DIVERSITY THROUGH AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH AT UNIGE

In collaboration with the Equality & Diversity Service, the HR Division promotes an inclusive approach, actively supporting equal pay and the integration and promotion of women, people with disabilities, and people who may be discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender, social or cultural origin, or religion.

### MONITORING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF UNIGE STAFF

HR experts manage and monitor the life cycle of staff members, welcoming new employees, informing them of their rights and duties, and ensuring their smooth integration, particularly that of non-French speakers, in collaboration with the Welcome Center and/or the Graduate Campus. HR experts develop skills and performance appraisal as a standard practice and identify career-long professional develop-

ment needs in line with the evolution of UNIGE projects. They also provide information and advice to staff wishing to move within or outside the UNIGE, or to prepare for retirement.

### ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF THE WORKING CLIMATE

UNIGE's management\* seeks to keep abreast at regular intervals of working conditions within the University to ensure that they not only comply with current regulations, but that the working environment is stimulating and conducive to the realisation of professional projects related to its missions. The job satisfaction of members of the various UNIGE entities is regularly assessed by independent bodies. HR experts analyse and monitor the indicators (absenteeism, turnover) that provide information on well-being/ill-being at work.

### MANAGING WORK-RELATED CONFLICTS WITH NEUTRALITY, COMPETENCE AND HUMANITY

Tensions and conflicts are part and parcel of the working world, and their management should be approached at the earliest possible stage. HR experts provide a sympathetic ear to each party and suggest responsible conduct aimed at re-establishing a healthy working climate, if necessary, with the support of external resource persons.

### DETECTING AND COMBATING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

The UNIGE takes particular care to protect the personal integrity of its members, demanding o tolerance for such situations. HR experts, backed up where necessary by legal experts, apply measures aimed at preventing and combating situations of personal injury or discrimination with competence and humanity. Staff members can contact the psychologists of the Cellule Confiance, who are available at short notice to listen, assess situations and suggest a course of action in complete confidentiality and independence. In the event of physical or verbal violence, the *Violence Prevention Unit* can react immediately.

### LISTENING TO UNIGE EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES

UNIGE management meets regularly with representatives of the various UNIGE bodies, including the personnel committee, representative associations of doctoral and post-doctoral fellows, research and teaching staff (CCER), professors, administrative and technical staff (PAT), to hear their expectations, criticisms and proposals.

## 3. Promoting and enhancing user-oriented HR management (6 objectives)

The objectives set out below are designed to make administrative management of HR processes easier and more transparent by 2025.

### ENHANCING A USER INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION POLICY

HR Division management works with the departments concerned to plan information campaigns on the resources available to employees. HR experts communicate rules, directives and documents relating to HR processes, ensuring that they are understood by users, particularly non-French speakers.

### DEVELOPING A SERVICE - AND SOLUTION-ORIENTED CULTURE

The management is developing a service and solutions-oriented culture within the HR division, a culture that involves all members and draws on their spirit of collaboration and initiative.

### SUPPORTING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR USERS

The digital transformation of HR management has been launched in 2022, with a target start date of 2024. The implementation of a new HR Information System (HRIS), interconnected with the financial sector and adapted to the efficient management of HR processes, will require support for administrations and HR relays within faculties and centers, to enable them to play an active role in the change. These new tools will enable efficiency gains, less task repetition and better information management.

\*UNIGE management comprises the rectorate, the heads of the common services, the deans and heads of inter-faculty centers.

## STREAMLINING AND RATIONALISING THE ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT OF HR PROCESSES

HR Division management, in collaboration with the departments concerned, is committed to streamlining the administrative management of HR processes, in particular by mobilising governance bodies around the adequacy, or even simplification, of regulations and directives to optimise HR processes and ensure their consistency with institutional needs.

## DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

UNIGE management is developing a culture of evaluation, particularly with regard to the efficiency of HR processes and HR Division services, using the HRIS to monitor and develop HR management performance indicators.

## ENSURING THE RIGHT MATCH BETWEEN MISSIONS AND HR RESOURCES AT THE UNIGE

HR Division management regularly assesses its requirements in order to balance its strengths with the respective needs of faculties, interfaculty centers and common services, and to anticipate any necessary adjustments to allocated resources.

## **4. Supporting talent and career development (8 objectives)**

UNIGE is committed to supporting employees in managing their career paths and developing their skills, whether in academic, technical or administrative careers, as well as attracting, identifying and retaining talent in all areas.

### SUPPORTING CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL STAFF (PAT)

UNIGE is committed to supporting the career development of its PAT members through continuing education and mobility. The HR Division supports the creation of HR development centers, such as the one in charge of promoting internal mobility.

### DEVELOPING TALENT MANAGEMENT WITHIN PAT

The Rectorate entrusts the HR Division and the departments concerned with the development of a talent management program tailored to PAT members (mentoring, coaching, etc.).

### ENSURING A CONSISTENT CAREER MANAGEMENT POLICY PAT

UNIGE management ensures that administrative and technical career management and promotion practices are consistent across its various entities and support the employability of staff both internally and externally.

### SUPPORTING VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR APPRENTICES AT UNIGE

The HR Division consolidates apprentice training capacity and contributes to achieving the minimum quota of 4% of apprentices trained each year in all UNIGE faculties, inter-faculty centers and administrative departments.

## SUPPORTING DOCTORAL AND POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWS WITH GRADUATE CAMPUS

The Graduate Campus supports the academic experience of doctoral and post-doctoral fellows, from their integration in Geneva - particularly for non-French speakers - through to the search for their first job, in cooperation with the Career Center. The Graduate Campus encourages the acquisition of professional skills, complementary to scientific skills, with a view to moving into non-academic careers.

## HELPING YOUNG SCIENTISTS DESIGN THEIR CAREERS

In order to actively support the professional development of young researchers, the Rectorate encourages faculties to offer a mentoring program, setting goals and evaluating performance in conjunction with participatory councils and representative associations. More generally, members of the Research & Teaching staff (CCER) should have access to a body within their faculty to advise them on career development.

## SUPPORTING AND VALUING THE TRANSITION TO A NON-ACADEMIC CAREER

Non-academic careers must be valued by academics, and this choice must be supported for those who wish to make it. The UNIGE Career Center must support the job search process, as well as facilitating access to a continuing education program tailored to the professional project. Through its activities, the Alumni Association fosters exchanges between professional circles and young scientists at UNIGE and promotes the value of doctoral training and the university career path to non-academic professional circles.

## ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ACADEMICS

Those planning to embark on an academic career should be informed about the different stages of this pathway and the evaluation criteria at each stage. They should also be able to benefit from exchanges with a mentor. Those wishing to compete for national or international funds can benefit from personalised support, notably from the Research & Grant Office. The UNIGE management team assists non-tenured professors in developing their projects and advancing their careers.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In response to a request from the State of Geneva's Internal Audit Service in its audit 19-42, this strategy was drawn up in 2020 by Brigitte Galliot, Vice-Rector, and Liliane Zossou, Deputy for Human Resources, then later revisited in 2021 with Aude Thorel, Director of Human Resources and Astrid Ruffa, Deputy for Human Resources. This strategy would not have been possible without the external collaboration of Leila Ksontini and Mehdi Guessous (Vicario consulting), who made a major contribution to its structuring, as well as Steeves Emmenegger (Emmenegger Compétences Conseils) and Alexandre Graf (SHAKE.swiss consulting), who shed light on the evolution of the HR function within the University.

Along this process, thoughts and proposals were also put forward by members of the UNIGE HR Division, Deans and Centre Directors, members of the Strategic Orientation Council, members of the Personnel Commission, associations representing Administrative and Technical staff (PAT-UNIGE), the Teaching and Research Staff (ACCORDER), the Professors (APUG), the UNIGE Board of Directors, the Administrators of the Faculties and Interfaculty Centres, the members of the University Assembly and the members of the Ethics and Deontology Committee. We would like to thank them all warmly for their interest and insightful comments.

