

# University of Turin

Expanding the Scope  
of Researcher Funding  
Opportunities

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With Research Professional, the University of Turin gave its researchers access to new funding opportunities that they did not know about, supporting the university's objective to expand its research efforts on the international level.

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***“... Our researchers were able to find funding opportunities that they didn't know about, and for which they were eligible”***

Chiara Abrescia, University of Turin



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### **About University of Turin**

Hosting over 74,000 students, the University of Turin is one of the largest Italian universities. It has a remarkable research legacy in traditional subjects including history, philosophy, law, economics and medicine, and is branching out into modern sectors such as food science, social politics, IT, performing arts and communication sciences. The medical diagnostic, biosensoristics and nanotechnologies research centers are amongst the best ones in Italy.

### **Supporting a Strategic Objective**

One of the most ancient and prestigious Italian universities, the University of Turin has earned an international reputation for high quality teaching and research. But that doesn't stop them from aiming higher. "One of our strategic objectives for research is to increase the participation of our researchers in competitive funding, especially at the international level," explains Chiara Abrescia, a scientific officer and research facilitator in staff at the Research Directorate of the university. "Our goal is to give them all possible information to increase their participation and apply to as many funding opportunities as possible."

That meant replacing a homegrown, manual system with a modern tool. "A couple of years ago, in 2016, we started investigating the available tools to determine which could be the best for us," Abrescia recalls. "We compared three different tools and did a trial of each one. We also met with the companies, so that we could go a little bit more in-depth in understanding the advantages and drawbacks of each tool."

### **Better Results, More Opportunities**

"We had a small sample of researchers test the tools," Abrescia continues. "They represented the three different areas of research we cover, which are social sciences and humanities, life sciences, and hard sciences. They found Research Professional to be really friendly and very intuitive to use. By spending a little bit of time randomly trying some functions and options, they were able to learn to use it, either autonomously or with a little support by our administrative staff. We saw that it would be useful for researchers, who don't have a lot of time to invest in getting familiar with a tool before starting to use it."

But the most important factor was the search results, according to Abrescia. "With Research Professional, our researchers were able to find international funding opportunities that they didn't know about, and for which they were eligible. That was the main benefit we were looking for. We gathered all the data and when we looked at it and compared the results, we decided for Research Professional."

## *"I must say that my expectations from Research Professional, though high, were overall met"*

*Chiara Abrescia, University of Turin*

### Filtering for More Relevant Results

Abrescia ticks off some of the other advantages of using Research Professional. "The other tools we tested were focused on the U.S. funders mostly, so it wasn't obvious whether we were eligible for the opportunities listed in their databases. It does no good to find 2,000 results when we are only eligible for ten of them," she declares. "With Research Professional, we set filters in the interface so it retrieves only the useful results. That is really time-saving for us. The discipline filter is the most useful for researchers. It is quite detailed and most disciplines are well-defined."

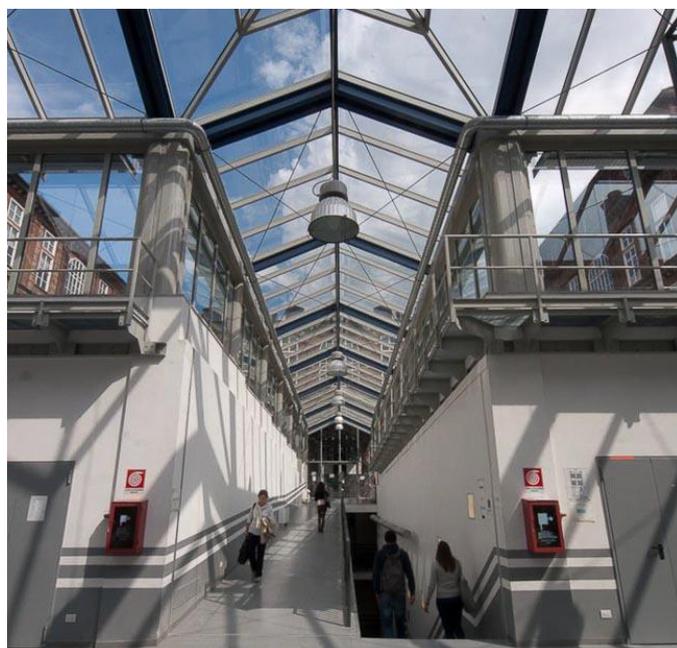
Compared to other tools, the Research Professional alerting capability is a particular strength for delivering only relevant results. "The alerts are only about new opportunities that researchers are interested in. Once the alert is set, then there is not much else to do and they receive the alerts once a week. It's very easy, and they get a lot more information that's truly important to them."

### Expanding the Scope of Funding

"We see Research Professional as a way to find opportunities that are smaller and that have a higher success rate compared to the big EU funding program grants we are used to working with," states Abrescia. "I am hopeful that we can increase our opportunities to apply for grants from small foundations or companies by 30 or 40 percent. That is one of the main reasons why we wanted to find a tool to search funding opportunities. We are well aware of the mainstream of the European funding programs such as Horizon 2020, but at times we happen not knowing that many of the smaller ones, especially at the international level. Research Professional includes a vast number of opportunities, from large grants directed at building infrastructures, to individual grants to do a small trial. All kinds of grants are included in the database and there's not as strong a bias toward some kinds of grants as compared to other search tools we tested."

"We also hope that we can find new opportunities for internationalizing our university, since students that go outside of our university, go abroad to other prestigious institutions and come back are good candidates for participating in prestigious individual grants, such as ERC grants from the EU. In the same way, we can take advantage of incoming opportunities for hosting prestigious researchers from abroad. That is something we aim to exploit, absolutely."

Having Research Professional has changed the way Abrescia supports researchers, as she explains. "I used to have individual meetings with researchers to counsel them about their fundraising strategy. I was limited to grants I already knew or to manual searches through free funding opportunities portals. Now, when I have individual meetings with researchers aimed at a customized scouting of funding opportunities, I normally focus on demonstrating Research Professional besides exploring the main European Commission funding programs. Research Professional allows researchers to find opportunities in a personalized way."



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## Measurable Results - Expectations Met

Abrescia continues to be data-driven in her approach. “Of course, the most relevant measure is the number of successful applications,” she explains. “But it’s also useful to look at the number of filed applications. If researchers are more involved in writing applications, then their success rate also increases. Also, from the user standpoint, we constantly monitor the number of registered users and the number of accesses. If we find a user who registered but is not accessing the service or setting the personalized alerts, we reach out and give them some support. So we’re satisfied, but we always want to do more.”

“I think the potential of the service was quite clear from the beginning. I must say that I was really expecting a lot from Research Professional and my expectations have been met.”

Learn more about Research Professional or Request a Demo <http://info.researchprofessional.com>



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