



SHARING EXPERIENCES WITH THE
HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS
WHITE PAPER DATED 23RD MAY 2018

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LETTER FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT


The key challenges of universities include - amongst others - assuring gender equality and diversity, faculty workforce planning, open- and transparent recruitment, and social inclusion. In essence, the challenges relate to ensuring universities are recognised as attractive employers able to recruit the best talent and providing faculty with the training necessary to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The relationship between researcher and employer is key to performance in generating, transferring, sharing and disseminating knowledge and technological development, and to the career development of researchers.

As newly appointed Vice President for Leadership & Sustainability, I greatly value sound policies related to human resources.

Therefore, it is my honour to share this white paper with you, the first ever published by CESAER, authored by Sarah Benschop, Chiara Biglia, Gordon Scott and Karen Vandevelde. The paper provides a comprehensive overview of European engagement and developments concerning human resources for researchers and gives practical guidance for the implementation of HRS4R. The paper furthermore provides impressive and inspiring examples from Universities which have applied for and attained the corresponding HR Excellence in Research Award.

I am confident that HRS4R provides a powerful instrument in strengthening the commitment of university leadership *vis-à-vis* human resources as well as furthering the researcher-employer relationship.

Once again, I wish to extend my gratitude to the authors Sarah Benschop, Chiara Biglia, Gordon Scott and Karen Vandevelde for this excellent contribution providing guidance to all Universities wishing to develop and improve in this area.



Sigbritt Karlsson
Vice President Leadership & Sustainability CESAER
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2005, the European Commission (EC) recommended the [European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#). Launched in 2008, the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers ([HRS4R](#)) was created to support research performing and funding organisations in the endorsement and implementation of the Charter and Code. EC staff and experts involved in the evaluation of proposals for the EU Framework Programme for Research & Innovation (FPs) have been trained on the importance of the principles of the Charter and Code and on the requirements of Article 32 of the model grant agreement. The EC continuously develops HRS4R by adding new criteria and conditions: Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment ([OTM-R](#)) of researchers was introduced in the [strengthened HRS4R implementation procedure](#) that entered in force on 1st January 2017, and more attention was given to embedding the HRS4R within the institution, to involve the research community in the process and to provide evidence and indicators for each of the proposed actions. In the years to come, we may expect the HRS4R strategy to continue to make new links with policy developments at European level.

The Task Force Human Resources of [CESAER](#) is committed to raising awareness of the Charter and Code and to promoting the benefits of the [Human Resources \(HR\) Excellence in Research Award](#), and encourages our Members to consider applying for it.

This white paper thus provides an overview of the HRS4R ([chapter 1](#)), the benefits for holders of the corresponding HR Excellence in Research Award ([chapter 2](#)) and essentials to get this award ([chapter 3](#)). It is based on the experiences of and lessons learnt by four CESAER Members implementing HRS4R and obtaining the award, i.e. Delft University of Technology (the Netherlands), Ghent University (Belgium), *Politecnico di Torino* (Italy) and the University of Strathclyde (Scotland). With this white paper, they share their experiences and best practices on their institutional approaches ([chapter 4](#)) and on specific aspects ([chapter 5](#)) with our Members and externals. Throughout the paper, we have included many useful web links. The undersigned writers of this white paper are ready to provide support on request to other CESAER Members for the implementation of the process.

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CONTENTS

1. Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)	2
1.1 European Charter and Code	2
1.2 Implementing HRS4R.....	2
2. Benefits for award holders.....	4
3. Essentials.....	5
4. Best Practices to obtain award	6
4.1 Delft University of Technology	6
4.2 <i>Politecnico di Torino</i>	7
4.3 Ghent University.....	8
7. Best practices on specific aspects	9
7.1 Ghent University on ethical and professional aspects.....	9
7.2 <i>Politecnico di Torino</i> on working conditions and social security	10
7.3 University of Strathclyde on training	10
7.4 Ghent University on 'additional block'	11
7.4 TU Delft on working conditions, social security, training and development for researchers	13
Annex A: List of abbreviations	16
Annex B: CESAER Members holding the award	16

1. HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS (HRS4R)

HRS4R supports research performing and funding organisations in Europe to implement the Charter and Code in their policies and practices. Organisations can obtain the 'HR Excellence in Research Award' following a thorough analysis of their institution's HR policies. The award demonstrates their commitment to implementing the Charter and Code and identifies them as providers and supporters of a stimulating and favourable working environment for researchers. At the time of publishing this paper, [410 organisations](#) have received the HR Excellence in Research Award¹. Twelve out of fifty-one of our Members so far have been granted the HR Excellence in Research Award (see [Annex B](#)).

1.1 EUROPEAN CHARTER AND CODE

The EC launched the Charter and Code in 2005. They lay out forty principles for employing and developing the careers of research staff. The four main areas covered are 1) ethical and professional aspects, 2) recruitment, 3) working conditions and social security and 4) training and development for researchers. 998 organisations have endorsed the Charter and Code so far. HRS4R aims at supporting organisations to effectively implement the Charter and Code and embed it within their organisations. Until December 2016, it was possible to endorse these principles without further commitment. Any institution endorsing these principles after the 1st January 2017 is obliged to also participate in the HRS4R strategy.

1.2 IMPLEMENTING HRS4R

In January 2017, the EC introduced a strengthened HRS4R implementation consisting of three main phases with defined timelines and [standard templates](#). When implementing HRS4R, organisations are expected to incorporate Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R) policy and practice and ensure that their HR strategy is embedded within the institution's HR policies. They are also expected to set indicators and targets for consulting with key stakeholders, i.e. their own research community, during the implementation. Within the United Kingdom, Vitae² offer an alternative route to obtain the HR Excellence in Research Award that is recognised by the EC.

INITIAL PHASE (T0 UNTIL T+1)

Organisations can initiate the HRS4R process by notifying their commitment to the forty principles of the Charter and Code. Within twelve months of the notification, the institution has to launch an internal process with a working group to submit an application containing a gap analysis addressing these principles and a two-year action plan. Following assessment by international external experts, the institution might obtain the HR Excellence in Research Award and be entitled to use its logo in all its communication.

¹ For list of institutions, see <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/hrs4r#hrs4r-acknowledged-institutions>

² Review of the UK implementation of the HR Excellence in Research Awards process: benefits to institutions and next steps, Vitae 2012 - <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/reports/uk-hr-excellence-in-research-award-review-and-benefits-june-2012-vitae.pdf>

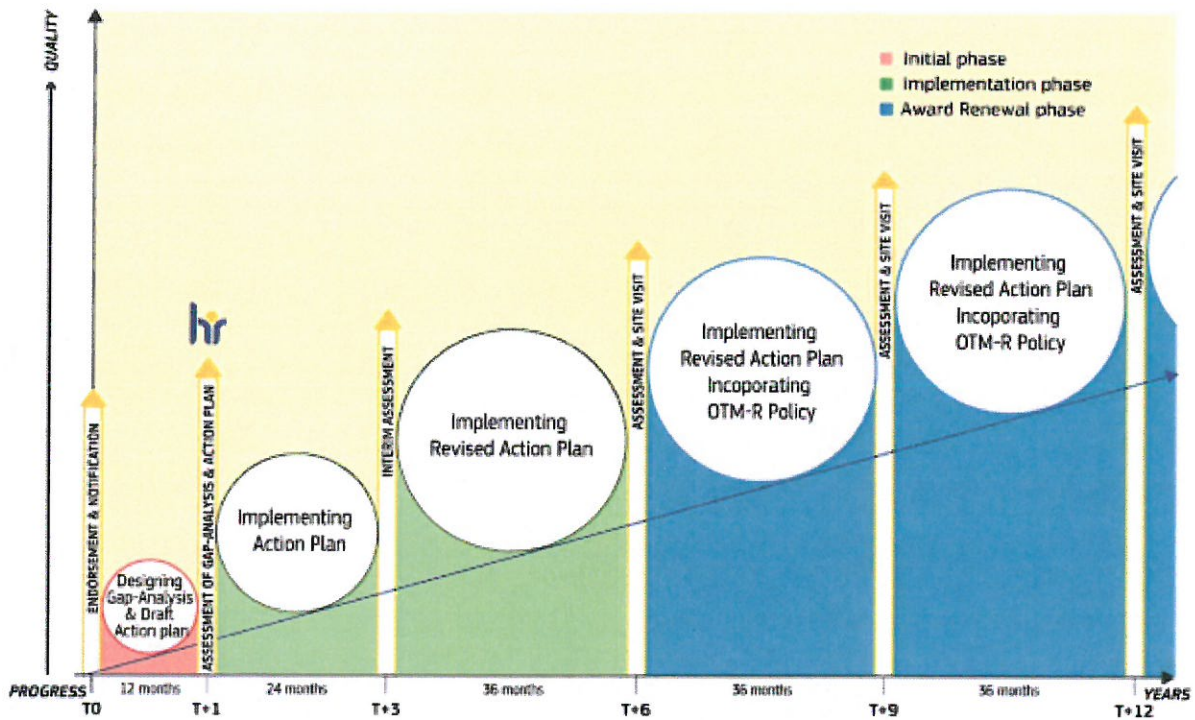


TABLE 1: OVERVIEW STRENGTHENED PROCESS

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE (T+1 UNTIL T+3 & T+3 UNTIL T+6)

In the first twenty-four months following the award, the institution implements and embeds its action plan. An interim assessment checks the implementation at the end of the two-year period and provides detailed feedback. The focus is on continuous improvement to incorporate this feedback into a revised action plan covering the next three years. At the end of these years, an internal review is undertaken which should result in a renewed 3-year action plan, which is then assessed by external experts during a site visit to the institution.³ The external assessment considers both progress against the plan and quality of actions and measures. Successful institutions retain their HR Excellence in Research Award.

AWARD RENEWAL PHASE (T+6 UNTIL T+9 ETC.)

At the end of each subsequent three-year cycle, the awarded institutions develop a new three-year action plan. This is assessed at the end of the period through internal review and external assessment with a site visit. The assessment considers ongoing progress with implementing the Charter and Code and evidence that the HRS4R process is embedded into organisational policy. Further information on this process is available on the [HRS4S Website](#).

All rewarded institutions are invited to nominate staff to get involved as an assessor for other institutions applying for the HR Excellence in Research Award. Although this involves some voluntary and unpaid work, it is a great opportunity to learn from other institutions, to get connected to other ‘HRS4R Ambassadors’ and to stay in tune with recent developments.

³ Site visits were suspended since 2014 but might start again by the end of 2018. The Steering Group of Human Resources Management (SGHRM) recently suggested that site visits should take place every six years instead of every three years.

2. BENEFITS FOR AWARD HOLDERS

We now outline the benefits for organisations holding an HR Excellence in Research Award. HRS4R provides a framework for implementing the Charter and Code, embedding the principles within organisations and facilitates ongoing continuous improvement of support for the researchers. The EC foresees the following benefits:

- The institution stands for a stimulating and favourable environment for researchers.
- The institution actively supports a change in working culture.
- The institution cares about its staff.
- The institution benefits from international visibility.
- The institution joins a pan-European network of researchers and research organisations.
- Beneficiaries of Horizon 2020 projects can easily demonstrate that they comply with Article 32 of the Model Grant Agreement and implement the principles set out in the Charter and Code in their recruitment practices.

Our Members holding such an award identified the following additional benefits:

- It improves the overall experience of researchers and enhances the ability to attract and retain high calibre research staff.
- It encourages interaction and integration between academic staff and central administration and decentralised departments, bringing them together to share information on existing activities. It identifies overlaps and common needs and optimises workflows.
- Carrying out the Gap Analysis brings academic and support staff together to reflect on strengths and weaknesses and helps to identify joint concerns and opportunities.
- It allows for engagement across all categories of researchers to define new activities tailored to the different career stages and to assess the effectiveness of existing ones.
- For those universities, whose HR Department offers only administrative services addressed at solving contractual issues, HRS4R is an opportunity to start developing career support actions or to engage in closer collaboration with other university services on these, e.g. concerning transferable skills training, coaching, talent development programmes and job placement.
- It enables being part of an international network and share best practice with innovative and ambitious universities on issues such as career development and supervision.
- It supports the attraction of competitive research funding, i.e. HRS4R can be used to support applications for grants requesting researcher support and development.
- It reduces the burden of proof for researchers showing their engagement in Horizon 2020 projects and proves fulfilling the requirements of Article 32 in the Model Grant Agreement.
- The participatory approach fosters the identification of key points for the implementation of internal regulations.
- It brings essential HR policies - such as recruitment, development, social status and ethics - into the foreground of institutional policy-making, which otherwise may be regarded as peripheral concerns.

- For institutional leaders, adopting the strategy can act as a public expression of your organisation's support for researchers. It acts as a framework for understanding and implementing policies and practices to improve the research environment.

3. ESSENTIALS

Based on the experiences and lessons learned by the Members holding an award, we have identified the following essentials for the successful implementation of HRS4R:

- **INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT**

The senior leaders of the institution must be committed to the process. The governing bodies of the institution should formally endorse the Charter and Code and approve the participation in the HRS4R process, the Gap analysis and the Action Plan. A senior leader should oversee the entire process to signal the importance to the organisation and ensure that HRS4R action.

- **EMBEDDING HRS4R IN INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES AND PROCESS**

If an institutional strategic plan and HR strategic plan exists, then the HRS4R must be embedded in these institutional strategies: HRS4R must refer, further and reinforce existing research and other strategies. If a dedicated HRS4R management structure is put in place, it should work in synergy with the governing structure of other institutional processes and be related to the Charter and Code.

- **CLEAR ROLES AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

A dedicated management structure for the whole process with well identified tasks and members should be created. A project manager should be granted a mandate to coordinate the entire process, preferably someone who has a clear overview of the main strategies and initiatives of the Institution.

- **ENGAGE WIDELY WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

Researchers at all stages of their careers should be involved in the process from the very beginning. When developing an action plan, consider the impact of the actions from the researchers' perspective and actively seek their views when developing your action plan and undertaking internal reviews.

- **LEARN FROM OTHERS EXPERIENCES**

HRS4R action plans from other institutions are widely available through their websites. Use university networks - such as CESAER - to learn from experiences and best practices elsewhere and then adapt them to meet your own institutions' needs.

- **EVIDENCE IMPACT AND IMPROVEMENTS**

Think from the onset how you will demonstrate the impact of your action plan when you come to review it. This can be done through changes in employee surveys over time, specific Key Performance Indicators (KPI), improved participation rates for development initiatives and case studies of good practice.

4. BEST PRACTICES TO OBTAIN AWARD

In this section, we present our best practices on our approaches to obtain the HR Excellence Award.

4.1 DELFT UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

TIME DEMANDS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF HRS4R AND NECESSARY WORK CAPACITY

By combining desk research and the overall university strategy discussions, we aimed to minimise the work load associated with implementation. However, the initial preparations for the implementation demanded a lot of attention. We started with three staff members working half a day per week each for two months, getting started and completing the first steps. After this period, we had many discussions internally to get acquainted with the HR Excellence in Research Award and the benefits.

After the implementation and carrying out the gap analysis, drafting the action plan and submitting the action plan for review, the biggest part is preparing the information for the self-assessment. In terms of time and workload, we estimate that it takes one month, with two people working full time together on the abovementioned actions.

The preparation for the external review also needs attention: monitor the progress of the diverse actions and keep an eye on new developments within the university on the determined gaps and - if necessary - adjust the action plan. Furthermore, the actions and subjects need to be discussed with a diverse group of colleagues within the university to make sure that all voices are heard. We estimate that the preparation for this step takes one day a month in the beginning increasing to half to one day a week towards the review.

WHAT IS THE INTERCONNECTION WITH HRS4R ON OUR OWN HR GOALS

We use the HR Excellence in Research Award and strategy for our university wide goals, which is an ongoing process. We make sure that the gaps on the HRS4R themes are on the HR agenda and action is taken on those subjects in order to be able to fulfil the HRS4R requirements and - more importantly - to be a good employer where people want to work.

INTERLINKED SYSTEMS OF SELF-EVALUATION AS THE KEY PILLARS OF UNIVERSITY ACTIVITIES

There is no strict policy to use HR Excellence in Research in our self-evaluation systems - such as research evaluations - but departments are free to do so. We know for example that certain departments use the HR Excellence logo for job descriptions, research evaluations take notice of the HR Logo and our Valorisation and Grant Support Office uses the logo when submitting grants proposals.

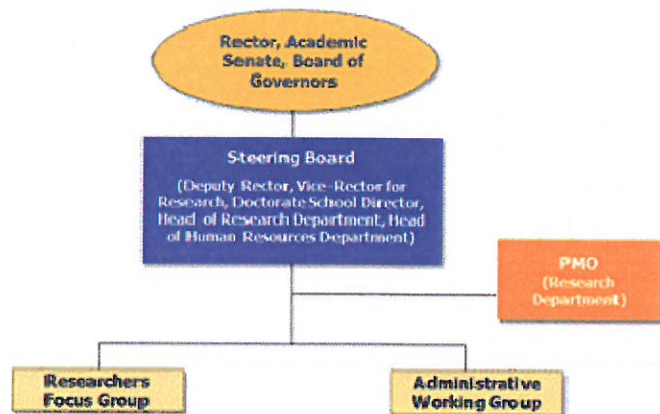
4.2 POLITECNICO DI TORINO

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF THE HRS4R

A dedicated governance structure was created in 2013 for the implementation of HRS4R. A Steering Board undertook the gap analysis through a Researcher Focus Group and an Administrative Working Group in consultation with the Governing Bodies. We advise Institutions that are applying for the HR Excellence in Research Award to be careful about using a 'survey' addressed to all researchers to measure the implementation of the C&C principles because the response rate is usually low and it does not always provide significant inputs for the process.

RESEARCHER FOCUS GROUP

In order to involve committed and active researchers, two representatives from each category of all research personnel – i.e. PhD candidates, research fellows, assistant researchers, full and associate professors - were identified on the basis of a 'call for candidates' open to all internal research personnel.



ADMINISTRATIVE WORKING GROUP

Representatives of the following Areas of the Central Administration have been involved: Research Support; Technology Transfer; Human Resources; International Affairs; Libraries & Museum; Estates Facilities & Logistics; Student Affairs; Information Technology; Health & Safety; Strategic & Institutional Support; Communication and Events & External Relations; Legal Affairs.

MONITORING PLAN

We enacted the following to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the actions:

- A common template for annotating and verifying the progress of each action has been distributed to all the administrative staff in charge of the implementation of the actions.
- Biannual meetings of the Administrative Working Group are scheduled and reported to the Steering Board.
- The Researchers Focus Group is consulted once a year to receive inputs and evaluate changes in the perception of researchers towards the implementation of the Charter and Code.
- The meetings of the Administrative Working Group and of the Researchers Focus Group are chaired by the Deputy Rector.
- The Governing Bodies are periodically informed.

4.3 GHENT UNIVERSITY

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

We established a Steering Group (highest level of operational management: Academic Registrar, Head of Research, Head of Personnel & Organisation, and the two project leaders for the HRS4R) and a Working Group. The latter is a gathering of all action representatives who meet at least once every year to discuss progress, obstacles and possible new actions with the two project leaders. Any crucial problems may be lifted to the level of the Steering Group for intervention-from-above but so far this has not been necessary. The Working Group meetings are perceived as useful: small problems can easily be solved by looking at them from a different angle; one action representative can inspire another by the approach they have taken; achievements by one action representative can be shared and enjoyed by everyone as a group achievement and so on. At the time of our first internal review, we invited the contributors from the research community who initially helped to carry out the gap analysis to get involved again in our internal monitoring activities. As this is to a large extent a transient community (PhD and postdoc researchers on temporary contracts), only a few of them are still at Ghent University, but new members have joined in. They will continue to play a role in the annual informal monitoring activities and in the 'official' internal monitoring at the end of each cycle.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We involved a large group of early-stage researchers in the initial gap analysis and continue to involve them in our progress monitoring. This sustained commitment helps to gain credibility and support from the research community. In addition, we have been able to make use of statistical data and surveys from the Flemish Centre for R&D Monitoring, ECOOM, commissioned by the Flemish Government to monitor researchers' careers, international mobility and academic career opportunities.



Information on the HR Strategy's updates and implementation is available to the research community within Ghent University and outside at <http://www.ugent.be/hrs4r>.

7. BEST PRACTICES ON SPECIFIC ASPECTS

In this section, we present our experiences and best practices on four aspects, i.e. 1) ethical and professional aspects, 2) working conditions and social security, 3) training and 4) 'additional blocks'.

7.1 GHENT UNIVERSITY ON ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS

WORKSHOPS ON SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF RESEARCHERS

Although ethical and professional aspects did not feature as 'problematic' in the initial gap analysis in 2012, the project team wanted to embed some ongoing and planned actions on ethics and research integrity into the HRS4R nevertheless. Our Commission for Scientific Integrity dealing with breeches of scientific integrity had just been set up at the time.

In the international academic community, a lot has happened since, in particular with the increased number of retracted papers, exposed cases of scientific fraud, and funding agencies setting higher standards for methodology, data management, and research integrity. This has shifted the focus from 'sanctioning' actions by the Commission for Scientific Integrity to 'preventive' actions and creating a quality culture. Illustrating this new approach, the training package - including a train-the-trainer module - has become very successful within Ghent University and beyond.

ACTION: THE DOCTORAL TRAINING PROGRAMME INTRODUCES SESSIONS ON SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY AND ON THE PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESEARCHERS AS PART OF ITS REGULAR PROGRAMME.

A training package (four sessions per year) on research integrity for individual PhD researchers has been launched and positively evaluated. There is a growing interest for introduction and awareness workshops at group level (on the request of faculties, departments and research groups). Research integrity training is promoted via different channels and formats, e.g. the introduction day for new PhD researchers, the EUA's European Industrial Doctoral School Spring School, external policy communication, etc. A workshop training format is developed and research policy advisors are trained in (via the train-the-trainer format). We offer our tools and resources on a [special website](#).

7.2 POLITECNICO DI TORINO ON WORKING CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL SECURITY

SUPPORTING CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCHERS

The increase of the number of actions dedicated to support the career development of researchers, especially young researchers, is one of the outcomes of the HRS4R process related to the full implementation of the principles of the Charter and Code. The following initiatives are worth mentioning:

- Our Board of Governors adopted a [project 'Empowerment for Employability'](#) in July 2015. This project is aimed at increasing the potential of work placement of researchers, PhD students and postdocs at *Politecnico di Torino*. The activities to be implemented relate to the dynamics that have an impact on the relations between candidate and company for highly specialised profiles, such as: the need to formalise clearly the area of applicability of the knowledge acquired by the candidate and to effectively communicate the technical content of career path; the need to increase awareness of the transferability and attractiveness of the acquired qualification and skills for companies; the need to provide training in soft skills to facilitate the communication between candidate and company.
- We offer more training courses in transferable skills on issues such as intellectual property rights, open access, fundraising, proposal writing and project management.
- Our university created a [new area](#) on the website dedicated to opportunities for researchers: internal and external researchers can find information on research funding, incoming and outgoing mobility opportunities, internal initiatives and call for proposals (e.g. Project ERC@POLITO, Project H2020@POLITO, Project Research Talent), career opportunities, success stories, course catalogue of the university in transferable skills and support services for international researchers. The website provides information on opportunities and initiatives that are managed and promoted by different Areas of the Central Administration.

7.3 UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE ON TRAINING

RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT

At the University of Strathclyde, our researcher development programmes play a key role in the support for our research staff in relation to the HR Excellence in Research Award. We have two programmes aimed at research and academic staff: the [Strathclyde Programme in Research and Leadership](#) and the [Strathclyde Programme in Academic practice, Researcher development and Knowledge exchange](#). Research staff are also able to attend teaching and generic skills training programmes. In 2016/2017, there were a total of 1,137 attendances by 342 members of research staff.

SPIRAL is a workshop-based continuing professional development programme designed to support the strategic aims of the university. It is evaluated and refreshed each year with the 2017/2018 themes being Grant Writing, Publication, Knowledge Exchange, Supervision and Personal Effectiveness. Within SPIRAL three 'Challenges' take place to support grant writing, publication and knowledge exchange. These consist of a series of seminars supported by mentoring and peer-review. In 2016 and 2017, there were 55 SPIRAL events with 879 attendances by 463 people.

SPARK is an accredited programme which supports staff from our four academic job families (academic, research, knowledge exchange and teaching & learning) to study up to a Masters level qualification in Researcher Development, Academic Practice, Knowledge Exchange or Teaching & Learning. A flexible, modular approach allows staff to tailor the training to their own development needs. There are currently 220 people registered on the programme.

To ensure the programmes meet the specific needs of research staff, we undertook a consultation in 2015 consisting of a qualitative survey, interviews and a focus group. The outcomes were used to implement a small number of new events targeted at the career development of these researchers. These have been highly popular and have received 100% satisfaction scores from participants.

Research staff at Strathclyde are also able to join the 'Researchers' Group'. This is a sub-committee of the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and allows research staff to have a voice within the university as well as a forum to organise their own events.

7.4 GHENT UNIVERSITY ON 'ADDITIONAL BLOCK'

The Charter and Code structure consists of only four blocks, but the stakeholder discussions at Ghent University highlighted the importance of and difficulty with a fifth block: 'career prospects' do not fit into any of the other four. Ghent University added this as a fifth component in its own HR strategy. Under the heading 'career prospects', three different actions were defined in order to meet the needs and demands of the research community and to highlight the university's commitment to these actions:

ACTION 1: GHENT UNIVERSITY INCREASES ITS NUMBER OF INITIATIVES DRAWING ATTENTION TO THE COMPETENCIES OF DOCTORATE HOLDERS AND RAISING AWARENESS IN THE NON-ACADEMIC LABOUR MARKET REGARDING THE VALUE OF RESEARCH EXPERIENCE.

In addition to strengthening the career awareness and employability of its researchers, Ghent University continuously invests in building long-term contacts with employers, recruiters and intermediaries on the external labour market through organising on a structural basis and participating in events and fora fostering the value and competencies of [PhD students](#) and [PhD holders](#) for a wide range of careers (e.g. Job Market for Young Researchers, From PhD to Job Market, debate with external employers on competencies and jobs for postdocs, inter-sectoral⁴ mentoring). For sharing best practices with partners of the [U4 network](#) (Gent, Groningen, Göttingen, Uppsala), Ghent University career professionals are participating in a staff training (two-year cycle 2016-2017).

⁴ Science Europe published a report on inter-sectoral mobility within existing funding schemes (2016). A summary was presented at their meeting in Brussels on October 5th. [http://www.scienceeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SE Intersec-Mobility Survey Report.pdf](http://www.scienceeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SE_Intersec-Mobility_Survey_Report.pdf).

A Working Group operating under the Steering Group Human Resources published a report on inter-sectoral mobility (November 2016) at https://cdn2.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/final_report_sghrm_intersectoral_mobility_final_report_0.pdf.

The Joint Research Centre published a report on Inter-sectoral mobility: http://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC102534/jrc102534_ism_report_final.pdf

ACTION 2: GHENT UNIVERSITY FURTHER DEVELOPS POSTDOC TALENT MANAGEMENT, SETTING UP: POSTDOCTORAL TRAINING (SEE UNDER "TALENT AND DEVELOPMENT"); CONTACT EVENTS IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE EXPOSURE TO OTHER LABOUR MARKETS (ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC); A POSTDOC COMMUNITY, A GRASS ROOTS POSTDOC ASSOCIATION, INTENDED TO STRENGTHEN THE MUTUAL CAREER INTERESTS OF THIS GROUP.

Since 2015 and after a pilot phase in 2013-2014, the University's [Postdoc Talent Management Programme](#) is part of the regular activities of the Department of Personnel & Organisation. A vision text on postdoctoral career policy and guidance was approved by the University's Board of Governors, a postdoc support programme has been put together consisting of skills trainings, mentoring schemes (towards an academic career and the external labour market) and individual career coaching. A website with online career resources is in place and continuously updated. The Ghent University [Postdoc Community](#) has been launched in 2014 and coordinates postdoc career events (four times a year), organized by postdoc representatives for their peers (e.g. the central theme in 2015-2016 was careers outside academia).

ACTION 3: GHENT UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATES OPENLY ABOUT REALISTIC CAREER PERSPECTIVES WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSITY, BOTH AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL AND ON THE DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL. THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AND THE PHD SUPERVISORS HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO RAISE CAREER AWARENESS AMONGST THEIR RESEARCH STAFF BY GIVING THEM ALL POSSIBLE EXPOSURE AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ORDER TO DEVELOP THEIR COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS.

Continuous efforts at different levels, e.g. top-down: overall career support programme by the Doctoral Schools, involving PhD students and supervisors, the declaration by the University's Board on a shared responsibility in raising awareness and career prospects of postdoctoral researchers, professorial staff, the university and the external labour market; and bottom-up: the Ghent University Postdoc Community launched a campaign to make faculty board members and deans aware of the responsibility of principals investigators to make their research staff aware of the next career step.

ACTION 4: GHENT UNIVERSITY COMPLETES A FEASIBILITY STUDY INVESTIGATING A NEW TYPE OF LONG-TERM APPOINTMENT FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF RESEARCHERS WITH A DESIGNATED MANAGEMENT OR COORDINATION ROLE.

The possibility of establishing a new type of long-term appointments for research staff is part of the analysis and ongoing negotiations on a new transparent career model for research staff. Although it would be unfeasible to do this on a large scale, a number of small-scale initiatives are currently undertaken to appoint researchers (usually at postdoc level) in areas which would benefit from long-term research, management and coordination expertise.

7.4 TU DELFT ON WORKING CONDITIONS, SOCIAL SECURITY, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR RESEARCHERS

WORKING CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL SECURITY

TU Delft strives to create a work environment where all staff members feel completely safe and comfortable with each other. We consider collegiality, integrity, respect and consideration for other people to be of the utmost importance. TU Delft also seeks to ensure that tasks and working conditions are suited to staff members' capacities and abilities in order to prevent or minimise negative outcomes as far as possible.

We therefore promote good experiences at work and monitor the situation because we believe that this allows people to perform at their best. Ideal working conditions vary from person to person and comprise various different aspects, such as the immediate work environment (physical), relationships at work (with managers and colleagues), the formal and informal aspects of the work culture, adequate support, opportunities for professional development, etc. One's personal experience of the job is also a factor here.

Staff members and managers need to try to enable each other to have a good work-life balance. Staff members can also indicate what they need in order to perform well, both in the short and longer term.

EMPLOYEE MONITOR

Every three years, TU Delft sends all staff members a university-wide employee survey. The survey provides insight into staff satisfaction, customer satisfaction and other legally required measures of work-related psychosocial stress. Work-related psychosocial stress refers to the physical and mental consequences of a heavy workload and/or undesirable behaviour in the workplace, such as bullying, discrimination, unwanted sexual advances and aggression. We use this information to develop relevant policies and take appropriate measures. At the end of January 2017, TU Delft staff members were invited to take part in a university-wide survey of how they experience their work, work load, vitality and internal support: the TU Delft Employee Monitor.

DRAFT REPORTS 2017

[IVA Onderwijs](#) administered the survey, analysed the response, representability and target groups and in March 2017 processed its findings in a draft report of the 2017 TU Delft Employee Survey. In the autumn, they will publish the finalised report, containing the measures to be taken. In addition, all employees can find an interim report, specific reporting the results of the university.

RELATIONSHIP WITH HR LOGO AND THE ACTION PLAN

One of TU Delft's points of improvement in our Action Plan was aimed at the Tackling of Working Pressure of staff members. We formulated two specific actions as part of our new Action Plan based on the internal assessment completed in November 2015. The first action was the development of standardised tools to measure working pressure and to stimulate an integral working pressure policy. The second action was aimed at developing a programme of requirements and setting up a policy framework to tackle the working pressure in an efficient and adequate manner.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR RESEARCHERS

Ongoing personal and professional development of staff members is an important pillar in our HR Strategy. TU Delft offers education and training for the purpose of personal and professional development. Various departments and institutes offer courses within TU Delft. However, it is also possible to take a course within the LDE alliance (Leiden University, Delft University of Technology and Erasmus University Rotterdam) or via an external training agency. Human Resources | HR, Development & Mobility provides courses on personal and professional development. These include Peer-to-peer sessions, Personal Leadership, Project Management, R&D courses, Coaching Leadership, Finance, Personal Development Programme Tenure Track UD. For researchers, we would like to highlight a new training which is called 'Mastering PhD Supervision'.

MASTERING PHD SUPERVISION

The new course is aimed at assistant professors (including those on tenure track), associate professors and new full professors. Some experience in supervising PhD candidates is required plus the ability to reflect on situations that are difficult for you. 'Mastering PhD Supervision' is an intensive course of three days which largely consists of practical exercises. Participants will learn by carrying out assignments and receiving personal feedback after which they need to apply the lessons learned in their work situation. There is room for personal goals and the exchange of personal experiences. The programme focuses on learning how to:

- choose the right supervising strategy, depending on the situation and the PhD student;
- communicate effectively, taking different cultural backgrounds into account;
- coach, i.e. help to solve problems of the PhD student using your communication skills;
- select a new PhD student and how to conduct a job interview;
- supervise the planning of the PhD project;
- clarify mutual expectations and how to supervise as part of a team;
- give constructive feedback.

This course follows the TU Delft rules and regulations on doctorates and PhD supervision.

DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF COURSES FOR SUPPORT STAFF

The results of the TU Delft Employee Monitor gave new insights on health and wellbeing issues at the workplace. Beyond the associated health risks, it is essential that staff are physically and mentally fit and prepared. Therefore, we are also developing training courses that will enable staff members to:

- make use of techniques to manage work-related stress;
- formulate strategies with peers to reduce stress and build resilience;
- analyse their working environment and ethos and identify possible improvements;
- assist with creating a sustainable wellbeing culture in their departments.

RELATIONSHIP WITH HR LOGO AND THE ACTION PLAN

One of TU Delft's points of improvement in our Action Plan was aimed at developing and evaluating several professional development courses for our (support) staff. We formulated this as a new action in our Action Plan based on the internal assessment.

ANNEX A: LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	MEANING
EC	European Commission
FP	EU Framework Programme for Research & Innovation
HR	Human Resources
HRS4R	Human Resources Strategy for Researchers
OTM-R	Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment
EUA	European University Association
ECOOM	<i>Expertisecentrum Onderzoek- en Ontwikkelingsmonitoring</i> , i.e Centre for R&D Monitoring, Flanders
KPI	Key Performance Indicator

ANNEX B: CESAER MEMBERS HOLDING THE AWARD

The following CESAER Members have obtained the HR Excellence in Research Award as of the beginning of May 2018.

UNIVERSITY	YEAR	HRS4R WEBSITE
Aalto University	2012	http://www.aalto.fi/en/about/careers/human_resource_strategy_for_researchers/
BarcelonaTech	2017	http://www.upc.edu/en
Gdansk University of Technology	2017	https://pg.edu.pl/en/welcome
Ghent University	2014	http://www.ugent.be/en/work/hr-excellence
Norwegian University of Science and Technology	2010	http://www.ntnu.edu/charter-and-code
<i>Politecnico di Milano</i>	2015	http://www.polimi.it/en/scientific-research/aims-and-results/policy/
<i>Politecnico di Torino</i>	2013	http://www.researchers.polito.it/en/hr_excellence_in_research
Delft University of Technology	2013	http://www.tudelft.nl/en/about-tu-delft/working-at-tu-delft/tu-delft-as-employer/hr-excellence-in-research/
Technion - Israel Institute of Technology	2012	http://hr.trdf.co.il/HRS4R
University College Dublin	2012	http://www.ucd.ie/research/about/officeofthevpforresearchinnovationandimpact/hrstrategyforresearchers/
University of Sheffield	2012	https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/ecr/landscape
University of Strathclyde	2011	http://www.strath.ac.uk/euhrexcellence/