Implementation Phase Interim Assessment: EC Consensus Report

Case number: 2018CZ348775

Name Organisation under assessment: Univerzita Karlova (Charles University)

Submission date of the Interim Assessment Internal Review: 03/02/2021

Submission date: 23/04/2021

Quality assessment

The quality assessment evaluates the level of ambition and the quality of progress intended by the organisation. If any statements have prompted a "no" or "partly" in the evaluation, please provide recommendations:

Has the organisational information been sufficiently updated to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is implemented?	Yes	The information provided gives a compact, clear and comprehensive, as well as transparent understanding of the current situation of the institution and of its developments.
Does the narrative provided list goals and objectives which clearly indicate the organisation's priorities in HR-management for researchers?	Yes	Strategic orientation, goals and priorities are well explained, and also the difficulties the institution is facing during this implementation and the pandemic.
Has the organisation published an updated HR Strategy and Action Plan been updated with the actions' current status, additions and/or modifications?	Yes	Comprehensive information is available on the website of the institution. Also lots of information about already implemented actions and their results (with well structured links).
Is the implementation of the HR strategy and Action Plan sufficiently embedded within the organisation's management structure (e.g. steering committee, operational responsibilities) so as to guarantee a solid implementation?	Yes	Yes, despite the difficulty with the decentralized structure of the faculties, the institution seems to have found a good balance in the HRS4R project structure and its embedding in the institutional structures and strategies.
Has the organisation developed an OTM-R policy?	Yes	Yes, the document is called "Competitive Hiring Process Code" and is published on the website and provides detailed instructions as to how the recruitment process has to be organised in order to fulfil the requirements of the institution itself.

Strengths and weaknesses

*On the basis of the information submitted and taking into account the organisation's national research context, how would you as an assessor judge the HR Strategy's **strengths and weaknesses**? (maximum 1000 words).*

The Initial Assessment 2018 pointed out two main difficulties/weaknesses of the HRS4R process at CU: (i) involvement of researchers; (ii) structural difficulties between the decentralized faculties and central institutional steps. CU has found a suitable way to deal with issue (i) and set up a useful project structure directly involving researchers from different faculties. The structural issue (ii) is very well and transparently reflected in the Interim Assessment / Internal Review by the institution, which seems to experiment with ways to cope with it. E.g. harmonization between existing regulations of different faculties, testing new approaches with pilot studies in different faculties, drawing on experiences of faculties to ensure institutional learning. So, despite the difficulties, there seem to be new interesting ways to approach a structural weakness.

A clear strength and motivation for CU seems to come from the 4EU+ European Alliance and also from the exchange activities with other Czech institutions involved in the HRS4R process. This makes possible to use synergies and provides nice learning effects.

A potential future strength is given by two aspects which both may still be considered work in progress:

- on the one hand the already existing OTM-R policy ("Competitive Hiring Process Code") has to be more and more thoroughly implemented (and measured), despite the differences and difficulties in the decentralized institution;
- on the other hand, the new implementation concerning career development and research evaluation could really provide new inputs and strength to the whole process.

The information made available on the website, also in English, is clearly a strength of the institution, striving for transparency and providing well structured links to a lot of documents, regulations and initiatives.

A clear weakness of the institution is the lack of a policy for equal opportunities and gender. The institution is monitoring the development of the new framework programme Horizon Europe and will probably have to develop such a policy / plan. This is very strongly suggested also for HR purposes (although the institution at the moment seems to have a very well balanced gender composition of the R&D staff, but of course nothing can be said about distribution among career levels etc.). This is a central point also for the HRS4R.

The institution itself points out in a transparent way several other areas where progress is still necessary, here just a couple of them:

- collection and availability of centralized data on different HR related procedures
- functioning of the existing ethics committees and confidence in their work
- communication and awareness of several measures among the researchers
- several aspects of compliance by the faculties

If relevant, please provide suggestions for modifications or revisions to the (updated) HR strategy: (maximum 2000 words)

- It is strongly suggested to strive in the near future for a real Policy or Plan for equal opportunities and gender. As pointed out in the Internal Review, this will be necessary for Horizone Europe, and it will also make possible to address the corresponding principles in the Charter & Code in a really ambitious way.
- As far as the Action Plan is concerned, it is strongly suggested to go through the Actions and revise their indicators and targets trying to distinguish between indicators for the completion of the Action itself (e.g. publishing something, defining a new regulation) and possible targets about the actual implementation, where suitable (e.g. number or ratio of R&D employees taking part in a specific training programme).

During the transition period special conditions apply:

Institutions having started the HRS4R implementation prior to the publication of the OTM-R toolkit and recommendations by the European Commission (2015) may not have prioritised actions implementing the OTM-R principles yet. In this case, they should not be penalised but strong recommendations should be made to address these principles appropriately.

At this point of the INTERIM assessment, the institution does not jeopardise maintaining the HR award. *Nevertheless, the institution is advised to take into account the comments and recommendations of the assessors to <u>meet all assessment criteria at the next assessment</u> (in 36 months).*

Recommendations

Which of the below situations describes the organisation's progress most accurately? Tick the right situation and add comments/general recommendations accordingly.

HRS4R embedded	⊙
HRS4R embedded, corrective actions needed	○
HRS4R embedded, strong corrective actions needed	○

Additional comments *

It is very much appreciated that CU tried and tries to make genuine efforts for real improvement for different groups of researchers, despite several difficulties due not only to internal issues but also to budget constraints and to the development during the pandemic. The approach clearly evolved over the years, points out to lots of improvements still to be made, has a nice and honest ambition to pursue improvement step by step, although the steps some time may only seem small. The whole picture shows a clear improvement.

Do not stop for looking for suitable ways, depending on the culture of the institution, to make progress despite the differences inside a large, old and decentralized university (this is a very common problem). The idea of a stepwise harmonization, using only a couple of faculties, introducing test phases, trying out pilot studies, learning from them, is a very good one and can be pursued in several areas.

Explanation

- **HRS4R embedded**: The organisation is progressing with appropriate and quality actions as described in its Action Plan. There is evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded.
- **HRS4R embedded, corrective actions needed**: The organisation is, for the most part, progressing with appropriate and quality actions as described in its Action Plan, but could benefit from alterations as advised through the Assessment process. There is some evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded.
- **HRS4R embedded, strong corrective actions needed**: The organisation is not deemed to be implementing appropriate and quality actions and this raises some concern for the future efforts to implement actions closely aligned to the Charter and Code. There is a lack of evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded.