

EURAXESS

Initial Assessment - EC Consensus Report

Case number

2021SE721930

Name Organisation under assessment

University West

Organisation's contact details

Gustav Melins gata 2, Trollhättan, Trollhättan, 461 86, Sweden

Submission date of initial GAP-Analysis, HR Strategy and Action Plan

26/01/2023

Submission date to the European Commission

12/05/2023

Eligibility assessment

Please rate the state of achievement ("yes", "no" or "partly"). If any statements have prompted a "no" or "partly" in the evaluation, please provide recommendations:

	YES / NO / PARTLY	Recommendations
Have the Strategy and Action Plan been published on the organisation's website?	Yes	All required information and an explanation of the HRS4R creation process available on the HV website
Have the Strategy and Action Plan been published in English?	Yes	

	YES / NO / PARTLY	Recommendations
Have the Strategy and Action Plan been published in a visible place?	Partly	The HRS4R webpage is a sub-domain of the Job Opportunities webpage. The "Work for us" menu on the footer area of home page can also be used to access the HRS page. It is fast to be found using the search tool, that requires to know in advance what UV applied for HRS4R logo. It is recommended to reposition it to gain more impact.

<p>Have the following elements of the templates for the Gap Analysis and the HR Strategy and Action Plan been completed with sufficient details and quality?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gap Analysis ▪ HR Strategy and Action plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organisational information ▪ Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice ▪ Actions ▪ Implementation 	Yes	A detailed Gap Analysis content was performed, with references to national and institutional legislations and links to the documents. However, the GA is looks like a result of a desk research. It is not clear how gaps were determined and it is not possible to identify the views of categories R1-R4 of researchers regarding the level in which the 40 principles of C&C are embedded in UV activities. The organizational information and strengths and weaknesses of the 4 main sections of the Charter and Code are clear and explanatory. HR strategy and Action plan are well elaborated. However, the indicators and targets should be improved, to be SMART. The actions must contain both qualitative and quantitative targets. As to implementation, UV stated that the HR strategy is "de facto compliant with most of the HRS4R procedures", so in many aspects is embedded in the overall institutional strategy, whereas details on the mechanisms put in place for implementing and monitoring the process have been properly provided.
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Quality assessment

The quality assessment evaluates the level of ambition and the quality of progress intended by the organisation.

Rate the state of achievement ("yes", "no" or "partly"). If any statements have prompted a "no" or "partly" in the evaluation, please provide recommendations:

	YES / NO / PARTLY	Recommendations
Is the organisational information provided sufficient to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is designed?	Yes	

	YES / NO / PARTLY	Recommendations
Is the Action Plan coherent with the Gap Analysis?	Yes	The Gap Analysis made a clear connection between the identified gaps and the proposed actions. In the comment to the identified deficiency, the number of the proposed action was given, which allows you to easily trace the process of preparing the HV strategy. In the Action Plan published on the website, in the table of contents, the actions indicate the principles of the Charter and Code they are intended to cover.
Have a steering committee and working group been established to guarantee the implementation of the HRS4R-process?	Yes	Steering Committee and Implementation Group have been established. The division of roles, competencies and the way these two bodies work are explained in the documents posted on the e-tool. A new approach to this subject has been also presented, as the Reference Group has been established as the advisory/consultative body. However, the steering committee and working group should include representatives of categories R1-R4 of researchers.
Has the research community been sufficiently involved in the process, with a representation of all levels of a research career?	Partly	Explaining the context of the creation of HRS4R at West University (HV) shows that the academic community has spoken out about the strategy. Institution involved researchers in the GA through the focus groups and questionnaires (43% replies). However, I could not distinguish them opinions in the GA. No evidence of representation of all career levels of researchers in the completion of questionnaires. Besides the survey mentioned before, the GA also indicated that a survey on leadership, health, safety, discrimination, management, understanding of university goals, working environment etc. is carried out periodically.
Are the relevant management departments sufficiently involved in the process so as to guarantee a solid implementation?	Yes	The roles of individual administrative and management units are indicated and described in the Action Plan. Their role in the creation of actions was indicated, as well as responsibility for the implementation of individual tasks
Have adequate targets and indicators been provided in order to demonstrate when/how an action will be/has been completed?	Yes	Yes, targets and indicators have been selected and described in an orderly manner and assigned to activities, which will undoubtedly allow them to have control over their implementation. However, no quantitative targets established. No SMART measures in place.

	YES / NO / PARTLY	Recommendations
Is the organisation establishing an OTM-R policy?	Partly	The OTM-R policy is scattered across several documents. The principles of open and transparent recruitment are met, but there is no single document that would indicate what principles HV follows when recruiting and employing scientists. The checklists identified in OTM-R were properly addressed in HRS4R. It is recommended to create one short common OTM-R Policy document to complement Action 15 of the Action Plan.
Are the goals and ambitions sufficiently ambitious considering the context of the organization?	Yes	The West University (HV) made a very thorough gap analysis. The proposed actions are a direct response to the identified shortcomings. Both actions aimed at changing the existing procedures and internal rules, as well as soft information, training and raising awareness of HR Excellence in Research were planned. I highly value the ambition of this strategy.

General Assessment

Accepted



Pending **minor** modifications



Pending **major revisions**



Explanation

- **Accepted: This application meets the criteria and the HR award is granted.**
The assessors might have commented on your file asking for future focus on a particular aspect/criterion, so please refer to the comments given above.
- Pending **minor** modifications: This application **broadly meets the criteria**, but the assessors have some concerns/questions about specific areas/criteria. Please reflect about the feedback given above and update your file before **re-submitting within 2 months**.
- Pending **major revisions**: This application does not meet the criteria; please make the appropriate changes taking into account the comments of the assessors before **re-submitting within 12 months**.

General Recommendations

If any of the above statements have prompted a "no" in the evaluation, please provide suggestions of modifications in the form below.

If the general assessment is:

- "pending minor modifications" the recommendations are split into:

- Immediate mandatory modifications (to be implemented in order to obtain the award, resubmission within 2 months)
 - Other modifications (to be carried out during the implementation phase).
- "pending major revisions" the recommendations are split into:
- Mandatory modifications (in order to obtain the award, resubmission within 12 months)
 - Other modifications.

Recommendations *

The West University has provided a complete plan of implementation of their Human Resources Strategy for Researchers. It is detailed and ambitious. The recommendations presented below are not only for the institution but also for the assessor who will evaluate West Universities' reports in the future:

- Researchers at all career stages (R1-R4) should be included and consulted in all phases of the HRS4R process. For example, following their participation in focus groups and completion of questionnaires, the UV should have detailed what percentage corresponds to research staff and to which categories R1-R4. Also, no information is provided either on the results of the survey or on the perception of the degree of implementation of the criteria by the research community. Nor is there any evidence of how the results of this survey have been used to develop the GAP analysis. The recommendation is that the actions must be specific to the needs of the research community in the context of the 40 principles of Charter and Code. The institution is kindly request to provide on then HRS4R dedicated webpage, more information about the result of focus groups and questionnaires to show the engagement of R1-R4 categories.
- The HRS4R webpage is a node of the Job Opportunities webpage. The "Work for us" menu on the footer area of home page can also be used to access the HRS page. It is fast to be found using the search tool, that requires to know in advance what UV applied for HRS4R logo. It is recommended to reposition it to gain more impact.
- Include representative from the categories R1-R4 of researchers in the steering committee and working groups, in order to achieve a fully consultative approach of HRS4R. It is very much appreciating the creation of the Reference Group as an advisory and consultative body. The role of this body is also to be advisory in terms of consulting changes, and its voice is to replace consultations with the academic community, however this will not replace the direct and anonymous consultations that a survey can provide.
- HV has done a very good job identifying gaps and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of its university. In constructing the Action Plan, they used the project methodology, planning the purpose and target of each action. However, the targets and indicators of the actions are mainly documents or activities to be carry out. If possible, institution should add quantitative metrics (SMART methodology), where the case, to determine in the next phases of HRS4R implementation, if an action is "fully implemented".
- Regarding action plan schedule time, many activities are foreseen in Q4/2024 or 2025 or 2026, such us activities related to OTM-R, postdoctoral appointments (2015) or career development / access to career advice which were "the most major of all the gaps identified". As recommendation, the institution is kindly requested to take in account to revise the schedule time for the major gaps identified.

If the organisation deserves to be commended on their ambition, their actions, evidence of good practice and/or their implementation process, please provide a commentary supporting this. (max. 2000 words)

Evaluators wanted to congratulate West University on a great application. The methodology of work shows that they derive their actions from a very thorough and extensive analysis of existing HR practices for researchers. And the planned actions and tasks are a direct consequence of the identified shortcomings. The points presented below are examples of good practices that deserve to be highlighted.

- As an addition to the Steering Committee and Implementation Group, HV has presented a new approach to the implementation of the HRS4R; they have introduced an advisory/consultancy body - The Reference Group. A completely new idea is also to invite a person from outside the university to this body as an external advisor. I will certainly be watching how this solution works in the future.

- When planning Actions and Tasks, HV made excellent use of the project methodology, indicating the action based on the identified deficiency. At the same time, the target/objective to be achieved through the implementation of the task was indicated. The actions themselves have been divided into smaller ranges to facilitate the control of the implementation of individual tasks. Indicators and responsible entities are clearly defined. I would like to stress that despite the clear instructions, the Action Plan is not always so clear and easy to interpret. The West University has managed to create a very good HRS4R, the performance of which will be easily controlled by both responsible persons and assessors.