# HRS4R

## Human Resources Strategy for Researchers

## ACTION PLAN

University of Cologne

# ✳ LIST OF CONTENS

# 1 ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

## ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

The University of Cologne (UoC) is one of the leading German research universities with an increasing international reach. In 2012, the UoC won substantial funding in the German Excellence Initiative and is now one of eleven German Universities of Excellence. It currently has almost 37,000 students (almost 50,000 head count) enrolled in 335 degree programs.

The UoC is part of a wide network of international partners and is constantly strengthening its international links. In the past years, the UoC has set a particular focus on enhancing the career development and good working conditions for its early-stage and advanced researchers.

# 2 CURRENT PRACTICE

## ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS

The University of Cologne's success in the German Excellence Initiative in 2012 has inspired a dynamic process in research as well as in the improvement of the university's HR management. The aim is to attract the best minds through an inspiring work environment, excellent working conditions and attractive career paths.

Good scientific practice constitutes the foundation of excellent research. The UoC's *Policy for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice* defines guidelines for researchers' responsibility as to transparent, honest, original and rule-oriented academic work. It is complemented by *Guidelines on the Management of Research Data*, which define principles on the long-term access to research data and the replicability of studies. The UoC adopted a *Research Code of Conduct* in 2018, which outlines the guiding ethical principles for all research activities at the UoC. The three Faculties of Medicine, of Management, Economic and Social Sciences and of Human Sciences hold ethics committees.

Research activities at the UoC comply with high professional standards. The *Institutional Strategy* of the Excellence Initiative triggered a comprehensive evaluation of the UoC's central administration in 2013, which culminated in a "*change programme*". The administration, thus, provides up-to-date professional and service-oriented support for contractual matters and financial accountability to regular and third-party funded research projects. The university has established regular internal and external evaluation mechanisms for continuous quality management and strategic planning.

The Department for Communications and Marketing has developed an "interface model" of science communicators who report on major scientific projects and projects within the German Excellence Initiative. In 2017, this innovation won the Award for Communication of Higher Education Institutions of the German Rector's Conference. The success in exploitation of the UoC's incubator GATEWAY will be expanded by the foundation of an Innovation and Start-Up Centre. The centre will enhance the encouraging environment for young entrepreneurs with a focus on digital innovations (Action 11).

## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The UoC has established transparent and quality-oriented appointment procedures and follows a pro-active *strategy of internationalization*. The appointment processes have been honoured with the seal of approval for "Fair and Transparent Professorial Recruitment Processes" by the German Association of University Professors and Lecturers since 2014. The university continues to enhance the reliability and transparency of career perspectives for professorial positions and for mid-level academic staff.

Tenure track has been strengthened as a career path to permanent professorial positions. The Institutional Strategy of the Excellence Initiative formally established the tenure track procedure in 2013. It has since been continuously expanded. The *Tenure Track Programme of the German Federal Government and the Federal States (WISNA)* recognized the achievements of the UoC's tenure track system. The additional funding of this programme creates 27 new tenure track professorships over the course of 2018 to 2028. The long-term goal is to appoint up to 20 per cent of all professorial positions under tenure track with a 50 per cent share of women (see Action 1).

More reliable and transparent career paths are also important beyond the professorial level. The university adopted Strategic Guidelines for Career Paths in the PostDoc Stage in April 2017, which specify three career tracks for academic staff: research, teaching and research management. Each track is linked to a clear job profile and skill set for more transparent career perspectives. The Strategic Guidelines form the conceptual basis for a policy on permanent positions for mid-level academic staff, which is currently under development (see Action 2 & 3). It will identify permanent tasks within the university and allocate permanent positions to these tasks, where possible. The policy will assure transparency and long-term quality-management for permanent employment.
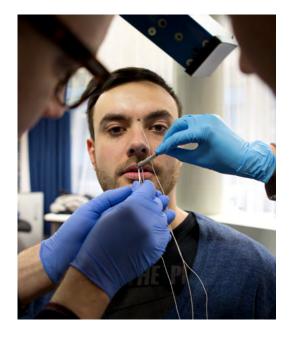
## WORKING CONDITIONS

A large majority of researchers at the UoC is covered by the provisions of the Collective Agreement of the States or the Civil Servant Remuneration Law, which provide fair and transparent remuneration and social security benefits. More so, the UoC committed to the *Contract on Good Employment Conditions for Academic Staff* (NRW 2016). One major achievement of this agreement is the increased stability for academic staff thanks to the extended duration of fixed-term contracts. The UoC reformed a number of HR-related policies in the implementation phase of this contract.

The UoC provides the opportunity for part-time employment and flexible working hours for its employees. Based on the existing Work Agreement on Teleworking for central administration staff, the UoC is developing formalized procedures for remote work for its researchers and administration staff in faculties and central institutions (Action 10). The Dual Career and Family Support Office helps researchers to reconcile career and family life and offers childcare facilities. The Total E-Quality Award, the participation in the programme Family in Higher Education Institutes, the adoption of the Diversity Charter in 2014 and the continuously rising numbers of young and advanced female researchers and parents at campus demonstrate the significant achievements in equal opportunities. The UoC continues its efforts for equal opportunities for women (Action 8) and develops measures within the existing *strategy on equal opportunities* resulting from the audit "*Vielfalt Gestalten*" (Action 9).

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Department for HR Development, the Albertus Magnus Center and the professional centres and graduate schools of the faculties play a central role in the support of career development for young and advanced researchers. They offer a broad range of trainings on soft skills, personnel development as well as professional, management and leadership skills. The UoC also implemented a number of mentoring programmes geared towards different groups, such as female academics, scholars at risk and first-generation academics for doctoral students.

The supervision of doctoral students has become more structured and formalized in the past years with the establishment of graduate schools in all faculties. A general letter of support and a detailed supervision agreement structure and guide the relationship between the supervisor(s) and the doctoral candidates. *Guidelines on Good Employment Conditions for Early-Stage Researchers* assure, for instance, that doctoral students may dedicate at least one third of their working time to their own research endeavours.

Researchers with leadership responsibility have an important role for the personnel development of their academic staff. The UoC intends to support those in leadership positions by introducing a policy specifying their tasks (Action 4). The UoC plans to introduce regular, structured and documented personnel development reviews for academic staff (Action 5). Trainings and seminars complement the professionalization of management and leadership responsibility (Action 6).

# 3 ACTIONS

| No. | Proposed Action | Responsible Unit | Timing (in quarters) | Indicator(s) / Target(s) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GOAL I: MORE RELIABLE AND TRANSPARENT CAREER PATHS** | | | | |
| 1 | Extend tenure track as career path for R3 researchers<br>» Establishment of tenure track in all faculties<br>» Refinement of the tenure track procedure | Vice-Rectorate for Academic Staff / Faculties | continuous<br><br><br><br>Q I 2022 | Up to 20 % of all new professorial appointments with TT with participation of all faculties<br>Evaluation of TT procedures |
| 2 | Policy on permanent positions (university level) | Vice-Rectorate for Academic Staff | Q II 2019<br>Q II 2019<br>Q I 2021 | Adoption of a policy<br>Implementation<br>Evaluation<br>*Indicator: reduced rate of temporary employment for positions financed through direct government funding* |
| 3 | Revision or adoption of policies on permanent positions (faculty level) | Dean's offices of the six faculties | Q I 2019<br><br>Q II 2019<br>Q I 2021 | Revision or adoption of the policies<br>Implementation<br>Evaluation |

| No. | Proposed Action | Responsible Unit | Timing (in quarters) | Indicator(s) / Target(s) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GOAL II: BETTER SUPPORT FOR PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT** | | | | |
| 4 | Guidelines on responsibilities of academic staff in leadership positions | Rectorate | Q I 2019<br>Q II 2019<br>Q II 2022 | Adoption of a policy<br>Implementation<br>Evaluation |
| 5 | Regular personnel development reviews | Dep. 43 | Q II 2019<br><br><br>Q III 2019<br><br>Q I 2020<br><br>Q III 2020 | Templates for personnel development reviews<br><br>Implementation in a pilot phase<br><br>Evaluation of the pilot phase<br><br>Implementation |
| 6 | Trainings on leadership and management skills for academic staff | Dep. 43 | continuous<br><br><br><br>Q III 2019 | Revision of course format to better suit the different groups of participants<br><br>Introduction of obligatory participation for all newly appointed professors |
| 7 | Ombudsperson for researchers in the postdoc-phase | Vice-Rectorate for Academic Staff | Q IV 2018 | Installation of an ombudsperson and communication to academic staff |
| **GOAL III: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES** | | | | |
| 8 | Continue to enhance gender balance:<br>» Performance Agreements with the faculties<br>» Gender & Diversity Action Plans for the overall university and for the faculties and administration | Vice-Rectorate for Gender Equality and Diversity; Dep. Gender and Diversity; Equal Opportunities Officer | continuous | Increased no. of female postdocs and professors according to the "cascade model" |
| 9 | Specific actions resulting from the diversity audit „Vielfalt gestalten":<br>» Action Plan for the Inclusion of Handicapped Persons<br>» Non-discrimination Guidelines | Dep. Gender and Diversity | Q IV 2018<br><br><br>Q I 2019 | Adoption of an action plan and reform of existing guidelines<br><br>Beginning of the implementation phase |
| 10 | Development of a Work Agreement on Teleworking for all employees | Division 4 Staff | Q IV 2019 | Adoption of the Work Agreement and implementation |

| No. | Proposed Action | Responsible Unit | Timing (in quarters) | Indicator(s) / Target(s) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GOAL IV: BETTER DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS** | | | | |
| 11 | Innovation and Start-up Centre and extension of the GATEWAY incubator | Rectorate | Q I 2020 | Beginning of the construction work |
| 12 | Review of the Patent and Exploitation Strategy | Dep. 75 | Q I 2019 | Revision of the policy and implementation |
| 13 | Establish a pool of science communicators | Dep. 43 | continuous<br><br>Q III 2019 | Revision of course format to better suit the different groups of participants<br>Introduction of obligatory participation for all newly appointed professors |
| **GOAL V: INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY / OTM-R PRINCIPLES** | | | | |
| 14 | Job advertisements on the EURAXESS website for research positions | Dep. 41 | Q III 2018 | Increased no. applications from abroad |
| 15 | E-recruitment tool for all academic positions | Dep.41 | Q III 2019<br><br>Q IV 2019 | Pilot phase of e-recruiting tool<br>Implementation |
| 16 | Officially acknowledge the status of all doctoral students | AMNZ | Q III 2020 | Registration of all doctoral students in "DocFile" |

# DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION PLAN

The following section explains the aims, procedure and timeline of the 16 actions listed in the Action Plan for 2018 to 2022.

## GOAL I: MORE RELIABLE AND TRANSPARENT CAREER PATHS

1) The UoC is furthering its tenure track programme beyond the status quo both qualitatively and quantitatively towards a university-wide qualification path for the recruitment of full professors. All faculties will appoint a number of professors using tenure track in the framework of the Tenure Track Programme of the German Federal Government and the Federal States (WISNA). The long-term goal is to appoint up to 20 per cent of all professorial positions using tenure track at the UoC. This action is paired with measures for gender balance, as quotas for the share of female appointments were specified for each faculty. Moreover, the UoC intends to continuously enhance the quality of the tenure track procedures. The tenure track system will be evaluated in 2022 by international external evaluators.

2)
3) The UoC is reforming the recruitment system for permanent academic staff in mid-level positions. Based on the Strategic Guidelines for Career Paths in the Post-Doc Stage (2017), five of six faculties have developed policies on permanent positions for academic staff (all but the Faculty of Medicine). These policies define the criteria for temporary and permanent employment, the recruitment processes and instruments of career development. The policies on permanent positions for mid-level academic staff of the faculties are currently under revision or – for the Faculty of Medicine – under development (Action 3). They serve as the basis for a coherent university-wide framework policy on permanent staff (Action 2). The policies at faculty and university level will be finalized and adopted by mid-2019. The reform will significantly enhance the transparency, reliability and quality control of long -term employment at the UoC.

## GOAL II: BETTER SUPPORT FOR PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

4)    The UoC intends to further strengthen and structure the personnel development provided by academic staff with leadership responsibility. As a first step, a policy on personnel development of academic staff with managerial tasks will identify positions with leadership responsibility within the university. It acknowledges their respective tasks, competences and responsibilities. The aim is to expand the current structures on personnel development to fit each profile and provide optimal support to academic staff with leadership responsibility.

5)    A second measure to enhance leadership responsibilities are regular, structured and documented personnel development reviews for academic staff at all stages of their career. This structured dialogue is designed as an open and constructive exchange on the individual employee's role, contribution and personnel development goals.

6)    The Department 43 HR Development initialized the programme „Lead Excellent" in 2014, which offers trainings and seminars aiming at further qualification on management skills for academic staff with leadership responsibility. The "Lead Excellent" programme is continuously evaluated and adapted. The goal is to better suit the needs of different groups of participants, e.g. early-stage researchers or experienced professors with leadership responsibility. Participation will become obligatory for newly appointed professors in the third quarter of 2019.

7)    The Gap Analysis demonstrated that the existing structure in the complaints mechanism for researchers covers all stages but the post-doc phase. The introduction of an ombudsperson for early-stage researchers by late 2018 will complement the other three actions on support for personnel development.

## GOAL III: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

8)  The UoC is committed to further increase the share of female researchers in the future. It continues its gender activities using the so-called "cascade model" as a bench-mark, as recommended by the German Research Foundation and installed in the Higher Education Act of North-Rhine Westphalia. The Equal Opportunities Office defines quotas for an increased proportion of women at each level of qualification in relation to the next lower level. The achievements are monitored using gender-sensitive data (see *Gender Data Report 2016, 2017*). The Vice-Rectorate for Gender Equality and Diversity of the UoC links formal agreements on these quotas and other gender-related goals to financial incentives. Additionally, every 3 to 5 years the UoC develops Gender Equality Action Plans for the entire university as well as for the faculties and the administration in particular.

9)  The diversity audit "Vielfalt Gestalten" will result in specific actions against discrimination as well as for educational justice and inclusion by the end of 2018. The process is participative, as it is open to members from all groups of the university (students, academic staff, professors as well as administrative and technical staff), and inter-sectional, as it links various stakeholders. The audit results in an Action Plan for the Inclusion of Handicapped Persons. Furthermore, the current *UoC Guidelines on Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment* will be further developed into more general non-discrimination guidelines.

10) In order to allow for greater flexibility and the possibility to balance family needs and career requirements more easily, inter alia, the UoC is planning to develop formalized procedures for remote work for all employees. Serving as a basis, the existing Work Agreement on Teleworking for central administration staff of October 2015 will be further developed for the projected all-encompassing agreement for researchers and administration staff alike.

## GOAL IV: BETTER DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

11) The UoC is planning to establish a new Innovation and Start-up Centre. Existing structures and new elements of support for the dissemination and exploitation of research results will be united in a new facility located at the heart of the university's campus. The centre will host the GATEWAY incubator, the Digital Hub Cologne, a test centre for companies as well as co-working and meeting spaces. The construction process will begin in early 2020. The process is accompanied by an expansion of the GATEWAY services.

12) The UoC is currently revising its Patent and Exploitation Strategy, which will be adopted in the first quarter of 2019. This revised strategy will state the university's aims more pronouncedly. An important innovation is the explicit welcome of equitable licencing for all research innovations by members of the UoC.

13) The UoC plans to expand the success in dissemination of research results of the "interface model". By establishing a pool of science communicators, it will be possible to bundle the expertise of the research fields and further strengthen the UoC as an excellent partner in science communication for both the media and the broader public.

## GOAL V: PROCEDURAL INNOVATIONS IN VIEW OF THE OTM-R PRINCIPLES

14) The UoC does not yet post open positions systematically via the EURAXESS website. Division 4 Staff will post job advertisements for the professorial level on EURAXESS beginning in mid-2018. The number of applications should in consequence increase, especially in terms of applications from abroad.

15) Department 41 HR management is developing a central e-recruitment tool in close cooperation with the university's Regional Computing Centre. The Department for HR management identifies the necessary elements of the e-recruiting tool. The Regional Computing Centre supports the implementation of the operating system. The e-recruitment tool will manage the entire recruitment process for all academic positions.

16) In the past year, the Albertus Magnus Center began registering all UoC doctoral students with a new software ("Docfile"). This measure assures that all doctoral candidates are formally recognized and integrated in the university programmes for doctoral students. The registration of doctoral students via "Docfile" is ongoing. The process will be significantly advanced by the end of 2018 and completed with the turnover of a generation of doctoral students (approx. three years).

# 4 OPEN RECRUITMENT POLICY

The UoC aims at attracting and recruiting the most highly qualified researchers in open and transparent procedures with due regard to diversity, equal opportunities and mobility. The aforementioned "change programme" for the university administration has triggered a number of innovations that steered the recruitment processes further towards the OTM-R principles.

The UoC recently revised its *Appointment Regulation* (2018) for junior and full professors. A *Best Practice Model for the Appointment of Professors* further clarifies the selection criteria for transparent and fair procedures. The *guidelines on Attracting and Recruiting Staff* (available in English and German) cover all stages of the recruitment process in English and German and function as an OTM-R policy. The Department 4 Staff introduced templates for job advertisements in English and German, which assure that calls contain all necessary information for applicants. The Department for HR Development offers trainings on a merit-based and transparent recruitment strategy to all members of the UoC. The UoC's diversity programme successfully encourages members of underrepresented groups to apply to open positions, as the positive trend in the share of female applicants to professorial positions indicates.

The application of the OTM-R toolkit has identified two minor gaps in the current design. First, the UoC plans to use the EURAXESS website for job advertisements to further increase its international outreach in the future (Action 14). Second, Division 4 Staff is developing an e-recruitment tool that allows managing all R1 to R3 hiring procedures similar to the already existing e-recruitment tool for the professorial level (Action 15).

↗ **RECRUITMENT**

# 5 IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the Action Plan will be monitored closely to assure a smooth, consistent and timely execution. The overview of the planned actions (see table in section 3) indicates the unit responsible for each action clearly. All measures derived from the HRS4R gap analysis are thus embedded in the existing university structures and policies. The following checklist defines the responsibilities for supervision and monitoring of the overall process of the HRS4R. Three measures assure the quality control in the implementation phase: 1) a working group for the internal review, 2) monitoring by a high-ranking university committee on HR matters and 3) supervision by the university leadership.

## THE WORKING GROUP AND THE STEERING GROUP

The UoC installed a working group responsible for the internal review of the HRS4R and future audits. The working group consists of four administrative representatives bringing together different areas of expertise relevant to HR matters: the head of the Department 43 HR Development, the head of the Department 94 International Science, a member of staff of the Department 12 Strategy and member of staff of the Office of the Vice-Rector for Academic Staff. The members of the working group assure the implementation within their respective units and contact other units responsible to initiate and monitor progress. All developments are continuously documented. At least twice a year, the working group reports to a small steering group consisting of the Vice-Rector for Academic Staff, the Vice-Rector for International Affairs and the Permanent Deputy of the Chancellor. The head of Division 4 Staff is an advisory member of the steering group and is consulted in particular with respect to administrative regulations for university personnel.

## INVOLVING THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY

The process of the HRS4R HRS4R has been and will continue to be monitored by the UoC's Committee on HR Matters of Academic Staff ("Kommission für die Belange der akademischen MitarbeiterInnen"). The committee is chaired by the Vice-Rector for Academic Staff. It involves researchers at all stages of their careers, as it is composed of representatives of all groups of the university: students, academic staff (R1 to R3, from all faculties), professors (R4) and administrative staff. Furthermore, the deans of all six Faculties, the heads of the Staff Council and of Division 4 Staff participate. The committee meets at least four times a year and discusses all HR-related policies and matters. At least once a year, the committee will receive a detailed status report by the working group. The oversight function of this committee assures that the process suits the needs of the research community as the main stakeholder.

## ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND THE HRS4R

As the Action Plan is published on the UoC's website, it is accessible to all stakeholders, the academic and the administrative staff. It will function as a reference point for all planned actions and the overall HR strategy of the UoC.

## ENSURING IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the action plan is supervised by the Vice-Rector for Academic Staff in close cooperation with the Rector of the UoC. At least once a year, the Rectorate will receive a detailed status report by the working group. The implementation of several actions falls under (partial) responsibility of the faculties (Actions 1, 3 and 8). The Rectorate embedded these actions into a central management tool: The Rectorate defines target agreements on specific strategic objectives with the faculties. These are evaluated every other year and linked to financial incentives. The target agreements with each of the six faculties include clearly defined goals and indicators related to the HRS4R actions.

## MONITORING AND MEASURING PROGRESS

The working group closely monitors the implementation of each action throughout the implementation phase. It informs the steering group, the Committee on HR Matters of Academic Staff and the Rectorate in regular intervals on the progress in view of the defined timeline. Delays must be duly justified to the steering group, the Commission on HR Matters and the Rectorate.

The working group collects data and documentation regarding the indicators of the Action Plan. It reviews in regular intervals whether the indicators remain valid to achieve the respective goal. Potential adjustments towards the indicators are documented. The documentation and revisions will feed into the next assessment of the HRS4R to assure best long-term results.

As delineated in our Gap Analysis, the UoC has successfully introduced a substantial number of new policies and programmes to enhance career development and working conditions for researchers in recent years. This has been a joint effort and accomplishment of the UoC management, its central administration as well as all our faculties and centres.

The UoC has set up a clear project structure for a consistent and timely implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan.

The project structure defines clear responsibilities for the implementation, monitoring and supervision and provides a strong link to the research community.

Most of our projected actions build directly on our existing strategies and measures. They are currently prepared or already well underway. One example is the acquisition of up to 30 M€ additional funding over the next five years for our Innovation and Start-up Centre and the extension of the GATEWAY incubator (action 11) early in 2019. Given our extensive experience as well as such very recent achievements, the The HRS4R Action Plan is, in consequence, expected to be implemented successfully. It will further enhance good conditions of employment and an inspiring research environment for academic staff at the UoC.

The principles of the EU Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct guiding the HRS4R are further embedded in the university's strategies and guidelines, as the Action Plan demonstrates.