HR Excellence in Research

Process Description

Process Description

Case number

2022RO768013

Name Organisation under review

UNIVERSITATEA DE MEDICINA SI FARMACIE IULIU HATIEGANU

Organisation’s contact details

8 VICTOR BABES, CLUJ-NAPOCA, CLUJ, 400012, Romania

Date endorsement charter and code

07/04/2022

Submission date to the European Commission

11/10/2024

Process

The HRS4R process must engage all management departments directly or indirectly responsible for researchers' HR-issues. These will typically include the Vice-Rector for Research, the Head of Personnel, and other administrative staff members. In addition, the HRS4R strategy must consult its stakeholders and involve a representative community of researchers ranging from R1 to R4 , as well as appoint a Committee overseeing the process and a Working Group responsible for implementing the process.

Please provide the name, the position and the management line/ department of the persons who are directly or indirectly engaged in the HRS4R process in your organisation:

Name	Position	Steering Committee	Working Group	Management line/ Department
MIHAELA - FELICIA BACIUȚ	Vice-Rector for Research PhD Professor - R4 (Faculty of Dental Medicine)	■	☐	Member of the Management Board
VALENTIN - MIHAI MUDURA	General Administrative Director	■	☐	Member of the Management Board
GINA RITI	Head	■	☐	Human Resources Department
STEFAN - CRISTIAN VESA	Head PhD Lecturer - R3 (Faculty of Medicine)	■	☐	Research, Development and Innovation Department
IOANA BERINDAN-NEAGOE	Former Head Director PhD Professor - R4 (Doctoral School - SD)	■	■	Functional Genomics, Biomedicine, and Translational Medicine Research Centre
CRISTINA - ADELA IUGA	Director of MedFuture PhD Professor - R4 (Faculty of Pharmacy)	■	■	Research Center for Advanced Medicine MedFuture
DANA POP	Director PhD Professor - R4 (Faculty of Medicine)	■	☐	Doctoral School

Name	Position	Steering Committee	Working Group	Management line/ Department
GABRIELA - ADRIANA FILIP	Member PhD Professor - R4 (Faculty of Medicine)	■	■	Scientific Committee
DANIELA - SAVETA POPA	Member, Former Director PhD Professor - R4 (Faculty of Pharmacy)	■	■	Scientific Activity Monitoring Department
EMANUELA - CALINA RETISAN	Head	■	■	Research, Development and Innovation Service
CARMEN MIHAELA MIHU	Vice-Rector for Teaching PhD Professor - R4 (Faculty of Medicine)	■	☐	Member of the Management Board
RADU OPREAN	Vice-Rector for Quality Assurance and International Relations PhD Professor - R4 (Faculty of Pharmacy)	■	☐	Member of the Management Board
OANA ALMASAN	Director PhD Associate Professor - R3 (Faculty of Dental Medicine)	■	■	Scientific Activity Monitoring Department
STEFAN STRILCIUC	Director PhD Chief Scientific Researcher - R3	■	☐	Functional Genomics, Biomedicine, and Translational Medicine Research Centre
SIMONA CIOTLAUS	Member Senior sociologist, PhD - R2	☐	■	Quality Assurance Vice-Rectorate
OLIMPIA PISCOTI	Member Financial administrator (Economist)	☐	■	Research, Development and Innovation Service
ELENA - ADRIANA ROSU	Head of service	☐	■	International Relations
ADRIANA MUNTEAN	Secretary	☐	■	Vice-Rector's Office

Name	Position	Steering Committee	Working Group	Management line/ Department
CRISTINA - ILEANA ARDELEAN	Head of office	☐	■	Grants, European Funds Office
ANDREEA NAGY	Head of service	☐	■	HR Service
LOREDANA SZAKACS IULIA	Head of service	☐	■	Legal Office

Your organisation must consult its stakeholders and involve a representative community of researchers ranging from R1 to R4 (https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/europe/career-development/training-researchers/research-profiles-descriptors), as well as appoint a Committee overseeing the process and a Working Group responsible for the implementation of the HRS4R process.

Provide information on how the researchers groups were involved in the GAP-analysis:

Stakeholder group	Consultation format	Contributions
Committee	On-site meetings	Appointment of the members of the Expert Working Group (WG-E) to conduct an internal investigation into the degree to which the principles of the European Charter of Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers (hereinafter referred to as the Charter & Code) are implemented, as well as the preparation of the necessary documentation for the university's accession to the HRS4R Strategy of European Union. Appointment of members of the Administrative Advisory Group (AAG) to provide the necessary data to the Expert Working Group (WG-E) for the HRS4R process.
Expert Working Group (WG-E)	Periodic meetings, onsite and online (Teams platform); e-mail correspondence	Evaluation of the degree of implementation of the principles of the Charter & Code in the UMPhIH Charter and the university regulations. Agreement on the calendar for the academic community consultation campaign to conduct the Gap Analysis and develop the Action Plan for the HRS4R project. Validation of consultation design and tools. Discussion of the report on the consultation process. Assessment of the degree to which the university's research strategy and regulations apply OTM-R policies. Elaboration of documents (the 4 templates).

Stakeholder group	Consultation format	Contributions
Expert Working Group (WG-E) and Communication Center of UMPhIH	Phone calls and e-mail correspondence	Establishing the dedicated HRS4R page on the university website to inform the academic community about the HRS4R process and how it is implemented at UMPhIH. Regular update of contents.
Expert Working Group (WG-E) and Administrative Advisory Group (AAG)	On-site meetings and e-mail correspondence	Data collection for the preparation of documents required within the HRS4R process (the 4 templates).

Stakeholder group	Consultation format	Contributions
The Working Group of Experts (WG-E) and the academic community of UMPhIH	Online survey through the Office Forms platform	The first phase of the consultation process on the implementation of the principles of the Charter & Code in UMPhIH included a survey, conducted to collect data for the elaboration of the future action plan. The main objectives were to: 1) identify the extent to which members of the academic community believe that the university, through its regulatory documents and institutional practices, ensures the implementation of the principles of the Charter & Code; 2) measure the (subjective) importance attributed to different aspects about ethics, recruitment and selection, working conditions, and professional development in their work and/ or within the institution. An anonymous self-administered online questionnaire data was used to collect data on five dimensions, four related to the principles of the Charter & Code and one section comprising socio-demographic questions. The questionnaire was open for responses (between 22.01.-18.02.2024). A total of 203 questionnaires were validated for data analysis (a general participation rate of 13,5%; for further details on the sample, data collection, analysis and results, please see Report on the Consultation process). Key points and actions to comply with - resulting from the 1st phase of the consultation process According to survey results, several key directions were identified to improve harmonization with the principles of the Charter & the Code. Thus, UMPhIH must plan measures: - to streamline the ethics review of research project proposals by the Scientific Research Ethics Committee; - to establish clearer criteria for appointing selection committees (for teaching and research positions); - to ensure similar working conditions for research activities and access to existing research infrastructure, regardless of the level at which researchers are in their career; - to improve the work environment (more engaging); - to ensure an optimal research/ teaching balance, especially for young teaching staff (R1, R2).

Stakeholder group	Consultation format	Contributions
Expert Working Group of Experts (WG-E) and Representatives of Researchers (GRC)	Onsite focus group discussions and on-site or online (Teams platform) semi-structured interviews	The 2nd phase of the consultation relied on qualitative data collection methods to document experiences of conducting scientific research within UMPhIH from representatives of researchers. The representatives of the researchers group (GRC) included researchers working at the Genomics and MedFuture centers, coordinators of research centers affiliated to the three faculties in the structure of UMPhIH (accredited in 2023 by the University Senate), as well as doctoral students. In this sense, data was collected from heterogeneous samples of researchers (mostly R1, R2, and R4, according to Euraxess descriptors). The focus group discussions were conducted with 8 participants from each of the two research centers (Genomics and MedFuture), a total of 16 R1 and R2 researchers. Secondly, 18 individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 4 directors of research centers and 14 PhD students at different stages of their training (for further details on the sample, please see Report on the Consultation process). All participants were provided with informed consent to participate in these discussions, recordings of discussions and interviews being available only to representatives of the Quality Assurance Department. Data collected was anonymized, processed and systematized by the Quality Assurance Department (sociologists and one psychologist), being used to provide more depth and comprehensiveness of survey results. The final report, written in Romanian and English, is available on the HRS4R section page of the UMPhIH website. Key points and actions to comply with - resulting from the 2nd phase of the consultation process (doctoral students, researchers, and directors of research centers): - enhance access to research infrastructure through the provision of information of research services/ methods/ techniques/ equipment available within the research centers (on websites; during demonstration days and visits to centers); - improve access to research data for doctoral students through the development of data banks (clinical data, bio-banks); - improve the ethics approval process through digitalization and/or detailed guidelines for doctoral students applying for it, especially during their first year; - increase efficiency of acquisition processes of materials needed to conduct doctoral research through digitalization and pooling of resources; - extend course offer during doctoral school to cover professional training during years 2-4 and meet various needs of students (scientific methods for research different than clinical research, advanced statistical data analysis, in vivo research ethics); - support doctoral students to develop advanced statistical analysis of data; - support students to improve work-life balance and, if the case, decrease teaching duties to allow for improved time allocated to research activities; - improve planning of research and allocate periodic funding to ensure timely and relevant research equipment and sufficient; - reduce bureaucracy through the digitalization of different processes supporting research activity; - reduce administrative duties within the workload of

Stakeholder group	Consultation format	Contributions
		researchers through the opening of administrative positions to support research activities at centers; - organize consultations and meetings between researchers at centers and doctoral supervisors to improve access and use of research infrastructures for faculty and doctoral students; - develop measures to cultivate and retain talented young researchers within the UMPhIH; - improve yearly self-assessment of faculty and researcher to include indicators referring to: dissemination of research results, teaching to develop scientific competence among undergraduate students (workshops; student conferences and events; activity in the ethical review board/ Committee for Scientific Research Ethics); - ensure representation of researchers in governing bodies of the UMPhIH (e.g. University Senate); - rethink the structure of core facilities to include both an administrative component (own staff) and a research component to establish research direction (coordinated by senior researchers); - strengthen collaboration between faculties and research centers – improved dissemination of information regarding research services available (technologies, methods and techniques, potential impact, collaboration practices); - introduce modules within the Doctoral School to provide an in-depth presentation of available research services/ techniques/ methods (for both centers acting as core facilities); - improve research component in educational programs to cultivate talent and increase early recruitment to medical/ pharmaceutical research of undergraduate and master's students; - enhance a culture of research by making research activity more relevant to clinical practice (train future physicians to use research to improve clinical practice) – integrate research in clinical practice; - link doctoral supervision to research resources to ensure the success of doctoral research projects (enrolling doctoral students supervised by professors coordinating projects); - prioritize research activity by revising the teaching/research ratio in a teaching position to stimulate highly performing faculty staff to allocate enough working time to research (and less to teaching); - encourage doctoral supervisors to provide mentorship on the feasibility of research proposals (including via consultancy provided by researchers in centers/ core facilities); - improve the understanding of the research flux and the roles of those involved (doctoral student, mentor/ supervisor, collaborating researcher at core facility); - increase efficiency of administrative processes (esp. acquisitions) through digitalization and employment of administrative staff at centers (core facilities); - organize targeted events to improve collaboration between researchers/ research centers and faculty staff (before the launch of calls, so that coordinators can establish teams); - improve the predictability of research activity by discussing project proposals in advance (before submitting projects) so that researchers in centers can be allocated to those projects (compensates for the lower salaries of those occupying research positions as compared to teaching auxiliary staff – biologist, chemist, etc.); - improve retribution for directors of research centers

Stakeholder group	Consultation format	Contributions
		considering their current double role: research and management of center; - introduce different evaluation frameworks for teaching staff, auxiliary staff at research centers, and researchers - administrative tasks would be allocated to auxiliary staff so that researchers could allot time to research activity); - consider employing more technicians at research centers to cover the routine tasks in research activities; - elaborate a policy for long-term financing of research centers (core facilities) that enables the acquisition state-of-the-art equipment/ infrastructure (required for high-impact research); - revise funding of research to pool resources and increase the efficiency of acquisition and allocation (core facilities should be prioritized considering their status – providing research services for the entire research community); - consider revising the evaluation of doctoral students (focus on the quality of the journal, not on the number of articles) - develop biobanks accessible to doctoral students; - improve digitalization and integration of data on research conducted within the university through investments in the administrative capacity of DepCDI; - improve administrative support services (human resources, acquisitions, legal counseling aso); - call for changes in legal provisions that allow the employment of international researchers at centers; - revise evaluation criteria to improve ethical alignment in co-authorship situations by linking the content of the article to the authors' expertise; - provide doctoral students with the possibility to gain Certificates for conducting ethical research (both human subjects and in vivo); - consider revising and improving the possibility of research centers to generate income (if they meet periodic evaluation criteria); - improve mechanisms that allow for pooling of resources for research activity; - increase efficiency of materials acquisition by ensuring stocks of key reagents; - improve the efficiency of the review board (ethical approvals) through digitization and extended guidance for applicants (provide templates, examples of documents); - revise the annual evaluation framework to include active participation at conferences; - identify means to allow more flexibility for resident physicians who are involved in research and teaching; - cultivate research culture within the university and improve integration of research results/ activities in teaching activities; - improve mentorships and supervision skills of doctoral supervisors through courses and periodic reviews; - develop public communication of science and research results at the community level to increase awareness and cultivate voluntary participation in research of members of the local community. Drawing on the results included in the consultation report, the WG-E revised the previously submitted gap analysis and finalized the current action plan.

Stakeholder group	Consultation format	Contributions
Expert Working Group (GL) and Steering Committee (SC)	Consultative meetings; e-mail correspondance	The documents prepared by WG-E to obtain the Excellence in HR for research award (Gap Analysis, OTM-R List and Action Plan) were analyzed, adjusted and finally approved by the SC, which submitted the documents, in their final form, to the UMPhIH management for approval. These final documents are published on the university's dedicated HRS4R page.

Please describe how the Committee overseeing the process was appointed and how it worked (meetings, decisions, etc.):

The decision of UMPhIH to adhere to the principles of the CE Charter & Code and to implement the HRS4R strategy in the university started through the institutional project PROGRES (40PFE/30.12.2021, 2022-2024), to increase the performance of scientific research, support excellence in research and innovation in medicine, the university's rector being the project's director. The Scientific Vice-rector is formally responsible for the implementation of the HRS4R process, together with the general administrative director and other key persons from the university's management structures, who are directly or indirectly involved in the HRS4R process (Pro-Rectorate for Quality Assurance and International Relations, Pro-Rectorate for Teaching, Human Resources Directorate (HR), Department of Research, Development, Innovation (DepCDI), Genomic Research Center, MedFuture Research Center, Doctoral School (SD), Scientific Activity Monitoring Department, Scientific Council). They constitute the Steering Committee (SC), coordinating and supervising the entire HRS4R process within UMPhIH. DepCDI will have a leading role in the implementation of the HRS4R strategy and the Action Plan.

Please describe how the Working Group doing the Gap Analysis was appointed:

Following the acceptance of the Letter of Intent for launching the HRS4R process within the UMPhIH, the SC appointed the working group of experts (WG-E), consisting of representatives of researchers from the faculties, research centers, and DepCDI to carry out the internal assessment of the degree of implementation of the HRS4R strategy in UMPhIH. The initial campaign was redesigned with the support of experts after we accounted for the recommendations made by the evaluators. The initial assessment completed in 2023 was updated at the suggestion of EC evaluators. Designed by the WG-E and coordinated by Simona Ciotlăuș, the new consultation process consisted of two phases conducted throughout January-May 2024. The 1st phase relied on data collected through a questionnaire-based survey, while the 2nd

involved collecting qualitative data through 18 individual semi-structured interviews with doctoral students and directors of research centers and two focus groups conducted with 16 researchers from Genomics and MedFuture research centers. For the preparation of the documents (Gap Analysis, OTM-R List, Action Plan), the WG-E consulted the administrative advisory group, respectively with the representative group of researchers that included representatives from the Genomic and MedFuture centers, the research centers of the three Faculties and the DS.