



EC Consensus Report

Executive Summary

The European Commission's renewal assessment of Charles University (CU) confirms significant progress in embedding the HR Excellence in Research Strategy (HRS4R) throughout the university. CU has demonstrated a strong institutional commitment to high-quality HR management for researchers, supported by robust governance structures, an Equal Opportunities Plan, and a dedicated Centre for Open Science.

Key Strengths

- Strong strategic alignment with the Charter & Code principles, especially around academic freedom, ethics, equal opportunities, sustainable development, and open science.
- Well-developed structures like the network of ombudspersons, doctoral study hubs, postdocs support, and a comprehensive educational portal for staff development.
- Commendable practices in researcher well-being, such as the Centre for the Care of the Soul, mental health support, flexible working arrangements, and good onboarding services for international researchers.
- Proactive open science policies with dedicated support staff, repositories, and initiatives promoting FAIR data and ethical AI use.

Identified Challenges

- Persistent structural fragmentation: CU's decentralized governance across faculties limits unified implementation of HR strategy.
- Insufficient quantitative targets and indicators in the Action Plan make it harder to measure impact.
- Limited researcher engagement in analysing strengths and weaknesses during the renewal phase.
- Variability in HR services, working conditions, salaries, and career development support across faculties.
- Gaps in supervisor accountability, PhD student support (e.g., accommodation, insurance), and career counselling services.
- Need to further strengthen open, transparent recruitment (OTM-R) through clearer policies and better presentation to candidates.

Recommendations



- Increase quantitative targets and embed continuous monitoring in the Action Plan.
- Engage researchers more directly in co-creating and reviewing HR policies through structured surveys and representation.
- Improve supervisor guidelines, complaint mechanisms, and evaluation processes to address ethical issues and PhD study quality.
- Harmonize HR services and working conditions across all faculties to ensure equitable treatment.
- Expand and structure career development training for all career stages, including non-academic pathways.
- Further develop cross-faculty networking for PhDs to foster interdisciplinary research.
- Enhance recruitment processes with better training for committees, structured candidate feedback, and clearer OTM-R communication.
- Improve internal communication in order to raise awareness of the activities and services offered.

Conclusion

Charles University has shown strong ambition and commendable progress in embedding HRS4R principles but should address the highlighted challenges to sustain momentum and increase impact.