



CHARLES UNIVERSITY



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

# Internal Review for Interim Assessment HRS4R

**Case number:** 2018CZ348775

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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,  
YOUTH AND SPORTS



## 1. Organisational Information

STAFF AND STUDENTS (2019)	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	5 134 employees + 6 643 PhD students
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	594 employees + 1 874 PhD students
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	45 employees
Of whom are women	2 051 employees + 3 413 PhD students
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	1 449
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	2 579
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	302 employees + 6 643 PhD students
Total number of students (if relevant)	46 601
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	9 156

*Remark.: PhD candidates are students according to the Czech law. Some of them might be also employed at the university but it's not a rule, therefore we indicate the numbers separately.*

RESEARCH FUNDING ( 2019)	€
Total annual organisational budget	470 689 428
Total annual organisational budget designated for research	143 541 474
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	72 327 316
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	69 570 777
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	1 643 381



## Organisational profile

Charles University was founded in 1348 and is one of the oldest universities in the world. Nonetheless, it is also recognized as a modern, dynamic, cosmopolitan, and prestigious university. It is the largest Czech university and the highest rated in international rankings. Currently, the university has 17 faculties (14 in Prague, two in Hradec Králové, and one in Plzeň), four university institutes, six additional units (such as the Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer and the Central Library), four special-purpose facilities serving the entire university, and the Rectorate, which is the executive body of the university.

## 2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

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### Ethical and professional aspects

#### Strengths:

- Academic freedoms,
- Code of Ethics and Ethics Committee, Research Ethics Committees,
- System for appointing associate professors and full professors,
- Functioning system for the transfer of knowledge and technology.

#### Weaknesses:

- Still a lack of sufficient awareness among all employees,
- Unified, transparent rules for evaluating employees and their career advancement do not exist.

The principles in this area are usually achieved. As for academic freedoms, ethical aspects and non-discrimination, they are all incorporated into the Constitution of Charles University and the Code of Ethics, which has been amended. The University has both an Ethics Committee, which deals with possible violations of the Code of Ethics, and a Research Ethics Committee, which deals specifically with research. However, the functioning of ethics committees is not entirely ideal – there is a lack of confidence in them, and thus they do not have much incentive to act. With regard to plagiarism, a new Rector’s directive was issued, which defines what plagiarism means at the university, and originality is checked in student theses as well as theses for the appointment of associate professors.

The popularisation of research carried out at the university and the dissemination of results is constantly being improved – the team dealing with external relations and popularisation at both the central and faculty levels has been strengthened and professionalised. University employees often appear in the media and are in contact with public administration, non-profit organisations, and members of various professional networks. Contact with the private sector is coordinated mainly thanks to the scout network of the Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer. A subsidiary of CUIP (Charles University Innovations Prague) founded in 2018 is also successful, and CUIP has established several additional spin-off companies itself.

The university seeks to raise awareness of these activities (both in terms of academic integrity and disseminating research results), in particular, by organizing various training sessions for employees. Among other things, this information is now also included in the employee handbook,



which is mainly for new employees. Another important step is the translation of all information and internal regulations into English, so that foreign employees may be acquainted with them. However, awareness is still insufficient, and individual excesses may occur.

In 2020, we started working on a system of regular employee evaluation that would provide transparent rules for career development and feedback for each employee. We took inspiration from documents from certain faculties that are already working with evaluation and requirements for specific types of positions. The documents are currently only in the preliminary stage and are being tested in a pilot study. Their completion and use for everyone is planned for the upcoming years. Nevertheless, the rules for the process of appointing associate professors (“habilitation”) or full professors are incorporated into Czech law, and universities, as well as Charles University, have clearly defined criteria for evaluating employees with respect to these procedures. Sometimes, however, the problem is that not all employees are always motivated enough to apply for this procedure.

## Recruitment and selection

Strengths:

- New Competitive Hiring Process Code implementing the principles of OTMR,
- More flexible competitive hiring procedures,
- More emphasis on the transparency of competitive hiring procedures (publishing advertisements and information in English and on international servers).

Weaknesses:

- Decentralization of the HR agenda,
- Lack of aggregate data for the entire institution.

From 2020, Charles University has a new Competitive Hiring Process Code, which implements the principles of Open, Transparent, and Merit Based Recruitment (OTMR) for the recruitment of academic staff. Open positions must now be announced in English and also published on non-university websites. Interviews with candidates can also be conducted remotely. In particular, this measure promises greater interest of applicants from other institutions, including those from abroad. In addition, the CU Staff Welcome Centre was established to assist employees coming to Charles University from abroad with the administrative and practical aspects of relocation. The CU Staff Welcome Centre, in cooperation with the European Centre, also offers faculties the opportunity to publish open positions via the Euraxess website.

New university career pages have also been created, making available all information about competitive hiring procedures as well as HR policies at Charles University. Therefore, candidates have a better overview of what to expect.

In general, however, there is increased awareness for the need to publish advertisements internationally, not only on Euraxess, but also on other portals. The work environment at Charles University is also becoming more internationalized thanks to membership in the 4EU+ European Alliance. The aim of this alliance is to increase the mobility of all employees of member universities. After the successful launch of these activities, however, the Czech Republic and the entire EU were affected by the COVID crisis, and thus everything takes place mainly online or exceptionally in a so-called blended format.



In accordance with the Higher Education Act, employee relations fall within the competence of the individual faculties. This, together with the university's high level of heterogeneity, is the reason why competitive hiring procedures are carried out at the faculties and not centrally. This means that the practice may differ at the specific units, and the effective harmonization of the process, which we are planning, will take some time. Another effect is the decentralization and incompatibility of data relating to competitive hiring procedures and the recruitment of candidates. Thus, we do not have suitable aggregate data and information on recruitment for the entire institution. This is due, among other reasons, to insufficient digitization and inadequate information systems.

A handbook for new employees has been created, where they will find information on the functioning of the university, strategic and legal documents, information systems, and other practical matters related to their work at Charles University. Assistance with the relocation of foreign employees to the Czech Republic is provided by the new CU Staff Welcome Centre. It focuses on both administrative barriers such as visas and practical issues such as accommodation and schools or preschools for family members.

## Working conditions

### Strengths:

- Academic self-governance,
- Internationalization: mobility and opportunities for international cooperation,
- Quality research facilities and infrastructure.

### Weaknesses:

- Underfunding and low wages,
- PhD students are often just students and not employees.

In the Czech Republic, the Higher Education Act ensures strong academic self-governance. The academic staff and students select from among themselves the rectors and deans, adopt the internal regulations and budgets, decide on strategies, etc. Decision-making at the university is primarily in the hands of the academic staff. In contrast, other employees are disadvantaged.

The persistent underfunding of Czech higher education and Czech research seems to be problematic (although we have noted attempts by the Ministry of Education to improve this situation) – basic wages are relatively low, and academic staff member often have more jobs. The situation of PhD students who are students in the Czech higher education system is specific. Not all of them are employees, and PhD scholarships themselves are very low (lower than the minimum wage).

In relation to Charles University's membership in the 4EU+ Alliance, the university received bonus funds for the development of student mobility and projects. A large amount of PhD students are now involved in research and educational projects with foreign partners, which allows them to obtain additional funding and also to develop their experience and international networking. In the context of the ongoing COVID crisis, it turns out that a "lack of physical facilities" is not necessarily an obstacle and that many activities can take place online or in a blended format using new innovative practices.



Thanks to the PRIMUS programme, it was possible to acquire a number of foreign researchers or academics with foreign experience, some of whom also received an ERC grant, which they are currently working on at Charles University. The exchange or greater circulation of postdocs, the introduction of “bridge professors”, i.e. professors who are at two universities concurrently, is part of the scope of 4EU+. However, due to the harmonization of different institutional environments, national policies, etc., implementation of the plan could take longer.

Although the university has not yet developed a specific policy in the area of equal opportunities or gender and refers to existing general principles and processes enshrined in internal regulations and the Code of Ethics, it is constantly striving to instil new knowledge and to make improvements in these areas. In line with the policy of the European Commission, which expressed the belief that, during the Horizon Europe programme, individual institutions will need to implement plans for gender equality and equal opportunities into their policies, Charles University will also develop its future activities in this direction. In particular, it will seek to transfer best practices from our strategic partners, such as the 4EU+ universities.

In terms of instruction, the vast majority of staff working on research also teach and supervise students. The university offers educational programmes and individual courses for pedagogical skills, currently focusing on distance learning and distance testing.

## Training and development

### Strengths:

- A wide range of courses and improved coordination,
- Ability to adapt courses to current demand.

### Weaknesses:

- Imperfect system of evaluation and principles of career development,
- Decentralization of PhD studies.

The various educational courses on offer has been increased during the past two years, and even researchers have attended the courses more frequently. In order to better coordinate the range of training courses, an educational portal was created where all courses are offered centrally, including annotations, contacts, and the possibility to enrol. However, awareness of these courses at faculties is still insufficient, and some staff members do not attend any courses for their further education.

Key documents concerning employee evaluation and the principles of career development were created. These are university-wide framework rules that the faculties will specify for their own needs. At the beginning of 2021, a pilot study should take place at selected workplaces, and in 2022, all faculties should have their own principles. Since an evaluation system has already been introduced in some faculties, we can also draw on their experience here. Based on the evaluation of employees and their training needs, it will also be possible to adjust the type of training courses offered.

The Doctoral Study Hub was created for the more coordinated education of PhD students. The aim is to better inform PhD students about their rights and obligations, funding opportunities for research, mobility, ethics, and opportunities for further development. Welcome Days for new PhD students and an orientation day for those interested in PhD studies were organized. Conditions



vary across the disciplines in terms of securing funding and facilities for PhD students, their involvement in research teams, and supervision. Coordination boards deal with the harmonization of at least the same minimum standards across the study programmes in similar fields.

In connection with the COVID-19 crisis, where teaching became fully online, the academic staff members are now motivated by the situation to learn new innovative teaching methods, how to communicate with students in a virtual environment, or to expand their IT skills. Several methods of distance education and testing as well as courses for pedagogical skills in distance education were created in a very short period of time.

### **Have any of the priorities for the short- and medium term changed?**

In 2020, a new Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2021+, was adopted, which clearly emphasizes new areas – flexible forms of education, connections to practice and experience, new types of mobility, etc. This is undoubtedly also a response to the current situation associated with COVID-19.

In 2020, the entire functioning of Charles University was affected by this extraordinary situation. The management, decision-making bodies, as well as employees had to deal with a new way of working and react in a very short time. Securing instruction and the continuation of research had become a priority. For example, the traditional physical mobility abroad, whether short-term or long-term, had experienced a sharp decline.

Now the emphasis will certainly switch to virtual mobility, online skills, as well as the digitalization and simplification of all processes. It turned out that modern technologies could be used much more than before, which can promote greater connections abroad with respect to teaching and research in the coming years.

We drew on the measures of the action plan from the university's Strategic Plan 2021-2025, from strategic university-wide projects (whether internal or international), from the recommendations of the EUA international assessment, and from the national assessment of research. Therefore, all of these plans and strategic documents should be clearly coordinated.

### **Have any of the circumstances in which your organisation operates, changed and as such have had an impact on your HR strategy?**

As mentioned above, the situation was to some extent affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, some strategic steps have been pushed into the background, because the time and energy of both academic staff members and researchers, as well as other employees, had to be focused elsewhere. Nevertheless, we managed to fulfil the vast majority of the planned measures, though we experienced delays with some of them.

Due to the expected decline in the revenues for the entire institution, the budget was adjusted and austerity measures were taken. This, together with the pandemic, also caused a decrease in the number of newly announced hiring procedures and mobility abroad. However, we hope that this situation is only temporary and it will soon be possible to return to the previous trend.

### **Are any strategic decisions under way that may influence the action plan?**

In 2020, Charles University is adopting a new strategic plan for 2021-2025. HRS4R and generally taking care of people has a firm position: the first priority goal is "The best people make the best



university”, and one of the sub-goals specifies in particular preservation of the HR Award certificate. From this point of view, adoption of the Strategic Plan for fulfilling the action plan should help, because we have focused on integrating the individual steps from the action plan and the Strategic Plan as well as other documents.

An important factor that may affect implementation of the action plan is a change in the university’s management, which will take place at the beginning of 2022. The second term of the current rector expires and, according to current legislation, he can no longer run for office. Thus, the university will have new management. The transit period may cause delays in implementation and, in theory, a change in the emphasis of strategic priorities, but since it is incorporated into the Strategic Plan, we do not expect a fundamental change in the consequences.

### 3. Actions

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#### New Action Plan 2021-2023

See the Annex.

#### Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles

The OTMR principles have been implemented in the new Competitive Hiring Process Code, which comes into effect on 1 January 2020. During 2020, SC members responsible for the HR agenda consult with faculty HR officers the OTMR principles specified in the Competitive Hiring Process Code, respond to their questions, and support them in putting the OTMR principles into practice. During the year, meetings of HR employees from the different units of Charles University took place focusing on this issue. Currently, emphasis is placed on advertising all hiring procedures on the faculty websites and also on the main web pages of Charles University. In addition, positions for researchers and academics where knowledge of Czech is not required are advertised on the Euraxess website or on another international website suitable for advertising research and academic positions. The heterogeneity of the university does not allow the central team to check the compliance of all OTMR principles by the faculties and to impose penalties for non-compliance. We try to ensure that the positions are advertised well in advance so that all candidates are informed that they have been included in the competition and so that they have complete information on how the procedure will take place (this information is also available on the CU web pages – on the new page “Career at CU”).

Candidates are always evaluated by a selection committee. We try to reduce the administrative burden of candidates, and applications for the hiring procedure can be submitted electronically. In addition, interviews can be conducted remotely. In evaluating candidates, the committee takes into account their educational and creative activities to date and also other aspects of their overall professional experience, such as promotion, mobility, and managerial skills. The composition of the selection committees is up to the faculties. The rules regarding the appointment of the committee are set out in the Competitive Hiring Process Code (professionalism, integrity, balance, absence of a conflict of interest). All candidates are informed of the results of the hiring procedure.

With respect to the recruitment of new academic staff and researchers, the forthcoming university-wide document Principles of Career Development will also contribute to increased



quality, where the career paths of academics and researchers will be set out and candidates will know their career development opportunities at Charles University in advance.

We can ensure from these steps that hiring procedures will be more open and transparent with the participation of more applicants outside Charles University and preferably even from abroad.

**Career pages:**

- English version: <https://cuni.cz/UKEN-1149.html>
- Czech version: <https://cuni.cz/UK-1560.html>

## 4. Implementation

### General overview of the implementation process:

The central part of the Steering Committee met approximately every month, both physically and later online. The team was in contact despite the limitations of e-mail communication and a shared environment, in which documents were created so that more people could be involved in their creation. In addition, this team met with members of the Working Group (again physically and online), although most of the communication took place electronically.

The individual points of the action plan were prioritized in light of the current situation, so that their subsequent implementation would take place, if possible, according to the schedule. In general, the process most often took place in such a way that the implementation team proposed a solution, in most cases in cooperation with other colleagues (see stakeholder groups). Subsequently, this proposal was sent to the entire working group and thus also to the contact persons at each faculty, who could send proposals or comments. After being resolved and completed, the documents were approved by the Rector’s Board, and in some cases, i.e. with key documents, even by the Extended Rector’s Board, and if necessary due to the legislative process, by the Academic Senate of Charles University. In some cases, of course, the implementation team also received suggestions from the WG members or from academics or researchers with whom it subsequently worked. In complicated cases, the creation of the first proposal was preceded by consultation of the ad hoc group, depending on the agenda.



The implementation process runs smoothly, each of the members performs their tasks properly, and the individual points in the action plan are, with some exceptions, fulfilled according to the set schedule. The members of the implementation team are also in close contact with the university management, so that the individual steps can be consulted and have the support of the management in discussions with other bodies of the university.

In order to support the whole process, many training sessions took place during the implementation, the topic of which was implementation of the HR Award or some of its steps. These training sessions were attended by members of the working group as well as other interested parties (two training sessions on HRS4R with guests from foreign universities – from



Warsaw and Antwerp, several HR training sessions, Staff Training Week (twice), training on data management, ethics in research, the GDPR, the transfer of knowledge and technology, etc.).

## Engaged stakeholders

### Members of the Steering Committee:

- Milan Prášil, Registrar (Head of the Rector’s Office),
- Tereza Svobodová, Lawyer and Coordinator of the HR Award, Rector’s Office,
- Marie Fiantová, Head of the Human Resources Department, Rectorate,
- Adéla Jiroudková, European Centre, Research Support Office, Rectorate,
- Helena Kvačková, Head of the Research Support Office, Rectorate,
- Josef Fontana, Member of the Rector’s Board, PhD student (R1),
- Jan Trlifaj, up to 2020 Vice-Dean for International Affairs and Research, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics (R4),
- Petr Solich, Vice-Dean for Internal Affairs, European Projects, and Strategic Development of the Faculty, Faculty of Pharmacy (R4).

### Members of the Working Group

Name	Position
Mgr. Eva Matějcová	Coordinator for educational activities, Research Support Office, Rectorate
Mgr. Nikola Burkovská	HR officer, Human Resources Department, Rectorate
Mgr. Bc. Kateřina Šolcová, Ph.D.	Catholic Theological Faculty
Mgr. Pavel Moskala	Protestant Theological Faculty
doc. PhDr. Jiří Pavlík, Ph.D. (R3)	Hussite Theological Faculty
Mgr. David Sanetrník	Faculty of Law
Lenka Karhanová	First Faculty of Medicine
prof. MUDr. Jan Trka, Ph.D. (R4)	Second Faculty of Medicine
Prof. MUDr. Michal Anděl, Csc. (R4) /Mgr. Veronika Mazurová	Third Faculty of Medicine
Ing. Daniela Vyzrálová	Faculty of Medicine in Plzeň
Ing. Gabriela Hrubecká	Faculty of Medicine in Hradec Králové
prof. RNDr. Petr Solich, CSc. (R4)	Faculty of Pharmacy
doc. Mgr. Radek Skarnitzl, PhD. (R3)	Faculty of Arts
Ing. Kateřina Konečná	Faculty of Science
prof. RNDr. Jan Trlifaj, CSc., DSc. (R4)	Faculty of Mathematics and Physics
Mgr. Helena Chalupová (R1)	Faculty of Education
Bc. Angelika Hájková	Faculty of Social Sciences



Mgr. Jana Štollová	Faculty of Physical Education and Sport
Mgr. Jan Tuček (R1)	Faculty of Humanities
Ondřej Rydval, M.A., Ph.D. (R2)	CERGE

### Additional stakeholders and their engagement

Stakeholder	Engagement
<p><b>Rector</b></p> <p>Highest representative of academic self-governance, head of the university.</p>	<p>The Rector was informed on a regular basis of the specific implementation steps, which he commented on. As a result, all steps were in line with the strategies of the university.</p>
<p><b>Rector's Board</b></p> <p>Permanent advisory body of the Rector that meets approximately once every two weeks. It is made up of the vice-rectors, the registrar, the bursar, the chair of the CU Academic Senate, and student representatives.</p>	<p>The members of the board were a part of the teams that prepared the materials for the specific steps falling under their agendas. Subsequently, they submitted these materials for approval to the whole Rector's Board. In addition, the board was informed on a regular basis of the status of implementation of the action plan and any risks or obstacles.</p>
<p><b>Extended Rector's Board</b></p> <p>Permanent advisory body of the Rector that meets approximately once every month. It is made up of members of the Rector's Board, deans of the faculties, and directors of other units of the university.</p>	<p>Thanks to the documents submitted by the Extended Rector's Board, the management of all faculties and other units could be informed of the key steps of implementation and in particular coordination could be ensured throughout the institution.</p>
<p><b>Academic Senate of Charles University</b></p> <p>The senate has 70 members, of which 34 are students and 36 members of the academic staff, who are elected by the academic community. The senate adopts principal decisions, appoints the Rector, and approves the budget, internal regulation, and strategic plan of the university.</p>	<p>All changes to the internal regulations and strategic documents of the university were submitted to the academic senate. The senate was also informed of the university's participation in the HR Award project and the steps that await the university in relation to acquiring and maintaining the certificate.</p>
<p><b>Human Resources Department of the Rectorate</b></p> <p>The department is mainly responsible for methodology and coordination throughout the university.</p>	<p>The head of the department is a member of the SC. The employees of the Human Resources Department participated mainly in the work of implementation in the area of recruitment and HR management, for example, the personnel information system WhoIs.</p>



<p><b>Student Affairs Department of the Rectorate, especially the Doctoral Studies Office</b></p>	<p>The head of the Doctoral Studies Office contributed mainly to all steps geared to PhD students, especially their education and keeping them better informed.</p>
<p><b>Research Support Office, especially the European Centre of the Rectorate</b></p> <p>The office determines research strategies, prepares internal grant schemes, assists in applications for projects relating to national and international grant schemes.</p>	<p>The head is a member of the SC. As a part of HRS4R, the Research Support Office is involved primarily in educating the academic staff, grant opportunities, increasing the chances of success when applying for grants, and best practices relating to research. The office is also responsible for the Research Ethics Committee and postdocs.</p>
<p><b>UK Point, especially the CU Staff Welcome Centre of the Rectorate</b></p> <p>An information, counselling, and social centre that offers services for students, graduates, and employees.</p>	<p>We mainly consulted with the employees of the CU Staff Welcome Centre the situation relating to foreign employees, the opportunity to hire them as a part of recruitment, and also services offered to foreign employees starting work at Charles University and administrative employees of the faculties (e.g. the visa agenda, taxes, etc.).</p>
<p><b>Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer</b></p> <p>With the assistance of a network of innovative scouts, the centre seeks opportunities for the transfer of knowledge and technology among researchers and then implementing the transfer.</p>	<p>The Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer was involved mainly in intellectual ownership, relations with the private sector, and the commercialization of research results.</p>
<p><b>Central Library</b></p> <p>In addition to coordination of the general library and information science agenda, the library is responsible for open access, open science, and data management.</p>	<p>Employees of the Central Library have contributed to activities relating to the plan's data management and research data management.</p>
<p><b>Computer Science Centre</b></p> <p>The centre is responsible for all infrastructure and information systems.</p>	<p>The Computer Science Centre developed all changes in the HR information system and also facilitated the translation of all information systems.</p>
<p><b>Data Protection Officer (DPO) at Charles University</b></p>	<p>The DPO is responsible for the entire agenda relating to the implementation of the GDPR at Charles University, including complaints. As a part of HRS4R, the officer is especially involved in the handling and processing of personal data relating to research data management and in the HR area.</p>
<p><b>Administrative employees at the faculties, especially HR officers</b></p>	<p>HR officers at the faculties are those who actually administer hiring procedures and work with the</p>



	personnel information system. Thus, we consulted with them the steps relating to these areas and also offered them training.
<b>Academic staff members and researchers</b>	Besides their involvement in the SC, the WG, and the bodies described above, they participated in ad hoc consultation groups for the specific implementation steps. Some of them contacted us with proposals and comments that we subsequently used for later steps.

**How have you prepared the internal review?**

We relied on the materials that we collected throughout the implementation of the action plan. First, we evaluated the current implementation of the action plan, and then we collected ideas for a new action plan. These topics were based on our individual interviews with members of the WG and the SC where all faculties are represented as well as our strategic documents (Strategic Plan of Charles University 2021-2025), strategic projects (especially as a part of our European University Alliance 4EU+), and recommendations from various external assessments (EUA, assessment of research). The working versions were first commented on within the departments responsible for implementing the action plan and by other administrative staff members of the Rectorate. Subsequently, they were commented on by the members of the SC and the WG. After approval by the Rector’s Board and the Extended Rector’s Board, the materials were also approved by the Academic Senate of Charles University.

Given that this is implementation of a European strategy, we also focused on cooperation with other universities and research organizations and the transfer of experience. The SC members participated in several seminars led by experts from other institutions (organized by the European Commission and directly by other universities). We often met with colleagues implementing HRS4R at other Czech institutions, with whom we shared our experience. This practice has proven to be very successful due to the fact that the situation at Czech institutions is similar. In addition, thanks to this, we managed to participate in several seminars of more experienced colleagues from abroad who came to the Czech Republic at the invitation of our university or another institution.

**How have you involved the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation proces?**

The academic staff and researchers were involved at several levels:

- a) They are members of the university bodies – The Rector’s Board is made up of members of the academic staff and researchers, and to a certain degree, the Extended Rector’s Board as well, and the Academic Senate of Charles University is made up of elected students (often PhD students) and members of the academic staff,
- b) They are members of the WG and the SC (representatives include R1-R4 academics, HR employees, research office employees, etc.),



- c) Ad hoc consultation groups were created that commented on and contributed to the specific steps, or individual interviews were conducted with the researchers and academics (e.g. principles of career development and employee evaluation, research data management, the Code of Ethics, etc.).

The Rector's Board is a permanent advisory body of the Rector. It is the principal executive body of the university that meets once every one or two weeks. Every six months, the board had to discuss the current status of the entire HR Award action plan. In addition, the Rector's Board discussed almost all of the steps of the action plan since the board discusses all changes to internal regulations and Rector's measures, and for all strategic steps, they must initially be submitted to the board.

The Extended Rector's Board is also a permanent advisory body of the Rector. In addition to the members of the Rector's Board, the members of the Extended Rector's Board include all deans of the faculties and the directors of other units. This body meets approximately once a month. The key steps of the university are always discussed in this forum.

The members of the WG and the SC met on a regular basis during implementation, physically and online. In addition, we were in regular contact via email. They were informed of the progress and of course also contributed to the preparation of documents and procedures. For the most part, the process was organized so that the implementation team created the first working version, which was subsequently reworked based on comments from the WG/SC.

**Do you have an implementation committee and/or steering group regularly overseeing progress?**

Charles University has a Steering Committee (SC) made up of relevant employees of the Rectorate and representatives of researchers. The SC is in close contact in relation to implementation of the action plan, and we regularly inform them with respect to the procedure. In particular, emphasis is put on a deeper understanding of the entire plan and also the place of HRS4R in the strategies of the whole institution, as well as the link to other strategic documents and projects of Charles University.

The tasks of the SC are in particular:

- Coordination of the process of implementation at Charles University,
- Communication with the management of the university, the bodies of the university, the faculties, the WG, and the individual workplaces responsible for implementation of the points of the action plan,
- Analysis of potential risks and obstacles,
- Preparation of any changes to the action plan,
- Ensuring harmonization of the procedure as a part of HRS4R with the other strategic documents and projects at Charles University,
- Cooperation and transfer of experience between universities and research organizations in the Czech Republic and throughout the EU.



Another important group is the Working Group (WG), which includes representatives from each faculty. These are academics at all levels of career advancement (R1 to R4), often members of the faculty management, or even administrative staff from relevant departments of the faculties (HR department, research department, international relations office, doctoral studies office, project support office). Thanks to this very diverse group, regular feedback can be obtained from all faculties, but they also handle specific questions from different perspectives corresponding to the categorization of individual members. In addition, the WG provides valuable feedback on neglected aspects or topics from the faculties' point of view that we should focus on.

**Is there any alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? For example, is the HRS4R recognized in the organisation's research strategy, overarching HR policy**

One of the tasks of the SC (which was achieved) was to ensure that the newly adopted Strategic Plan of Charles University 2021-2025 includes as one of the goals maintenance of the HR Excellence in Research Award certificate. This is the most important strategic document at the university level, so incorporating HRS4R was crucial. Funds are also allocated for the entire HRS4R implementation process within the related Program for the Support of Strategic Management where one of the indicators is the maintenance of the HR Award certificate.

The university also has a page dedicated to HRS4R and even mentions its existence and involvement in it on its career pages.

Among the SC members is besides a member of the university's top management also the head of the Rector's Office, the head of the Research Support Office of the Rectorate, and the European Centre. This ensures that HRS4R is in line with the university's HR policy and research strategies.

**How has your organisation ensured that the proposed actions would be also implemented?**

The implementation of HRS4R is integrated into the most important strategic document of the university. A member of the Rector's Board is responsible for implementation and oversees the entire process, regularly informs the Rector's Board about the implementation process, and submits to it materials for approval. The whole process is further supervised by a project manager, who coordinates all activities and preparation of the necessary documents. In addition, it ensures communication between the university's management, the SC, the relevant workplaces, and other interest groups. In the event of delays or any problems in implementation, they will be discussed as soon as possible so that the best possible solution can be found.

**How are you monitoring progress (timeline)?**

Fulfilment of the action plan will be supervised by a member of the Rector's Board and, at the working level, by the project manager, who are responsible for the implementation of the strategy. Once every six months, the Rector's Board will receive a report on the current implementation of the action plan. If there are problems or obstacles identified, whether of an internal or external nature, a decision will be made as soon as possible on how to proceed. There will be regular SC meetings as well as regular reporting to the WG.



### **How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?**

The indicators are set out in the action plan for each measure. Their fulfilment will be checked by the project manager and the member of the Rector's Board, who are responsible for their fulfilment as well as by the SC, and the procedure will be regularly reported to the Rector's Board and the WG. However, in addition to individual indicators, it is also necessary to monitor the overall progress of the institution, changes in its internal culture, and processes with regard to the entire significance of HRS4R.

### **How do you expect to prepare for the external review?**

We will regularly monitor implementation of the action plan as well as further developments within the European Research Area, including, for example, the conditions for obtaining funding in European grant schemes. Over the next three years, we want to continue the practice that has worked for us, i.e. to meet with representatives of other Czech research organizations and universities on the topic of HRS4R and HR in general. When the situation allows, we will also travel abroad to universities in Europe to share our experiences across borders. Our strategic partners will be a priority for us, especially the European University Alliance 4EU+.

We also want to continue to link activities within HRS4R with other activities at the university as a part of fulfilling the five-year Strategic Plan and ad hoc activities.

We also consider one of the priorities to be improved communication of measures to academics and researchers in order to be more aware of our steps, but also to increase their participation in implementation. In order to measure progress and obtain feedback from the academic community, we will prepare an employee survey, which will also focus on employee satisfaction with working conditions and Charles University in general as an employer.

### **Remarks**

These documents were passed by the Rector's Board on 11th January, by the Extended Rector's Board (incl. all Deans) on 18th January and by the Academic Senate of the university on 22th January 2021.

### **Abbreviations**

4EU+ = European University Alliance 4EU+

CU = Charles University

DPO = Data Protection Officer

HRS4R = HR Strategy for Researchers

OTM-R = Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment

SC = Steering Committee

WG = Working Group



## Action Plan HRS4R – 2021-2023

	Name and description of action	Deadline	Responsible unit	Indicator/target
1.	<p><b>Harmonization of HR procedures at the units of Charles University</b></p> <p>With the help of regular meetings of the HR officers of the university's units and training, the transfer of good practices and the harmonization of procedures in the HR agenda will take place (e.g. recruitment, onboarding, exit interviews, the GDPR). This process will be supported methodologically by the HR department of the Rectorate. We will develop and support the instruments for sharing relevant information and documents among the HR officers of all units.</p>	On a continuous basis until Q4 2023	HR	Training and methodological materials for HR officers at all CU units.
2.	<p><b>Improving the IT systems for Human Resources (WhoIS and EGJE)</b></p> <p>To improve the collection of data and digitalization of certain agendas, we will upgrade the personnel information system WhoIS. Many modifications need to be made in relation to the new legislation. On our own initiative, we would like to incorporate into WhoIS, for example, more detailed records of job positions, an electronic record of home office, a module for training relating to health and safety at the workplace, and employee evaluations. We will harmonize the EGJE and WhoIS systems so that data will not need to be duplicated in both systems. We will perfect the EGJE system, leading to the automizing of operations that still need to be done manually and that put demands on HR's capacity due to the large number of employees. We will strive to offer all new modules in Czech and English.</p> <p><i>(building on current activity no. 11)</i></p>	Q4 2022	HR + Computer Science Centre	Functioning new modules in WhoIS enabling the digitalization of the HR agenda. Improving the connection between WhoIS and EGJE.



3.	<p><b>Unification of advertisements for job vacancies and subsequent work with applicants</b></p> <p>New software will allow us to place advertisements for job vacancies at the university in a uniform format with all relevant elements and in the appropriate graphic form. The software will also enable the work of the selection committee, including voting by secret ballot in accordance with the Competitive Hiring Process Code. The application will operate in Czech and English.</p> <p><i>(building on current activity no. 17)</i></p>	Q2 2022	HR + Computer Science Centre	Using the new software to place advertisements. Making the university more attractive as an employer. Automatization of work that is currently done manually by HR employees.
4.	<p><b>Career principles and evaluation of academic and research staff</b></p> <p>After incorporating the results of the pilot project, the career principles and system of evaluation will be integrated into the university framework documents (Q2-Q3 2021), which will be followed by documents specifying the process at the faculties and units (Q4 2021). From 2022, evaluations for the entire university will take place according to these new rules. This system will enable evaluation based on clearly set criteria in all areas of the university's activities (instruction, research, third role, operations of the university). In addition, it will create a more transparent working environment with clear opportunities for the career advancement of employees, including incentives for associate and full professorship.</p> <p><i>(building on current activities no. 16 and 18)</i></p>	Q4 2022	HR	Amending the Internal Salary Regulation, approving career principles and university framework rules, following up with faculty documents. Training for evaluation interviews.



5.	<p><b>Evaluation of administrative employees</b></p> <p>In relation to the pilot testing of administrative staff evaluations at the Rectorate, we will create a system of evaluation and will approve its final form in the university bodies. From 2021, regular evaluation will take place at the Rectorate. From 2022, this will also take place at other units with the methodological support for the Rectorate.</p> <p><i>(building on current activity no. 18)</i></p>	Q2 2021	HR + Computer Science Centre	Binding measure of the Bursar regulating the evaluation of the Rectorate staff, annual evaluation according to this measure. Training for evaluation interviews.
6.	<p><b>Introduction of fixed-term positions for managerial staff</b></p> <p>We will establish in the internal regulations that management positions for which this is possible under the national legislation will be filled in time-limited segments with the possibility of reappointment instead of appointment for an indefinite period. Continuing in a management position should be based on employee evaluation. Exceptions are positions whose appointment is regulated by the Higher Education Act.</p>	Q4 2022	HR	Enabling replacement in management positions based on employee evaluation.
7.	<p><b>Onboarding new employees</b></p> <p>We will introduce a system of training for new employees so that they may acquire the most important information about the university and its functioning as well as practical areas, such as benefits, IT support, counselling, further education opportunities, etc. We will also focus on the work of head employees with new employees (adaptation process, interview at the end of the probation period, etc.).</p> <p><i>(building on current activity no. 13)</i></p>	Q1 2022	CU Point + HR	Onboarding training for new employees approximately once every two months. Training or manual for the adaptation process.



8.	<p><b>Employee well-being and benefits</b></p> <p>With the goal of improving the social conditions of our employees and to provide them the means for a quality lifestyle, we will support activities and introduce other measures promoting a balance of work and private life and a healthy lifestyle. We will organize workshops and a campaign relating to the prevention of adverse psycho-social effects and supporting a healthy lifestyle. We will conduct a survey of employee satisfaction in connection with activities as a part of the HR Award.</p>	On a continuous basis until Q4 2023	HR + CU Point	Analysing the needs of employees based on a survey. Events and measures supporting improved conditions for employees, a healthy lifestyle, and psychological health.
9.	<p><b>Equal opportunities</b></p> <p>Every year, we submit a report to the Rector’s Board on the status of this issue, including proposals for improvement (especially equal opportunities, gender equality, sexual harassment, work-life balance, staff caring for children or loved ones, returning from parental leave, etc.). We will monitor the terms of the new Horizon Europe framework programme and consider adopting an equal opportunities plan (or a gender equality plan) as a comprehensive university policy.</p>	Q4 2023	HR + Rector’s Office + EC	Equal access to management positions and career advancement, a fair and transparent working environment to meet the conditions of the new EU framework programme. Procedures for cases of sexual harassment.
10.	<p><b>Bilingual environment at Charles University</b></p> <p>We will create a rigorously bilingual environment in which foreign students and employees may study or work without complications (language skills of students, academic, research, and support staff, key documents or services and information systems in foreign languages, especially English, etc.). We will improve the language skills of our employees both through greater emphasis on language skills and foreign experience in selection procedures and competitions and also through language courses.</p> <p><i>(building on current activity no. 7)</i></p>	On a continuous basis until Q4 2023	Rector’s Office	Foreign employees and students have access to all essential information.



11.	<p><b>Staff Welcome Centre</b></p> <p>We are establishing the CU Staff Welcome Centre to provide comprehensive and practical services to academics and researchers and their families coming from abroad, to advertise offers for doctoral, postdoctoral, and other positions or grants enabling researchers from abroad to stay for a longer period of time at the university, and to contribute to the international visibility of the university. In addition, the SWC will represent the university as an employer in foreign countries within the agenda of contributions and reporting on behalf of employees. The centralization of this agenda will contribute to higher efficiency and will free up capacities for faculties.</p> <p><i>(building on current activity no. 10)</i></p>	Q4 2021	CU Point	A functioning SWC, helping to obtain more qualified job candidates from abroad and assisting employees and the receiving workplace with their relocation. Distribution of the agenda between the Human Resources Office, the Finance Department, and the SWC.
12.	<p><b>Recordkeeping for mobility</b></p> <p>We will launch a new platform for registering and recording mobility. We will put into practice electronic systems for the registration and billing of domestic and foreign travel orders.</p> <p><i>(building on current activity no. 9)</i></p>	Q4 2021	Computer Science Centre + International Relations Office	Reliable data on mobility. Setting processes between the Internal Relations Office, the Finance Department, and the Human Resources Office.



13.	<p><b>Support for postdoctoral researchers</b></p> <p>Establishing a clear definition of “postdoctoral researcher”, recording in the HR system, and inclusion in the career principles of the university. Creating the web pages “Postdoctoral Hub” in Czech and English summarizing the possibilities for support (e.g. further education, assistance with relocation, involvement in innovative teaching, organizing events for the academic community and the public, etc.). We will focus in particular on obtaining postdoctoral researchers who have a PhD from a foreign university as well as offering graduates from our PhD programmes clear perspectives if they would like to continue their academic careers at Charles University in relation to the career principles (see activity 4).</p> <p><i>(building on current activity no. 15)</i></p>	Q4 2021	Research Support Office + Student Affairs Department	Increasing the number of postdoctoral researchers from abroad or with long-term foreign experience. System support for postdoctoral staff and its presentation via the “Postdoctoral Hub”. Inclusion of perspectives for PhD graduates in the career principles.
14.	<p><b>Bridge professors</b></p> <p>We will create, support, and develop the concept of <i>bridge professors</i>, i.e. academic staff members who work part time at Charles University and part time at another partner university where they are members of an international team at each university working on a similar topic.</p>	Q4 2022	Research Support Office	Increase the number of bridge professors as one of the possible instruments for supporting internationalization.



15.	<p><b>Kampus Hybernská</b></p> <p>We will support the third role of the university, knowledge transfer in the social sciences and humanities, and interdisciplinary cooperation and intensify relations with the city of Prague thanks to Kampus Hybernská. We will support the community dimension of the university and the innovation ecosystem. “Research in practice” platform – regular meetings on innovative topics and presentation of the results of the successful application of research in practice across disciplines. We will continue cooperating with student associations, the innovation incubator/accelerator linked to entrepreneurship education, our relationship with primary and secondary schools, counselling and advice for the public, discussion clubs, the cooperation of Charles University in resolving urban and community problems, and events for the public.</p> <p><i>(building on current activity no. 3 and 22)</i></p>	Q4 2023	Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer	The objective is to involve Charles University with the community in Prague and other towns and with the public, support of projects with external partners.
16.	<p><b>Open Science and the management of research data</b></p> <p>We will create conditions for the wider use of the <i>Open Access</i> regime and for archiving, protecting, and accessing research data. For this purpose, we will primarily establish the Centre for the Support of Open Science, create and implement a set of methodological materials for the support of Open Science at Charles University and for self-archiving the results of research activities in the university’s institutional repository of publishing activities, and introduce a university-wide system for supporting the creation of data management plans. We will also focus on the analysis of creating infrastructure for the archiving of research data in the institutional repository and begin its preparation.</p> <p><i>(building on current activity no. 20)</i></p>	Q3 2022	Central Library of Charles University (+ Research Support Office + Computer Science Centre)	A functioning Centre for the Support of Open Science. Repository for archiving research data and a repository of publishing activities. Template for Data Management Plan and support for its creation.



17.	<p><b>Evaluation of research</b></p> <p>Given the importance we attach to the strategic management of research at the university in the system of evaluating research based on objective, transparent, and area-specific criteria, we will continuously develop and revise this system. Based on the experience with the first cycle of the international and national assessment of the quality of research work at the university, we will evaluate the concept of our system, if necessary, amend the Strategy of Evaluation of Creative Activities at Charles University, and establish the rules for monitoring the quality of our research between two evaluation cycles.</p> <p><i>(building on current activity no. 23)</i></p>	Q2 2022	Research Support Office	Strategies for evaluating the research reflecting the first international evaluation of research.
18.	<p><b>Support for the submission of grant projects</b></p> <p>In order to increase the number of applications and success in international grant schemes, we will use the possibilities of internal financial instruments, such as the stable and long-term financial support programme for quality project promoters in the ERC competition and further expanding the European Centre’s expert assistance in submitting applications for major foreign grants. In cooperation with the Technology Centre of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and senior researchers, we will organize open thematic workshops focused on writing ERC grants and the National Orientation Day. We will continue to work with the ERC pipeline in order to search for and support quality proposals for grant projects. Regular workshops with grant advisors at the faculties and units.</p> <p><i>(building on current activities no. 1 and 21)</i></p>	Q4 2022	European Centre	Workshops, the ERC pipeline, increasing the number of quality ERC grants submitted.



19.	<p><b>New system for financing PhD studies</b></p> <p>In relation to changes at the national level, we are preparing a new system for financing PhD studies.</p> <p><i>(building on current activity no. 12)</i></p>	?	Department for the Quality of Education and Accreditation + Student Affairs Department	New system of financing doctoral study with focus on quality, not quantity, and supporting successful graduation within standard study period plus one year.
20.	<p><b>Standards for PhD studies</b></p> <p>We will prepare a comparative analytical study concerning the current state of requirements for students in individual PhD study programmes, and on the basis of this, we will prepare and subsequently discuss proposals for their convergence in the individual branches within the Internal Evaluation Board and the coordination boards. In addition, we will create a set of area-based standards for academic supervisors.</p>	Q4 2022	Student Affairs Department + Department for the Quality of Education and Accreditation	The aim is to ensure the excellence of PhD studies by setting demanding, internationally comparable and area-appropriate criteria.
21.	<p><b>Strategy for internal communication</b></p> <p>We will prepare an analysis of the current state of internal communication between the following: 1) Workplaces of the Rectorate, 2) Rectorate – faculties, and 3) Rectorate – external partners. Based on the findings, creating an internal communication strategy for Charles University, in which we define the appropriate tools for its implementation and development. In the first phase, we will implement it at the Rectorate.</p>	Q4 2021 Rectorate, then other units of the university	Press and PR Office	Define the strengths and weaknesses of the current internal communication at Charles University, strengthen the functional procedures and introduce new ones to improve communication and information exchange throughout Charles University (from management to staff, from the Rectorate to faculties, etc.).



22.	<b>Cooperation and transfer of best practices with other universities</b>  Cooperation and in particular the transfer of best practices in the area of research infrastructures, HR policy, equal opportunities, and research policies with partner universities (Heidelberg, Sorbonne, Copenhagen, Milan, Warsaw). Connection with other Czech universities and research organizations implementing HRS4R for the purpose of joint progress and exchange of experiences (meeting at workshops and conferences), participation in seminars organized by the European Commission or the employees of foreign universities implementing HRS4R.	Q4 2023	European Centre + Rector's Office	Exchange of best practices and decision on possible implementation of certain policies/measures in this area.
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