HR STRATEGY - ACTION PLAN

Organisation: University of Montenegro

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Web link to published version of organisation's HR Strategy and Action Plan:

HR Strategy

Action Plan

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1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD students either full-time or part-time involved in research	704
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	
Of whom are women	364
Of whom are stage R3 or R4[1] = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	310
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	135
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	259
Total number of students (if relevant)	15414
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	**€**
Total annual organisational budget	[2]
Annual organisational direct government funding (block funding, used for teaching, research, infrastructure,…)	
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	

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[1] http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/Towards_a_European_Framework_for_Research_Careers_final.pdf

[2] University of Montenegro has centralized funding –the government funding is distributed to the organisational units (19 facutlies and 3 research institutes) mostly for the salaries of employees. The research funding is available only through the grants and projects obtained by the faculties and research institutes.

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

The University of Montenegro (UoM) was founded in 1974 as the oldest, the largest and the only state higher education institution. Today, the University is comprised of 19 faculties and 3 scientific institutes, with more than 15,000 students. The headquarters and main campus of the University is in Podgorica, with other campuses located in eight other Montenegrin cities – Nikšić, Cetinje, Kotor, Herceg Novi (Igalo), Bar, Bijelo Polje and Berane. The University of Montenegro is an integrated public university, organized according to the principles of the Bologna Declaration, with curricula harmonized with those at the most respectable European universities. This, as well as numerous agreements and programs in which the University takes part, enables mobility without barriers in the European Higher Education Area for students, teachers and administrative staff. The University of Montenegro has signed 132 bilateral agreements on cooperation with universities from 35 countries worldwide. Studies at the University of Montenegro are organized at the level of Undergraduate, Masters and Doctoral studies. The University is continuously engaged in the restructuring and modernizing of all study programs and their harmonization with modern achievements and the labour market needs. For years the University of Montenegro has participated in the EU funded projects, either in the capacity of a partner or the coordinating institution – over 50 projects funded under the Tempus program, over 15 Erasmus Mundus Action 2 projects for student mobility, a number of projects under FP7 funding scheme or IPA supported projects, Erasmus + capacity building and International credit mobility projects and other. The projects tackled various issues related to higher education reform and harmonization of our higher education system with the EHEA – be it through curricula reform or introduction of new study programs, but also through capacity building and structural reforms introducing new instruments, procedures and systems pertaining to lifelong learning. Learning outcomes, cooperation with the society at large and the business community, information literacy, development of research capacities, development of services for students with disabilities and other.

In view of attaining its mission, UoM is oriented towards the priority social needs of the time in which it accomplishes its mission; open for all the students and staff exclusively based on their knowledge and abilities; dedicated to preservation of multicultural and multi-ethnic society in Montenegro; entrepreneurial in stimulating social and economic application of supreme achievements within the scope of its activities. UoM is also the leading higher education and research institution in Montenegro. Academic community of UoM is aware of the importance of its functioning for further development of the state and wider region. It has been so far, and will be in the future, leader in processes of social and cultural changes, along with the economic development.

2. OVERVIEW OF KEY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES, REGARDING C&C PRINCIPLES

2.1 Ethical and professional aspects

The ethical and professional aspects at the University of Montenegro are regulated by several acts adopted at the University level. The research freedom is guaranteed by the Constitution of Montenegro and safeguarded by the Statute of University, Law on scientific and research activities and Law on higher education. The ethical and professional attitude of the researchers and employees at the University of Montenegro is imposed by the Code of Ethics as well as by the contractual obligations specified by the specific project funders. The awareness of research freedom and the obligations on professional attitudes are relatively high. Moreover, the University actively participates in the project "Strengthening Integrity and the Fight against Corruption in Higher

Education", funded by the Council of Europe, and has realized numerous international meetings, study visits or workshops where students, academics and non-academic staff are introduced to the basic postulates of academic integrity. Consequently, the University of Montenegro is in the process of certification for the field of the Academic integrity (IRFPA - International Institute for Research and Action on Academic and Plagiarism). The University adopted Decision on the use of software for detecting plagiarism which defines the procedure for examining master and PhD thesis at the University. However, the level of awareness among academic staff, especially the students, of the existing ethical and professional rules at the University needs to be increased.

Also the University adopted Rules for doctoral studies and the Guidelines for doctoral studies (in 2015) defining the obligations of candidates and the supervisors during the research process. The Rulebook on the procedure of evaluation criteria and method of employee rewards, that stimulates the researchers for scientific papers published in the Web of Science was adopted by the Managing Board of the University in 2016. Although in certain research area the research results are on the level of modern European universities, in some other areas the research skills and approaches in research activities still need to be significantly improved. Particularly, the lack of young researchers (particularly PhD student and young postdoctoral students), as the main driving force in research activities, significantly influences the dynamics, efficiency and capacity for research at the University.

The University of Montenegro cherishes an open access to science, and accordingly in 2018 has signed The University of Montenegro has signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Field of Science and Humanities. The University also established a system for permanent archiving, indexing and use of digital objects, named PHAIDRA (Permanent Hosting, Archiving and Indexing of Digital Resources and Assets), that contains deposited PhD and master thesis, final exams and other published papers, and keeps them protected, in accordance with copyright legislation.
However, there is still a lack of strategy in research activities aligned with national and international policies and strategies, and among these to be aligned with the new strategy of smart specialization defining the research priorities on the national level (which is finalized and should be adopted soon by the Ministry of science of Montenegro). Moreover, the University of Montenegro lacks also the general strategy which was last time created for the period 2008-2012, which needs to include most of these crucial issue for the future development of the University. Furthermore, there is no an IPR protection policy of strategy (although it is currently in the process of definition), neither the researchers are fully aware of the issues arising in data protection or privacy policy.

2.2 Recruitment

The University applies very transparent legal framework for recruitment of researchers (criteria are defined by Rules for the Academic promotion, adopted by University in 2004 and national rules from 2016 adopted by the Council for Higher Education). The criteria include various scientific, educational, pedagogical, innovation, and professional categories. The recruitment process starting from the Call announcement is defined by the Statute of the University and Rules for conducting recruitment procedure for academic and scientific titles. Therefore, the procedure and criteria are perceived as transparent and clear. Career breaks are typically not considered as an obstacle, even in certain cases it is possible to keep the status at the University (passive position), while performing other types of activities/functions/mandates outside the University.

There is a significant number of English-language doctoral and master programmes. In accordance with the legal framework of the Republic of Serbia, ever since 2014, the competent Ministry (ENIC/NARIC centre) is responsible for recognition of foreign higher education degrees for professional purpose.

Doctoral study system including the rules and procedures are considered to be transparent, with equal criteria across different research fields and aligned with the national and institutional legislation. The selection of PhD candidates has never been an issue since the number of applied candidates is always below the institutional licence for the number of PhD students. However, the criteria for enrolling PhD studies are defined by the Law on Higher education. A great majority of PhD student are employed at the University as teaching/research assistants, again with no issue arises so far in the selection process. However, there is a need for higher number of positions for teaching/research assistants and higher number of PhD students. Also, the call for positions (job advertisements) are not published on the international level, with exception of the specific project experts' engagements. The call for positions are however open for all surrounding foreign countries having the same (similar) official language. However, there is a very low number of foreign researchers. The language is identified as a barrier for international calls since each academic position required also teaching engagement for which the official language is Montenegrin (also Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian). Furthermore, there is no accredited English-language doctoral and master programmes. Also, the current regulations do not prescribe the written feedback on the selection procedure when more than one candidate applies for the position. Evaluation and appraisal systems could be further improved during the implementation of the HRS action plan.

2.3 Working conditions and social security

The working conditions are defined by the Collective Agreement and the Statute of the University. The salaries are calculated according to the Collective agreement based on the working load of the individuals, as well as based on the job position, but the salaries accounting is transparent. Social security (together with the contributions for health and pension fund) are paid by the University on the regular basis. The working hours for the academic positions are mainly flexible assuming the obligatory hours in teaching process, but also various activities that requires flexibility (external collaboration, meeting with partners, study visits, participation to the scientific meetings and conferences, etc.). The academic staff and students actively participate in different types of board, University bodies, councils, committees, etc. The possibility for sabbatical leave is defined by the Statute of the University every 7 years. However, the academic staff are usually overload with teaching apart from research activities, while it is difficult to find replacement for the period of leave. Also, only full professors have permanent positions at the University (others have contracts defined as short-term mandate as specified by the Law of Higher education; teaching/research assistants are commonly the MSc. and PhD students which also have short-term engagements). However, the lowest guarantees for permanent employment (or at very low level) are for PhD student after completing PhD (teaching/research assistants), since it depends on the available positions at the University. Namely, the candidates with doctoral degree are mainly oriented toward the academic careers since the Montenegrin industry currently does not articulate sufficient need for this level of education. This is the reason for having low number of PhD candidates. The research equipment is mainly provided from the external funding such as international projects and is unevenly distributed

over organisation units, research laboratories and centres. Therefore, the availability of research equipment may vary significantly between the laboratories and units.

The Career development centre was established in the past. However, there are no continuous and systematic activities devoted to career development, monitoring, and continuous trainings.

2.4 Training

The staff training activities are mainly performed within the specially dedicated projects that were implemented at the University, especially the TRAIN project (King Baudouin foundation) and ERASMUS projects such as Re@WBC, within significant percent of staff very trained in variuos skills. However, there is no a continuous and institutionalized process of staff trainings. University of Montenegro has a special fund called Development fund offering possibility to use this fund for supporting training activities, participation to the workshops, conferences, etc. Ministry of science provides funds for bilateral projects, fostering the participation of MSc and PhD students. However, there is a need for much stable funding and organisation of these activities, there is a need to make them planned and well-structured. Also the trainings for teaching, research and communication skills at the University needs to be organized on the regular basis not just as hoc.
The University Rulebook on PhD studies, adopted in 2016, and Guides for PhD studies defined the role of supervisor and the supervision process during several phases of the studies. The mentoring process is also monitored by the Committee for PhD studies that exists at each faculty unit, but also the Board for PhD studies that is a centralized body at the University.
Although training, workshops and similar tools are generally available, there is a need to make them planned and well-structured.

3. ACTIONS

The Action Plan and HRS4R strategy must be published on an easily accessible location of the organisation's website.

Please provide the web link to the organisation's HR strategy dedicated webpage(s):

*URL:

Proposed ACTIONS	GAP Principles(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
1) Revising the Code of Ethics to be aligned with the new Law on Academic Integrity. 2) Increasing awareness of ethical issues and academic integrity among senior and especially young researchers and students. 3) Obtaining certificate for academic integrity.	Ethical principles	2s/2y	Rector, Vice-rectors, Court of Honour, Centre for quality assurance, Centre for career development, Workgroup for academic integrity	Code of Ethics revised. Certificate for academic integrity obtained. Organized workshops on ethical issues and academic integrity.
1) Introducing precise mechanisms for training staff in financial, administrative and reporting obligations and policies. 2) Introducing clear guidelines for professional attitude of researchers coordinating and managing projects.	Professional attitude	2s/3y	Rector, Vice Rectors, Senate, Centre for quality assurance, Centre for international affairs	Professional staff trained for financial, administrative and reporting obligations (centralized service for the University project management and consultancy). Guidelines for professional attitudes in managing and coordinating projects.
Develop IPR policy/strategy at the University and accompanying legal contractual and legal framework	Contractual and legal obligations	1s/2y	Rector, Vice Rector for science and research, Centre for Quality Assurance, Scientific Board	IPR policy developed including the contractual and legal framework.
Establishing framework for innovation and commercialization of research, with special emphasize on confidentially policy and different protection policies.	Good practice in research	1s/2y	Rector, Vice-rector for science and research, Institute – Centre of excellence for research and innovation,	University has adopted a template for confidentiality and data protection agreements or policy. Adopting University guidelines for good and safe practice in research.

			Scientific board	
1) *Develop Technology transfer office at the University and train the TTO staff.* 2) *Introduce reporting mechanism on the University level for the results of the scientific and innovation projects (for the purpose of promotion).*	*Dissemination, exploitation of results*	*2s/2y*	*Rector, Vice-rectors, Scientific board, Institute-Centre of excellence for research and innovations, Senate, Managing Board, Ministry of Science*	*TTO established and staff trained.* *Adopted template for reporting scientific and innovation results achieved within the project, dissemination and promotion through the UoM web site.*
Providing better visibility of advertisements for job positions at international level.	*Recruitment (Code)*	*2s/2y*	*Rector, Vice-rectors, Centre for quality assurance, Centre for Information system EURAXESS office, Legal department*	*Established University web page dedicated to the call for applicants in cooperation with EURAXESS office.* *Systematize the rules and procedures for recruitment in the form of clear guidelines for applicants.*
Introducing the informative report after finalization of the selection process.	*Transparency (Code)*	*2s/3y*	*Rector, Vice-rectors, Senate, Scientific Board, Legal department*	*The informative feedback on the selection and recruitment process is included in the official procedure.*
Including mobility experience as a criterion for academic promotion/recruitment.	*Recognition of mobility experience (Code)*	*2s/3y*	*Rector, Vice-rector for science and research, Council for Higher education, Senate*	*Organized meetings with representatives of the Council for Higher Education (in charge of defining criteria for academic promotion) and presented the interest to include mobility as a valuable criterion.*
Encouraging the relevant ministry for defining legislation at national level for recognition of non-formal qualifications.	*Recognition of the qualifications (Code)*	*2s/3y*	*Legal department Rector Vice-Rectors Centre for Career Planning*	*Organized meetings with the representatives of the Ministry of education, regarding the recognition of non-formal qualifications (lifelong learning, distance learning, recognition of different courses, summer schools)*
Enhancing the mechanisms for appointing postdoctoral researchers.	*Postdoctoral appointments (Code)*	*2s/3y*	*Rector, Vice-rectors, Senate, Managing Board Ministry of science Ministry of education, Legal Department*	*Developed explicit guidelines for postdoctoral positions.*
1) *Develop the database on research infrastructure at the University of Montenegro.* 2) *Centralization of resources and interdepartamental sharing.* 3) *Cooperate with Government and industry for larger*	*Research environment*	*2s/3y*	*Rector, Vice-rectors, Senate, Managing Board, Centre for information system, Ministry of Science, Industry representatives*	*Database is implemented online.* *The resources are available for sharing between units, departments, and partners form the industry.*

investments for research.				
Fostering the mechanism for attracting external (project-based) funds for funding research positions.	*Stability and permanence of employment*	*2s/3y*	*Rector, Vice-rectors Senate*	*Trainings performed (especially for young researchers. PhD students and postdoctoral researchers) on the topics related to obtaining funds from external sources, preparing applications, funding research positions.*
Develop strategic approach to researchers' career development.	*Career development*	*2s/3y*	*Rector, Vice-rectors, Senate, Centre for PhD studies, Board for PhD studies Centre for quality assurance*	*University overall strategy developed including the career development strategic guidelines.* *Establish a mentorship program for support and guidance of personal and professional development of researchers.*
1) Recognising mobility as one of the important criteria for academic promotions (career progression) and engagements. *2) Encouraging mobility of PhD students and post-doctoral researchers to other research institutions.* *3) Encouraging intersectoral mobility, and mobility between public and private sector.* *4) Collaborate with relevant ministries to foster mobility culture according to the EU policies.*	*Value of Mobility*	*2s/1y*	*Rector, Vice-rectors, Senate, Faculties' deans, Centre for international affairs*	*Mobility is proposed and introduced in the Rules for Academic promotions.* *Increased number of motilities of PhD student and post-doctoral researchers.* *Initiative/framework for intersectoral and public-private mobility defined.*
Intensifying involvement and activities of the Center for Career Planning in terms of career guidance of PhD students, post-doctoral researchers and graduate students.	*Access to career advice*	*2s/1y*	*Centre for Career Planning*	*Plan of activities (of the Centre for Career Planning) defined and focused to career guidance and support during different career stages.*
1) Establishing IPR framework at the University. *2) Defining University's IP policy and commercialization acts.*	*Intellectual property rights*	*2s/1y*	*Rector Vice-Rectors Senate*	*IP policy (strategy) adopted.* *Additional forms of commercialization and scientific collaboration agreements defined.*
Introducing mechanisms for maintaining complaints/appeals of researchers: *a) Defining additional responsibilities of the Court of Honour devoted to the advisory and mediation function.* *b) Analysing the possibility of*	*Complains/appeals*	*2s/2y*	*Rector Vice-Rectors Court of Honour Senate*	*Mechanism for maintaining the complains/appeals of researchers established either through the Court of Honour or through the ombudsman for research issue.*

introducing the Ombudsman for researchers at the University.				
Encouraging activities for continual professional development: - Dissemination of the significance of professional trainings - Organising workshops for various skills development	Continuing professional development	2s/2y	Rector, Vice-Rectors Centre for International Affairs Centre for Career Planning Centre for quality assurance and studies	Increased interest in professional development trainings. Increased number of trainees.
Establishing trainings/workshops for professional and soft skills development on the regular basis through the Career for Career Planning.	Access to research training and continuous development	1s/2y	Vice-Rector for International Affairs Centre for Career Development Centre for International Affairs Centre for quality assurance and studies	Trainings organized on the regular basis, typically twice per year (once in each semester) on the topics related to the research, teaching and soft skills development.

Actions addressing the implementation of Open, Transparent, Merit-Based Recruitment principles:

Proposed ACTIONS		Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
Consolidate information and procedures for advertising a job position, election into academic titles and employments at the University of Montenegro	Do we have an internal guide setting out clear OTM-R procedures and practices for all types of positions?	2s/1y	Rector, Vice-Rector Legal department	Guidelines on the procedure of election into titles and employment at the University of Montenegro. Guidelines translated into English. University website OTM-R page is updated.
Organizing OTM-R workshops for researchers	Is everyone involved in the process sufficiently trained in the area of OTM-R?	2s/2y	Centre for Career Planning, Centre for quality assurance and studies, EURAXESS office	3 workshops organized
Creating opportunities to submit job advertisements in Montenegrin and English language for researchers from abroad.	Does our current OTM-R policy encourage external candidates to apply?	2s/2y	Legal department Centre for International affairs	Recommendations created. University website OTM-R page is updated.
Offering language courses for foreign researchers.	Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract researchers from	2s/3y	EURAXESS Office Centre for International Affairs Centre for Career Planning	Offers are published on the web site (EURAXESS or job advertisement page at the UoM web site).

	abroad?			
Add non-discrimination policy, related to career advance and employment to the relevant bylaws	Is our current OTM-R policy in line with policies to attract underrepresented groups?	2s/2y	Legal department	Rulebook on the procedure of election into titles and employment of the teaching staff of University of Montenegro updated.
Extend the template with more informative descriptions of the job position and reference to the institutional rules and opportunities.	Do we include in the job advertisement references/links to all the elements foreseen in the relevant section of the toolkit?	2s/2y	Legal department Centre for quality assurance and studies	Template updated.
Fostering publishing of job advertisements on EURAXESS portal.	Do we make full use of EURAXESS to ensure our research vacancies reach a wider audience?	2s/2y	Legal department Centre for International Affairs EURAXESS Office	Increased number of job advertisements published on EURAXESS portal
Preparing a recommendation regarding the gender balanced committees	Are the committees sufficiently gender-balanced?	2s/1y	Legal department Senate Scientific Board	Recommendation adopted.
Introducing the feedback report into the Guidelines on the procedure of election into titles and employment at the University of Montenegro.	Do we provide adequate feedback to interviewees?	1s/2y	Legal department Senate Rector Vice-Rectors Scientific Board	Guidelines updated.
Introducing the committee with the aim to access the implementation of OTM-R objectives	Do we have a system to access whether OTM-R delivers on its objectives?	2s/2y	2s/2y	Committee established and its activities defined by the internal legal act.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

The action plan will be implemented during the period of three years: from 01.02.2019 to 31.01.2021.

The implementation process will be conducted according to the action plan, involving all relevant departments and offices at the University of Montenegro, and will be continuously monitored by the Steering group for the implementation of HRS4R process at University of Montenegro. The group is comprised of top-level management representatives including Rector and Vice-Rectors, legal expert (member of legal department at the University of Montenegro) and Director of the Centre for quality assurance and studies. The group will meet on a regular basis during collegiums, at least one per month, discussing and analyzing the progress of the action plan implementation, identifying the obstacles in the implementation process and identifying the mechanisms for overcoming the obstacles. Also the Steering group will monitor the timing of the actions implementations in order to be in accordance to the planned schedule.

The process of the action plan implementation will be supported by the Centre of Information System (for the development of web-based services and other activities related to the ICT support), Scientific Board, Centre for Career Planning, Centre for International Affairs and EURAXESS office Montenegro.

Furthermore, the implementations will be supported by the organizational units at the University of Montenegro (faculties and research institutes) through the dean's collegiums and the faculties' councils which will be in charge for implementation of individual activities, data collection, dissemination of activities and adoption of specific acts within the academic community. Apart from the individual communications (in the form of instructions and guidelines for implementation) with the faculties' management, the Steering group will organize twice per year large meetings during the Rector's collegiums with deans and vice-deans, to inform about the progress and to discuss the operational issues.

The Rector will organize the working groups particularly for the preparation of demanding tasks from the action plan, such as the preparation, revision and modification of rulebooks, development of the University's overall strategy, IPR policy, and similar. Also, for the purpose of professional training organization, the Rector and its team will appoint the group of internal experts who will lead the training process for researchers at the regular basis, and will use all the opportunities to involve external experts at least twice per year for the specific trainings and workshops in OTM-R practice, ethical issues, strengthening capacities and mechanism for attracting external (project-based) funds, and increasing all segments of mobility at the University of Montenegro.