

TEMPLATE 2: HR STRATEGY - ACTION PLAN

Name Organisation under review: Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici (Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica)

Organisation's contact details: Národná 12, 97401 Banská Bystrica, Slovakia

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

<https://www.umb.sk/veda-a-vyskum/informacie/hrs4r/>

<https://www.umb.sk/en/research/useful-links>

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1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

Please provide a limited number of key figures for your organisation. Figures marked * are compulsory.

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	545 research staff, 270 PhD. students; total 815
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	21 (staff), 31 PhD., total 52
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	0
Of whom are women	449
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	217 (74 full profs, 143 assoc. profs)
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	319
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	9
Total number of students (if relevant)	8200
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	1067
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	18 million €
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	6 million €
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	1733000 €
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	200 000 €

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)

Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica is the leading university in Central Slovakia. It consists of 6 faculties (Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations, and Faculty of Education). The University has 545 university teachers and researchers, and 8,200 students. International cooperation has been rapidly developing in recent years mainly through numerous EU programmes including the Framework Programmes. University has an advanced and sufficient infrastructure with all necessary technical equipment and provides an ample space and facilities for research, teaching and networking.

2. NARRATIVE (MAX. 2 PAGES)

Please provide an overview of the organisation in terms of the current strengths and weaknesses of the current policy and practice under the four thematic headings of the Charter and Code at your organization.

Based on the Gap Analysis, we identified a number of strengths and weaknesses of the current policy and practice at Matej Bel University as illustrated below:

Strengths:

- **Appropriate material and technical equipment and infrastructure**

Researchers from all faculties are generally satisfied with material and technical equipment and infrastructure. The university has been efficiently using the EU structural funds for improving and enhancing material and technical infrastructure. Research teams use also other national and international funding resources for constant improvement of the infrastructure.

- **Research freedom**

Researchers from all faculties are generally satisfied with research freedom. Majority of national research grants are open for any thematic research and do not strictly limit the research topic, which supports the freedom of researchers to carry out research of their own choice. The university has identified its own research priorities in its Strategy 2015-2020, however, as most of research is funded by external resources (national and international grants), researchers are to a great extent free to do research of their interest, while recognizing ethical principles and practices.

- **Access to career advice**

Researchers expressed satisfaction with career services provided by the university although they do not use them very often.

- **Participation in decision-making bodies**

Researchers are satisfied with opportunities to participate in decision-making bodies. Each department has its representative in the management body of the faculty and can have a representative in the Academic Senate (elected in a democratic election). Students also take an active part in decision-making bodies and processes.

- **Continuing Professional Development**

Researchers showed satisfaction with opportunities of continuing professional development. Professional development is required as a condition for maintaining the job position and is also supported by heads of departments and managements of faculties and university.

- **Access to research training and continuous development**

Researchers have opportunities to participate in various courses of continuous development and are satisfied with the offer.

Weaknesses:

- **Plagiarism and research ethics**

Despite existing Ethical Code for Researchers as well as Ethical Code for Students, cases of plagiarism occasionally happen. It seems that there is no efficient mechanism for revealing plagiarism. In addition, in order to fulfil demanding publication criteria for different purposes (personal career, university quality assessment and accreditation, university budget), some researchers choose an easier way to publish in low quality journals or even predatory journals (although the university has a strict policy about it).

- **Intellectual Property Rights**

The Gap Analysis revealed rather low awareness of intellectual property rights including copyrights. The university does not have a specific policy or guidelines in this area.

- **Contractual and legal obligations**

Researchers are generally aware of regulations governing their research work, however, inter-faculty and interdisciplinary research collaboration is limited and seems to be problematic due to lack of transparent rules of this kind of collaboration (e. g. a project which involves two faculties can be registered only at one faculty, which discourages inter-faculty and interdisciplinary collaboration).

- **Dissemination of research results**

Gap analysis revealed that research results, publications and research activities are not disseminated sufficiently within internal and external environments.

- **Openness towards foreign recruitment**

There is a very low number of foreign employees as well as students at the university. Positions are not advertised internationally and inbreeding is a common practice.

- **Sabbatical leave and qualification growth**

National legislation does not recognize sabbatical leave. University autonomy allows to introduce rules about sabbatical leave, however, it is much depended on faculties and departments and their own autonomy and willingness.

- **Limited possibilities for part-time work**

Due to national legislation and rules of accreditation there is only a limited opportunity for part time jobs for researchers. If a researcher is part-time employed, his/her scientific outputs and publications are not recognized in the accreditation process as research outcomes (only outcomes of full-time researchers are taken into account). This accreditation criterion discourages part-time job positions in academia.

- **An inclusive environment**

UMB has partly succeeded in improving inclusive working environment that works well for the needs of both researchers and students (for instance access with no unnecessary barriers). Still, there are challenges to achieve more, especially to enable access for everyone with any declared disability at all UMB workplaces.

- **Mobility patterns and preferences**

Researchers at UMB do not fully use the potential of mobility as they often prefer visiting the neighboring countries (e.g. Poland and Czech Republic) where they do not need to speak foreign language. Many researchers do not use mobility opportunities at all. Mobility should become the essential part of academic career and should be incorporated in the career plan of each researcher.

- **Supervision**

There is no systematic monitoring of supervisors despite recognised problems with the quality of doctoral education. There are also no practices in place for the professional development of supervisors.

3. ACTIONS

Please provide a list of all actions to be undertaken in this HR strategy. The list must be accompanied by an extended version in which the actions are described in more detail. The overview must contain least the following headings: Title action – timing – Responsible Unit – Indicator(s) / Target(s).

Title action	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
<i>University Guidelines for Interdisciplinary and Inter-faculty Research Collaboration</i>	<i>March 2018</i>	<i>Vice Rector for Research; University Centre for International Projects; Coordinator for UMB Research</i>	<i>Strategic university document defining conditions of inter-faculty collaboration (in terms of transparency of duties and rights of all partners). Indicators of the implementation of the guidelines: A growing number of of interdisciplinary and inter-faculty projects (monitored annually)</i>
<i>Intellectual Property Rights Directive</i>	<i>April 2018</i>	<i>Vice-Rector for Development</i>	<i>Strategic university document endorsed by the Governing Board</i>
<i>University Guidelines for Recruitment</i>	<i>May 2018</i>	<i>The UMB HR Department</i>	<i>Strategic university document – an update of existing document that will incorporate some ideas from C&C</i>
<i>Research Results Dissemination Platform</i>	<i>December 2018</i>	<i>Vice Rector for Research; Coordinator for UMB Research</i>	<i>Platform for sharing research results and dissemination of project, research and</i>

			<i>publication activities Indicators: number of items published on the platform, number of press releases, number of induced cooperation activities</i>
<i>Introducing professional development opportunities for supervisors by organising workshops/ fora for PhD supervisors</i>	<i>By December 2018</i>	<i>Vice-Rector for Research, Vice-Deans for Research</i>	<i>1 training per academic year Indicator: Number of participants/ New supervisors will be obliged to participate Continuous monitoring of the effect: improved quality of doctoral candidates' outcomes</i>
<i>Advertising all researcher vacancies on Euraxess</i>	<i>Since January 2019</i>	<i>HR Department</i>	<i>25% increase in applications, min. 20% applications from abroad</i>
<i>Gender Action Plan</i>	<i>June 2019</i>	<i>Vice-Rector for Research</i>	<i>Strategic university document endorsed by the Governing Board</i>
<i>Improvement of inclusive design in order to achieve inclusive environment for those with a declared disability</i>	<i>December 2019</i>	<i>Vice-Rector for Development</i>	<i>25% in the number of barrier-free workplaces</i>

As the establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HRS4R strategy, please also indicate how your organisation will use the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Toolkit and how you intend to implement/are implementing the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above, please provide a short commentary demonstrating this implementation.

The leadership of Matej Bel University is aware of the OTM-R Package and the implementation of open, transparent and merit-based recruitment practices. The university recruitment system is generally open and transparent, and it is strongly framed by national legislation. However, the system is still too much inward-looking and supports inbreeding. International advertising of all positions is necessary if the university wants to become more international. This will require more human resources, qualified not only in the HR field, but also mastering English as a second language. The plan of the leadership is to implement new principles step by step every year. For instance, e-recruitment has been already implemented in the recruitment policies. New Guidelines for Recruitment of university teachers, researchers, associate professors, professors and other leading academics at UMB have been adopted in 2018 taking into account also OTM-R policies. They have been published at: <https://www.umb.sk/o-nas/rozne/vnutrouniverzitnepredpisy/poriadky.html>, see: Zásady výberového konania). These guidelines will be translated in English, too.

4. IMPLEMENTATION (MAX. 1 PAGE)

Please provide an overview of the expected implementation process. You can use the following questions as a guideline in your description:

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

Rector of UMB established a Steering Committee as a decision making body and a Monitoring Committee as an implementation body with representatives from all faculties and relevant organisational units involved in the process of preparing the Gap Analysis. In addition, each Faculty has its own Working Group that was involved in the preparation of the faculty gap analysis for HRS4R and will be active in the implementation of the Action Plan. The Monitoring Committee in cooperation with Faculty Working Groups will regularly oversee progress related to the implementation of the Action Plan.

- How do you involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?

Research community will be involved (the same as it was already done during the preparation of Gap Analysis) via Faculty Working Groups. Each of them involve Vice-Dean for Research and representatives of researchers (junior and senior), representative of HR department, representative of research support staff, representative of doctoral students. All proposed actions will be discussed at all levels – in WGs, Monitoring Committee and at the meetings of the Governing Board. All proposed actions will be published also on the UMB website and regularly also in a university newsletter (a quarterly journal). This way, each researcher will have an opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

- How will your organisation ensure that the proposed actions will also be implemented?

Proposed actions will be implemented on the faculty level via Faculty Working Groups. On the institutional level, implementation is assured via the Monitoring Committee as an implementation body and supported by the Steering Committee. The head of the SC is the Rector, which ensures the efficient implementation of all actions. The implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan will be an important task reflected also in a yearly Action Plan of the UMB, which is monitored every 6 months and discussed in the Governing Board.

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

The goal to align with HRS4R is recognized in the main tasks of the university for 2017 (UMB Action Plan). Implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan will be included in all further Action Plans of the university as these plans are binding strategic planning documents at the university level and the basis for identification the main tasks at the faculty levels.

- How will you monitor progress?

The Monitoring Committee will be in charge of monitoring of the progress. The committee involves all crucial individuals needed for progress monitoring, incl. Vice-Rector for Research (head of the committee), representatives of HR and research support staff (on the university level) and all Vice Deans for Research (on the faculty level). The Progress will be also discussed at regular meetings of the Committee for Science (Vice-Rector for Research, Vice-Deans for Research, Head of University Library and Coordinator for UMB Research). Vice-Rector for Research will report on the progress to the Rector and the Governing Board.

- How do you expect to prepare the internal and external review?

All relevant committees will be involved in the process of discussing the progress and preparing the review. Vice-Rector for Research will be in charge to prepare the final version of internal and external review.