



A4L_ACTIONS

Alliance for Life Sciences: From Strategies to Actions in Central and Eastern Europe

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D3.1 Best practices in career systems in Life Science research

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1 INTRODUCTION

Research organisations in the Central and Eastern Europe (also “CEE”) launched their transformation from focusing on personnel administration to the model of having modern human resources (also “HR”) management. The transformation was boosted by the launch of the HR Excellence in Research Award¹ after the European Commission published the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers² in 2005, with different dynamics in individual EU countries. Missing systems and in-house expertise are still one of the gaps dividing research organisations in CEE from research employers in Western Europe. The Alliance4Life (also “A4L”) members opened debate on modern human resources management and career system at the beginning of the alliance in 2018. The debate started at the level of focus group “HR and mobility” (also “FG 3”) with defining HR-related indicators (essential for benchmarking and analysis of long-term trends) and identification of barriers at institutional, national and EU level. **With this deliverable (also “D3.1”), the A4L is moving from studying obstacles and HR landscape in research institutions in CEE to bringing inspiration and recommendations for practical changes in career systems in life sciences.**

In the **White Paper (2020)**³ segment related to *Modern Human Resource Management and Career System*, the A4L stated that currently **there are not any internationally recognised human resource management and science career system models in existence that could be applied across the CEE countries.** A modern career progression system reflecting the reality of current research careers is often absent, and institutes face a huge inbreeding problem. This situation blocks the desired institutional change, and hinders the recruitment of international talents and an inflow of new people that could bring new ideas into the institutions and foster innovation.

Policy recommendations formulated by the A4L in the document **Inventory of Best Practices (2019)**⁴ to universities and research institutions encourage to build a life-long career model based on evaluation of scientific and other outputs and following general research policies; to implement open, transparent and merit-based recruitment policy and procedures.

In previous discussions, the education in transferable/soft skills as an important part of the careers was emphasised and the need for balance between the higher education, research and medical practice in academic health care institutions was suggested. Training and mentoring provided by companies, as an important possibility of career building for PhD students and other early stage career researchers was mentioned as well.

¹ More details at: <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/hrs4r>

² Available at: <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/charter-code-researchers>

³ Available at: <https://alliance4life.ceitec.cz/white-paper/>

⁴ Available at: <https://alliance4life.ceitec.cz/inventory-of-best-practice/>

Focus group “HR and mobility” (FG 3) identified **main areas of interest and priorities in the area of career systems in research** as follows:

1. HR Excellence in Research Award implementation
2. Career development/system and career track
3. Mobility and internships
4. Strengthening of group leaders as managers
5. Recruitment: increase of both quantity and quality of applicants
6. Internationalisation, and recruitment of people from abroad
7. Welcome services and integration support
8. Diversity, equal opportunities, and women in science
9. Culture in science, and culture of the institute as HR tool

The deliverable (D3.1) presents best practices implemented by A4L members in these nine HR areas.

1.1 METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach for collecting best practices in career systems in life sciences was agreed by members of FG 3. All partners of the A4L did a self-assessment in nine areas as defined above (chapter 1 “Introduction”). The self-assessment consisted of (1) basic grading, that was followed by (2) written description of the existing system (only relevant for “advanced” grades).

Basic grading:

1. The “**missing system**” grade: No policy/system/measures in place in the given area.
2. The “**basic**” grade: The institution implements some measures/actions.
3. The “**advanced**” grade: The institution considers its system well-functioning and is ready to share best practices, but also pitfalls it experienced in progressing to the current state.

The structure of written description was designed as follows:

1. **Summary** – maximum 150 words (what)
2. **Description of your best practice measure/experience**
(how/who/budget/capacities/etc.)
3. **Short explanation:** Why is it considered to be successful and recommendable?
Possible feedback? Positive change of related indicators over time?
4. **Additional information, sources and contact**

Based on the self-assessment and inputs provided by all partners, a summary of best practices in career systems in Life Science research was formulated. It is important to notice that there are differences among A4L partners regarding national legislation, level of (de)centralisation of HR management, structure/size of budget, internal culture, etc. These differences lead to need for tailored made approach and individual HR strategy and measures. The other side of the coin is that, we can find some general principles to be used to boost positive change in the HR in research environment in CEE. These “golden principles” are summarized at the beginning of each thematic chapter. We also analysed which areas, based on A4L self-assessment, can be rated as most developed versus least advanced across the A4L partners.

A risk of the used methodology can be identified in different level of self-criticism of individual partners. To diminish this risk, all self-assessment reports were reviewed by a core team responsible for the deliverable D3.1. After the review, core team recommended several changes in grading (both from “Advanced” to “Basic”, and from “Basic” to “Advanced”). In case of need, A4L partners were asked for additional information or clarifications needed for text revision, or for decision on the final grade.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Basic self-assessment (grading system) confirmed evaluation of HR systems in research organisations in CEE region as less developed.

- In two HR areas, there are three organisations with “Advanced” grade.
- In three HR areas, there are two organisations considering themselves as “Advanced”.
- In four HR areas, there is only one A4L partner in “Advanced” grade.

A positive aspect is that in all nine HR areas, we identified at least one advanced institution that can share its best practices.

Among the least developed areas, based on number of institutions with “Missing system”, we identified:

- **Culture in science, and culture of the institute as HR tool**
- **Strengthening of group leaders as managers**
- **Welcome services and integration support⁵**

See table 1 for complex overview of areas and number of institutions in all three grades.

Table 1: Overview of self-assessment in nine HR areas by A4L members

HR Area / Grading	Missing system	Basic	Advanced
1. HR Excellence in Research Award implementation	6 ⁶	4	2
2. Career development/system and career track	2	7	3
3. Mobility and internships	1	9	2
4. Strengthening of group leaders as managers	4	7	1
5. Recruitment: increase of both quantity and quality of applicants	1	10	1
6. Internationalisation, and recruitment of people from abroad	2	8	2
7. Welcome services and integration support	5	4	3
8. Diversity, equal opportunities, and women in science	3	8	1
9. Culture in science, and culture of the institute as HR tool	7	4	1

⁵ The area of „Welcome services and integration support“ offers a great opportunity for mutual learning. There are five institutions without system and three institutions with advanced system on the other side.

⁶ Six A4L partners are not holding the HR Excellence in Research Award. These institutions are graded as “Missing system”.

D3.1 gives us a starting point for future evaluation of progress in HR management of all A4L partners. Results will be presented to A4L Board, representing all partners, at the meeting in M12 (April 2022). The partners will internally discuss how to use the recommended best practices to improve their HR management, and in the end their scientific performance as well. In addition, results will be used for formulation of consecutive deliverable **D3.3 “Report on advances in career system upgrades”** – monitoring progress at the level of A4L partners and their HR management systems.



D3.1 also identified some **shortcomings to be addressed in the future:**

- 1) There is a challenge in the area of combining career in medical/life sciences (research at the university/research centre and at hospital) – none of A4L members considered its system as “Advanced”. We are still missing best practices in this area.
- 2) Missing standardized monitoring tool for grading and assessment of progress in HR / career systems.

An important aspect that complicates implementation of advanced system from one institution to another is **the national context** (national legislation, and related (de)centralisation of HR management).

On the other hand, we can identify **general factors/enablers enhancing positive, institutional change that are valid across not only nine HR areas, but also across individual countries and institutions.** These factors make career system upgrades functional and sustainable in long run:

- Formulation of a clear vision and strategy, supported by well-defined benefits for all stakeholder groups (management, senior researchers, junior researchers, employees in general, potential applicants, etc.)
 - *Overall institutional strategy further specified in the HR strategy that is transformed into action plan and potentially to other specific strategies/policies (e.g. recruitment strategy/policy)*
- Support of top management and leaders (sponsors) – “committed leadership”
- Strong, diverse working group with a direct access to management
- Systematic approach (SMART planning)
- Capacity planning and capacity building
- Evaluation of the progress (regular monitoring, reporting, well-defined indicators, analysis of results)
- Support for institutional dialogue, engagement of different groups of people – “informed stakeholders” and “aligned employees”
- Open communication (adjusted to different target audiences)
- Budget allocation

3 BEST PRACTICES IN CAREER SYSTEMS

3.1 HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AWARD IMPLEMENTATION

Out of twelve partners of the A4L, six institutions are holders of the prestigious **HR Excellence in Research Award**⁷ (also “HR Award”). As already stated in the executive summary, the national context plays a role here as well. In countries with a centralised HR management, the HR Award is coordinated and implemented at central level (typically rectorate of the university, or academy of sciences). Whereas in case of Czech Republic with highly decentralised HR management, the HR Award is awarded at the level of “unit” (e.g. faculty, research institute of the university/hospital).

Table 2: Overview of HR Award holders in the A4L:

Institution	Coordination and implementation level	Awarded in	Phase
CEITEC MU	unit level	2019	Implementation phase (revised action plan)
FNUSA-ICRC	unit level	2021	Implementation phase (action plan)
BMC	central level ⁸	2020	Implementation phase (action plan)
MUL	central level	2019	Implementation phase (action plan)
UZSM	central level	2013	Award renewal phase
UL	central level	2013	Award renewal phase

Out of six holders of the HR Excellence in Research Award, CEITEC MU and MUL evaluated themselves as “advanced” in the system of the award implementation. While sharing their experience, **CEITEC MU** focuses on overall organisation of the “HR Award” agenda starting with application preparation to implementation of the action plan; **MUL** focuses on the implementation phase. One of the methods of assessing implemented actions of HR Award Action Plan were quantitative and qualitative surveys conducted among R1-R4 researchers at the university.

⁷ “The European Commission recognises the '**HR Excellence in Research Award**' institutions which make progress in aligning their human resources policies to the 40 principles of the Charter & Code, based on a customized action plan/HR strategy.“ (<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/hrs4r>)

⁸ In case of BMC, the HR Award is coordinated by the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

Central European Institute of Technology of Masaryk University, Czech Republic	
AREAS OF INTEREST	HR Excellence in Research Award implementation
Grade	<i>Advanced</i>
Summary	
<p>CEITEC MU is a proud holder of the HR Excellence in Research Award (HR Award) since 2019. In 2021, the institute successfully passed the interim assessment. The real motivation, genuine commitment and an approach built on managing institutional and cultural change are fundamental for successfully implementing the HR Award principles. Good practice of the HR Award implementation begins in the moment of decision to apply for the award, continues in the application preparation (consisting of a gap analysis and action plan), and we can say it never ends as the implementation of the action plan, and its assessment is repeated every five years. CEITEC MU was able to embed the HR Award implementation into the standard operation of the institute, ensuring that the change is systematic and sustainable.</p>	
Description and short explanation	
<p>Responsibility and capacity assignment: The Director of the Institute appointed the Head of the Director’s Office as a coordinator of the HR Award (both for the preparation and implementation phase). There is an HR Award working group (WG) that prepared an application and continues its work also in the implementation period. The group consists of a scientific secretary and representatives of all relevant administrative departments (HR Department, Research and Innovation Support Department, Communication Department). Researchers (as recipients of actions) are involved mostly as members of thematic focus groups, as respondents of surveys, and as members of the Steering Committee.</p>	
<p>Questions to be asked before applying for the HR Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who is in charge of “HR management“ / “HR Agenda“ at your institution? - What is your motivation to be awarded the HR Award? - Are there any potential issues where researchers’ and management’s points of view could be fundamentally different? - Do you have experts on the HR agenda with sufficient capacity? - Is there any clash between different generations of researchers? - Are you ready for implementation and change? (HR Award is not only about nice words.) 	
<p>Preparation of the application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination: Head of Director’s Office - WG: scientific secretary and heads of relevant administrative departments, responsible for performing the gap analysis and writing the whole application - Steering committee: Director’s Board (a permanent advisory board of the Director, composed of heads of Research Centres and selected group leaders), the Steering committee was presented with a proposal of the application and commented on it - External consultant: Marijke Lein, HR Director, VIB (EU-LIFE partner) - Expert cooperation with a sociologist on preparation and analysis of a PhD and 	

Postdoc Survey

- Proofreading of the application by the external contractor
- WG members met every month, more often if needed
- Methods used for the gap analysis: data analysis, documents analysis, focus groups (management, group leaders), PhD and Postdoc survey
- Learning from others – consultations with other holders of the award, participating events focused on sharing best practices, participating in Euraxess events focused on the HR Award procedure, studying application forms of the successful holders of the award

Time-schedule:

- 2017 – establishment of the WG, preparation of the concept for the application phase
- 2017 – preparation of the gap analysis, three rounds of revisions in total, everything reviewed by the coordinator – 9 months in total, out of which 2 months of writing
- 2018 – action plan formulation – 3 months of writing and revisions, 2 months of final works (proofreading, formal requirements check)
- Summer 2018 application sent, September 2018 start of the implementation (without respect to when we receive results of the evaluation procedure)
- 2019 – January – CEITEC MU received the HR Award

Implementation phase

- Coordination: Head of Director's Office (the same person => supported continuity)
- WG: scientific secretary and heads of relevant administrative departments, responsible for the implementation of the action plan, each task in the action plan is assigned to one member (department) of the WG
- Steering committee: Director's Board (a permanent advisory board of the Director, composed of heads of Research Centres and selected group leaders), the Steering committee is informed about implementation progress and comments on significant outcomes (e.g. recruitment policy, career system, gender equality plan)
- WG members met every month, more often if needed, at the beginning, new tasks to be implemented are discussed at the group meetings, assignment is specified more in detail, afterwards, the responsible department prepares a first draft (e.g. of the new policy) that is presented to and reviewed by the WG. When the proposal is finished at the level of WG, the proposal continues in a standard institutional procedure – being presented at the management meeting, group leaders' meeting and Director's Board / Scientific Board (if relevant).
- The action plan is formulated as SMART (specific, measurable, action, responsibility assigned, time aspect defined)
- The action plan is reviewed every quarter
- While opening a new task (new agenda/issue), we try to use participative methods such as focus groups with researchers to discuss the issue in a complex way, searching for employees' experience, feedback and needs (e.g. when we started works on the design of onboarding system, there was a focus group with group leaders as persons that are, together with HR Department, primarily responsible for proper onboarding of new team members)
- Regular reporting to the management (status report of the HR Award action plan)

Budget allocation

- CEITEC MU applied for several grants in order to finance actions of the HR Award implementation both by national and international grant providers. In the future, the institute is ready to allocate institutional funding, especially for providing training.
- Most common types of HR Award related costs: travel costs (mostly in pre-award phase), direct costs for training (post-award phase)

Major recommendations (best practices)

- There are many reasons why to apply for the HR Award. However, the primary motivation should be improving working conditions and research environment and thus keeping the best researchers motivated, staying in research. The institution should not apply just because of “grants reasons” (such as being eligible for grants or receiving bonus points).
- The HR Award is not a goal. It is “only” a tool how to perform systematic and sustainable institutional change.
- The HR Award should not be perceived as a project. It should be dedicated to departments that will implement it in the long run.
- Support of top management is essential, not only to the idea of the HR Award but also (and mainly) to bringing change and launching new policies, measures, actions.
- The coordinator should be a member of the management and should have allocated capacities of relevant departments.
- The HR Award action plan should be in line with the institutional strategy. It should be an integral part of the institutional annual plan and reporting system.
- Researchers of all career phases, genders, nationalities should be involved while respecting their limited capacity.
- WG should be as diverse as possible.
- Be patient and celebrate every small step and success.
- Be realistic about the time schedule and capacity allocation. Do not open too many new topics at one time!
- Do not underestimate the communication plan. People need to be informed. The change is often not visible immediately, and it should get a PR.
- Take full advantage of informal networks, find other HR Award holders and exchange not only best practices but also lessons learned! It is beneficial to have such a network both on a national level (sharing the same context and legal framework) and international level.

Additional information, sources and contact

Contact: eliska.handlirova@ceitec.muni.cz

HR Award news available at: <https://www.ceitec.eu/ceitec-mu/i1?tabId=25741>

Medical University of Łódź, Poland	
AREAS OF INTEREST	HR Excellence in Research Award implementation
Grade	<i>Advanced</i>
Summary	
<p>The Rector of Medical University of Lodz Prof. Radziśław Kordek signed the Endorsement and Commitment Letter on the 6 March, 2018, and since then the implementation process started. Afterwards, the Working Group, Steering Committee, and the Committee overseeing the process (Monitoring Group) were appointed. As a result of their collaborative work with researchers at all career stages (R1-R4), the outline of the strategy for overcoming several gaps was formed and the Action Plan for years 2019-2021 was developed.</p> <p>After being granted the prestigious award “HR Excellence in Research” in 2019 MUL regularly oversees the completion of all activities proposed in the Action Plan. The implementation process is directly supervised by the Vice-Rector for Research Strategy and International Relations. The Administrative Coordinator of HRS4R process is responsible for management and communication among all the stakeholders.</p> <p>Three groups are responsible for implementing the HRS4R process: the Working Group, the Steering Committee and the Monitoring Group. The implementation process includes researchers R1-R4, additional administrative staff if needed, and all faculty authorities, who will have a significant role in reflecting on further gaps to be filled by the University. The implementation of HRS4R process is continuously monitored and the progress is reported to the responsible partners and Management Board at MUL, including Rector, in a regular way. At the moment MUL is preparing for the Interim Assessment Phase (the deadline for that phase is 14th December 2021).</p> <p>One of the good practices which MUL has established and presents as a good practice (see the text below) was creating a two-step study – quantitative and qualitative research, which was designed by Department of Sociology of MUL (<i>dr. Magdalena Wieczorkowska, dr. Paweł Przyłęcki, dr. Agnieszka Pawlak</i>) and conducted among all stages of researchers R1-R4 at MUL. Results of the survey were used for assessing implementation of the HR Award Action Plan.</p>	
Description and short explanation	
<p>a) <u>Introduction</u></p> <p>The HR Excellence in Research distinction is awarded by the European Commission to R&D institutions that respect the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Obtaining the distinction involves a process of systematic monitoring of excellence in the areas defined by the documents mentioned above. Accordingly, the last quantitative research was conducted at the turn of March and April 2021 and the last qualitative research was conducted in May 2021 in line with the principles of the Charter and the Code and evaluation of the changes implemented to date.</p>	

b) The aim of the study

The aim of the study was to test the strategic areas set out in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Where appropriate, respondents assessed the scope and quality of the solutions implemented. The in-depth analysis was aimed at identifying the most significant issues that need to be addressed by the university in terms of quality improvement in four main areas:

- Labour and ethical aspects
- Recruitment
- Training courses and development
- Working conditions

c) Methodological note

The study was designed by an interdisciplinary team consisting of administrative staff, scientists, researchers and methodologists. Department of Sociology of Medical University of Lodz coordinated and supervised the whole survey. The survey had a two-stage design. The first stage was a quantitative study, using an online survey and CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interview) technique. In order to do so, four separate questionnaires were prepared, each covering a different range of topics contained in the documents given above:

- 1st Questionnaire – addressed labour and ethical aspects;
- 2nd Questionnaire – addressed recruitment issues;
- 3rd Questionnaire – addressed training and development;
- 4th Questionnaire – addressed issues related to working conditions.

Each questionnaire consisted of several subject and metric questions that were standardized across all four questionnaires: gender, age, length of service, title or degree, and employee group. The questionnaire was made available to employees online between March 15 and April 16, 2021. The respondents were informed of the anonymous and voluntary nature of the study. Considering the number of employees who were the target group of the study (about 1500 people), the return rate was less than 30 %.

Table 3 Number of completed questionnaires

Questionnaire Number	Number of completed questionnaires
1	571
2	473
3	459
4	480

The second stage of the study was qualitative, consisting of Focus Group Interviews (FGI), the scenarios of which were based on the obtained results of the quantitative research. This phase of the study was conducted in May 2021. Five focus group interviews were conducted with the participation of 29 representatives of the scientific and didactic environment of the Medical University of Lodz. The respondents were divided into five groups according to their position. Thus, focus group interviews were conducted with the following groups:

- PhD students;
- Teaching staff;
- Research and teaching staff working as Associate Professors holding a doctoral degree;
- Research and teaching staff working as Associate Professors holding a postdoctoral degree;
- Research and teaching staff holding an academic title of Professor.

The research was supervised by the Department of Sociology of MUL.

The survey enabled to make HR Award implementation more visible to all employees of the university and to connect implemented actions (and positive changes) with the label.

Additional information, sources and contact

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3.2 CAREER DEVELOPMENT, CAREER SYSTEM AND CAREER TRACK

“Career development/system and career track” area could be considered as the most advanced in the A4L, measured by highest number of advanced grades (three A4L members) and by low number of “missing system” grades (two A4L members).

CEITEC MU presents its formal career system and its practical implementation in form of career development opportunities for various groups of researchers. **LIOS** also presents a structure and rules of its career system and adds two interesting tools (motivation system and internal grants for students). **University of Tartu** presents how the university responded to the amendment of the national law, which gave universities more flexibility in developing career models, including adoption of principles of retiring with the emeritus status.

Even self-assessing its career system as “basic”, we include also an example of **ICRC** and its “ICRC Academy” as an example of separated tool focused on offering career development options to university students.

Central European Institute of Technology of Masaryk University, Czech Republic	
AREAS OF INTEREST	Career development, career system and career track
Grade	<i>Advanced</i>
Summary	
The career system and its support and development at CEITEC MU are based on the concept formulated in the Director’s Measure 09/2018 Career System. It is one of the most significant documents in the HR area, which clearly sets out the types of career paths within which specific positions are defined. It also introduces possibilities for further career advancement, career changes, and development. The document is followed by a set of further documents, which together help to create a positive and supportive environment for building research careers at different stages but also preventing the institute from	

inbreeding practices.

Description and short explanation

The concept of a career system is based on the organisation of CEITEC MU as the university institute and supports its mission, i.e., to create excellent scientific results in the field of Life Sciences. Although the involvement of researchers in teaching is also supported at CEITEC MU, and the location of the institute at the university greatly facilitates this, education is not a priority goal. Thus, a career path can only be **scientific** (researchers - typically employees of research groups), **technical** (technicians - typically employees of core facilities), or **administrative-managerial** (typically employees of administrative section and management of the institution). The traditional academic career path (assistant / associate professor / professor) is not included, although it can be realised as a parallel path to the scientific course in specific cases.

In addition to individual career paths, the Career System also defines the milestones, i.e., the conditions for **admission**, **evaluation**, and **termination of a career** at CEITEC MU, including the reasons for termination. It also defines employees' right to their individual development and career guidance at any stage of their career.

The scientific career path includes the positions of **PhD candidate**, **Postdoc fellow**, **Group Leader** and **Staff Scientist**.

Group Leaders Track:

The research group will further be inextricable from the person of group leader, who is to be selected only through an open call – in other words, when the group leader leaves, the group is terminated.

Two career stages for group leaders are defined: junior and senior.

All newly appointed research group leaders who have not previously held such a position elsewhere will be junior research group leaders. They will be subject to regular evaluation at the end of their fourth year at CEITEC MU, after which they may be offered tenure (granting an employment contract to the group leader for an indefinite period), termination (to be implemented within one year), or probation (another evaluation within a year, subject to specific conditions).

Senior research group leaders will be subject to the Common Evaluation of Scientific Excellence of the CEITEC consortium, which may lead to the termination of the group if it fails to meet the Common Criteria of Scientific Excellence.

The position of a **postdoctoral researcher** (also "Postdoc") cannot be filled by a person who worked at the institute in the period of 2 years immediately preceding the tender as a PhD student or who, during the same period, completed a doctoral study program at MU, having the (main) supervisor at CEITEC MU at the same time.

PhD students are perceived as the first phase of a scientific career, so we include them in the career system, regardless of whether they have a working contract or not. Together with Postdoc fellows, PhDs form a group that receives very strong attention in terms of

research knowledge and developing soft and transferable skills. The aim is not to provide them with a specific set of courses, but rather to help them orient themselves in their strengths and weaknesses, familiarise them with the skills expected of senior researchers and enable them to take courses to help them eliminate weaknesses or empower areas that may be perceived as sufficient but where is still room for improvement. Organised **courses are then usually available for all researchers**, including those at a more advanced stage of their careers, who easily identify which topics are more or less beneficial for them.

For PhD students, this counselling is provided mainly by consultations with their **supervisor** and the so-called **Thesis Advisory Committee** (a group of at least three experts that oversees the course of study of specific student and provides career counselling). Postdoc fellows can also use consultations with their supervisors.

In addition to individual mentoring, both groups (so-called Early-Stage Researchers, also “ESRs”) can exploit the possibility of **peer mentoring**, i.e., regular meetings of the group, where it is possible to discuss with each other without the intervention of supervisors and share good practice. These meetings can be organised on an *ad hoc* basis. For example, if there is a topic that concerns most group members, the meeting is usually initiated by the CEITEC PhD Student Committee or Postdoc Committee. Or there is also a room for joint meetings in informal CEITEC Tee Time Meetings that are held every Friday.

Standard offer of soft and transferable courses includes: Management & leadership, Presentation skills, Scientific communication, Academic writing, Time management, Open Science, etc. The courses offer is set up concerning global standards and reflect the needs of the scientific community CEITEC.

In addition to these courses, we also organise meetings with inspiring scientific personalities from various work sectors who share with ESRs their experience in building a career called **Life after PhD**. And also, Company Visits to introduce the corporate environment, where representatives of companies present to ESRs what they do, their vision, the possibilities of cooperation, and possible future careers in their company. ESRs can also attend meetings/lunches with prominent researchers lecturing at the university. An important space for sharing good practice and networking are **PhD and Postdoc Retreats** regularly organised by the target group (CEITEC PhD Student Committee, CEITEC Postdoc Committee). The parallel can be found in more advanced researchers in the form of **Group Leaders’ retreats**. Besides Retreats, we also organise the CEITEC PhD Conference, which is intended for both the scientific and academic public in the field of life sciences, and its aim is to present the research results of the CEITEC PhD School students. The conference program includes presentations of research results of 4th-year students and posters of 3rd-year students.

Researchers at CEITEC MU are also supported in participating in various types of **mobility**, from scientific conferences to longer-term internships. A high level of **internationalisation** is also a significant added value that enables further career development of researchers even after they leave CEITEC MU and join the activities of other international teams (86 % Postdocs, 66 % CEITEC PhD School students, and 28 % group leaders are from abroad at CEITEC MU).

Career System – Procedure:

Preparation: The draft of the measure reflected the outcome of the working session of the institution's management. The document itself was then formulated by the Scientific Secretary and further revised by the heads of administrative departments and the management of the institution. The final text was gradually introduced to all employees, with specific attention paid to PhDs and Postdocs.

Implementation: The measure was implemented after a complex presentation to all employees. The individual parts of the measure were interpreted on real activities and situations in order to avoid miss implementation. This document was followed by other documents that specified the individual processes, especially in connection with their implementation, such as the Recruitment policy, Evaluation handbook, Mentoring program, Thesis Advisory Committee handbook, etc. Other documents are in preparation, such as Leadership Policy. The implementation is distributed to various administrative departments according to the affiliation of the given area. HR and Research and Innovations Support departments are most involved.

Budget: There is no specific budget package to cover the costs associated with these activities. Often the source comes from specific projects. Alternatively, institutional (non-purposed) resources are used.

Capacities: The Training Manager (HR department) is fully dedicated to career development, and the Science and Research Manager (RIS department) holds similar activities for PhD students. From a conceptual point of view, this area falls under the responsibility of the Scientific Secretary.

Added value: Added value is a clear and well-arranged career system, which allows planning further careers. It also strengthens the skills of researchers leading to a smooth adaptation in the international scientific scene. It makes the system transparent and predictable.

Milestones / checkpoints: The career system was properly introduced and discussed with employees. The special meeting was also for PhD students and representatives of the HR department, who most often work with the document and have to interpret it. There was a special Group Leaders meeting dedicated to discussion about the aimed rules of the career system. After some time, a revision was made, including feedback from scientists, and minor changes were implemented. The measure is regularly checked and revised.

Feedback: Both positive and negative. The career system relatively strictly sets the rules for the admission and further evaluation of researchers and teams. The most significant resistance was in the group of Postdoc fellows against anti-inbreeding measures. During the discussion, however, the concept became clearer, and within about a year, the career system was fully accepted by scientists.

Positive change of related indicators over time: The career system helped to boost the dynamics of the institute (measured by the number of new research groups). The HR

monitoring system became clear, enabling international benchmarking of data.

Additional information, sources and contact

[https://is.muni.cz/do/ceitec/uredni_deska/opatreni_reditele/opatreni_reditele_2018_09 -
_karierni_system/](https://is.muni.cz/do/ceitec/uredni_deska/opatreni_reditele/opatreni_reditele_2018_09_-_karierni_system/)

<https://www.ceitec.eu/ceitec-mu-adopted-new-career-system/t10069>

Contact person: Nikola Kostlánová, Scientific Secretary (nikola.kostlanova@ceitec.muni.cz)

Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis, Latvia

AREAS OF INTEREST

Career development, career system and career track

Grade

Advanced

Summary

Career development system and career track in LIOS is regulated and defined by Law on Scientific Activity and regulation adopted by the Scientific Council of LIOS. **The purpose of the career system is to define different types of career paths within the institute and clearly outline the tasks and goals of the respective position.** The primary goal of LIOS is to conduct research in organic chemistry, pharmacology and drug discovery. LIOS is not an education institution, therefore, it is not issuing academic degrees. However, LIOS provides opportunity and promotes students from local universities to conduct their research projects at the institute facilities, which is facilitated by **1) internal grants to students for academic career advancement.** Additionally, as an excellent research is the priority for LIOS we have introduced **2) motivation scheme in a form of individual annual bonuses to employees for achieving excellence in key performance indicators.**

Description and short explanation

The scientific career system of LIOS is based on Law on Scientific Activity and regulation adopted by the Scientific Council of LIOS⁹.

The LIOS scientific career system offers 5 positions throughout a person's scientific career path as illustrated in the Figure below.

⁹ 5(584), adopted 07.03.2019.

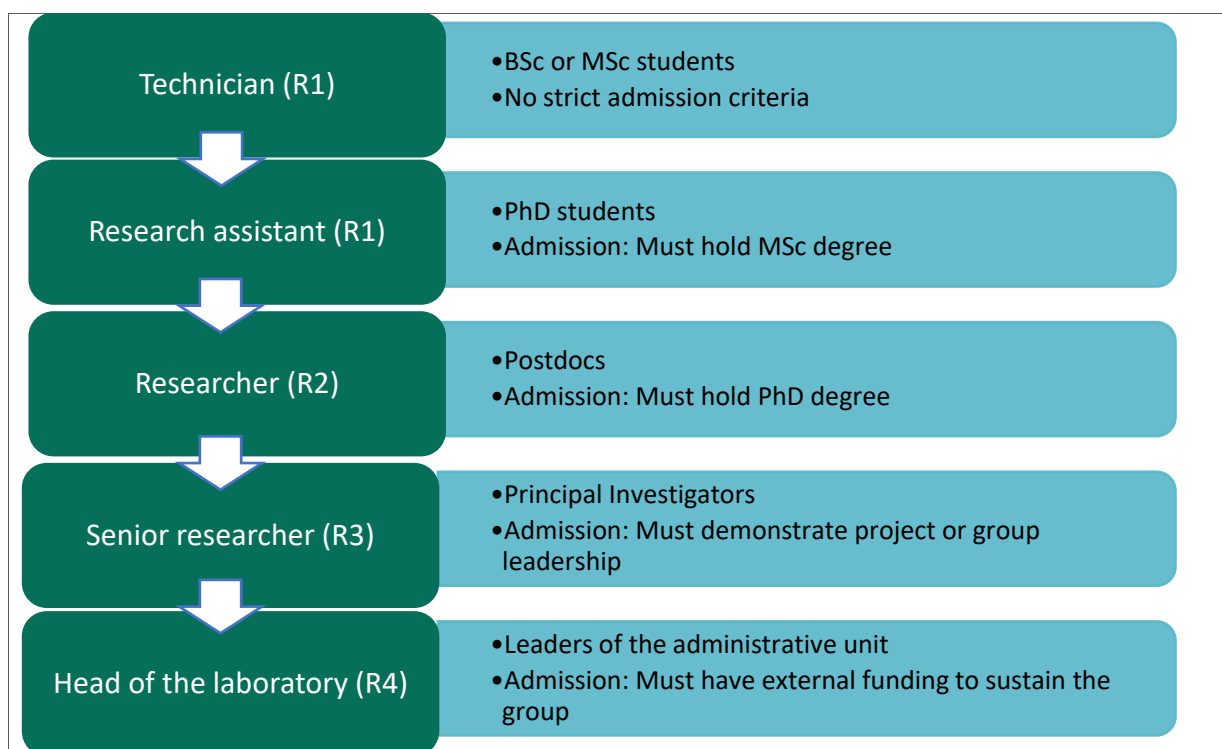


Figure 1: LIOS Career system

The career path at LIOS usually starts with BSc and/or MSc students employed by LIOS as **Technicians**, corresponding to Euraxess R1 position. Since LIOS is not a degree issuing institution, all the students are affiliated to one of Latvian universities. For this reason, LIOS also does not hold classical academic positions such as lecturers or professors. Usually technicians are paid, in rare cases BSc students are engaged in unpaid internship positions, limited to max. 12 months.

The next career step is **Research assistant** (Euraxess R1). The admission criteria for the position is MSc degree. The candidate must apply to LIOS Scientific Council for the vacancy. LIOS Scientific Council awards the Research assistant position for 6 years term with simple majority voting after the candidate has delivered short oral presentation on his/her scientific record and future ambition.

The third step in LIOS scientific career path is **Researcher** (Euraxess R2). These are usually Postdocs. The admission criteria for the position is PhD degree. The candidate must apply to LIOS Scientific Council for the vacancy and LIOS Scientific Council awards the Researcher position for 6 years term with simple majority voting after the candidate has delivered short oral presentation on scientific record and future ambition.

The fourth step in LIOS scientific career path is **Senior Researcher** (Euraxess R3). These are usually Principal Investigators. The admission criteria for the position is record on project or group leadership. The candidate must apply to LIOS Scientific Council for the vacancy and LIOS Scientific Council awards the Senior Researcher position for 6 years with simple majority voting after the candidate has delivered short oral presentation on scientific record and future ambition.

The final step in LIOS scientific career path is the **Head of the laboratory** (scientific unit with certain administrative autonomy), R4 according to Euraxess. This is not elected position. It is open to candidates who have reached Senior researcher level in their career and who fulfill two basic criteria: 1) have expressed the intention to take up group leadership; 2) have secured external funding for the sustainability of the group.

It must be noted that there is no specific budget to secure the salary payments to any of the abovementioned positions. The funding comes from external, competition based research projects, except for few cases outlined in detail below. So, the obvious drawback of the system is external funding dependency.

Two measures of LIOS could be highlighted as the best practices of career development and HR management:

1. Motivation scheme

Since 2014, LIOS Scientific Council has introduced an annual bonus system for excellent scientific achievements interlinked with key performance indicators of the institute. The bonus is awarded

- a) to the corresponding author of the article if the IF factor of the journal ≥ 2 ;
- b) to the first author from LIOS of an article in a high impact journal (IF>6.0) resulting from collaborative work with other research centres;
- c) to researchers for external project applications above the evaluation threshold;
- d) to PIs for managing private collaborative research projects;
- e) to scientific supervisors for defended Master's and PhD theses.

For the period of 2018 - 2020, 317 kEUR was allocated for bonuses. Individual bonus to an employee can reach up to 15 kEUR. Due to high share of private income and associated freedom to operate, LIOS can offer this highly competitive motivation scheme. As a result, for instance, the average impact factor of journals where LIOS researchers publishes has increased from 1.802 (2013) to 3.3 (2020).

2. Internal grants to students for academic career advancement

Although LIOS is not a degree issuing institution, approximately 50 students each year are employed by LIOS and work on a graduation thesis supervised by LIOS researchers. To facilitate academic career advancement, LIOS awards internal grants for students (up to 100 kEUR for the duration of full PhD study cycle) from its internal resources. This contributes to fully dedicated learning process and studies. The key motivations for introduction of internal student grants was:

1. absence of equivalent funding schemes on national level thus allowing students to fully focus on their research projects;
2. to develop internal instrument for generating new research ideas and testing their feasibility;
3. to create training opportunity for mastering project writing skills at early stage of career development.

In total 706 kEUR was awarded as internal student grants during the period of 2018-2020.

It has to be mentioned, that the peer review principle plays a key role in fostering competition and is embedded in LIOS in-house student grants as the applications for the funding is subject to evaluation by external/independent experts unrelated to LIOS to avoid any insider influence. The project needs to meet a qualification threshold to be funded. Applicants for student grants are usually selected and approved by group leaders who ensure the project meets the high standard, thus, usually high success rate is achieved.

Additional information, sources and contact

Contact person: Dace Kārkle, dacek@osi.lv

University of Tartu, Estonia

AREAS OF INTEREST	Career development, career system and career track
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Grade	<i>Advanced</i>
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Summary

From 1 January 2021, the University of Tartu is using a [new career model](#), in which the teaching and research paths are combined in higher positions (stages R3 and R4). There are seven different academic positions: professor (R4), associate professor (R3), lecturer (R2), junior lecturer (R1), research fellow (R2), junior research fellow (R1, PhD student's position) and teacher. A doctoral degree is required starting from the positions of lecturer and research fellow.

Positions are filled by open competition, and employment contracts are entered into for an unspecified term. Starting from stage R2, it is also possible to move to a higher position in the course of evaluation. The promotion decision is made by the evaluation committee. Academic staff working under employment contracts entered into for an unspecified term are generally evaluated every five years of service. The requirements for the position, including promotion requirements and the promotion procedure, have been approved by the Senate of the University of Tartu ([Job Descriptions of Academic Staff](#); [Regulations for Evaluation of Academic Staff](#)).

Description and short explanation

The need for a new career model was brought about by the amendment of the Estonian national Higher Education Act, which gave universities **more flexibility in developing career models**. Before developing the new career model, in-depth discussions were held at different levels of the university (2017–2020). The vice rector for research and the academic secretary were responsible for developing and implementing the model. One of the model's objectives is to give young talented researchers assurance that one can advance in his or her career if certain requirements are met.

In the first phase of the implementation of the career model, the **principles of retiring with the emeritus status** were also reviewed: the possibility was created to pay a one-time emeritus payment from the university's central funding to long-term professors who reached the retirement age. 24 professors retired with emeritus status from 2020 to 2021.

In the future, the opportunity of the emeritus payment remains, but it will come from the units' budgets. More flexible opportunities were created for professors' emerita to contribute to the teaching and research of the university after retirement with the emeritus status.

One of the key points in the promotion process is the substantive assessment of the work of academic staff and giving feedback on their work in the evaluation committees. The HR Office has organised **training courses and seminars** for both the assessors participating in the work of the evaluation committees and for staff to be evaluated. In most cases, also a representative of the HR Office participates in the work of the commission.

In autumn 2021, a **programme to promote cross-sectoral mobility** will be launched, i.e. researchers will get the opportunity to temporarily move from academic work to the private or public sector. Support measures for cross-sectoral mobility have also been set up at the national level in Estonia.

The implementation of the new career model has only started at the university: so far, ten academic employees have moved to a higher position through promotion. We can assess the success of the implementation of the career model by monitoring the key performance indicators set out in the strategic plan: internationally attractive working environment, the number of high-level publications, income per academic employee, the number of employees with a doctoral degree, the percentage of international employees, age distribution of academic staff, etc. For more information, see statistika.ut.ee.

Additional information, sources and contact

See more:

<https://www.ut.ee/en/about-us/career-model>

<https://statistika.ut.ee/ut/>

International Clinical Research Centre of St. Anne's University Hospital in Brno, Czech Republic

AREAS OF INTEREST	Career development, career system and career track
Grade	<i>Basic (example of successful project)</i>

Summary

ICRC is proud for having ICRC Academy as a part of its career development practices.

What is ICRC Academy and what is its goal?

The ICRC Academy (established 2012) is a unique platform offering high school and pre-gradual university students interested in life sciences further education in the field of science and research. Its main objective is to present them the scientific career opportunities in an attractive way, especially in the field of clinical research.

Description and short explanation

Key activities:

ICRC Academy includes the following key activities:

- Science Talks / Lab Tours,
- 3-days Workshop,
- Internships.

Science Talks / Lab Tours - A series of online lectures and guided interactive lab tours at the research premises with the goal to reach as many students as possible, to introduce FNUSA-ICRC research, and to invite participants to the 3-days workshop.

3-days Workshop – A special weekend workshop following the Science Talks / Lab Tours which is full of lectures and excursions, that gives the participants a chance to get a deeper knowledge of research methodology as well as clinical research activities. Each seminar is designed for approximately 50 students selected based on their CV and covering letter. Participants take also part in a team competition resulting in a poster presentation.

Internships – A cooperation between chosen students from the workshop and research teams. Each intern signs an official agreement (usually for a 6 months period) and works under the guidance of a mentor. The students are actively involved in research activities, participate in educational workshops and prepare and present the Research Project.

The target group and number of participants who have been already involved:

The ICRC Academy is designed for high school and pre-gradual university students interested in life sciences. Since 2012 (including 3 years break) more than 2700 students have participated in any ICRC Academy activity, from which more than 70 gained an internship within ICRC research teams. Most of the ICRC research teams have been involved in Academy activities.

Benefits for institution/ research teams/ students:

Benefits for:

- institution**
 - Promotion of the institution among and beyond the target group
- research teams**
 - Headhunting of young talents
 - Direct feedback from the new generation
- participants**
 - Awareness of perspectives of the personal growth and possible future career
 - New information from the field of science and research
 - Contact with other active and talented students with the similar interests
 - Direct communication with researchers

How Academy helps to make dreams come true:

Michaela Slánská (*Currently works as a laboratory assistant in the team ICRC Protein engineering of Prof. Jiří Damborský*): *"The ICRC Academy has allowed me to work on cutting-edge research since I was 18 years old. It means a lot to me because from the very first year at the university I felt that I was quite ahead of my classmates, so I could focus more on things that I enjoyed. I went for an internship at FNUSA-ICRC and Loschmidt*

Laboratories at Masaryk University and I liked it so much that I stayed up to this day. The whole team is involved in protein engineering and I personally work on the development of fluorogenic substrates for the study of enzyme kinetics, for high-throughput screenings, and also for protein labelling."

Costs and size of the organizational team:

Positions and FTE:

- Coordinator (0,5 FTE) - responsible for administration and daily operational tasks, organizes activities, processes the contracts and internships
- Consultant (0,5 FTE) - provides expertise regarding the strategy and planning of activities, assists with their organization, and communicates with lecturers
- Technical Assistant (agreement to complete a job - max. 300 hours/year) - helps with organization of activities
- ICRC Academy is part of the HR Department of FNUSA-ICRC

Budget:

The budget mainly includes personal costs (organizational team, speakers), promotion (web pages, social media, printed materials), catering. It can be adjusted from the very low-cost version to the high-cost version.

Some tips for the successful realization:

- Offer both online and onsite activities
- Have a proactive organizational team
- Be active on social media with the aim to reach the target group
- Keep in touch with former interns and involve them as speakers and/or mentors

Additional information, sources and contact

<https://akademie.fnusa.cz/>

<https://www.facebook.com/akademieicrc>

3.3 MOBILITY AND INTERNSHIPS

In the area of support for mobility and internships, vast majority of institutes reported high importance of mobility support schemes, such as ERASMUS+ and bi/multilateral mobility agreements. Also, in this area, clear strategy, concrete goals and long-term monitoring are important factors of success, as presented by **University of Tartu** and by **Medical University Sofia**.

University of Tartu, Estonia	
AREAS OF INTEREST	Mobility and internships
Grade	<i>Advanced</i>
Summary	
<p>The University of Tartu (UT) supports its staff in gaining international experience. Through various programmes and cooperation agreements, the University has created a wide range of opportunities for self-development abroad, including international scholarships mediated by the University's grant application software, which uses the Research Professional database. Study mobility activities are coordinated by the International Cooperation and Protocol Department.</p>	
Description and short explanation	
<p>In order to promote international cooperation, UT has signed a considerable number (70+) of bilateral partnership agreements with universities abroad which provide for exchanges of students and researchers, as well as other cooperation in teaching and research. The process of negotiating and concluding cooperation agreements between UT and partner universities is coordinated by the International Cooperation and Protocol Office. Under the terms of these agreements, UT researchers have the opportunity to make short-term visits (5–10 days) to partner universities to initiate projects and cooperation or to invite their colleagues from partner universities for short visits. However, staff exchanges funded under bilateral agreements have decreased as opportunities under EU programmes have increased.</p> <p>During the period 2016-2020, around 20% of academic staff participated in mobility. Outgoing mobility for staff training purposes is higher in Erasmus+ programme countries, while mobility for teaching purposes accounts for the largest share of incoming mobility. Besides the teaching staff exchange of the Erasmus+ programme, a number of other mobility programmes support staff development abroad. For instance, programmes funded by foreign countries such as DAAD¹⁰ in Germany and the Fulbright Scholar Program in the US enable longer term research mobility and knowledge exchange.</p> <p>Along with growing internationalisation, staff mobility has also increased. Each year, the Finance Office compiles a comprehensive overview of the business trips abroad undertaken by the university staff during the budget year. In recent years, the proportion of UT staff members who travelled abroad during the year was close to 70%.</p>	
Additional information, sources and contact	
Contact person: Lauri Randveer (lauri.randveer@ut.ee)	

¹⁰ Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service), <https://www.daad.de/en/>.

Medical University Sofia, Bulgaria	
AREAS OF INTEREST	Mobility and internships
Grade	<i>Advanced</i>
Summary	
<p>In accordance with the Internationalization strategy of Medical University Sofia, the mobility is one of the main priorities and important instrument for institutional transformation in modern and competitive research, educational and clinical organisation. It provides opportunities for professors and researchers to develop their skills and improve their employment prospects. The university staff has the opportunity to exchange good practices through knowledge alliances.</p>	
Description and short explanation	
<p>Medical University Sofia, has officially signed more than 150 institutional agreements for academic exchange and 33 memorandums of academic cooperation with similar educational institutions around the world. In the frames of ERASMUS + program MU-Sofia works intensively with around 70 Medical Faculties in Europe, and for several years has been working with universities outside the European Union, in particular with countries such as Japan, USA, Russia, Switzerland etc.</p> <p>In 2019 several documents were adopted by the Academic council regulating the international mobility of the university: Internal rules for administration of mobility, Strategy for internationalization, Procedure for recognition of periods abroad, Policy statement.</p> <p>Administrative structure: The Vice-rector for international relations is responsible for overall implementation of the strategy. An institutional coordinator was appointed, being responsible for incoming and outgoing mobility, assisted by the administrative coordinators from the International Department. On Faculty level, academic coordinators are involved. They are advised by a Commission. Other technical supporting staff – 2 accountants from the financial office, one IT and one legal advisor.</p> <p>The Budget is coming from different sources – various European programs (Erasmus+, H2020, Cost, European funds) and National funding (National fund for research, own budget). Co-funding options from the university budget for PhD mobility and conference participation.</p> <p>Planning and implementation go through several stages - before, during and after the mobility, and the implementation depends on the teacher's training, motivation, worldview, intercultural knowledge and continuity, research interests and goals of the visit. Good planning of the visit begins with choosing the right partner and the right teacher(s) to make the mobility happen. At the beginning of each year, the International Department holds a competitive selection procedure, where participants are interviewed in a clear, open and transparent way.</p> <p>There are following stages in the process of implementing the actions of mobility:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. signing an agreement for inter-institutional cooperation between the two 	

universities,

2. full assistance in the process of planning and implementation of mobility,
3. convening a commission for evaluation and selection of candidates,
4. selection based on pre-announced criteria,
5. planning and coordination the period of stay with the host university,
6. assistance in logistics for travel and stay.

All participants prepare a report to the Rector, in which they describe the experience gained. In addition, participants are required to prepare a technical and financial report. Long-term and sustainable mobility is supported by the dissemination of results – a digital platform called Stories – publication of short stories for successful mobility and its impact on the career development.

In conclusion, consequences of the application of good practices for the implementation of Teacher Mobility and overall cooperation between the universities can be summarized as follows:

- Getting acquainted with the organizational model of the host country, conducting training and organizing practical classes.
- Participation in the theoretical and practical training of students in the host country and exchange of various practices both between teachers and students.
- Organizing visits to the bases and simulation centres for student preparation.
- Social and cultural exchange.

Additional information, sources and contact

Contact: Simeon Manolov, smanolov@mu-sofia.bg, International office, MU-Sofia

Webpage: <https://mu-sofia.bg/en/>

<https://www.facebook.com/erasmusmusofia/>

<https://mu-sofia.bg/en/erasmus/>

3.4 STRENGTHENING OF GROUP LEADERS AS MANAGERS

Group leaders are expected not only to have research results, but also to be good supervisors, leaders of team and managers. They should be able to manage the team in all its aspects (personnel management, financial management). Moreover, there are many more leadership areas (roles) that might be expected, such as being active in the community, being active in institutional governance/management, being active in communication of science, and/or being active as ambassador of the organisation. There was only one A4L partner with a systemic approach towards strengthening of group leaders as leaders/managers. In the text below, the **University of Tartu** shares its experience and approach to formulation of good practice of leadership and its practical implementation.

University of Tartu, Estonia	
AREAS OF INTEREST	Strengthening of group leaders as managers
Grade	<i>Advanced</i>
Summary	
<p>Various measures have been created to support good governance. An important basic document is the "Good Practice of Leadership", an intra-university agreement that incorporates the principles of good management. In addition, we offer a variety of training courses for managers and a development programme for managers has been developed. Since 2020, collegial coaching groups have been set up to support management, and managers have had and continue to have the opportunity to get a coach/development partner. A 360° survey among managers is to be carried out in the second half of 2021 (73 UT managers will participate in the survey).</p>	
Description and short explanation	
<p>The good practice of leadership is an intra-university agreement that describes and promotes good leadership. Such a set of principles has a broad-ranging output: from the selection and training of new managers to recognising the best. From a broader perspective, it is the managers who have the most significant influence on the working environment in the university and the extent to which it supports doing a great job. The good practice of leadership includes three major groups of topics: interpersonal roles, informational roles and decisional roles. See the English version: https://www.ut.ee/sites/default/files/www_ut/good_practice_of_leadership.pdf</p> <p>The managers' development programme aims to develop the skills and knowledge that good managers need most in their daily work at the university, support starting managers, and help them create a network that promotes their professional performance.</p> <p>The development programme consists of monthly training days and additional activities such as cooperation with a development partner, self-analysis tools and feedback, discussion of management situations in collegial coaching, visits to support units, etc. In addition to the main programme, we offer a selection of recommended additional training courses.</p> <p>The programme is meant for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> managers who have led a unit, team or working group for less than three years. 	

Also, new area directors or heads of faculties, as well as deputy heads, are welcome;

- experienced managers who want to develop themselves – work on the skills needed by a good manager and broaden their view of leadership;
- future managers – employees who see themselves in a managerial role in the future.

Other training opportunities for managers:

In 2019, the future participation of the University of Tartu in the **U4 Academic Leadership Programme** [was agreed and preparations started to organise](#) the training session of the programme at the University of Tartu. The series of training courses are an excellent opportunity for in-service training of experienced (top-level) managers. These training courses take place as three-day cycles successively at all the universities of the network. Due to the pandemic, the start of the programme was postponed to January 2022.

The **leadership autumn school for the heads of research groups** has taken place. The four-day training aimed to develop team-leading skills. The majority of participants were UT senior research fellows and newly elected professors, but there were also participants from other Estonian universities.

With an in-university **development partner**, who is an experienced manager-mentor or a colleague trained as a coach, new managers can discuss the challenges they face and find solutions together. Around 5–10 managers use this opportunity every year.

We continuously offer **training courses** to support professional management (mostly 1–2 days). There are more than ten courses on various topics such as conflict management, remote meetings, performance reviews, strategic planning in co-creation, change management, teamwork, etc.

Collegial coaching groups. In 2020, 31 university employees, incl. managers, completed the training to become a collegial coaching group leader. In autumn, 18 collegial coaching groups started work in the university for participants with different job profiles, incl. teaching staff, programme directors, research group leaders, heads of structural units, specialists, etc. The collegial coaching groups aim to provide participants with collegial support, inspiration and solutions in (complicated) situations in their work. In a trustful and constructive setting, collegial coaching groups seek solutions to stories the group members want to discuss. Each meeting is mediated by the team leader, who helps to find the appropriate approach and maintain the group's work within the chosen framework. Collegial coaching is a well-founded form of cooperation that helps to maintain professional freshness and benefits both the participants and the organisation as a whole. A new training course for group leaders is planned to start in 2021 to provide even more opportunities to participate in collegial coaching.

The Centre for Professional Development of the UT HR Office is responsible for the operation and funding of management training and development programmes. Feedback is systematically requested to determine training needs. The 360° survey will undoubtedly provide more information on training and development needs.

Additional information, sources and contact

Contact person: Raivo Valk (Raivo.valk@ut.ee)

3.5 RECRUITMENT: INCREASE OF BOTH QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF APPLICANTS

Even though recruitment is an essential for all employers, there was only one institution that self-assessed itself as having “Advanced” recruitment system that increases both quantity and quality of applicants. This area is closely related to following HR areas (6. *Internationalisation, and recruitment of people from abroad*, 7. *Welcome service and integration support*) in which we can find more examples of “Advanced” systems (with a focus on international staff). **Medical University Lodz** presents its systemic approach towards attracting more (and high quality) candidates.

Medical University Lodz, Poland	
AREAS OF INTEREST	Recruitment
Grade	<i>Advanced</i>
Summary	
<p>Medical University of Lodz (MUL) is perceived in Poland, as a reliable employer - one that provides employees with decent working and development conditions at each stage of career. MUL has established various channels of communication with potential job candidates such as: career website www.kariera.umed.pl, social media portals with job advertisements, Euraxess, ministry websites. It has already resulted in a greater number of candidates on each of posted job offer. To enhance the quality of applicants MUL has introduced assessing tools for recruitment process and introduced e-learning courses for management staff in order to improve their skills in recruiting and selecting candidates.</p>	
Description and short explanation	
<p><u>Tools used at MUL to recruit high quality candidates:</u></p> <p>1. Website www.kariera.umed.pl One of the main activities aiming at increasing level of both quantity and quality of applicants was creating a website www.kariera.umed.pl , which includes all job advertisements, information on the selection and recruitment process, the scientist's career path description and Human Resources Office (HRO) contact details. The website was financed from the MULs budget. Each year MUL plans to conduct satisfaction surveys, among employees, what will allow to constantly improve the website.</p> <p>2. Social media Each applicant has the opportunity to get familiar with the University thanks to the promotion movies (for instance: showing the first day of work at MUL). Job applicants can also ask questions on a dedicated electronic form, and have open access to FAQs. Additionally, the application process for academic teachers has been simplified by creating an active application form for vacancies.</p> <p>3. Euraxess and national ministry pages MUL announces job offers on various pages including www.euraxess.europa.eu and national portals.</p> <p>4. Survey after recruitment</p>	

After the end of the recruitment process, the candidates are asked whether the application process was accessible and transparent for them and for their opinion on the recruitment interviews. Job applicants are also asked about where they have found information about that particular job offer - it is the main source of information on where to look for potential employees. Such exchange of information, gives MUL opportunity to strengthen position as a good employer on a local market.

5. E-learning courses for management staff

Aiming at increasing the quality of employees, in June 2021, MUL has introduced training in the form of e-learning for management staff. The aim is to ensure that MUL's management staff strengthens their competences in selecting the best candidate – such who identifies with the brand of the Medical University of Lodz and achieves its professional goals which are consistent with the University's strategy and keeps work-life balance. The training contains set of valuable tips on what to consider when selecting a candidate for a job, what questions to ask to check their suitability for the position, and how to provide feedback to the applicants.

Additional information, sources and contact

Contact person agnieszka.komorowska-michalek@umed.lodz.pl (Head of HR Office)
www.kariera.umed.pl

3.6 INTERNATIONALISATION, AND RECRUITMENT OF PEOPLE FROM ABROAD

Internationalisation of research institutions – from the perspective of recruiting more people from abroad – is a natural trend in science supported by many factors (HR Excellence in research, mobility support schemes, support for diversity, etc.).

Strategy aiming to increase share of international staff should include measures (“enablers”) in various areas, such as:

- Recruitment practices, including open vacancies published internationally
- Onboarding system (welcome services, integration support)
- Language policy (English speaking working environment)
- Information system upgrades
- Internal culture, including social events for international staff
- Training (e.g. language courses, courses on intercultural competencies)

Two A4L members indicated having “Advanced” system focused on internationalisation and recruitment of people from abroad. Both **University of Tartu** and **CEITEC MU** based internationalisation of the organisation in their strategies and implemented multilayer system to support international working environment.

University of Tartu, Estonia	
AREAS OF INTEREST	Internationalisation, and recruitment of people from abroad
Grade	<i>Advanced</i>

Summary

Internationalisation at UT is based on the goals set in the University's Strategic Plan and follows the general objectives defined at both Estonian and European level, which mainly focus on improving the quality of higher education. In its Strategic Plan, UT has set itself the goal of active participation in international cooperation, the development of existing and the creation of new international study programmes and the provision of a motivating and high-quality international learning and work environment for students and staff.

To further emphasize the importance of internationalisation, the University's Senate approved the policy document titled "The language and internationalisation principles of the University of Tartu", which guides UT's community in the organisation of its daily work, in order to balance the two specific tasks of a national university: ensuring the sustainability of the Estonian language and culture and participation in internationally high-level teaching, research and creative projects.

Description and short explanation

Over the past five years, UT has been invited to join several networks in Europe (The Guild, U4Society, LERU-CE7, Europaeum, ENLIGHT). This signals the credibility of the University of Tartu as a partner of excellence in Europe and creates the conditions for a well-functioning exchange of information and mobility of researchers, lecturers and students. Active participation in collaborative networks such as The Guild, U4Society and the Coimbra Group has given UT the opportunity to increase its international visibility, broaden its geography of cooperation and contribute to the shaping of European research and higher education policies.

In its Strategic Plan for 2021-2025, the University has set a goal of increasing the share of international academic staff to 15-20 %. Between 2016 and 2020, the share of international academic staff increased from 8 % to 15 %.

"The language and internationalisation principles of the University of Tartu" are the basis for organising the involvement of foreign staff in the daily life and management of the University. In organizing the work of its decision-making bodies, the University follows the principle of parallel language use. The University offers international staff and their family members the opportunity to learn Estonian, take part in seminars that introduce the Estonian culture and in social events as well as to improve their academic English language skills.

Internationalisation Liaison Officers are available at the institutes to help international staff members get to know the University and settle in. In addition to this, **Tartu Welcome Centre**, established in 2019 with the active participation of the University, helps international employees and their family members to settle in and manage their affairs outside the university.

A club evening series called "Dorpater Dozentenabend" offers cultural entertainment and social venue for the UT's international community. Cultural experiences are also offered through outings, seminars and other activities organised for international staff and their families.

Additional information, sources and contact

<https://www.ut.ee/en/international>

Central European Institute of Technology of Masaryk University, Czech Republic

AREAS OF INTEREST	Internationalisation, and recruitment of people from abroad
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Grade	<i>Advanced</i>
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Summary

From its establishment, CEITEC MU focused on building an international working environment. In 2021, we have established a Welcome Office, supporting incoming international researchers moving to Brno with a vision to help them focus on science and settle successfully in Brno with their families. English language is widely used and is defined as a primary communication language of science and internal communication (while the Czech language being primary for official communication with national offices, ministries, etc.). Continuous and systematic measures supporting the internationalisation of the institute resulted so far in having 41 % of researchers from abroad. Support for an international working environment goes together with support for diversity and equal opportunities in the framework of the HR Excellence in Research Award.

Description and short explanation

Responsibility: Shared responsibility of individual heads of departments and head of Director's office, rooted in the Strategic Plan and Rules of Organisation of the Institute (two most important strategic documents)

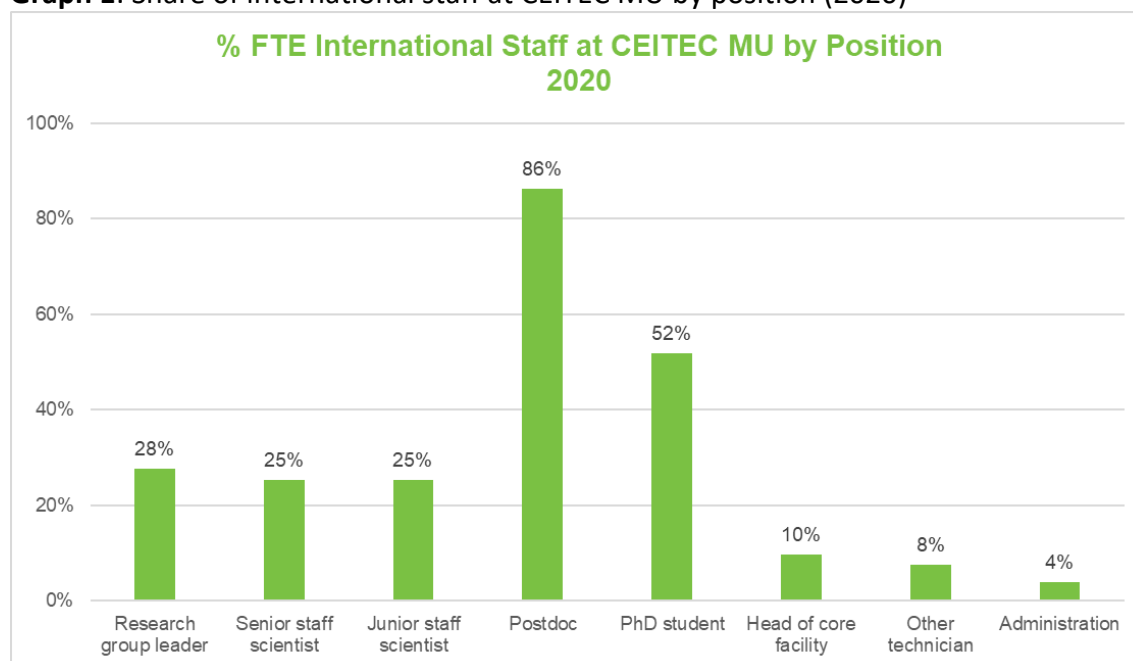
Budget allocation: Not a specific budget for support of internationalisation of the working environment

Monitoring of the progress: Annual reporting to the management consists of data relevant in this area (e.g. HR data on international staff, data on essential documents in English, PR data, composition of institute's bodies from the perspective of international staff)

Positive change over time: In 2011, when CEITEC MU started its operation, only 9,5 % of employees came from abroad (14,43 FTE). Currently, 41 % of researchers are from abroad (165 people from more than 30 countries).

Table 4: Share of international staff at CEITEC MU (2020)

	% International Staff (FTE)
Researchers	41%
Technicians	8%
Administration	4%
Total FTE International Staff	30%

Graph 1: Share of international staff at CEITEC MU by position (2020)**Practices supporting international working environment at CEITEC MU:**

- Internal communication in English (internal newsletter, staff emails, staff events and meetings)
- All internal rules (Director's measures), policies and strategic documents are both in English and Czech language, as well as all important meeting minutes and background documents (management, Director's Board, Scientific Board, Group Leaders Meeting)
- Administrative staff speaks English (the requirement for at least communication level of English is embedded in recruitment principles)
- Open, transparent and merit-based recruitment policy in place
- Welcome office for incoming foreign employees (<http://welcome.ceitec.cz/en/>) – with a capacity of Welcome office manager (1 FTE) based at the HR Department
- Events for employees and their family members – bringing together people from all around the world, helping them feel rooted in Brno, Czech republic
- External communication in both English and Czech language (press releases, web presentation)
- All the main points in the Information systems of the university are both in Czech and English language

Recruitment practices supporting the coming of people from abroad:

- Internal culture supporting the recruitment of researchers with experience from abroad
- Open, transparent and merit-based recruitment policy in place
- Systematic work with group leaders as hiring managers (training provided, individual relationship with dedicated HR partner)
- Professional position adverts, including use of gender-sensitive communication and high-quality English
- Publishing position adverts on international web portals such as EURAXESS,

NatureJobs, Research Gate

- Using social networks to promote important open positions (mostly group leader, CF head)
- Sharing important open positions with our partners (EU-life, Alliance4life, or also Czech partners)
- Posting the vacant job on social media
- Possibility to interview candidates online
- The high-quality Welcome office service

Additional information, sources and contact

https://is.muni.cz/do/ceitec/uredni_deska/politiky_a_koncepcce/CEITEC-MU_Recruitment_Policy_Final_2020-11-24_Approved.pdf

<https://www.ceitec.eu/recruitment-policy-as-a-tool-for-scientific-excellence/t10593>

Contact person: Eliška Handlířová, Head of director's office

(eliska.handlirova@ceitec.muni.cz)

3.7 WELCOME SERVICES AND INTEGRATION SUPPORT

Welcome services and integration support for new (typically international) employees becomes a must for all research institutions aiming to attract people from abroad. Recruitment strategy aiming to attract more international staff is related to an endeavour to select from bigger pool of candidates (higher quantity) and consequently to have an option to choose from high quality candidates (higher quality).

There are three A4L partners with “Advanced” welcome services and integration support. **CEITEC MU** (Czech Republic) and **University of Tartu** (Estonia) present their welcome services and integration support for international staff. **Medical University of Lodz** (Poland) presents its onboarding system for all newcomers to the university, integrating an area of welcome services for international staff within an area of general onboarding of new employees.

Central European Institute of Technology of Masaryk University, Czech Republic

AREAS OF INTEREST	Welcome services and integration support
Grade	<i>Advanced</i>

Summary

From its establishment in 2011, CEITEC MU aimed for becoming an international research centre that would attract bright minds from all around a world. Having this in mind, a Welcome Office was established in 2012 (first in the Czech Republic). Since 2014, there has been 1.0 FTE (one person) dedicated to the agenda of welcome services at the institution. As a part of the HR Department, the Welcome Office Manager assists new and current foreign employees with minimising bureaucratic burden, thus enabling researchers to focus on their research projects. The first contact is initiated before arrival, including assistance with residency permits, and the service continues after arrival throughout the employee's stay at the institution. This service also covers family members.

Description and short explanation

The mission of the **Welcome Office at CEITEC MU** is to support current and future foreign employees/students of CEITEC MU. The welcome office is one of the first points of contact for future CEITEC MU foreign employees/students and provides them with information about their employment and all necessary steps taken before and after their arrival to Brno. We also assist their families throughout their stay in the Czech Republic.

The high-quality service is provided by CEITEC Masaryk University, with enthusiasm by Welcome Office Manager (1 FTE), who is a member of the HR Department.

The welcome office manager assists foreign employees/students with the following issues:

- Formalities before arrival (obtaining a visa, enrolling in health insurance, finding accommodation, and travelling to the Czech Republic and Brno, etc.)
- Information after arrival (visiting the Ministry of the Interior), a medical check-up before joining CEITEC MU as an employee, medical facilities and language courses, obtaining a driver's license, and communicating with other authorities such as the Labour Office, Tax Office, etc.)
- Obligations during stay (waste collection fee, etc.)
- All other situations when an international employee may need help (loss or theft of documents, etc.)

The welcome office has its section on the CEITEC website, which every employee can find: News, Practical Information, FAQ and contacts, available at <http://welcome.ceitec.cz/en/>.

The welcome service is based on individual relationship and communication with the welcome office manager. This approach is much appreciated by our employees.

CEITEC MU cooperates with organisations providing help and services to international employees in Brno, Czech Republic. Such cooperation enables sharing know-how, sharing information materials, cooperation on specific events and projects:

- 1) Brno Expat Centre (<https://www.brnoexpatcentre.eu/>): free public service supported by the City of Brno, dedicated to helping foreign professionals.
- 2) Euraxess Point (https://www.jcmm.cz/projekt/euraxess_en): local contact point of the Euraxess network based in Brno.

Additional information, sources and contact

<http://welcome.ceitec.cz/en/>

Contact person: Zdeňka Bártová, Welcome Office Manager

zdenka.bartova@ceitec.muni.cz

University of Tartu, Estonia	
AREAS OF INTEREST	Welcome services and integration support
Grade	<i>Advanced</i>
Summary	
<p>Tartu Welcome Centre</p> <p>Tartu Welcome Centre has been established in Tartu by the city of Tartu, the University of Tartu and the Estonian University of Life Sciences. It aims to help new migrants arriving in Tartu and South Estonia adapt smoothly and find their place in Estonian society. At the centre, one can apply for the personal identification number and register their residence in Tartu. In addition to counselling, the centre organises various events and seminars to showcase Estonian society. The centre also hosts various seminars of the Settle in Estonia Programme and Estonian language courses offered by the Estonian state. The centre cooperates with the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, the Police and Border Guard Board, the Customs and Tax Board, the Integration Foundation and other agencies which new immigrants are in contact with.</p> <p>International cooperation network</p> <p>At the University of Tartu, an international cooperation network has been established to bring together people from all units working with international employees. Training courses and seminars are organised for the members of the network to support them in their activities.</p>	
Description and short explanation	
<p>Events</p> <p>The UT organises various events to support the adaptation of its international staff and their family members, such as the series Tartu – Rich in Cultures, where international employees can introduce their culture to locals and thus better integrate. International researchers and lecturers of the University of Tartu can participate in the series <i>Dorpater Dozentenabend</i>, which offers international employees the opportunity to communicate and exchange ideas. In addition, university-wide joint events such as the orienteering month are organised for international employees and their families. At the welcome seminar, for instance, the city of Tartu, the life and work at the UT, the Estonian culture, etc., are introduced and opportunities are created to expand the social network of international employees and their family members. In addition, the UT international staff can participate in the events of the Euraxess network.</p> <p>Language learning</p> <p>Knowledge of the local culture and the Estonian language contribute to integration. All international employees and their family members can take one Estonian language course per semester free of charge through the Centre for Professional Development (does not apply to intensive courses). Language courses start at the beginning of the semester and cater to all levels (beginners, intermediate and advanced). The Language Act, which came into force in 2019, stipulates that the Estonian language proficiency of academic staff members must be at least B1 level. Since then, the number of participants in Estonian language courses has increased. The university also organises courses on the academic English language all employees can attend.</p>	

Other seminars and training courses

The university organises information seminars and training courses in English, e.g. the course “University teaching”, which aims to expand the knowledge and skills of teaching staff members on how to plan and reflect on their teaching activities.

Exchange of information

International employees receive information from the international staff mailing list (international@lists.ut.ee), the intranet and the Facebook group for UT international staff. In addition, stories related to the university are published on the English-language blog.

Budget

These activities are supported and funded centrally.

Additional information, sources and contact

Contact person: Raivo Valk (Raivo.valk@ut.ee)

Medical University Lodz, Poland

AREAS OF INTEREST	Welcome services and integration support
Grade	<i>Advanced</i>

Summary

One of the good practices referring to “Welcome services and integration processes” is the “onboarding” process introduced by Human Resources Office (HRO) of Medical University of Lodz (MUL). The onboarding process was set up in 2019, based on employees’ feedback that they often feel lost in such big organization as MUL, that they were not adequately trained at all in the IT tools, nor were they familiar with the rules of communication and procedures in force in MUL.

Description and short explanation**Onboarding process at MUL**

The onboarding process is aimed at ensuring the integration of a newly hired people with other employees and creating a friendly environment for the new-hired at their first day of work. The onboarding process consists of presenting, in particular, the organizational culture of MUL, adopted patterns of behaviour, methods of communication, etc. Several units from MUL are engaged in this process at the same time and, what is worth mentioning it **does not require additional budget**.

Additionally, the candidate who has successfully passed the selection and recruitment process receives a welcome e-mail confirming the conditions of employment, with a detailed description of the conditions of her/his employment at MUL and a list of necessary documents which should be delivered to HRO via e-mail.

New employees are always invited to onboarding (it is like a short training) on a designated day of a given week, which is on the first day of work for the newcomers. They

are warmly welcomed by the representative of HR Office, who introduces and describes working conditions at MUL. Later, HR Office presents other important information about MUL including: the motivational system, periodic assessments and rights and obligations of employees. HR representative provides basic information about the history of MUL, trains in safety at work and IT systems and answers questions. Employment contracts are signed on this day and employment documentation is completed. Additionally, the new employee receives an e-mail confirmation of the messages obtained during the training. HR Office checks whether employees receive all the information necessary to start work, if not - what information is missing.

MUL strives to treat new employees as partners.

We examine the process with an adaptation survey, so the onboarding process constantly improves at our university.

Additional information, sources and contact

www.kariera.umed.lodz.pl

Contact person: agnieszka.komorowska-michalek@umed.lodz.pl (Head of HR Office)

3.8 DIVERSITY, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, AND WOMEN IN SCIENCE

There is a long-term systematic support of the equal opportunities in science at the level of European Union. Most recently, formal adoption and implementation of “**Gender Equality Plan**” (also “GEP”) is a precondition for Horizon Europe funding. That motivates even more research organisations to launch a systematic support of gender equality.

If we want to build an organisation and research teams capable of innovating, we need diversity and promotion of equal opportunities. Diversity enhances creativity. It encourages the search for novel perspectives, leading to better decision making and problem solving. That is the conclusion drawn from decades of research from organisational scientists, psychologists, sociologists, economists, and demographers.

The European Commission identifies four challenges to be addressed in the area of gender equality¹¹:

- (1) More women participating in research and innovation programmes
- (2) Better integration of the gender dimension in the context of research and innovation projects
- (3) More participation of EU widening countries in actions dedicated to gender equality in research and innovation organisations

¹¹ Find out more at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/web/eu-law-and-publications/publication-detail/-/publication/c0b30b4b-6ce2-11eb-aeb5-01aa75ed71a1>

- (4) Broadening gender equality policies in research and innovation to intersections with other potential grounds for discrimination such as ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation

Among A4L members, only one organisation self-assessed itself as having “Advanced” system focused on equal opportunities and diversity in place. Eight organisations are graded as having “Basic” system, and three organisations have no system in place (“Missing system”).

Central European Institute of Technology of Masaryk University, Czech Republic	
AREAS OF INTEREST	Diversity, Equal Opportunities and Women in Science
Grade	<i>Advanced</i>
Summary	
CEITEC MU opened the topic of equal opportunities and diversity very early after its establishment in 2011. As part of the overall HR strategy, the institute publicly expressed its commitment to improving research and the working environment for everyone regardless of gender, nationality, age, sexual orientation, etc. Support for equal opportunities is complementary to supporting the international working environment (supporting a diversity of teams). We started building internal know-how, networking and building cooperation with external expert organisations. Gender audit and gender equality plan are two essential tools used at CEITEC MU to bring a systematic, long-term and sustainable positive change.	
Description and short explanation	
<p>Coordinator: Head of Director’s Office</p> <p>Working group: HR Award working group. The group consists of a Scientific Secretary and representatives of all relevant administrative departments (HR Department, Research and Innovation Support Department, Communication Department).</p> <p>CEITEC MU underwent two gender audits (2012 and 2016). In 2016, the institute formulated the first Gender Equality Plan (2016-2019). Currently, the institute approved the third GEP for 2021-2023. The GEP is an integral part of the HR Award action plan, and its implementation follows the same rules and principles as used for the HR Award.</p> <p>Budget allocation: Starting from 2021, the institute allocated an annual budget of 100 kCZK (app. 3 800 EUR) for the GEP implementation. The budget is aimed primarily at employees’ training (unconscious bias, active bystander, etc.). In the past years, CEITEC MU was able to receive two grants focused on support of equal opportunities: 1) “Work-life balance of researchers” (Operational programme “Human resources and employment”, 2012-2015), 2) Unifying innovative efforts of European research centres to achieve gender equality in academia – LIBRA (H2020, 2015-2019).</p> <p>In the Czech Republic, we can take advantage of having the National Contact Centre</p>	

“Gender and Science” at the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences¹². The centre provides consultations, training and information service for free to all research organisations in the country. Their operation is financed mostly by the state via a long-term specific grant scheme.

The GEP identifies areas of intervention, goals and individual actions (tasks). It has the same structure as the HR Award action plan – specifying responsible person, deadline, but also budget allocated. The actions are focused on three levels: (1) change of institutional framework (rules, procedures), (2) change of internal culture, (3) direct support of employees.

Overview of actions implemented in 2016-2021:

- The monitoring and reporting system had been reviewed and changed to include gender-disaggregated data (where relevant), e.g. structure of employees, recruitment data, the share of women/men in decision-making and advisory bodies, etc.
- Gender mainstreaming as a standard method while preparing any institutional policy (rule, procedure) was launched and allocated to the Head of Director’s office as a regular agenda.
- The organisational change was adopted, allocating the agenda of work-life balance to the HR Department.
- New recruitment policy and supportive measures were adopted to make the procedures open, transparent and merit-based. Templates of adverts were reviewed and changed to be more inclusive, including the usage of gender-sensitive language. All group leaders and hiring managers participated in the training focused on the right recruitment principles. Data from recruitment are analysed from the gender perspective.
- All communication tools (mostly website) were externally assessed from the perspective of gender-sensitive communication. External expert recommended changes that were implemented. The expert also trained the Institute’s PR experts on how to take advantage of gender-sensitive communication.
- The institute issued a Work-Life Balance policy (<http://libra.ceitec.cz/work-life-balance-policy/>) and launched a Work-Life Balance portal for employees, offering several self-assessment and self-development tools for personal development.
- Information brochures were issued, covering topics of maternity/parental leave, grants and parenthood.
- Training for employees in the areas of recruitment, work-life balance and unconscious bias.
- The institute organised events for junior researchers about available career opportunities in research (Life After PhD, My Life in Science).
- Exit interviews and analysis of their outcomes were launched as a standard procedure.
- A communication plan was added with presenting role models and raising awareness in gender equality related topics (e.g. work-life balance).
- Nappy changing tables were installed in the institute’s premises.

¹² <https://genderaveda.cz/en/gender-and-science/>

- The Sex/Gender dimension in research was opened as a relevant topic. A teaching module was prepared and offered to PhD Students.
- Institute celebrates International Day of Women and Girls in Science.
- Masaryk University launched grant scheme “CAREER RESTART”, supporting the return of young researchers back to research after maternity/parental leave (or other research career break) - <https://gamu.muni.cz/en/pro-vedce/career-restart>.
- Masaryk University closed an agreement with an external provider of childcare for children of employees of age 1+.

In 2021, CEITEC MU adopted the Equal Opportunities Plan (third “GEP”) for 2021-2023. The plan incorporates current trends and priorities as identified also by the European Commission and HORIZON EUROPE requirements, such as:

- Intersectional approach that widens focus of the GEP not only to gender equality, but also to other axes of discrimination, such as nationality and age;
- Clear capacity and budget allocation;
- Goals and actions focused on sexual harassment and bullying.

Additional information, sources and contact

Contact: eliska.handlirova@ceitec.muni.cz

Link to CEITEC MU GEP:

https://is.muni.cz/do/ceitec/HR_Award/plan_rovných_prilezitosti_2021-2023/

3.9 CULTURE IN SCIENCE, AND CULTURE OF THE INSTITUTE AS HR TOOL

An institutional culture defines the proper way to behave within the organization. It consists of shared norms, beliefs and values. Internal culture might be (and usually is) declared by the management, but mostly it must be nurtured and supported by all leaders in the organisation. There is not a one-size-fits-all culture template that meets the needs of all organisations. Indeed, we can identify some values shared in the scientific/academic environment, mostly formulated within codes of ethics, and supported by other institutional strategic documents.

Among practices helping to develop institutional culture, we can identify:

- (1) **Recruitment policy:** Typically, recruitment focuses primarily on an applicant's (hard) skills. But if new employee's personality fits with the organisation's culture, the employee will be more likely to deliver excellent performance.
- (2) **Onboarding system:** Onboarding teaches new employees about the institutional values, norms and desired organizational behaviours. Organisation must help newcomers become part of the community (social networks) and make sure that they soon have job experiences that reinforce the culture.
- (3) **Evaluation system and other reward and recognition programs** have a strong power to support the preferred behaviour and internal culture.
- (4) **Internal communication and campaigns** supporting preferred values and norms (e.g. campaigns focused on support for gender equality, raising awareness campaign about mental health issues in research environment).

To be able to compare preferred institutional culture with a reality, an employer should be able to assess the culture, using tailored made cultural assessment tool (e.g. satisfaction survey, focus groups), analyse the results, communicate them and react accordingly.

HR area focused on “Culture in science, and culture of the institute as HR tool” can be considered as one of the least developed areas with only one organisation self-assessing itself as advanced, five organisations indicated their status with “basic” grade and seven with “missing system”.

University of Tartu, Estonia	
AREAS OF INTEREST	Culture in science, and culture of the institute as HR tool
Grade	<i>Advanced</i>
Summary	
<p>UT acknowledges high importance of nurturing internal culture of the university and reflects its influence on working environment and other HR areas.</p> <p>Centre for Professional Development implements following actions and services to ensure a good working environment and culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual job satisfaction survey • Collegial coaching groups • Mental health conference • Various training courses to support mental health and good working culture • Advisor-chaplain for university staff 	
Description and short explanation	
<p>Annual job satisfaction survey</p> <p>The survey aims to contribute to maintaining and shaping the mental and material environment that fosters good work in all university units and supports the university's development as an organisation. Once a year, the university invites all employees to assess their working environment, give feedback to their manager, highlight the positive and draw attention to what needs to be changed. The generalised results of the survey are available to all university staff and used by all managers to make decisions that shape the working environment and support the team in their unit/institution.</p> <p>The survey is conducted in a feedback environment created at the university. The survey is organised and its content developed by the UT Human Resources Office, and the IT solution required for the survey is provided by the university's IT Office. The survey is carried out throughout the university. The invitation to reply is sent by email. The form can be completed in both Estonian and English.</p> <p>The data collected by the survey is used to improve the working environment of the university. That includes mapping the changes taking place, evaluating the success of the university's development activities, setting goals and planning, initiating the necessary changes and making management decisions, development and performance interviews,</p>	

and other purposes supporting the development of the University of Tartu.

The results are published in a summarised form in the university's feedback environment. Each employee has access to the results of his/her unit and, if desired, to other units. Comments are visible to the heads of units.

Collegial coaching groups

In 2020, 31 university employees, incl. managers, completed the training to become a collegial coaching group leader. In autumn, 18 collegial coaching groups started work in the university for participants with different job profiles: teaching staff, programme directors, research group leaders, heads of structural units, specialists, etc. The collegial coaching groups aim to provide participants with collegial support, inspiration and solutions in (complicated) situations in their work. In a trustful and constructive setting, collegial coaching groups seek solutions to stories the group members want to discuss. Each meeting is mediated by the team leader, who helps to find the appropriate approach and maintain the group's work within the chosen framework. Collegial coaching is a well-founded form of cooperation that helps to maintain professional freshness and benefits to both the participants and the organisation as a whole. A new training course for group leaders is planned to start in 2021 to provide even more opportunities to participate in collegial coaching.

Mental health conference

The conference usually takes place at the beginning of the year. It gives the participants food for thought and valuable techniques to maintain their mental health and good state of mind and cope with stress. The solution-centred and information-rich event discusses mental health problems, methods for dealing with crises, supporting colleagues in a difficult period, designing a positive working environment, the basics of self-care, and the prevention of accumulation of stress factors and their alleviation by physical and mental exercises.

Various training courses to support mental health and good working culture, e.g. mental health ABC, coping with stress, time management, teamwork during a stressful period, assertiveness, etc.

Advisor-chaplain for university staff

Employees of the University of Tartu have the opportunity to contact an adviser in the event of problems in working life.

The work of counsellor-chaplain aims to contribute to the psychological and mental well-being of UT employees and increase their ability to operate effectively, help to improve the relationship climate in the university's working environment.

The advisor offers:

- support in case of problems in working life;
- help to improve the relationship climate of the unit or team through counselling and cooperation seminars;
- support for teaching a student going through a crisis;

- help to reconcile the parties of conflict (with the consent of the parties);
- internal training or workshop for the staff of the unit to increase their ability to cope with difficult communication situations.

Additional information, sources and contact

Contact person: Raivo Valk (Raivo.valk@ut.ee)

4 List of abbreviations

A4L	Alliance4Life
BMC	Biomedical Research Center of the Slovak Academy of Sciences
CAWI	Computer-Assisted Web Interview
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CEITEC MU	Central European Institute of Technology of Masaryk University
CF head	Core Facility head
D3.1	Deliverable 3.1 „Best practices in career systems in LS“
D3.3	Deliverable 3.3 „Report on advances in career system upgrades“
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
ESRs	Early-Stage Researchers
EU	European Union
FAQ	frequently asked question
FG 3	focus group “HR and mobility” of the Alliance4Life
FGI	Focus Group Interviews
FNUSA-ICRC	International Clinical Research Center of St. Anne's University Hospital in Brno
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
HR	Human Resources
HR Award	HR Excellence in Research Award
HRO	Human Resources Office
HRS4R	HR Strategy for Researchers
ICRC	International Clinical Research Centre of St. Anne’s University Hospital in Brno
IT	Information Technology
kCZK	thousand(s) Czech crown(s)
kEUR	thousand(s) euro(s)
LIOS	Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis
LS	life sciences
M12	month 12 of the project (April 2022)
MUL	Medical University of Lodz
Postdoc	postdoctoral researcher
PR	Public Relations
RIS	Research and Innovations Support Department at CEITEC MU
SMART	specific, measurable, action, responsibility assigned, time aspect defined
UL	University of Ljubljana
UT	University of Tartu
UZSM	University of Zagreb School of Medicine
VIB	Vlaams Instituut voor Biotechnologie
WG	Working Group