

Process Description

Case number: 2021BG716882

Name Organisation under review: Medical University - Sofia

Organisation's contact details: Sofia 1431, bul. „Acad. Ivan Geshov" № 15, Sofia, Sofia City, 1431

Submission date: 29/11/2022

Date endorsement charter and code: 08/12/2021

Process

The HRS4R process must engage all management departments directly or indirectly responsible for researchers' HR-issues. These will typically include the Vice-Rector for Research, the Head of Personnel, and other administrative staff members. In addition, the HRS4R strategy must consult its stakeholders and involve a representative community of researchers ranging from R1 to R4 , as well as appoint a Committee overseeing the process and a Working Group responsible for implementing the process.

Please provide the name, the position and the management line/ department of the persons who are directly or indirectly engaged in the HRS4R process in your organization:

	Name	Position	Steering Committee	Working Group	Management line/ Department
	Acad. prof. LATCHEZAR TRAYKOV	Rector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rectorate
	Prof. Tsvetalina Tankova, MD, DMedSc	Vice Rector for International Integration and Project Funding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rectorate
	Prof. Valentina Petkova-Dimitrova, DSc	Vice Rector for Science and Accreditation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Department for Science and Accreditation
	Magdalena Kasnakova	Senior Expert	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	International Integration and Project Funding
	Simeon Manolov	Senior Expert	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	International Integration and Project Funding
	Mario Kirilov	Manager Systems administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT and Systems administration
	Radoslav Shterbakov	HR Manager, the Head of Personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HR and Accounting Department

Name	Position	Steering Committee	Working Group	Management line/ Department
Lyudmila Tomova	Library Director	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Central Medical Library - MU Sofia
Tanya Ivanova	Deputy Secretary General for Human Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HR and Accounting Department
Katya Gavrilova	Expert at the Department for Postgraduate and Specialisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Department for Postgraduate and Specialisation
Polina Tsarkova	PhD Student (R1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Faculty of Medicine
Iva Taneva	PhD Student (R1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Faculty of Dental Medicine
Kristian Proichev	Lawyer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Department for Science and Accreditation
Georgi Gensuzov	Administrative Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	International Integration and Project Funding
Tanya Todorova	Administrative Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	International Integration and Project Funding
Prof. Karolina Lubomirova, MD	Vice Rector for Academic Affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rectorate
Assoc. Prof. Elitsa Deliverska, MD	Vice Rector for Postgraduate Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rectorate
Prof. Dr. Dimitar Bulanov, MD	Dean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Faculty of Medicine
Prof. Dr. Bozhidar Ivanov Yordanov, PhD	Dean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Faculty of Dental Medicine
Prof. Alexander Zlatkov, DSc	Dean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Faculty of Pharmacy
Prof. Magdalena Alexandrova, DM	Dean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Faculty of Public health and care

Your organization must consult its stakeholders and involve a representative community of researchers ranging from [R1 to R4](#), as well as appoint a Committee overseeing the process and a Working Group responsible for the implementation of the HRS4R process.

Provide information on how the researchers groups were involved in the GAP-analysis:

Stakeholder group	Consultation format	Contributions
Rectorate	Strategic meeting of university management (Dec 2021); Rector's Council - 1 physical meeting per a week	The Rector and the Vice-rectors of MU-Sofia were regularly informed about the progress and development of the GAP Analysis. The high-management detected the "gap" and proposed the actions that will be discussed to design the MUS's HRS4R action plan.
Department "International Integration and Project Funding"	Working groups' meetings; Teams meetings; E-mails; telephone;	Preparation of a survey on compliance with the principles of the Charter and Code of the researchers of MU-Sofia. Sending out online questionnaires to employees. Conducting a gap analysis and preparation of an action plan based on the analysis of completed questionnaires.
Faculty of Public health and care	Online Questionnaire survey; Workshops on a monthly basis; Short interviews; Brainstorming sessions (Metaplan method, group moderation)	Filling in the questionnaires; This questionnaire did not differentiate between the groups of respondents.
Faculty of Pharmacy	Online Questionnaire survey; Workshops on a monthly basis; Short interviews; Brainstorming sessions (Metaplan method, group moderation)	Filling in the questionnaires;
Faculty of Dental Medicine	Online Questionnaire survey; Workshops on a monthly basis; Short interviews; Brainstorming sessions (Metaplan method, group moderation)	Filling in the questionnaires;
Faculty of Medicine	Online Questionnaire survey; Workshops on a monthly basis; Short interviews; Brainstorming sessions (Metaplan method, group moderation)	Filling in the questionnaires;
Department for Postgraduate and Specialisation	Follow-up regular meetings	Presentations and discussions, gaining basic feedback.
IT and Systems administration	Follow-up regular meetings	Presentations and discussions, gaining basic feedback.
HR and Accounting Department	Total of 12 Workshops; Every week meetings (March – on going)	Provides all the necessary information in the framework of the HR Award Working Group. The results of the workshops and survey made it possible to develop the Gap Analysis, as well as to propose the actions included in the Action Plan.
Central Medical Library - MU Sofia	Follow-up regular meetings	Meetings with the management of the MUS' Literary Bibliography research infrastructure and involving of the Administrative and supporting staff.
Scientific Research Ethics	Meetings; Academic Council;	Analysis of the Rules of Procedure of the MUS' Scientific Research Ethics Committee;

	Stakeholder group	Consultation format	Contributions
	Committee of MU-Sofia		

Please describe how the Committee overseeing the process was appointed and how it worked (meetings, decisions, etc.):

Appointment of the MUS' Steering Committee (SC) overseeing the process:

The MUS' SC is the responsible body for leading the whole process. After consultation with the management of the respective 4 faculties, 2 affiliates and all Rectorate's departments in securing and implementing of all necessary measures recommended by the EC, incl. European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (C&C) & MUS' internal procedures and relevant policy documents, it was identified **3 key development areas*** in the GAP-analysis. A series of meetings were held between the members of the SC with the members from the working groups, using meetings, teleconferences and correspondence. The 40 criteria of the C&C were discussed and the general compliance of the institution in each of them was evaluated.

The **MUS' Steering Committee** was appointed from among the persons responsible for the scientific activity at the MUS (members which well covered both various research fields and all career stages R1-R4 and included relevant levels of management). The team coordinated the work of the Implementation Team and supervised the preparation of the gap analysis and action plan. The SC includes the Head of the structural unit, the Head of the basic unit, as well researchers in the respective scientific field, a lawyer with the right to an advisory vote. A technical assistant is also appointed to assist the SC's work. The SC is appointed by an order of the Rector of MUS.

- *Composition:* Acad. prof. LATCHEZAR TRAYKOV (Rector); Prof. Tsvetalina Tankova, MD, DMedSc (Vice Rector for International Integration and Project Funding); Prof. Valentina Petkova-Dimitrova, DSc (Vice Rector for Science and Accreditation); Prof. Karolina Lubomirova, MD (Vice Rector for Academic Affairs); Assoc. Prof. Elitsa Deliverska, MD (Vice Rector for Postgraduate Studies); Prof. Dr. Dimitar Bulanov, MD (Dean of Faculty of Medicine); Prof. Dr. Bozhidar Ivanov Yordanov, PhD (Dean of Faculty of Dental Medicine); Prof. Alexander Zlatkov, DSc (Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy); Prof. Magdalena Alexandrova, DM (Dean of Faculty of Public health and care);

- *Contact persons:* Magdalena Kasnakova and Simeon Masnolov chaired the Analysis Working Group (AWG), and act as liaison with the MUS' Steering Committee, informing on the progress and proposals coming from the AWG and transmitting the decisions adopted by the SC.

- *Role and Responsibilities of the SC:* raising the awareness on the importance of implementing the HRS4R process to all target researchers groups and stakeholders involved; triggering its visibility at institutional level and beyond; providing a strategic coordination of the HRS4R implementation methodology in line with the MUS' strategic priorities, as well as validating the main steps and documentation drafted.

- *Milestones and main tasks executed:*

On **16th December 2021**, the MUS hold a Workshop on HRS4R Strategy process and OTM-R system, with the participation of external experts and cases studies of good practices. The workshop was targeted to regional research institutions decision makers and managers. The number of participants was 32 persons, which 14 were directors and managers from different Areas and Research Units.

The SC initiated the selection procedure and creation of the Working Groups in **January 2022**.

The process started with a Kick-off Meeting on **26.01.2022** and the **MUS' Analysis Working Group** (incl. representatives of the research community and stakeholders involved in human resources and research issues) has been appointed by the SC with a main purpose to do a diagnosis of the current situation and to develop the design of improvement actions.

In M2 (**February**) the SC accepted the detailed plan with the work methodology, general planning and allocation of tasks. It was started the collection of Information on the principles of the C&C (**01.03-23.05.2022**).

Commitment sheets from the constituents of the SC (**27.10.2022**) and the final writing lasted 1.5 months (**15.09.-30.10.2022**).

The strategic leader of the SC did on a regular session of the Academic Council the final presentation of GAP analysis and accepted Action plan (responsible: **Prof. Tsvetalina Tankova, MD, DMedSc, Vice Rector for International Integration and Project Funding**, October 2022). She personally and intensively promoted the role and importance of HRS4R process for Medical university - Sofia at relevant bodies (advisory board of deans, Academic Council, Departments' workshops) and also on informal meetings with the academic staff.

On **03.11.2022** a new Committee was formed - **HRS4R Implementation and Monitoring Committee** (responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the process).

The MUS conducted the GAP analysis to compare its practices on ethical and professional aspects, recruitment, working conditions and social security and training, with principles established on the C&C.

*3 key development areas:

1. Professional responsibility & Professional attitude
2. Contractual and legal obligations (incl. Accountability)
3. Good practice in research

Please describe how the Working Group doing the Gap Analysis was appointed:

The establishment of the **MUS' Analysis Working Group and 4 Mini working groups (WGs)**, allowed us to analyze and approve of the gap analysis (identified strengths and weaknesses), as well as to undertake some initiatives and proposals for the Action Plan. The members of the WGs have also met the management of individual departments that are affected by the strategy of the human resources management concerning the researchers with a purpose to raise their awareness and to involve them in the entire project.

The process included **3 key phases**:

- Preliminary phase: 01.12.2021 - 01.03.2022
- Gap Analysis phase: 01.03.2022 - 28.10.2022
- Action Plan phase: 15.09.2022 - 30.10.2022

The appointment of **the Implementation Team** (consists some main members from the focus groups) was the result of the MUS' SC examination of the provisions of the C&C from among the representatives of the responsible units. **In the period 01.02.-30.09.2022**, the meetings of the Implementation Team began, during which *the Questionnaire* was developed, analyzed and all the required application documents were completed.

326 respondents took part in the survey (R1-R4 scientists from all 4 faculties, i.e. the Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Dental Medicine, Faculty of Pharmacy and Faculty of Public health and care). Percentage of respondents in individual groups, as follows:

- R1 - 45 %,
- R2 - 12%

R3 - 13.5%

R4 - 51%.

The return of the survey was 84%.

The survey was conducted online and consisted of 40 questions corresponding to the principles of the C&C (e.g. ethical aspects of scientific work, gender equality, international collaboration, and evaluation).

The respondents rated each question on a scale from 1 to 3 points. The respondents could reply to using scalable answers and such which respondents could answer in the form of comments.

In **M6 (June)** the Implementation Team (MUS' Analysis Working Group and 4 Mini working groups (WGs)) designed the format of *the Survey for the AWG (01.06.-28.06.2022)*. The target audience were contacted by institutional email containing an individualized link with information about and access to the online survey. On July 20th, a reminder was sent.

In **M9 (September)** it was conducted *the Survey for researchers and academic personnel of MUS*: scoring the degree of development of the 40 principles and a space for observation. An open round table discussion was organized with all those interested permanent staff representatives, as the topic included the results of a questionnaire survey, discussion over the identified missing human resources management elements at the MUS and ideas and brainstorming sessions on possible priorities in the Action Plan (AP).

Constitution of the 4 Mini WGs and their meetings was in the beginning of the process (**from M1**) as their members approved the gap analysis and proposal of initiatives for the Action Plan at the end of September (**until M9**).

The 4 mini WGs as follows:

WG1: Coordination of the HRS4R process & transfer of information: group of administrative staff at the Rectorate of MUS. The Department for International Integration and Project Funding supervised the whole HRS4R process, from the drafting of the institution's strategy up to the review of texts.

WG2: Group of the heads of administrative offices and services with competences in human resources, external relations, research and knowledge transfer, quality, data management and communication.

WG3: Group of R1–R4 employees (Predoctoral researchers; Postdoctoral researchers; Researchers; Group Leaders): Several group meetings of the FG1' members were organized to assess and discuss results of the survey. Gaps were identified including the need for a system

to monitor progress in doctoral thesis projects, development of more formal mentoring mechanisms for predocs, promotion of international mobility, and adequate maintenance of the university's infrastructure. The academic positions at MUS are:

1. for habilitated professors – associate professor and professor;
2. for non-habilitated lecturers – assistant and senior assistant.

The positions of the academic staff also include the positions of the habilitated and non-habilitated lecturers who work in the University hospitals for hospital care.

WG4: IT Support of Strategic Projects

The WG2-4 consists on a multidisciplinary team with Directors of Secretariats and Researchers to monitor the project on HRS4R MUS' Strategy and the WG1 whose role is to drive and ensure the project and prepare the documentation of each stage.

Work-meetings Calendar:

14/02/2022 The SC approved to implement the new HRS4R Strategy in MUS's structures and administrative units

28/02/2022 The SC meeting with the Department for Science and Accreditation to prepare the anonymous questionnaire survey on MUS Platform addressed to 476 researchers;

04/03/2022 the MUS' Analysis Working Group had a meeting with Prof. Valentina Petkova-Dimitrova, DSc, Vice Rector for Science and Accreditation, to prepare the work plan proposal and with Prof. Tsvetalina Tankova, MD, DMedSc, Vice Rector for International Integration and Project Funding, to prepare the work plan for the Working Groups.

11/03/2022 First meeting Working Groups. Project's presentation to set up the MUS' strategy HRS4R (Gap Analysis and Action Plan) to demand the HRS4R Award.

09/05/2022 Governing Board MUS' Monitoring Meeting

16/09/2022 SC' meetings with the Vice-Rectors to prepare 7 Meetings with MUS' Researchers by profile (R1, R2, R3, R4).

06/10/2022 Meetings of the Working Groups to analyze results from MUS' gap analysis (Meetings with researchers/Questionnaire Respondents).

MUS HRS4R STRATEGY	WG	Tasks	Resphnsible	12/21	01/22	02/22	03/22	04/22	05/22	06/22	07/22	08/22	09/22	10/22	11/22
Preliminary phase	WP 1	Work Plan Presentation	Rectorate	first half of the month	second half of the month	14&28.02.									

MUS HRS4R STRATEGY	WG	Tasks	Resphnsible	12/21	01/22	02/22	03/22	04/22	05/22	06/22	07/22	08/22	09/22	10/22	11/22
		Meetings with researchers													
	WP 4	Solving technical and application problems	Rectorate	first half of the month		01.-20.02.									
Gap Analysis phase	WP 1	Launch of Questionnaire Survey Distribution Gap Analysis Template	HR and Accounting Department				bimonthly meetings		bimonthly meetings		bimonthly meetings		30.09.		
	WP 3	Researchers with different categories have been involved	Department for Science and Accreditation				1st week	1st week	1st week	1st week	1st week	1st week	1st week	1st week	
Action Plan phase	WP 1	Sending results on Gap Analysis Template Rules /Elaboration of joint document	Rectorate				first half of the month							Ad hoc meetings	
	WP 2	Revision of Survey's Results and	Department "International Integration and Project Funding"				1st week							3 meetings	

MUS HRS4R STRATEGY	WG	Tasks	Resphnsible	12/21	01/22	02/22	03/22	04/22	05/22	06/22	07/22	08/22	09/22	10/22	11/22
		MUS Template Gap Analysis Approval from the Rectors' Council Publication of the MUS HRS4R Strategy on https://mu-sofia.bg/en/hrs4r/													

Raising the awareness at the institutional level and beyond:

The **HR Strategy for Researchers at the Medical University - Sofia and Action Plan (in English and Bulgarian languages)** have been published on the organisation's website on https://mu-sofia.bg/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Strategia_2021-24.pdf.

The abbreviation HRS4R is in a visible place in order to be visible also to people that visit the university website but don't know that the university is involved in the HRS4R process. The MUS' HRS4R webpage, <https://mu-sofia.bg/en/hrs4r/>, was created under the umbrella of the institutional website and was used and considered the main entry point for all targets to get familiar with the fundamentals of the HRS4R award and to understand the whole process. For this reason, the web page (available in Bulgarian and English) designed with a simple and clear layout, so that to be as much user-friendly as possible even if containing all. The webpage contains relevant links to the main websites and documents related to the process.

Useful documents & links:

Institutional Strategic Priorities and Goals for development of the MU-Sofia, 2021-2024, https://mu-sofia.bg/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Strategia_2021-24.pdf

Regulation for acquiring academic degrees and occupying academic positions at the Medical University – Sofia, <https://mu-sofia.bg/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Regulation-MU-Sofia-20-y.pdf>

1. <https://mu-sofia.bg/en/position-on-energy-crisis-impacton-life-science-research/>
2. <https://mu-sofia.bg/en/mu-sofia-is-a-leader-in-academic-mobility-among-12-cee-research-centers/>
3. <https://mu-sofia.bg/en/mu-sofia-with-large-scale-initiative-for-better-career-development-of-researchers/>
4. <https://mu-sofia.bg/en/the-scientific-research-fund-invites-you-to-participate-in-the-competition-under-the-national-science-program-peter-beron-science-and-innovation-with-europe-2020/>
5. <https://mu-sofia.bg/en/hrs4r/>