

Renewal Phase Assessment With Site Visit - EC Consensus Report Radboud University

This report was drafted by the Lead-Assessor in consensus with the members of the assessment team.

A. Desk based assessment

The quality assessment evaluates the level of ambition and the quality of progress intended by the organisation.

Has the organizational information been sufficiently updated to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is implemented?	Yes
Does the narrative provided list goals and objectives which clearly indicate the organization's priorities in HR-management for researchers?	Yes
Has the organization published an updated HR Strategy and Action Plan been updated with the actions' current status, additions and/or modifications?	Yes
Is the implementation of the HR strategy and Action Plan sufficiently embedded within the organizations' management structure (e.g. steering committee, operational responsibilities) so as to guarantee a solid implementation?	Yes
Is the OTM-R policy in place and publicly available?	Yes

B. SITE-VISIT BASED Assessment

The site visit provided more context of the overall HRS4R strategy within Radboud University and how it has embedded the strategy within business processes such as EFQM. Interview meetings pointed out new issues to be considered: internal visibility of HRS4R, deeper involvement of the researchers in the implementation process, motivation versus contract, recognition of researchers. The benefits of implementing an HR Strategy in the Radboud University have a positive impact of the institution. The overall achievements are good and they are the following: the bureaucracy was reduced; the autonomy was increased; the research environment is very friendly for PhD Students, young researchers and researchers; the leadership is a leadership servant oriented to people and to improvement of communication process. Impression is confirmed. HRS4R strategy is well embedded and the benefits are evident with annual staff surveys capturing feedback from staff which further informs the strategy. Systems are in place for monitoring objectives and actions. Staff have access to training and understand the HRS4R process. One very good example is that a "Teaching and learning center" has been recently established due to the analysis done after the last survey, where among other improvement areas, a need for further training in teaching

skills was detected. This center is up and running being the philosophy behind it that having better teaching skills can lead as well to a better balance between teaching and research duties.

A second example of the HRS4R implementation is the Diversity and Inclusion, where special attention is paid on Social Safety, where the Action Plan is already looking for a better confidential information flow and protocol.

The level of implementation of principles of the Charter & Code at Radboud University is high, and for those issues where there is still room for improvement, proposals on remedial measures are laid down in the Action Plan

2. How do you judge the organisation's level of ambition with regard to its HR strategy for researchers, taking into account the initial state of play?

The organisation's level of ambition with regard to its HR strategy for researchers, taking into account the initial state of play is very high and was seriously improved. Current conditions are challenging for researchers and working conditions.

High level of ambition, very well prepared various internal regulations and policies allowing the implementation of C&C principles. Executive Board as well is actively forming part of the strategy and its implementation.

r the university is not complacent with the standards they have already achieved but look forward to further improvements. They could easily just tick off some of the boxes in the gap analysis (eg. gender representation), but keep working to extend the understanding of the principles (eg. diversity and inclusion). They set a very good example of for other institution in terms of ambition levels.

3. How do you judge the organisation's efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding the Ethical and Professional Aspects of Researchers?

The organisation's continuous efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding the Ethical and Professional Aspects of Researchers are sustained by Radboud University good practices and by researchers' scientific behavior.

Ethical and Professional aspects are taken into account and Research Integrity is also carefully driven by the policy officers.

Overall actions seem to be appropriate in order to address the identified gaps.

Special attention has been paid to Diversity and Inclusion. Radboud University has gone beyond gender balance, where various female researchers networks are already working, implementing a Diversity Office.

The university has managed to integrate Ethical and Professional Aspects with research quality, which gives this this whole topic even more significance. They focus not only on individual researchers, but on the organization's responsibility for ensuring the right environment for ethical and responsible research. The challenge is addressed in the context of analysis of work pressure on researchers and rewards and incentive systems (which they are developing).

The university provides not only control systems but also concrete tools (eg. data management system). It has included the topic into the training of young researchers, giving them specific advice as to how to react if faced with misconduct. Awareness of the problem is also raised by the peer learning processes (discussions, workshops) in which researchers can discuss, consult and expand their understanding of ethics and professional responsibility in research. In short ,the university has taken valuable actions to make defining and securing ethical and professional aspects an open process.

4. How do you judge the organisation's efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding the Recruitment of Researchers (OTM-R)?

The OTM-R is in place at Radboud University and this organisation registered sustainable efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding the Recruitment of Researchers.

The organisation has made a considerable progress in ensuring transparency of the recruitment process. It has created an impressive set of information for the candidates on their website (including guidelines how to prepare for the recruitment process). Direct support is also being offered to the people (e.g. team leaders) in need of recruiting. This includes not only technical and administrative support but also trainings, eg, training on bias.

They have also introduced IT system for managing vacancies, applications, assessment and communication with the applicants, which makes the whole process more transparent, punctual, straightforward and same for all the applicants.

However, OTM-R policies are not visible for newcomers or external researchers willing to join the University. Probably many information currently at the intranet could be shared at the public website with no risk of spreading confidential information or sensitive internal procedures.

5. How do you judge the organisation's efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding the Researchers' Working conditions and Social Security?

Workload and work pressure (especially for early career postdocs) have been identified as one of the major concerns and therefore improvement areas. Teaching and research workload (40% each) are balanced. However the remaining 20% for managerial duties also needs to be used for outreach, leadership, tech-transfer impact and mentoring which seems not to be enough. Several measures are already in place to improve this working pressure issue.

Researchers stability: Probably some small communication actions has to be taken to get a more clear idea of the stability process because some discrepancies about the stability rules raised along the interviews with the different groups.

Radboud University gives psychological support to help researchers dealing with personal issues. However this service seems to be overloaded.

Radboud University has created an attractive, stimulating and rewarding environment for researchers and is continuing to raise the bar. Their level of ambition is high; their level of achievement as well.

Temporary, short contracts - which are a significant stress factor for many researchers - are hard to avoid in the current research funding system - but the university tries to help with career advice and versatile training of researchers.

The university also pays attention to the diversity and inclusiveness issues, going beyond gender balance. It has started to work on social safety.

6. How do you judge the organisation's efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding Researchers' Development and Training?

The Radboud University's proved that it made valuable efforts to ensure the implementation of the Charter and Code principles regarding Researchers' Development and Training. The good practices are sustained by results and by research Centres.

R1-R4 representatives participate in the working group.

Special actions were taken looking for a smoother transition from student to hired pre-doctoral researcher situation. Performance checkpoints are established and regular meetings with supervisors as well.

Young researchers receive from the University a good advice and support on career path and future opportunities.

A new postdoc network is being developed to work in issues such as the integration of temporary staff in the overall strategy of the University..

The university provides high standards for the PhD training: a PhD candidate has more than one supervisor (their numbers depends upon individual needs). There is an obligatory training supervision plan in place. Young researchers are included in many consultation processes at the university. There is lot's of evidence of democratic culture at the university which facilities contacts and exchange between junior and senior staff.

Junior researchers are offered individual career advice, career development course. They are also introduced to the non-academic world (visit at companies, where researchers can present their work).

Importantly, training and development opportunities are not limited to junior researchers. The university is currently working on the career policy for senior researchers, redesigning the reward and incentive system.

There is strong emphasis on developing personal leadership skills and other transferable skills, eg. teaching - Teaching Learning Centre has been developed where researchers from different faculties and with different backgrounds and skills can exchange their experiences and get advice and share tools and good practices. Since teaching constitutes a significant part of the researchers workload, that kind of training should prove really helpful.

B. Elements of good practice

HRS4R integration with business operations through EFQM annual survey is a good process

Different strategy between faculties, depending on their sphere of interest

Sustainability of the research and also the teaching program

Electronic system in place for tracking and monitoring HRS4R objectives and actions and reporting on indicators is convincing

Meetings between professors from different faculties

Introduction day for new PhD Students

Round tables for transfer of knowledge between generations

Increase awareness about women carrier

Women's Meeting with representative of the faculties to discuss the issues

Teaching and Learning Centre – founded in January 2020

Education Week

Weekly lunch with members of faculties

Teaching learning center as a structured tool for enhancing not only quality of teaching at the university but also transferable skill of individual staff.

Data management systems that allow for flexibility related to different research fields and data formats but at the same time ensure data control and data sharing mechanisms.

The university has the Open Science team that assists researchers with open access related questions. They run an open science course for PhD students and manage Radboud Repository.

Catering to the needs of PhD students by providing them with more than 1 supervisor. Depending on the individual needs there may be more than 2 supervisors.

Recognition of the problem of work pressure and identification of main sources of the work-related stress for different groups of researchers and different faculties).

Close communication and collaboration between central administration and faculties. There are relevant policy officers at both levels. Both levels are very actively involved in analysis of current practices and implementing new policies. They clearly appreciate that "one size does not fit all" and seek flexibility, while at the same time secure the overall standards.

Intense collaboration with other Dutch academic institutions, funding bodies and government with the aim of refining academic environment in the Netherlands (and Europe as well).

Same happens with OTM-R policy: OTM-R policies are not visible for newcomers or external researchers willing to join the University. Probably many information currently at the intranet could be shared at the public website with no risk of spreading confidential information or sensitive internal procedures.

The documents are not easy to find on the institution's website or are in the intranet (where you can access only if you are already hired), which means that also current/future applicants for positions at RU can be well-informed about current HR policies. Therefore, the HRS4R section of the web could be improved in order to gain visibility. It would also be recommendable and would contribute to visibility and standardization if the logo was displayed at the website's home page.

C. Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Management commitment
- Efficiency of the implementation team
- Embedment in Radboud University strategic development
- The website contains sufficient information and documentation regarding the HRS4R
- A working group focused on HR strategy and policy is working in a continuous way
- Very well-structured and coherent strategy in line with the overall strategy of the University
- Tasks on the action plan are linked to the HR principles
- Gender balance plan. Radboud University is currently reformulating its ambitions and the content of the diversity policy and will soon formulate a new policy and action plan for the future.
- High level of ambition. -Taking into account the national context of the RU (namely very attractive research environment in the Netherlands) one might expect complacency on the part of the University which has already established the basic standards of good HRS4R. In contrast - the university has taken upon itself many actions to develop even better measures for creating a

stimulating, safe and fair workplace for researchers. Some of the measures must have called for significant effort and investment, which also shows dedication.

- Involvement of the community. Many of the actions involve direct and broad participation of the staff (workshops, trainings, focus groups, surveys, interviews, discussion, themed lunches and so on). That again makes the actions more embedded in the institutional life and more relevant to researchers. The researchers get to have a say and can directly impact the implementation of the actions.

- Comprehensiveness -The HR Strategy and Action plan include very broad scope of actions. RU has managed to simultaneously work in many directions in respect to ethical and professional standards and researchers' well being. Not only are the actions far-reaching and numerous but they are also clearly interlinked, which molds them into a convincing vision and strategy.

- Evidence based approach. - Action Plan 2013-2017 has been evaluated and the diversity of evaluation tools indicates a real commitment to the task.

- Electronic system in place for tracking and monitoring HRS4R objectives and actions and reporting on indicators is convincing

- Meetings between professors from different faculties

- Teaching learning center as a structured tool for enhancing not only quality of teaching at the university but also transferable skill of individual staff.

- Data management systems that allow for flexibility related to different research fields and data formats but at the same time ensure data control and data sharing mechanisms.

- Assistance for researchers with Open Science related questions and problems.

- Recognition of the problem of work pressure and identification of main sources of the work-related stress for different groups of researchers and different faculties.

- Close communication and collaboration between central administration and faculties.

- Intense collaboration with other Dutch academic institutions, funding bodies and government with the aim of refining academic environment in the Netherlands (and Europe as well).

Weaknesses

It is not clear how the researchers were involved in updating and validating the priorities and the Action Plan. HRS4R is at the website of the University but it's not easy to find nor evident where it is. I'd suggest to add the logo at the Home page (for instance at the bottom of the Home) with a link to the web page.

Right now all this info about the HRS4R is accessible through Working at/Employment conditions, whereas HRS4R is much more and wider than just the Employment conditions.

D. Recommendations

We can conclude that the level of implementation of principles of the Charter & Code at Radboud University is high, and for those issues where there is still room for improvement, proposals on remedial measures are laid down in the Action Plan.

- The HRS4R section of the web is not easy to be found. The user could only find the section by the search engine. The documents are not easy to find on the institution's website or are in the intranet (where you can access only if you are already hired), which means that also current/future applicants for positions at RU can be well-informed about current HR policies. Therefore, the HRS4R section of the web could be improved in order to gain visibility. It would also be recommendable and would contribute to visibility and standardization if the logo was displayed at the website's home page.

- A large part of the policies/ actions/ regulations described in the internal review document and the OTM-R checklist/ guide are described on the Radboud University intranet Radboudnet, and therefore cannot be accessed externally. Think which part of this information might be valuable for an incoming researcher prior to his/her decision to join the University. Likely having more info about the Strategy could lead the researcher to take a favorable opinion about the University and help him/her deciding to join the Institution.

- The actualized action plan for implementation of principles is detailed, wide and comprises the strengthened HRS4R policy

- Ambitious action plan, good indicators, few actions pending.

- Radboud University is working towards the OTM-R horizon.