

Report from UiB Workshop II on 03.05.18

1. Summary

The University of Bergen (UiB) has started an affiliation process to the EU "Charter and Code" (C&C) according to the "strengthened" HRS4R implementation method. The affiliation process at UiB is supervised by the C&C Steering Committee, and the gap analysis is conducted in the form of a survey, and workshops for three working groups.

Workshop II dealt with the C&C topic "Recruitment and selection". The working groups consisted of people at academic management level and researchers at various career levels from UiB's faculties. The topics were illustrated with introductions and followed up by discussions in the working group based on C&C principles and UiB's practices in the field. Positive and negative variations were considered with a view to any proposed remedial measures in UiB's Action Plan.

The discussions in the working group can be briefly summarized with the following highlights. Recruitment of researchers to UiB is subject to national and institutional regulations which meet the requirements of the recruitment procedure in C & C. Open, effective and transparent recruitment processes are important for the rights of applicants for researcher positions, but also for the diversity of the research communities at UiB. The recruitment process for researchers is intended to meet the academic needs of different faculties, in addition institutional procedures must be safeguarded with joint training templates. International recruitment and mobility bring to UiB a high level of academic qualifications and access to leading research networks. It is important to have a service centre for the intake and distribution of researchers, and stimulate foreign researchers to take on positions of trust and management positions. Despite a long tradition of gender equality at UiB, there is a need for more knowledge on what leads to discriminatory practices. It is also necessary to further develop instruments that provide gender balance and equal opportunities for women on a career path.

Proposals for remedial measures in UiB's Action Plan will be considered together during the further administrative procedures, and will be based on positive and negative variations arising from the survey and discussions in all the workshops.

2. Background and purpose of Workshop II

UiB signed a declaration of intent on the implementation of C&C, on 05.03.09, and has been for many years a Euraxcess Contact Point. The university management at UiB decided in the spring of 2016 to start the process of affiliation to C&C according to the "strengthened" HRS4R implementation method. The University Board has been briefed on several occasions regarding the development of the relationship with C&C and the affiliation process.

The affiliation process at UiB is monitored by the C&C Steering Committee. The University Director heads the Steering Committee, and its members are academic/administrative leaders and researchers at various career levels. The Steering Committee has decided that UiB's gap analysis should be carried out in the form of a survey, and workshops for three working groups.

The Steering Committee has given the working group for Workshop II the following mandate:

"Working Group II" shall use the workshop as an analysis tool to conduct a gap analysis with the aim of implementing UiB's Charter and Code in accordance with the "strengthened" HRS4-R. The gap analysis must compare UiB's actual practices with the principles for "Recruitment and Selection" as stated in the Charter and Code. It should state the extent to which UiB already complies with each of

these principles, and document the status with reference to existing strategy and action plans etc. It should also state whether national or institutional regulations endorse or oppose implementation of any of the principles. The gap analysis must describe existing variations in such a way that it is possible to see the correlation between the variation and proposed remedial measures in the Action Plan to fulfil the principles.” The gap analysis must also indicate UiB’s strategy and practice in relation to "Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment" (OTM-R).

3. Composition of the working group and agenda for Workshop II

The C&C Steering Committee has given general recommendations that the working groups should be made up of people at an academic management level and researchers at different career levels from UiB’s faculties.

Workshop II was conducted on 03.05.18 and the following people participated in the working group:

Academic management level:

HR Director Sonja Irene Dyrkorn, MAT Head of Department Pinar Heggernes, SV Head of Department Liv Syltevik and Chief Physician Mette Vesterhus

Researchers at various career levels:

R1 JUS Research Fellow Øyvind Røed, R3 PSYK Associate Professor Gry Heggli and R4 JUS Professor Camilla Bernt

Agenda for the meeting:

09:00-09:15: Welcome and some practical information about the organisation of the workshop

09:15-09:30: Brief overview of C&C principles for the “Recruitment and Selection” topic.

09:30-10:45: C&C rules on scientists’ rights, recruitment procedure and assessment of the suitability of scientists. Introductory speaker Professor Anne Marit Blokhus.

10:45-12:00: International recruitment and mobility in the job market for scientists. Introductory speaker Professor Daniel Chourrout.

12:00-13:00: Lunch

13:00-14:15: C&C requirements for non-discrimination and gender balance. Introductory speaker Advisor Mona Grindheim Matre.

14:15-15:00: Summary of Workshop II and the way forward

The meeting was led by HR Director Sonja Dyrkorn, and conducted in accordance with the agenda and ended at 14.30.

The protocol from Workshop II is published on UiB’s C&C website:

www.uib.no/charterandcode

4. Introductory speakers and presentations in Workshop II

Senior Advisor Svein Åge Eilertsen from the University Director's Office gave a brief overview of the C & C principles under the theme "Recruitment and Selection"

MAT Professor Anne Marit Blokhuis explained “C&Cs rules on scientists’ rights, recruitment procedure and assessment of the suitability of scientists”. After the presentation, the topic was discussed by the working group based on the C&C principles and UiB’s practice in the field. Positive and negative variations were considered with a view to any proposed remedial measures.

Professor Daniel Chourrout informed on “International recruitment and mobility in the job market for scientists” based on experience from UiB’s Sars Centre, and cooperation with the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL). The topic was discussed in the working group with background in the conditions at UiB, and considered with a view to any proposed remedial measures.

Advisor Mona Grindheim Matre of the HR Department illuminated the topic “C&C requirements for non-discrimination and gender balance” through a briefing on the mentor programme Balance-Bergen, and referred to the report from UiB’s survey on C&C. She asked questions about where in the recruitment process discriminatory practices take place, how they develop, and what can be done? The presentation was followed up by discussions in the working group. Positive and negative variations were considered with a view to any proposed remedial measures.

The PowerPoint presentations used by the speakers are available on UiB’s C&C website:

www.uib.no/charterandcode

5. Survey conducted among UiB’s researchers

The survey was prepared by an academic group comprising Professor Roger Strand (SVT), postdoctoral fellow Erik Knudsen, Department of Information Science and Media Studies, and Advisor Jill A. Opsahl (HR). The survey was conducted in February 2018 among all employees in scientific positions at UiB. Overall response rate was 34%, with 734 responses given. The questions in the survey are linked to a sample of 17 of the C&C principles. In the final report from the survey, the questions are grouped between questions related to Evaluation Committees, Pages 9-21, general questions, Pages 22-29, employment situation and career development, Pages 30-39 and guidance Pages 40-45.

The report functions both as part of UiB’s gap analysis and as background material for the workshops. It was therefore made available to the workshop as background material, along with a form that showed the correlation between the relevant C&C principles, national/institutional regulation and the survey. In relation to recruitment, the report contains the examination of several questions relevant to the work of expert evaluation committees. These range from the design of announcements (Page 21), mobility and international recruitment (Pages 12-15) and research and social issues (Pages 16-20). The survey also includes information about researchers’ opinions of equality issues, Pages 13, 28, and 29.

Final report on the survey of C&C at UiB is published on UiB’s C&C website:

www.uib.no/charterandcode

6. Discussions during Workshop II on C&Cs rules on scientists’ rights, recruitment procedure and assessment of the suitability of scientists.

Open, effective and transparent recruitment processes are important for the rights of applicants for researcher positions, but also for the diversity of the research communities at UiB. The professional competence level of applicants is the main selection criterion in the recruitment process. In addition, consideration must be given to the suitability of the individual researcher for the position based on a

wide range of conditions. The suitability assessment must build upon clarification of the actual conditions, and be factual and justifiable. UiB has prepared special regulations for appointments to scientific posts and academic/administrative management positions that regulate in detail procedures for announcement, expert evaluation, recommendation and employment.

Public announcement of job vacancies is the starting point for openness in UiB's recruitment process. In accordance with the regulations, the diversity perspective is to be safeguarded in the announcement, but there are still few scientists being recruited from disadvantaged groups. Openness can be threatened by the desire to recruit named scientists into specially customised research positions. UiB's announcement templates have a standard design with a formal content, but could be made more attractive by describing the assets of the university and position.

UiB's regulations endeavour to create broadly composed expert committees to evaluate researchers' scientific qualifications. The expert committees are normally composed of international, national and internal members of both genders. In addition, suitability is also evaluated before recommendations of the best candidates. The recruitment process for scientists should meet the academic needs of the different faculties, and it could be helpful to have a joint training template for committee members to ensure the necessary unified procedures. It is also important to have revised interview and reference follow-up templates, adapted to the position for which scientists are to be interviewed. Students have a role in the selection process, particularly in terms of trial lectures, but questions can be raised regarding their participation in appointment bodies for highly qualified and managerial positions.

7. Discussions during Workshop II on international recruitment and mobility in the job market for scientists.

The Sars International Centre for Marine Molecular Biology was created in 1997 with the help of funding from the Norwegian Research Council (NFR), the Ministry of Education and the University of Bergen. The Sars Centre is part of the University of Bergen and has about fifty employees. The Centre is a partner of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), one of the world's leading research institutions, and Europe's flagship laboratory for Bioscience. UiB has started a comprehensive marine research cooperation with Ocean University in Qingdao in China. A cooperation agreement has been signed with the Sars Centre as the key UiB player in this cooperation.

The Sars Centre is currently organized in eight research groups. The current groups perform basic research related to the "comparative molecular biology of marine animals" research programme. All groups are evaluated by an International Advisory Committee (SAC). Each group is led by a research group leader, who is recruited following an open, international announcement. Group leaders are normally appointed for 6 years, in a circulatory system whereby group leaders are not permanently tied to the institutions. Based on performance and relevance for the Sars Centre plans, SAC can recommend the extension of the researcher groups by an additional four years.

The studies show that there are very few Nordic or Norwegian scientists applying for and obtaining scientific positions at Sars. None of today's 8 research group leaders are Norwegian, of the 34 remaining scientific positions one is held by a Norwegian and one by a Swede. Once the period has expired, the career path often continues to higher research positions in other institutions.

International recruitment and mobility provide UiB with a high level of academic qualifications and access to leading research networks. From a national perspective, it is important to keep a certain

balance in the composition of the research staff, both where there is a majority of national and international staff. Internationalisation should also apply at the individual level in managerial positions and in decision-making bodies at UiB. Recruitment and evaluation committees should have a composition that safeguards the international perspectives. It can be difficult to evaluate the competence of foreign researchers. Language can also be a challenge in research groups, in communication with overarching management systems and daily life. UiB has a well-developed system for teaching Norwegian, which also includes spouses of foreign researchers. It is important to have a service centre for the reception and distribution of researchers.

8. Discussions during Workshop II on C&C requirements for non-discrimination and gender balance.

The main objective of the Norwegian Research Council's BALANSE programme is to improve gender balance at the senior level in Norwegian research through new knowledge, learning and innovative measures and to increase the proportion of women in academic top positions and research management. A research component was incorporated into three research and education institutions in Bergen, with the aim of acquiring new knowledge about the relationship between student and apprentice. The mentor programme in Balanse-Bergen has been led from UiB and has provided an increased insight into what is needed to create a career in academia. UiB's survey on C&C, shows that the vast majority of men surveyed believe that men and women have equal opportunities at UiB, while a significant proportion of women believe that it is easier for men to be appointed.

Despite a long tradition of gender equality at UiB, there is a need for more knowledge on what leads to discriminatory practices. Promotion schemes are a means of increasing the proportion of women in higher scientific positions. However, there are considerable differences in the criteria for promotion in the various subjects, and the criteria for a number of disciplines are diffuse. Where the criteria are clear enough, the problem may be to have sufficient instruments that provide gender balance and equal opportunities for women on the career path. Mentorship, follow-up of management and compliance with action plans/initiatives are important.

In addition to gender balance, UiB's recruitment and selection processes are designed to counteract discrimination based on age, ethnicity, national origin, religion/belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political conviction or socio-economic background. It is a problem that factual information is lacking on diversity issues. Projects to clarify statistical conditions, etc. will provide a more secure basis for designing instruments to counteract the different forms of discrimination.