



# “HR IN RESEARCH”

## - REPORT

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DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES

UNIVERSITETET I BERGEN



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# “HR IN RESEARCH”

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Is a UiB project directed at ensuring that R&D staff's working conditions allow sufficient flexibility to achieve good research results. By implementing European principles for researchers, the status of "HR Excellence in Research" is achieved. This report provides information on the principles, procedures and measures to improve R&D staff's working conditions. More information about the project can be found on the web page:

<https://www.uib.no/en/charterandcode>

## WHAT IS?

### Charter and Code (C&C)

The short version of the two European Union statements "The European Charter for Researchers" and "The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers". The statements are a set of general principles and requirements which specify the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of researchers, as well as of employers and/or funders of researchers.

Charter and Code addresses all researchers irrespective of their field of research, the sector in which they work and the nature of their appointment or employment at all stages in their career. The principles take into account the multiple roles of researchers who are appointed not only to conduct R&D activities, but are also involved in academic supervision, mentoring, management or administration.

### HRS4R

"The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers" is the name of the C&C affiliation procedure. It spans three phases, an initial application phase, an implementation phase and a renewal phase, all of which will ensure progression and development in the quality of working conditions for R&D employees.

### OTM-R

"Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers" is the abbreviation for a recruitment system. The system is intended to ensure that the best qualified individuals are recruited, that there are equal opportunities and access to attractive research careers and to develop an international portfolio based on cooperation, competition and mobility.

## ORGANISATION OF UiB's C&C PROCESS

### The Steering Group for C&C

Was appointed following a decision by the University Board on 27.04.17 to monitor UiB's affiliation process. The Chair of the group is the University Director. The other 7 members represent academic/administrative leaders and researchers at career levels R1 to R4. The Steering Group's work is described in the minutes of the group's meetings.

The Director of Human Resources is a member of the Steering Group and has administrative responsibility for the affiliation process.

### The C&C Project Team

Is appointed by the Steering Group and is made up of 10 (variable) administrative employees. The project group is the case handling body for the Steering Group and point of contact for central administration departments and faculties. A separate composite academic group designed a survey on the relationship between C&C and UiB's practice.

## UiB's GAP ANALYSIS

### Survey

In February 2018, UiB conducted a survey of all employees in scientific positions on the relationship between 17 of the C&C principles and UiB's practice in this area. The report from the survey shows R&D employees' perception of recruitment, career development, gender balance, supervision and other conditions at UiB. The report functions both as part of UiB's gap analysis and as background material for the thematic workshops on the C&C principles.

### Workshop I-III

As the next stage in the gap analysis, in the spring of 2018, UiB conducted three thematic workshops to assess all the 40 C&C principles and to present proposals for action from a researcher's perspective. The workshops were composed of representatives of R&D employees at different career levels and academic-/administration managers. A report has been prepared from each of the workshops.

**Workshop I** dealt with the C&C topics "Professional and Ethical Aspects" and "Training and Development". The main conclusions of the discussions are that research ethics and researcher integrity at UiB fully comply with the C&C principles in the field. Researcher education at UiB has been directed towards a career in academia, while a system for researcher careers outside academia has only been developed to a smaller extent. It was therefore proposed to establish a career guidance scheme for researcher positions also outside of academia, as well as to strengthen the supervisor role in general.

**Workshop II** dealt with the C&C topic "Recruitment and Selection". The deliberations of the Working Group showed that recruitment to R&D positions at UiB complies with national regulations and meets the requirements of the recruitment procedure in C&C. Open, effective and transparent recruitment processes are important for the rights of applicants for the positions, but also for the diversity of the research environments at UiB. It is desirable for measures to be taken that encourage external

national and foreign researchers to apply for positions and management posts at UiB. In order to serve mobility it is necessary to have a service centre for the reception and deployment of our R&D staff. The recruitment process must cover the different faculties' academic needs but institutional strategies and uniform procedures must also be ensured by training and use of common templates. Despite the long tradition of equality and diversity at UiB, more knowledge and actions are needed to further develop measures that result in gender balance and equal opportunities for everyone on the career path as a researcher.

**Workshop III** dealt with the C&C topic "Working Conditions and Social Security". "HR in research" at UiB has the same main purpose as C&C's principle 24 on working conditions; to ensure that researchers' working conditions allow sufficient flexibility to achieve good research results. In light of this, practical measures for career development inside and outside of academia were discussed in the workshop. In both situations, it may be appropriate to utilise a career development tool. Increasing participation in externally funded project work and international networks means that the use of R&D positions should be regulated in more detail in guidelines and employment agreements for international conditions of work and externally funded projects. Salary, stable terms of employment and stimulating research environments are some of the other measures aimed at creating attractive working conditions for researchers

## Workshop IV – "OTMR Checklist"

In connection with the OTM-R checklist being made a compulsory application document, UiB's recruitment procedures were assessed in the autumn of 2018 based on an "OTMR checklist". The report was conducted as Workshop IV by the Division of Human Resources and representatives from the faculty administration managers. The Group considered it appropriate to extend UiB's recruitment procedures into a combined OTM-R policy as set out in the EU guidelines. Furthermore, the workshop discussed issues related to the three recruitment phases and to the achievement of the objectives of UiB's recruitment strategies. A report has been prepared from the workshop showing the discussions and proposed actions.

## UiB's Action Plan

### From non-conformance to action

UiB's Action Plan builds on the background material of the gap analysis, and contains the institutional plan of action to develop "HR in research" at UiB. The gap analysis shows that UiB complies in full with 34 of the 40 C&C principles and possible improvement, measures were proposed for 7 of these principles beyond the C&C requirements. Negative deviations have been found in UiB's practices that necessitate improvement measures for 6 of the C&C principles.

In the Action Plan, the number of measures has been extended to 15, and covers 18 of the principles in C&C. The initiatives in the Action Plan are to be interpreted and designed with the aim of developing researchers' working conditions and research findings in accordance with UiB's overall strategy. Emphasis is placed on designing realistic, feasible and measurable initiatives, which are also suitable for using C&C as a tool for long-term quality development of UiB's HR practice.

The initiatives are systemised in five overarching areas.

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## Overview of the measures

### **Recruitment**

Open, transparent and merit-based recruitment processes are important for the rights of applicants for positions, but also for the diversity of the research environments at UiB.

Action 1 – Audit to establish a collective OTM-R policy

Action 2 – Review of templates and procedures used in UiB’s recruitment

Action 3 - Recruitment training

Action 4 - Recruitment management data

### **Career development-/counselling**

The strengthening of R&D employees’ career development is the key development area for UiB in the initial implementation phase of C&C.

Action 5 - Career development for younger researchers

Action 6 - Counselling on career opportunities outside academia

Action 7 - Trial with career development tools

Action 8 – Renewal of performance assessment interviews

Action 9 – Pilot project for R&D work related to own teaching

### **Supervisor role**

Academic supervision covers various ethical, academic and HR aspects of R&D work. These aspects can be developed on an

interdisciplinary basis by focusing on initiatives that strengthen the entirety of the supervisor role.

Action 10 - Arena for development of the supervisor role

### **Gender Equality /diversity**

UiB has a long tradition of a policy for equality and diversity in R & D positions, but recognises that there is a need to continually develop knowledge and measures.

Action 11 - Make a pilot project for promotion courses to scientific top positions into a permanent scheme for women

Action 12 – Academic CV and career path

Action 13 – Knowledge about discrimination and diversity

### **Administrative support for R&D staff**

Administrative support for R&D staff is essential to developing and effectuating UiB’s procedures, thus ensuring that the working conditions of the researchers allow sufficient flexibility to achieve good research results.

Action 14 – Guidelines and employment agreements for staff engaged in international working conditions and externally funded projects

Action 15 - Develop pay mechanisms to stimulate research and quality of education and active dissemination of scientific activities

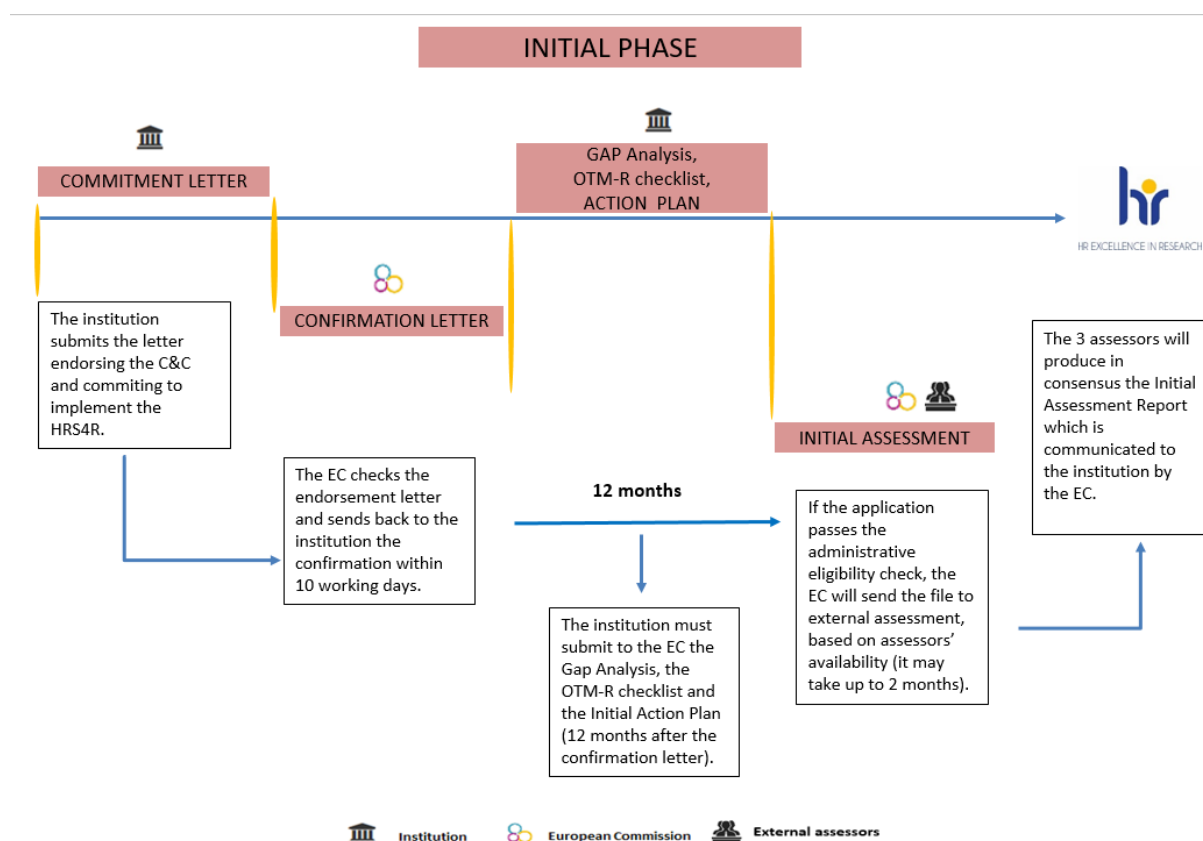


## Implementation

### Of the application process

The institutional processing at UiB has the objective of including relevant actors in the process. This has occurred through the organisation of the process and the participation of R&D staff in the gap analysis and the preparation of actions in the Action Plan. The measures are handled by the institutional bodies at UiB, prior to presentation to the University Board for a decision on the submission of the application documents to the European Union Commission. 5 November 2019 is the application deadline for UiB to achieve the status of "HR Excellence in Research".

Overview of the implementation of the application process in the initial phase is shown in Illustration 1.



## Implementation of the actions

Implementation of the measures in UiB’s Action Plan starts with the achievement of "HR Excellence in Research". The actions will be carried out according to their content in the first 2-year implementation phase, with the possibility of further development in subsequent phases. The actions are described with the aim of qualitative development of UiB's practice for "HR in Research", with specification of the person responsible for the action, time and indicators for attainment of objectives. A project follow-up tool is to be used to ensure progress up to final attainment of the objectives for each individual action.

The C&C Steering Group will monitor UiB’s implementation of the action plan. The responsibility for the practical implementation will lie in each section of UiB’s management line, up to the person who is given formal responsibility for the action. In addition, the Director of Human Resources will have the overall administrative responsibility for continuous project monitoring.

For the majority of R&D employees, UiB’s web page for C&C will be the information channel for implementation of the actions. Input in the implementation phase from R&D staff and others will be handled in a central "tool box" for follow-up in the further development of "HR in research" at UiB.

A schematic overview of the implementation phase of the actions and subsequent audit and renewal phases is shown in Illustration 2.

