UNamur
REPORT
2021-2022

Report of the UNamur Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) 2021-2024

UNIVERSITÉ DE NAMUR

REPORT OF THE UNAMUR HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHES (HR4RS)

1. Organisational information

STAFF & STUDENTS (2020)	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	618,1
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	140
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	124
Of whom are women	244,1
Of whom are stage R3 or R4= Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor	77,42
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	50,13
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	490,55
Total number of students (if relevant)	6771
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	952,31
UNamur FUNDING (2020)	€
Total annual organisational budget	106 273 438,74
Annual organisational direct government funding (block funding, used for teaching, research, infrastructure...)	65 327 044,41
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations –including EU funding)	18 640 528,24
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	6 642 637,12

Organisational profile

The University of Namur (UNamur) is the first higher education institution in the Namur province of Belgium. The University is anchored in the Namur educational landscape through close collaboration and association with Namur hospitals and university colleges. UNamur offers bachelor (25), master (44) and doctorate (12) programs in 6 faculties. Through the 11 transdisciplinary research institutes, researchers work on more than 800 applied and fundamental research projects. UNamur is successful in the following areas: nanotechnologies, life sciences, surface and materials physics and chemistry, information systems and information technology engineering, big data, regional economics, development economics and information, law and society.

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

a. Ethical and professional aspects

Since 2016, ethics and the researcher's commitment to society have been flagship projects of UNamur's policy, for example:
· The creation of an ethics committee for projects in social sciences and humanities,
· The revision of the procedure in the event of a breach of scientific integrity,
· Awareness-raising actions on ethics and technology transfer,
· The reorientation of the scientific mediation center to include the human sciences,
· The organisation of training courses in scientific mediation.

The communication plan for the actions carried out requires a structured and coherent reflection in relation to the target audience in order to increase the number of people informed.
The strategic plan of the current Rector's team supports non-discrimination actions, with the creation of a vice-rector position linked to gender policy.
The improvement of good research practices relies in particular on the reinforcement of laboratory security, the proper use of computer data (security and back-up), the support of security officers in the laboratories and the creation of a common internal regulation for all laboratories. These initiatives are strongly supported by the general policy of UNamur and are among the priorities.

b. Recruitment and selection

The management has also taken the initiative to directly encourage researchers to systematically publish their job offers on the Euraxess Jobs platform, which is already showing positive results. Recently, the university authorities approved the launch of a project to improve the organisational and structural management of human resources. This project was entrusted to a private consultancy firm. Among other things, the company examined the current procedure for recruiting researchers and the measures to be implemented to improve it. A working group is in charge of instructing and identifying the improvement actions that will then be implemented.

c. Working conditions

As already mentioned in the context of good research practices, the institutional policy is positioning itself for an even more favorable working environment in the future with the creation of a well-being unit, a survey on psychosocial risks and the hiring of a prevention advisor. The working conditions of staff are indeed a constant concern, as shown by the series of actions put in place to promote work-life balance with, for example: the recognition of part-time work for academic staff, home working possibilities...

d. Training and development

The training of staff, not only researchers, is a constant in UNamur policy. This is reflected in the implementation of a constantly evolving HR training catalogue (a new version is being implemented in 2022) and the implementation of transversal skills training specifically dedicated to researchers. This catalogue, which has existed since 2013, is constantly updated to meet the needs of researchers and their new demands. This continuous adaptation explains its flexibility and its temporary nature since it is directly linked to the needs expressed by researchers each year on various occasions: round tables, individual interviews and surveys. The general context of the FWB, linked to the Decree of the French Community of 7 November 2013 defining the landscape of higher education and the academic organisation of studies with the new rules for the functioning of universities, complicates the administrative work of everyone within the university. Moreover, the principle of academic freedom being very strong at UNamur, we are looking for new proposals through reflections in other universities of the FWB. UNamur has a career development center, through an employment unit that was restructured in September 2018.

3. Implementation

The management of the implementation of the HRS4R and OTM-R process is entrusted to a multidisciplinary and multi-skilled steering committee. This allows for effective monitoring and coordination of the projects. The steering committee is responsible for proposing actions to be included, validating the HRS4R and OTM-R action plans and reporting to the board. The Steering Committee is chaired by the Vice-Rector for Research. Its composition is as follows:
- Vice-Rector for Research;
- Vice-Rector in charge of Human Resources;
- Vice-Rector in charge of Education;
- Vice-Rector in charge of Quality;
- Directors (Human Resources Services SRH, Research Administration ADRE, Rectorate Services);
- Representatives of the three bodies (academic, scientific and administrative);
- Two persons in charge of quality;
- Person in charge of the reception of foreign researchers (Researcher's Helpdesk);

The day-to-day management is attributed to the Quality Support Unit, which is part of the rectorate services.

The involvement of the Quality Support Unit in university life and the human size of the structure facilitate exchanges, which allows researchers to address their requests directly to the Researcher's Helpdesk and the Quality Support Unit.

Moreover, the faculty councils collaborate with the councils of the scientific and university bodies whose representatives sit on the steering committee. Depending on the project, working groups are created and reports and information are centralised by the Quality Support Unit. Finally, various events are organised throughout the year to allow researchers to express themselves (round tables, workshops, individual meetings) and to explain the implementation of the HRS4R process (newsletter, annual events on Euraxess).

The new strategic plan of the Rector (2021-2024), presented in December 2021 to the university community, integrates the HRS4R action plan in a transversal way in each of its orientations. Integration is facilitated by the strong representation of the institution's bodies in the steering committee. Emphasis is placed on the development of a strong HR policy that enables the implementation of the OTM-R strategy.

a. How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?

Progress is presented to the steering committee, which meets four times a year, by a representative of the quality support unit. The monitoring of actions is carried out by the quality support unit. Indeed, a part-time person is dedicated to monitoring and coordinating the actions of the action plan. This person is responsible for initiating projects, monitoring their progress and gathering the necessary information to assess the progress of the project. An internal project management tool is used to monitor progress in terms of time (meeting deadlines) and indicators to be achieved.

b. How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?

Researchers are invited to the steering committee through their representatives from the academic and scientific communities. These two representatives act as a link with the boards of both organisation's and thus ensure the transmission of requests and projects from both boards. In addition, the Quality Support Unit actively participates in UNamur events and regularly attends information meetings. Thanks to the network that has been set up, researchers can easily get in touch with the contact persons and submit their requests.

c. How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R?

Ensure that HRS4R is recognised in the organisation's research strategy as an overall HR policy. The participation of four vice-rectors in the steering committee helps to integrate HRS4R actions into the institutional strategy.

Thus, the Rector's strategic plan includes actions that contribute directly to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code for the Recruitment of Researchers, such as:

-Knowledge and technology transfer;

-Strengthening international collaboration in teaching and research;

-Strengthening of the quality approach;

-Development of innovative teaching methods through teacher training;

-Improvement of the integration of foreign students (especially doctoral students);

-Well being of all workers of the UNamur

d. How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?

Actions are considered completed when the previously defined indicators are reached. This could be a training event, a report or a number of participants to be reached. When the event is completed, the quality support unit makes it permanent by including it in the action plan: general training for the HR department and researcher training for the research administration department, official annual communication, staff orientation day. In the case of a report, the quality support unit sets up a watch to ensure the continuity of the project (think tank, survey, evaluation report) and to ensure the use of the data collected (addition to the institutional policy, creation of a working group, official mandate for an administrative service). Finally, short actions such as the translation of the doctoral regulations are monitored to ensure that future updated versions of the regulations are also translated.

e. How will you monitor progress (timeline)?

The action plan is monitored and discussed at each steering committee meeting, i.e. at least 4 times a year.

f. How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?

The action plan is monitored and discussed at each steering committee meeting.

4. Actions

Implementation of the OTM-R strategy

Following the self-evaluation report of the HRS4R action plan (2013-2016) submitted by the University of Namur, the European Commission issued recommendations inviting UNamur to further develop its researcher recruitment policy based on the OTM-R principles. Numerous actions have therefore been carried out in this field.

The recruitment of researchers at UNamur is mainly organised in two categories of staff members: academics and scientists. The procedures for the recruitment of academics are defined in the "Statutes" for this category of staff. As for the scientific staff, two types of researchers are recruited: either scientists on management positions (assistants) or scientists on external funding. The recruitment procedure is different for these two types of researchers. UNamur recruits its researchers both internally and externally. Some members of the administrative services may also be recruited for specific research management positions. Driven by its values of excellence in each of its missions, including research, the current new authorities of the UNamur wish to strengthen the attractiveness and the reception of national and international researchers. Thus, the recruitment of researchers, which is intended to be open, transparent and based on the merit of the candidates, has become one of the strategic priorities of the University.

In 2017, UNamur adopted the "OTM-R toolkit" proposed by the European Commission. The "OTM-R

Gap analysis", which systematically takes up the 23 questions of the checklist, was carried out by the Euraxess unit. The analysis of the institutional policy for the recruitment of researchers and the identification of the gaps to be filled in order to comply with the OTM-R principles allowed the identification of actions to be implemented in order to improve the recruitment practices of researchers within UNamur. Thus, the "OTM-R Gap analysis" was followed, in August 2017, by the drafting of the OTM-R action plan. The "OTM-R Gap analysis" and the "OTM-R Action Plan" were validated by the UNamur Board of Directors on 25 January 2019. Today, the actions of the HRS4R and OTM-R plans significantly intersect with all of UNamur's strategic priorities, supported by the new rectoral team. The human resources policy developed by the Vice-Rector in charge of personnel, in close collaboration with the Human Resources Department, has made it possible to put forward the priority actions of the OTM-R action plan (2021-2024).

The current action plan continues this policy. There are three categories: communication, training and specific actions.

Communication is information to be repeated every year. Training (ethics, anti-plagiarism, security, transversal skills) is held annually or more regularly. For specific actions, the axes followed are the improvement of safety and well-being of workers. These different actions are fully included in the HRS4R action plan.

List of abbreviations used in the 2021-2024 action plan:
AdCom: Administration of Communication
ADRE: Administration of Research
PAQ: Quality Support Unit
SerP: Prevention service
SIGEC: Infrastructure and Campus Management Services
SIPPT: Internal Service for Prevention and Protection of Work
SRH: Human Resource Department
VRE/VRQ: Vice-Rector in charge of Education and Quality
VRR: Vice-Rector for Research and International Relations

Proposed action	Time	Departement responsible	Indicator +
Continuous action			
Communication			
Communication on the missions, roles and confidentiality obligation of confidence persons	Each year	AdCom	-
Posting of job vacancies focusing on research activities in English on the UNamur-jobs, Euraxess-jobs and other possible recruitment platforms	Each year	SRH	-

SPF Finance presentation on taxes and pensions	2022	PAQ	-

Formation			
Ethics training	Continuous	ADRE	Number of organised training sessions
Anti-plagiarism training	Continuous	ADRE	Number of trained people
Support and training for internal security relays in laboratories	Continuous	SerP	Number of organised training sessions; Number of trained people
U2ES training courses	Continuous	PAQ	Number of organised training sessions; Number of trained people

Specific action			
Writing of the Anti-Plagiarism Charter	2022	ADRE	DONE/NOT DONE
Improving of Campus security (laboratories and animal house), (reflexion)	Continuous	SIGeC	Number of laboratories equipped
Creation of internal rules of procedures common to all laboratories	2023	SRH	DONE/NOT DONE
Continuation of the risk analysis program in laboratories		SerP	#analysis completed or %; progress of mitigation plan; Bird pyramid
Setting up an evaluation of research institutes	2021	VRR	DONE/NOT DONE

Establishment of a catalogue of permanent transversal competence training courses	2022	PAQ	DONE/NOT DONE
Implementation of HR training for team leaders	2022	SRH	DONE/NOT DONE
Implementation of roles and responsibilities for the line manager	2023	SRH	DONE/NOT DONE
Development of a good practice guide on the right to disconnect	2022	SRH	DONE/NOT DONE
Development of a good practice guide on teleworking	2022	SRH	DONE/NOT DONE
Establishment of a gender equality plan	2022	SRH	DONE/NOT DONE
Definition of an OTM-R UNamur policy		VRRH	DONE/NOT DONE
Revision of the regulations of the academic staff: integrate the "Provisions for the recruitement of new academics" + C&C compliance		VRRH	DONE/NOT DONE
Development of an organisational and technological solution to support e-recruitment (application management, videoconference support for interviews, etc.)	2024	SRH	DONE/NOT DONE
Building of a single form for job offers to feed the Euraxess platform and the UNamur website	2022	SRH	DONE/NOT DONE