



REPORT

on THE PROGRESS OF HR STRATEGY'S IMPLEMENTATION

Spiru Haret University (USH) based in Bucharest, Romania was awarded with the HR Excellence in Research logo on Oct.2013. Being committed to implementing the Charter & Code, USH elaborated a HR Strategy for 2013-2015 and the implementation process began. During the implementation period, strategic actions came to life due to the responsible people/departments/managerial bodies' efforts. Working groups were created especially to deliver the planned actions and to achieve the envisaged outcomes. The WGs coordinators reported twice a year their results/outcomes. Also, they reported the stage of implementation for each of the actions (e.g. done, on-going or delayed) to the USH research management coordinator (Vice Rector of Research).

Gathering this information, we are able to report that Spiru Haret University (USH) implemented HRS4R with the following results:

I. Ethical and professional aspects

1. Research freedom - Done

To have a clear vision on how researchers perceive *Research freedom*, an online survey was conducted among all academic staff (with research duties) and a report was drafted. No constraints were indicated, so we conclude that the research freedom principle is respected. In some particular cases, especially in narrow research fields, researchers indicated that they have no access to relevant funding (e.g. philosophy), the suggested solution was that they were advised to join other interdisciplinary research teams.

2. Ethical principles - No actions needed.

3. Professional responsibility - Done

The USH Quality Management Manual, point 5.2. Quality Assurance in Research -provides the Procedure for evaluation and approval of the research results, which specifies what measures must be taken, such as: originality, respect and consideration for the authors of past publications, compliance to established research ethics outlined in the USH Code of Ethics ; the assurance of the quality of research is the authors' main responsibility. All research work is checked for plagiarism before being published. USH provide access to all academic staff at Safe Assign via Blackboard. Undergraduates and postgraduates students have their own Code of Conduct in terms of academic work and ethics. Supervisors are jointly responsible on matters of quality.

4. Professional attitude - Done

An interdepartmental team (research staff, accounting, management) was set up, that provides guidance before and during research project implementation. A Project Register (RUP) available online was implemented, assuring electronic access to all researchers to an unique database of USH research projects at different stages of implementation, proposals in funding competitions, under implementation or finished. The RUP register offers clear information about the



implementation process, if there are any delays the project managers are invited to give explanation or to work with the interdepartmental group in finding solutions to overcome the difficulties and to recuperate the delays.

5. *Contractual and legal obligations* - Done

To inform researchers about all their contractual and legal obligations, a series of seminars and training workshops were organised around different topics (e.g. 12 dec.2013 – seminar on Data protection and intellectual property protection in research activities). Professors from the Law school together with IT security specialists from Faculty of Mathematics shared their experience and knowledge with less experienced research staff.

On the Central Research Institute¹ (ICCS) website (the main research management unit) a special area dedicated to funding opportunities was created, which also informs researchers on their contractual obligations in case they get funded. The USH Ethics Commission constantly monitors the performance of research projects managers and in case of misconduct they solve the case and annually they present a Report to the University Senate and Board of Trustees.

6. *Accountability* - Done

An external audit is performed annually and includes research projects which have been implemented or are still under implementation. A procedure for preventive financial auditing was drafted and all the parties involved in handling public money must follow this internal procedure.

7. *Good practice in research* - Done

The internal procedure of data protection and confidentiality was updated. Researchers were encouraged to disseminate their good practice, and a series of round table and informal meetings on sharing good practice in implementing research projects were organised at department/faculty /university level. Blackboard facilities provide researchers with access to training materials.

8. *Dissemination and exploitation of research* – Partially delayed

Dissemination of research results is regulated by each funding body in detail: visual identity, communication means to be used , standardized message content, type of dissemination (e.g. workshops, seminars, conferences, scientific TV shows etc). Researchers have the liberty to publish their research results in any domestic and foreign scientific publication, but they need to declare their affiliation to Spiru Haret University if the research project is financed and implemented in Spiru Haret University.

The Quality Assurance Manual includes the Research Methodology which outlines a series of procedural aspects such as the dissemination of research results.

The Procedure to disseminate the results of collective work is ready, but the publication of it in the Manual of Quality Assurance was postponed due to the revision work of the entire Manual , which will be finished at the beginning of 2016.

The USH Manual of communication and dissemination is still in the drafting phase due to the consultation of different research teams coming from various research fields. The consultations are going slow due to the differences identified between the communication needs of different research areas. The WG is looking to standardize methods to be included in the Manual of Communication, harmonizing different aspects arising from the researchers

¹ Central Research Institute (ICCS) is the main research management unit of Spiru Haret University
<http://cercetare.spiruharet.ro>



9. *Public engagement – Done*

The interest of USH to become more involved in making research results available to society was stated clearly when² the functioning of the Pro Business Center was approved by the University Senate. The Pro Business Center aims to develop a closer relationship between the major stakeholders in order to support applied research in the benefit of business representatives and society in general. Some of the connections already made took the form of participation in clusters building, clusters activating in knowledge transfer area, project proposal writing, participation at international fairs and exhibitions etc.

10. *Non discrimination - Done*

11. *Evaluation/apraisail system – Done*

An evaluation system (SAPIC) was designed and it is in the testing phase in our university starting with the 2015-2016 academic year. The system of evaluation/apraisail of researchers' work is based on the national evaluation criteria for professorship and have extra criteria based on our own vision on quality assurance and merit judgement.

II. Recruitment

12. *Recruitment (Code) - Done*

For transparency reasons all vacancies are advertised on Euraxess Jobs starting with January 2014 .

13. *Selection (Code) - Done*

The Methodology of recruitment, selection of candidates for academic/research positions was revised and the new version will be published in the new edition of the Quality Assurance Manual (every 4 years a new edition is printed). The revised methodology includes gender balance criterion, non-discrimination principles, merit based selection criteria etc. apart from the compulsory national criteria included in the National Law of Education (e.g. all candidates should hold a PhD no matter what stage of their career they are at the moment of recruitment)

14. *Transparency (Code) - Done*

All recruitment information is transparent, all the information being published on the USH webpage. All vacancies are announced by the Ministry of Education, and published in the Official Gazette of Romania.

15. *Judging merit(code) - Done*

Every 6 months, academic staff fill in a self –evaluation form for research and academic apraisail purposes. This standardized file is available in the Quality Assurance Manual since 2005, and in all editions after improvements were made. The current SAPIC system makes this file available online for analysis purposes, and the performance criteria were weighted differently to increase motivation.

18. *Recognition of mobility experience - Done*

Mobility is encouraged, undergraduate and graduate students benefiting from the Erasmus Plus mobility scheme, Spiru Haret University has signed over 40 Erasmus bilateral Agreements and the incoming and outgoing flows are monitored.

² Approval given in Oct.2015



The USH Internationalization Strategy(2014-2020) incorporates mobility as a priority for the coming years. International cooperation is based on mobility schemes and mixed cooperation teams are able to develop common research projects. The USH Internationalization Strategy has as main objectives the following:

- increasing visibility
- attracting new students and academic staff under Erasmus+;

21. Post-doctoral appointments- Done

The Career Advice Office is working on the benefit of early stage career staff and senior researchers too. Postdoctoral positions and training programs are available and are advertised on the USH website.

III. Working conditions and social security

22. Recognition of the profession- Done

Mobility is recognised as being important in career advancement, and in the payment scheme. All other actions included in the HRS4R for 2013-2015 were implemented.

23. Research environment – - Done

Partnership in co-authorship, projects, scientific events, international networking was encouraged, so the number of implemented projects increased. Scientific events were organised at national and international level.

25. Stability and permanence of employment – Done

A WG was established and it was efficient in attracting funds – over 16 projects are under implementation having USH as main applicant or partner . In 2013-2015, approximatively 8 milion EUR was attracted in national and international project proposal competitions.

26. Funding and salaries – Partially Done

Academic staff was employed with full-time labour contracts – no time limit. The workload of the academic staff, according to the Romanian Law of Education, art.287, is 8 hours per day/ 40 hours weekly consisting of teaching hours (8-12hours/week), research and administrative hours comprising the rest. Researchers working in projects benefit from a part-time salary (maximum 4 working hours/day) over the main salary that means extra income if he/she is accepted as an expert, under contract, in the research projects.

No incentives for exceptional results in research were approved by the Board of Trustee. The decision was based on the decrease of total revenues coming from student fees in the past 5 years due to the decreasing number of undergraduates students and due to the inability to win major funding competitions (projects over 1.5 milion EUR).

27. Gender balance – Done

Assuring gender balance is a continous action that benefits the current employment mechanism in terms of recruiting, selection and creating job stability over time.

28. Career development – Partially Delayed

From the 3 actions established, two were realised and one was delayed, as follows:

- mentors were identified to sustain specific career development paths (e.g. economics, sociology, psychology, IT and sports)
- career development opportunities were created in the field of applied research in benefit of business.



Only the medium term objective – “creating an interdisciplinary doctoral school” was postponed due to the lack of national methodology in authorizing/accrediting such an academic program. The National Agency of Quality Assurance is still working to elaborate such a methodology, mainly due to a wide contest of the suggested mechanisms (e.g. only class A undergraduate programs can establish a doctoral school in the same field). The classification of study programs (class A to E) was under big debate, many public or private universities do not agree with the classification results. So, a new national exercise of classification will be relaunched in 2016, this time using more clear and measurable classification criteria .

29. Value of mobility – Done

The ERASMUS mobility increased 35% in 2013-2015 and we intend to ensure a constant growth in terms of incoming/outgoing students and staff mobility.

30. Access to career advice – Done

A wide range of short continuous professional development (CPD) training programs were offered to our staff through our Center for Professional Training and our Department for Pedagogical Training.

31. Intellectual Property Rights – Done

A series of seminars were organized starting with Dec.2013 in all our departments. In house seminars were possible due to the fact that the most famous Romanian specialist in property rights is working full time in our Law School.

32. Co-authoring - Done

The number of papers published in co-authorship have increased in the past 2 academic years(see the Annual Raport on Research Results – available to the general public on <http://cercetare.spiruharet.ro>

33. Teaching _Done

Continuous professional development programs were offered to all staff over the years. It is an ongoing action monitored also by the Ministry of Education. No specific actions are needed.

35. Participation in decision-making bodies- Done

Researchers can be nominated for different decision- making bodies at faculty and university levels. Once every four years elections are organised, anyone can announce his/her candidacy if they meet the standard conditions to be elected.

IV. Training

36. Relation with supervisors – Delayed

See the explanation provided at II.28.

37. Supervision and managerial duties – Done

Senior researchers are involved in young researchers’ activity mainly as research project managers, or research team coordinators due to their experience being able to supervise teams and solve managerial duties. On a regular basis, senior researchers gather together for best practice sharing informal meetings. We would like to encourage interdisciplinarity in organising such meetings.

38. Continuing profesional development(CPD) _Done



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A tailored CPD program was launched in Oct.2015 – SAPIC – via Blackboard available to all academic staff.

39. *Access to research training and continuous development* –Done

40. *Supervision* – Done – USH maintains her current system of supervision, clearly stated in USH University Charter and for which there are procedures and regulations inserted in the USH Quality Assurance Manual – current edition.

Conclusion:

Implementing the HR Strategy was an interesting exercise for all parties involved : university management, departments, research centers/teams. Most of all, running different consultations, via online surveys, we realized that the response rate increased constantly and that makes us confident that the interest for HR governance has risen. The academic staff are keen to express their own point of view in handling their career development opportunities and also became an important output for all stakeholders. The HR Strategy for the next 2 years is developed and is under staff consultation until the end of January 2016.

Vice-Rector of Research & International Relations

Prof. Manuela Epure, PhD, MCIM

Appendix

1. USH HRS4R Gantt Diagram – Oct.2013-Dec.2015
2. USH HRS4R Gantt Diagram – 2016-2018