

TEMPLATE 2: HR STRATEGY - ACTION PLAN

Name Organisation under review: Hasselt University
Organisation's contact details: Yves Soen, HR Director, yves.soen@uhasselt.be
Web link to published version of organisation's HR Strategy and Action Plan: https://www.uhasselt.be/UH/human-resources/HR-HR-HR-Strategy/HR-HR-HR-Strategy-HR-Excellence-in-Research.html

SUBMISSION DATE: 26/01/2018

1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

Please provide a limited number of key figures for your organisation. Figures marked * are compulsory.

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	>712.72
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	>155.75
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	*81.40
Of whom are women	*315.47
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	*180.65
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	*130.37
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	*401.70
Total number of students (if relevant)	5910
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	*1034.41
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year=2016)	€
Total annual organisational budget	90,416,858.80
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	31,290,741.95
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	11,605,137.25
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	4,206,678.05
ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)	
<p>Hasselt University is a young university, a dynamic centre of education, research and service provision, with two campuses (Diepenbeek and Hasselt) and six research institutes. Its baseline, 'Knowledge in action', underscores Hasselt's ambition and its commitment to playing a role in shaping an innovative, sustainable future for the region.</p> <p>Ground-breaking research</p>	

Hasselt University not only offers top-level education, but also conducts ground-breaking research and supports companies in innovation. It seeks to function as part of the innovation web. The six research institutes form the backbone of this innovative research.

Professors bring students into contact with 'real' research through project work and by other means. Educational programmes also receive input based on socially relevant developments, which ensures that they remain topical.

2. NARRATIVE (MAX. 2 PAGES)

Please provide an overview of the organisation in terms of the current strengths and weaknesses of the current policy and practice under the four thematic headings of the Charter and Code at your organization.

In general

Hasselt University considers an active HR policy for its researchers to be of the utmost importance. It is in its DNA to treat its employees in a caring manner so that they can develop their talents in the best possible circumstances. As early as 2004, it created a career plan for researchers who wanted to develop a career at Hasselt University outside the professorial framework. In 2011 it became the first Flemish university to obtain the HR Excellence in Research award, which has led to many initiatives that have improved the professional life of researchers at Hasselt. With this HR strategy and the new action plan, Hasselt University sets out new improvements for the next four years (2018-2021); in this connection, an internal self-evaluation is scheduled for 2019 and an external review for 2021.

During the last half year of 2017, several major initiatives were taken which are closely related to the compilation of this HR strategy (but not all of which have yet been finalised):

- 1. A new mission, vision and values were drawn up (see attached document). These are now being discussed within all faculties and departments, with each unit formulating how it will contribute to the promotion of this mission, vision and values. Hasselt University clearly positions itself in them as a civic university. Obviously, this will have consequences for the HR strategy and the integration of this position will be a consistent theme in different actions.*
- 2. A new strategy plan for research and innovation 2017-2021 was approved by the Board of Governors on 6 July 2017. This immediately refers to the importance of good HR support for researchers.*

Excellent research and innovation are only possible with motivated researchers who have the opportunity and space to develop fully. To this end, Hasselt University conducts an HR policy that takes account of the needs of all researchers, from PhD students to professors.

Among other places, this is expressed in the third strategic objective, which states that the University wishes to take an active approach to talent and employability skills within research and innovation.

In addition, there is an active focus on internationalisation, with the aim of increasing the proportion of foreign PhD students from 38% to 45% by 2021.

- 3. A new internationalisation policy plan was drawn up, which is currently in an approval phase.*
- 4. In September 2017, a broad stakeholder consultation was organised with researchers at all levels in order to implement the gap analysis. On this basis, the current action plan has been developed, to which the results of the internal staff survey from 2015 form an interesting supplement.*

This action plan has been assessed for feasibility with the various stakeholders and presented to the various policy bodies: the Executive Board, the Board of Deans and the Board of Governors. It is being submitted to the European Commission for approval and an explanation of the action plan has already been scheduled for the Research Board meeting of February 2018. This is because the intention is to keep the document alive from the outset and to focus much more on communication – a learning point from the previous period.

Ethical and professional aspects

As is clear from the gap analysis, Hasselt University is highly active in all areas that include ethical and professional aspects. Various committees have been set up in recent years to assess delicate matters with great care and to define structural measures (expansion of regulations). For instance, the integrity charter has been developed through a widely supported consultation process, and forms a guideline for all Hasselt University staff. The principles of responsible research and innovation, as defined by the European Commission, form an integral part of the new Policy Plan for Research and Innovation 2017-2021. The valorisation regulations have been in place since 2008 and are currently being revised. Our researchers (juniors and seniors) are trained by the doctoral schools and the Research Coordination Office in the principles of good research. Hasselt University backs an open access vision based on the 'green road' (the management of its own publications output in a repository).

Various measures have been taken on the initiative of the gender feedback group (e.g. support during and after maternity leave to keep more time for research, possibilities for working from home, childcare during holidays etc.). The intention is to continue on the chosen path.

In the coming period, a committee and policy will need to be developed concerning dual use. The focus in the coming period will be not so much on the creation of new bodies as on operationally superior support for the existing committees and on continued communication with and provision of training to researchers on these points. Developments in the international research world are of course being monitored.

Recruitment & Selection*The positioning of Hasselt University as a civic university naturally starts with its recruitment and selection policy. In the coming year, there will be an assessment of the meaning of the new mission, vision and values in terms of the staff that Hasselt University wishes to attract.*

In the coming period, the closest attention will be paid to the recruitment and selection policy (in accordance with the objectives of HRS4R), with the aim of addressing those elements of the OTM-R principles which are lacking or insufficiently explicit.

Hasselt University has a recruitment and selection policy for research positions that is based on the requirements of the Codex for Higher Education. In addition, the Status Regulations for Academic Staff and the Status Regulations for Independent Academic Staff will indicate the requirements for opening and filling a vacancy. The Academic Structure Regulations determine how the selection committees are put together. In past years the 'Vacancy Management' application has been systematically expanded; departments that wish to open a vacancy are guided by means of a format to create the vacancy and have it approved and published correctly. The Staff Office carries out the quality check. Most of the vacancies are also published internationally (including via Euraxess). However, an even more focused effort needs to be made to improve the quality of support.

Candidates receive a lot of information via the vacancy notice and the vacancy website, but a number of points require more attention, such as career opportunities and development opportunities. This will be prioritised.

The application is made in a uniform manner via a database of applicants. This ensures that each application file is submitted in a similar way, that the members of the selection committee have an electronic file with all the necessary documentation, and that if candidates end up applying for another vacancy, they do not have to re-enter most of their data. Candidates can also follow the status of their application there. The user-friendliness of this system still needs to be improved in certain respects.

The selection committee must also be approved, and compliance with the gender standard (max. 2/3 of the committee members may be of the same sex) is checked. The selection report is a template that guides the committee in assessing the candidates in an open, transparent and merit-based way. In this phase the analysis is being performed to integrate this document into the database; this is on the IT Office's list of priorities. The committees look at all aspects of CVs, including non-academic experience. Further training and support in assessing soft skills and personality aspects is still needed.

A more detailed explanation can be found below in the section on the OTM-R principles.

Working conditions and social security

It was noted during the stakeholder consultation for the preparation of the gap analysis that ‘The researchers’ status regulations are well put together’. The Belgian and Flemish governments have ensured that proper arrangements are made concerning both pay conditions and social security. Hasselt University takes its own initiatives as an employer within the financial and legal possibilities. For many years, Hasselt has ensured that researchers receive an open-ended contract after a maximum of two years, a career plan has been provided for researchers without independent academic staff status, a permanent framework, including group insurance, has existed for researchers who wish to continue their career for a longer period of time (more than 6 years) at Hasselt University, etc. Remuneration is paid according to the scales set by the Flemish government. However, there are also genuine temporary statuses, such as PhD scholarship holder, assistant or postdoc assistant. They have specific temporary objectives (e.g. obtaining a doctorate) and a finite character. For researchers, the specific regulations surrounding these different statuses are not always properly understood, which sometimes leads to incorrect expectations. It is important to pay (even) more attention to be paid to clear communication on such matters.

Hasselt University pays a lot of attention to the safety of its researchers, which is of course important in the research laboratories. However, more consideration also needs to be given to researchers’ mental welfare (workload, working conditions in offices, etc.). Here too, many arrangements have been made, but researchers often turn out to be insufficiently aware of the facilities and possibilities already available (part-time work, homeworking, the replacement fund, assistance with ergonomics, etc.).

With regard to gender policy, the regulations are applied rigorously. The influx of women into academic positions is increasing. Progression to the highest positions is still lagging behind (which is partly a matter of time, as it takes years to progress to the highest levels). Annual monitoring via the gender feedback group remains necessary, including possible adjustments via new initiatives.

Relatively speaking, career development is still in its infancy. From the doctoral schools, numerous initiatives are taken which are intended for junior researchers (including career guidance). However, this needs to be extended to researchers who are further on in their careers. A number of test cases have been started (a development centre, the recruitment of a career coach, etc.). The development of a general policy is scheduled for next year.

All kinds of obstacles (including work-life balance) still hamper international mobility. The further development of additional provision and facilities will be analysed; this is included in the internationalisation policy plan.

Training & development

In recent years, various initiatives have been taken regarding training and development. The doctoral schools, the Education Office and the Staff Office have all invested in a wide range of courses. This policy is continued and the provision is being expanded. Further efforts are needed with regard to the supervision of managers in particular, because they play a very important role in the welfare of researchers, and historically less attention has been paid to support for academics in this role. The mentoring programme, in which senior researchers coach junior researchers in their careers, is a success story, but needs to be more structurally embedded.

3. ACTIONS

Please provide a list of all actions to be undertaken in this HR strategy. The list must be accompanied by an extended version in which the actions are described in more detail. The overview must contain at least the following headings: Title action – timing – Responsible Unit – Indicator(s) / Target(s).

Title action	Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
AP1. Communication and integration of mission, vision, values in HR policy	Q3 2018	P&O	HR communication plan
Ethical aspects			
AP2. Creation of Dual Use Ethical Committee	Q2 2018	DOC	Agreement of Board of Governors
AP3. Introduction of integrity charter	Q2 2018	P&O DOC	Approval of Board of Governors Integrated in employment rules Awareness-raising via communication (website)
AP4. Technical IT support for proper functioning of ethics committees	Q2 2019	DOC	Implementation of IT tools
AP5. Co-authorship regulations	Q2 2019	DOC	Good authorship regulations
AP6. Communication and training concerning importance of ethical aspects	Q3 2018	DOC DCM P&O	Communication and training plan
Recruitment & Selection			
AP7. Training & coaching of selection committee members (incl. OTM-R principles)	Q2 2018	P&O	Organisation twice a year
AP8. Inclusion of explicit elements in the vacancy to encourage minority groups to apply	Q1 2018	P&O	Vacancies website
AP9. Striving for maximum turnaround time of 3 months	Q4 2018	P&O	75% turnaround time of max. 3 months (target to be reviewed in 2019)
AP10. Expanding and increasing the accuracy of information on the vacancy website with publication of OTM-R principles.	Q2 2018	P&O	Redesigned website
AP11. Greater focus on the use of professional selection tools (see also action 7 in strategy plan 2011)	Q2 2019	P&O	Provision of selection tools and inclusion in selection regulations
AP12. Greater recognition of the value of international mobility	Q3 2018	P&O	Inclusion of international mobility as a plus point in preselections
AP13. Further focus on administrative simplification of 'Vacancy Management', including automating the selection process	Q2 2019	P&O/IT	Further elaboration of tool + analysis of improvement actions with a view to implementation in 2019
AP14. Explicit quality control system with regular checking of application of OTM-R principles	Q1 2019	P&O	Publication of regulations to guarantee quality
AP15. Expansion of monitoring system	Q4 2018	P&O/ICT	Business intelligence for continuous monitoring of recruitment & selection process
AP16. Systematic conduct of exit interviews	Q3 2019	P&O	Expansion of system of exit interviews + policy reporting

AP17. Elaboration of four career profiles (R1-R4) for researchers within recruitment & selection tools	Q3 2018	P&O	Description of profiles Integration in selection tool
AP18. Mention of feedback and complaints procedure on website	Q1 2018	P&O	Procedures clearly mentioned on the vacancies website
AP19. Integrated intake structure for new employees (see also action 3, strategy plan 2011)	Q4 2018	P&O	detailed text
Working conditions			
AP20. Clarification of staff statuses	Q4 2019	P&O (other Flemish universities)	Clear explanation of status on website for PhD scholarship holders Status of assisting academic staff Status of special academic staff
AP21. Review of researchers' group insurance	Q1 2019	P&O	New group insurance scheme approved by the Board of Governors
AP22. Integrated welfare policy plan	Q4 2018	P&O	The integrated plan is approved by the Board of Governors and published on the website
AP23. Standardised purchase procedure for hazardous products	Q4 2019	Occupational health and safety adviser	On the basis of the 2017 audit; integrated into multi-year action plan of occupational health and safety service
AP24. Focus on ensuring a good and safe working environment (ergonomics, accessibility)	Q4 2018	Facility services	For all new buildings and renovations, a section on ensuring a good and safe working environment is explicitly included in the approach plan
AP25. Place- and time-independent work	Q1 2019	P&O	The regulations on homeworking are approved by the Board of Governors and published
AP26. Mobility issues	Ongoing	Facility services Senior academic policy-makers	Senior academic policy-makers and facility services continue to lobby the competent authorities to address mobility issues properly
AP27. Expansion of career opportunities for researchers including temporary financing problems	Q1 2020	P&O, rectorate, DOC, FIN	Policy text approved by the Board of Governors with clear guidelines in order to minimise uncertainty and provide clear communication with the various possibilities offered internally and externally (see also AP27 – career centre)
AP28. Gender issues: annual communication about developments and initiatives taken via the gender feedback group (see action 12, action plan 2011)	Ongoing	P&O Gender feedback group	Annual reporting and internal communication
AP29. Expansion of the career centre (see action 16, action plan 2011)	Q1 2019	P&O Doctoral schools	Policy plan for career centre approved by the Board of Governors and communicated (see also research policy plan)
AP30. Stimulating international mobility	Ongoing	DOC	See internationalisation policy plan
Training & development			
AP31. Supporting managers in their role as regards researchers (see action 20, action plan 2011)	Q3 2019	P&O DOC DOW	Integrated training programme with different modules for beginner and senior managers
AP32. Further expansion of the mentoring programme	Q3 2019	P&O, DOW, Rectorate	Clearly streamlined programme with delineation of possibilities for juniors and recognition of coaches
AP33. Encouraging academics to attend continuous training	Q1 2020	P&O, Rectorate	Detailed policy plan with participation monitoring

More detailed description of the action points

Title action	Timing (at least by year's quarter/ semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
AP1. Communication and integration of mission, vision, values in HR policy	Q3 2018	P&O	HR communication plan
<p>When the new mission, vision and values are launched, their translation into HR Policy will be undertaken, in the fields of recruitment & selection, training & development and evaluation.</p> <p>Although Hasselt University is far advanced in its implementation of the charter & code, staff members' knowledge of them is not always adequate. Together with the Communication Department and the Research Coordination Office, the Staff Office will draw up a communication plan to ensure that staff members are systematically informed about the provision that has been made. This starts with the information given to applicants and to researchers at the start of and throughout their career, with regular reminders about certain topics in the form of newsletters, information sessions and training courses, and with a clearly developed intranet, in both Dutch and English. Specifically, attention will continue to be paid to the provision of high-quality translations in English.</p>			
Ethical aspects			
AP2. Creation of Dual Use Ethical Committee	Q2 2018	DOC	Agreement of Board of Governors
<p>An ethics committee is set up and regulations are drawn up in connection with the dual-use guidelines.</p>			
AP3. Introduction of integrity charter	Q2 2018	P&O DOC	Approval of Board of Governors Integrated in employment rules Awareness-raising via communication (website)
<p>The approved integrity charter is integrated into the employment rules and awareness-raising actions are started for the existing staff. New staff members receive the text and explanatory notes on commencement of employment.</p>			
AP4. Technical IT support for proper functioning of ethics committees	Q2 2019	DOC ICT	Implementation of IT tools
<p>In order to facilitate the proper functioning of the ethics committees, a number of technical tools are needed. DOC will work this out in more detail in cooperation with the IT Office. This forms part of the RDM processes and is included in Alipa2. The preparatory process analysis is scheduled for 2018, and the rollout is expected to start in Q2 2019.</p>			
AP5. Co-authorship regulations	Q2 2019	DOC	Good authorship regulations
<p>There is a lack of clarity about co-authorship. Among other things, this is closely linked to customary practice in different disciplines. The idea is to ensure a little more clarity, integrated in regulations on good authorship.</p>			
AP6. Communication and training concerning importance of ethical aspects	Q3 2018	DOC DCM P&O	Communication and training plan
<p>Via the doctoral schools, ongoing training courses and awareness-raising actions are set up on the importance of ethical aspects and professionalism in conducting research.</p>			
Recruitment & Selection			
AP7. Training & coaching of selection committee members (incl. OTM-R principles)	Q2 2018	P&O	Organisation twice a year
<p>A training course for members of the selection committees is organised by the Staff Office twice a year. In addition to explanation of the OTM-R principles, the selection procedure at Hasselt University will be explained and there will be exercises in competency-oriented selection.</p>			
AP8. Inclusion of explicit elements in the vacancy to encourage minority groups to apply	Q1 2018	P&O	Vacancies website
<p>The existing text is revised and made more appealing.</p>			

AP9. Striving for maximum turnaround time of 3 months	Q4 2018	P&O	75% turnaround time of max. 3 months (target to be reviewed in 2019)
<i>In a first phase, a monitoring system will be devised with the IT Department for the duration of the selection procedure. In the first instance, the aim is to achieve 75% completion within 3 months. After one year, new targets will be set based on experience.</i>			
AP10. Expanding and increasing the accuracy of information on the vacancy website with publication of OTM-R principles.	Q2 2018	P&O	Redesigned website
<i>Some information needs to be expanded further (selection procedures, training opportunities, career opportunities). A lot of information is available on the intranet site, but applicants do not have access to this. Additions will be made to the vacancy website.</i>			
AP11. Greater focus on the use of professional selection tools (see also action 7 in strategy plan 2011)	Q2 2019	P&O	Provision of selection tools and inclusion in selection regulations
<i>Together with researchers, relevant selection tools are chosen and explained in training courses and a 'Guide for members of the selection committee'. They can also be integrated into the selection regulations.</i>			
AP12. Greater recognition of the value of international mobility	Q3 2018	P&O	Inclusion of international mobility as a plus point in preselections
<i>The importance of international mobility is reflected in the new internationalisation policy plan. Consideration is given to the extent to which this can be integrated during the pre-selection process.</i>			
AP13. Further focus on administrative simplification of 'Vacancy Management', including automating the selection process	Q2 2019	P&O/IT	Further elaboration of tool + analysis of improvement actions with a view to implementation in 2019
<i>From the time a vacancy starts to be drawn up to the time of its publication, applications by candidates and the reviewing of all candidacies, everything is integrated into a single database in which the stage that has been reached in the process is also visible (including for the applicant). The only missing part is the selection report. This is ready to be programmed and needs to be planned at IT. When this phase is over, a thorough analysis of general user-friendliness will be conducted and adaptations prepared.</i>			
AP14. Explicit quality control system with regular checking of application of OTM-R principles	Q1 2019	P&O	Publication of regulations to guarantee quality
<i>A text is prepared and published in which the existing quality control systems are explained and possibly expanded.</i>			
AP15. Expansion of monitoring system	Q4 2018	P&O/ICT	Business intelligence for continuous monitoring of recruitment & selection process
<i>In order to achieve the organisation's objectives and to guarantee quality to candidates, it is important to have sufficient data. To this end, a reporting system will be developed.</i>			
AP16. Systematic conduct of exit interviews	Q3 2019	P&O	Expansion of system of exit interviews + policy reporting
<i>Researchers leaving the organisation are an important source of information about HR policy. A system is therefore being developed to organise exit interviews with these people on a continuous basis.</i>			
AP17. Elaboration of four career profiles (R1-R4) for researchers within recruitment & selection tools	Q3 2018	P&O	Description of profiles Integration in selection tool
<i>In the context of internationalisation, it is important to develop the R1-R4 profiles further to be able to communicate more coherently and use the profiles in selections.</i>			
AP18. Mention of feedback and complaints procedure on website	Q2 2018	P&O	Procedures clearly mentioned on the vacancies website
<i>The procedure for giving feedback will be explained on the vacancy website, as well as the way in which complaints can be submitted.</i>			
AP19. Integrated intake structure for new employees (see also action 3, strategy plan 2011)	Q4 2018	P&O	detailed text
<i>The importance of good intake for new researchers should not be underestimated. The entire procedure (HR department, faculties, other services) will be put in writing and standardised as far as possible.</i>			

Working conditions			
AP20. Clarification of staff statuses	Q4 2019	P&O (other Flemish universities)	Clear explanation of status on website for PhD scholarship holders Status of assisting academic staff Status of special academic staff
<i>After the completion of the independent academic staff status regulations, the status regulations for assisting academic staff will be updated. Status regulations will also be drawn up for special academic staff. For PhD scholarship holders, work is currently being done with the other Flemish universities to clarify this status.</i>			
AP21. Review of researchers' group insurance	Q1 2019	P&O	New group insurance scheme approved by the Board of Governors
<i>The current group insurance that exists for researchers in the permanent framework will be reviewed in the course of 2018 (as legislative changes are due to occur in 2019). In this context, the RESAVER proposal will also be analysed.</i>			
AP22. Integrated welfare policy plan	Q4 2018	P&O	The integrated plan is approved by the Board of Governors and published on the website
<i>Researchers' welfare is extremely important. Hasselt wishes to introduce a general welfare policy plan in order to emphasise this and provide researchers with clarity about the tools that are available for issues such as burn-out, reintegration of staff after long-term sick leave, workload, about contact points and so on.</i>			
AP23. Standardised purchase procedure for hazardous products	Q4 2019	Occupational health and safety adviser	On the basis of the 2017 audit; integrated into multi-year action plan of occupational health and safety service
<i>On the basis of the audit conducted in 2017, implementation will commence. This is part of the occupational health and safety service multi-year action plan, and an inventory will be drawn up in the initial phase (2018).</i>			
AP24. Focus on ensuring a good and safe working environment (ergonomics, accessibility)	Q4 2018	Facility services	For all new buildings and renovations, a section on ensuring a good and safe working environment is explicitly included in the approach plan
<i>Coupled with the previous point, greater attention will be explicitly paid to the working environment (accessibility of buildings, ergonomics). In connection with the various new construction and renovation projects that are planned, this aspect will be integrated into the various plans.</i>			
AP25. Place- and time-independent work	Q1 2019	P&O	The regulations on homeworking are approved by the Board of Governors and published
<i>In the context of the welfare policy, homeworking is a facility that is offered. It is important for agreements to be made about this (for both welfare and safety). This will be detailed in a regulation.</i>			
AP26. Mobility issues	Ongoing	Facility services Senior academic policy-makers	Senior academic policy-makers and facility services continue to lobby the competent authorities to address mobility issues properly
<i>Mobility to the campuses remains a point for concern that is consistently raised. The university is dependent on government bodies here, and continues to lobby for more facilities in terms of car parks.</i>			
AP27. Expansion of career opportunities for researchers including temporary financing problems	Q1 2020	P&O, rectorate, DOC, FIN	Policy text approved by the Board of Governors with clear guidelines in order to minimise uncertainty and ensure clear communication with the various possibilities offered internally and externally (see also AP27 – career centre)
<i>Work will be done on mapping career paths, both within and outside the academic framework. In view of the tendency to retire later, there is also a need for researchers to diversify their careers. Support provision will be developed via the career centre. In addition, in the context of the issue of temporary financing, further policy improvements will be sought to prevent researchers from facing sudden surprises (an early announcement when funding is lacking).</i>			

AP28. Gender issues: annual communication about developments and initiatives taken via the gender feedback group (see action 12, action plan 2011)	Ongoing	P&O Gender feedback group	Annual reporting and internal communication
<i>The gender feedback group continues to meet regularly to monitor the trends on the basis of the annual reporting and to suggest additional measures to policy-makers.</i>			
AP29. Expansion of the career centre (see action 16, action plan 2011)	Q1 2019	P&O Doctoral schools	Policy plan for career centre approved by the Board of Governors and communicated (see also research policy plan)
<i>With the recruitment of a professional career coach, a policy plan can be devised (together with the doctoral schools) to ensure the provision of a consistent range of career guidance for researchers throughout the different stages of their careers.</i>			
AP30. Stimulating international mobility	Ongoing	DOC	See internationalisation policy plan
<i>The internationalisation policy plan includes various initiatives to encourage researchers to use international mobility. The aim is to create facilities that remove the barriers for researchers as far as possible.</i>			
Training & development			
AP31. Supporting managers in their role as regards researchers (see action 20, action plan 2011)	Q3 2019	P&O DOC DOW	Integrated training programme with different modules for beginner and senior managers
<i>Good support from managers to researchers is essential. The focus will be on offering sufficient training for managers to support them in this task, rolling out a form of evaluation meeting for researchers and publicising services more effectively that researchers can use in the event of problems with their manager (see also welfare policy).</i>			
AP32. Further expansion of the mentoring programme	Q3 2019	P&O, DOW, Rectorate	Clearly streamlined programme with delineation of possibilities for juniors and recognition of coaches
<i>The existing mentoring programme, which is highly successful, will be expanded further; a sufficient number of independent academic staff (and possibly emeriti) will be encouraged (inclusion in academic record?) to give young researchers career coaching. The necessary support will also be provided here in the form of 'train the trainer' sessions.</i>			
AP33. Encouraging academics to attend continuous training	Q1 2020	P&O, Rectorate	Detailed policy plan with participation monitoring
<i>Lifelong learning is essential in a research environment. The importance of this must be underlined, by providing a tool to record training programmes and to measure training efforts. This should also be included in the academic record. Supervisors should also encourage their researchers to attend trainings.</i>			

As the establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HRS4R strategy, please also indicate how your organisation will use the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Toolkit and how you intend to implement/are implementing the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above, please provide a short commentary demonstrating this implementation.

If your organisation already has a recruitment strategy which implements the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment, please also list the web link where this strategy can be found.

Actions addressing the implementation of Open, Transparent, Merit-Based Recruitment principles:

Hasselt University emphasises the importance of open and transparent recruitment, with the primary objective of attracting and selecting the right talent for vacant positions, by conducting surveys of the internal and external labour market both nationally and internationally as far as possible. To this end, targeted online recruitment channels are used as much use as possible. In consultation with the Staff Office, the right online recruitment mix is determined in order to reach the appropriate target group for the vacancy in question as effectively as possible. With a view to reaching international candidates, systematic use is made of channels such as Euraxess and academicpositions.eu. Through the feedback received from international applicants and the evaluation of the influx of international candidates, we plan to continue monitoring international candidates and to take appropriate actions through benchmarking with other universities.

To reduce the administrative workload for applicants, an online application tool called 'Vacancy Management' was introduced at Hasselt University in 2012. This online tool makes the application process more accessible for applicants and allows them to follow the progress of their application remotely. This tool also enables the Staff Office and the designated members of the selection committee to follow applicants' dossiers accurately and in good time and to inform them by email of the status of their application. Various optimisations have been implemented over the years to increase the system's ease of use and accessibility in response to internal and external feedback. The aim of this is to minimise the administrative burden for the applicant.

When an applicant has created a profile within the e-recruitment tool Vacancy Management, and has added his/her mandatory documents (e.g. diplomas and certificates), this profile is saved. This means that he/she will not have to provide this information again for a subsequent application, and can apply more easily and quickly.

The recruitment and selection team manages a general mailbox jobs@uhasselt.be where candidates can ask additional questions by email. Candidates are also kept informed in this way of the further course of the selection process and receive invitations to interviews and psychological tests/assessment centres and feedback on their application. Exploratory interviews with international applicants are held as far as possible via Skype, to avoid unnecessary long-distance travel and expenses for the applicants concerned.

An up-to-date overview of administrative/technical and academic vacancies can always be found on the Hasselt University website (<https://www.uhasselt.be/human-resources>). Applicants can always go there for information about the entire selection process, the planned steps/selection

components; as far as possible, an indication of timing is given in the vacancy. Applicants will also find more information about employment conditions, job classifications, training opportunities, career policy and staff benefits.

The application process is explained on the website:

<https://www.uhasselt.be/UH/human-resources/Applying-at-Hasselt-University/Application-process.html>

Also more information on staff categories can be found on the website:

<https://www.uhasselt.be/UH/human-resources/HR-policy/staff-categories.html>

The text of the vacancy also contains the contact details of the direct manager for the vacant position, to give applicants the opportunity to obtain prior information about the position, team, work location, career opportunities, etc. Throughout the selection procedure, applicants can also contact the recruitment and selection team at any time if something is unclear or they have questions.

A further point of action is the continued optimisation and expansion of the information on the vacancy website regarding, for example, the following points:

- when a qualification must have been obtained,
- what the language requirements are,
- the fact that relevant experience can be taken into account and recognised,
- the maximum term for this specific appointment,
- the objectives of an appointment (e.g. PhD scholarship holders, what the position is like).

By formalising and structuring the recruitment and selection process, the intention is to bring the quality standards within all faculties and services to the same level, using the OTM-R principles as a yardstick and target. One important point here is that academic knowledge and research experience should not be the only decisive factors in the recruitment of academic staff. In addition to knowledge and experience, behavioural skills (competencies), ambitions, motivators, etc. should also be taken into account when evaluating candidates. The OTM-R principles provide the necessary guidance throughout the recruitment and selection process, as well as ensuring that unnecessary barriers are not created, for example, by setting unrealistically high demands.

The recruitment & selection team within the Hasselt University Staff Office provides support and ensures continuous quality control in the drafting of clear vacancy texts with the intention of reaching the right talent for the vacancy and encouraging it to apply. This is necessary in view of the importance attached to employer branding and attracting and retaining talent, and the even greater role such things will play in the future given the ongoing war for talent. For this reason, the necessary background information about the organisation, faculty and/or office is also always shown in the vacancy text.

Hasselt uses the Flemish Government's competency guide (<https://overheid.vlaanderen.be/competentieboek-vlaamse-overheid>) to take the critical competencies for the job into account at the time of writing the vacancy text, so that these can then be assessed during the various stages of the selection process. The recruitment and selection team offers the necessary support to the various faculties and offices in this context. The objective is, as well as providing a clear description of the position's range of tasks and responsibilities and of the required qualification and experience, to also indicate to the applicant what competencies Hasselt University is looking for in connection with a specific position. Competency-oriented vacancy texts ensure that both employer and employee can assess more accurately whether a particular vacancy is consistent with their expectations, ambitions and talents.

Hasselt University's Staff Office has already created a number of opportunities in the past in the form of workshops with the aim of training academic staff who are involved in the recruitment and selection process, among other things in determining competencies and criterion-oriented interviewing. In the future, the Staff Office wishes to continue focusing on the regular and systematic provision of training opportunities, taking particular account of the OTM-R principles; it plans to do this every two years.

The systematic provision of information about the OTM-R principles is an important action point for the future. In the first phase, the selection procedures (including composition of selection committees, attention for gender within the committee) will be published for each staff status. In the second phase, all existing procedures (status regulations for independent academic staff and assistant academic staff, RAS) will be screened on the basis of the OTM-R criteria, adapted and published on the website.

The current selection form template allows for the application of most OTM-R principles. A point of action is the compilation of an OTM-R selection guide with tips and points for attention that the members of selection committees can easily consult.

Hasselt University has set out the course of the selection procedure for the recruitment of academic staff in a series of regulations concerning academic staff. These are available to all staff via the University's intranet. The guidelines on the composition of the selection committee are also provided there.

Hasselt intends to make more use of the European Framework for Research Careers in the future by, among other things, integrating the four career profiles within our vacancy management tool 'Vacancy Management'. At the moment, the allocation of competencies is mainly done on an individual, ad hoc basis within a faculty or office. In future, Hasselt has set the objective of drawing up standardised competency profiles for each career profile, and including these via a vacancy template in 'Vacancy Management' so that the OTM-R principles can be followed when inputting vacancies. This should make it clear from the start what competencies, knowledge and experience are required and desired.

The current quality control system consists firstly of the mandatory use of defined templates and secondly of the critical reviewing of the selection reports by the Staff Office. This is mentioned in Hasselt University's OTM-R policy to ensure that this guarantee is clear to applicants.

At present, the recruitment and selection team at Hasselt's Staff Office acts as a first and direct point of contact for applicants if they have complaints and/or wish to obtain feedback about the state of progress and/or not whether or not their application has been successful. As a point of action, the feedback and complaints procedure should be clearly mentioned on the website.

It is already possible to retrieve a lot of data from the Vacancy Management tool with a view to monitoring, reporting and evaluation. We propose it as an action point that this should be extended further in future in collaboration with the Information Office at Hasselt University, so that the main indicators concerning recruitment and selection can be systematically mapped with a view to detecting trends and developments and further optimising our approach accordingly.

- Trend in proportion of external candidates
- Trend in proportion of foreign candidates
- Trend in number from under-represented groups (women)
- Number of unfilled vacancies (or long-lasting searches)
- Number of vacancies via Euraxess + number of candidates from abroad

On this basis, Hasselt University wishes to set objectives for the elements that are important for good international recruitment; every year, a report will be submitted to the Board of Deans with an analysis of the trends in the defined indicators.

Expansion and continued professionalisation of the Staff Office.

Recently (September 2017) the recruitment and selection team at Hasselt was expanded with a staff member responsible for recruitment, selection and internal mobility. Recruiting a staff member with specific expertise in these areas is consistent with Hasselt's goal of further optimising the recruitment, selection and career guidance processes in line with the OTM-R principles.

4. IMPLEMENTATION (MAX. 1 PAGE)

Please provide an overview of the expected implementation process. You can use the following questions as a guideline in your description:

- Do you have an implementation committee and/or steering group regularly overseeing progress?
- How do you involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?
- How will your organisation ensure that the proposed actions will also be implemented?
- Is there evidence of any alignment of the HRS4R with organisational policies? For example, is the HRS4R recognized in organisation's research strategy, overarching HR policy?
- How will you monitor progress?
- How do you expect to prepare the internal and external review?

As part of the HRS4R process, we work with an Operational Committee that advises and reports directly to senior academic policy-makers: the Rector, the Vice Rector for Research and the Board of Deans. The directors and staff members of the Staff and Organisation Office and the Research Coordination Office sit on this committee. The committee organises the annual stakeholder consultation, and prepares the gap analysis and a draft action plan based on this consultation.

The group of stakeholders which is working on the gap analysis and has an advisory role in the determination of actions consists of researchers from all stages of the research career, especially independent academic staff and other post-doc researchers, as well as pre-doc researchers including both assisting academic staff and scholarship holders. Recruitment takes place mainly through the university's and faculties' policy bodies, in particular the Board of Governors, the Research Board, the Faculty Boards and Departmental Boards, and the Doctoral Schools. Of course, the Rector, the Vice Rectors for Education and Research, the deans and the departmental chairpersons also participate in this consultation.

The proposed actions as formulated in the action plan are implemented in cooperation with the Research Board. The Research Board is the advisory, decision-preparing body that oversees the optimal implementation of the university's research role. The Research Board advises the Board of Deans and the University Board on research-related matters. This collaboration ensures the continuous link between the HRS4R action plan and the research policy.

The HR policy for researchers is included in the Research Policy Plan.

The monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of actions included in the action plan are among the duties of the Operational Committee which reports and gives advice to senior academic policy-makers.

The intention is that progress on the various action points should be monitored and documented by these bodies. There will be regular progress updates on the website and all relevant documents supporting the actions taken will be collected in a file.