

HR Excellence in Research

Interim Assessment: EC Consensus Report

Implementation Phase Interim Assessment - EC Consensus Report

Case number

2021BG606909

Name Organisation under assessment

Medical University of Varna

Organisation's contact details

55 Marin Drinov, Varna, 9002, Bulgaria

Submission date of the Interim Assessment Internal Review

04/06/2024

Submission date to the European Commission

07/08/2024

Quality assessment

The quality assessment evaluates the level of ambition and the quality of progress intended by the organisation.

If any statements have prompted a "no" or "partly" in the evaluation, please provide recommendations:

	YES / NO / PARTLY	Recommendations
Has the organisational information been sufficiently updated to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is implemented?	Partly	The entity has almost not followed the recommendations made by the assessors in the initial assessment. In addition, limited evidence provided on the implementation of the action plan.
Does the narrative provided list goals and objectives which clearly indicate the organisation's priorities in HR-management for researchers?	Partly	Limited evidence provided to the assessors on the implementation of the action plan.
Has the organisation published an updated HR Strategy and Action Plan been updated with the actions' current status, additions and/or modifications?	Partly	There is not an evident improvement of HRS4R MUV webpage with information about the process . There is no section in the main banner of the web page indicating access to HRS4R information. There is only the HR Excellence award logo at the bottom. By clicking on the logo it is almost the only way to access to a page with the information aboutt HRS4R. There, it shows the initial plan of 2022 and the 2021 survey. The internal review of 2024 is missing and the OTM-R Policy too.
Is the implementation of the HR strategy and Action Plan sufficiently embedded within the organisation's management structure (e.g. steering committee, operational responsibilities) so as to guarantee a solid implementation?	Partly	The strategic plan of the organization is not detected to know if the action plan of the HRS4R is embedded in the strategic plan of the MUV.
Has the organisation developed an OTM-R policy?	No	There is no specific OTMR-Policy regulation of the institution.Reference is made to regulations that are either in Bulgarian or sometimes access to web pages that cause errors. They don't provide a link to the OTMR policy.

Strengths and weaknesses

On the basis of the information submitted and taking into account the organisation's national research context, how would you as an assessor judge the HR Strategy's **strengths and weaknesses?** (maximum 1000 words)

Weaknesses:

The Institution did not follow the recommendations made by the assessors in the initial assessment. In addition, limited evidence provided to the assessors on the implementation of the action plan.

1. MUV OTM-R policy is missing.
2. The R1 - R4 researchers' participation in the Working Groups must be encouraged and permanent, also during the HRS implementation phase. We have no evidence of R1 or R2 participation in the Steering Committee or evidence of the results of survey in 2024. Only the 2021 survey is available on the web.
3. There is not an evident improvement of HRS4R MUV webpage with information about the process . There is no section in the main banner of the web page indicating access to HRS4R information. There is only the HR Excellence award logo at the bottom. By clicking on the logo it is almost the only way to access to a page with the information aboutt HRS4R. There, it shows the initial plan of 2022 and the 2021 survey. The internal review of 2024 is missing and the OTM-R Policy too.
4. The strategic plan of the organization is not detected to know if the action plan of the HRS4R is embedded in the strategic plan of the MUV.
5. The policy to attract researchers from abroad is still missing (according to the updated information 22 are only foreign researchers out of 1037). Promoting the mobility of international researchers is key to its development of MUV.
6. Reference is made to regulations that are either in Bulgarian or sometimes access to web pages that cause errors.

Strengths:

MUV has set an ambitious action plan and progress has been made in areas such as entrepreneurship, technology transfer, ethics and mentoring with very interesting actions in their implementation.

The appointment of an academic ombudsman is a very positive action.

If relevant, please provide suggestions for modifications or revisions to the (updated) HR strategy: (maximum 2000 words)

It is advisable to modify the template of the action plan for a more operational follow-up by indicating the actions that have been completed, those in progress and those that are pending, clearly reflecting the time horizon and quantitative indicators.

During the transition period special conditions apply:

Institutions having started the HRS4R implementation prior to the publication of the OTM-R toolkit and recommendations by the European Commission (2015) may not have prioritised actions implementing the OTM-R principles yet. In this case, they should not be penalised but strong recommendations should be made to address these principles appropriately.

At this point of the INTERIM assessment, the institution does not jeopardise maintaining the HR award. Nevertheless, the institution is advised to take into account the comments and recommendations of the assessors to meet all assessment criteria at the next assessment (in 36 months).

Recommendations

Which of the below situations describes the organisation's progress most accurately? Tick the right situation and add comments/general recommendations accordingly.

HRS4R embedded

☐

HRS4R embedded, corrective actions needed

☐

HRS4R embedded, strong corrective actions needed

☒

Additional comments *

These are priority issues:

1. Develop an OTM-R policy to be uploaded to the web.
2. Create in the institution's main banner of the web page a section about HRS4R with all the updated documentation in English.
3. Include R1-R2 researchers in the steering committee so that they can participate in the implementation of the plan.
4. Modify the template of the action plan for a more operational follow-up by indicating the actions that have been completed, those in progress and those that are pending, clearly reflecting the time horizon and quantitative indicators.
5. Provide evidences of the actions carried out
6. Include the entity's strategic plan to ensure it is embedded with the HRS4R.

Explanation

- **HRS4R embedded:** The organisation is progressing with appropriate and quality actions as described in its Action Plan. **There is evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded.**
- **HRS4R embedded, corrective actions needed:** The organisation is, for the most part, progressing with appropriate and quality actions as described in its Action Plan, but could benefit from alterations as advised through the Assessment process. **There is some evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded.**

- **HRS4R embedded, strong corrective actions needed:** The organisation is not deemed to be implementing appropriate and quality actions and this raises some concern for the future efforts to implement actions closely aligned to the Charter and Code. **There is a lack of evidence that the HRS4R is further embedded.**