



KOÇ UNIVERSITY ACTION PLAN FOR THE HRS4R PROCESS

Case number: 2018TR343571

1. Organisational Information

STAFF & STUDENTS

FTE

Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research *	1283
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Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	253
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Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	204
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Of whom are women *	632
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Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. *	432
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Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level *	83
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Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level *	693
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Total number of students (if relevant) *	9042
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Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) *	2137
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RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)

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Total annual organisational budget	71723724
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Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	0
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Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	6495923
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Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	1588043
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ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)

Koç University (KU) is an endowed, non-profit institution of higher education, located in Istanbul, Turkey. Founded in 1993 by the Vehbi Koç Foundation, its mission is to produce the most capable graduates by providing a world class education, to advance the frontiers of knowledge and to contribute to the benefit of Turkey and humanity at large. KU is spread in a main campus, a separate university hospital campus and two smaller locations in Istanbul. Established by national law, KU is a public institution, under the "foundation university" category according to Turkish legislation.

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

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

Note:Click on the name of each of the four thematic headings of the Charter and Code to open the editor and provide your answer.

Ethical and professional aspects*



Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

An established research university, currently leading as the most successful (in terms of total retained funding) higher education institution in Turkey under the Horizon 2020 programme (running 43 participations, with 19M EUR EC contribution), KU is observed to be very strong in being aligned with the 11 principles under the "Ethical and professional aspects" section. KU has made research freedom and independent thinking as part of its mission in teaching and research. KU's Faculty Handbook, along with its administrative structure of ethics boards, ensures that the researcher community adheres to the highest ethical standards, which also ensures professional responsibility in conducting research. As outlined in the Faculty Handbook and aided by the Research, Project Development and Technology Transfer Directorate (RPDTTD), KU researchers are fully aware of the institution's strategic goals. The Faculty Handbook further outlines contractual rights and responsibilities. In full cooperation with RPDTTD during the lifetime of externally funded projects, KU research community is very strong in accountability standards when using national and international grants. KU administrative units make sure that the community adheres to national legislation on "Protection of Personal Data" and a dedicated unit under HR is operational for occupational safety and security across the campus. The Faculty Handbook further outlines principles on dissemination & exploitation (supported by RPDTTD's technology transfer service functions), non-discrimination and performance evaluation in full alignment with the Charter and Code.

KU, especially through the social engagement role played by its research centers like the Center for Gender Studies (eg, the center's "UNESCO Summer Academy" event in September 2019) and Migration Studies Center, is quite strong in public outreach through research. Another good practice here is the public event series (organized in Turkish for outreach), aimed to make research more accessible to general audiences, titled "Meetings Open to Anyone", organized by the College of Social Sciences and Humanities. Recently, KU's successful initiative of "24 Hours in Koç University", a summer research program for high school students where they had opportunities to meet with academics, was another example of good practice for public engagement. Furthermore, many R3-R4 researchers at KU from across different disciplines are engaged in the activist CSO "Science Academy", an independent organization devoted to academic freedom, science literacy and promotion of excellent research in Turkey.

Recruitment and selection*



Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

For the recruitment of R1 researchers, KU's formal graduate school admission policies are in clear adherence with the Code & Conduct principles. For references, here are the main programs of the 4 graduate schools at KU: PhD in Business at the Graduate School of Business, PhD programs at the Graduate School of Sciences and Engineering, PhD programs at the Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities, and programs at the Graduate School of Health Sciences. Graduate school online resources provide detailed information about the rights and responsibilities of R1 researchers, once they are admitted into a program. Nevertheless, a review is required to assess how Principles 14-20 (which might usually be more relevant for R2-R4 appointments) should be integrated into the current recruitment policies of all 4 graduate schools.

For the recruitment of R3-R4 researchers, there is a formally defined "workflow" about the appointment and operation of Selection Committees, described in the Faculty Handbook. This workflow implements Principles 14-20 almost fully, but there are minor gaps to be worked on: Although each Selection Committee member (for a list of members and different committees since 2015, [click here](#)) is informed via e-mail what is expected of them, which covers issues related to transparency, merit evaluation, seniority and those related to the analysis of CVs, there is no formal training program for members that ensures full compliance with Principles 14-20. Therefore, the operation of Selection Committees need to be fully aligned with the candidate evaluation topics outlined under Principles 14-20.

All R1-R4 candidates are formally informed about the outcomes of each phase in their job applications. However, in the case of R3-R4 recruitment, the language of rejection decisions is very generalized, though there is a common template used across colleges.

Nevertheless, there is no clearly defined (and publicly announced) policy about feedbacks, and some letters sent to rejected candidates may involve no clear justifications at all. In terms of full compliance with the transparency principle, this gap needs to be filled.

Finally, for R2 researchers who are recruited as postdoctoral researchers, KU's strength is to have a formal, public procedure announced about their recruitment and benefits: The "Procedure for Post-Doctoral Researcher Support Program" was updated in late 2019, but in the light of first EC feedback to this HRS4R application, an extensive restructuring of the procedure is envisioned for full conformity with the Charter and Code.

The main KU weakness for R2 recruitment in the implementation of Principle 21 is that different departments implemented the existing procedure differently, while some appointments were made without the knowledge or proper referral to it. The revisions already mentioned will also ensure compliance with Principle 21.

Working conditions*



Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

In terms of its compliance with Principles 22-35, KU is on the strong side, with this pillar almost fully implemented. As a pioneering research university in operation for the last 35 years, KU ranks #2 in Turkey in all Times Higher Education Rankings 2021. With its mission statement, supported by the adopted principles in its Faculty Handbook, evidenced by its Annual Reports, and monitored through Self-Assessment reports produced by the Quality Commission, and delineated through the benefit package procedures published by the Human Resources Directorate, KU has for long fully implemented the following principles:

- KU has created and is sustaining a professional research environment (physically, in terms of campus facilities, and mentally) for those who are following research careers between R1 and R4.
- Elimination of discrimination based on gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition is a long-lasting KU policy.
- KU main campus and the KU Hospital campus provide equal access working condition, with facilities that support employees spouses and children. Formal rules about leaves, and benefits are set. Flexible working hours are offered that conform to distant locations employees might live at.
- Contract renewal procedures and performance expectations are explained to employees clearly.
- KU thrives to maintain competitive salary levels for researchers at all stages, and provides parental benefits, healthcare packages, housing support. The university has achieved gender balance at all academic levels (52% of the R1-R4 community is women).
- KU has a solid support structure in intellectual property rights, teaching, and complaint mechanisms. Technology transfer and IPR policies are published here.
- The representation of faculty members in the decision-making organs of colleges, institutes, and university (all executive councils, faculty councils, and the senate) and their elections according to their rankings and positions are secured and pre-defined under Turkish law.

Here are the issues where KU is observed to need improvement:

- For Principle 25, Turkey as an EU member candidate country has not yet officially harmonized its labor law with the EU Directive on Fixed-Term Work. This is the main gap, though it is observed that the current Labor Law of 2003 that also binds KU already covers the most critical parts of the Directive. All work contracts for R1-R4 are fixed-term contracts.
- For Principles 28 and 30, there is a well-defined support structure for career development for most researchers: All researchers are provided with services in writing, teaching. R1 researchers are offered support in academic and life skills and the KU Career Development Center serves to support the R1 community. KU's R3-R4 researchers have access to exclusive mobility programs, while all researchers are invited to participate in Erasmus actions by the Office of International Programs.

Nevertheless, as previously described under Principle 21, car This also leads to a gap in Principle 30, in the sense that there is no clear-cut policy about providing career advice to postdoctoral researchers outside their professional relationship with their PI/peer development support for postdoctoral researchers (R2) are not clearly laid out at KU.

Training and development* 

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

Principles regarding training and development are almost fully implemented at KU.

Strengths:

All researchers at levels R1 and R2 who are still in training are supervised, and their supervisors are responsible for their mentorship. Graduate schools offer guidelines to PhD level researchers about supervision (here is an example). KU's "Procedure for Post-Doctoral Researcher Support Program" lays out R2 researchers' relationship with faculty supervisors. The Faculty Handbook delineates the professional duties of R3-R4 researchers.

As was also mentioned under "Working Conditions", KU adheres to the principles about providing access to research training and professional development. All researchers are provided with services in writing, teaching. R1 researchers are offered support in academic and life skills. Full faculty has access to mobility programs, while all researchers are invited to participate in Erasmus actions by the Office of International Programs.

Weaknesses:

The issue was already raised, and applies to Principles 38 and 39: While services about professional development and research training exist that are open to R2 researchers, current guideline about their appointments and current employment practices do not address the planning and implementation of such services to this group.

3. Actions

The Action Plan and HRS4R strategy must be published on an easily accessible location of the organisation's website.

Please provide the web link to the organization's Action Plan/HR Strategy dedicated webpage(s):

<https://hrs4r.ku.edu.tr/>

Please fill in the list of all individual actions to be undertaken in your organisation's HRS4R to address the weaknesses or strengths identified in the Gap Analysis. The listed actions should be concise, but detailed enough for the assessors to evaluate the level of ambition, engagement and the expected implementation process. The institution should strive to provide a detailed plan, not just an enumeration of actions.

Note: Choose one or more of the principles automatically retrieved from the GAP Analysis with their implementation ratings.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 1

DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLICIZATION OF THE HRS4R PORTAL During the revision work on the current application (following the March 2020 EC feedback), a dedicated website for the HRS4R process was created: hrs4r.ku.edu.tr While this website demonstrates KU's commitment to the HRS4R process, there is more work to do during the implementation phase. The Working Group will maintain and update the portal as the Action Plan is implemented with new improvements to close identified gaps. Regarding the implementation of the OTM-R toolkit, a holistic portrayal of KU's Open Recruitment Policy Regime will be possible. Currently three separate groups are involved in R1-R4 recruitment: (1) For R3-R4 researchers, each College is responsible for recruitment, and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs provide support services for these operations. (2) For R1 researchers, recruitment is coordinated by each of the 4 graduate schools, and faculty is responsible for the evaluation of applications. (3) R2 recruitment is handled on a case-by- case manner, depending on the external funding program and the needs of the R3-R4 researchers that is going to supervise the postdoctoral researcher. Future updates on the HRS4R portal will combine OTM-R toolkit usage information for this three-tiered administrative structure. The portal will later include a news module about HRS4R-related developments.

GAP Principle(s)

- (++) 1. Research freedom
- (++) 2. Ethical principles
- (++) 3. Professional responsibility
- (++) 4. Professional attitude
- (++) 5. Contractual and legal obligations
- (++) 6. Accountability
- (++) 7. Good practice in research
- (++) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results
- (++) 9. Public engagement
- (++) 10. Non discrimination
- (++) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems
- (++) 12. Recruitment
- (++) 13. Recruitment (Code)

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

Completed by the second quarter of the 1st year

Proposed ACTIONS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
(+/-) 14. Selection (Code)	
(+/-) 15. Transparency (Code)	
(+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)	
(+/-) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)	
(+/-) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)	
(+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)	
(+/-) 20. Seniority (Code)	
(+/-) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)	
(++) 22. Recognition of the profession	
(++) 23. Research environment	
(++) 24. Working conditions	
(+/-) 25. Stability and permanence of employment	
(++) 26. Funding and salaries	
(++) 27. Gender balance	
(+/-) 28. Career development	
(++) 29. Value of mobility	

Proposed ACTIONS

GAP Principle(s)		Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
	(+/-) 30. Access to career advice	
	(++) 31. Intellectual Property Rights	
	(++) 32. Co-authorship	
	(++) 33. Teaching	
	(++) 34. Complains/ appeals	
	(++) 35. Participation in decision-making bodies	
	(++) 36. Relation with supervisors	
	(++) 37. Supervision and managerial duties	
	(+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development	
	(+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	
	(++) 40. Supervision	
Responsible		
Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)	

Proposed ACTIONS

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Working Group; Office of the VPRD; Office of the VPAA; Graduate Schools	Completed and maintained web platform

Action 2

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
(++) 13. Recruitment (Code)	
(+/-) 14. Selection (Code)	
(+/-) 15. Transparency (Code)	
(+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)	Module to be published before the end of the 3rd quarter of the 1st year
(+/-) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)	Implementation begins by 4th quarter of 1st year
(+/-) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)	
(+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)	
(+/-) 20. Seniority (Code)	

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 2

IMPROVEMENT OF RECRUITMENT POLICY FOR R3-R4 RESEARCHERS In addition to the current practice of informing the Selection Committee members about recruitment policies and procedures via email, KU will begin to require the completion of an online e-learning module by each appointed member. Initially, the Working Group will consult the relevant stakeholders about the content of the material: Deans and some of the most recent members. The draft content (in the form of a script) will then be developed using the OTM-R toolkit and will close the gaps defined for Principles 14-20, concerning the various dimensions of candidate evaluation. the Faculty Handbook's section on Selection Committees will be updated with a summary of the script. Design services for the actual coding and preparation of the module will be procured. The final product will be made accessible through the web platform defined in Action 1, and information about its implementation will be disseminated throughout the university. Following its online publication, the tool will immediately be implemented for all appointed Selection Committee members. Completing the training will be compulsory and be monitored by Deans.

Responsible Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Working Group; Office of the VPAA

Online OTM-R Training Module (R3-R4) Revised "Faculty Handbook"

Action 3

GAP Principle(s)

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 3

IMPROVEMENT OF RECRUITMENT POLICY FOR R1 RESEARCHERS The 4 graduate schools at KU responsible for R1 recruitment have to operate under national legislation (overseen by the Higher Education Council) regulating the selection and appointment of researchers into PhD programs. The recruitment policy at this level already conforms to many aspects of the Charter and Code. Nevertheless, there is a gap to close and the online e-learning module proposed in Action 2 will also be utilized to train the administrative support staff of the schools and more importantly, the evaluators that are going to select the candidates to be recruited. The content design during Action 2 (which will be parallel to this action) will be made flexible and modular to accommodate issues that are specific to R1 recruitment (such as, conformity to relevant national legislation). The common HRS4R platform (Action 1) will reflect the changes and graduate schools will be revising their own online content accordingly. Completing the training will be compulsory and be monitored by Graduate School Directors.

GAP Principle(s)

- (++) 13. Recruitment (Code)
- (+/-) 14. Selection (Code)
- (+/-) 15. Transparency (Code)
- (+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)
- (+/-) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)
- (+/-) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)
- (+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)
- (+/-) 20. Seniority (Code)

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

Module to be edited and published before the end of the 3rd quarter of the 1st year Implementation begins by 4th quarter of 1st year

Responsible

Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Working Group; Graduate Schools	Online OTM-R Training Module (R1)
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Action 4

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 4

IMPROVEMENT OF RECRUITMENT POLICY FOR R2 RESEARCHERS The recruitment of R2 researchers at KU so far has been on a case-by-case basis: Many candidates apply through external funding programs (like the MSCA Individual Fellowships or being fellows under national R & D grants), and some are internally funded (through the budget of the Office of the VPRD) at the request of their supervisors. There is a published "Procedure for Postdoctorate Research Support Program" that covers working conditions and benefits topics, but the policy is not fully compliant with the Charter and Code. The online e-learning module proposed in Action 2 will again be utilized to train the supervisors of postdoctoral candidates. This action will also be parallel to Actions 2 and 3, tailored to accommodate Principles 14-21 according to R2 appointment requirements. Completing the training will be compulsory for supervisors and be monitored by the Vice President for R&D. Although some cases of R2 recruitment do not involve selecting candidates from a pool of applicants (e.g., an individual R2 researcher can contact the supervisor and submit a MSCA-IF application), the Action will make sure KU is prepared to run its own internally or externally funded postdoctoral fellowship programs that are OTM-R compliant.

GAP Principle(s)

- (++) 13. Recruitment (Code)
- (+/-) 14. Selection (Code)
- (+/-) 15. Transparency (Code)
- (+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)
- (+/-) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)
- (+/-) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)
- (+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)
- (+/-) 20. Seniority (Code)
- (+/-) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

Module to be edited and published before the end of the 3rd quarter of the 1st year Implementation begins by 4th quarter of 1st year

Responsible

Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Working Group; Office of the VPRD	Online OTM-R Training Module (R2) Revised "Procedure for Postdoctorate Research Support Program"
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Proposed ACTIONS

Action 5

IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW CAREER SUPPORT REGIME FOR R2 RESEARCHERS The service infrastructure that would serve the closure of gaps in Principles 28, 30, 38 and 39 is already set up, but not tailored towards and planned for R2 researchers: In Action 5, KU's Career Development Center will be retooled for access by R2 researchers. Job interview trainings, one-on-one meetings with career consultants, "career readiness" trainings, and "advance your profession" trainings will be available for R2 researchers. (For a current full calendar of such trainings, see <https://career.ku.edu.tr/en/employers/event-calendar/>). Secondly, KU's current subscription to the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Programme, <https://about.citiprogram.org/en/homepage/>) will be evaluated for access for the R2 community (thus providing them with the "Trusted Standard in Research, Ethics, and Compliance Training"). Thirdly, KU Research, Project Development and Technology Transfer Directorate will offer a series of training webinars on Horizon Europe, grant writing, technology transfer, university-industry collaborations, and incubations programs at KU (in collaboration with the KWORKS Incubation Center, <https://kworks.ku.edu.tr/en/>). A deliverable of this action will be a website dedicated to R2 researchers support services and policies.

GAP Principle(s)

- (+/-) 28. Career development
- (+/-) 30. Access to career advice
- (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development
- (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

Service package to be made available before the end of the 3rd quarter of the 1st year

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Working Group; Office of the VPRD	R2-tailored career development and researcher training service package Revised "Procedure for Postdoctorate Research Support Program"

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 6

IMPROVEMENT OF R2-R4 JOB ANNOUNCEMENT TEMPLATES There are national regulations overseen by Turkey's Higher Education Council that dictate what sort of minimum information has to be communicated in R3-R4 job announcements. Across all departments at KU, common templates are used (through the coordination of the VPAA) for the job announcements to be published (and there are regulations about how they are going to be published). Additionally, PIs with external funding sometimes make use of these templates (or ask for the help of RPDTTD officers) for their individual R2 announcements to find postdoctoral fellows. Nevertheless, part of the implementation of HRS4R requires the improvement of the template using the OTM-R toolkit and make it modular so that it can serve various recruitment needs. The default template will be prepared in coordination by the two Vice President offices and published in the HRS4R portal (Action 1).

GAP Principle(s)

(++) 13. Recruitment (Code)

(+/-) 15. Transparency (Code)

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

New modular template to be made available before the end of the 2nd quarter of the 1st year

Responsible Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Working Group; Office of the VPAA; Office of the VPRD

Updated modular job announcement template

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 7

UNIVERSAL USAGE OF EURAXESS The usage of EURAXESS in the dissemination of R3-R4 job announcements or of the announcement of PhD program applications is rare at KU. More commonly, PIs with European funding post R2 announcements in the portal, influenced by RPDTTD (the unit running Horizon 2020 and other European program support) advice and even that is not universal. The Working Group, with the support of all Deans, Graduate School Directors, two Vice Presidents and the President, will implement the compulsory usage of the EURAXESS portal for each published position announcement for R1-R4 researchers. Administrative staff in the colleges and graduate schools are already responsible for publishing the posts in KU websites and other national media (as per Higher Education Council regulations). During the HRS4R implementation process, all such posts will be streamed through the common web portal (Action 1), and the Working Group will be able to send reminders to the staff (and their superiors, Deans and Graduate School Directors) for posting the announcement at EURAXESS. The Working Group will hold info sessions about the usage of EURAXESS once every semester for 2 years.

GAP Principle(s)

- (++) 12. Recruitment
- (++) 13. Recruitment (Code)

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Working Group; Office of the VPRD; Office of the VPAA; Graduate Schools

Target: Deans and Graduate School Directors will enforce the policy through emails to administrative staff Indicator: 4 information sessions in 2 years

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

Implementation by the end of the 2nd quarter of the 1st year Info sessions every semester for 1st and 2nd years

Action 8

GAP Principle(s)

- (+/-) 25. Stability and permanence of employment

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

Report submitted by the end of the 2nd quarter of the 1st year

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 8

COMPLIANCE WITH EU DIRECTIVE ON FIXED-TERM WORK Turkey as an EU member candidate country has not yet officially harmonized its labor law with the EU Directive on Fixed-Term Work. This is the main gap that KU has no power to close, but the Working Group has observed (discussed under Gap Analysis) that the current Labor Law of 2003 already covers the most critical parts of the Directive. All work contracts for R1-R4 are fixed-term contracts, so in general, there is no possibility of discrimination in comparison to open-ended research contracts. With 43 participations in EC's Horizon 2020 Programme, KU is running the largest budget (about 19M EUR) among Turkish universities and has already officially endorsed all EU labor regulations by signing grant agreements. Although practically KU acts as a higher education institution located in an EU-member country in this sense, it still is bound by national labor laws, which are not yet fully in harmony with EU legislation. During Action 8, the Working Group will collaborate with the KU Human Resources Directorate to ensure, through an exhaustive analysis of contract renewal procedures, that current practices conform to the Directive. During the revision work on the current application, the Working Group decided that current practices appear to be fully implementing Principle 25, but that the Human Resources Directorate should corroborate this observation, in light of the requirements of the HRS4R process.

Responsible Unit

Office of the VPAA;
Working Group

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Desk Study Report

Action 9

GAP Principle(s)

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 9

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE According to the planned structure of the Action Plan, towards the end of the 1st year, the whole revised recruitment and support regime will be in place, and the 2nd year will be the main period where the new structure can be observed to operate. The Working Group will secure a mandate from the KU President for this action, as early as the Implementation Phase begins. The objective of Action 9 is to ensure that the university is on track in terms of the timing of Action 1-9 deliverables, indicators and targets, during the 24 months of the Implementation Phase and is ready before the Interim Assessment. For the monitoring of the progress of Actions and the evaluation of the implementation of each action (and their initial, early impact), the Working Group will organize Monitoring Workshops for every 6 months: Staff responsible for implementing each action, as well as the Research Community (Stakeholder Group consisting of researchers at all levels), will participate and the progress of the actions will be discussed. Any delays will be addressed, and necessary planning updates will be decided. Based on the 2 workshops to be completed within the 1st year, and gathering any additional information that may be required, the Team will prepare a written Year One Evaluation Report to assess the level of HRS4R compliance achieved up to that point. Before the date of the Interim Assessment, the Team will prepare a second Pre-Assessment Evaluation Report to ensure final readiness. The Steering Committee will be informed about the implementation phase with these 2 evaluation reports.

GAP Principle(s)

- (+/-) 14. Selection (Code)
- (+/-) 15. Transparency (Code)
- (+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)
- (+/-) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)
- (+/-) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)
- (+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)
- (+/-) 20. Seniority (Code)
- (+/-) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)
- (+/-) 25. Stability and permanence of employment
- (+/-) 28. Career development
- (+/-) 30. Access to career advice
- (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development
- (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

Monitoring Workshop 1:
2nd quarter of 1st year
Monitoring Workshop 2:
4th quarter of 1st year
Monitoring Workshop 3:
2nd quarter of 2nd year
Monitoring Workshop 1:
4th quarter of 2nd year
Year One Evaluation
Report: End of Year 1
Pre-Assessment
Evaluation Report: 1
month before the
scheduled Interim
Assessment

Proposed ACTIONS

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Working Group	4 Monitoring Workshops Year One Evaluation Report Pre-Assessment Evaluation Report

Unselected principles:

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 the case, please make the link between the OTM-R checklist and the overall action plan. (max. 1000 words) *

A thorough internal analysis of the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Toolkit considering evidence of practices gathered from different units within KU was completed in preparation for the current application. It was observed that the general outlook for the institution towards establishing an Open Recruitment Policy regime in conformity with the HRS4R process was very positive. Supporting this view, the initial feedback from the EC about the first HRS4R application did not raise major issues. Many measures outlined in the toolkit are already in place. In alignment with the Action Plan on the Charter and Code offered above, there is room for improvement in implementing the OTM-R principles. Below is a summary of the foreseen improvement, which will inevitably repeat some of the actions planned to close the gaps in the principles.

1. When the Faculty Handbook (concerning R3-R4 researchers), the Procedure for Postdoctorate Research Support Program (concerning R2 researchers) and KU's graduate school admission and support policies (for R1 researchers) are taken into consideration, a well-defined, online policy regime of OTM-R exists and is operational. However, this does not translate to a complete "OTM-R policy" publication. These resources need be made more accessible and brought under an online umbrella describing KU's compliance with the HRS4R process. As outlined in the Action Plan, revisions are called for in this policy regime to demonstrate the implementation of the OTM-R toolkit.
2. The weakest point for KU in the checklist is the lack of a formal training approach for Selection Committee members (R3-R4 recruitment) on OTM-R issues. Since R2 recruitment is on a case-by-case basis according to the candidates' academic relationship with their supervisors and external funding resources, training supervisors with the same online tool that KU proposes to implement will close the gap for the R2 group, too. A similar implementation is also possible for the evaluators of graduate school applications.
3. During the internal analysis and consultations, there was a consensus about making the usage of the EURAXESS portal compulsory for all job announcements. Its usage at KU has so far been occasional, even rare for R3-R4 job announcements.

- 4 With the coordination efforts of the Office of the VPAA, common templates are utilized in job announcements, but the task of evaluating this template from the perspective of the OTM-R toolkit is called for.
5. "Judging merit" during the evaluation of job applications will greatly improve once the proposed Selection Committee member training program is implemented.
6. Feedbacks to candidates was also discussed in the Gap Analysis, under Principle 15: "Giving detailed explanations about criteria that leads to rejection decisions is not practised. To remedy this, the Office of the VPAA will prepare a template that lists most common rejection reasons and the online training tool for Selection Committee members will guide researchers to keep notes about negative feedback to candidates. Sending such feedback will be made standard practice during faculty recruitment."
7. KU monitors its recruitment goals and practices, but its Open Recruitment Policy regime is not yet revised to completely accommodate the OTM-R toolkit. Nevertheless, it is observed that the existing national regulations about job announcements, feedbacks to candidates and selection procedures dictated by the Higher Education Council of Turkey has already pushed KU towards standards that are reflected in the toolkit. The Council audits KU (as it does every university in Turkey) on every aspect of university administration, which will be another useful indicator in the future monitoring of OTM-R compliance.

If your organisation already has a recruitment strategy which implements the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment, please provide the web link where this strategy can be found on your organisation's website:

URL:

<https://facultyguide.ku.edu.tr/online-faculty-handbook/section-6/>

4. Implementation

General overview of the expected overall implementation process of the action plan: (max. 1000 words)

There are 8 main action areas as outlined above, and 1 support action to monitor and evaluate the successful completion of the 2-year implementation phase. At the beginning of the Action Plan, KU's Steering Committee will be informed about the whole 2-year process. The Committee will appoint a Working Group to oversee and coordinate the Action Plan. The Team will be responsible to assign Action tasks to relevant stakeholders, hold meetings about the assignments, and run Action 9 to monitor and evaluate the progress of the Action Plan.

Make sure you also cover all the aspects highlighted in the checklist below, which you will need to describe in detail:

Note: Click on each question of the checklist to open the editor.

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



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

As explained under Action 9, the Working Group will hold 4 monitoring workshops (1 every 2 quarters) and prepare 2 evaluation reports about the progress of the Action Plan.

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



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

Action 1: The dissemination of progress about the HRS4R process through the web portal and the Working Group 's participation in regular Faculty Meetings and Coordination Meetings will raise awareness about the project.

Actions 2-5: These actions require full cooperation of KU faculty members as some of them will be required to complete the online training module. Additionally, administrative staff of colleges and graduate schools have to be collaborating. The Working Group will ensure the support of Deans and Graduate School Directors, when they own the process, they can ensure that faculty members will do so. The support of faculty members is also important to bring active R2 researchers on board for the effective implementation of the recruitment and career support schemes.

Action 7: Researcher support is also required to make the usage of EURAXESS universal at KU. Most job announcements are prepared by administrative staff, but especially R2 announcements might be prepared by supervisors themselves.

Action 9: In the Monitoring Workshops which will be held for every 6 months, comments and criticisms of stakeholder group consisting of researcher representatives will be crucial for the evaluation.

How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? Make sure the HRS4R is recognized in the organisation's research strategy, as the overarching HR policy. 

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

As mentioned before, it is observed that existing practices are largely seen in compliance with the HRS4R. The alignment process is already supported by the two Vice Presidents and the President, and they will continue to muster the support of academic and administrative units during the implementation process. Any necessary revisions in policy documents that reflect KU's commitment to the HRS4R process will be ordered by the administration, and the completion of Action 1 will positively impact the visibility of this process within KU community

How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?*



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The President (Prof. Umran S. İnan), the Vice President for Research and Development (Prof. İrşadi Aksun, also KU's LEAR in EU grant applications) and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (Prof. Barış Tan) will oversee the operations of the Working Group. Any internal impediments before the completion of the actions will be reported to them, so that they can take direct action in removing those impediments.

How will you monitor progress (timeline)?*



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

There is a specific action (Action 9) planned to accomplish this task. Description is provided under that action.

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



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

Deliverables/indicators/targets of each Action are clearly defined. Action 9's workshops will determine whether tasks are completed on time and the Team will be able to intervene if there are delays. The two evaluation reports will provide the KU administration with evidence about the progress, and any necessary initiatives to push implementation units will be asked of the President and Vice Presidents. The progress for each action are measurable as follows:

Action 1: Successful completion of this action requires the following deliverable: Regularly updated web portal. Impact of the tool depends on effective maintenance and content updates as the Implementation Phase progresses, so update frequency is a indicator. 6 months into its activation, the portal's usage can be compared to other web pages under the ku.edu.tr domain in order to measure the level of dissemination.

Actions 2-4: The success of these actions aiming at the improvement of KU's recruitment policy for R1-R4 researchers depends on the timely delivery of the e-learning module. When the tool is put online, the achievement will be the main indicator. Secondly, each of the 3 actions lead to revisions of written policy and the coordination of this information through the HRS4R portal. Completion of these revisions is another indicator. Thirdly, it is possible to measure whether the training module is being completed by the population of candidate evaluators who must complete it.

Action 5: Progress here is indicated first by the creation of a coordinated service package for R2 researchers. Secondly, a revised postdoctoral researchers' recruitment policy that reflects the career support network is another indicator. Thirdly, with the knowledge of the number of eligible active R2 researchers at KU, it is possible to measure the initial effectiveness of this action by the number of individuals accessing to these services. Deliverable: Website dedicated to R2 services and policies.

Action 6: The indicator here is the revision of existing templates.

Action 7: The indicator here is the ratio of EURAXESS-published position announcements to all announcements. This can be monitored quarterly.

Action 8: The submission of the Desk Study Report on compliance indicates progress here.

Action 9: To effectively monitor and evaluate the Implementation Phase, mentioned workshops need to be completed. The submission of the two (annual) evaluation reports is the second measurement of progress.

Additional remarks / comments about the proposed implementation process: (max. 1000 words)

One observation about the forthcoming Implementation Phase: For the duration of the activities that led to the revision of the submitted application, the Working Group observed that the KU leadership was highly motivated about the implementation of the HRS4R process. This is seen as the greatest asset for the future Working Group. Since various administrative units that have never needed to cooperate before have to coordinate their efforts during the Implementation Phase, there is a risk for delays if stakeholders of the Actions planned fail to prioritize this initiative sufficiently. The risk can be mitigated because it was observed that KU's academic leadership (President, Vice Presidents, Deans and Graduate School Directors) effectively owned the application process by using their authority to speed up the information flow necessary to complete the 3 main sections of this proposal. There is no reason to doubt that this ownership will diminish in any way, on the contrary, a green light to start the Implementation Phase will increase motivations for being a stronger part of the European Research Area through receiving the HRS4R logo.

KU is currently the leading higher education institution in Turkey in terms of retained funding (about 19M EUR as of October 2020) from Horizon 2020 actions, and is actively participating in Erasmus+ actions (with a total running budget of about 5M EUR from KA1 and KA2 projects). The institution is specifically successful in the ERC program, demonstrating its commitment to become a "European University" as well as an excellent research university. KU's participation in a successful Erasmus+ "European Universities" action (<https://www.unic.eu/>) is a further testament to the university's commitment to European cooperation. As the whole KU researcher community prepares for Horizon Europe, the university wants to affirm its will to be part of Europe once again by joining the list of excellent European universities using and maintaining the HRS4R logo.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a shutdown of KU physical operations since March 2020 (face-to-face education is expected to resume in February 2020, though not certain). While this caused a delay in the submission of a revised HR4SR proposal, the Working Groups is not foreseeing pandemic-related delays in the Implementation Phase. The Working Group believes that the outlined targets of the Action Plan will be timely delivered and KU will be prepared for the Interim Assessment.