

# **HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH**

## **UNIVERSITY OF OPOLE RESEARCH REPORT**

### **ENGLISH SUMMARY**

Opole, March 2024

## SUMMARY

In July 2023, the University of Opole (UO) officially started the application procedure for the HR Excellence in Research Award. The European Commission has approved the Letter of Support for the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, signed by the Rector, Prof. Marek Masnyk. Thus, the University of Opole was placed on the list of institutions that expressed their support for the Charter and the Code.

The implementation of the HRS4R Strategy obliges research units to ensure favorable working conditions, career development, mobility, and transparent, open, and merit-based processes of recruitment of researchers/academics. Other measurable benefits related to obtaining the distinction include rewarding the unit in international grant competitions of the European Commission.

In connection with the University of Opole's application for the HR Excellence in Research Award, the following activities have been designated to develop application documentation:

- a) review of legal acts in force at the University of Opole and determination of their compliance with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers,
- b) survey of the opinions of academic teachers (research, research, and teaching positions) employed at the UO and its doctoral students in terms of compliance with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers with the practices of the university.

For the implementation of the latter activity, empirical research was carried out using a questionnaire in the period October-November 2023, in the field of recognition of the opinions

of academics as to the compliance of the principles indicated in the HRS4R documents with the practices of the UO. On their basis, the areas that in the opinion of the respondents work relatively well and those that require improvement, as well as popularization or awareness-raising activities, were identified. On the other hand, in the field of the characteristics of the general population, internal data of the UO collected and processed by the Employee Affairs Office of the UO were used.

For the application procedure, including the identification of areas requiring special attention when designing strategic and operational activities and the formulation of recommendations for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers in the UO, three main objectives of the empirical study were set:

- **to recognize opinions of academic teachers employed at the University of Opole**, with particular emphasis on those in research, research and teaching positions, and doctoral students studying at the UO Doctoral School, in terms of the compliance of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers with UO practices,
- **identification of areas (understood as sets of UO practices) which**, in the opinion of UO academic teachers, with particular emphasis on the opinions of those in research, research and teaching positions, and doctoral students of the UO, **work relatively well, and those requiring improvement in terms of compliance of practices with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers**,
- **identification of areas that require popularization and awareness-raising activities among the surveyed population** in terms of compliance of (selected) practices with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

The study assumes that the practices occurring/binding at the University of Opole are understood as all formalized (e.m.in. by way of statutes, orders, resolutions, regulations, strategies, positions) and informal (m.in. customs, good practices) rules of functioning of both the university and academic and doctoral students in the field of working conditions, career

development, mobility and recruitment processes of researchers following the open policy, transparent and substantive recruitment processes.

The survey was designed by the so-called working team coordinating the work of the HRS4R Team using the infrastructure of the Centre for Modern Technologies of the University of Opole. The work on the survey among academics was divided into four main stages, which were carried out from July 2023 to April 2024. Taking into account the above, the general population consisted of 1,194 units/subjects of the survey, including 1,109 academic teachers and 85 doctoral students.

The number of questionnaires completely completed was 316, so the overall response rate in the study was 26.5%. The overall return rate among academic teachers was about 27%; in the group of academic teachers employed in research and teaching or research positions: about 41%, and in teaching positions – about 13%. The overall reflexivity in the group of doctoral students was at the level of approx. 25%.

The analysis of both the basic features and indicators in the field of characteristics of academic teachers employed at the University of Opole, as well as the results of the research, allow us to conclude that the set goals have been achieved. Areas within the studied modules were identified, which in the opinion of the respondents function relatively well, which does not mean that they should not be improved (mainly those assigned to module 1: "General principles and requirements for scientists"). It should be mentioned that variables in this area can be treated as a foundation for building the organizational culture of the university. Based on the research carried out, for Module 1 it is recommended to strengthen the role of the scientific supervisor as a mentor and leader in conducting research, especially for scientists classified as R1 and R2. It is justified to pay special attention to the issue of whether experienced UO researchers performing the functions of scientific supervisors, mentors, leaders, project coordinators, managers, etc., carry out their work following the highest professional standards.

However, as for the main areas that need to be improved and strengthened, it should be emphasized that those included in the processes of recruitment of researchers should be emphasized, mainly in the area of refining the existing practices and procedures, thus moving towards building a system of modern human resources management. In addition, it seems necessary to raise awareness of recruitment among academic teachers and doctoral students

of the UO. This applies in particular to the procedures/criteria for selecting members of recruitment committees, the importance of individual merits of candidates, as well as feedback on recruitment results.

Another important area, in the opinion of the respondents, that requires improvement, is module 2: "General principles for employers", and in particular matters related to the remuneration of researchers, as well as recognition in the employee evaluation system (not only through appropriate remuneration) of their teaching. However, it should be borne in mind in this case that these areas depend on the national policy in the field of financing scientific research and public universities.

Full version of the report available in Polish,  
<https://uni.opole.pl/biblioteka/docs/LogoHR/Raport%20z%20bada%C5%84%20HRS4R.pdf>.