HR Excellence in Research

Action Plan

Action Plan

Case number

2024HR200300

Name Organisation under review

University of Zagreb, School of Medicine

Organisation's contact details

Šalata 3, Zagreb, Croatia, 10000, Croatia

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 *	500
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	0
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	26
Of whom are women *	246
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. *	253
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level *	113
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level *	61
Total number of students (if relevant) *	2755
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) *	287

RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	56992798,10
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	834033,90
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	2789167,27
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	40122,88

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)

University of Zagreb School of Medicine (UZSM) is educational institution for medical training and research connecting preclinical, clinical and public health field. It is oldest in the South East Europe, largest in Croatia, founded in 1917. as a separate legal entity within the University of Zagreb. It is internationally recognized, devoted to excellence in education, research and transfer of knowledge in the area of biomedicine and health care. Laboratories are organized and equipped to provide research and diagnostics in preclinical and clinical research. School is a medical institution in Zagreb, with several affiliated hospitals.

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)

University of Zagreb School of Medicine is a distinguished institution known for its academic standards, advanced research initiatives, and commitment to producing competent medical professionals. Ethical and professional aspects play a critical role in medical education, shaping the integrity, responsibility, and decision-making of future doctors. Here are descriptions for our strengths and weaknesses of ethical and professional dimensions where we will provides insight into areas of excellence as well as potential improvement.

Strengths

1. Ethical conducts in Curriculum

One of the key strengths is its well-integrated ethical education. Lectures on medical ethics, bioethics, and professional conduct are part of curriculum, ensuring that students gain a strong understanding of ethical principles. These lectures cover important topics such as patient confidentiality, informed consent and professional responsibility, preparing students to handle complex moral dilemmas in medical practice.

2. Emphasis on Professionalism

Institution places a strong emphasis on professionalism, expecting students to stick to high ethical standards in their academic and clinical activities. Faculty members serve as role models, demonstrating professional behavior, primary to students, but most important in patient interactions and medical research. This commitment to professionalism fosters a culture of respect, accountability, and integrity among students.

3. Research Ethics and Integrity

School prioritizes ethical considerations in research, sticking to international standards for research integrity. Ethical review boards ensure that research involving human subjects is conducted with the highest ethical standards. This commitment not only protects participants but also upholds the credibility of medical research at the university.

4. Patient-Centered Education

Ethical considerations in patient care are strongly emphasized and students are taught to prioritize patient welfare, autonomy, and dignity. School encourages compassionate care and ethical decision-making in clinical settings that prepare students for real-world medical practice.

5. Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Institution promotes non-discrimination and equal opportunity policies, ensuring that students and staff are treated fairly and with dignity, which is a key component of ethical education.

6. Collaboration with International Ethical Standards

The School aligns its ethical training with international medical standards, such as the Helsinki Declaration, ensuring that its employees not only adhere strictly to national medical ethics but are also well-prepared for ethical challenges in international medical practice.

Weaknesses

1. Variability in Ethical Enforcement

While the school has strong ethical policies in place, their enforcement can sometimes be inconsistent. Some students and faculty members may perceive ethical violations as being handled unevenly, which can undermine trust in the institution's commitment to ethical standards.

2. Pressure of Academic and Clinical Workload

The demanding nature of medical education can sometimes lead to ethical compromises. Researchers and students under intense pressure may engage in academic dishonesty, plagiarism, or unprofessional behavior due to stress and competition.

3. Ethical Challenges in Clinical Training

During clinical rotations, students may encounter ethical dilemmas, such as observing unethical behavior by professors and medical professionals. In some cases, they may feel unwilling to report ethical violations due to fear of repercussions or hierarchical pressures. Strengthening mechanisms for anonymous reporting and promoting a culture of openness could address this issue.

4. Limited Practical Ethics Training

Although theoretical ethics lectures are well-integrated into the curriculum, there is a need for more practical training in real-world ethical decision-making. Interactive case studies, ethical simulation exercises, and structured discussions on ethical conflicts in clinical settings could enhance students' ability to navigate ethical challenges in practice.

5. Need for Enhanced Mentorship in Ethical Issues

While faculty members serve as role models, there is a need for more structured mentorship programs focusing on ethical decision-making. Establishing mentorship opportunities where students can discuss ethical concerns with experienced professionals could further support the development of their ethical and professional values.

6. Balancing Commercial Interests and Ethical Considerations

As medical research increasingly involves collaboration with industrial companies and private healthcare institutions, ethical concerns regarding conflicts of interest may arise. Ensuring transparency in research funding and maintaining strict guidelines on interactions with industry stakeholders is essential to uphold academic integrity.

Recommendations for Improvement

To strengthen the ethical and professional aspects at the School of Medicine several initiatives can be considered like stronger ethical enforcement mechanisms, stress management and ethical decision-making training, ethical simulation exercises, anonymous reporting systems, expanded mentorship programs, ethical guidelines for industry collaborations.

The School of Medicine at the University of Zagreb has established a strong foundation in ethical and professional education. Its strengths include a well-integrated ethics curriculum, emphasis on professionalism, commitment to research integrity, patient-centered training, inclusivity, and adherence to international ethical standards. However, challenges such as high academic pressure, ethical dilemmas in clinical surroundings, limited practical ethics training, lack of structured mentorship, and potential conflicts of interest remain areas for improvement. By implementing targeted strategies to address these weaknesses, the institution can improve its commitment to producing ethically responsible and professionally competent medical doctors and researcher.

Recruitment and selection*

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

The recruitment and selection process at the School of Medicine plays a crucial role in maintaining its high academic standards. Institution has a structured admission process that ensures the selection of the most capable students and faculty members. However, like any system, it has both strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths

School follows a well-defined selection process, particularly for its medical programs. The entrance exams and academic conditions help maintain high educational standards, ensuring that only well-prepared students are admitted. It offers programs in both Croatian and English, as follows: integrated undergraduate and graduate study in medicine (in Croatian), medical studies in English, graduate study in Nursing (in Croatian), PhD programs and postgraduate specialist courses. This attracts a diverse pool of applicants, both locally and internationally. School has agreements with various institutions across the European Union, allowing the exchange of students and researchers. This international approach enhances the quality of medical education and research. Students are exposed to hands-on clinical training early in their studies, working in hospitals and health centers. This practical approach ensures that graduates are well-prepared for their medical careers. Institution clearly outlines admission requirements, ensuring transparency in the selection process. The availability of information on the institution's website allows prospective students to make informed decisions.

Weaknesses

The strict entry requirements and competitive exams can discourage potential applicants. While this ensures quality, it may limit access to students who do not perform well in entrance exams but may still have strong potential in medicine. University only allows a small number of undergraduate and also PhD students to transfer from other institutions, with strict requirements. This limits the ability of students from other universities to join the School of Medicine. While an English-language medical program exists, some administrative and academic resources are in Croatian. International students may face challenges in navigating university processes and integrating into the academic community. PhD students undergo annual assessments. If their progress is not deemed satisfactory, they may lose the right to continue their studies. While this maintains high research standards, it can also add significant stress and discourage students from applying. Process of recognizing foreign medical qualifications can be lengthy and complicated, making it difficult for international applicants to transfer credits or enroll in postgraduate programs.

The School of Medicine, University of Zagreb, has a strong recruitment and selection process that ensures high academic and professional standards. However, certain barriers, such as competitive admission, language challenges, and limited transfer options, could be improved to make the process more inclusive. Addressing these weaknesses while maintaining academic excellence could further increase university's reputation and accessibility.

Working conditions* ⌄

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

Strengths

School of Medicine, University of Zagreb has well-established research departments, such as the Croatian Institute for Brain Research and there are also well-developed laboratories at other departments at the School. Also, there is School for public health which also actively participates in research activities in the field of public health. These departments support scientific collaboration and provide access to modern laboratories in, most, basic science but also in clinical.
Faculty members benefit from international mobility programs that allow them to engage in research exchanges and professional development opportunities abroad. This enhances academic quality and promotes global networking. School has structured administrative support for employees, which include support in all parts of research from the Finance department, Procurement and Science, knowledge transfer and innovation department also they can participate in unions, and have legal support related to protections for personal data. These systems contribute to a structured and professional work environment. Employees at the School of Medicine engage in various professional activities, from teaching to research and diagnostics. The integration of clinical and research work fosters a stimulating academic environment. Institution has mechanisms in place which are ensuring a respectful and professional workplace. This commitment to ethical standards helps prevent workplace conflicts and improves job satisfaction.

Weaknesses

Faculty members face a high workload due to their involvement in teaching, research, and clinical practice. Balancing these responsibilities can lead to stress and burnout, particularly for young researchers and lecturers. Although research is a priority, securing sufficient funding for new projects can be challenging. Many faculty members rely on external grants, which can be competitive and time-consuming to obtain. Administrative procedures can be complex and time-consuming, which may slow down research approvals, funding applications, and hiring processes. This can be frustrating for faculty members who need efficient workflow management. Administrative support for project applications is provided with unquestionable experience and knowledge in project management. But, there is a problem of a lack of administrators who can help at the expected level which would increase the quality of applications, as well as the success rate in passability for research funding. Despite having well-equipped laboratories, there are constraints in terms of physical space and the availability of state-of-the-art technology. Some research departments may struggle with outdated equipment, which can impact the quality of scientific output. The demanding nature of academic medicine, with long working hours and expectations for continuous professional development, can impact work-life balance. Faculty members often work beyond standard hours to meet academic and research obligations.

School of Medicine offers a stimulating academic environment with strong research facilities, international collaborations, and administrative support. However, challenges such as high workload, limited funding, bureaucratic hurdles, and work-life balance concerns need to be addressed to improve overall working conditions. Addressing these weaknesses would increase satisfaction at the School of Medicine and sustain the institution's reputation for academic excellence.

Training and development* ⌄

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

Strengths

School of Medicine at has extensive international partnerships, particularly in translational and clinical research. It collaborates with institutions like Yale university, Karolinska institute, Masaryk university and much more leading European universities and institutions outside of Europe. These partnerships provide faculty and students with access to cutting-edge research and development opportunities, enriching their learning and professional growth. ERASMUS program offers students and researcher for mobility all over the world.

School offers a well-structured graduate program that includes mandatory coursework in basic medicine, pre-clinical, clinical, and public health subjects. Practical training is integrated into the curriculum, including hands-on experience through hospital rounds, clinical conferences, and fieldwork, ensuring that students develop the necessary skills for medical practice. Regarding Research Facilities at School of Medicine, Croatian Institute for Brain Research and Departments which are part of Centre for Translational and Clinical provide world-class research infrastructure. These institutions lead innovative projects in neuroscience, genomic medicine, and translational research, fostering an environment where students and faculty can participate in groundbreaking studies. Research at School receives significant financial support from the European Union, the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Youth, and other international and national organizations. This funding helps sustain high-quality training programs and provides students and faculty with opportunities to work on well-funded research projects. School of Medicine partners with the University Hospital Centre Zagreb and other healthcare institutions, allowing students and medical professionals to gain practical experience in real-world medical settings. This hands-on approach is crucial for skill development and professional readiness.

Weaknesses

While School offers advanced training opportunities, access to some programs, particularly those requiring expensive equipment and high levels of specialization, may be limited due to financial and resource constraints. Not all students may have equal opportunities to engage in certain research projects. The curriculum requires students to balance a demanding academic schedule with practical training, which can be overwhelming. With full-time study hours ranging from 20 to 30 hours per week, and additional time required for practical training outside these hours, students may struggle to manage their workload effectively.

Although research opportunities exist, structured programs for continuous professional development for researchers and postgraduates should be expanded. More formal mentorship programs and career development workshops would help faculty and researchers progress in their careers. While School receives substantial external funding, reliance on grants and donations can pose challenges. Any reduction in funding from the EU or other sources may affect the continuity and expansion of training programs.

Although institution has a strong research focus, there is room for improvement in integrating interdisciplinary training. Expanding collaboration between researchers from School of Medicine and industry could enhance the development of innovative medical technologies and research methodologies.

School of Medicine excels in training and development due to its international collaborations, strong research facilities, and practical clinical training opportunities. However, challenges such as accessibility issues, heavy workloads, and funding dependency highlight areas for improvement. Strengthening structured professional development programs and expanding interdisciplinary training could further increase institution's training possibilities.

3. Actions

The Action Plan and HR Excellence in Research 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). Multiple links must be comma separated.

https://mef.unizg.hr/ (https://mef.unizg.hr/)

Please fill in the list of all individual actions to be undertaken in your organisation's HR Excellence in Research 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 ratings.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 1

Establishing Internal working group to revise General Rules of Conducting Scientific, Professional, and Teaching Work and harmonize with University and national regulations and laws. After revision, the regulation will be sent for approval according to the regular procedure of the institution. After acceptance, implementation will be monitored through the appropriate committees.

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility

(++) 5. Contractual and legal obligations

(+/-) 7. Good practice in research

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

4th quarter 2026

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Legal Department	Revised General Rules of Conducting Scientific, Professional, and Teaching Work.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 2

Revising existing outdated rules and bylaws: these improvements will be made based on our work in theAlliance4Life-Sciences_ACTIONS H2020 project, a bottom-up initiative of twelve leading life science institutions from eleven EU countries, where UZSM is a partner institution.	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
	(+/-) 14. Selection (Code)	
	(+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)	
	(+/-) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)	1st quarter 2027
	(+/-) 20. Seniority (Code)	
	(+/-) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)	
	(+/-) 29. Value of mobility	

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Board for PhD Theses and Legal Department	Revise existing rules and bylaws. Improve selection processes and mobility.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 3

Raising awareness regarding importance/value of international mobility. International mobility plays a crucial role in the personal and professional development of medical researchers to gain valuable experience, broaden their medical knowledge, and increase cultural competence. It is essential to raise awareness about these possibilities and to encourage more researchers to contribute to a globally connected medical community.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
(-/+) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)	
(+/-) 22. Recognition of the profession	
(+/-) 29. Value of mobility	3rd quarter 2027
(-/+) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Committee for Science Research and International Relations Committee	Organizing workshops and online handbook.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 4

Enhance access to research training and continuous development by Development of Virtual Research Center (VRC) through A4L.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
(+/-) 23. Research environment	
(+/-) 29. Value of mobility	
(-/+) 30. Access to career advice	
(+/-) 33. Teaching	4th quarter 2026
(-/+) 39. Access to research training and continuous development	
(+/-) 40. Supervision	

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
A4L UZSM team	Miniconferences, webinars, journal clubs, virtual courses for doctoral students

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 5

Establishing Career Development Office (CDO) Professional development will include training courses and degree programs, such as: Communication skills improvement, Management training, Advocacy training, Harassment awareness and prevention, Workplace conflict management and resolution, Cultivating friendly and inclusive work environment.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
(+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)	
(+/-) 23. Research environment	
(+/-) 24. Working conditions	
(+/-) 25. Stability and permanence of employment	
(-/+) 27. Gender balance	
(+/-) 28. Career development	4th quarter 2027
(-/+) 30. Access to career advice	
(+/-) 36. Relation with supervisors	
(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties	
(+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development	

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
The School Management and Legal department.	Establishing CDO

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 6

Strengthen Transfer Technology Office to revise and implement regulations related to the protection of intellectual property with other related documentation. Connect and increase collaboration among academia, health and industry.

GAP Principle(s)

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

(+/-) 29. Value of mobility

(-/+) 31. Intellectual Property Rights

1st quarter 2027

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Legal department	Revise and implement regulations, increase mobility and research activities

Unselected principles:

(++) 1. Research freedom   (++) 2. Ethical principles   (++) 4. Professional attitude   (++) 6. Accountability

(+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results   (++) 9. Public engagement   (++) 10. Non discrimination   (+/-) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems

(+/-) 12. Recruitment   (++) 13. Recruitment (Code)   (++) 15. Transparency (Code)   (++) 26. Funding and salaries   (++) 32. Co-authorship

(++) 34. Complains/ appeals   (++) 35. Participation in decision-making bodies

The establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HR Excellence in Research 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) *

The School of Medicine, Universi

is committed to implementing an open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment (OTM-R) policy. This is a key element of the HR Excellence in Research strategy, ensuring the attraction, development, and retention of the best researchers while promoting academic excellence and innovation. To ensure openness and transparency in the recruitment process, the School of Medicine employs a range of specific tools and methods. All job vacancies for researchers and teaching staff are published on the official website, on the EURAXESS portal, and other relevant media. This ensures broad visibility of job postings and accessibility to potential candidates from Croatia and abroad. Each job advertisement includes clearly defined evaluation criteria, covering academic excellence, research competencies, scientific publications, experience in international projects, and teaching skills. This ensures that all candidates are assessed based on the same standards. Selection committees consist of independent experts. Their task is to conduct an objective evaluation of candidates while avoiding conflicts of interest. Candidates are assessed according to predefined criteria, and all evaluation data are available to applicants upon request. Feedback enables candidates to gain a better understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. In line with European guidelines, School of Medicine encourages international and intersectoral mobility of researchers and ensures equal access to opportunities regardless of gender, age, nationality, or other personal characteristics.

To ensure the consistent application of OTM-R principles, the School of Medicine will introduce several measures.

1. **Integration of OTM-R Guidelines into Internal Procedures** – School of Medicine has adopted internal regulations and guidelines to ensure that all recruitment processes comply with OTM-R standards.
2. **Monitoring and Evaluation of Recruitment Processes** – Regular audits and analyses of selection processes ensure consistency and improvement in recruitment procedures.
3. **Training for Selection Committees** – Training sessions are organized for selection committee members to familiarize them with best practices in open and transparent recruitment.
4. **Connection with the EURAXESS Recruitment Policy** – The School of Medicine will actively participate in the EURAXESS network, following and implementing best recruitment practices at the European level.

To align with the HR Excellence in Research strategy, School of Medicine will utilize the OTM-R checklist as a key tool for the ongoing assessment and enhancement of recruitment processes. Establishing a strong link with the action plan, requires development of clear recruitment procedures in accordance with OTM-R guidelines. Efforts will focus on improving transparency in job postings by disseminating opportunities across multiple communication platforms. Additionally, the introduction of a candidate feedback system will highlight fairness and support the professional growth of researchers. Greater involvement of international experts in selection committees will further ensure impartiality and promote diversity in candidate evaluation.

School of Medicine, University of Zagreb is committed to implementing an open and transparent merit-based recruitment policy, ensuring high standards of academic excellence. Through clearly defined procedures, the use of independent selection committees, transparent evaluation, and support for mobility, School of Medicine ensures that all recruitment processes align with HR excellence principles and European research institution guidelines.

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. Multiple links must be comma separated:

URL:

https://mef.unizg.hr/ (https://mef.unizg.hr/)

4. Implementation

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

The School management (UZSM) will integrate HR Strategy into the institute's standard managerial and operational procedures. Rather than being treated as a temporary project, the HR Strategy will be an ongoing priority, consistently addressed by top management, in cooperation with middle management and researchers. The HR Excellence in Research Award plays a key role in ensuring this, as it is one of the primary performance indicators outlined in the A4LBridge which is strong alliance for UZSM. This provides a strong assurance that the HR Strategy will be properly implemented and given the necessary attention.

A working group was established to prepare the Gap Analysis and Action Plan for the HR Award. This group, along with the management of UZSM will continue to work during the implementation phase. The overall responsibility for monitoring and reporting the implementation process will lie with the School management and Legal department. Regular monitoring and reporting (quarterly) will be established, involving management, the Director's Board, and the Scientific Board. HR Strategy progress will also be included in the UZSM Quality Assurance Activity Plans.

Since the implementation phase will require active participation from researchers, particularly supervisors (group leaders), the HR Strategy will be regularly discussed at Group Leaders Meetings. Information regarding the implementation will be distributed through the internal newsletter.

At the university level, updates on the HR Strategy implementation will be presented to the Rector and the Rector's Board during annual evaluation interviews. Currently, the Rectorate is already following the HR Award process at UZSM. The progress in the implementation phase will be tracked through clearly defined indicators, combining both quantitative and qualitative assessments of progress.

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)

Through the following methods:

1. Regular Monitoring and Reporting:
   The progress of the HR Strategy implementation will be monitored on a quarterly basis. Reports will be submitted to:
   - Top Management
   - Scientific Board
2. Chairing the Working Group:
   The School Managemet who chairs the working group on the HR Award, will be responsible for overseeing the overall implementation process. They will ensure that the process is being executed according to the defined plans and timelines. Importantly, eventual issues or shortcomings in implementation process will be actively discuss on monthly meetings.
3. Integration with the Annual Activity Plan:
   The HR Strategy implementation will be included as a key component of the UZSM management's annual activity plan. This ensures that progress is consistently tracked and incorporated into the broader institutional objectives.
4. Engagement with Group Leaders:
   The HR Strategy will be regularly discussed at Group Leaders Meetings, ensuring that supervisors (group leaders) are actively engaged in the implementation process. This provides a direct line of communication and feedback for ongoing adjustments.
5. Communication via Internal Newsletter:
   Updates on the HR Strategy's implementation will be distributed through the internal newsletter, ensuring continuous engagement and information sharing with the broader UZSM community.
6. University-Level Reporting:
   At the university level, the Rector and the Rector's Board will be informed about the implementation progress during annual evaluation interviews. The HR Award process at UZSM is already being monitored by the Rectorate, and it is viewed as a pilot project for the entire university.
7. Progress Tracking with Defined Indicators:
   The progress will be monitored based on clearly defined indicators, which will combine both quantitative and qualitative assessments of the HR Strategy's implementation. These indicators will allow the steering group to track the effectiveness and impact of the strategy.

In summary, the steering group will use a combination of regular reporting, active discussions, engagement with key stakeholders, and predefined performance indicators to ensure continuous oversight of the implementation process.

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

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

To effectively implement the HR Strategy at UZSM, the involvement of the research community—the main stakeholders—is critical. A comprehensive approach will be adopted to ensure that researchers, particularly group leaders and supervisors, are actively engaged throughout the process.

Engagement through Group Leaders Meetings:
Since supervisors (group leaders) play a vital role in shaping the research environment, the HR Strategy will be regularly discussed during Group Leaders Meetings. These meetings will serve as a platform for researchers to contribute their perspectives, share challenges, and offer feedback on the ongoing implementation of the HR Strategy.

Regular Communication via Internal Newsletter:
Transparency and continuous communication are essential for engaging the research community. The internal newsletter will be used to share regular updates on the progress of the HR Strategy. These updates will inform researchers about key milestones, upcoming actions, and any changes to the strategy, ensuring that the community remains involved and well-informed.

Involvement in Working Groups:
Researchers, especially those in leadership roles, will be invited to actively participate in working groups focused on the HR Strategy. These groups will help shape the Action Plan, allowing researchers to directly influence the decisions and plans being made. Their involvement ensures that the strategy aligns with the needs of the research community.

Feedback Mechanisms:
To ensure the HR Strategy is effective and relevant, a structured feedback mechanism will be established. Regular surveys, focus groups, and informal discussions will allow researchers to voice their experiences, provide suggestions, and identify potential areas for improvement. This feedback will help the management make adjustments to the strategy as necessary, ensuring it continues to meet the needs of the research community.

Active Participation in the HR Award Process:
The HR Excellence in Research Award is a central element of the strategy, and researchers will be encouraged to actively participate in initiatives related to this award. This involvement will help create a sense of ownership and commitment among researchers, making them stakeholders in the success of the HR Strategy.

Inclusion in University-Level Discussions:
At the university level, the Rector and the Rector's Board will receive updates on the implementation of the HR Strategy during annual evaluation interviews. Researchers will also be involved in discussions related to the HR Strategy's integration at the broader university

level. This ensures that their concerns and recommendations are considered as part of the wider institutional framework.

By adopting these methods, the HR Strategy will be deeply integrated into the research culture at UZSM. Researchers will not only be informed about the strategy but will also have an active role in shaping its implementation. This collaborative approach ensures that the HR Strategy is relevant, sustainable, and aligned with the goals of the research community.

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)

The implementation of the OTM-R is a key aspect of revising the recruitment policy at UZSM. The first step in this process was already completed with a review of the current recruitment practices, procedures, and policies, which was included as part of the Gap Analysis. The OTM-R checklist has been filled out and attached to the Gap Analysis.

For the revision of the recruitment policy, the OTM-R toolkit will be utilized to integrate key principles that align with best practices. These include:

1. Clear and Transparent Information: Ensuring that all information related to the selection process is transparent, including criteria and timelines.
2. Job Advertisements: Crafting job advertisements that are clear and concise, highlighting the working environment, equality policies, and necessary qualifications without setting unnecessary barriers.
3. Inclusivity: Promoting diversity by considering the inclusion of underrepresented groups.
4. Minimizing Administrative Burden: Reducing the workload for candidates throughout the recruitment process.

To further ensure the successful implementation of these principles, the recruitment policy will be supported by step-by-step guidelines for conducting recruitment procedures. The entire process will be closely monitored for effectiveness, with a quality control system administered by the HR Department. Additionally, the new recruitment policy will be published online.

The revised recruitment policy will:

- Clearly define responsibilities and expectations for each position.
- Implement OTM-R principles alongside gender equality principles, as identified in the institutional gender equality plan.
- Be made publicly available online.

Further steps in the implementation process include:

- Training for Committee Members: Designing specialized training to committee members to ensure they are aligned with the new recruitment policy and principles.
- Advertising Open Positions: The HR Department will ensure all open positions are advertised in line with the group leader's requirements and the systematization of job positions.
- Promotion of New Vacancy Advertising Methods: A review of efficient ways to promote new vacancies will be conducted to improve the quality and reach of candidate recruitment.

- **Updating Vacancy Templates:** All job vacancy templates will be updated to reflect the new recruitment policy and OTM-R principles, including gender-neutral language.

Through these measures, UZSM aims to enhance its recruitment practices, ensuring inclusivity, transparency, and efficiency in line with international standards.

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

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

To ensure that the proposed actions are effectively implemented, the following steps will be taken:

1. Clear Responsibilities and Accountability: The recruitment policy will clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all involved parties, including HR, committee members, group leaders, and other relevant stakeholders. This ensures that everyone is aligned with their specific duties and expectations.
2. Monitoring and Quality Control: A robust quality control system will be established, administered by the HR Department, to monitor the entire recruitment process. This will include regular assessments to ensure adherence to the new policy, tracking the effectiveness of each stage of the recruitment process, and identifying areas for improvement.
3. Regular Reporting and Evaluation: The recruitment process will be continuously monitored, with regular reports provided to top management and the School management. This will allow for ongoing evaluation of the process, ensuring the policy is functioning as intended and making adjustments as necessary.
4. Training and Capacity Building: Training programs will be offered to committee members and all involved in the recruitment process. This will ensure they are familiar with the new recruitment policy, OTM-R principles, and gender equality principles, helping them execute their roles effectively.
5. Transparency and Feedback: The recruitment policy and processes will be publicly available online, ensuring transparency. Additionally, feedback mechanisms will be in place for candidates, committee members, and other stakeholders to provide input on the process, which will help improve the recruitment strategy over time.
6. Continuous Improvement: The process will be subject to ongoing analysis, especially the effectiveness of new advertising methods and the integration of the informal inquiries tool. Regular updates and refinements will be made to vacancy templates, ensuring that all materials remain aligned with the updated recruitment policies and gender-sensitive language.

By combining clear responsibilities, training, transparency, monitoring, and continuous feedback, UZSM will ensure that the proposed actions are effectively implemented and that the recruitment policy evolves with best practices.

How will you monitor progress (timeline)?*

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

Structured timeline and a comprehensive monitoring system will be established which will include the following key components:

1. Action Plan with Specific Milestones

- **Initial Review and Gap Analysis:** The first milestone is the completion of the Gap Analysis and the use of the OTM-R checklist. This will be the foundation for the recruitment policy revision. Timeline: completed (as part of the ongoing process).
- **Policy Revision:** The next step is to revise the recruitment policy, incorporating OTM-R principles and gender equality considerations. Timeline: 6 months from the initiation of the process.
- **Implementation of Training Programs:** Develop and launch the training programs for recruitment committee members. Timeline: 6 months after policy revision.
- **Quality Control System Setup:** Establish a quality control system administered by the HR department to ensure the policy is being followed effectively. Timeline: 4 months for full implementation.
- **Online Publication of Recruitment Policy:** The final recruitment policy, along with updated templates and guidelines, will be published online for transparency. Timeline: 5 months from the start of implementation.
- **Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation:** Begin regular monitoring of the recruitment process, with quarterly reporting on progress and effectiveness. Timeline: Starting after 5 months, ongoing quarterly reports.

2. Regular Monitoring Activities

- **Semi-annual Reports:** The progress of the recruitment process will be reviewed semi-annualy. This will include assessing if the recruitment policy is being adhered to, whether OTM-R principles are being implemented, and how well the new methods are working (e.g., vacancy promotion, informal inquiries tool). Timeline: Evaluations, starting at month 6.
- **Stakeholder Feedback:** Collect regular feedback from stakeholders (e.g., candidates, committee members, group leaders, HR) about the recruitment process, making necessary adjustments based on the input received. Timeline: Continuous feedback collection with semi-annual evaluations.
- **Annual Evaluation and Adjustments:** At the end of the first year of implementation, an in-depth evaluation will take place to assess the overall success of the recruitment policy. This will involve reviewing data on recruitment outcomes, diversity and inclusion measures, and feedback from all stakeholders. Timeline: End of Year 1.

3. Ongoing Improvement

- Based on the feedback and evaluations, the recruitment policy will be updated annually to address new challenges, incorporate improvements, and align with emerging best practices in recruitment. Timeline: Annual updates as necessary.

By setting clear milestones, conducting regular evaluations, and maintaining continuous feedback loops, UZSM will ensure the successful implementation of the revised recruitment policy and track its progress over time.

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

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

To measure progress in the implementation of the recruitment policy and ensure continuous improvement leading to the next assessment, the following key indicators will be used:

1. Adherence to OTM-R Principles

- Indicator: Percentage of recruitment processes adhering to OTM-R principles.
- Measurement Method: Regular audits of the recruitment process to ensure that all stages (advertisement, selection, interview process) follow the principles of transparency, gender sensitivity, and inclusivity.
- Target: 100% adherence to OTM-R principles in all recruitment processes.

2. Candidate Experience

- Indicator: Candidate satisfaction with the recruitment process.
- Measurement Method: Candidate surveys to gather feedback on their experience with the recruitment process, including clarity, fairness, and administrative burden.
- Target: 85% positive feedback on the recruitment experience.

3. Implementation of Quality Control Measures

- Indicator: Frequency and effectiveness of quality control checks.
- Measurement Method: The HR department will conduct periodic quality control checks, reviewing recruitment practices to ensure that OTM-R principles are being followed and the recruitment process is being conducted efficiently.
- Target: Conduct at least annual control checks, with 95% of practices meeting standards.

4. Time-to-Hire

- Indicator: The average time from job posting to candidate hiring.
- Measurement Method: Track the average number of days taken to fill positions after the advertisement is posted.
- Target: Reduce the average time-to-hire by 15% compared to previous recruitment

5. Feedback from Annual Evaluation

- Indicator: Progress on key goals outlined in the recruitment policy, as evaluated at the annual review.
- Measurement Method: A detailed analysis of the recruitment process at the end of each year, assessing the achievement of key goals and alignment with institutional objectives.

- Target: At least 90% of goals achieved within the first year, with adjustments based on feedback and evaluation.

By using these indicators UZSM will be able to measure progress in a comprehensive manner, ensuring the successful implementation of the revised recruitment policy and its continuous alignment with best practices in recruitment, diversity, and inclusivity. These indicators will also form the basis for the assessment of progress during the next review cycle.

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

The proposed implementation process for the revised recruitment policy at UZSM is designed to ensure a transparent, efficient, and inclusive recruitment process. A key component of this implementation will be clear communication across all involved stakeholders, ensuring that everyone, including HR staff, group leaders, and candidates, fully understands the goals of the new recruitment policy and how it aligns with the institution's broader mission. Transparent communication will help foster trust and ensure that all participants are aligned with the objectives.

Stakeholder engagement will be critical to the success of the policy. In particular, it is important to maintain a focus on underrepresented groups and ensure that their needs are continuously addressed throughout the recruitment process. Engaging a wide range of stakeholders—from candidates to community leaders—will strengthen the recruitment process and promote inclusivity. Building lasting relationships with diverse stakeholders, such as patient advocacy groups and alumni, will further deepen the effectiveness of the policy.

The implementation plan must also be flexible and adaptable, as the recruitment landscape and the institution's needs will evolve over time. The process should remain responsive to feedback and allow for adjustments to improve effectiveness. For example, if certain recruitment methods prove more successful than others, these can be integrated into the ongoing strategy. Continuous feedback loops and periodic evaluations will be critical in ensuring that adjustments are made based on real-world insights.

To ensure the recruitment committee is well-prepared, ongoing training and capacity building will be essential. Committee members need to be trained on the new OTM-R principles, gender equality policies, and other recruitment guidelines. Not only will initial training be important, but ongoing education and refresher workshops should be implemented to keep the team updated on policy changes and best practices.

A robust monitoring and evaluation framework will be implemented to track progress and assess the success of the recruitment process. This framework will include both quantitative indicators, such as time-to-hire and diversity metrics, and qualitative data, such as candidate feedback and stakeholder surveys.

Additionally, the recruitment process should minimize the administrative burden on candidates. Clear, step-by-step guidelines will be provided to ensure that all participants, from candidates to internal stakeholders, understand their responsibilities and the expectations at each stage. The HR department will continue to offer support throughout the recruitment process to ensure smooth and efficient operations.

To ensure that the recruitment process remains effective, a clear timeline and accountability structure will be established. Specific milestones and deadlines will guide the implementation process, and the HR department will be responsible for monitoring progress and ensuring adherence to the timeline. Regular reports will be shared with senior management to address any delays or issues that arise.

Finally, the implementation process will be viewed as a continuous improvement initiative. The recruitment policy should not be static, and feedback, data, and evolving needs should guide future adjustments. With each recruitment cycle, the process will be refined to better align with institutional goals, emerging trends, and the evolving needs of candidates and stakeholders.

By incorporating clear communication, stakeholder engagement, flexibility, ongoing training, monitoring, and continuous improvement, UZSM will create a sustainable and inclusive recruitment process that meets the institution's goals and promotes a diverse and efficient workforce.