

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS INCORPORATING THE CHARTER AND THE CODE

Progress report

Reykjavik University

September 1st 2014

1. Introduction

Reykjavik University (RU) is a private university-level institution dedicated to higher education and research, with good connections to industry and society. RU consists of four academic Schools: the School of Law (SL), the School of Business (SB), the School of Computer Science (SCS), and the School of Science and Engineering (SSE). The Open University (OU) is RU's continuing education unit, and RU also offers preliminary study course as a preparation for university education. RU has a community of around 3500 students (thereof only around 30 Ph.D. students), 230 full-time employees (thereof around 110 academics engaged in research and around 10 postdocs) and over 100 part-time employees. The RU home page is: <http://en.ru.is/>.

In June 2009 RU accepted an invitation by the European Commission (EC) to join the HRS4R program to incorporate the *Charter* and the *Code* into its human resources strategy. In September 2009 a working group, consisting of key players in research at all levels within RU, was established to conduct an internal analysis of RU vis-a-vis the principles underlying the *Charter* and the *Code*. The current infrastructure at RU was analysed and to support the analysis, a special section of an employee survey conducted in November and December 2009 was designed to evaluate the environment at RU with respect to these principles.

An employee survey with the same questions as in the 2009 survey was conducted in November 2011 and in November 2013, with the aim to evaluate again the research environment at RU with respect to the principles underlying the *Charter* and the *Code* and to see how well and/or if the University has actually implemented the action items initially suggested. These surveys have been extremely valuable in monitoring the implementation of the *Charter* and the *Code* at RU. Main results from the staff surveys 2009 and 2013 can be seen in the secondary data information packet attached.

In February 2010 the internal analysis was completed and in May same year RU received a formal acknowledgement by the EC and the «HR excellence in research»

logo. The logo has been on the University home page since May 2010 (<http://www.ru.is/rannsoknir/>).

The result of the internal gap analysis 2010 can be seen at http://en.ru.is/media/hr/skjol/RU_Internal_analysis.pdf.

In February 2013 RU approved a new Human Resource Strategy (see at <http://en.ru.is/the-university/strategies/human-resource-strategy>) and in September 2013 RU hired a new Human Resource Manager. In constructing the new RU Human Resource Strategy, the principles underlying the *Charter* and the *Code* were taken into account.

RU's HR strategy is divided into 7 emphases; Teamwork, challenge and growth, encouragement and feedback, management, wellbeing, salaries and benefits and recruitment. The role of the HR director is to further develop RU's HR strategy, implement the HR strategy in cooperation with RU'S deans and executive directors, including recruitment and selection, health and safety, performance and feedback, career development, work life balance, salaries and benefit structures and management support.

2. Progress and action plans

A summary of suggested actions based on the internal cap analysis in 2010 can be seen at http://en.ru.is/media/hr/skjol/CC_summary_of_suggested_actions.pdf.

In May 2012 a new working group was established to conduct a self-assessment and review the HRS4R at RU and address suggested actions from the gap analysis 2010. The working group produced a new summary of suggested actions, plus an overview of new actions and recent developments within RU, which support the implementing of the *Charter* and the *Code* into its Human Resources Strategy. The results of the self-assessment and the review of the 2010 gap analysis can be seen at <http://en.ru.is/media/almennt/Self-assessment---HRS4R---Reykjavik-University-2012.pdf>. According to the results of the self-assessment in 2012 these were the main issues for RU to address:

Green text = Action already done

Red text = Action still required

Black text = Action ongoing

- **Training and information packet regarding selection and promotion work**
- **Guidelines on hiring post-doctoral staff and Ph.D. students**
- **Guidelines for Principal Investigators + training or an information packet**
- **Update the IP policy and the policy on joint data ownership**

- Policy for start-up companies
- Health and safety guidelines

RU has recently updated its IP policy (see in the secondary data information packet attached), including policy on joint data ownership and a policy for start-up companies. The new IP policy was approved by RU Executive Council in December 2013. Furthermore, RU approved a new Health Policy in 2013 and RU has formed a Safety committee, as required by Icelandic labour law organizations with 50 employees or more shall have a functioning safety committee. The role of the RU safety committee is to establish measures concerning health and safety within the organization, educate and inform the employees about safety matters and have a monitoring role over the measures relating to health and safety are fully effective. The concerns of the safety committee include; the use of hazardous chemicals in the workplace, machinery and equipment, environmental factors such as noise, lighting etc., ergonomics and social and mental aspects of occupational health.

A special training and information packet regarding selection and promotion work has not yet been produced. However, selection and promotion at RU follows a well-defined system, which depend on systematic evaluation based on the following key documents:

1. Icelandic law no. 63 from 2006 on Universities in Iceland.
2. New Regulation of Reykjavik University (approved by the Board of Trustees in July 2014). The new approved RU Regulation can be seen see in the secondary data information packet attached.
3. Rules on advancement reviews and assignment of academic titles (approved by RU Executive Committee in June 2009) (see in the secondary data information packet attached).
4. RU Universal Promotion Criteria (approved by RU Executive Committee in April 2010) (see in the secondary data information packet attached)

Guidelines on hiring post-doctoral staff and Ph.D. students, and RU guidelines for Principal Investigators + training or an information packet have not yet been produced. However, new rules on doctoral studies at RU were approved by the RU Executive Committee in March 2014 (see at <http://en.ru.is/research/rules-on-doctoral-studies/>) and new rules on doctoral studies of RU faculty and staff at RU were approved in April 2013 (see in the secondary data information packet attached).

In April 2011 the RC established a working group to look at doctoral studies at RU and on general rules on doctoral studies. The group addressed issues such as student statute, study contract, financing, tuition, procedure (admission, study course, etc.)

and progress monitoring. Subsequently, the working group suggested some changes to the general RU rules on doctoral studies. Results from the working group can be seen in the secondary data information packet attached.

In reviewing the Ph.D. rules, the principles underlying the *Charter* and the *Code* were taken into account. RU has plans for addressing the guidelines on hiring and the training packets in the near future.

3. Summary

Reykjavik University (RU) is a relatively young university. It was founded in its present form on July 1, 2005, when the Technical University of Iceland and RU merged. The objective of the merger was to create a strong university in the field of technology, business and law, with a broad selection of academic courses and the capability to succeed in teaching and research in accordance with international standards.

Since its foundation in its present form, RU has developed rapidly as a progressive university, nationally known for innovation in teaching, academic strength and active ties with the industry and businesses. RU has become the largest technical university in Iceland, graduating two out of every three students in the field of technology, and the largest business school, graduating more students with a business degree than any other university in the country.

RU understands very well the importance of external evaluation. All researchers are evaluated annually by an external panel (peers outside the country) – in the Annual Research Assessment (see in the secondary data information packet attached). The University has and is periodically being evaluated by the Icelandic Quality Board. The Board carries out two types of evaluation, a Quality Board-led reviews at institutional level and an Institution-led reviews at subject level. The University has also actively sought external evaluation from international accreditation bodies. These evaluations have proven to be an important part of enhancement procedures in the Schools/Departments and RU programmes that have sought such accreditations and have led to changes which improve quality assurance and the RU HR policy. These accreditations include: AMBA Accreditation in 2011, EPAS Accreditation in 2011 and Trial Accreditation BSc and MSc programme in Computer Science - European Quality Assurance Network for Informatics Education (EQANIE).

Since RU joined the HRS4R programme, some major improvements have been made in its regulations and research environment, which support the implementation of the *Charter* and the *Code* into its human resources strategy. To name just few of these improvements: In the area of recruitment, advertisements and feedback to

applicants have been substantially improved. In the area of selection and promotion, rules on evaluation committees now stipulate international representation and mobility is now encouraged on hiring of post-doctoral researchers and Ph.D. students. In the area of young researchers, the issue of mentoring is now a part of the RU Faculty Contribution Records (FCR), although a mentoring program has not yet been formally established. In the area of faculty working conditions, a survey with research environment questions is carried out every second year. In the area of evaluation and feedback, the Annual Research Assessment is now done in a very consistent way and the Deans annual staff interviews, and in the area of intellectual property, a new IP policy has been approved.

The impact of the HRS4R process on the University's HR policy is clear and positive. Naturally, there are still issues being dealt with and improvements being made. However, overall it is the University's opinion, so far, that taking part in the HRS4R program has been very beneficial for the University, for its HR policy and in implementing the *Charter* and the *Code*. It should be stated, that the HRS4R process, i.e. step 1-5, in itself has done much more for the University than the formal validation represented by the «HR excellence in research» logo.

4. List of documents in the data information packet attached

- a. RU Staff Survey 2009
- b. RU Staff Survey 2013
- c. RU IP Policy
- d. RU Health Policy
- e. RU Organisational and Operating Rules
- f. RU rules on advancement reviews and assignment of academic titles
- g. RU Universal Promotion Criteria
- h. RU rules on doctoral studies of RU faculty and staff at RU
- i. Results from the ad-hoc task force on doctoral studies at RU
- j. Main actions required according to the gap analysis 2010 and their current status
- k. The Academic Strength of Reykjavik University 2007-2013
- l. External annual assessment of research activity 2014 - ToR

Following documents can all be reached at RU home page:

- a. [The Strategy of Reykjavik University](#)
- b. [RU Research Strategy](#)
- c. [RU Code of Ethics](#)
- d. [RU Quality Assurance System](#)
- e. [RU Teaching Strategy](#)
- f. [Equality programme of RU](#)