

Action Plan

Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

1. Introduction

According to the results of the Gap Analysis, 29 actions were identified for aligning the Sofia University (SU) internal rules and practice with the Charter and Code principles.

In the beginning of July 2019, the Rector of Sofia University appointed three working groups: Administrative Working Group, Steering Group and Researchers Focus Group.

The implementation of the Action Plan will be coordinated by the Administrative working group (AWG) which is chaired by the Vice Rector of Information Activities, Academic Staff and Administration (F/R3) and composed of 10 members (10F; 1R3; administrative staff). Specific tasks will be allocated by the AWG to the respective administrative units, incl. the Career Development Sector (CDS), Technology Transfer Office (TTO), etc. The Administrative working group will meet regularly (at least 4 times annually) to evaluate the progress achieved and to consider next activities for implementation of the Action Plan.

The Steering Group (SG) will be in charge for monitoring of the Action Plan implementation and taking strategic decisions on the implementation of the HRS4R at SU. The SG is co-chaired by the Vice-rector of Research and Project Affairs (M/R4), Vice-rector of Information Activities, Academic Staff and Administration (F/R3) and Vice-rector of Education - PhD Students and Continuing Education (M/R3) and it is composed of all deputy deans on research at the University' faculties (9M/7F; 6R4/10R3). It will meet at least once annually.

In order to involve the research community in the process, a specific Researchers Focus Group (RFG) was set up. The RFG is co-chaired by the Functional Vice Rector of PhD school and International Relations (F/R4), Vice-rector of Information Activities, Academic Staff and Administration (F/R3) and Vice-rector of Education - PhD Students and Continuing Education (M/R3) and composed of 10 members (6F/4M; 1R4; 2R3; 2R2; 3R1). The main task of the RFG will be to regularly consult with researchers on the changes proposed during the Action plan implementation and evaluate their perceptions. The feedback of researchers will provide a sound base for strategic planning of the SG and Action Plan implementation by the AWG.

The Administrative working group will discuss initially with the RFG all changes in internal documents and procedures, specified in the Action Plan. The draft documents will be adopted by the Steering Group before presenting them for approval of SU governing bodies.

The governing bodies of SU will be informed regularly, and all documents prepared by the AWG will be approved by them.

I. Ethical and Professional Aspects

- 2. Ethical principles
- 3. Professional responsibility
- 4. Professional attitude

Problem identified	Objective	Planned actions	Responsible for implementing	Timing	Monitoring Plan
The principles of research integrity and responsible research, and the specific ethical issues in different scientific disciplines are not integrated in SU internal documents and practice.	Ensure observance of research integrity principles and attitude for responsible research	- to prepare internal Guidelines on research integrity and responsible research	AWG with the support of Legal Unit	by 2019	November 2019: to check actions undertaken
		- to be designed requirements for research ethics in different disciplines	AWG with the support of Legal Unit	by 2019	November 2019: to validate the rules prepared
		- information on research ethics and research integrity requirements to be provided to all researchers	CDS	by 2020	June 2020: check the awareness raising progress
		- training of supervisors and mentors based on good practices for observance of research integrity principles	CDS	by 2020	November 2020: check number of researchers trained
		-to integrate in PhD training guidance on professional attitude of researchers	AWG with support of CDS	by 2021	November 2021: check number of PhD students trained
		- introduction of software tools providing plagiarism checking	AWG with support of Information Technology (IT) Unit	by 2022	November 2022: testing phase

7. Good practice in research

Problem identified	Objective	Planned actions	Responsible for implementing	Timing	Monitoring Plan
Not all researchers are aware how to cope with information technology disasters, and the good	Ensure observance of good practices in research and rules for information security	- preparation of specific guidelines for researchers on cyber security and back-up strategies	AWG with support of IT Unit	by 2020	June 2020: to verify the guidelines prepared
		- provision of training to cope with information technology disasters	AWG with support of IT Unit	by 2020	November 2020: check

practices in their specific disciplines					number/category of researchers trained
		- changing internal rules according to specific good practices in different research fields	AWG with support of Legal Unit	by 2022	June 2022: to verify changes in internal rules

8. Dissemination, exploitation of results

31. Intellectual Property Rights

Problem identified	Objective	Planned actions	Responsible for implementing	Timing	Monitoring Plan
SU researchers face difficulties for IPR protection, knowledge transfer and research commercialization, as well as upcoming issues of Open Science and Open Data.	Facilitate research results exploitation and Open Science practice	- design of practical guidelines on IPR, knowledge transfer and research commercialization	TTO	by 2020	June 2020: to verify the guidelines prepared
		- seminars on awareness raising and training on IPR and research commercialization	CDS and TTO	by 2021	November 2021: check number of researchers trained or made aware
		- design of Open Science data bases at SU	AWG with support of IT Unit	by 2022	June 2022: testing phase
		- training of researchers on Open Science	CDS and IT Unit	by 2022	November 2022: check number of Open Science tools users

9. Public engagement

Problem identified	Objective	Planned actions	Responsible for implementing	Timing	Monitoring Plan
SU has no official policy on public engagement and regular monitoring of	Communication with the society on scientific issues to become regular practice	- introduce in SU annual plans organization of regular Open doors at SU and guided visits for students	AWG with support of PR Unit	by 2019	November 2019: check SU annual plans
		- introduction of training of PhD students on effective science communication	CDS	by 2019	November 2019: check of number of researchers trained

public and economic interests in RTD	- stimulation of researchers for participation in outreach activities	AWG with support of HR unit	by 2020	June 2020: verify measures proposed
	- introduce in Faculty strategic plans regular monitoring of research needs in economy and society	AWG	by 2022	June 2022: check faculties plans
	- undertaking collaboration with students and teachers on scientific issues	AWG with support of CDS	by 2022	November 2022: check collaboration forms proposed and implemented

Recruitment and Selection

11. Evaluation/ appraisal system 16. Judging merit (Code) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code) 29. Value of mobility

Problem identified	Objective	Planned actions	Responsible for implementing	Timing	Monitoring Plan
By judging merits of researchers (for appraisal or selection) not sufficient emphasis is put on the diversified career path, e.g. on national or international collaboration, public awareness activities, administrative duties, and mobility experience gained in industry or abroad	Ensure fair and balanced evaluation of all achievements of researchers during their career path	- to change SU internal rules for researchers' appraisal and selection to better correspond to Charter and Code requirements	AWG with support of CDS	by 2019	November 2019: check researchers' satisfaction
		- change of internal staff evaluation criteria in order to recognize the different mobility forms	AWG with support of CDS	by 2019	November 2019: check researchers' satisfaction

Working Conditions and Social Security

1. Research freedom
23. Research environment
26. Funding and salaries

Problem identified	Objective	Planned actions	Responsible for implementing	Timing	Monitoring Plan
The state subsidy for SU is not sufficient to ensure attractive salaries, and funding for access to research infrastructure and scientific literature in all disciplines	Raising capacity of academic staff for research funding	- ensure professional support to researchers for fund raising and projects preparation	AWG and Project Unit	by 2021	June 2021: check number of successful new projects
		- training of researchers on project management and funding opportunities	CDS with support of Project Unit	by 2021	November 2021: check number/ category of researchers trained

28. Career development
30. Access to career advice
38. Continuing Professional Development
39. Access to research training and continuous development

Problem identified	Objective	Planned actions	Responsible for implementing	Timing	Monitoring Plan
SU has no strategy for continuous development of researchers and their career support, as well as relevant services	Strengthen the services for career guidance and competences development of researchers	- establishment of a working group to study the career development practice, and to prepare HR strategy and action plan	AWG with support of CDS	by 2019	November 2019: validate HR strategy and plan
		- training of administrative staff on career development services	CDS	by 2020	November 2020: check number of administrative staff trained
		- awareness raising of researchers for the new HRM plan and services in place	CDS with support of RFG	by 2020	November 2020: check number of researchers made aware

		- regular monitoring of researchers needs for new knowledge and skills, and provision of relevant training	CDS with support of RFG	by 2021	November 2021: check researchers' satisfaction
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Training and Development

37. Supervision and managerial duties 40. Supervision

Problem identified	Objective	Planned actions	Responsible for implementing	Timing	Monitoring Plan
More emphasis is needed for monitoring of PhD supervisors obligations, and ensuring a concrete framework for mentoring of post-docs. More emphasis is needed for careful selection of supervisors and mentors and monitoring of their performance. There is a need for specific guidance and rules for exercising supervision duties.	Ensure research quality and excellent supervision and mentoring of not established researchers (R1 and R2)	- to specify in the HR Strategy requirements related to supervision duties of senior researchers	AWG with support of CDS	by 2019	November 2019: validate HR strategy and plan
		- to develop guidelines for PhD supervision and post-docs mentoring and advise	CDS	by 2020	June 2020: validate guidelines developed
		- training of supervisors and mentors of researchers	CDS	by 2020	November 2020: check number of supervisors and mentors trained