

Human Resources Strategy for Researchers in accordance with principles of European Charter and Code 2016-2020

Approach and methodology

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About the institution

The University of East Sarajevo is an autonomous, integrated higher education and research institution consisting of 15 faculties and two academies located in 10 towns in the eastern part of Republic of Srpska/Bosnia and Herzegovina (Trebinje, Foča, East Sarajevo, Pale, Vlasenica, Srebrenica, Zvornik, Bijeljina, Brčko, Doboj). The faculties and academies, representing Organizational units of the University, are grouped as natural, biotechnical, social and humanistic sciences and artistic fields. In 2013, the University of East Sarajevo became the first public accredited university in Republic of Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Since 2007/08, the Organizational units of the University in East Sarajevo have been operating in accordance with the Bologna process. Now, there are 13.143 students at all three study cycles – I cycle (Bachelor) 11.293, II cycle (Master) 1.758 and III cycle (PhD) 92. Enhancing dynamic cooperation and knowledge and experience exchanges through mobility, the continuation of the integration process, strengthening the research process, increase in visibility, strengthening local and regional development of the community, all these are priorities of the University of East Sarajevo. Over the past 15 years, the University has been actively involved in Tempus projects, Erasmus Mundus, FP7, Erasmus+, due to which the University has become a member of various national and international University Associations (EUA, the Danube and the Alps Adria Rectors' Conferences). The aspect of human resources is of paramount importance for the improvement of work and the quality of science and research at the University. The University currently employs 634 PhDs, 201 masters, and 86 graduate students in the learning process.

The approach and methodology

The management of the University of East Sarajevo has decided to accept the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and on 07 February 2013, the rector of the University of East Sarajevo, Prof. dr Mitar Novakovic, signed the Declaration of accession to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

The implementation process of the Charter and Code at the University of East Sarajevo began in mid-2013 when the working groups were established. They began the introductory preparation for the implementation of internal analysis and action plan in a centralized and integrated way. Later, over the time, these working groups have been expanded, and analyzing and implementing Charter & Code has become a regular part of the work of all members of the working groups. Also, during some time, apart from the working groups, individual experts have been appointed helping in the implementation of this process.

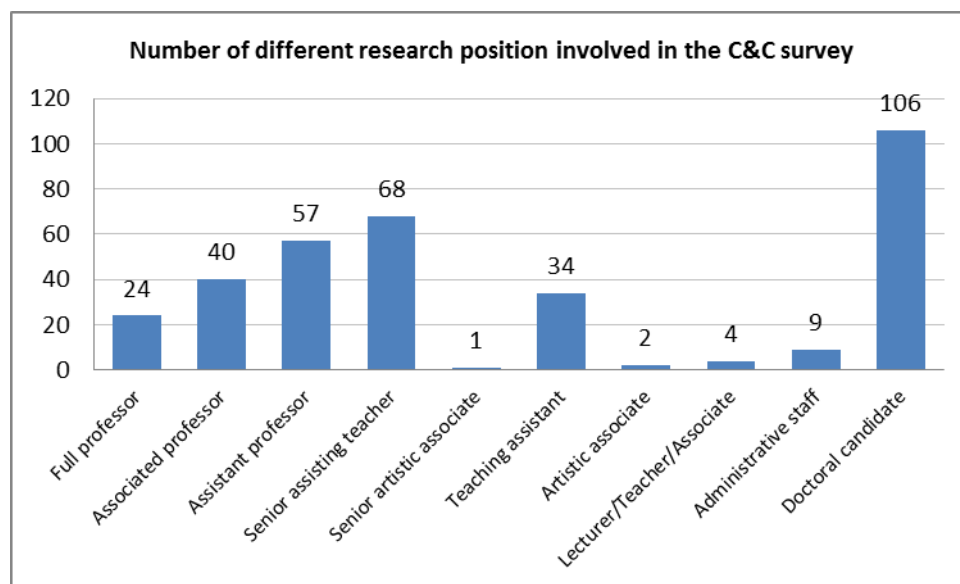
The rector and vice-rectors conducted dissemination of the Charter & Code presenting the planned activities and commitments at the meetings of the University Senate, which was unanimously approved. Then, at the meeting of the Quality Assurance Committee (professional and advisory body of the Senate) held on 20/12/2013, the Charter & Code was considered and it was decided that the Committee should present the final version of the questionnaire to be used for filling by researchers at the next meeting. Once the questionnaire has been determined, the experts in this area created an electronic questionnaire in order to conduct the survey quickly and with the results automatically available.

The survey was delivered to all deans and vice-deans of 17 Organizational units on 06/10/2014 in electronic form attached to a formal letter with the electronic survey link

(LimeSurvey) in order to be filled by all teachers and associates considered at the University as teachers and researchers. The deans were asked to help with their logistic services in organizing and completing the survey among researchers. The researchers (all teachers and associates of the University) were supposed to declare on each of the principles through a simplified electronic questionnaire with 40 assertions related to 40 principles of the Charter & Code. The survey was responded by 239 employees at the University of East Sarajevo, which has created a critical group of responses providing possibility of having statistically valid results. The working group analyzed the survey results and prepared a report which has been presented at the Rector's Collegium of the University of East Sarajevo, the core group for the implementation of the process.

Then, during 2016, completing of the same survey was organized for the PhD students of the University who are considered as researchers. They have had the opportunity to access the survey and to express their opinions and views on the basic 40 principles of Charter & Code. A total of 106 PhD students completed the survey.

In the end, a total of 345 researchers at the University of East Sarajevo completed the survey related to the evaluation of the Charter & Code principles.



After the results, the key group - the University management, has decided that the score of 4 is to be treated as a mean score (used grading scale 1-5) under which the results are considered unsatisfactory. So, for all questions with the ratings below 4 activities have been prepared, which implementation should lead to improvements. These activities will represent the action plan, or be an integral part of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers. In general, the management of the University has been a little stricter in defining medium-assessment in an effort to undertake action to improve the research sector as much as possible.

The relevant legislation, place where the principle is present in the documents relating to the operations of the University, current institutional practice, necessary action which is in line with research conducted by questionnaire among researchers, responsibilities and deadlines have been defined for each principle of the Charter & Code.

In parallel with this activity, the management has determined strategic objectives and long-term research vision with a detailed overview of activities, defining outcomes, key performance indicators, impact on the institution, challenges for implementation and explanation. The University Departments for Quality Assurance, International Cooperation,

Legal department, University IT center, and Financial department have worked on this action plan. The plan has been considered by the Quality Assurance Committee and the University Senate, which gave final approval for implementation. The key thing is that all Departments have assessed that the activities are real and may be feasible in the next four-year period.

Before the final draft, the Strategy has been sent to the University Senate. The draft was previously approved by the management of the University. The management of the University has assessed the impact of each activity individually and challenges for realization.

For easier monitoring and orientation regarding deadlines of ongoing activities, Gantt chart of activities has been made.

The entire analysis of the adaptation of the criteria of the Charter & Code has included the **following key groups** of participants with the following responsibilities:

- Representatives of the University management: Rector (prof. dr Radoslav Grujić, previous Rector prof. dr Mitar Novaković) and Vice-rectors (Vice-rector for International Cooperation and Quality Assurance prof. dr Dejan Bokonjić and Vice-rector for Science, Research and Development prof. dr Slaviša Moljević, previous Vice-rector prof. dr Stevan Trbojević) – responsibility in management of the entire procedure, coordination, its supervision, feasibility of the actions proposed in the Strategy and set deadlines.
- Deans and Vice-deans: meeting of the Deans and Vice-deans (especially Vice-deans for Science and Research) – responsibility has been connected with ensuring the implementation of the questionnaire of internal analysis on their Organizational units and in dissemination of Charter & Code at the faculties and academies of the University.
- Legal experts associates Nina Ličina, BCs of Law and Jovana Amović, BCs of Law – responsibility has been connected with the reviewing the existing institutional, entity and national regulations and providing connectivity of the Charter & Code principles with the relevant legislation; the provision of legal interpreting regarding the relevant principles, and possibilities of improving the institutional framework with the requirements of the Charter & Code principles.
- Quality Assurance Committee – professional and advisory body of the Senate – responsibility has been connected with discussion and adoption of the questionnaire methodology. It reformulated the original principles of the Charter & Code into the survey questions which were later used (psychologist Dr. Šuajb Solaković was the leader for defining the C&C questionnaire).
- Department of Quality Assurance (QA Coordinator Nenad Marković, M.Sc), Department of International Cooperation (International Cooperation Coordinator Slobodanka Krulj, M.Sc) and Department of Science, Research and Development (Project Officer Dajana Vukojević, PhD; Senior Officer for Development Predrag Ždrale, BSc. Econ and Financial Officer for projects Todor Obradović, BSc. Econ) – responsibility has been connected with the operational activities during the planning, organization, coordination and control of the process, by order of the management of the University.
- IT expert, Vice-dean for Science and Research at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering Dr. Danijel Mijić – responsibility was the development of an electronic questionnaire in the program LimeSurvey to have the results automatically generated and immediately available.

- IT expert, Coordinator of the University IT centre Zoran Novaković, Bachelor in Engineering. He has estimated feasibility of IT improvements in accordance with the requirements of the Charter & Code.
- All employees who are scientists and researchers (PhDs, masters, MA and employed graduates, PhD students) – responsibility was to fill in the questionnaire which was the base for developing the internal analysis.
- Administration staff of the University (Departments of Science, Research and Development, QA, International Cooperation, Legal department and Financial department).

The methodology for the implementation of the principles of Charter & Code at the University has been organized and conducted in the following way:

1. Signing the Declaration of accession to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct on the Recruitment of Researchers,
2. The establishment of sectoral working groups and appointment of various experts to work on the implementation of the Charter & Code,
3. Dissemination of information about the Charter & Code in the sessions of the Senate and the Quality Assurance Committee in order to increase awareness of the need to improve the research sector at all Organizational units of the University as a whole,
4. Analyzing principles of the Charter & Code by the Legal department and the Quality Assurance Committee in order to evaluate the possibilities of the current situation through the principles of the Charter & Code and possible improvements,
5. Converting 40 principles of the Charter & Code into questions to be used for the implementation of internal analysis by questionnaire among researchers at the University,
6. Creating an electronic questionnaire and conducting surveys among researchers,
7. Automatic processing of survey results,
8. Defining the medium scores in poll below which activities to improve will be planned,
9. Creating an internal analysis according to the principles of Charter & Code with the relevant legislation, existing institutional practices, necessary actions, responsibilities and deadlines,
10. Developing of strategic objectives, long-term strategic vision and action plan similar as the previous item; to define for each action to be implemented the outcome, a key performance indicator, impact on the institution, challenges for implementation and explanation,
11. Reviewing and approving strategic goals, long-term strategic vision and action plan by the management of the University (Rector, Vice-Rectors),
12. Assessing the impact on the institution and challenges for realization of these activities by the management of the University,
13. Creating a Gantt Chart of the Action Plan,
14. Consideration and approval of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers that includes the European Charter and Code for Researchers by the University Senate,
15. Submission of applications for HR excellence in research to the European Commission.

All steps in the planned methodology are respected and the Strategy as such is submitted to the European Commission for review.

During the planning, organization, coordination and control process a number of meetings have been held. Since 2013 to the present these activities have been classified and

treated as a regular operation and an integral part of work of all involved key groups and individuals.

Strategic goals and research vision

The obligation of the University of East Sarajevo is to work on the development of educational and research process with special emphasis on the development of knowledge and acquisition of skills that will provide high-quality human resources who will be able to respond to the challenges of environment.

„The vision of the University is to become recognizable on regional and international levels through excellence in teaching, research and art.“

The vision of the University of East Sarajevo is to be a higher education institution which:

- continuously develops autonomy of the University;
- is open, ready and able to accept the expected changes in the sphere of higher education and scientific research and artistic work;
- promotes and supports public debate and democracy;
- provides students professional knowledge according to changing demands of regional, national or international environment;
- strengthens internationalization in training students to succeed in a global society and improves the teaching staff and student mobility;
- applies new technologies in teaching;
- continuously develops quality assurance system;
- improves the efficiency of studies at all levels;
- provides continuous participation of students in teaching, research, artistic and management process;
- continuously develops and improves relations with industry and alumni organizations in order to obtain feedback to improve teaching and research process;
- works on the process of financial independence through entrepreneurship and innovation in education and research;
- follows the highest level in disciplinary and multidisciplinary research in order to improve the development of knowledge for the benefit of the local and wider environment, social institutions and in favor of the own development;
- achieves international standards in regarding own activities and the management and implements strategic management as a framework for future decision-making.

The main elements of Research Vision for the period 2016-2020 are:

- **support and investment in research and scientific culture that rewards innovation,**
- **improvement of research infrastructure and development of favorable environment for researchers in accordance with the Charter & Code,**
- **development of new curricula that will enhance research excellence,**
- **promotion of a rewarding system and development of research culture for researchers,**
- **increase in awareness and support all initiatives for staff development,**
- **development of strategic international partnerships.**

All these elements, together with the set strategic objectives, provide a framework of guidelines for the University for making future decisions and investments in research during the next five years.

The strategic objectives defined in the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers, which includes the European Charter & Code for researchers are:

1. Improving the education of researchers and strengthening mobility,
2. Improving legislation related to research support,
3. Strengthening research capacities (human, financial, material),
4. Quality assurance in research,
5. Contribution to the recognition of the University as an engine of local and regional development through cooperation with the environment.

Strategic objectives		Perspectives			
		Financial perspective	User perspective	Perspective of the internal processes	Perspective of the learning and growth
1	Improving the education of researchers and strengthening mobility		x	x	x
2	Improving of legislation related to research support		x	x	x
3	Strengthening research capacities (human, financial, material)		x	x	x
4	Quality assurance in research		x	x	
5	Contribution to the recognition of the University as an engine of local and regional development through cooperation with the environment	x	x	x	x

The strategic objectives are also defined to encompass a greater number of users, both internal and external, or to connect the economy and the relevant ministries in the process of improving the research sector. The strategic objectives link user perspective with the perspective of internal processes, and all is observed through the perspective of promotion, learning and growth, with reasonable financial perspective.

In the action plan of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers including the European Charter & Code for researchers, the connection of strategic objectives with the principles of the European Charter & Code for researchers is shown. Then, each strategic objective is followed by activities that should enable the achievement of these strategic objectives to which they belong; there are results or outcomes of each activity, key performance indicators, responsibility, deadlines for completion of activities. Based on the estimated impact on the institution and the complexity of realization, the milestones are defined.

In fact, any activity that has the sum 16 and more has been taken as milestone. There are 15 such activities representing a turning point and guaranteeing the overall strategic implementation.

Actions (activities)

The reason for such definition of the activities is result of the completion of questionnaires and internal analysis. Activities are positioned and visible in detail in the

action plan and grouped by the strategic objectives in the internal analysis document. They are grouped into five strategic objectives as described above.

Strategic objective SG1 *Improving education of researchers and strengthening the mobility* has 7 activities. Strategic goal SG2 *Improvement of legislation related to research support* has 13 activities. Strategic objective SG3 *Strengthening research capacities (human, financial, material)* has 14 activities. Strategic objective SG4 *Quality assurance of research work* has 12 activities. Strategic objective SG5 *Contribution to the recognition of the University as an engine for local and regional development through cooperation with the environment* has 6 activities.

The realization of the planned activities should enable the realization of the strategic objectives which should essentially lead to the realization of the set long-term strategic research vision.

Key activities that are defined as milestones are identified on the basis of the impact assessment on the institution and the complexity of implementation (activities marked in red). Any activity that has the sum 16 and more has been treated as milestone. There are 15 such activities and they will be specially treated and monitored during the implementation process.

Any activity, including the strategic objectives at the end, can be measured, estimated on the basis of the final results if realized, the responsibility, and deadlines.

Implementation and control of activities

Implementation of each action, which is the part of the Strategy, is simplified in the sense of already defined outcomes/deliverables for each action, key performance indicators, responsibilities and terms. So, there is clear responsibility what has to be done for each activity. Coordination of all activities will be done in accordance with assigned responsibilities. After development of this Strategy, the University Management (rector and vice-rectors in accordance with the approval of the Senate) has given its endorsement and confirmation that all activities have to be done in understandable defined terms. Realization of all activities will be monitored and controlled over quality assurance system of the University, particularly over Procedure for internal control of the University. Special attention will be paid to activities in red which are defined as milestones.

The following methodology will be used for the implementation of the Strategy:

1. Starting initiative and sending notification by the University Management to all responsible bodies, offices and persons for starting implementation of adopted actions in accordance with defined outcomes and terms,
2. Appointing Commission for monitoring and controlling of implementation activities by the University Management,
3. Conducting of Internal audits for control of some activities in accordance with the order of the University Management,
4. Creation of annual evaluation report about realization of all activities.