



UNIVERSITY of INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY and MANAGEMENT
in Rzeszów, POLAND

„Making research career at UITM
accessible and attractive”

Human Resources Strategy for Researchers and Action Plan at the University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów

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I. The implementation process of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) at the University of Information Technology and Management

The University of Information Technology and Management (UITM) in Rzeszów, in the southeast of Poland, is a private academic institution active since 1996. The University educates students at two cycles (*licencjat*/undergraduate and *magister*/graduate) at 16 fields (including 5 conducted in English) at 4 faculties (Faculty of Administration and Social Sciences, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Applied IT, Faculty of Medicine). Since 2015, UITM is also entitled to grant the doctoral degree within media studies, and plans to gain such rights also in other fields. The University conducts research work in areas related to the fields of study it offers. It is also very committed to matters of import to the regional (Podkarpacie) and local community. UITM is working with a wide spectrum of partners representing public administration, business and the non-governmental sector. The University has a high level of internationality reflected mainly in the number of international students from 27 countries (in the academic year 2015-2016, 2nd university in Poland with regard to their number). UITM aspires to be counted among modern international Universities which maintain the standards contained in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

The Commission's Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers and on the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, issued 2005, has for the last several years been the reference point for shaping HR policy and research policy at UITM. In the last two years (2014-2016) those activities have been intensified due to the application process for HR Excellence logo.

In December 2014 a working group for HR strategy for UITM was appointed. It included representatives of all levels of university authorities and communities: Vice-President for Science, proxies of deans for science, and heads and employees of selected (key) administrative departments and the department for research and teaching process support.

The composition of the working group for HR strategy for UITM:

Vice-President for Science - Prof. Jan Hetrich-Woleński

Proxies of the Vice-President for Science: Assoc. Prof. Marcin Szewczyk, Ph.D., Assoc. Prof. Agata Jurkowska-Gomułka, Ph.D., Aleksandra Filipowicz, Ph.D., Eng., Teresa Mroczek, Ph.D., Eng., Kamil Wais, Ph.D.

Head of the Department of Science: Renata Partyka; employee of the Department of Science: Monika Ślepecka

Head of the UITM HR Consulting Department: Bernadetta Kulinowska

Head of the UITM HR Department: Beata Ludera-Sitek; employees of the HR Department: Aleksander Harpula, Elżbieta Kisała

The working group performed a gap analysis of UITM HR policy. The preparation of an analysis in the form of a questionnaire based on the pattern made available by the Commission required the cooperation and consultation of many internal units of the University. The analyses were conducted based on legal acts, the University's internal (quasi-legal) documents, interviews with University employees and the working group's members' own experiences.

The first version of the analysis was presented for consultation to external partners represented in the UITM Convent and to research employees' representatives in faculty councils (October 2015). On receiving detailed comments from the partners, a final version of the analysis was prepared (December 2015), which formed the basis for the adopted development strategy for human resources in science and for the plan of its implementation at UITM (January-March 2016). In April 2016, parallel to presenting the strategy to the research employees' representatives in faculty councils, the materials from the working group's proceedings were published at the University's website in Polish and in English, together with information about the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and University authorities' declaration of support for the Charter. By 15th May 2016, UITM will have applied to the Commission for the right to use the HR Excellence logo.

II. The aims of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers and Action Plan at the University of Information Technology and Management

1. Enhancing and improving the current legal and practical regulations within employment policy with regard to researchers
2. Promoting the principles of researcher ethics in internal and external stakeholders
3. Improving the employee appraisal system for researchers (towards a more qualitative appraisal)
4. Constantly improving the quality of working conditions of researchers by extending the programme of trainings concerning a researcher's professional status and competences
5. Raising the competences of researchers within career and research activity management

III. Gap analysis of UITM HR policy: strengths and weaknesses

The gap analysis of UITM HR (employment) policy was conducted in four areas. The key results are presented below. Details concerning particular aspects are contained in the analytical table which is given in an attachment to this strategy. Instructions for specific operational measures in response to the identified weaknesses of UITM HR policy are presented below, with the schedule for implementing them given in point IV below.

(I) Ethical and professional aspects

In the first area, the analysis indicated that a great majority of requirements concerning respect for professionalism and ethical principles in employing researchers is guaranteed at the level of national law (compliance with which is a self-evident standard of the University's functioning), the University's internal acts and its practices.

As regards research freedom, it was stated that the University's strategy of scientific development indicates only general priority areas for the University's scientific development, which guarantees researchers full freedom of choosing research areas and topics to examine individually or in a team. What may be viewed as the only and minor limitation to research freedom is the perceived subordination of young researchers (below an Assistant Professor), but that reporting line results from the necessary mentoring and is also necessary in the context of applying for external research financing.

The University's strengths in the area discussed include the functioning of internal "Regulations for Intellectual Property and Legal Protection of Intellectual Assets at UITM". Thanks to internal regulations and procedures, the few cases of intellectual property rights infringement which have appeared throughout the twenty years of UITM's history were quickly and easily identified and resulted in immediate and specific corrective measures (initiation of proceedings in accordance with internal procedures and Polish law) taken by the disciplinary liability bodies for academic teachers: Disciplinary Spokesperson and Disciplinary Committee. Analysis of complying with ethical norms and broadly understood intellectual (and industrial) property rights is part of the biennial appraisal of each academic teacher (researcher) performed by the University authorities.

The University is characterised by highly professional approach to research organisation, developed in the twenty years of its functioning. The Vice-President for Science is responsible for coordinating researchers' activities within attaining research aims, research itself and obtaining funds for it. Each faculty has a Proxy of the Vice-President for Science who exercises the received prerogatives within the University's research and scientific policy in direct cooperation with the researchers. The Department of Science is the unit formally coordinating research activity. The Department transfers information about the possibilities of financing research and changes in research organisation resulting from modifications of the Polish legal system, to researchers at all faculties on a current basis. The Department of Science is also engaged in consulting and verification of the required documents at any stage of obtaining, conducting and reporting scientific grants. The Project Office assists in that – in the case of any irregularities, derogations or problems related to research grants it offers support in substantive matters. Detailed prudential procedures are implemented by the above named units for projects financed from budget means.

UITM's strength is also popularisation of research results, not only through typical research activity (publications, participation in conferences), but also thanks to social activity oriented towards external partners. The latter type of activity is conducted e.g. by the following University units: Europe Direct Info Point, Regional Centre of International Debate (under the auspices of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Institute of Research on Civilisations, Zimbardo Centre of Conflict Resolution,

Rzeszów Inspiration Academy (for gymnasium – junior secondary school – pupils), or 50+ Academy (for seniors). Also, starting May 2016, the University will have a European Documentation Centre in the Europe Direct network.

The multidimensional nature of research conducted by University employees generates the issue of ensuring security of various stakeholders in many aspects (data security, IT security, work health and safety, legal security). Therefore, a Security Director was appointed in the organisational structure, working closely with the Data Protection Officer (ABI) and the Work Health and Safety Inspectorate. Units which ensure the particularly important security of computer systems and databases are: IT System Security Section, Computer Network Management Section, and Operating Systems Management Section, which are responsible e.g. for realising the strategy of (organising) the backup system for servers.

As a result of the conducted analysis, in the first area it was decided that it was necessary to develop a UITM Code of Researcher Ethics in order to enhance the significance of ethical principles in researchers' work. The number of national laws and internal regulations (all fully complied with at the University) and the level of their complexity may cause individual researchers to have trouble understanding them right, so it is necessary to raise the level of practical knowledge of those regulations through systematising them at the University. In order to do that, a Team for Developing the UITM Code of Researcher Ethics was established in October 2015. The Team includes: the Disciplinary Spokesperson for Academic Teachers, Vice-President for Science, Proxies of the Vice-President for Science, representatives of the University's Legal Department, the Chair of Administrative Law and the Chair of Law Theory.

(II) Recruitment

Recruitment procedures for researchers have been developed by the HR Consulting Department. In the process of recruiting new research and teaching employees, the University is guided mainly by a candidate's experience gained throughout his/her professional career, his/her scientific potential measured with the scientific achievements and experience shaped throughout his/her career, as well as motivation and the presented plans of further scientific development. Important factors impacting the outcome of the recruitment procedure are the candidate's autonomy, his/her research integrity, innovation and creativity. Hence in accordance with UITM internal HR policy, when a research and teaching position is advertised, the University chooses people who meet the specified substantive requirements regardless of other circumstances of the candidate's situation, such as e.g. a break in scientific career or other situations unfavourable with a view to career shaping. Deviations from chronology or changes in research direction in a candidate's CV not only have no negative impact on the outcome of the recruitment procedure, but in justified cases are even considered a candidate's asset, as they may prove his/her creativity or inclination to search for new challenges.

The recruitment process and candidate choice comply with the principle of non-discrimination and thus are based on objective criteria. The information about the recruitment is made available in the customary ways: at the University's website, in press announcements, at web portals for researchers, and also at the website of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (although UITM as a non-state university is not obliged to publish advertisements at the Ministry's website).

Employees who have obtained their diplomas or other qualification certificates abroad, receive legal consulting services concerning the recognition of the diplomas and certificates, as well as legal help in realising procedures potentially necessary to have the diplomas and certificates recognised.

The University has developed a unique system of support for researchers who wish to develop their career. The University covers the full costs of doctoral and habilitation (post-doctoral) programmes based on relevant contracts. When preparing their habilitation theses, Assistant Professors can take advantage of a research leave, a lower number of organisational hours, they also receive habilitation scholarships. According to the UITM Work Regulations for researchers, the principles of work organisation divide the activity of academic teachers into research, teaching and organisational work. Proportions of those activities have been adjusted to the profile of each employee depending on his/her functions and responsibilities (mainly competences and capabilities). The allotment to employee groups results from an in-depth analysis considering each employee's scientific achievements and achievements within other areas of activity. Such a work model allows people interested in developing their scientific potential to increase their research activity, and also allows those who prefer to create and execute ventures important for the University to commit themselves to teaching and organisational work.

The University also has a mentoring system for young researchers, aimed at supporting their scientific development and facilitating qualification raising through intensive contact with experienced researchers.

As concerns recruitment, it is necessary to prepare documents to collect and systematise the University's practices in that respect. It is mandatory to prepare a President's regulation on the procedures when recruiting employees which would declare that the research employee recruitment process is based on principles indicated in the Code of proceedings for research employee recruitment. The HR Consulting Department will also develop a pattern of proceeding an application (further actions of the Department aimed at providing a full opinion on the candidate based on the qualifications, skills, professional experience and scientific achievements included in the candidate's CV).

(III) Working conditions and social security

Formal employment conditions fully meet the requirements of the relevant national provisions within the area of legal basis of employment, remuneration and its components, the right to a leave and career breaks, or incapability to perform the work. In solving employee disputes conciliatory methods are preferred, implemented mainly by middle-level management (deans and heads of chairs and departments). Employees are represented by the appointed representatives in the University's collegial bodies, i.e. the Senate and Faculty Council, which ensures direct impact on the decisions taken by the University Authorities and active participation in the University's work. Elections of Senate/Faculty Council members are ordered by the President and conducted by the University Election Committee in accordance with the provisions of the University Statute.

In accordance with the Regulations of using the research infrastructure at the University of IT and Management in Rzeszów, the University provides researchers with suitable equipment, laboratories and materials necessary in the research work. It ensures financial means to maintain the research potential of University employees. The University encourages and supports researchers in preparing research grants for external institutions and in commercialising the results of their research work. It is possible to arrange with their superiors individual work modes, e.g. working remotely.

The University has developed its own system of financial support for employee professional development: a system of internal grants, including research grants and teaching ones, and a system for financing conference participation. Language courses are also organised for employees. The Department of International Cooperation supports researchers in applying and organising foreign trips (e.g. within the Erasmus+ programme).

Numerous internal regulations establishing support systems for employees turn out in practice to be insufficiently transparent for researchers, especially young ones. To improve the availability of internal instruments of support, a decision was made to

organise annual information seminars, addressed in particular to young researchers and employees starting their work at the University.

It is also necessary to support employees in the area of managing their own intellectual property rights and commercialising their research results. A necessary element in that field are trainings oriented towards raising the qualifications of research employees.

(IV) Training

The University's organisational system enables researchers constant contact with their scientific supervisor and the Head of the Chair/Department, whose role is e.g. organising research work in the chair/department, including help in preparing research projects, regular consulting and appraisal of the progress of the doctoral/post-doctoral thesis, as well as organising and encouraging employees to take part in other activities, such as compulsory scientific meetings of the Chair/Department, seminars and conferences. Building right, constructive relations with the mentees is part of the responsibilities of senior researchers as resulting from the Work Regulations for Professors. In the first months of their employment, researchers are included in the Mentor system, and their relations with their scientific supervisor are specified in the Regulations of the Mentor System.

The duty to conduct research and to develop scientifically results from the work regulations for the particular research positions (Assistant Lecturers, Assistant Professors, and Professors). At each stage of their professional career, regardless of the position they have, researchers can develop professionally through access to means aimed at steady development of their skills and competences.

IV. Actions/results aimed at achieving the aims

To supplement the previous activities, implemented with the intention of making UITM a friendly and easily accessible place to scientists, also those from abroad, in order to eliminate weaknesses and enhance strengths identified in the Gap Analysis it is necessary to take the following measures at UITM within the presented Strategy:

- **Developing UITM Code of Researcher Ethics:** although many various ethical codes already exist, the character of UITM's functioning – in particular the issue of research commercialisation and relations between researchers and business and local authorities – requires the University to adopt the UITM Code of Researchers Ethics. The Code will indicate universal values for scientists to follow, ethical use of copyright, practices concerning research procedures (including research commercialisation), the most serious violations of ethics, principles of proceeding if the Code is infringed on. The document will refer to the European Charter of Researchers and the Code of Conduct for Researchers adopted by the General Assembly of the Polish Academy of Sciences in 2012. The team developing the Code of Ethics comprises: the Vice-President for Science, employees of the Department of Science, Faculty proxies for science, and research employees of the Department of Cognitive Science.

Reference to the Gap Analysis: I.1. (Research Freedom); I.2. (Ethical principles); I.3. (Professional responsibility); I.6.

(Accountability); I.7. Good practice in research; I.8. (Dissemination, exploitation of results); I.9. (Public engagement); IV.37. (Supervision and managerial duties): IV.38. (Continuing Professional Development)

- **Establishing the Committee for Ethics in Research:** in order to ensure compliance of research conducted at UITM with high ethical standards and support for employees when solving moral dilemmas related to the conducted research, the

Committee for Ethics in Research will be established at UITM (as of 1st October 2016). The Committee's responsibility will mainly be to provide opinions from an ethical perspective (by resolution upon a motion) on research projects conducted at UITM. The Committee's functioning will be based on Regulations of the functioning of the Committee for Ethics in Research at UITM, which will enter into force based on the President's decision. The Committee will consist of 8-12 members appointed by the President's regulation for a five-year term of office, with a Chair heading the team. People invited by the Chair may participate in the Committee's work in an advisory capacity.

Reference to the Gap Analysis: I.1. (Research Freedom); I.2. (Ethical principles); I.3. (Professional responsibility); I.6.

(Accountability); I.7. Good practice in research; I.8. (Dissemination, exploitation of results); I.9. (Public engagement); IV.37. (Supervision and managerial duties); IV.38. (Continuing Professional Development)

- **Organising trainings in intellectual property protection** (with case study analysis): the issues of intellectual property protection are still not known well enough to university employees, at least in some areas. The trainings in which UITM researchers will take part will focus on conveying knowledge on the most current problems related mainly to copyright, and to a lesser extent to patent law and related disciplines, such as legal protection of integrated circuits or legal protection of utility models. Much attention will be devoted to the issues of copyright protection within open access. Trainings for all researchers will be conducted using case studies, based as much as possible on real problems encountered by university staff. The person responsible for the trainings organised in UITM's seat will be Andrzej Kiebała, Ph.D., employee of the legal department, lawyer, UITM teacher, member of Poland's Main Council of Science and Higher Education.

Reference to the Gap Analysis: I.1. (Research Freedom)

- **Improving recruitment procedure principles:** so far the recruitment procedures at UITM, including those relating to research positions, have been conducted according to unwritten good practices developed by the HR Consulting Department. The practices do not require any significant changes, but in the light of implementing the HR Strategy it is necessary to define them in the form of the President's regulation (on principles of employment at UITM). Additionally, the HR Consulting Department will prepare an internal document to describe how to process a researcher's application for employment at UITM. Candidates for employment at UITM will be acquainted with both documents right on submitting their applications.

Reference to the Gap Analysis: II.12. (Recruitment); II.13. (Recruitment (Code)); II.14. (Selection (Code)); II.15.

(Transparency (Code)); II.16. (Judging merit (Code)); II.17. (Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)); II.18. (Recognition of mobility experience (Code)); II.19. Recognition of qualifications (Code); II.20. Seniority (Code); II.21. (Postdoctoral appointments (Code)); III.22. (Recognition of the profession); III.27. (Gender balance)

- **Organising information seminars on the internal support system for researchers:** the dynamic environment in which modern researchers function, the changing procedures of grant application, the changing legal regulations require researchers to have a high level of knowledge about those changes. Within the internal researcher support system, at the beginning of each academic year the Department of Science and the University Coordinator for Erasmus+ will organise information seminars concerning mainly the opportunities of research and research trip financing. Depending on the possibilities and the openness of external institutions, also representatives of relevant external institutions whose activity may impact researchers' situation will be invited to conduct the seminars. Another area of the yearly seminars will be potential changes in promotion procedures (obtaining doctoral or post-doctoral degrees or the title of a professor), as well

as potential changes in the internal researcher appraisal system. The trainings will be addressed mainly to young researchers who are just starting their scientific career and those with a doctoral degree, but they will also be open for experienced researchers.

Reference to the Gap Analysis: III.28. (Career development)

- **Organising trainings connected with discussion panels in two thematic blocks: 1) entrepreneurship for researchers (within commercialising research results), 2) industrial rights property management:** the environment in which modern researchers function requires cooperation with external stakeholders in various aspects. In the first place, the cooperation concerns business, allowing to commercialise research results. In a researcher-entrepreneur relation, the former – although specialised in the given field – is usually the “weaker” entity with a view to knowledge of legal regulations and principles of functioning of the specific market/industry. In order to prevent such a compromised position of a researcher, the Centre for Technology Transfer will organise yearly trainings addressed to all research employees which will provide the interested parties with knowledge on the principles of shaping relations with businesses, including principles of research result commercialisation beneficial for the researcher, as well as on the principles of managing industrial property rights. The trainings will be held by employees of the Centre for Technology Transfer and by external experts. The trainings supplement the current consulting services of the Centre for Technology Transfer for researchers.

Reference to the Gap Analysis: III.31. (Intellectual Property Rights)

Type of activity	Dates	Responsible units and/or persons	Result	Result indicator
Area of analysis				
Developing UITM Code of Researcher Ethics <i>(I) Ethical and professional aspects (I.1.; I.2.; I.3.; I.6.; I.7;I.8; I.9.;</i> <i>(IV) Training (IV.37)</i>	October 2015 - October 2016	Team for developing the UITM Code of Researcher Ethics	Raising the level of practical knowledge of regulations by implementing an internal document adjusted to the University's character, resulting in correct reception of the ethical principles in research work and in enhancing their significance for each UITM research employee	Number of documents approved for implementation at the University: 1
Establishing the Committee for Ethics in Research <i>(I) Ethical and professional aspects (I.1.; I.2.; I.3.; I.6.; I.7;I.8; I.9.)</i> <i>(IV) Training (IV.37)</i>	March- October 2016	Department of Science	Ensuring compliance of research conducted at UITM with high ethical standards, support for employees when solving moral dilemmas related to the conducted research	Number of documents approved for implementation at the University: 1
Organising trainings in intellectual property protection (with case study analysis)	Annually .. October /April	UITM Legal Department Andrzej Kiebała, Ph.D.	Increased level of knowledge of intellectual property protection issues	Number of researchers trained: 161

<i>(I) Ethical and professional aspects (I.1.)</i>				
Improving recruitment procedure principles	December 2015 - November 2016	HR Consulting Department Department of Science	Increased quality of researcher recruitment model	1. Regulation considering the proceeding principles with employee recruitment 2. Pattern of proceeding a researcher's application Number of documents: 2
<i>(II) Recruitment (II.12.; II.13.; II.14.; II.15.; II.16.; II.17.; II.18.; II.19.; II.20.; II.21.)</i> <i>(III) Working conditions and social security (III.22; III.27)</i>				
Organising information seminars on the internal support system for researchers	Annually (since 2015): October	Department of Science University Coordinator for Erasmus+	Increased level of knowledge of the issues concerned in the training	Number of researchers trained: 105
<i>(III) Working conditions and social security (III.28)</i>				
Organising trainings connected with discussion panels in two thematic blocks: 1) entrepreneurship for researchers (within commercialising research results), 2) industrial rights	Annually (since 2016): January-March	Centre for Technology Transfer	Increased level of knowledge of industrial property rights management issues	Number of researchers trained: 161

property management				
<i>(III) Working conditions and social security (III.31)</i>				

V. Monitoring strategy implementation

Since April 2016, the strategy implementation process has been monitored by the Monitoring Team, which includes proxies of the Vice-President for Science and head of the Department of Science. The monitoring process is based on reports from heads of the units responsible for the activities contained in the strategy, and on interviews with researchers.

The monitoring concerns not only activities to be implemented within this strategy, but also the current state of HR (employment) policy as identified at the stage of the gap analysis. Monitored will also be the state of legal regulations directly or indirectly concerning researchers – changes in that field may require the strategy to be adapted in the specific areas.

The Monitoring Team meets once a year (in November) to adopt a report on strategy implementation and potentially formulate recommendations for particular University units. The results of the monitoring are presented to the President once a year to have the strategy implementation process appraised.

VI. Communication policy

The **Human Resources Strategy for Researchers** and the plan of its implementation at the University of IT and Management are available to the public. The content of the strategy and accompanying documents have been placed at the University's website. Information on the strategy's existence and on activities implementing it will be conveyed to all research employees within the interinstitutional communication system.

