Human Resources Strategy for Researchers at Paderborn University

HRS4R Strategy & Action Plan
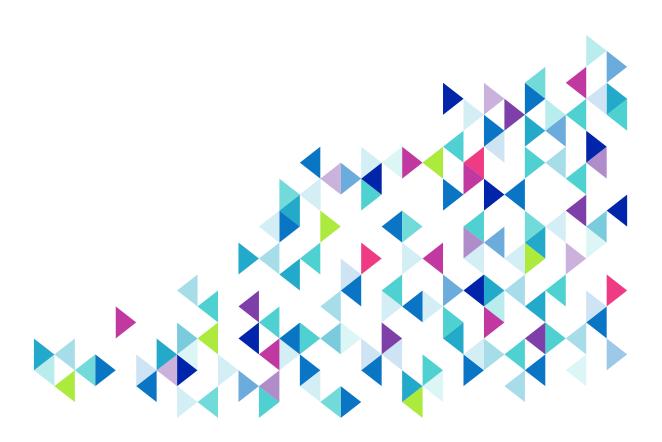
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Organisational Profile

Paderborn University is a medium-sized university in the heart of Germany with a strong focus on research and transfer. Five faculties offer study programmes in the fields of Arts and Humanities, Economics, Engineering, Natural and Computer Sciences. Our researchers work on shaping the technologies of the future and develop sustainable solutions, with a strong focus on societal change. Collaborations with other universities, companies and research associations – both nationally and internationally – contribute to the university's excellent networks and infrastructure. For example, Paderborn University coordinates the *COLOURS alliance*, funded by the European Commission as part of the European University initiative.

The HRS4R Initial Phase

HRS4R Audit

In October 2023, Paderborn University decided to participate in the HRS4R audit (*Human Resources Strategy for Researchers*), a process initiated by the European Commission. With the aim of strengthening the European Research Area and improving the working conditions of researchers, the European Commission has established a fundamental framework (the *European Charter for Researchers* and the *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*), which is the basis for the audit. Participating institutions that are committed to implementing these principles and are successful in establishing and promoting them in their HR strategy receive the *HR Excellence in Research Award* after being closely assessed by the European Commission.

Project Structure and Process of Initial Phase

A project group was established to coordinate the initial phase and prepare the application documents.

Within the Executive Board, the Vice-President for Research and Junior Academics assumed strategic responsibility for the HRS4R process and ensured regular communication with the Executive Board and the various university committees. As part of the HRS4R process, the Jenny Aloni Centre's Board of Directors acted as an overseeing committee: The HRS4R Advisory Board accompanied the entire process, advised the project group and ensured the regular involvement of researchers from various career stages and from all faculties as well as members from the Executive level and interest groups in the HRS4R process.

Over a period of several months, the project group has carried out two extensive workshop series to review the current practices at Paderborn University and to identify potential fields of action to strengthen the alignment with the principles of the Charter & Code. In the first workshop series, the project group worked together with more than 40 representatives from the faculties, the Central University Administration, the central offices and institutions and the interest groups in different topic groups. In the second workshop phase, these findings were discussed with researchers in cross-thematic workshops. In five target group workshops, more than 50 researchers contributed by sharing their perspectives and experiences. For each career level, one workshop was organised (R1, R2, R3, R4) and one for a group of international researchers.

The results were then consolidated by the project group and supplemented with results from previous surveys. The extensive gap analysis revealed several strengths and weaknesses, which led to six strategic goals to build on the strengths and to reduce the weaknesses and gaps identified. Finally, a bundle of concrete actions was planned for each strategic goal and coordinated with the responsible units. This Action Plan will assist Paderborn University in further implementing the principles of the Charter & Code.

Current Practice

The comprehensive review of current practices at Paderborn University showed that many principles defined in Charter & Code are already fulfilled. In the following, the current practice is summarised under the four thematic headings of the European Commission, including relevant national legislation, internal regulations and guidelines as well as structures and services that are established at Paderborn University.

Ethical and Professional Aspects

Freedom of science and research is enshrined in the German constitution and is a cornerstone of our knowledge-based society. In order to fulfil this privilege, researchers are obliged to maintain scientific integrity. In order to highlight the importance of scientific integrity, the German Research Foundation (DFG), the self-governing organisation of science and research in Germany, has published *Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice (Code of Conduct)* and called on all universities to create their own guidelines based on the code. The corresponding *Guidelines and Procedures for Safeguarding Good Research Practice at Paderborn University* were accredited by the DFG in 2021. Here, Paderborn University sets out the guiding principles for researchers in areas such as scientific integrity, ethics, working methods and leadership responsibility. In addition, the role of the university's Ombudsperson for Good Research Practice was sharpened and a Standing Committee for Safeguarding Good Research Practice was installed, which also carries out procedures in cases of suspected scientific misconduct. In addition, a permanent Ethics Committee is entrusted with reviewing research projects with regard to ethical implications and issuing ethics votes. A Data Protection Office ensures compliance with data protection regulations and advises researchers on how to handle sensitive data. In this way, Paderborn University has laid a comprehensive foundation, both structurally and legally, to promote good research practice.

With excellent structures in the area of innovation and start-ups, as well as strong partnerships with industry and educational institutions, the university offers ideal conditions for knowledge and technology transfer. The *Transfer Strategy* adopted in 2023 defines the university's understanding of transfer and the objectives for this area. A Transfer Team and experts in the Central University Administration advise and support researchers in their planned transfer activities.

Since 2022, the university has continuously pushed ahead with its efforts to promote Open Science and has successively expanded the support services for researchers in the areas of Open Access, Open Educational Resources and research data management. By signing the *Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities*, the university has committed itself to the principle of open access to scientific knowledge and laid the foundation for its strategic development. An organisational *Open Access Policy* and *Guidelines for Handling Research Data*, as well as the appointment of officers in both areas, testify to the university's commitment to developing these topics in a sustainable way, which is also reflected in the growing range of relevant advisory and training opportunities. An Open Access Publication Fund set up in 2023 provides financial support for researchers to publish their results in Open Access.

Appropriate internal processes and control routines, which are supported and implemented by the Central University Administration, ensure that legal requirements are met and that funds are utilised correctly and efficiently.

Recruitment and Selection

At Paderborn University, new employees are recruited in close cooperation between the Central University Administration and the faculties. While the HR Department focuses on the administration of the recruitment process, the research institutions and working groups are responsible for the selection of staff. The HR Department ensures compliance with federal and state regulations and internal rules by means of standardised

processes and templates. It also provides support for all procedural steps from job advertisement to contract conclusion by providing handouts, guidelines, advice and training.

University-wide regulations are in place for filling professorship, junior and tenure-track professorship and junior research group leadership positions. These clearly define the procedural rules and ensure a high degree of transparency. The correct execution of the appointment procedures is checked by the standard committees to be involved, such as Faculty Councils, the University Executive Board or the Senate. The university's cross-faculty Tenure Board ensures that tenure procedures at Paderborn University are carried out properly and monitors them from the moment the position is advertised.

In principle, applications for all positions at Paderborn University are digital, with as few administrative burdens as possible for applicants. In the case of professorships, an e-tool supports the selection committees throughout the entire process, thus ensuring compliance with data protection requirements and improving the quality of the process. Applications are also submitted digitally via the e-tool, and the current status of the process is displayed transparently for all applicants in the professorship appointment monitor. For its excellent standards and professional procedures when appointing professors, Paderborn University was recently awarded the *DHV Award for Fair and Transparent Appointment Procedures.*

With the *Guidelines and Procedures for Safeguarding Good Research Practice at Paderborn University* adopted in 2021, Paderborn University has made a clear commitment to a multi-dimensional approach to research assessment, prioritising quality and originality over mere quantity. In addition to research achievements, commitment to teaching, knowledge and technology transfer, academic self-administration and science communication should also be included in the assessment. Furthermore, Paderborn University has anchored in these regulations that family or health-related absences or alternative career paths must be given due consideration in the selection of applicants.

Gender equality is a central strategic field of action at Paderborn University. With 40.5% female professors, Paderborn University is one of the leading German universities in terms of gender equality, and its successful recruitment policy has also increased the proportion of women in other staff groups in recent years. When appointing selection committees, Paderborn University prescribes gender-parity. The Equal Opportunities Officer, the Disability Representative and the Staff Councils are to be involved in all procedures. In order to continue these successes, a new awareness-raising measure on the topic of unconscious bias was recently piloted in appointment procedures for professorships.

New researchers are supported by a central onboarding programme that facilitates their entry into the new position. In a one-on-one consultation questions about the employment contract can be clarified. A welcome folder contains the most important information for the start and is complemented by a welcome event, taking place twice a year. International employees can also take advantage of the Welcome Services who provide personal support.

Working Conditions

Paderborn University is explicitly committed to being an attractive and supportive workplace for all researchers and therefore strongly advocates equal opportunities. By offering flexible working conditions like part-time models or mobile working, Paderborn University supports in particular the reconciliation of family and career. Numerous awards, such as the certificate *family-friendly university* or the *TOTAL E-QUALITY award*, are testaments to the university's successful commitment in this area. In addition to this, the university has been actively promoting the topic of equality for years. Numerous stakeholders and measures have contributed to the fact that Paderborn University has been able to significantly increase the proportion of women in all areas in recent years. With the *Guideline for Respectful Cooperation and for Protection against Unfair Treatment, Discrimination, Sexualised Violence and Bullying*, the university is sending a clear signal in favour of a respectful and discrimination-free interaction. At Paderborn University, the involvement of all status groups

in the various committees, commissions and working groups is actively promoted, thus enabling participation in helping to shape the working environment.

Through the implementation of the *Agreement for Good Employment Conditions for University Staff of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia*, Paderborn University has significantly improved the stability and security of employment in recent years, for example by offering longer minimum contract periods for temporary researchers. In principle, academic staff are employed within the framework of the *Collective Agreement for the Public Service of the Federal States* and thus benefit from attractive salaries, comprehensive social security protection and attractive conditions. Fixed collective agreement regulations ensure transparency in salary levels. In principle, the areas of working conditions, personnel law and social security in Germany are very strictly regulated, so that a high standard of protection for staff is already in place simply by implementing federal and state-specific requirements.

In addition, Paderborn University has established a reliable career path with the newly established format of the tenure-track professorship, which offers long-term prospects and planning security for researchers. Mobility in its various forms is an important part of scientific qualification. Within the framework of Erasmus+, the university offers the opportunity for teaching or further education stays. Paderborn University coordinates the *COLOURS alliance*, a network of nine universities that has been funded by the European Commission as a *European University* since 2024. This network provides the best basis for further expanding mobility offers for researchers.

In line with the unity of research and teaching, teaching is a valuable part of the job profile of Paderborn University's researchers, and most employees are entrusted with teaching tasks as part of their employment. An extensive range of further training in higher education didactics, a nationally recognised certificate programme and teaching awards underscore the relevance of high-quality teaching at Paderborn University.

The university's comprehensive *Occupational Health, Safety and Environmental Protection Management System* and the established measures of the Healthy University Initiative promote occupational safety, health and the well-being of employees. In the event of complaints or conflicts, Paderborn University has numerous points of contact and has established appropriate review processes for special incidents, for example, violations of good research practice.

Training and Development

In order to systematically promote the career development of all early career researchers at Paderborn University, structures have been created both on central and decentralised levels and connected in a network in recent years. The Jenny Aloni Centre for Early Career Researchers was established as an umbrella organisation responsible for the overall coordination of the network and to provide services relevant for early career researchers of all faculties that are not discipline specific. Together with the Graduate Centres of the faculties, which provide subject-specific services, and further internal institutions, such as the Staff Development Department, the Higher Education Development Office or the Writing Centre, a comprehensive range of information, training and advice is provided. The wide range of services supports researchers in shaping their competences and profiles for career paths both within and outside of academia. The services are available to all early career researchers at the university free of charge.

The Higher Education Development Office offers all teaching staff the qualification programme *Professional Competence for Academic Teaching*, further training in university didactics and advice on all matters related to teaching and innovative educational formats for higher education. The Staff Development Department also provides further training for professors. This focuses in particular on supporting newly appointed professors.

With regard to doctoral studies, the doctoral regulations of the five faculties transparently govern the processes and formal requirements. Upon acceptance as a doctoral candidate, a supervisor is also appointed in a binding manner. The university has continuously promoted a good and supportive supervisory culture in

recent years. According to the *Guidelines and Procedures for Safeguarding Good Research Practice at Paderborn University*, supervisors are obliged to ensure that early career researchers receive appropriate individual support. To support this task and to create transparency in the supervisory relationship, Paderborn University requires a supervision agreement concluded between doctoral candidates and their supervisors. In this agreement, the framework conditions of the supervisory relationship and mutual expectations are set out at the start of the doctorate.

In addition to this, Paderborn University has recently introduced the instrument of structured annual talks between all employees and their supervisors throughout the university. These serve to support an open and constructive culture of dialogue and offer the opportunity to jointly define further training goals and discuss measures to promote careers.

A mentoring scheme is in place for the career paths of tenure-track professors and junior research group leaders. A mentoring guide helps mentors and mentees to implement this constructively.

Strategic Goals and Actions

Although many aspects of the Charter and Code have already been implemented at Paderborn University, the gap analysis revealed a need for action with regard to several principles. While in the initial phase the four thematic clusters provided by the European Commission – and described above in the current practice section – served as a starting point, it soon became clear that the HRS4R strategy at Paderborn University will consist of six strategic goals. These six goals not only allow a better clustering of the areas for improvement, but also contribute to a more coherent implementation. Starting with the gaps and weaknesses in each area, the specific actions are then described in more detail.

Goal I: Supporting Career Development for Researchers

Despite the great progress made in recent years, a number of weaknesses in the support structures for the career development of researchers at Paderborn University were identified. Individual career counselling for early career researchers has so far usually been provided by the supervisor. However, there are often multiple dependencies in this relationship and, due to personal biography, counselling can usually only be provided for academic career paths. For both postdocs and doctoral students, there is currently only a very limited central career counselling service for all career paths that provides targeted support for individual, independent career planning. For the target group of postdocs, there are generally few specific formats and funding instruments in place that provide targeted support for their development. As at all German universities, research staff at Paderborn University are generally employed on a temporary basis. The *Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act* stipulates a maximum period of 12 years during which researchers can be employed on a fixed-term contract. Although Paderborn University has taken the first steps towards establishing new, reliable career paths by creating tenure-track professorships, further formats are needed, particularly in the postdoc phase. In addition, there is a lack of transparency with regard to the job profiles, accessibility and processes for the (few) permanent positions at the university. Furthermore, the requirements for the selection procedures for these positions are not clearly defined. Thus, there is currently no comprehensive strategy for attractive and reliable career paths at Paderborn University. As a whole, the university has not yet been able to adequately communicate the wide range of continuing education and career development opportunities it has built up in recent years to the target groups.

To better support researchers in their career development at Paderborn University, three actions were developed to address the identified weaknesses.

Establishment/expansion of central career counselling for all career paths (Action 1): With this action, a central and target-oriented counselling offer will be established to provide doctoral candidates and postdocs with more guidance and orientation in their career development. This will include counselling for academic careers, but also non-academic career paths.

Revision of the internal research funding programmes (financial support for early career researchers / focus on scholarships) (Action 3): As part of the action, Paderborn University 's internal funding programmes will be revised, with a particular focus on funding opportunities for early career researchers.

Development of a strategy for attractive and reliable career paths in academia (Action 2): As part of the strategy, the transparency of career paths and recruitment processes for permanent positions at Paderborn University will be increased and permanent positions will be defined more clearly.

Goal II: Improving the Supervision and Leadership Culture

With the measures taken in recent years, Paderborn University has laid important foundations for the systematic support of its early career researchers. However, when it comes to supervision, there is no overarching guidance on how to design and implement good supervision and what makes a supervisory relationship successful. Also, the supervision agreement is not yet concluded as standard in all areas of the university, and the potential of the instrument is not fully utilised. There are also few support services available for supervisors. The area of leadership training is still underdeveloped and existing offers to strengthen leadership skills are only rarely accepted by the group of professors. The university provides contact persons or counselling centres for various problem situations, but the area of supervisory conflicts, including the issue of abuse of power, is only partially covered. The multiple dependencies of early career researchers on their superiors, who are usually also supervisors and assessors, create a risk of abuse of power. Paderborn University has clearly defined abuse of power as research misconduct in its *Guidelines and Procedures for Safeguarding Good Research Practice at Paderborn University*. However, an integrated approach to dealing with and preventing abuse of power is still lacking.

To improve the supervision and leadership culture at Paderborn University, five actions were developed:

Development of a guideline *Good supervision at Paderborn University* to promote an excellent culture of supervision (possibly including specifics for postdocs) (Action 4): The action is intended to create a general orientation framework for supervisors and supervisees to define and support supervision relationships.

Evaluation and further development of the *Supervision Agreement* instrument for doctoral candidates (Action 5): The use of the instrument is to be optimised through needs-specific adjustments. The aim is to encourage wider use of the instrument in all faculties and to raise awareness of the procedures to be followed in cases of conflict.

Further development of leadership programmes for researchers with supervisory responsibilities (Action 8): As part of the action, services to strengthen leadership and mentoring skills will be further expanded and target-group specific formats will be developed, including for people taking on a leadership role.

Evaluation of the *Annual Talks* instrument (possibly including science-specific enhancement) (Action 6): To strengthen the culture of discussion and feedback, the structured annual talks will be evaluated and further developed, also with a particular focus on the context of positions in research.

Development of a concept for dealing with abuse of power/supervision conflicts (Action 7): A university-wide concept will be developed. Among other things, the need for appropriate contact points and counselling services will be reviewed.

Goal III: Professionalising Recruitment and Onboarding Processes

Paderborn University has structured its selection and recruitment processes in various regulations, guidelines and handouts and implemented them in a legally compliant manner. However, an overarching OTM-R policy is still missing. While detailed regulations and guidelines exist for the appointment of professors and the recruitment of junior research group leaders, there are currently no comprehensive guidelines for the selection of other academic staff (phase R1 - R3). In particular, the selection and recruitment procedures for academic staff who take on permanent positions are not comprehensively defined. In general, knowledge of professional selection methodologies and practices, as well as factors influencing selection, is very heterogeneous or limited among the commissions and other actors involved in the selection process. Training opportunities are limited and existing offers have so far been met with only cautious acceptance. There is also a need for action in the presentation as an employer and the way of addressing applicants. Job vacancies should be communicated as widely as possible. The current job website is not very attractive nor intuitively designed for outsiders and in particular for international researchers. In addition, only few job publication channels are used systematically and Paderborn University is not yet sufficiently represented as an employer in relevant career networks. Only few vacancies are additionally published in English and international portals such as EURAXESS are used only to a very limited extent. In the area of onboarding and initial support for international employees, there are various contact persons, but no integrated standardised process.

To address these weaknesses, a series of actions was defined. These will strategically develop the existing processes and framework conditions at Paderborn University.

Development and publication of an organisational OTM-R policy (Action 11): Building on existing regulations and practices, the OTM-R policy aims to further support the professionalisation of recruitment processes, ensuring that key standards of open, transparent and merit-based recruitment are met, made transparent and the requirements of the Code are fulfilled.

Development of a recruitment guide for researchers (R1-R3) (Action 10): A comprehensive guide including specific recommendations for certain job-profiles and a collection of materials will support the professionalism of selection processes.

Development of a training programme to professionalise selection procedures, including raising awareness of diversity (Action 14): Training opportunities will be designed to professionalise those involved in selection processes. As a first step, a short film will be used to raise awareness of equality issues among members of professorship appointment committees. Other formats and topics will follow, e.g. how to define and assess selection criteria.

Revision and upgrading of the Paderborn University job website including job advertisements (Action 9): With the help of the action, Paderborn University's attractiveness as an employer should become more visible and the transparency of the selection process and the findability of job advertisements (also for international applicants) should be increased.

Review of currently used job publication channels and expansion to new channels and networks (especially international channels) (Action 13): With the expansion of job publication channels, e.g. EURAXESS, the (international) visibility of job vacancies and the openness of the procedures will be increased.

Analysis of existing onboarding processes for international researchers and derivation of needs for action (Action 12): This action is intended to increase transparency and openness for international researchers and to enhance support services.

The key action in this area will be the development of an overarching OTM-R Policy (action 11) to bring together all regulations into a single framework for all selection processes. This involves, on the one hand, combining existing regulations and principles and making them transparent, and, on the other hand, redefining those aspects that have not yet been sufficiently taken into account at Paderborn University. The OTM-

R toolkit of the European Commission will be used as a basis for this. A working group with central stakeholders will be set up to develop an OTM-R policy in close consultation with relevant committees and representatives, as well as the faculties and other institutions involved, and to establish it university-wide. The standards of OTM-R will be considered in the implementation of all actions above, e.g. job advertisements will be revised appropriately (action 9) and the OTM-R policy will be integrated into newly designed recruitment trainings (action 14).

Goal IV: Improving the Science Support Environment

Although Paderborn University generally provides its researchers with good science support structures, some room for improvement was identified in the review. The increasing use of generative models in the research context has given rise to new issues, for which Paderborn University does not yet offer appropriate orientation. There is also still a need for action in terms of raising awareness of good research practice and actively preventing scientific misconduct. Existing training opportunities have so far only been met with limited uptake and, in particular, early career researchers are not sufficiently informed about the rules of good research practice. The support and information available in the areas of Open Science and digital research support are still fragmented, and an integrated strategy is still pending. It became clear that the points of contact and the services provided by the university are not sufficiently transparent for the researchers. Especially in the area of research data management, the existing services are not fully utilised. So far, the area of science communication has hardly been strategically developed and is not very visible as a strategic field of activity at the university. The needs of researchers have not yet been fully determined in both areas and the existing training opportunities are difficult to find for the researchers. There is also a lack of systematic coordination between the various stakeholders who are responsible for the respective sub-areas of Open Science and digital research support at Paderborn University.

In order to further improve the science support environment at Paderborn University, several actions were derived.

Development of a recommendation on the use of AI in research at Paderborn University (Action 15): In order to provide researchers with clarity about applicable regulations of good research practice and better orientation when using AI tools in research, a corresponding guideline for Paderborn University will be developed.

Evaluation and further development of training programmes on good research practice (Action 18): This action is intended to create a needs-oriented and target-group-specific service in order to increase participation and strengthen the knowledge and necessary sensitivity of researchers.

Review of and raising awareness for support services for research data management (Action 16): The action aims to identify reasons for the low acceptance of services on the topic of research data management as well as needs for further support in the topics of *secure sharing of data*, *reuse and reproducibility* and issues relating to intellectual property rights. Existing support services will be reviewed and, in particular, ways to increase awareness of the services will be defined.

Development of an information page on the central offers to support science communication (Action 19): This action is intended to create more transparency regarding existing contact persons, information and training opportunities in the field of science communication.

Needs analysis of support services in the area of science communication (Action 20): This action systematically identifies the specific needs in the field of science communication on the part of researchers and which measures would be useful to increase engagement in the field of science communication.

Establishment of a network for digital research support (Action 17): This action is intended to promote the exchange and networking of relevant stakeholders in order to optimise the support structure for researchers.

Goal V: Advancing Supportive Working Conditions

Paderborn University offers a supportive and encouraging working environment for researchers at all levels. However, gaps were still identified in some areas. In the area of working conditions, it is evident that information is sometimes not prepared in a target-group oriented way, is not communicated widely enough or is difficult to find. For example, it is not always clear what to do and whom to contact in case of problems or in conflict situations. Initial steps have also been taken in the area of anti-discrimination, but there is room for improvement in terms of systematising and making more visible what is on offer. There is also room for improvement in terms of how working hours and availability are actually practised and the mobile work regulations need to be better communicated. Furthermore, not all relevant information is yet available in English.

Several actions were derived to further improve the working conditions at Paderborn University.

Further development of the needs-oriented support system in challenging work situations (individual advice in problem and conflict situations) (Action 21): This action aims to improve the working environment by providing adequate support in problem situations, in particular by increasing transparency with regard to suitable contact persons and further developing the services in line with requirements.

Systematization and visualisation of support structures and services in the area of anti-discrimination (possibly further development of services) (Action 25): The aim of the action is to improve the transparency of the contact points and to further develop the range of anti-discrimination services according to needs.

Raising awareness among supervisors and employees about working hours and availability (Action 22): Awareness-raising elements will be added to existing tools (e.g. annual talks, supervision agreement) to improve the framework conditions for a good work-life balance.

Evaluation of the *Mobile Work* instrument (Action 23): Possible adjustment requirements in relation to mobile working (Home Office) are to be identified and implemented and communicated transparently.

Expansion of the bilingualism of documents and information services (Action 24): The implementation of bilingualism will be consistently pursued and further needs will be analysed. A working group on language policy and a German-English glossary will support the implementation of bilingualism.

Goal VI: Improving the Organisational Knowledge Management and Internal Communication

The university does provide extensive information and recommendations for action on almost all topics related to research integrity and working environment, offers advice from experts and has implemented standardised processes to ensure compliance with regulations where necessary. However, the findability, also due to the large number and complexity of the regulations, as well as the way the information is prepared and provided, can be significantly improved. The lack of an internal communication concept and organisational knowledge management is clearly evident in the aspect of promoting research integrity and a supportive working environment. Furthermore, the insufficient provision of information and the lack of transparency are key findings that apply to many areas, issues and processes addressed in the audit. Therefore, this cross-sectional goal is also important for a number of actions described above.

Two actions were derived to improve the identified gaps at Paderborn University.

User-friendly revision of information websites for researchers (Action 26): The aim of this action is to make important information more transparent, findable and comprehensible for the respective target groups. Several websites will be revised as part of the action (e.g. website mobile work, website career development services).

Development of a concept for internal communication and organisational knowledge management (Action 27): The concept is intended to foster internal communication and systematise the organisational knowledge management in order to improve the overall transparency and findability of information.

The detailed Action Plan, including responsible units for implementation, time planning, and target indicators, can be found in the Annex.

Outlook on Implementation Phase

Project Structure for the Implementation Phase

The following project structure has been developed for the implementation phase to ensure the coordination of the HRS4R process, the implementation of the individual actions, the monitoring of the progress and the alignment with the further strategic development of the university.

The HRS4R coordinator is responsible for the overall coordination of the implementation phase, coordinates the Implementation Committee and monitors the implementation of the actions. Together with the HRS4R coordinator, the implementation managers form the Implementation Committee, which is responsible for implementing the actions in accordance with the action plan. The implementation managers are responsible for the design and implementation of the actions and the involvement of other stakeholders depending on the topic. The coordinator acts as an interface between the respective implementation managers and the HRS4R Advisory Board. The HRS4R coordinator also ensures transparent communication of the implementation steps to all stakeholders, the Executive level and the university community.

The implementation phase is accompanied and overseen by the HRS4R Advisory Board. The Advisory Board monitors the implementation of the actions, particularly with regard to the achievement of the planned target indicators, the implementation of the principles of the Charter & Code in the context of the concrete implementation of the actions, and the adherence to the timetable. For the initial phase, the Executive Board appointed the Board of Directors of the Jenny Aloni Centre as the Advisory Board for the HRS4R process. To ensure continuity, the committee will continue to accompany and supervise the implementation phase.

The Vice-President for Research and Junior Academics retains strategic responsibility for the audit process and thus also for the implementation of the actions.

Involving the Research Community

Researchers will be regularly involved in the implementation phase. As part of the HRS4R Advisory Board, researchers at all career levels and from all faculties will continuously monitor and accompany the implementation phase. This gives researchers the opportunity to contribute their perspectives and experiences and to help shape and monitor the process throughout. The researchers involved in the Advisory Board also act as multipliers, communicating project updates to their respective communities and bringing their needs to the Advisory Board.

Researchers are also involved in the individual actions, depending on the topic. In particular, researchers are actively involved in actions that include a needs analysis or concept development. The nature of participation varies (e.g. interviews, workshops or pilot groups that test instruments in practice and provide feedback). In

addition, researchers are represented in the committees and interest groups that are involved in many actions and are thus involved in the implementation of the actions (e.g. Staff Council, Senate).

Furthermore, additional target group-specific formats (for example the usage of longitudinal survey data (NACAPS), topic-specific surveys and the organisation of exchange meetings with representative bodies of researchers) are planned to gather the experiences and assessments of researchers.

In addition, the university community and in particular the researchers will be continuously informed about the progress of the implementation phase and the actions implemented. Regular updates are planned on the university's websites, in newsletters and in the relevant committees.

Ensuring Implementation and Monitoring Progress

All of the actions, indicators and target dates listed in the action plan have already been agreed upon in advance with those responsible for implementation. Paderborn University has defined short-term activities and long-term strategic projects in the six identified strategic goals. Individual target indicators have been defined for each action, which are used to assess the implementation status.

To ensure that all actions are implemented appropriately during the implementation phase, the HRS4R coordinator is responsible for monitoring the implementation status. At the Advisory Board meetings, the HRS4R coordinator provides continuous updates on the progress of the implementation phase, in particular on actions for which target indicators are to be completed in the near future. If implementation managers consider that an indicator has been met, this is reviewed by the Advisory Board. The target indicator or action is officially completed once the Advisory Board has given its approval. Difficulties in implementation and any necessary adjustments are also presented and discussed in the Advisory Board. Finally, the annual status report serves to communicate the status of implementation of the actions across the university, in particular to bodies such as the Senate.

A cornerstone of successful implementation is linking the actions to other strategic developments. As mentioned, the Vice-President for Research and Junior Academics has the overall strategic responsibility for the audit, ensuring close alignment with the research strategy and plans for promoting early career researchers. The Vice-President for Operations is a member of the Advisory Board and ensures coordination within the Central University Administration, particularly in HR and Staff Development Departments. The Vice-President for International Relations is also a member of the Advisory Board. This guarantees that the *Internationalisation Strategy* and the development of the *COLOURS alliance* are taken into account. Regular reports ensure that the complete Executive Board is continuously informed about the progress. In addition, the composition of the Advisory Board supports close interlinking with further strategic processes, for example on faculty level or driven by experts like the Equal Opportunities Officer. The planned communication activities will help to make the HRS4R Strategy widely known and understood. This helps to raise awareness of the need for the integration of the actions into other processes.

Annex: Action Plan in Detail

Goal I: Supporting career development for researchers

No.	Action	Responsible Unit	Timing	Indicators/Target(s)
1	Establishment/expansion of central career counselling for all career paths	Academic Career Development Office	Q2/25 Q2/25 Q3/25	• Concept approved (by Board of Directors of the Jenny Aloni Centre) • Consultants at the Academic Career Development Office have completed further training in career counselling • Pilot offer established and communicated (by Jenny Aloni Centre)
2	Development of a strategy for attractive and reliable career paths in academia	Vice-President for Research and Junior Academics	Q1/25 Q2/25 Q3/25	• Central concept for attractive and reliable career paths at Paderborn University (permanent position concept) developed • Faculty-specific concepts developed • Concepts approved in the relevant academic bodies
3	Revision of the internal research funding programmes (financial support for early career researchers / focus on scholarships)	Vice-President for Research and Junior Academics	Q1/25 Q2/25	• Concept developed • Concept approved (by the University Executive Board)

Goal II: Improving the supervision and leadership culture

No.	Action	Responsible Unit	Timing	Indicators/Target(s)
4	Development of a guideline "Good supervision at Paderborn University" to promote an excellent culture of supervision (possibly including specifics for postdocs)	Vice-President for Research and Junior Academics	Q1/26 Q2/26 Q2/27 Q2/28	• Objectives and framework conditions discussed • Project structure defined • "Good supervision" guideline created and approved • Measures for implementing the guideline developed and, possibly, piloted
5	Evaluation and further development of the "Supervision Agreement" instrument for doctoral candidates	Staff Development Department	Q1/25 Q3/25	• Evaluation completed • Adjustments developed and implemented
6	Evaluation of the "Annual Talks" instrument (possibly including science-specific enhancement)	Staff Development Department	Q3/26 Q1/27	• Instrument evaluated • Adjustments developed and implemented

No.	Action	Responsible Unit	Timing	Indicators/Target(s)
7	Development of a concept for dealing with abuse of power/supervision conflicts	Vice-President for Research and Junior Academics	Q4/25	• Concept developed (considering the German Rectors' conference's recommendation "Power and Responsibility", 2024) incl. needs analysis for contact points in the event of conflicts in the supervisory relationship
8	Further development of leadership programmes for researchers with supervisory responsibilities	Staff Development Department	Q4/25	• Leadership skills courses supplemented and piloted

Goal III: Professionalising recruitment and onboarding processes

No.	Action	Responsible Unit	Timing	Indicators/Target(s)
9	Revision and upgrading of the Paderborn University job website including job advertisements	Staff Development Department	Q4/26 Q4/26	• Job website incl. subpages revised (German & English) • Job advertisements made more attractive and appealing (e.g. bilingual, diversity-sensitive, indication of benefits)
10	Development of a recruitment guide for researchers (R1-R3)	Staff Development Department	Q2/26	• Guideline created and communicated to relevant stakeholders
11	Development and publication of an organisational OTM-R policy	Staff Development Department	Q2/ 26	• OTM-R Policy developed, approved and published
12	Analysis of existing onboarding processes for international researchers and derivation of needs for action	Organisational Advice and Internal Auditing Office (plus, International Relations Office and Dep. 4.2 (Human Resources)	Q4/25 Q4/25 Q4/25 Q4/25	• Process modelling (existing processes) completed • Clarification of responsibilities completed • Need for action identified • If necessary, requirements for a standardised central onboarding process defined
13	Review of currently used job publication channels and expansion to new channels and networks (especially international channels)	Staff Development Department	Q4/25 Q4/25 Q4/27 Q1/28	• Review completed • Use of EURAXESS expanded • New channels/networks screened and evaluated for fit with Paderborn University needs • Newly selected channels/networks are used

No.	Action	Responsible Unit	Timing	Indicators/Target(s)
14	Development of a training programme to professionalise selection procedures, including raising awareness of diversity	Staff Development Department	Q2/25 Q2/27 Q4/27	• Short film created for professorship appointment committees to raise awareness of gender equality issues in recruitment. Film used in appointment procedures • New further training offers for recruitment (training/e-learning) developed • Pilot offers implemented and evaluated

Goal IV: Improving the science support environment

No.	Action	Responsible Unit	Timing	Indicators/Target(s)
15	Development of a recommendation on the use of AI in research at Paderborn University	Vice-President for Research and Junior Academics	Q1/25	• Recommendation on the use of AI created and approved (based on the German Research Foundation's guideline)
16	Review of and raising awareness for support services for research data management	Research Data Management Officer	Q2/25 Q4/25 Q1/26	• Services evaluated • Existing services further developed if necessary • Available support services well known to those targeted
17	Establishment of a network for digital research support	Research Data Management Officer	Q1/25 Q3/25	• Concept developed, approved by the University Executive Board • Kick-off event of the network realised
18	Evaluation and further development of training programmes on good research practice	Academic Career Development Office	Q3/26 Q4/26	• Services evaluated • Existing services further developed and new formats designed where necessary
19	Development of an information page on the central offers to support science communication	Press, Communications and Marketing Office	Q2/25	• Information page established to bundle all existing services and contact persons (further training, workshops, individual advice)
20	Needs analysis of support services in the area of science communication	Press, Communications and Marketing Office	Q3/25	• Needs analysis completed

Goal V: Advancing supportive working conditions

No.	Action	Responsible Unit	Timing	Indicators/Target(s)
21	Further development of the needs-oriented support system in challenging work situations (individual advice in problem and conflict situations)	Dep. 5.3 (Occupational Health & Safety and Environmental Protection)	Q3/26 Q3/26 Q4/26	• Transparency of existing contact points created through a guidance system or organisation chart • Format developed to support networking among stakeholders /points of contact • Examination of the establishment of a first point of contact (also in emergency situations) is completed
22	Raising awareness among supervisors and employees about working hours and availability	Staff Development Department	Q1/27	• Topic integrated into existing instruments (e.g. supervision agreement, annual talks, leadership programmes)
23	Evaluation of the "Mobile Work" instrument	Dep. 4.5 (Staff Development & Legal Advice)	Q1/25 Q2/25	• Evaluation completed • Needs for adjustments identified and implemented where necessary
24	Expansion of the bilingualism of documents and information services	International Relations Office, Dep. 4 (Human Resources)	Q1/25 Q1/25 Q2/25 Q1/26 Q1/26 Q3/26 Q3/26	• Establishment of a working group on language policy • Relevant documents that applicants and new employees receive are available in English (reading version) • University-specific German-English glossary coordinated university-wide and published • Documents relating to qualification (e.g. doctoral regulations) are available in an English (reading) version • Recruitment websites are available in English (e.g. job portal) • Analysis of further needs for the expansion of English-language services (e.g. counselling services) • Central (university-wide) e-mails are available bilingually
25	Systematization and visualisation of support structures and services in the area of anti-discrimination (possibly further development of services)	Equal Opportunities Officer & Organisational Advice and Internal Auditing Office	Q 4/25 Q2/26 Q4/26	• Structures and responsibilities defined, implemented and visible • Services presented transparently • If necessary, need for further development identified and measures derived

Goal VI: Improving the organisational knowledge management and internal communication

No.	Action	Responsible Unit	Timing	Indicators/Target(s)
26	User-friendly revision of information websites for researchers	HRS4R Coordinator	Q1/25 Q4/25	• Adjustment requirements identified • Websites revised (e.g. mobile work: user-friendly, bilingual, FAQ; e.g. committees: Overview page created, e.g. Career development services: bundled presentation of services)
27	Development of a concept for internal communication and organisational knowledge management	Vice-President for Research and Junior Academics	Q1/26	• Concept developed