

EURAXESS

Action Plan

Case number

2021AM610781

Name Organisation under review

Yerevan State University

Organisation's contact details

1 Alex Manoogian, Yerevan, 0025, Armenia

Submission date to the European Commission

26/09/2023

1. Organisational Information

Please provide a limited number of key figures for your organisation. Figures marked * are compulsory.

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research *	1273
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	130
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	45
Of whom are women *	100
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. *	188
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level *	600
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level *	210

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total number of students (if relevant) *	13815
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) *	2215
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	
	€
Total annual organisational budget	19000000
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	3000000
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	50000
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	10000

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)

"Yerevan State University" Foundation is a prestigious higher educational institution focused on advancing knowledge and promoting excellence in Armenian studies, natural, socio-economic, humanitarian sciences, technology, and cultural education. Our mission encompasses comprehensive educational programs spanning from primary to postgraduate levels, empowering students with a well-rounded education. We are committed to developing scientific-pedagogical specialists through rigorous training and qualification programs. Moreover, we actively engage in cutting-edge scientific research, fostering innovation, and facilitating the commercialization of research outcomes to contribute to societal progress. Our holistic approach ensures the transformative growth of individuals and the positive impact on local and global communities.

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Please provide an overview of the organisation in terms of the current strengths and weaknesses of the current practice under the four thematic headings of the Charter and Code at your organization.

Note: Click on the name of each of the four thematic headings of the Charter and Code to open the editor and provide your answer.


Ethical and professional aspects* **Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)**

Strengths:

1. Rich Experience in Scientific Research: Yerevan State University (YSU) boasts a wealth of experience in scientific research, demonstrating a strong track record of producing high-quality research outputs. This experience serves as a solid foundation for future research endeavors.
2. Diverse Research Topics: YSU conducts comprehensive research on a wide range of topics in both exact and social sciences, public policy, and security. This breadth of research areas contributes to the university's relevance to both the public and private sectors.
3. Grants for Research Projects: The university has access to institutional and international grants that provide financial support for research projects. This availability of funding enhances the capacity of researchers to undertake innovative and impactful studies.
4. Collaboration with State Committee of Science: YSU has established joint grant programs with the State Committee of Science, fostering collaboration between academia and government institutions. This partnership facilitates the execution of research projects that address societal challenges.
5. Internal Institutional Grants: YSU has developed internal grants specifically aimed at promoting the skills and professional development of young researchers. These grants provide opportunities for early-career researchers to enhance their research capabilities and contribute to the university's scientific output.
6. Open Access Data: YSU demonstrates a commitment to open science by making certain data sets accessible through its website. This open access policy promotes transparency, collaboration, and wider dissemination of research findings.
7. Digitization of Banber Journal: The digitization of the Banber journal, available on the OJS system and journals.y-su.am, expands the international exposure and opportunities for researchers. This digital platform enhances the visibility and accessibility of scholarly publications from YSU.
8. High Rankings in International Rating Systems: YSU achieves high rankings in several international rating systems, reflecting the university's reputation for academic excellence and research productivity. These rankings affirm YSU's standing as a leading institution in the region.
9. Publications in Prestigious Databases: The weight of articles published by YSU researchers in renowned databases such as Web of Science and Scopus underscores the quality and impact of the university's research output. These publications contribute to the global scientific knowledge base.
10. Well-Equipped Scientific Laboratories: YSU houses 33 advanced scientific laboratories covering a wide range of research disciplines. These state-of-the-art facilities provide researchers with the necessary infrastructure and resources to conduct cutting-edge studies.
11. Establishment of Research Policies: YSU has developed important research policies, including an Intellectual Property (IP) policy, Research Ethics Policy, and Open Science Policy (draft versions). These policies establish guidelines for responsible research conduct, promote openness and collaboration, and protect intellectual property rights.
12. Supportive Resources: YSU is committed to supporting researchers through various initiatives. The ongoing development of handbooks for researchers and the establishment of an Academic Writing Center for PhD students and young researchers aim to enhance research skills, improve scientific writing, and foster a research-friendly environment.
13. Anti-Plagiarism System: YSU has implemented an anti-plagiarism system for Bachelor and Master's studies, initially used at the Center for European Studies and some faculties. This system ensures the integrity of academic work and upholds high ethical standards.

Weaknesses:

1. Insufficient Research Methodology Skills: There is a need to strengthen research methodology skills among young researchers at YSU. Providing comprehensive training and mentorship in research methodologies will enhance the quality and rigor of research conducted at the university.
 2. Low Student Participation in Research Projects: The level of student involvement in scientific research projects is currently low. Encouraging and facilitating student engagement in research will foster a research culture among students and nurture the next generation of researchers.
 3. Limited Scientific Component in Educational Activities: The scientific component in educational activities, particularly in certain social science areas, is relatively low. Integrating more
 1. scientific perspectives into the curriculum and encouraging interdisciplinary approaches will enrich the educational experience.
 2. Low Engagement in International Research Programs: YSU has limited participation in joint international research programs. Strengthening collaborations with international partners and promoting research mobility will broaden the university's global research network and enhance its international visibility.
 3. Inefficiency in Intellectual Property Commercialization: The university faces challenges in effectively commercializing intellectual property. Developing strategies and mechanisms to bridge the gap between research outcomes and commercialization opportunities will unlock the potential for economic impact and societal benefit.
 4. Limited Research Works in English: The prevalence of research works in the English language is relatively low. Encouraging researchers to publish in English and providing language support and training will expand the reach and impact of YSU's research outputs.
 5. Absence of Plagiarism Monitoring System: YSU currently lacks a comprehensive plagiarism monitoring system. Implementing such a system will safeguard academic integrity, ensure originality in research outputs, and strengthen the university's reputation for high ethical standards.
 6. Absence of Big Data Server: The lack of a dedicated server for big data access poses challenges for researchers in effectively accessing and analyzing large-scale datasets. Establishing a centralized infrastructure for big data management will facilitate advanced research and data-driven discoveries.
- Addressing these weaknesses through targeted interventions and strategic initiatives will fortify YSU's research capabilities, enhance its academic standing, and contribute to the university's overall development.

Recruitment and selection* **Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)**


Strengths:

1. Selection Based on Professional Exams: The recruitment and selection process for PhD students at YSU is based on professional exams, ensuring that candidates are assessed on their subject-specific knowledge and skills. This rigorous evaluation contributes to the quality of the incoming cohort and maintains academic standards.
2. Well-Organized and Promoted Vacancy Advertisements: YSU demonstrates effectiveness in organizing and promoting vacancy advertisements, attracting a diverse pool of qualified applicants. This proactive approach enhances the visibility of available positions and ensures a competitive recruitment process.
3. Transparency in Selection Process: Candidates are well-informed about the selection process, which promotes transparency and fairness. Providing clear guidelines and regular communication with applicants establishes a positive candidate experience and fosters trust in the university's recruitment procedures.
4. Qualified Staff for Selection Process: The selection process is overseen by qualified staff who possess the expertise and knowledge necessary to assess candidates effectively. Their competence ensures that the recruitment process adheres to established criteria and selects candidates with the highest potential for success.
5. Laboratory Attestation Process: YSU has organized the attestation of 27 scientific laboratories, a comprehensive evaluation process that measures the scientific and research activity of the research staff. This impartial qualification process provides valuable insights into the capabilities and achievements of the researchers, facilitating targeted support and strategic development.

Weaknesses:

1. Absence of Unified "Supervision" System: The absence of a unified "Supervision" system for PhD students and researchers poses a challenge to efficient research management. Implementing an electronic system that streamlines and professionalizes research supervision will enhance communication, facilitate progress tracking, and ensure effective mentorship and support for doctoral candidates and researchers.
2. Simplified Application Procedure for PhD Seekers: The current simplified application procedure for PhD seekers may result in unequal application conditions for PhD students and PhD seekers. To address this issue, ongoing reviews by the Government of Armenia and higher education institutions (HEIs) aim to establish fair and standardized application processes for all aspiring PhD candidates.
3. Absence of Licensing for Some PhD Educational Programs: The absence of licensing for certain PhD educational programs presents a limitation in terms of quality assurance and adherence to established standards. Collaborative efforts between YSU's Department of Scientific Policy and the YSU Information Technology Center are underway to expedite the process of obtaining licensing for these programs, ensuring their accreditation and credibility.

Addressing these weaknesses will strengthen the recruitment and selection practices at YSU, leading to an even more robust and inclusive research community. Implementing a unified supervision system, standardizing application procedures, and obtaining licensing for all PhD educational programs will enhance transparency, fairness, and quality assurance in the recruitment process, ultimately attracting and nurturing the most promising talents in academia.

Working conditions* **Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)**

Strengths:

1. Improved Conditions for Researchers with Special Needs: YSU has made significant improvements in providing accessible facilities and support for researchers with special needs. The university ensures that all necessary measures are in place to enable the smooth movement and participation of these researchers within the campus, fostering inclusivity and equal opportunities.
2. Increased Salaries for Scientific Staff: Following the attestation of laboratories, YSU has taken steps to enhance the salaries of its scientific staff. This initiative ensures competitive compensation for researchers, recognizing their valuable contributions and providing a motivating environment that encourages their scientific endeavors.
3. Medical Insurance Packages: YSU prioritizes the well-being of its staff by offering comprehensive medical insurance packages. This provision demonstrates the university's commitment to the health and welfare of its employees, providing them with necessary coverage and access to medical services when needed.
4. Gender Equality in Recruitment: YSU's recruitment practices are based on professional skills, free from gender discrimination. With 60% of the university staff being women, many of whom hold leadership positions, YSU actively promotes gender equality, fostering an inclusive work environment that values and empowers all employees.

Weaknesses:

1. Educational Focus over Scientific Activity: Some scientists at YSU tend to prioritize their educational activities over scientific research, resulting in reduced research effectiveness. Recognizing this challenge, the university is actively working to promote and enhance the scientific activity of its researchers. This includes creating an improved scientific environment, providing necessary resources and infrastructure, and offering competitive salaries to motivate and support their research endeavors.
2. Discrepancies in Salary for Administrative Workers: Certain administrative workers receive lower salaries in comparison to their working hours, leading to recruitment difficulties in some departments. Addressing this issue is crucial to attract and retain talented young professionals in administrative roles. Ensuring fair and equitable remuneration aligned with their responsibilities and contributions will contribute to a more harmonious and motivated workforce.

By addressing these weaknesses and building on the existing strengths, YSU can further enhance the working conditions for its researchers and staff. Encouraging a stronger focus on scientific activity, providing competitive salaries, addressing salary discrepancies, and fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment will contribute to the overall research excellence and success of YSU.

Training and development*

**Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)**

Strengths:

1. Internal Grants for Researchers and Administrative Staff: Yerevan State University has taken the initiative to develop and provide internal grants for its researchers and administrative staff. This commendable effort not only supports the improvement of their working qualities but also provides financial assistance, enabling them to undertake valuable research projects and professional development activities.
2. Travel Grant Scholarships for Young Researchers: YSU's development of Travel Grant scholarships for young researchers is a significant strength. These scholarships offer opportunities for international engagement and research collaboration, providing funding for research activities and facilitating participation in the European research area. By supporting international exposure and knowledge exchange, YSU empowers young researchers to contribute to the university's development and enrich the overall research environment.
3. Focus on Enhancing International Visibility: Recognizing the importance of international visibility, YSU acknowledges the need to register researchers on platforms like Research Gate, Scopus, and other renowned international research systems. The university aims to bolster its international presence by encouraging and rewarding researchers for publishing in internationally recognized journals, creating Scopus-indexed journals, and implementing strategies to enhance global recognition.

Additional Strengths:

4. Collaboration with International Institutions: YSU can further strengthen its training and development initiatives by fostering collaborations with renowned international institutions. Partnering with established universities and research organizations can facilitate knowledge sharing, joint research projects, and opportunities for faculty and staff exchanges. Such collaborations enrich the training and development landscape by exposing participants to diverse perspectives and experiences.

Weaknesses:

1. Limited International Visibility of Researchers: One of the key weaknesses identified is the low registration of YSU researchers on platforms like Research Gate, Scopus, and other prominent international research systems. This limitation hampers the university's international visibility and opportunities for collaboration. YSU should prioritize initiatives that encourage researchers to actively engage with these platforms, enabling them to showcase their work, network with peers, and enhance the university's global reputation.

Notes:

- To address the weakness of limited international visibility, YSU could consider providing training and resources to researchers on effectively using research platforms and networks, highlighting the benefits of international visibility and collaboration.
- Creating an awareness campaign among researchers about the advantages of registering and actively participating in international research systems can help overcome the hesitations or lack of familiarity that may exist.
- Collaboration with international research institutions can offer valuable opportunities for researchers to establish connections, publish joint papers, and enhance their international visibility. YSU should actively seek partnerships and explore avenues for joint research projects.
- It is essential for YSU to establish clear guidelines and incentives, such as rewards or recognition, for researchers who actively contribute to international publications and engage in collaborative research projects.
- The university can also consider organizing workshops or seminars on publishing in internationally recognized journals and disseminating research findings through various platforms, thereby equipping researchers with the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance their international presence.

3. Actions

The Action Plan and HRS4R strategy must be published on an easily accessible location of the organisation's website.

Please provide the web link to the organization's Action Plan/HR Strategy dedicated webpage(s):

<https://www.yzu.am/en/sitesection-798> (<https://www.yzu.am/en/sitesection-798>)

Please fill in the list of all individual actions to be undertaken in your organisation's HRS4R to address the weaknesses or strengths identified in the Gap-Analysis. The listed actions should be concise, but detailed enough for the assessors to evaluate the level of ambition, engagement and the expected implementation process. The institution should strive to provide a detailed plan, not just an enumeration of actions.

Note: Choose one or more of the principles automatically retrieved from the GAP Analysis with their implementation ratings.

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 1	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
1.1. Development of unified antiplagiarism system 1.2. Creation of working group which will work as at national level as at institutional level 1.3. Conduct of a competition for a unified anti-plagiarism system among professional programmers 1.4. Study of european experience 1.5. Development of anti-plagiarism monitoring handbooks for YSU staff 1.6. Organisation of trainings for YSU administrative workers	(++) 1. Research freedom (+/-) 2. Ethical principles (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility (++) 4. Professional attitude (++) 5. Contractual and legal obligations	4th quarter, 2023 (Continuous)
	Responsible Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)	
	Vice rector for Science, International Cooperation Office, Human Resources Management Devison, Science Policy Department	- Publication of handbooks for staff (is in process) - Run of Anti-plagiarism system (in process) - Almost 80% of the staff Awareness among research community, administrative staff on relevant legislation and procedures

Proposed ACTIONS**Action 2**

2.1. Development of research management policy
 2.2. Development of research ethics handbooks for early-stage researchers
 2.3. Organization of trainings for faculties and research staff for writing research works

GAP Principle(s)

- (++) 1. Research freedom
- (+/-) 2. Ethical principles
- (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility
- (++) 4. Professional attitude
- (++) 6. Accountability
- (++) 12. Recruitment
- (+/-) 23. Research environment

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

4th quarter, 2023
(Continuous)

Responsible**Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Vice rector
 for Science,
 Scientific
 Policy
 Department,
 Postgraduate
 Department

- 80% Employees are trained and familiar with all related systems and procedures. - Increased number of professional research works(at least 300 research works per year)

Proposed ACTIONS**Action 3**

3.1. Development of IP policy 3.2. Creation of working group 3.3. Study of international experience 3.4. Research of legislation in the framework of commercialization at national and institutional level

GAP Principle(s)

- (++) 1. Research freedom
- (+/-) 2. Ethical principles
- (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility
- (++) 4. Professional attitude
- (-/+) 26. Funding and salaries
- (+/-) 31. Intellectual Property Rights
- (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development
- (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

3th quarter, 2023, 1st quarter of 2024

Responsible**Unit****Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Vice Rector for Science, Department of Scientific Policy, Judicial Devision	- Creation of a new IP policy (Almost 4 patents per year) - 80% of awareness at YSU - Strong line between industrial market and YSU/new agreements (almost 2 new agreements with industrial companies per year)
---	---

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 4

4.1. Organisation of english trainings for not only scientific but also administrative staff 4.2.Encouragement of English language research 4.3.Increase of rewards for English-language research works and scientific activities

GAP Principle(s)

- (++) 1. Research freedom
- (+/-) 2. Ethical principles
- (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility
- (++) 4. Professional attitude
- (-/+) 7. Good practice in research
- (+/-) 28. Career development
- (+/-) 33. Teaching
- (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development
- (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

4th quarter, 2023
(Continuous)

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Scientific Policy
Department,
Faculty of
European
Languages and
Communication,
Postgraduate
Additional
Education
Center

- Almost 60% of the local and 90% international articles are in english, - Almost 10% of thesises written in english - Web page of YSU is bilingual both armenian and english (all the information)

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 5

5.1. Development of interdisciplinary research
 5.2. Increase of student engagement in interdisciplinary research programs

GAP Principle(s)

- (++) 1. Research freedom
- (+/-) 2. Ethical principles
- (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility
- (++) 4. Professional attitude
- (-/+) 7. Good practice in research
- (++) 10. Non discrimination
- (++) 12. Recruitment
- (+/-) 23. Research environment
- (+/-) 32. Co-authorship
- (+/-) 33. Teaching
- (++) 36. Relation with supervisors
- (+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties
- (++) 40. Supervision

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

Continuous 4th quarter, 2023, 4th quarter 2024 (Continuous)

Responsible

Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Vice-rector for Academic Study, Scientific Policy Department, Faculties
 - Increase of interdisciplinary research, almost 30% of researches are interdisciplinary - Increase of the number of students in interdisciplinary research (almost 40%)

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 6	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
6.1.Operation of "the Supervision" operational system 6.2.Providing YSU e-mails to postgraduate students 6.3.Training of administrative staff to work with "Supervision" operational system	(++) 12. Recruitment	2nd quarter, 2023 (Continuous) until 2026
	(++) 14. Selection (Code)	
	(+/-) 23. Research environment	
	(+/-) 24. Working conditions	
	(+/-) 33. Teaching	
	Responsible Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)	
	Vice Rector for Science, Postgraduate Department, IT center	- Digitalization of the postgraduate system - Creation a common platform for graduate students

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 7

7.1.Development of a new order for PhD seekers which will create equal conditions for both of them and PhD students
 7.2.Creation of YSU working group
 7.3.Cooperation with RA MoESCS

GAP Principle(s)		Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
(++) 12. Recruitment		
(--) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)		
(+/-) 23. Research environment		1st quarter, 2023 (Continuous) untill 2026
(+/-) 24. Working conditions		
(+/-) 25. Stability and permanence of employment		
Responsible Unit		Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Vice Rector for Science, Vice-rector for Academic Study, Postgraduate Department		- Operation of a new order for PhD seekers (almost done) - Existence of equal conditions for both PhD students and PhD seekers - Almost 40% of PhD students defend their thesises

Proposed ACTIONS**Action 8**

8.1. Creation of Doctoral Study Center 8.2. Review of Non-mandatory PhD studies which will develop their professional skills 8.3. Development of a package of proposals for changes related to the educational-research components of the credit system which will be introduced to RA MoESCS

GAP Principle(s)

- (++) 6. Accountability
- (++) 12. Recruitment
- (++) 13. Recruitment (Code)
- (++) 14. Selection (Code)
- (--) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)
- (+/-) 23. Research environment
- (+/-) 24. Working conditions
- (+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties
- (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

4th quarter, 2023
(Continuous) until
2025

Responsible**Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Vice-rector for Academic Study, Postgraduate Department	- Operation of Doctoral Study Center (At least 2 doctoral programs for young researchers , the Machine Learning doctoral program is almsot ready for operation) - Operation of non-mandatory PhD studies - Approval of a package of proposals for changes related to the education-research components of the credit system
---	---

Proposed ACTIONS**Action 9**

9.1. Conduct of internal grants competitions for scientific staff
 9.2. Creation of grant commissions
 9.3. Summing up the results of competitions
 9.4. Provision of funding

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results

(+/-) 9. Public engagement

(+/-) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems

(++) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)

(+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)

(+/-) 22. Recognition of the profession

(+/-) 24. Working conditions

(++) 27. Gender balance

(+/-) 30. Access to career advice

(+/-) 35. Participation in decision-making bodies

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

1st quarter, 2023
(Continuous)

Responsible

Unit **Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Vice Rector for Science, Department of Scientific Policy, YSU Faculties

- Operation of internal grants (At least 6 internal grants for each year) - Promotion of scientific activity of YSU scientists and researchers (At least 500 articles per year)

Proposed ACTIONS**Action 10**

10.1. Conduct of Travel Grants 10.2. Creation of commissions 10.3. Summing up the results of applications 10.4. Provision of funding

GAP Principle(s)

- (++) 15. Transparency (Code)
- (+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)
- (+/-) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)
- (+/-) 20. Seniority (Code)
- (++) 29. Value of mobility
- (+/-) 30. Access to career advice
- (+/-) 34. Complains/ appeals
- (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development
- (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

2th quarter, 2023
(Continuous)

Responsible**Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Vice-rector for Academic Affairs, Vice Rector for Scientific Affairs, Department of Scientific Policy, YSU Faculties

- Operation of Travel Grants (At least 20 travel grants per year) - Increase of researchers engaged in international conferences (Almost 20 conferences per year) - Increase of international publications (20% of publications are on Scopus, Web of Science journals)

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 11

11.1. Review of requirements for Supervisors
 11.2. Separation of requirements for humanities and natural sciences

GAP Principle(s)

- (+/-) 2. Ethical principles
- (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility
- (+/-) 28. Career development
- (++) 36. Relation with supervisors
- (+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties
- (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development
- (++) 40. Supervision

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

3th quarter, 2023
 (Continuous)

Responsible

Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Vice Rector for Scientific Affairs, Department of Scientific Policy, YSU faculties

- Increased number of professional supervisors (at least 20% of supervisors are from international academic community) - Increase number of research works in humanities and natural sciences (as was mentioned at least 500 articles per year)

Proposed ACTIONS**Action 12**

12.1. Conducting professional trainings that will promote the dissemination of information about international research platforms among researchers
 12.2. Creation of informative videos on Google Scholar, Research Gate, Scopus, etc for research staff

GAP Principle(s)

- (++) 4. Professional attitude
- (-/+) 7. Good practice in research
- (+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results
- (+/-) 23. Research environment
- (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

4th quarter, 2023
(Continuous)

Responsible**Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Vice Rector for Science, Department of Scientific Policy, Postgraduate Additional Education Center, PR department	- Dissemination of information on international research platforms - Increase of number of researchers who are registered on international research platforms (almost 80% of academic staff)
--	--

Proposed ACTIONS

Action 13

13.1. Operation of OTM-R Policy 13.2. Creation of working group 13.3. Study of international experience

GAP Principle(s)

- (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility
- (++) 6. Accountability
- (++) 12. Recruitment
- (+/-) 38. Continuing Professional Development

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

1st quarter, 2023
(Continuous)

Responsible

Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Vice Rector for Scientific Affairs, Department of Scientific Policy

- Operation of OTM-R Policy (already have been published) - Some evidence (photos) of working group discussions

Proposed ACTIONS**Action 14**

14.1 Organization of trainings for the YSU Faculties on how to apply for grant programs. 14.2 More targeted approach should be implemented based on the need analysis

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 3. Professional responsibility

(++) 4. Professional attitude

(+/-) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)

(+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)

(+/-) 24. Working conditions

(-/+) 26. Funding and salaries

(+/-) 28. Career development

(+/-) 32. Co-authorship

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

2nd quarter, 2023
(Continuous)

Responsible Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Vice Rector
for Scientific
Affairs,
Department
of Scientific
Policy, Grant
Unit, YSU
Faculties

- Increased number of collaboration and grants applied (at least 20 grant application per year) -
Increased number of trained employees (80% of employees are trained)

Unselected principles:

The establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HRS4R strategy. Please also indicate how your organisation will use the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Toolkit and how you intend to implement/are implementing the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above, please provide a short commentary demonstrating this implementation. If the case, please make the link between the OTM-R checklist and the overall action plan. (max. 1000 words) *

Yerevan State University recognizes the importance of an Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) policy as a fundamental element of its HRS4R strategy. The university is committed to implementing the principles of OTM-R to ensure fairness, equality, and excellence in its recruitment processes. YSU aims to utilize the Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment Toolkit provided by the European Commission as a guiding framework for its recruitment practices.

The implementation of the OTM-R policy at Yerevan State University is aligned with its overall action plan for HRS4R. The following commentary highlights how the university intends to use the OTM-R Toolkit and implement the principles of OTM-R:

1. Adoption of the OTM-R Policy: YSU has developed an OTM-R policy that aligns with the principles and guidelines set forth in the OTM-R Toolkit. This policy is presented on the university's new website, providing clear information and guidelines to all stakeholders involved in the recruitment process.
2. Transparent Recruitment Procedures: YSU ensures transparency in its recruitment procedures by providing comprehensive and easily accessible information about available positions, eligibility criteria, evaluation processes, and expected outcomes. This information is published on the university's website and other relevant platforms to reach a wide range of potential candidates.
3. Merit-Based Evaluation: YSU places a strong emphasis on merit-based evaluation to ensure that candidates are selected based on their qualifications, skills, and experience relevant to the position. Evaluation committees are formed, comprising experts in the respective fields, to assess candidates objectively and fairly, taking into account predefined evaluation criteria.
4. Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination: YSU is committed to providing equal opportunities to all applicants and strictly adheres to non-discriminatory practices during the recruitment process. The university promotes diversity and inclusivity, valuing candidates from diverse backgrounds and ensuring fair treatment throughout the selection process.
5. Selection Committees and Peer Review: YSU establishes selection committees composed of qualified experts who possess in-depth knowledge and understanding of the subject area. Peer review plays a crucial role in the evaluation process, allowing for independent assessment by experts in the field, ensuring the quality and credibility of the selection process.
6. Training and Awareness: YSU acknowledges the importance of providing training and raising awareness among its staff involved in the recruitment process. Training programs are developed to familiarize them with the principles of OTM-R, emphasizing the need for transparency, fairness, and equal opportunities.
7. Feedback and Communication: YSU maintains open communication channels with applicants, providing them with feedback on their application status and the outcome of the selection process. This feedback helps candidates understand the strengths and weaknesses of their application and contributes to the continuous improvement of the recruitment process.

The implementation of the OTM-R policy at YSU is closely linked to the university's overall action plan for HRS4R. The OTM-R checklist serves as a comprehensive tool to guide and monitor the progress of implementing the principles of open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment within the institution. The checklist assists YSU in evaluating its recruitment practices, identifying areas for improvement, and ensuring compliance with the established guidelines.

By incorporating the OTM-R policy and utilizing the toolkit, Yerevan State University demonstrates its commitment to promoting a culture of transparency, fairness, and excellence in its recruitment processes. The university's OTM-R policy, coupled with the overarching HRS4R action plan, establishes a solid foundation for attracting and selecting the best candidates while fostering equal opportunities, diversity, and the advancement of knowledge and expertise.

In addition to the aforementioned implementation of the OTM-R policy and its alignment with the HRS4R action plan, Yerevan State University (YSU) has developed several provisions to further strengthen its commitment to open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment practices. These provisions aim to enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of the recruitment process, foster collaboration and knowledge exchange, and support the professional development of researchers. The following provisions have been implemented:

1. Widening the Candidate Pool: YSU recognizes the importance of attracting a diverse range of candidates to enrich its research community. To achieve this, the university actively seeks to widen the candidate pool by promoting its vacancies through various channels, including international networks, professional associations, and academic platforms. This approach ensures that a broader and more diverse set of applicants are aware of the opportunities at YSU.
2. Engaging External Experts: YSU values the expertise and perspectives of external professionals in the recruitment process. The university actively involves external experts, both from academia and industry, in the evaluation and selection of candidates. Their participation brings valuable insights, contributes to impartiality, and helps maintain high standards of excellence.
3. Transparent Evaluation Criteria: YSU ensures transparency in the evaluation criteria used during the recruitment process. Clear and specific evaluation criteria are defined for each position, providing a solid foundation for the assessment of candidates. These criteria are communicated to applicants in advance, enabling them to understand the expectations and align their applications accordingly.

4. Research Statement and Project Proposals: YSU encourages candidates to provide research statements and project proposals that showcase their innovative ideas, potential contributions to their field of study, and alignment with the university's research priorities. This allows candidates to demonstrate their research vision, methodologies, and anticipated impact, enabling a comprehensive evaluation of their potential.

5. International Collaborations: YSU recognizes the significance of international collaborations in advancing research and fostering knowledge exchange. The university actively seeks to collaborate with international research institutions, participate in joint research projects, and facilitate mobility opportunities for researchers. Such collaborations not only enrich the research environment but also provide access to diverse expertise and resources.

6. Mentoring Programs: YSU has implemented mentoring programs to support the professional development of researchers, particularly early-career researchers and PhD students. Experienced faculty members or senior researchers serve as mentors, providing guidance, advice, and support to mentees. These mentoring programs help researchers navigate their academic journey, enhance their research skills, and foster a culture of collaboration and growth.

7. Continuous Training and Development: YSU places great emphasis on continuous training and development opportunities for its researchers. The university offers workshops, seminars, and courses on research methodologies, grant writing, project management, and other relevant skills. These initiatives equip researchers with the necessary tools and knowledge to excel in their roles and contribute to the advancement of their respective fields.

8. Performance Evaluation and Recognition: YSU has established a comprehensive performance evaluation system that assesses researchers based on their research productivity, impact, and contributions to their field. Outstanding researchers are recognized and rewarded through internal mechanisms such as awards, grants, and career advancement opportunities. This recognition promotes a culture of excellence, motivates researchers, and encourages continuous improvement.

By implementing these provisions, YSU aims to create a vibrant and inclusive research environment that attracts top talent, promotes collaboration, and facilitates the advancement of knowledge. The university's commitment to open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment practices, coupled with these provisions, reinforces its position as a leading research institution and contributes to the overall success of its HRS4R strategy.

If your organisation already has a recruitment strategy which implements the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment, please provide the web link where this strategy can be found on your organisation's website:

URL:

http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/YSU_Internal_Disciplinary_Rules_ENG.pdf (http://documentation.y-su.am/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/YSU_Internal_Disciplinary_Rules_ENG.pdf)

4. Implementation

General overview of the expected overall implementation process of the action plan: (max. 1000 words)

Yerevan State University (YSU) has embarked on a comprehensive strategy to synchronize its research environment and practices with the principles set forth in the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R). YSU is embracing the European Charter for Researchers, the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and the guidelines for Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) in order to cultivate an atmosphere of openness, transparency, and meritocracy within the institution.

The initial gap analysis has unveiled that YSU has already incorporated internal regulations that have played a significant role in ensuring the impartial and unbiased selection of academic staff and the establishment of an open research atmosphere. Building on these foundations, the action plan aims to further fortify the university's policies to align with Euraxess standards. A number of key metrics have been identified to evaluate the feasibility and efficacy of the proposed reforms.

One of the principal goals is to ensure that YSU's internal regulations are in harmony with the European Charter for Researchers, the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and the OTM-R guidelines. This alignment will provide a framework that promotes equitable and transparent recruitment practices, nurtures career progression, and fosters a positive research milieu.

To advance the principles of open science, YSU seeks to raise awareness among its researchers and staff members. By championing open access, data sharing, and collaboration, the university is endeavoring to create fresh opportunities for both budding researchers and senior faculty members. This strategic focus on open science will boost YSU's international visibility and collaborative potential, strengthening its status as a research-intensive institution.

An integral facet of the action plan involves offering training programs for both administrative and research staff. These programs will equip them with the requisite skills and knowledge to navigate the evolving research landscape, encompassing an understanding of the tools and processes involved in securing projects and grants. By endowing staff members with these competencies, YSU aims to augment research quality, productivity, and impact.

The establishment of internal and travel grants represents another pivotal measure that will empower YSU researchers to participate in the global research arena. These grants will facilitate involvement in conferences, workshops, and research visits, fostering the exchange of knowledge, collaboration, and networking opportunities. By facilitating international research activities, YSU intends to broaden the horizons of its researchers, encourage interdisciplinary partnerships, and enhance the university's global reputation.

In order to sustainably promote the implementation of open science principles, YSU will set up a repository and enhance capacities for open science practices. These initiatives will enhance the transparency of research, expedite the dissemination of research outputs, and stimulate collaboration among researchers, both within and beyond the institution. By offering the necessary resources and infrastructure, YSU aims to ensure that all staff members can wholeheartedly embrace and uphold the tenets of open science in their research endeavors.

In sum, the execution of YSU's action plan for HRS4R is a comprehensive and dynamic undertaking. It encompasses the alignment of internal regulations with European standards, the promotion of open science principles, the provision of training and development opportunities, the establishment of grants for international engagement, and the enhancement of research capabilities. Through the adoption of these measures, YSU aspires to create an environment that nurtures excellence, encourages collaboration, and supports the professional advancement of its researchers. Through these concerted efforts, YSU aims to position itself as a leading research institution that actively contributes to the advancement of knowledge and innovation.

Make sure you also cover all the aspects highlighted in the checklist below, which you will need to describe in detail:

Note: Click on each question of the checklist to open the editor.

How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?*



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The implementation committee and/or steering group will play a crucial role in overseeing the progress of the HRS4R implementation at Yerevan State University (YSU). Their responsibilities will involve monitoring the implementation of the action plan, evaluating the outcomes, and providing guidance and support to ensure the successful achievement of the set objectives. Here is a detailed description of their role and justification for their regular oversight:

1. Establishment of the implementation committee and/or steering group: YSU will establish a dedicated implementation committee and/or steering group consisting of key stakeholders, including representatives from the university administration, faculty members, researchers, and relevant support units. The committee will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the HRS4R action plan.
2. Regular meetings: The committee will conduct regular meetings, at least quarterly or as needed, to review the progress of the implementation process. These meetings will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to come together, share updates, discuss challenges, and collectively make decisions to address any issues that may arise during the implementation phase.
3. Monitoring and evaluation: The committee will monitor the implementation progress by reviewing the action plan's milestones, objectives, and timelines. They will assess whether the planned activities are being executed according to schedule and evaluate the outcomes and impact of the implemented measures. This monitoring and evaluation process will ensure that the action plan stays on track and that any necessary adjustments can be made in a timely manner.
4. Reporting and documentation: The committee will maintain comprehensive documentation of the implementation process, including meeting minutes, progress reports, and any other relevant materials. Regular reports will be prepared to provide updates on the progress made, challenges faced, and actions taken to address them. These reports will be shared with the university administration, relevant departments, and external stakeholders as necessary.
5. Stakeholder engagement: The committee will actively engage with various stakeholders involved in the HRS4R implementation, including faculty members, researchers, administrative staff, and relevant support units. They will seek input, feedback, and suggestions from these stakeholders to ensure their active participation and to address any concerns or issues that may arise during the implementation process.
6. Support and guidance: The committee will provide support and guidance to departments and units within the university to facilitate the implementation of specific measures outlined in the action plan. They will offer resources, training opportunities, and expert advice to help overcome challenges and ensure that the implementation is aligned with the principles of HRS4R.
7. Continuous improvement: The committee will promote a culture of continuous improvement by encouraging stakeholders to share best practices, lessons learned, and innovative ideas. They will explore new approaches, tools, and initiatives that can further enhance the implementation process and contribute to the overall success of HRS4R at YSU.

Justification:

Regular oversight by the implementation committee and/or steering group is essential for several reasons:

- a. Accountability: Regular oversight ensures that the responsible individuals and units remain accountable for the progress and successful implementation of the HRS4R action plan. It provides a structure for tracking progress, identifying challenges, and taking appropriate actions to address them.
- b. Timely adjustments: Regular monitoring allows for the identification of any deviations from the planned objectives or timelines. It enables the committee to take timely corrective actions, make adjustments, and reallocate resources if necessary, ensuring that the implementation stays on track.
- c. Stakeholder engagement: The committee's regular meetings provide a platform for stakeholder engagement, promoting transparency, collaboration, and open communication. This engagement helps build trust, ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, and fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among all stakeholders involved.

d. Documentation and reporting: The documentation of the implementation process and the preparation of regular reports facilitate transparency and accountability. These records serve as a valuable resource for future reference, evaluation, and institutional memory, ensuring that the implementation process

How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?*

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

YSU internal and external stakeholders will be directly or indirectly involved in the HRS4R implementation process. Internal stakeholders include YSU management bodies, researchers, administrative staff and PhD students. State and territorial self-government bodies, national and international research funders act as external stakeholders of the institution. Besides, the working groups involve representatives of all career stages of researchers (R1-R4).

How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? Make sure the HRS4R is recognized in the organisation's research strategy, as the overarching HR policy.*

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The YSU commits itself to the principles of the European initiative HRS4R «Human Resource Strategy for Researchers» and actively promotes good employment conditions and framework (charter & code and OTM-R).

Yerevan State University, as already presented in Gap analysis, has already implemented a number of reforms to internationalize and improve the research environment at the university.

The main steps of the university have already been fixed in YSU 2020-2024 strategy plan, where it is mentioned what specific road map is drawn on the way to becoming a research university not only at national but also at international level.

Despite the many reforms already underway, there is a need for a number of additional actions and adjustments that will already be implemented under the Action Plan.

How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?*

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

YSU will ensure that the proposed actions are implemented by these actions:

1. Firstly, it is high responsibility of our administrative staff of doing their best to make research environment of our university better,
2. Secondly, steering group will organise mid-term and long-term monitoring processes which will help to measure what have been done and what still need to be done in the framework of Action Plan,
3. Thirdly, annually reports will be written where all responsible stakeholders will present the actions that are already taken to ensure the willingness of the university to comply with the HRS4R Principles,
4. Finally, thematic reports will be presented by the expert groups to show the progress of the actions.

How will you monitor progress (timeline)?*



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The YSU Steering Group will undertake the monitoring of the Action Plan progress, initiate all the actions in case they are necessary for reaching the objectives set up in the Action Plan.

All activities will be under control of Vice-Rector for Science and Vice-Rector for Academic Study, who will monitor the process and supervise all the reforms. Also the process will be controlled by all other stakeholder divisions and each of them will have their own responsibility for the progress of this or that action. This will ensure mutual control of the action plan not only by Steering Group but also by all stakeholders engaged in this process.

How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?*



Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The progress will be measured through specific indicators defined by the Action Plan, based on the level of achievement of goals. Control over the implementation of processes, identification of needs for changes and measures for their improvement will be carried out according to the quality management, constantly updating the action plan and adapting to changing needs.

Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process: (max. 1000 words)

We would like to express our sincere gratitude for your comprehensive evaluation of our Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) process, as well as for your valuable recommendations and insights. Your meticulous assessment has been instrumental in guiding us toward the successful implementation of essential improvements within our institution.

Your commitment to ensuring the alignment of our practices with international standards has been both commendable and constructive. We understand the significance of your role in enhancing the quality of our processes and practices, and we deeply appreciate your dedication to this endeavor.

The collaboration between our institution and the Assessors has been invaluable in promoting a more inclusive, transparent, and merit-based research environment. We have diligently reviewed and implemented the recommendations you provided, and we are pleased to report that all specified action points have been successfully addressed.

In the following sections, we will provide detailed reports on the actions taken in response to each of the recommendations outlined in your report. Your insights have served as a catalyst for positive change within our organization, and we look forward to continued cooperation in our pursuit of excellence in research and academia.

Once again, thank you for your commitment and guidance throughout this process. Your expertise and dedication have played a pivotal role in shaping our institution's journey towards fostering a world-class research culture.

1) Publication of Relevant Vacancies in English

We have implemented the recommendation to publish all relevant vacancies on the management side, such as research management, international relations, education management, and lab managers, in Armenian, now we are translating all the vacancies in English, so it can be easily available in English too the university website (find Armenian vacancies here https://www.y-su.am/en/career-center/vacancies/ysu_vacancy) and the Euraxess job opportunities also are published on our website (the main page for HRS4R <https://www.y-su.am/en/sitesection-798>). Furthermore, we have redesigned these key positions to meet international standards and have ensured that the net monthly salary range for each advertised position is communicated.

2) Implementation of More Quantitative Feedback

We have taken steps to incorporate more measurable quantitative indicators to demonstrate and detail the achievement and implementation of various actions (you can find some certain numbers to indicate our target). This enhancement will facilitate ongoing assessments over the years and allow for a more in-depth analysis of the impact of the actions.

3) Improved Website Accessibility

To address the issue of website accessibility, we have added a specific section to our main website, making it easier to find relevant information. Specifically, we have included this section as an item in the vertical menu under the "Science" tab. This modification will also enhance the visibility of our YSU HRS4R section on popular search engines like Google and Bing (as the website is new it needs some time to be more available on SEO search engines). You can find all the needed information here:

<https://www.y-su.am/en/sitesection-798> .

4) Evidence of Researcher Representation

We have provided evidence of the active participation of researchers from all faculties in the Working Group, as well as staff from the HR management division. This ensures that the implementation process includes diverse perspectives and experiences. You can find some more photos of the section here: <https://www.y-su.am/en/sitesection-798/photo-galleries/50655> .

5) English Documentation of OTMR Policy

All documentation related to the Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTMR) policy has been made available in English on the YSU website. This will facilitate access to information for both internal and external stakeholders. As was mentioned you can find it here: <https://www.y-su.am/en/sitesection-798> .

6) Enhancements to the Action Plan and Website

The Action Plan is now published as part of the YSU HRS4R web section. Additionally, we have expanded the information related to the HR Strategy for Researchers, providing clear context for YSU web visitors. We have also added links to basic EU context, ensuring comprehensive information for all interested parties. As before you can find the information here: <https://www.y-su.am/en/sitesection-798> .

7) Removal of HR Excellence Logo

We have promptly removed the HR Excellence Logo from the YSU website, as per the recommendation. We have understood that this logo should only be used after the university is officially granted the Award.

8) Identification of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

We have identified a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each action, enabling us to monitor progress, develop corrective measures, and evaluate our advancements effectively. For example, we have introduced measurable targets and indicators for Action points 4 (Trainings), 9, 10, and 14, including specific numbers and percentages to gauge success.

9) Gender Equality and Diversity Initiatives

We have intensified our efforts to promote gender equality by engaging women in Working Groups and ensuring diverse representation in selection panels. Furthermore, we are providing training to selection committee members to mitigate implicit biases toward underrepresented groups. To ensure our intention we have developed Gender Equality Plan, which is accepted by Rectorate and it is now available on our web site both in armenian and in english. Find it here: <https://www.y-su.am/en/sitesection-798/50654> :

10) Expansion of Researcher Involvement

To enhance the perspective of researchers in the implementation of the YSU HR strategy, we have expanded the group of researchers involved in the process, taking into account the size of the university. You can see that HR department and some other departments, Faculties are also engaged in the process.

11) Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination

You can find here that during these months we have developed Sexual Harassment Exclusion Policy at "Yerevan State University" Foundation <https://www.y-su.am/en/sitesection-798/50676> , also, as was mentioned we have developed Gender Equality Plan. In the future cycles of HR strategy implementation, we will consider gender equality and anti-discrimination topics. These activities, when realized, will be published on the YSU website to strengthen our Employer Branding.

12) Focus on Recruitment Area

We recognize the need to focus further on the recruitment area, particularly in the training of all stakeholders involved in the recruitment process, including Selection Committee members and administration staff supporting the recruitment process. But as you can find on HRS4R section of YSU web site some trainings have been already organised by our working group.

13) Correction of OTMR Policy Reference

The reference link to the YSU OTMR Policy has been corrected to ensure accuracy and alignment with the intended policy.

14) Evidence for Future Interim Self Assessment

In preparation for the future Interim Self Assessment, we will provide evidence related to completed action points, including hyperlinks to websites, documents, or repositories created for assessment purposes.

We appreciate the thorough evaluation provided and would like to emphasize our commitment to implementing their recommendations effectively, which has resulted in the successful completion of these actions.