



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH



University of Montenegro

Internal Review

Case number:
2018ME314906

Organisation under review:
University of Montenegro

Organisation's contact details:
Cetinjska 2, Podgorica, Montenegro, 81000, Montenegro

Organisation's contact person:
Dijana Jovanović, Head of Rector's Office

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1. Organisational Information

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research *	1058
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	40
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	38
Of whom are women *	555
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. *	457
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level *	163
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level *	117
Total number of students (if relevant) *	13042
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) *	1560

RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)		€
Total annual organisational budget		51376247.00
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)		35800000
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)		9436707.34
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research		6139539.66

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

The University of Montenegro was founded in 1974, and is the oldest, the largest and the only public higher education institution. University comprises of 19 faculties and 4 scientific institutes, with more than 15,000 active students. The University of Montenegro is an integrated public university, organized according to the principles of the Bologna Declaration. This, as well as numerous agreements and programs in which the University takes part, enables mobility without barriers in the European Higher Education Area for students and staff. Studies at the University of Montenegro are organized at the level of Undergraduate, Masters and Doctoral studies. University of Montenegro is the leading higher education and research institution in Montenegro.

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Ethical and professional aspects

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase 2018)

The ethical and professional aspects at the University of Montenegro are regulated by several acts adopted at the University level. The research freedom is guaranteed by the Constitution of Montenegro and safeguarded by the Statute of the University, Law on Scientific and Research Activities and Law on Higher Education. The ethical and professional attitude of the researchers and employees at the University of Montenegro is imposed by the Code of Ethics as well as by the contractual obligations specified by the specific project funders. The awareness of research freedom and the obligations on professional attitudes are relatively high. Moreover, the University actively participates in the project "Strengthening Integrity and the Fight against Corruption in Higher Education", funded by the Council of Europe, and has realized numerous international meetings, study visits or workshops where students, academics and non-academic staff are introduced to the basic postulates of academic integrity. Consequently, the University of Montenegro is in the process of certification for the field of the Academic integrity (IRFPA - International Institute for Research and Action on Academic and Plagiarism). The University adopted Decision on the use of software for detecting plagiarism which defines the procedure for examining master and PhD thesis at the University. However, the level of awareness among academic staff, especially the students, of the existing ethical and professional rules at the University needs to be increased.

Also the University adopted Rules for doctoral studies and the Guidelines for doctoral studies (in 2015) defining the obligations of candidates and the supervisors during the research process. The Rulebook on the procedure of evaluation criteria and method of employee rewards, that stimulates the researchers for scientific papers published in the Web of Science was adopted by the Managing Board of the University in 2016. Although in certain research areas the research results are on the level of modern European universities, in some other areas the research skills and approaches in research activities still need to be significantly improved. Particularly, the lack of young researchers (particularly PhD student and young postdoctoral students),

as the main driving force in research activities, significantly influences the dynamics, efficiency and capacity for research at the University.

The University of Montenegro cherishes an open access to science, and accordingly in 2018 the University signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Field of Science and Humanities. The University has also established a system for permanent archiving, indexing and use of digital objects, named PHAIDRA (Permanent Hosting, Archiving and Indexing of Digital Resources and Assets), that contains deposited PhD and master thesis, final exams and other published papers, and keeps them protected, in accordance with copyright legislation.

However, there is still a lack of strategy in research activities aligned with national and international policies and strategies, which will among other things be aligned with the new strategy of smart specialization defining the research priorities on the national level (which is finalized and should be adopted soon by the Ministry of Science of Montenegro). Moreover, the University of Montenegro lacks also the general Strategy (the previous one was created for the period 2008-2012), which needs to include most of these crucial issues for the future development of the University. Furthermore, there is no an IPR protection policy or strategy (although it is currently in the process of definition), and the researchers are not fully aware of the issues arising in data protection or privacy policy.

Strengths and Weaknesses (**Interim Assessment 2022**)

The Law on Academic Integrity was adopted by the Government of Montenegro, The Ethics Charter was adopted, and the national Ethical Committee was appointed, and our institutional regulations are completely in line with the national legislative.

Despite the COVID-19 challenges and barriers in the previous 2 years, the University of Montenegro has invested significant efforts in developing strategic framework for institution operation and development in accordance with the European education policies and standards. The University of Montenegro adopted its Development Strategy 2019-2024 (https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_4/objava_40/fajlovi/Strategy%20of%20the%20University%20of%20Montenegro%202019_2024.pdf), with main goals and tasks that will strengthen the University position as the comprehensive and internationally open higher education institution in the region. The University of Montenegro adopted several others strategic documents that contributes to higher quality education and mobility of students and staff and the strengthening research capacities and prospects:

- as the signatory of the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Field of Science and Humanities and the institution that aligns its education and research system with the EU and international standards, the University of Montenegro continued to strengthen the system of open access to science by adopting the “Policy for Open Access to Research Infrastructure at the University of Montenegro on October 1st, 2020 as part of the support program of Regional Cooperation Council.

(https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_21920/objava_105846/fajlovi/Politika%20za%20otvoreni%20pristup%20istrazivackoj%20infrastrukturi%20na%20UCG_eng.pdf)

- University of Montenegro adopted the Internationalization Strategy 2021-2026 in December 2021 (https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_19379/objava_128673/fajlovi/Internationalisation%20Strategy%20of%20UoM%202021-2026_1.pdf).
- As an active member of EOSC, The University of Montenegro established in 2021 the National Open Science Cloud in Montenegro through the Memorandum of Cooperation signed by 9 higher education and research institutions/units in Montenegro.
- The University of Montenegro staff is the Montenegro National Focal Point for Joint Research Center.
- In 2021 the Memorandum of Cooperation has been signed with several strategic national ministries – Ministry of Ministry of Public Administration, Digital Society and Media, Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism and Ministry of Capital Investments.
- The new Rulebook on the procedure of evaluation criteria and method of employee rewards, that stimulates the researchers for scientific papers published in the Web of Science, and scientific results in general, was adopted in February 2020 by the Governing Board of the University (https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_6/objava_3728/fajlovi/The%20Rulebook,%20Procedure,%20Evaluation%20Conditions%20and%20Award%20of%20the%20Employees.pdf).
- The University of Montenegro was awarded with the acknowledgement by the International Institute for Research and Action on Academic Fraud and Plagiarism (IRFPA) for its efforts and results in academic integrity issues. The software for plagiarism detection operates for about two years, and we have not recorded a single case of plagiarism. Document “Academic Integrity at the University of Montenegro-Policy and Practice” was adopted.
- The Integrity Plan for the University of Montenegro was revised and adopted

The University established the Institute of Advanced Studies that will significantly contribute to interdisciplinarity of its research potential. Also, the University has established the UNISPECTRUM as an independent organizational unit/spin-off, dedicated to commercialization of research results, development of strategic studies, faster linking with the industry sector and realization of joint projects.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal 2025)

In order to further strengthen the institutional framework concerning ethical and professional standards, the University of Montenegro has continued to improve its legislative and strategic documents in this field.

To that end, amendments and additions were made to the institutional document *Code of Ethics*, which regulates moral and professional principles, ethical standards, and rules of ethical conduct at the University of Montenegro. The amended version was adopted by the Governing Board of the University of Montenegro in July 2025.

The *Code of Ethics* ensures the preservation and promotion of professional dignity, academic integrity, and the reputation of the University. It safeguards moral values and raises awareness of the responsibilities of all members of the academic community and other staff members in fulfilling the University's mission. The document also promotes academic freedom, responsible exercise of rights, and adherence to obligations in research, teaching, artistic, and professional activities, while emphasizing respectful and collegial relationships within the academic community.

In addition, based on the experiences from recent years and the need to further clarify certain procedures and terminology, the Governing Board adopted the *Rulebook on Determining Violations of Academic Integrity* in July 2025. To support consistent understanding and application, the Ethical Committee of the University also adopted the *Terminology Glossary on Types of Academic Integrity Violations*.

All these institutional efforts are harmonized with the Law on Academic Integrity, which provides the national legal framework for safeguarding ethical standards and preventing academic misconduct in Montenegro.

The University has also developed several courses on academic integrity.

- The course *Academic Integrity 1* is designed for first-year students. It introduces the concept of academic integrity, expected standards of behavior, and practical advice for maintaining integrity throughout studies. The course *Academic Integrity 2* is intended for students beginning to write their first academic papers. It provides guidance on academic writing, citation, paraphrasing, and summarizing, helping students to avoid plagiarism and other forms of misconduct.
- Additionally, the online course “Academic Integrity: A Framework for Responsible Research and Education”, created in cooperation with Université Côte d’Azur, is available to all students and staff members through the Ulysseus European University alliance.

The University also developed a comprehensive policy document *Academic Integrity at the University of Montenegro: Policy and Practice*, which defines institutional procedures and mechanisms for ensuring compliance and accountability.

Each year, the University of Montenegro adopts an *Integrity Plan*, and appoints the Integrity Manager responsible for the implementation of measures for the protection of academic integrity defined in the Plan. The Integrity Manager performs the following duties:

- Monitoring the implementation of integrity measures;
- Preventing corruption, conflicts of interest, and other forms of unethical or illegal behavior;
- Preparing reports on the implementation of the Integrity Plan in cooperation with organizational units;
- Submitting annual reports to the Rector;
- Assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Integrity Plan;
- Proposing amendments to the Plan in line with institutional needs and development.

Currently, at the University level, the Integrity Manager also acts as the Head of the Centre for Quality Improvement, ensuring that the elements of the Integrity Plan are implemented and monitored through the University's quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms.

Links:

1. Code of Ethics of the University of Montenegro https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_6/objava_159200/fajlovi/02-0302%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20of%20the%20UoM.pdf
2. Rulebook on the Determination of Violation of Academic Integrity at the University of Montenegro https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_3/objava_13535/fajlovi/PRAVILNIK.pdf
3. Glossary of Types of Academic Integrity Violations https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_3/objava_13535/fajlovi/Pojmovnik%20tipova%20kr%C5%A1enja%20akademskog%20integriteta.pdf
4. Academic Integrity at the University of Montenegro: Policy and Practice https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_1012/objava_5/fajlovi/16%20Academic-Integrity-Certification-University-of-Montenegro-January-2019,%20policy%20and%20practice.pdf
5. Integrity Plan https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_6/objava_158389/fajlovi/Plan%20integriteta%20i%20Odluka%20za%202025.pdf
6. Academic Integrity: A Framework for Responsible Research and Education <https://ulyseus.eu/other-activities/academic-integrity-a-framework-for-responsible-research-and-education/>

Remarks

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies represents one of the most profound shifts in contemporary higher education. For the University of Montenegro, the integration of AI tools and systems offers new opportunities for improving teaching, learning, research, and institutional management. However, this transformation must be guided by a strong ethical and strategic framework to ensure that technology serves academic values and not the other way around.

AI has the potential to support personalized learning, automate administrative tasks, and enhance research through data-driven insights. Yet, it simultaneously introduces new risks related to academic integrity, misinformation, privacy, and the authenticity of intellectual work.

The University is therefore committed to developing policies, training programs, and technological infrastructures that will enable responsible and transparent use of AI. Our approach shall emphasize digital literacy, ethical awareness, and critical thinking as essential skills for students, researchers, and academic staff.

In this context, AI is understood not as a substitute for human intellect, but as a complementary tool that can amplify creativity, innovation, and efficiency — provided it is implemented responsibly, transparently, and in alignment with the University's mission and values.

Recruitment and selection

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase2018)

The University applies very transparent legal framework for recruitment of researchers (criteria are defined by Rules for the Academic promotion, adopted by the University in 2004 and national rules adopted by the Council for Higher Education in 2016). The criteria include various scientific, educational, pedagogical, innovation, and professional categories. The recruitment process, starting with the Call announcement, is defined by the Statute of the University and Rules for conducting recruitment procedure for academic and scientific titles. Therefore, the procedure and criteria are perceived as transparent and clear. Career breaks are typically not considered as an obstacle, even in certain cases it is possible to keep the status at the University (passive position), while performing other types of activities/functions/mandates outside the University.

Doctoral study system, which includes the rules and procedures of doctoral studies are considered to be transparent, with equal criteria across different research fields and aligned with the national and institutional legislation. The selection of PhD candidates has never been an issue since the number of applied candidates is always below the institutional licence for the number of PhD students. However, the criteria for enrolling PhD studies are defined by the Law on Higher Education. A great majority of PhD candidates are employed at the University as teaching/research assistants, again with no issue arising so far in the selection process. However, there is a need for a higher number of positions for teaching/research assistants and higher

number of PhD candidates. Also, the call for positions (job advertisements) are not published on the international level, with exception of the specific project experts' engagements. The call for positions are however open for all surrounding foreign countries having the same (similar) official language. However, there is a very low number of foreign researchers. The language is identified as a barrier for international calls since each academic position also requires a teaching engagement for which the official language is Montenegrin (also Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian). Furthermore, there are no accredited English-language doctoral and master programmes. Also, the current regulations do not prescribe the written feedback on the selection procedure when more than one candidate applies for the position. Evaluation and appraisal systems could be further improved during the implementation of the HRS action plan.

Strengths and Weaknesses (**Interim Assessment 2022**)

Through a long process of negotiations and numerous meetings with representatives of relevant ministries, especially the Ministry of Finance, management of the University of Montenegro has set an agreement with the Government for the allocation of budget for this year which is for 20% higher than it was in the previous year. Also, the amendments of the Collective agreement followed

(https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_6/objava_3710/fajlovi/Collective%20Agreement,%20amandements.pdf).

The national Rules for the Academic promotion adopted by the Council for Higher Education were revised and the amendments were adopted

(https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_6/objava_3719/fajlovi/Criteria%20on%20the%20conditions%20and%20requirements%20for%20promotion%20to%20academic%20titles.pdf), with the participation of research community of our University, through participation of its representatives in working groups. The changes are focused on the qualitative aspect of scientific publications, introducing the categorization Q1-Q4, emphasizing publications with higher impact factor.

Within the newly established Institute for Advanced Studies, we have created an environment for research activities in areas of national priority, defined with the National Smart Specialization Strategy (<https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/ea1d661e-922a-4d42-af8d-ae55bc53988e>). Four researchers were already elected into research titles, and a significant number of positions are planned, for engagement of researchers of different research stages (R1-R4).

The first PhD programme in English language was introduced at the University of Montenegro, interdisciplinary programme *Sustainable Development*. The interest for the enrollment exceeded all expectations, resulting in the enrollment of 25 candidates, the maximum number according to the license for this programme.

Apart from the obligation to publish job posts in national language and within the national means of communication (fully transparent and open), the University of Montenegro dedicated a page at the web site of the University where all job posts are

announced, both in national and English language (<https://www.ucg.ac.me/objava/blog/4/objava/141105-calls-2022>). We are also publishing posts at the EURAXESS Jobs portal, but still have to refine the system within our administrative units to make the process more effective.

For all research/teaching posts, applications are gathered (in the specifically designed form), systematized and published within the University Bulletin at the web site of the University. Each candidate can see all applications in detail: teaching experience, research results, scientific papers, books published, mobility experience, evaluation by independent reviewers... all classified and ranked, along with the final decision on the selection of a candidate. So, in this manner, all candidates have a full insight into the whole process of selection and qualifications of all candidates, including themselves.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal 2025)

In recent years, the University of Montenegro has implemented comprehensive reforms in its recruitment and selection system with the goal of enhancing transparency, inclusiveness, and competitiveness in academic employment. These improvements have been strongly supported by a significant increase in the national budget for higher education and research, allowing the University to open new positions, improve working conditions, and attract both domestic and international talent. This higher level of investment enables recruitment to focus not only on staff replacement but also on strategic growth in priority research areas.

The new Law on Scientific Research Activities introduced a modernized framework for academic and research titles, aligning national structures with European standards. The establishment of new research positions provides broader career pathways and strengthens the professionalization of research, fostering merit-based advancement and greater flexibility in forming interdisciplinary and international research teams.

Further progress has been achieved through the introduction of the IMPA Index, a comprehensive tool for assessing academic and research performance across all university units. By integrating indicators such as research output, teaching quality, project participation, and societal impact, the Index provides a transparent, data-driven approach to monitoring institutional excellence. Its implementation ensures consistent evaluation of achievements and supports evidence-based decision-making in promotions, recruitment, and strategic planning—a significant step toward harmonizing with European standards of accountability and research assessment.

At the operational level, the Legal and Administrative Services have enhanced systems for monitoring employment contracts, deadlines, and recruitment procedures. This improvement guarantees the timely announcement of calls, transparent candidate evaluation, and efficient completion of all hiring processes. A recent policy change allowing the reappointment of

candidates when no more qualified applicants are available, by removing the former single reappointment limit, provides continuity and stability, especially in narrow fields of expertise.

To promote international cooperation, the University adopted a Rulebook on the Engagement of Academic Staff from the Diaspora, encouraging collaboration with Montenegrin scholars abroad. The Rulebook on Visiting Professors was also revised to simplify procedures and facilitate short- and medium-term teaching and research mobility.

The University has made decisive progress in gender equality through the Gender Equality Plan, developed in accordance with European Research Area principles and the GEAR Project (Gender Equality in Academia and Research). The plan establishes mechanisms for balanced representation in selection committees, transparent evaluation criteria, and active support for women's career development, fostering an inclusive and equitable academic environment.

Parallel to these initiatives, the University Alumni Network was established to connect graduates across generations and disciplines, serving as a platform for mentorship, collaboration, and talent identification. This network also supports recruitment by engaging distinguished alumni from Montenegro and abroad.

Finally, the introduction of new study programs in English has advanced the University's internationalization agenda, enabling the recruitment of academic staff who do not speak Montenegrin and broadening access to global expertise. Together, these measures reinforce the University's commitment to excellence, integrity, and openness in academic employment.

Links:

1. IMPA Index https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_17/objava_203432/fajlovi/IMPA%20index.pdf
2. Rulebook on the Engagement of Academic Staff from the Diaspora
https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_6/objava_158387/fajlovi/03-4801%20Pravilnik%20o%20saradnji%20sa%20nau%C4%8Dnom%20dijasporom.pdf
3. The Rulebook on Visiting Professors
https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_6/objava_3720/fajlovi/Pravilnik%20o%20uslovima%20i%20na%C4%8Dinu%20anga%C5%BEovanja%20gostuju%C4%87ih%20profesora.pdf
4. Alumni network <https://alumni.ucg.ac.me/home>
5. Alumni Strategy
https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_6/objava_158389/fajlovi/Alumni%20Strategy%20UoM%202024-2029.

Remarks

While the University of Montenegro continues to strengthen its recruitment and selection framework, certain structural and financial limitations remain. One of the key challenges relates to the lack of dedicated financial and human resources for maintaining and updating vacancy announcements on the EURAXESS portal. Although the University is fully committed to the principles of openness and transparency in recruitment, the absence of specialized administrative support limits the frequency and quality of postings on international platforms. Ensuring full alignment with European recruitment standards will therefore require additional institutional and state-level investment.

Another area requiring further development concerns the evaluation of professional experience gained outside academia, particularly in industry and the private sector. Current mechanisms for assessing such experience are not sufficiently robust to capture the full value of applied and practice-based expertise. Strengthening these mechanisms — through clearer criteria, expert panels, and collaboration with external stakeholders — would enhance the University's capacity to attract candidates with diverse professional backgrounds and support the alignment of academic programs with the needs of the economy and society.

These challenges underline the need for continued capacity building, intersectoral cooperation, and targeted funding to sustain progress in implementing the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct.

Working conditions

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase 2018)

The working conditions are defined by the Collective Agreement and the Statute of the University. The salaries are calculated according to the Collective agreement based on the working load of the individuals, as well as on the job position, but the salaries accounting is transparent. Social security (together with the contributions for health and pension fund) are paid by the University on regular basis. The working hours for the academic positions are mainly flexible and include the obligatory hours in teaching process, as well as various activities that requires flexibility (external collaboration, meeting with partners, study visits, participation to the scientific meetings and conferences, etc.). The academic staff and students actively participate in different types of boards, University bodies, councils, committees, etc. The possibility for sabbatical leave is defined by the Statute of the University every 7 years. However, the academic staff are usually overloaded with teaching besides research activities, while it is difficult to find replacement for the period of leave. Also, only full professors have permanent positions at the University (others have contracts defined as short-term mandate as specified by the Law on Higher Education;

teaching/research assistants are commonly the MSc and PhD students who also have short-term engagements). However, the lowest guarantees for permanent employment (or at a very low level) are for PhD candidates after completing their PhD (teaching/research assistants), since it depends on the available positions at the University. Namely, the candidates with doctoral degree are mainly oriented toward the academic careers since the Montenegrin industry currently does not articulate sufficient need for this level of education. This is the reason for having low number of PhD candidates. The research equipment is mainly provided from the external funding such as international projects and is unevenly distributed over organisation units, research laboratories and centres. Therefore, the availability of research equipment may vary significantly between the laboratories and units.

The Career development centre was established in the past. However, there are no continuous and systematic activities devoted to career development, monitoring, and continuous trainings.

Strengths and Weaknesses (**Interim Assessment 2022**)

In the previous period, the University of Montenegro achieved several important goals:

- In communication and through an intense process of negotiation with the Government of Montenegro and our Union, we have adopted the changes of the Collective Agreement for the University of Montenegro, which resulted in higher salaries for all employees of the University (https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_6/objava_3710/fajlovi/Collective%20Agreement,%20amandements.pdf).
- Additionally, the Law on Incomes for Academic Community was adopted, providing better salaries for professors, researchers and scientists employed at the University of Montenegro. The Law is yet to be effective.
- With the Decision by the Governing Board of the University of Montenegro, we have waived our teaching/research assistants that are also our PhD students, from paying the scholarship fee for their PhD studies.
- With the Decision by the Governing Board of the University of Montenegro we have significantly lowered the amount of the PhD scholarship fee, providing all interested candidates better conditions and access to the third cycle of studies.
- The “Policy for Open Access to Research Infrastructure at the University of Montenegro which was adopted on October 1st, 2020 provides the framework for greater access to research and scientific activities, nationally and internationally, which can impact the employability and mobility conditions at the University.
- Regarding the infrastructure, we have realized significant investments into the reconstruction of the Central University Library, building of the technical faculties, Faculty of Maritime Affairs, Faculty of Medicine and the Center for Doctoral Studies. In communication and negotiation process with the Government of Montenegro, we have reached the agreement that the Government will invest, within the capital budget for the next year, into construction of the academies in Cetinje, Faculty of Architecture, Faculty of Philosophy and the library at the Faculty of Law.

- Having in mind that living conditions have an indirect impact to overall content of our staff, and previous practice of our University to provide residences for its employees, we have continued the practice through securing a certain number of apartments which will be allocated especially for young researchers at the beginning of their career. Those who have their own residences, had the opportunity to apply for allocation of funds for reconstruction or improvement of their residences (in 2021, nearly 700.000,00 euro was allocated to employees for this purpose).

Despite the fact that we have created a favorable environment in terms of legislation, rights and duties, we are still facing difficulties with the lack of funds for research equipment and investments into new laboratories which would provide optimum environment for research performance. Budget allocated for the University, although increased in this year, by the Government is only sufficient for earnings and some infrastructure maintenance issues, leaving the University to search for external funds. In some research areas we have successful project activities and support from EU programmes, but it is still below the desired level.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal, 2025)

The University of Montenegro has recently made significant progress in improving the overall working conditions for its academic and research staff through a combination of legislative, financial, and institutional measures. The most important development is the adoption of the new Law on Higher Education, passed only a few days ago, which represents a milestone in the protection of employment rights within academia.

One of the key changes introduced by the new law is the transformation of employment contracts for academic staff. Until now, only full professors were entitled to permanent employment, while all other academic positions were based on fixed-term contracts. Following the University's long-standing proposal, the new legal framework now guarantees open-ended employment contracts for all academic ranks. This reform ensures greater job security, professional stability, and institutional continuity, enabling academic staff to plan long-term research and teaching careers while safeguarding their social and labor rights.

Parallel to legislative progress, the University has significantly invested in improving physical and research infrastructure. In the current year alone, several hundred thousand euros have been allocated for the acquisition of modern scientific and research equipment, strengthening the technical capacities of laboratories and research centers. In addition, multi-million-euro investments have been made in large-scale infrastructure reconstruction projects, including the construction of a new building for the Faculty of Architecture, the reconstruction of the Faculty of Philology, and the ongoing renovation of the Technical Faculties building complex. These projects are designed to create modern, safe, and accessible spaces for teaching, research, and collaboration, fully aligned with European standards of academic infrastructure.

To further support scientific excellence, the University has established the Fund for the Advancement of Research, aimed at stimulating innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and participation in international projects. The Rulebook on the Allocation of Funds from the Research Fund has been adopted, ensuring transparent procedures and merit-based criteria for financial support.

For the second consecutive year, the University has awarded postdoctoral fellowships to international researchers who wish to conduct research at the University of Montenegro. At the same time, outgoing fellowships have been granted to University staff members for research stays at partner institutions abroad. These initiatives promote knowledge exchange, enhance research mobility, and foster international cooperation.

In addition to research and academic development measures, the University has also introduced initiatives aimed at improving the social well-being of its employees. Last year, a public call was announced for the allocation of financial support to University employees for the improvement of housing conditions. Furthermore, the University has launched an initiative toward the Government of Montenegro for the construction of a kindergarten dedicated to the children of University staff members. These activities reflect a growing institutional commitment to work-life balance and the creation of a supportive and family-friendly work environment.

As part of its broader commitment to inclusiveness and equality, the University has adopted the Rulebook on the Protection Against Discrimination, reinforcing mechanisms to ensure equal treatment and prevent any form of bias or harassment in the workplace. This complements the previously adopted Gender Equality Plan and contributes to a respectful and supportive environment for all members of the academic community.

Taken together, these measures demonstrate a strong institutional commitment to improving the working and research conditions of academic staff, strengthening the University's competitiveness, and ensuring that all employees can thrive in a secure, inclusive, and high-quality academic environment that supports both professional development and personal well-being.

Links:

1. Programme for Researchers
https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_17/objava_203432/fajlovi/Programme%20researchers.pdf
2. Rulebook on Conditions and Procedures for Financial Support for Research
https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_17/objava_203432/fajlovi/Rulebook,%20fianancial%20suport_En.pdf
3. Gender Equality Plan
https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_617765/objava_187437/fajlovi/PLAN%20RODNE%20RAVNOPRAVNOSTI%20UCG%202022-2026.pdf

4. Rules on the Protection Against Discrimination Based on Gender and Other Personal Characteristics and on the protection against sexual harassment and blackmail at the university of Montenegro https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_6/objava_158387/fajlovi/03-5801%20Pravilnik%20o%20za%C5%A1titi%20od%20diskriminacije%20na%20UCG.pdf

Remarks

Despite significant institutional progress, the University of Montenegro continues to face challenges related to workload distribution among academic staff. Over the past decade, several reforms of study programs have been implemented, resulting in overlapping curricula and simultaneous delivery of courses from different study programs at the same academic level. This situation has created an increased workload for teaching staff, who are often required to meet parallel obligations within undergraduate, master's, and newly reformed programs.

In addition to these structural complexities, the University has recently introduced a number of study programs in English and launched new interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs within the newly established University unit – the Institute for Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies. While these initiatives represent an important step toward modernization and internationalization, they have not yet been fully supported by an adequate employment policy or sufficient human resource planning.

The current academic overload emphasizes the need for a more systematic approach to workforce allocation and recruitment planning. Ensuring appropriate staffing for newly introduced and interdisciplinary programs will be crucial for maintaining teaching quality, research productivity, and the overall balance between academic innovation and sustainable workload management.

Training and development

Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase 2018)

The staff training activities are mainly performed within the specially dedicated projects that were implemented at the University, especially the TRAIN project (King Baudouin foundation) and ERASMUS projects such as Re@WBC, within significant percent of staff trained in various skills. However, there is no continuous and institutionalized process of staff trainings. University of Montenegro has a special fund called Development fund as a source of support for training activities, participation to the

workshops, conferences, etc. Ministry of Science provides funds for bilateral projects, fostering the participation of MSc and PhD candidates. However, there is a need for more stable funding and organisation of these activities, there is a need to make them planned and well-structured. Also the trainings for teaching, research and communication skills at the University needs to be organized on regular basis and not just ad hoc.

The University Rulebook on PhD studies, adopted in 2015, and Guides for PhD studies defined the role of supervisor and the supervision process during several phases of the studies. The mentoring process is also monitored by the Committee for PhD studies that exists at each faculty unit, but also the Board for PhD studies that is a centralized body at the University.

Although training, workshops and similar tools are generally available, there is a need to make them planned and well-structured.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment 2022)

This segment was the most severely affected by the limitations caused by the COVID-19 since, as we all are fully aware, no in person trainings were possible to be organized during this period, and caused significant delay in the planned events. We have managed, as other universities, to perform a number of online events, webinars and similar events in various topics.

However, certain activities were performed:

- We have established the Doctoral School, and the first PhD programme in English language, interdisciplinary programme *Sustainable Development*, within the Doctoral School was introduced. Within this PhD programme there are already trainings taking place.
- The Rules for PhD Studies are revised and adopted in 2020, with improved mechanisms of students' monitoring due to achieve higher efficiency of studies.

Strengths and Weaknesses (Award Renewal, 2025)

The University of Montenegro continuously invests in the professional growth of its academic, research, and administrative staff, recognizing that a well-trained and motivated workforce is the foundation of academic excellence. Professional development is supported through a combination of institutional initiatives, international partnerships, and dedicated funding mechanisms that promote lifelong learning, innovation, and collaboration.

A key pillar of this policy is the Fund for the Advancement of Research, which finances activities aimed at strengthening research capacities and enhancing international cooperation. Through this Fund, the University awards fellowships for both incoming and outgoing researchers. For two consecutive years, international postdoctoral researchers have received funding to conduct research at the University of Montenegro, while University staff members have been supported to carry out

research visits at institutions abroad. These activities promote mobility, knowledge exchange, and integration into the European Research Area.

In addition, the University adopted new Guidelines for the Preparation of Inaugural Lectures, introducing an innovative mechanism that links academic promotion with the dissemination of research results. The new approach encourages professors to prepare and publish their inaugural lectures as academic papers, thus contributing to the visibility of research achievements and the strengthening of research culture within the University.

Training and development opportunities are further expanded through participation in numerous international projects, particularly those under the Erasmus+ and other EU programs. These projects offer academic and administrative staff a variety of professional training programs, workshops, and mentoring sessions focused on topics such as digital transformation, project management, quality assurance, open science, and leadership in higher education.

A cornerstone of the University's international training policy is its membership in the Ulysseus European University Alliance. Through this strategic partnership, staff and students benefit from a large number of virtual and physical mobilities, specialized courses, and joint training programs. The Alliance provides access to multidisciplinary topics such as artificial intelligence, sustainable development, entrepreneurship, intercultural communication, and innovation management. Participation in Ulysseus has significantly expanded opportunities for capacity building, networking, and collaboration with leading European universities.

Alongside Ulysseus, the University maintains a strong presence in the Erasmus+ mobility network, with an extensive portfolio of bilateral and multilateral agreements offering structured staff training and professional exchange opportunities. These collaborations strengthen institutional capacity and enable staff to adopt modern educational and research methodologies, ultimately improving the overall quality of academic performance.

Another important dimension of professional development is the University Alumni Network, which connects graduates, academics, and professionals across disciplines. The network fosters collaboration between academia and industry, creates mentoring opportunities, and serves as a platform for continuous learning and professional advancement. Through alumni engagement, staff and students gain access to knowledge-sharing events, internships, and training opportunities that bridge higher education with the labor market.

By strategically investing in these initiatives, particularly through Ulysseus and Erasmus+ networks, the University of Montenegro has positioned training and development as a central element of its institutional growth. These efforts ensure that academic and administrative staff remain equipped with up-to-date skills, international experience, and the capacity to contribute to the University's mission of excellence, innovation, and societal impact.

Remarks

The University of Montenegro has established a solid foundation for training and development through national and international initiatives. However, to fully capitalize on these opportunities, there is a growing need for a more structured institutional framework for professional learning. Future efforts will focus on aligning training programs with institutional priorities, developing tailored programs for early-career researchers, and introducing a digital training platform to facilitate access to continuous learning. Strengthening monitoring and evaluation of training activities will also ensure that staff development translates into measurable institutional impact.

An important step forward has been introduced through the new Law on Higher Education, which formally recognizes the concept of microcredentials and microqualifications as part of the national education system. The legislative process for accreditation of microcredential programs is currently underway and is expected to significantly expand opportunities for short-term, targeted, and flexible learning. This reform will allow the University to develop modular training programs that respond to the evolving needs of both academic and administrative staff, as well as external stakeholders, contributing to a culture of continuous professional growth and innovation.

Have any of the priorities for the short- and medium term changed?

There have been no major changes in the short- and medium-term priorities of the University of Montenegro, as the institution continues to pursue a consistent and strategically coherent development path. The University maintains the same management structure and leadership team, ensuring institutional stability, policy continuity, and the uninterrupted implementation of long-term objectives. This continuity has proven essential for maintaining the momentum of reforms and ensuring the consistent application of strategic policies related to research excellence, internationalization, quality assurance, and human resource development.

The University's governance remains firmly committed to the vision of strengthening its position as a leading national and regional higher education institution, aligned with European standards and integrated into the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area. As such, the strategic priorities defined in the previous institutional strategy continue to guide current activities, particularly in the areas of digital transformation, international collaboration, support for researchers, and the promotion of ethical and professional standards.

At the same time, the University has entered a new phase of strategic planning, preparing a new Development Strategy of the University of Montenegro, as the previous one (2019–2024) has reached its conclusion. The preparation process for the

new strategy is designed to build upon existing achievements while addressing emerging challenges in higher education and research. It includes broad consultation with academic units, students, and external partners, ensuring that the new document reflects both institutional experience and future-oriented goals. The new strategy will reinforce the University's commitment to sustainability, innovation, inclusiveness, and the modernization of academic and research environments.

In the context of internationalization, one of the key strategic directions that remains unchanged—and is now even more emphasized—is the University's active participation in the Ulysseus European University Alliance. The University has strategically prioritized this partnership as a cornerstone for its future development, enabling deeper integration into European academic networks, joint research initiatives, and new educational models. Through Ulysseus, the University continues to expand opportunities for staff and student mobility, access to training, and participation in European projects, while promoting shared values of excellence, diversity, and cooperation.

Overall, the University's priorities have not shifted but have been further consolidated. Institutional efforts remain focused on strengthening the quality and competitiveness of teaching, research, and innovation, while creating a stimulating and inclusive environment for all members of the academic community. The forthcoming Development Strategy will reaffirm these commitments and translate them into updated operational plans and measurable objectives for the next period.

In conclusion, the University of Montenegro continues to pursue its strategic goals with consistency and dedication. Stability in leadership, clear long-term direction, and the strategic partnership within the Ulysseus network ensure continuity of institutional progress and reaffirm the University's mission to contribute to knowledge, innovation, and sustainable development at both national and European levels.

Have any of the circumstances in which your organisation operates, changed and as such have had an impact on your HR strategy?

There have been no significant changes in the external or internal circumstances that would negatively affect the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) at the University of Montenegro. On the contrary, the institutional, legal, and financial environment has remained stable and, in many aspects, has become even more favorable for the realization of strategic goals in the field of human resource development.

The continuity of the University's leadership and governance structures has ensured a consistent implementation of the existing HR policies and a clear focus on long-term objectives. The national framework for higher education and research has also remained supportive, with several new legislative and funding measures that align closely with the University's HR strategy. These include the adoption of the new Law on Higher Education, which strengthens the employment status of

academic staff and introduces new opportunities for professional development through micro-credentials, as well as continued state investment in research infrastructure and academic mobility programs.

Institutional reforms at the University—such as the establishment of the Fund for the Advancement of Research, the adoption of the Gender Equality Plan, and improvements in recruitment and evaluation systems—are all in line with the objectives of the HR Strategy. As a result, the University currently operates in a stable and encouraging environment that supports the full realization of HRS4R principles.

In summary, no major external disruptions or institutional constraints have occurred. The conditions under which the University of Montenegro operates remain conducive to the further implementation and continuous improvement of its HR Strategy.

Are any strategic decisions under way that may influence the action plan?

The University of Montenegro is currently in the process of preparing a new institutional Development Strategy, which will define the University's strategic orientation for the upcoming period. This process represents one of the most important institutional undertakings at the moment and is expected to strengthen the alignment between the University's overall strategic framework and the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R).

The drafting of the new Strategy is being carried out through an inclusive and participatory approach. All levels of the University community are actively involved — deans and directors of organizational units, academic and research staff, teaching and research assistants, students and administrative personnel. Their contributions ensure that the new strategic document accurately reflects the institutional needs, priorities, and shared values of the academic community.

As part of this process, the HRS4R Strategy has been distributed to all University units as a reference document. Academic and administrative representatives have been encouraged to review its objectives and to integrate relevant actions and measures into their proposals for the new Development Strategy of the University. In this way, the ongoing strategic planning process provides an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of human resource development, ethical research practices, and support mechanisms for researchers as integral components of institutional growth.

It is therefore expected that the forthcoming Development Strategy will not replace or alter the HRS4R Action Plan but rather reinforce its principles and ensure their deeper institutional integration. The synergy between these two strategic frameworks will further contribute to building a sustainable, inclusive, and internationally competitive academic environment at the University of Montenegro.

3. Actions

ACTION 1	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
a) Revising the Code of Ethics to be aligned with the new Law on Academic Integrity. b) Increasing awareness of ethical issues and academic integrity among senior and especially young researchers and students. c) Obtaining certificate for academic integrity	Ethical principles	2s/1y	Rector, Vice-rectors, Court of Honour, Centre for quality assurance, Workgroup for academic integrity	Code of Ethics revised. Certificate for academic integrity obtained. Organized workshops on ethical issues and academic integrity.
Current status:	COMPLETED			
Remarks: Amendments and additions were made to the institutional document <i>Code of Ethics</i> , which regulates moral and professional principles, ethical standards, and rules of ethical conduct at the University of Montenegro. The amended version was adopted by the Governing Board of the University of Montenegro in July 2025. In addition, based on the experiences from recent years and the need to further clarify certain procedures and terminology, the Governing Board adopted the <i>Rulebook on Determining Violations of Academic Integrity</i> in July 2025. To support consistent understanding and application, the Ethical Committee of the University also adopted the <i>Terminology Glossary on Types of Academic Integrity Violations</i> . All these institutional efforts are harmonized with the Law on Academic Integrity, which provides the national legal framework for safeguarding ethical standards and preventing academic misconduct in Montenegro.				

ACTION 2	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
a) Introducing precise mechanisms for training staff in financial, administrative and reporting obligations and policies. b) Introducing clear guidelines for professional attitude of researchers coordinating and managing projects.	Professional attitude	2s/2y	Rector, Vice Rectors, Senate, Centre for quality assurance, Centre for international affairs	Professional staff trained for financial, administrative and reporting obligations (centralized service for the University project management and consultancy). Rulebook for managing and coordinating projects.
Current status:	EXTENDED			
Remarks: The University of Montenegro is currently developing a comprehensive Rulebook on Project Management and Procedures, which will be accompanied by detailed supporting acts to ensure consistent application across all units. In parallel, the new Rulebook on Job Classification introduces dedicated positions of Project Associate within the Rectorate and all university units, focusing exclusively on project administration and implementation. Additionally, a new requirement has been established mandating the signing of Responsibility Agreements between the Rector and Project Managers, clearly defining duties, accountability, and timelines for project realization. These measures strengthen transparency, efficiency, and institutional oversight in project management.				

ACTION 3	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
Develop IPR policy/strategy at the University and accompanying legal contractual and legal framework	Contractual and legal obligations	1s/2y	Rector, Vice Rector for science and research, Centre for Quality Assurance, Scientific Board	IPR policy developed including the contractual and legal framework.
Current status:	COMPLETED			
Remarks: The University of Montenegro has adopted a comprehensive Intellectual Property (IPR) Policy, fully aligned with national legislation and European standards https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_17/objava_203432/fajlovi/IPR%20Policy.pdf . This policy regulates the management, protection, and commercialization of intellectual property generated through academic and research activities at the University. It defines the rights and responsibilities of researchers, the institution, and external partners, ensuring fair distribution of benefits and transparent ownership procedures. The adoption of this policy represents an important step toward fostering innovation, safeguarding research results, and strengthening the University's role in knowledge transfer and cooperation with industry.				

ACTION 4	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
Establishing framework for innovation and commercialization of research, with special emphasize on confidentiality policy and different protection policies.	Good practice in research	1s/2y	Rector, Vice-rector for science and research, Scientific board	University has adopted a template for confidentiality and data protection agreements or policy. Adopting University guidelines for good and safe practice in research.
Current status:	COMPLETED			
Remarks: The University of Montenegro has adopted an institutional Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy, fully aligned with national legislation and European standards. In line with this framework, the University has introduced the obligation that every project and research contract must include an IPR clause, guaranteeing proper regulation of ownership and usage rights from the outset. In partnership with the Government of Montenegro, the University has co-founded the Science and Technology Park of Montenegro, which hosts the newly founded National Technology Transfer Office. Additionally, the University established the company Unispektrum, created to strengthen cooperation with the market, industry, and the business sector. These developments significantly enhance the University's innovation ecosystem, supporting effective technology transfer, entrepreneurship, and the valorization of research results. Together, they provide a strong foundation for linking academia with the economy and promoting sustainable, knowledge-based growth in Montenegro.				

ACTION 5	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
a) Develop Technology transfer office at the University and train the TTO staff. b) Introduce reporting mechanism on the University level for the results of the scientific and innovation projects (for the purpose of their promotion).	Dissemination, exploitation of results	2s/2y	Rector, Vice-rectors, Scientific board, Senate, Managing Board, Ministry of Science	TTO established and staff trained. Adopted template for reporting scientific and innovation results achieved within the project, dissemination and promotion through the UoM web site.
Current status:	COMPLETED			
Remarks: In line with the objective to strengthen innovation and research valorization, the University of Montenegro, in partnership with the Government of Montenegro, has established the Science and Technology Park of Montenegro, which serves as a national hub for fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaboration between academia and industry. Within its structure, the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) has been established to support the protection, management, and commercialization of research results generated at the University. The TTO provides professional assistance to researchers in identifying, protecting, and promoting intellectual property, as well as in establishing partnerships with the private sector. These developments ensure that scientific and innovation project outcomes are systematically monitored, reported, and promoted at the institutional level, contributing to a more dynamic innovation ecosystem and enhancing the University's role in national economic development.				

ACTION 6	GAP Principles (s)	Timin g (at least by year's quarte r/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
Providing better visibility of advertisements for job positions at international level.	Recruitme nt (Code)	2s/2y	Rector, Vice-rectors, Centre for quality assurance, Centre for Information system EURAXESS office, Legal department	Established University web page dedicated to the call for applicants in cooperation with EURAXESS office. Systematize the rules and procedures for recruitment in the form of clear guidelines for applicants.
Current status:	COMPLETED			
Remarks: Specific web page of the University is set for publishing calls, both in English and Montenegrin language (https://www.ucg.ac.me/objava/blog/4/objava/141105-calls-2022). Rules and procedures in the form of guidelines are created and are available at the web site of the University - Guidelines for applicants, within the document Academic Research Staff Employment-OTMR Policy Overview (file:///C:/Users/Dijana/Downloads/Academic_Research%20Staff%20Employment%20-%20OTMR%20policy%20overview.pdf)				

ACTION 7	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
Introducing the informative report after finalization of the selection process.	Transparency (Code)	2s/3y	Rector, Vice-rectors, Senate, Scientific Board, Legal department	The informative feedback on the selection and recruitment process is included in the official procedure.
Current status:	COMPLETED			
Remarks: For all research/teaching posts, applications are gathered (in the specifically designed form), systematized and published within the University Bulletin at the web site of the University. Each candidate can see all applications in detail: teaching experience, research results, scientific papers, books published, mobility experience, evaluation by independent reviewers... all classified and ranked, along with the final decision on the selection of a candidate. So, in this manner, all candidates have a full insight into the whole process of selection and qualifications of all candidates, including themselves. Complete procedure is described within the Guidelines for applicants, within the document Academic Research Staff Employment-OTMR Policy Overview (file:///C:/Users/Dijana/Downloads/Academic_Research%20Staff%20Employment%20-%20OTMR%20policy%20overview.pdf)				

<i>ACTION 8</i>	<i>GAP Principles (s)</i>	<i>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</i>	<i>Responsible Unit</i>	<i>Indicator(s) / Target</i>
Including mobility experience as a criterion for academic promotion/recruitment.	Recognition of mobility experience (Code)	2s/3y	Rector, Vice-rector for science and research, Council for Higher education, Senate	Organized meetings with representatives of the Council for Higher Education (in charge of defining criteria for academic promotion) and presented the interest to include mobility as a valuable criterion.
Current status:	COMPLETED			
Remarks: Within the Rules for Academic promotion, adopted by the national Council for Higher Education (where the University of Montenegro has its two representatives as members), mobility is recognized through allocation of a certain number of points, along with their other achievements. It is not an eliminatory criterion, but it gives an advantage in relation to those who have no mobility experience.				

ACTION 9	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
Enhancing the mechanisms for appointing postdoctoral researchers.	Postdoctoral appointments (Code)	2s/3y	Rector, Vice-rectors, Senate, Managing Board Ministry of science Ministry of education, Legal Department	Developed explicit guidelines for postdoctoral positions.
Current status:	IN PROGRESS			
Remarks: The University of Montenegro has enhanced its mechanisms for appointing postdoctoral researchers by introducing the IMPA Index, a new institutional tool for evaluating academic and research performance. This index enables transparent and data-based assessment of scientific output, providing valuable support in the selection and evaluation of postdoctoral candidates. In addition, the regulatory framework has been improved—previously, only one postdoctoral contract could be signed for a maximum of five years. Under the new provisions, researchers may now hold two consecutive contracts, each lasting up to five years. This change ensures greater flexibility, career continuity, and institutional capacity for developing high-quality postdoctoral research.				

ACTION 10	GAP Principles (s)	Timin g (at least by year's quarte r/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
a) Develop the database on research infrastructure at the University of Montenegro. b) Centralization of resources and inter-departmental sharing. c) Cooperate with Government and industry for larger investments in research.	Research environme nt	2s/3y	Rector, Vice-rectors, Senate, Managing Board, Centre for information system, Ministry of Science, Industry representatives	Database is implemented online. The resources are available for sharing between units, departments, and partners form the industry.
Current status:	IN PROGRESS			
Remarks: With the established of the National Open Science Cloud in Montenegro through the Memorandum of Cooperation signed by 9 higher education and research institutions/units in Montenegro, the majority of the research infrastructure at the University of Montenegro shall be integrated in the database of the Cloud. Adopted Policy on Open Access to Research Infrastructure enables University organizational units to develop database for further use and commercialization of its research infrastructure. The final step is to develop organizational guidelines for the use of the equipment. In the meantime, the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation is also working on the database on national level, which is in progress.				

ACTION 11	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
Fostering the mechanism for attracting external (project-based) funds for funding research positions.	Stability and permanence of employment	2s/3y	Rector, Vice-rectors Senate	Trainings performed (especially for young researchers. PhD students and postdoctoral researchers) on the topics related to obtaining funds from external sources, preparing applications and funding research positions.
Current status:	COMPLETED			
Remarks: The University of Montenegro has strengthened its mechanisms for attracting external, project-based funding for research positions through several institutional measures. Apart from the existing Projects Office, the new Rulebook on Job Classification introduced dedicated positions of <i>Project Associate</i> within the Rectorate and across all university units. Their primary responsibility is to monitor international funding opportunities, support project preparation, and manage implementation. The structure of employment contracts for these positions has also been improved to ensure flexibility and efficiency. In addition, significant efforts are directed toward the Ulysseus European University Alliance, which provides access to numerous funding schemes and international projects, further enhancing the University's research and innovation potential.				

ACTION 12	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
Develop strategic approach to researchers' career development.	Career development	2s/1y	Rector, Vice-rectors, Senate, Centre for PhD studies, Board for PhD studies Centre for quality assurance	University overall strategy developed including the career development strategic guidelines. Establish a mentorship program for support and guidance of personal and professional development of researchers.
Current status:	IN PROGRESS			
Remarks: The mentorship programme as a mechanism for young researchers includes mentors for PhD students, and after receiving their degree, we have vice deans for science who take the role of supervisors and contact persons for young researchers in their career development through instructions for scientific, research work and professional development. Further, they become part of a research group with a leading researcher, for further directions and publication of research work. Assistants in teaching, PhD graduates holding no academic title, are permitted to perform teaching under the mentorship by a professor, in order to strengthen research component in teaching. Considering that the new Development Strategy for the University is under preparation, will contain the whole segment dedicated to strategic approach to research, and thus the researchers' career development				

ACTION 13	GAP Principles (s)	Timin g (at least by year's q./s.)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
a) Recognising mobility as one of the important criteria for academic promotions and engagements. b) Encouraging mobility of PhD students and post-doctoral researchers to other research institutions c) Encouraging intersectoral mobility, and mobility between public and private sector.	Value of mobility	2s/1y	Rector, Vice-rectors, Senate, Faculties' deans, Centre for international affairs	Mobility is proposed and introduced in the Rules for Academic promotions. Increased number of mobilities of PhD student and post-doctoral researchers. Initiative/framework for intersectoral and public-private mobility defined.
Current status:	COMPLETED			
Remarks: Within the Rules for Academic Promotion, adopted by the Council for Higher Education, mobility is recognized through the allocation of a certain number of points, along with other achievements, which provides an advantage to candidates who have mobility experience. The University of Montenegro EURAXESS Centre regularly promotes and disseminates opportunities for mobility and PhD career development through its web platform and social media channels. However, after a period of dialogue and meetings with industry representatives, it has been concluded that the industrial sector in Montenegro still does not provide a sufficiently favorable environment for the engagement of PhD graduates in research-oriented roles, as most companies are small or medium-sized enterprises without established R&D departments. Consequently, opportunities for academia–industry mobility remain limited. Nevertheless, the University continues to encourage industrial mobility and actively develops alternative forms of collaboration with the business sector. In support of this, the University has established an Alumni Network to strengthen links between academia and industry and to promote joint initiatives. Additionally, the Research Advancement Fund provides financial support for researchers engaged in both academic and industry-based projects, fostering cooperation and the practical application of research results in the Montenegrin economy.				

ACTION 14	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
a) Establishing IPR framework at the University. b) Defining University's IP policy and commercialization acts.	Intellectual Property Rights	2s/1y	Rector Vice-Rectors Senate	IP policy (strategy) adopted. Additional forms of commercialization and scientific collaboration agreements defined.
Current status:	COMPLETED			
Remarks: The University of Montenegro has successfully established an institutional framework for intellectual property rights management by adopting the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy, fully aligned with national legislation and European standards. This policy defines procedures for the protection, management, and commercialization of research results created within the University. It clearly regulates ownership, authorship, and benefit-sharing mechanisms between researchers, the University, and external partners. The adoption of this policy marks an important step in strengthening innovation capacity, ensuring transparency in commercialization processes, and promoting the transfer of knowledge and technology from academia to industry.				

ACTION 15	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
Introducing mechanisms for maintaining complaints/appeals of researchers: a) Defining additional responsibilities of the Ethical Board devoted to the advisory and mediation function. b) Analysing the possibility of introducing the Ombudsman for researchers at the University.	Complains/appeals	2s/2y	Rector Vice-Rectors Ethical Board Senate	Mechanism for maintaining the complains/appeals of researchers established either through the Ethical Board or through the ombudsman for research issue.
Current status:	COMPLETED			
Remarks: The University of Montenegro has established clear and transparent mechanisms for maintaining complaints and appeals of researchers. The institutional Code of Ethics has been fully harmonized with national regulations and European standards, clearly outlining the principles of professional conduct, integrity, and responsibility within the academic community. In addition to this, the University has adopted the Rulebook on Determining Violations of Academic Integrity and the accompanying Terminology Glossary, which define in detail the procedures, terminology, and steps through which any member of the academic community may submit a complaint or appeal. These measures ensure transparency, fairness, and accessibility of ethical procedures, while also strengthening the advisory and mediation role of the University's Ethical Board.				

ACTION 16	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
Encouraging activities for continual professional development: - Dissemination of the significance of professional trainings - Organising workshops for various skills development	Continuing Professional Development	2s/2y	Rector, Vice-Rectors Centre for International Affairs Centre for Career Planning Centre for quality assurance and studies	Increased interest in professional development trainings. Increased number of trainees.
Current status:	IN PROGRESS			
Remarks: The University of Montenegro is strategically committed to fostering continuous professional development through international mechanisms and partnerships. Over the past two years, numerous training activities and workshops have been organized within the frameworks of the Ulysseus European University Alliance and Erasmus+ programs. These initiatives offer a wide range of professional development opportunities for academic, research, and administrative staff, covering topics such as digital skills, innovation management, sustainability, and leadership in higher education. By engaging in these networks, the University ensures continuous access to high-quality training resources, enhances international collaboration, and supports lifelong learning as a core element of its institutional development strategy.				

<i>ACTION 17</i>	<i>GAP Principles (s)</i>	<i>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</i>	<i>Responsible Unit</i>	<i>Indicator(s) / Target</i>
Establishing trainings/workshops for professional and soft skills development on the regular basis through the Career for Career Planning.	Access to research training and continuous development	1s/2y	Vice-Rector for International Affairs Centre for Career Development Centre for International Affairs Centre for quality assurance and studies	Trainings organized on regular basis, typically twice a year (once in each semester) on the topics related to the research, teaching and soft skills development
Current status:	COMPLETED			
Remarks: The University of Montenegro has strategically enhanced its system of trainings and workshops for professional and soft skills development, moving beyond the traditional activities of the Career Centre. While the Career Centre continues to play an important role in career planning and guidance, the University has expanded this framework to the international level through partnerships within the Ulysseus European University Alliance. This collaboration enables regular organization of high-quality training sessions and workshops delivered jointly with international partners, focusing on personal development, intercultural communication, entrepreneurship, and innovation skills. Such an approach strengthens employability, international competence, and the professional growth of both staff and students.				

ACTION 18	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
Providing opportunities for professional and soft skills development	Access to research training and continuous development	1s/2y	Rector, Vice-rector for science and research, Scientific board	University has established a digital hub to enable development of digital skills. Trainings/workshops organized.
Current status:	IN PROGRESS			
Remarks: The University of Montenegro, through its active participation in the Ulysseus European University Alliance, has established a Regional Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) as a platform for developing and enhancing digital competencies. Within this framework, numerous trainings and workshops have been organized, focusing on areas such as digital transformation, artificial intelligence, data management, and innovative teaching methods. The hub serves as a regional center for knowledge exchange and capacity building, providing opportunities for academic and administrative staff, researchers, and students to strengthen their digital skills and actively contribute to the modernization and innovation of higher education in Montenegro and the wider region.				

ACTION 19	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
Establishing framework and conditions for institutional qualifications in area of IT sector.	Continuing Professional Development	1s/2y	Rector, Vice-rector for science and research, Center for Quality Assessment	University has accredited a lifelong programme in IT development. Enrollment of candidates.
Current status:	COMPLETED			
Remarks: The University of Montenegro has opted to advance beyond the initial concept of a lifelong learning program in IT development and instead established a higher-level academic framework. Specifically, the University has accredited a new master's program in Cyber Security, designed to meet the growing national and international demand for expertise in this field. This program combines theoretical foundations with practical, industry-relevant skills and aligns with European standards of digital competence. In the current academic year, the University successfully enrolled the first generation of students, marking a significant step in strengthening Montenegro's educational and research capacities in the area of information security and digital resilience.				

ACTION 20	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
Database/software for tracking data on mobility and projects.	Continuing Professional Development	2s/2y	Rector, Vice-rector for science and research, Center for Quality Assessment	University has developed databasis for tracking mobility and projects.
Current status: NEW				
Remarks:				

ACTION 21	GAP Principles (s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target
Developed mechanism for tracking and evaluation of research results	Evaluation/appraisal systems	1s/2y	Rector, Vice-rector for science and research, Center for Quality Assessment	University has developed a new mechanism for tracking and evaluation of research results.
Current status: NEW				
Remarks:				

Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Policy

OTM-R checklist

Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles (**Initial Phase 2018**)

The main action that will be implemented to address the OTM-R principles will be creating a single document that compiles several bylaws addressing the principles of OTM-R policy. Namely, it is necessary to develop a single and concise policy that will join together all the OTM-R principles contained within several institutional acts such as the Statute of the University of Montenegro, Criteria on the conditions and requirements for promotion to academic/research titles, Rules on selection procedure in academic and research positions and Code of Professional Ethics. Therefore, the aim is to have a unique updated recruiting policy describing different elements of the recruiting procedure based on the C&C principles. Also, this will include the Guidelines on the procedure of election into titles and employment at the University of Montenegro providing clear and transparent information on the candidate selection process, levels of qualifications and competencies aligned with the position, and with explicit stimulating elements for underrepresented groups. Further, it will include posting a clear and concise job advertisements and extended template with more informative descriptions of the job position and reference to the institutional rules and opportunities. The international calls that will target foreign researchers will be stimulated and regularized by the adaptation of the institutional policies. The call for positions will be published also in English on the EURAXESS and University's web site which will be regulated by internal policy as well. Also, the implementation of OTM-R policy will be supported by the organization of several OTM-R workshops (which are foreseen in the strategy) for researchers, but also for the administrative staff involved in the recruitment process. As an additional strengthening mechanism, the University of Montenegro will offer and organize the language courses for foreign researchers to help their integration into society. We will also identify the career profiles for researchers (R1, R2, R3 and R4). The Committee for implementation of OTM-R policy will be established with the aim to provide assessment of the implementation process and quality of the established procedure.

Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles (**Internal Review for Interim Assessment 2022**)

The procedures, requirements, working conditions, and specific OTM-R principles implemented and cherished at the University of Montenegro have been joined into the single Academic/Research staff employment policy which is published at the University web site.

The policy comprises of several bylaws addressing the principles of OTM-R policy joining together the relevant from several national laws such as the Law on Higher Education, Labor Law of Montenegro and institutional acts such as the Statute of the University of Montenegro, Criteria on the conditions and requirements for promotion to academic/research titles, Rules on selection procedure in academic and research positions and Code of Professional Ethics. A special part of this policy is devoted

to the Guidelines on the procedure of election into titles and employment at the University of Montenegro, which clearly defines all the steps in the academic/research staff employment process which lasts utmost six months (according to the Law and Statute) starting from the public advertisement of the job position to the signing the contact with the selected candidate.

Moreover, the job advertisements have been placed regularly at the University's web site in Montenegrin and English language, all daily newspapers, on the website of the Employment Service of Montenegro, as well as at the Euraxess portal.

The staff involved in the recruitment process includes the members of the Scientific Board (The Committee for implementation of OTM-R policy) which is an expert body of the Senate dedicated to the coordination of the procedures and steps in the process of promotion into academic and research titles. Also, the administrative staff from the Legal Service and the Career Development office are included in the employment process. All members of the Scientific Board and administrative staff have been fully trained to respond to the OTM-R principles during the research employment activities.

The Scientific Board (The Committee for implementation of OTM-R policy) has been elected for the mandate period of three years. The current convocation (from 19.05.2022) of the Scientific board has 7 members of which 4 are women, while in the previous convocation there were 3 women in the board. Hence, the gender-balance principle has been carefully implemented and it is a practice in most of the committees at the University level.

Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles (Internal Review for Award Renewal 2025)

The procedures, requirements, working conditions, and specific OTM-R (Open, Transparent, and Merit-based Recruitment) principles applied at the University of Montenegro have been integrated into a single Academic and Research Staff Employment Policy, published on the University's official website.

This policy consolidates several institutional and national regulations relevant to academic and research employment. It draws upon the provisions of the Law on Higher Education, the Labor Law of Montenegro, and key institutional acts, including the Statute of the University of Montenegro, Criteria for Promotion to Academic and Research Titles, Rules on Selection Procedures for Academic and Research Positions, and the Code of Professional Ethics.

A distinct section of the policy is dedicated to the Guidelines on the Procedure for Election and Employment at the University of Montenegro, which clearly outlines each step of the recruitment process. In accordance with the Law and the Statute, the procedure must be completed within a maximum of six months—from the public announcement of the position to the signing of the employment contract with the selected candidate.

Job advertisements are regularly published in both Montenegrin and English on the University's website, in national daily newspapers, on the website of the Employment Service of Montenegro, and on the EURAXESS portal, ensuring transparency and international visibility.

The recruitment process involves the Scientific Board—which also serves as the Committee for Implementation of the OTM-R Policy—as an expert body of the Senate responsible for coordinating all stages of selection and promotion procedures. Administrative staff from the Legal Service and the Career Development Office are also involved in the process. All members of the Scientific Board and administrative personnel have undergone comprehensive training to ensure full compliance with OTM-R principles in every phase of recruitment.

To further strengthen transparency and evidence-based evaluation, the University of Montenegro has introduced the IMPA Index, a comprehensive institutional metric for assessing academic and research performance. The metric has been refined and supported by the implementation of specialized software solutions that enable continuous monitoring and evaluation of research outputs, project participation, and academic achievements. These innovations contribute to a more objective and efficient system for recognizing research excellence and informing recruitment and promotion decisions.

In addition, the University has adopted two important institutional documents promoting equality and ethical conduct: the Gender Equality Plan, which establishes mechanisms for equal opportunities and balanced representation of women and men in recruitment and promotion processes, and the Rulebook on Protection Against Discrimination, which safeguards all employees and students against any form of bias, harassment, or unequal treatment on the basis of gender or other grounds. These measures ensure that fairness, inclusiveness, and respect for diversity remain integral principles of the University's human resource policies.

Given the recent adoption of the new Law on Higher Education, the University is preparing a comprehensive revision and harmonization of all institutional acts, including those regulating academic promotion, employment procedures, and evaluation mechanisms. This process will ensure full alignment of institutional policies with the updated legal framework and strengthen the University's commitment to transparent, fair, and merit-based recruitment and career development.

The Scientific Board is appointed for a three-year term. The current convocation, consists of seven members, four of whom are women, compared to three in the previous terms. This demonstrates the University's continuous commitment to gender balance, which is consistently applied across most University-level committees and governing bodies.

4. Implementation process

General overview of the implementation process:

The implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) at the University of Montenegro has been carried out through a coordinated, inclusive, and institutionally integrated approach, ensuring full alignment with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. The ongoing Action Plan builds on the achievements of the previous cycle and reflects the University's continuous commitment to transparency, merit-based recruitment, and professional development of researchers.

The process is managed through the coordinated engagement of the University's top leadership — the Rector and the three Vice-Rectors for Teaching, Science and Research, and Internationalization — who oversee all activities related to the implementation of HRS4R principles. Regular consultations are held within Rector's collegiums, where progress is monitored, achievements reviewed, and institutional measures adjusted as necessary.

Implementation is also supported by several specialized University bodies, including the Scientific Board, the Ethical Board, the Centre for Information System, the Centre for Quality Assurance and Studies, the Centre for Career Development, the Centre for International Cooperation, and the EURAXESS Office Montenegro. These structures jointly contribute to the realization of action plan objectives through the development of new procedures, organization of trainings, dissemination of information, and monitoring of compliance with ethical and professional standards.

Faculties and research institutes play an essential role in implementing individual actions, updating internal procedures, and ensuring dissemination and reporting at the local level. Deans, Vice-Deans, and Faculty Councils are directly responsible for the adoption of institutional practices related to recruitment, mobility, and researcher development. Periodic meetings and consultations between the Rectorate and faculty management enable the exchange of good practices and ensure that implementation is harmonized across the University.

In addition, working groups composed of internal experts are established to prepare and update complex institutional documents, such as internal rulebooks, the IPR Policy, and other strategic acts. Whenever relevant, external experts are

engaged to conduct workshops and trainings on OTM-R principles, ethics, research management, project-based funding, and international mobility.

Recent developments have further strengthened the institutional framework for implementation. The introduction of the IMPA Index — a comprehensive institutional metric for evaluating research performance — enables data-based monitoring of academic results and supports transparent decision-making in recruitment and promotion. Following the adoption of the new Law on Higher Education, the University has initiated a full revision and harmonization of all institutional acts to ensure compliance with the updated legal and strategic framework.

Participation in the Ulysseus European University Alliance and the Erasmus+ network continues to provide extensive training, mobility, and capacity-building opportunities for academic and administrative staff. These initiatives support professional growth, innovation, and the integration of European standards into University practices.

Through these efforts, the University of Montenegro has successfully maintained continuity in the implementation of the HRS4R process, ensuring sustainable progress, transparency, and continuous improvement in human resource management and researcher support.

How have you prepared the internal review?

The internal review process at the University of Montenegro was conducted in a structured, inclusive, and evidence-based manner, ensuring the participation of all relevant institutional bodies and stakeholders. The process was designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) and the corresponding Action Plan.

Preparation of the internal review began through institutional coordination among the three Vice-Rectors of the University — for Teaching, for Science and Research, and for Internationalization — each contributing perspectives from their respective domains. This ensured that the review process covered the full spectrum of academic, research, and administrative activities relevant to the HRS4R principles.

Comprehensive reports, analyses, and inputs were then collected from the University's Senate committees and advisory bodies directly involved in HRS4R implementation. These included the Scientific Board, the Ethical Board, the Strategic Planning Board, and the Publishing Council. Each of these bodies provided detailed feedback on the progress made within their respective areas of responsibility, identifying achievements, ongoing challenges, and areas for further improvement.

Additional contributions were gathered from administrative offices, particularly the Legal Service, the Human Resources Department, and the Office for International Cooperation, all of which provided documentation and data related to recruitment practices, professional development, gender equality, and research mobility.

Following this institutional consultation phase, all reports and inputs were compiled and analyzed. A dedicated Working Team was established to synthesize the findings, evaluate the implementation progress of each action within the Action Plan, and prepare the official Internal Review Report. The team ensured consistency between institutional evidence and the HRS4R principles, providing a transparent overview of the University's progress in the areas of recruitment, working conditions, training, and ethical standards.

The drafting process also involved internal discussions with Deans and Directors of University units, as well as feedback collection from academic and research staff, including early-career researchers and administrative personnel. This participatory approach ensured that the review reflected a broad institutional perspective and aligned with the everyday experiences of the University's employees.

Finally, the compiled internal review was examined and validated by the University's management and the Senate committees before its final submission. The process confirmed that HRS4R principles are increasingly integrated into institutional practices and that the University maintains strong continuity in implementing its human resources strategy, guided by transparency, inclusiveness, and commitment to continuous improvement.

How have you involved the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?

The University of Montenegro has ensured the active participation of its entire research community and all relevant stakeholders throughout the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R). A central principle guiding this process has been inclusiveness — involving representatives of all research career stages (R1–R4), as well as administrative, managerial, and external partners, in both planning and realization of activities.

Researchers at all levels are engaged through their participation in working groups, faculty councils, and institutional committees dealing with specific segments of the HRS4R Action Plan. Early-stage researchers (R1 and R2) — including teaching and research assistants, PhD candidates, and postdoctoral researchers — are regularly involved in discussions concerning training, mobility, and career development. They also participate in consultations on improving the mentoring system, working conditions, and access to research infrastructure. Their feedback has been particularly valuable in designing programs that support skill development, mobility, and international collaboration.

Established researchers (R3 and R4) — associate and full professors, senior researchers, and project leaders — play a crucial role in shaping institutional policies and ensuring that HRS4R principles are embedded in academic practice. They contribute through membership in the Scientific Board, the Ethical Board, and various ad hoc working groups that revise internal rulebooks, evaluation criteria, and recruitment procedures. Many of them also act as mentors and trainers in internal workshops on research integrity, open science, and project management.

The involvement of the research community is also ensured through a bottom-up approach at the faculty level. Deans, vice-deans, and research coordinators serve as intermediaries between the Rectorate and researchers, ensuring that institutional policies are discussed and adapted to the specific context of each academic unit. Regular meetings, surveys, and consultations are organized to collect feedback on the implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan and to identify emerging needs within the research community.

Furthermore, the University engages external stakeholders — such as representatives of the Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation, the Science and Technology Park of Montenegro, and the private sector — in discussions and collaborative initiatives that link research with innovation and societal impact. These partnerships contribute to aligning the University's HR and research policies with national priorities and European standards.

The implementation process is also supported by the University's participation in international networks such as the Ulysseus European University Alliance and the Erasmus+ program. Through these frameworks, researchers at all levels are involved in training, staff exchanges, and joint projects that directly contribute to the realization of HRS4R objectives.

To ensure transparency, all relevant documents, updates, and reports related to the HRS4R implementation are published on the University's website and disseminated through faculty channels, mailing lists, and social media. This approach allows all members of the research community to stay informed and engaged in the process.

By maintaining open communication and systematic participation across R1–R4 levels, the University of Montenegro has built a strong culture of shared responsibility and collaboration. This inclusive approach guarantees that the HRS4R implementation reflects the real needs of the research community, promotes career development at all stages, and supports the creation of a sustainable and dynamic research environment.

Do you have an implementation committee and/or steering group regularly overseeing progress?

In previous implementation cycles, the University of Montenegro had formally appointed a Steering Group and a dedicated Implementation Committee to oversee and coordinate all activities within the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers

(HRS4R) process. These groups were responsible for ensuring consistency, monitoring the timeline of activities, and reporting progress to the University's management.

However, in the most recent phase of HRS4R implementation, the University opted for a more integrated and institutionalized approach, relying on existing governance and management structures to oversee and evaluate progress. This decision reflects the maturity of the process within the institution — HRS4R principles are now embedded across regular operations and strategic planning, rather than being managed through a temporary or separate structure.

Currently, the overall coordination and monitoring of implementation are carried out by the University's top management, including the Rector and the three Vice-Rectors responsible for Teaching, Science and Research, and Internationalization. Their close involvement ensures that HRS4R objectives remain fully aligned with the University's broader strategic goals and day-to-day management decisions. Progress is discussed regularly during Rector's collegiums, where reports from faculties, research units, and administrative offices are reviewed, and new measures or corrective actions are proposed when needed.

In addition to the central management, several University bodies play an essential role in overseeing and supporting implementation. The Scientific Board monitors research-related actions, including recruitment and evaluation procedures; the Ethical Board supervises integrity and ethical conduct within research; the Strategic Planning Board ensures alignment between HRS4R actions and the institutional strategy; and the Centre for Quality Assurance and Studies coordinates data collection and analysis for reporting purposes. Administrative units such as the Legal Service, the Human Resources Office, and the Office for International Cooperation provide operational and technical support.

This distributed model of oversight has proven to be highly effective, ensuring shared responsibility across all relevant structures and greater integration of HRS4R principles into the institutional framework. The approach also guarantees that the implementation process remains dynamic, with feedback continuously gathered from faculties, research institutes, and administrative departments.

Furthermore, the University regularly engages Deans and Directors of organizational units in discussions about the implementation status, challenges, and future priorities. This collaborative mechanism allows for a constant exchange of information between the central management and the operational level, fostering accountability and transparency.

In summary, while the University of Montenegro no longer maintains a formally appointed Steering Group, the HRS4R implementation is now systematically overseen through the existing governance structures. This model ensures continuity, sustainability, and institutional ownership of the process, embedding the HRS4R principles deeply into the University's management, strategic planning, and everyday academic and research practices.

Is there any alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? For example, is the HRS4R recognized in the organisation's research strategy, overarching HR policy

The University of Montenegro has ensured a strong alignment of its institutional policies with the principles and objectives defined by the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R). This alignment has been achieved through systematic integration of HRS4R guidelines into all key strategic, legal, and procedural documents adopted at the University level.

Since the beginning of the HRS4R implementation process, every time new institutional policies or strategic documents were drafted or revised, the working groups in charge were provided with the HRS4R Strategy and Action Plan as reference materials. This practice has ensured that the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers remain a continuous and visible foundation for all University regulations and strategic initiatives.

A concrete example of this approach can be seen in the ongoing development of the new University Strategy. As the previous strategic cycle has ended, a new institutional strategy is currently being prepared, and all working groups involved in this process have received the HRS4R Strategy with instructions to align their proposals and objectives accordingly. This ensures that the principles of transparency, openness, equality, mobility, and professional development of researchers are embedded into the future vision and goals of the University of Montenegro.

Moreover, the same practice has been consistently applied in the drafting or revision of various other institutional acts, including the Statute of the University, the Rulebook on Academic Promotion, the Code of Ethics, the Rulebook on the Protection Against Discrimination, the Gender Equality Plan, and the University's IPR Policy. In each of these processes, the HRS4R served as a guiding framework, ensuring coherence between national legislation, institutional goals, and European standards.

This alignment has also been supported through continuous dialogue among university management, academic staff, researchers, and administrative offices. The Vice-Rectors, Deans, and members of University committees such as the Scientific Board, Ethical Board, and Strategic Planning Board actively contribute to ensuring that all institutional measures, policies, and programs are consistent with HRS4R objectives.

Additionally, the University's participation in European initiatives such as the Ulysseus European University Alliance has reinforced the practical implementation of HRS4R values, particularly in areas related to mobility, open science, gender balance, and researcher training.

In summary, the HRS4R framework has become an integral part of institutional policy-making at the University of Montenegro. It is recognized as both a strategic and operational foundation for all initiatives related to human resources, research development, and academic excellence. The systematic alignment of the University's policies with the HRS4R principles

demonstrates the institution's long-term commitment to maintaining a transparent, inclusive, and supportive environment for researchers at all career stages.

How has your organisation ensured that the proposed actions would be also implemented?

To ensure that all proposed actions within the HRS4R Action Plan are effectively implemented, the University of Montenegro adopted a balanced and systematic approach that combines both bottom-up and top-down mechanisms. This dual structure guarantees strong engagement from the entire academic community while ensuring that institutional leadership provides the necessary coordination, authority, and strategic direction.

The bottom-up approach has been essential for ensuring broad participation and ownership among members of the academic community. From the outset, significant efforts were made to disseminate information about the HRS4R process and the importance of the planned actions through internal communication channels — including faculty meetings, newsletters, and the University website — as well as external communication platforms such as social media and public events. By clearly communicating how these actions contribute to improving the working and recruitment environment for researchers, the University encouraged staff, researchers, and students to actively participate in the process and provide feedback. This inclusive engagement helped identify the real needs of the research community and ensure that the measures adopted were both relevant and feasible.

At the same time, a strong top-down approach was used to ensure effective coordination and timely progress. The University management, through the Rector, Vice-Rectors, and key administrative offices, initiated and organized working groups and committees responsible for drafting, revising, and implementing specific institutional documents. Each working group included representatives from different academic and administrative units, ensuring interdisciplinary perspectives and collective accountability. The University's management regularly monitored the progress of each activity, discussed challenges during collegiums, and provided the necessary support and resources for implementation.

In addition, several structural mechanisms have been integrated into the institution's regular operations to secure continuity of implementation. These include monitoring by the Scientific Board, Ethical Board, and the Centre for Quality Assurance, as well as regular reporting from faculties and research institutes on the progress of actions relevant to their domains. This system ensures that the HRS4R objectives are not treated as isolated projects but as ongoing institutional commitments.

Furthermore, progress has been periodically reviewed and discussed in broader university forums, enabling collective reflection and adjustment of actions when necessary. This ongoing dialogue among researchers, management, and administrative services guarantees that the implementation process remains transparent, evidence-based, and adaptable to emerging needs.

How are you monitoring progress (timeline)?

The University of Montenegro monitors the progress of the HRS4R Action Plan implementation through a structured and continuous process integrated into its regular management and reporting system. The implementation timeline is reviewed and updated regularly at Rector's collegiums, where the Vice-Rectors for Teaching, Science and Research, and Internationalization, along with Deans and administrative heads, present activity reports and assess milestones achieved.

Each action from the plan is assigned to a responsible office or organizational unit, which reports on the status of implementation, delays, or challenges encountered. The Centre for Quality Assurance and Studies consolidates these reports and provides an annual overview of progress, ensuring coherence between the planned and realized activities.

Furthermore, relevant university boards such as the Scientific Board, Ethical Board, and Strategic Planning Board contribute to monitoring specific areas, ensuring that all activities are aligned with institutional priorities and European standards.

This decentralized yet coordinated monitoring system enables timely identification of obstacles and facilitates adjustment of activities when needed. Regular communication between management and faculties ensures that progress is consistent with the defined timeline and that accountability is maintained at all levels.

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

For the next assessment cycle, the University of Montenegro will apply a comprehensive and data-driven monitoring framework to evaluate progress across all actions within the HRS4R Action Plan. Each activity will be assessed through a combination of qualitative and quantitative indicators that reflect institutional, academic, and research development.

Key indicators will include data on financial investments in research and infrastructure, the number and type of employment contracts, recruitment and promotion rates of researchers, publication output, participation in international projects, and staff and student mobility. Additionally, the number of trainings organized, participants engaged, and newly adopted institutional documents will serve as benchmarks of organizational growth and professional development.

A significant advancement in progress measurement is the introduction of the IMPA Index — an integrated institutional tool developed to evaluate academic and research performance based on objective indicators such as scientific output, project involvement, teaching quality, and societal impact. The IMPA Index provides a consistent and transparent basis for monitoring results and aligning them with strategic goals.

All data will be consolidated by the Centre for Quality Assurance and relevant university boards, ensuring accuracy, accountability, and readiness for the next external assessment.

How do you expect to prepare for the external review?

The preparation for the external review will be conducted through a structured and evidence-based process that consolidates all activities, reports, and outcomes achieved during the implementation period. This process will include the systematic collection and analysis of documentation from faculties, research centers, and administrative units, ensuring that each action is supported by measurable results and verifiable evidence.

A series of consultative meetings will be organized with key university bodies — including Vice-Rectors, Deans, research coordinators, and representatives of the Scientific and Ethical Boards — to review progress, identify good practices, and address remaining challenges. This participatory approach will ensure that all levels of the academic community are informed and engaged in the preparation process.

This systematic and inclusive preparation will ensure that the University of Montenegro presents a transparent, data-driven, and reflective overview of its progress in implementing the HRS4R principles.

Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process:

No additional remarks about the proposed implementation process are needed, apart from those listed in the above categories.