

Webinar:

Assessing HRS4R applications under the strengthened procedure June 1st 2017

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Webinar contents: assessing HRS4R applications under the strengthened procedure

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Your role as assessor

Procedure is **peer-reviewed**: your judgement is personal, but needs to meet the HRS4R-criteria.

Essence of peer review: **combination of personal (subjective) views** of multiple assessors usually leads to a **coherent (objective) final assessment**.

All assessors:

- Your work is voluntary, but very important and very much appreciated
- Once you are engaged, your commitment operates as a “contract”
- Please respect deadlines set by the EC and by the lead assessor
- Please respect the confidentiality of submissions and assessments
- For every evaluation round you can accept or decline to contribute. If you cannot guarantee your commitment to do the job, please decline so new assessors can be approached
- Each assessor fills out an individual assessment form.

Lead Assessors:

- Take charge: coordinate timing (+/- 1 month for each assessment round), organize internal democracy, prepare consensus
- The lead assessor also completes a consensus assessment form (similar to individual template, but agreed by all reviewers)

Main changes in strengthened procedure

1. Endorsing and committing to “**Charter & Code**” = formal start of the procedure

2. Timelines are strict & risk of losing the award

- Initial phase = 1 year from letter of endorsement & commitment
- First implementation phase = 2 years + external assessment
- Second + following implementation phases = 3-year cycles + external assessment + site visit

3. New templates for submission & evaluation

- Formalisation to ensure quality process & continuing commitment
- OTM-R: obligation to address specifically

4. Focus on quality

- Evidence of involving wide range of stakeholders
- Measurable outcomes
- Embedded in institutional strategy

Main changes in strengthened procedure

5. New re-submission rules:

- o 'PENDING' = minor alterations – **1 re-submission**
- o 'DECLINED' = major revisions – **1 re-submission**
 - *in case of subsequent 'PENDING' minor alterations – 1 more re-submission*

All institutions have switched to the 'strengthened' HRS4R implementation procedure as of 1 January 2017

- o This is the case for “new” submissions as well as for “renewal” submissions

Which documents will you receive as assessor?

- Template 1 = GAP-analysis including Process description, checklist for C&C and OTM-R
- Template 2 = Action plan including organisational information, narrative, actions & implementation

The revised templates 1 & 2 must be used: <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/useful-information/policy-library#document-collapsible-research-careers-strengthened-hrs4r-process>

The image shows a screenshot of the 'TEMPLATE 1 - GAP ANALYSIS' form. It is divided into several sections:

- Header:** Name of the institution under review, contact details, and the date of endorsement.
- PROCESS (MAX. 300 WORDS):** A section for describing the recruitment process, including the roles of management and researchers.
- GAP ANALYSIS:** A section for analyzing the current situation against the Charter and Code, identifying strengths and weaknesses.
- Checklists:** Two checklists are included: one for 'C&C principles, assessment & gap identification' and another for 'OTM-R checklist & gap identification'.

Callouts from the image:

- Endorsement date C&C:** Points to the 'DATE ENDORSEMENT CHARTER AND CODE' field.
- Process description: HOW did they carry out gap analysis?:** Points to the 'PROCESS (MAX. 300 WORDS)' section.
- C&C principles, assessment & gap identification:** Points to the first checklist.
- OTM-R checklist & gap identification:** Points to the second checklist.

Which documents will you receive as assessor?

- ❑ Template 1 = GAP-analysis including Process description, checklist for C&C and OTM-R
- ❑ Template 2 = Action plan including organisational information, narrative, actions & implementation

The revised templates 1 & 2 must be used: <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/useful-information/policy-library#document-collapsible-research-careers-strengthened-hrs4r-process>

Template 2: HR Strategy - Action Plan

1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION
 Name Organisation under review: _____
 Organisation's contact details: _____
 Submission date: _____

2. NARRATIVE (MAX. 2 PAGES)
 Please provide an overview of the organisation, its current policy and practice underpinning the proposed strategy.
 Please provide a list of all actions to be undertaken in this HR strategy. The list must be accompanied by an extended version in which the actions are described in more detail. The narrative must contain at least the following headings: **Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment**.

Title/Action	Timing (for years)	Responsible for (quarter/semester)	Indicators/Target(s)
1.1. Adoption of research career policy	2017	HR/Research	HR/Research
1.2. Review of research career policy	2017	HR/Research	HR/Research
1.3. Review of research career policy	2017	HR/Research	HR/Research

3. ACTIONS
 Please provide a list of all actions to be undertaken in this HR strategy. The list must be accompanied by an extended version in which the actions are described in more detail. The narrative must contain at least the following headings: **Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment**.

4. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
 Do you have an implementation committee and/or steering group regularly overseeing progress?
 How do you involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?
 How will your organisation ensure that the proposed actions will also be implemented?
 Is there evidence of any alignment of the instalt with organisational policies? For example, is the instalt recognised in organisation's research strategy, overarching HR policy?
 How will you monitor progress?
 How do you expect to prepare the internal and external review?

Callouts:
 - HRS4R weblink (points to 1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION)
 - Narrative (SWOT-analysis) (points to 2. NARRATIVE)
 - Key facts & figures (some compulsory) (points to 1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION)
 - List of actions related to C&C (points to 3. ACTIONS)
 - Specific actions related to OTM-R (points to 3. ACTIONS)
 - Implementation plan (points to 4. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN)

Which documents will you need to complete as assessor?

- Template A = initial assessment
- Template B = interim assessment
- Template C = renewal assessment

Download from: <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/useful-information/policy-library#document-collapsible-research-careers-strengthened-hrs4r-process>

TEMPLATE A: INITIAL EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF HR STRATEGY

Name Organisation under assessment: _____
 Organisation's contact details: _____
 Submission date (initial GAP-analysis, HR Strategy and Action Plan): _____

Name Assessor¹ (lead): _____ Date: _____
 Name Assessor²: _____ Date: _____
 Name Assessor³: _____ Date: _____

GENERAL ASSESSMENT
 Completed: _____ Accepted pending minor alterations: _____ Declined pending major revisions: _____

1. QUALITY ASSESSMENT
 The quality assessment evaluates the level of ambition and the quality of processes provided by the organisation.

Question	YES	NO (or not evidence)
Has the organisation formally endorsed the Charter and Code?		
Have the strategy and action plan been published on the organisation's website?		
Have the following elements of the templates for the gap analysis and the HR strategy and Action Plan been completed? a. Gap analysis b. HR strategy and action plan: i. Organisational information ii. Narrative iii. Actions iv. Implementation		
Have the strategy and Action Plan been formally endorsed by the organisation's highest authority?		

2. RECOMMENDATIONS
 If any of the above statements have prompted a "not" in the evaluation, please provide suggestions for (minor) alterations or (major) revisions, in order to qualify for the HRSA award.
 If the organisation deserves to be commended on their ambition, their actions, evidence of good practice and/or their implementation process, please provide a commentary supporting this.

Callouts:
 - General Assessment (points to GENERAL ASSESSMENT)
 - Quality Assessment (points to 1. QUALITY ASSESSMENT)
 - Recommendations (points to 2. RECOMMENDATIONS)

Your assessment step-by-step

1. Eligibility criteria: all of the following must be included in order to be eligible

- If “Charter & Code” was signed after 1 January 2017 and more than 1 year before HRS4R submission: not acceptable for newcomers.

If signed before 1 January 2017: only mention it as a comment

- Is HRS4R published on website in English?

If there but hard to find, make a recommendation (not a reason for penalizing)

Full gap analysis does not need to be published!

- Is the submission complete, i.e. the two templates (Gap-analysis + action plan)?

- Is there a letter or other evidence of institutional endorsement? E.g. letter, board decision, ... (checked by EC)

(Can be difficult if faculty applies but not institution)

Usually the EC checks eligibility but it can happen that they miss something. In that case, the lead assessor can inform the EC that the document is not valid & assessors do not need to invest time in detailed reviewing & feedback. Assessors have a lot of work so use your time well.

Your assessment step-by-step

1. Eligibility criteria

Where should you expect to find this evidence?

DETAILED ASSESSMENT		Gap-analysis template	
1. ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT		YES	NO (or no evidence)
Has the organisation formally endorsed the Charter and Code?			
Have the Strategy and Action Plan been published on the organisation's website?			
Have the following elements of the templates for the Gap Analysis and the HR Strategy and Action Plan been completed?			
A. Gap Analysis			
B. HR Strategy and Action plan:			
B1. Organisational information			
B2. Narrative			
B3. Actions			
B4. Implementation			
Have the Strategy and Action Plan been formally endorsed by the organisation's highest authority?			

Annotations:

- Gap-analysis template (points to the header)
- Weblink included in action plan template (points to the 'NO' column)
- 2 templates fully completed (points to the 'YES' column)
- Not specifically listed in template but included in or attached to action plan (points to the 'NO' column)

Your assessment step-by-step

2. Quality assessment

Where should you expect to find this evidence?

Is the organisational information provided sufficient to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is designed?
Is the Action Plan coherent with the Gap Analysis?
Have a steering committee and working group been established to guarantee the implementation of the HRS4R-process?
Has the research community been sufficiently involved in the process, with a representation of all levels of a research career?
Are the relevant management departments sufficiently involved in the process so as to guarantee a solid implementation?
Have adequate targets and indicators been provided in order to demonstrate when/how an action will be/has been completed?
Is the organisation establishing an OTM-R policy?
Are the goals and ambitions sufficiently ambitious considering the context of the organization?

Action plan template
(organisational information,
narrative) + gap analysis (process)

Points of attention:

- Use the organisational information to get an understanding of the institution
- Read Process description in GAP-analysis & Narrative in Action plan: do they give sufficient insight for you to understand the institution?

Your assessment step-by-step

2. Quality assessment

Where should you expect to find this evidence?

Is the organisational information provided sufficient to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is designed?
Is the Action Plan coherent with the Gap Analysis?
Have a steering committee and working group been established to guarantee the implementation of the HRS4R-process?
Has the research community been sufficiently involved in the process, with a representation of all levels of a research career?
Are the relevant management departments sufficiently involved in the process so as to guarantee a solid implementation?
Have adequate targets and indicators been provided in order to demonstrate when/how an action will be/has been completed?
Is the organisation establishing an OTM-R policy?
Are the goals and ambitions sufficiently ambitious considering the context of the organization?

Compare action plan
with gap analysis

Points of attention:

- **Solid methodology** for gap analysis is essential
 - o No solo exercise (e.g. HR-department)!
 - o Evidence of broad stakeholder consultation, of operational group & of senior level support
 - o Choice of methodology (workshops, focus groups, survey,...)
- If "gaps" are identified in the gap analysis, they **must be addressed**:
 - o Either included in action plan
 - o Or an explanation why they cannot be addressed
 - o Or an explanation why other actions take priority in the next few years

Your assessment step-by-step

2. Quality assessment

Where should you expect to find this evidence?

Is the organisational information provided sufficient to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is designed?
Is the Action Plan coherent with the Gap Analysis?
Have a steering committee and working group been established to guarantee the implementation of the HRS4R-process?
Has the research community been sufficiently involved in the process, with a representation of all levels of a research career?
Are the relevant management departments sufficiently involved in the process so as to guarantee a solid implementation?
Have adequate targets and indicators been provided in order to demonstrate when/how an action will be/has been completed?
Is the organisation establishing an OTM-R policy?
Are the goals and ambitions sufficiently ambitious considering the context of the organization?

Action plan: Implementation

= Refers to the time period AFTER the award

Points of attention:

- There must be management support as well as operational responsibilities within a logical management structure (whatever names they are given)

Your assessment step-by-step

2. Quality assessment

Where should you expect to find this evidence?

Is the organisational information provided sufficient to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is designed?
Is the Action Plan coherent with the Gap Analysis?
Have a steering committee and working group been established to guarantee the implementation of the HRS4R-process?
Has the research community been sufficiently involved in the process, with a representation of all levels of a research career?
Are the relevant management departments sufficiently involved in the process so as to guarantee a solid implementation?
Have adequate targets and indicators been provided in order to demonstrate when/how an action will be/has been completed?
Is the organisation establishing an OTM-R policy?
Are the goals and ambitions sufficiently ambitious considering the context of the organization?

Gap-analysis: process

= Refers to the time period BEFORE the award

Points of attention:

- There must be sufficient evidence that the research community was thoroughly consulted – e.g. focus groups with fair representation, surveys with solid methodology
- Involvement R1-R2-R3-R4

Your assessment step-by-step

2. Quality assessment

Where should you expect to find this evidence?

Is the organisational information provided sufficient to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is designed?
Is the Action Plan coherent with the Gap Analysis?
Have a steering committee and working group been established to guarantee the implementation of the HRS4R-process?
Has the research community been sufficiently involved in the process, with a representation of all levels of a research career?
Are the relevant management departments sufficiently involved in the process so as to guarantee a solid implementation?
Have adequate targets and indicators been provided in order to demonstrate when/how an action will be/has been completed?
Is the organisation establishing an OTM-R policy?
Are the goals and ambitions sufficiently ambitious considering the context of the organization?

Gap-analysis: process + Action plan: implementation

= Refers to the time period BEFORE AND AFTER the award

Points of attention:

- This should not be an isolated HR-department procedure.
- **Other relevant departments must be involved** in the gap-analysis AND in the planned follow-up (e.g. research services, education, IT-department,...)

Your assessment step-by-step

2. Quality assessment

Where should you expect to find this evidence?

Is the organisational information provided sufficient to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is designed?
Is the Action Plan coherent with the Gap Analysis?
Have a steering committee and working group been established to guarantee the implementation of the HRS4R-process?
Has the research community been sufficiently involved in the process, with a representation of all levels of a research career?
Are the relevant management departments sufficiently involved in the process so as to guarantee a solid implementation?
Have adequate targets and indicators been provided in order to demonstrate when/how an action will be/has been completed?
Is the organisation establishing an OTM-R policy?
Are the goals and ambitions sufficiently ambitious considering the context of the organization?

Action plan: list of actions

Points of attention:

- Individual actions must be accompanied by an **expected timing**
- **Targets, indicators** or other forms of evidence must be included for monitoring purposes ("how will they judge whether the action is successful?")
- These could be **measurable** (e.g. 35% women in academic recruitment) or documented with **evidence** (e.g. Board decision on new regulation, future expected survey results)
- Purpose of HRS4R = **organisational change**. Simply changing regulations is not sufficient to change a culture.

Your assessment step-by-step

2. Quality assessment

Where should you expect to find this evidence?

Is the organisational information provided sufficient to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is designed?
Is the Action Plan coherent with the Gap Analysis?
Have a steering committee and working group been established to guarantee the implementation of the HRS4R-process?
Has the research community been sufficiently involved in the process, with a representation of all levels of a research career?
Are the relevant management departments sufficiently involved in the process so as to guarantee a solid implementation?
Have adequate targets and indicators been provided in order to demonstrate when/how an action will be/has been completed?
Is the organisation establishing an OTM-R policy ?
Are the goals and ambitions sufficiently ambitious considering the context of the organization?

Gap-analysis (last section) + action plan (OTM-R section)

OTM-R is compulsory in new procedure, but institutions have time to develop this.

Initial assessment

- OTM-R checklist must be completed
- Actions may already have started, but this is not yet compulsory .
- Action plan must include “some” initiatives to improve OTM-R policies, but they may not yet be very coherent or specific

Interim assessment

- The organisation must be preparing a coherent OTM-R policy and corresponding actions

Renewal assessment

- The organisation must have an OTM-R policy and corresponding actions in place

Your assessment step-by-step

2. Quality assessment

Where should you expect to find this evidence?

Is the organisational information provided sufficient to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is designed?
Is the Action Plan coherent with the Gap Analysis?
Have a steering committee and working group been established to guarantee the implementation of the HRS4R-process?
Has the research community been sufficiently involved in the process, with a representation of all levels of a research career?
Are the relevant management departments sufficiently involved in the process so as to guarantee a solid implementation?
Have adequate targets and indicators been provided in order to demonstrate when/how an action will be/has been completed?
Is the organisation establishing an OTM-R policy?
Are the goals and ambitions sufficiently ambitious considering the context of the organization?

All documents

Points of attention

- Use the **institutional information** to assess the level of ambition
- Use your own sense of judgment to assess whether the institution is merely “formally” designing the HR strategy or truly **prepared to make improvements and introduce institutional change**
- **Multiple / international campuses:** how do they ensure overall implementation?

Your assessment step-by-step

3. Overall judgment

TEMPLATE A: INITIAL EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT of HR STRATEGY

Name Organisation under assessment:

Organisation's contact details:

Submission date initial GAP-analysis, HR Strategy and Action Plan:

Name Assessor1 (lead): Date:

Name Assessor2: Date:

Name Assessor3: Date:

GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Accepted	Accepted pending minor alterations	Declined pending (major) revisions

This assessment is composed in consensus by the assessors on (date).....

Points of attention

- **'ACCEPTED'** : the institution has followed the procedure adequately and meets the quality criteria
- **'PENDING'** minor alterations: resubmission within 1 month *
- **'DECLINED'** pending major revisions: resubmission within 12 months
 - o if subsequent assessment is 'pending': 1 month resubmission time

* In practice: this may be 2 months if duly justified, e.g. due to duration of formal procedures within the institution

Your assessment step-by-step

4. Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

If any of the above statements have prompted a "no" in the evaluation, please provide suggestions for (minor) alterations or (major) revisions, in order to qualify for the HRS4R award.

If the organisation deserves to be commended on their ambition, their actions, evidence of good practice and/or their implementation process, please provide a commentary supporting this.

Points of attention

- Use your personal judgment
- A "no" to any of the above questions in most cases means the institution cannot be granted the award.
- Even when your judgment is positive, you can make recommendations for further improvement
- If deserved, compliment the institution on their achievements / approach / ...
- Indicate whether recommendations need to be addressed in the short-term or the longer-term (e.g. by submitting interim report or renewal report)

Some FAQs

Does the GAP-analysis need to be published in addition to the action plan?

In the old as well as in the strengthened procedure, it is NOT mandatory to publish the GAP-analysis or the OTM-R checklist (template 1), but it must be submitted to the EC.

The institution's Action Plan (either Template 2 or free format) must be published.

Some FAQs

Does the GAP-analysis need to address every single principle from the Charter & Code?

Each item must be dealt with and commented on, even if they are reviewed positively and do not require any action.

Take note of the fact that some elements can be closely linked to other ones and the institution may address them only once, or cross-reference.

Also some issues may be a problem in terms of national legislation and the institution's own HR strategy cannot solve these.

Reviewers must rely on their own judgment whether this meets the standards of adequate self-reflection.

Some FAQs

What is expected in terms of OTM-R achievement?

- Different levels of expectation apply to institutions submitting for the first time, and institutions applying for renewal.
 - first-time applicants: the institution must have completed the OTM-R checklist and must include some actions addressing the relevant gaps
 - Mid-term applicants (after 2 years): the institution must be preparing an OTM-R policy
 - Renewal applicants (after 3 years, and subsequently): the institution must have an OTM-R policy in place.
- Institutions who obtained the HRS4R award under the “old” procedure have time to transition to this new rule: for now, they must not yet have an OTM-R policy in place but must take the necessary steps to develop an OTM-R policy in their revised action plan.

Some FAQs

What if the evidence is insufficient to make a judgment?

- E.g. evidence on how the research community was involved
- E.g. survey data, method of analysis
- The onus is on the applicant to provide sufficient documentation. In the previous years, applicants were often given the benefit of the doubt but in the focus on quality improvement this is no longer the case

Some FAQs

How can assessors check whether the HRS4R is embedded within the institutional strategy?

- Not all institutions have an institutional strategy, or one that is publically available in English and easy to find. In that case, there should be other evidence that the actions to be implemented operate within an institutional framework, are in line with overall policies, and get top-down support. If this is not happening, assessors should point this out.

Some FAQs

Who do you send your review to?

- Individual assessors send their review to the lead assessor.
- The lead assessor uses the individual assessments to write the Consensus report (template largely similar to individual reports). Some email exchanges will go back and forth amongst reviewers in order to agree on a final version.
- When the Consensus report is complete the lead assessor sends the consensus report AND all individual reports to the EC.
- The EC will check to make sure that the Consensus report respects and takes into consideration every assessor's opinion/suggestions.

Some FAQs

What if the assessors do not agree?

- The lead assessor initiates a discussion amongst the assessors
- All assessors provide evidence to support their peer review judgment
- Ideally, a consensus is obtained, but voting is acceptable.
- In case of difficulties, the lead assessor informs the Commission. In exceptional cases, an additional assessor may be asked to look into the case.

Some FAQs

What if you are lead assessor and one of the other assessors does not answer your emails ?

- Try and send a few reminders
- If the assessor agreed with assessing an application but is not answering emails, the EC will try to contact him/her. If the EC still does not receive news from that person, they will chose another assessor.
- If this situation happens often with the same assessor, the EC can decide to withdraw his/her name from the list.

Some FAQs

What to do in case of delay?

Ideally each assessment round is completed over a period of maximum 1 month.

Should you or one of your assessors need more time, inform the EC. In that case, they can inform the institution about the delay and coordinate the review round in the best possible way.

Some FAQs

Who reads the re-submissions?

In case of re-submissions after “accepted pending minor alterations”: ideally, just the lead assessor will look at the revised draft. If in doubt, he/she can ask support from the other assessors in their judgment.

In case of re-submissions after “declined”, usually the same assessors will judge the same institution’s proposal (all three).

Some FAQs

At what point do institutions who have the award already, submit their renewal application?

All institutions switch to the 'strengthened' HRS4R implementation procedure as of 1 January 2017.

- Any institution ready for the 2-year or 4-year review under the "old" system must use the new submission templates
- They switch to 3-year renewal cycles as they submit. Their renewal application includes a revised action plan covering the following 3 years, and meeting the standards of the strengthened approach
- Any renewal submissions will be evaluated according to the new quality-focused procedure, using the new templates.
- Please check earlier information on integration of OTM-R-related actions.

Useful references

Euraxess policy library

<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/useful-information/policy-library#document-collapsible-research-careers-strengthened-hrs4r-process>

- Expert report on the 'strengthened' HRS4R
- Process guidelines for the 'strengthened' HRS4R
- Template 1 - Gap Analysis
- Template 2 - Action Plan
- Template 3 - Internal Review
- Template A (for experts only) - initial assessment
- Template B (for experts only) - interim assessment
- Template C (for experts only) - renewal assessment



'Sharing experience to better implement
the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers'

WEBINAR
TRAINING of ASSESSORS



FAQS WEBINAR TRAINING SESSION ON HRS4R (01/06/2017)

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

What if an organisation creates an action plan by itself? Do they have to use the table included in the template?

As of 1.1.2017, the strengthened procedure is applicable for all institutions. To comply with the rules of this strengthened implementation procedure, templates are mandatory.

All templates are available on the EURAXESS website:
<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/useful-information/policy-library#document-collapsible-research-careers-strengthened-hrs4r-process>

I would like to have a feedback from the lead assessor about the destiny of my assessments.

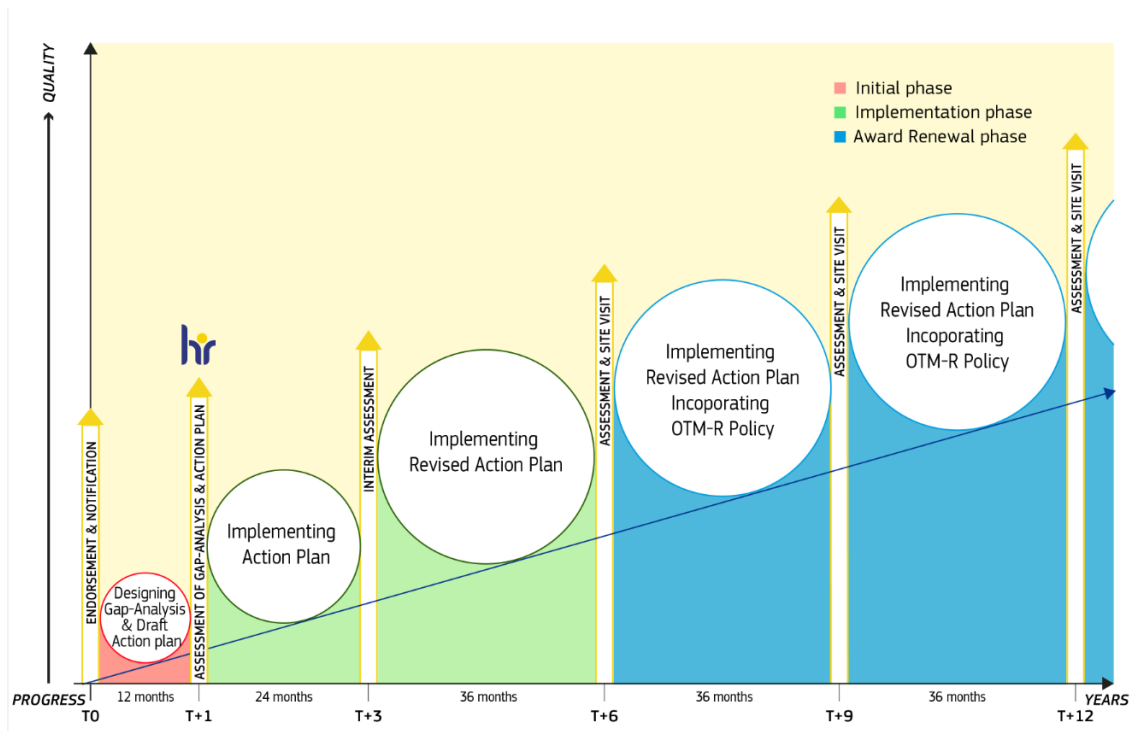
It has now been clearly indicated that the individual assessments have to be transmitted to the lead expert who is responsible to establish a consensus report (feed-back to the applicant organisation). The lead assessor needs to be in contact with the individual assessors to find consensus, but will need to send the consensus report and all the individual reports to RTD-CHARTER@ec.europa.eu putting all individual assessors in copy to the message.

Looking on websites of universities having already been awarded I can see a lot of 'self-made' action plans...

Yes, that is right since the former HR implementation procedure was a lot less structured; this will certainly change in the next future due to the structured way under the strengthened process, but the format of the AP published remains free if all the mandatory items are present.

It could be useful for the institutions to have clear deadlines on the reporting submission: it is clear the schedule time of the first step of the procedure. In the case of the midterm and renewal steps, one month after the end of the 2 (3) years with the starting date 0? Could you please specify the schedule for documents delivery to the EC in step 2 and 3 (mid-term and renewal)?

Institutions now have clear indications on the timeline which is indicated in the guidelines.



They need to pay special attention to the date of receiving the 'HR award' which is now published on the EURAXESS website and which counts for their individual timeline setting. Ideally, we consider that the timeline is the timeline for sending the files, not the deadline for beginning the reviews or assessments.

Is there a check list available for the OTM-R implementation?

There is not a checklist as such for the implementation itself but the related actions are to be clearly identified in the Action Plan. The experts' report on OTM-R is available at:

<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/useful-information/policy-library#document-collapsible-research-careers-strengthened-hrs4r-process>

It happened before that arguments for declining was not in line with the procedure and requirements. For example, I know for the case of university which submission was declined because templates weren't used - even if they were not mandatory at that time. How to ensure the integrity of the process in case of unrightfully assessments? How to ensure that there are no such assessments?

In general, the EURAXESS team checks eligibility of the applications before sending them out to the assessors. Eligibility criteria are indicated in the guidelines available on the EURAXESS website.

Should there be conflicts, discuss first with the lead assessor and, if consensus cannot be reached, inform the EURAXESS team via the functional mailbox: RTD-CHARTER@ec.europa.eu

Is it possible to be assessor for an institution from the same country as mine?

This will never be the case; the EURAXESS team allocates applications in that sense. Should you face any conflict of interest, please inform the EURAXESS team immediately.

When will Institutions that received the award in 2013 and 2014 have the external assessment?

We suppose that you mean by 'external assessment' the site visits. These are pending since November 2014. The Commissions services are working on it and we will inform all institutions when this starts again so that they have time to get prepared.

Nevertheless, it is important that all involved institutions continue 'as if' they would have site visits, meaning that they prepare their self-assessment according to the phase in which they are. Institutions will benefit from this delay to become familiar with the new procedure and to prepare the updated action plan using the new templates.

What should we do meanwhile? Filling the renewal assessment form?

Yes indeed, as explained previously, but take into account the switch to the strengthened process where all institution have to catch up with OTM-R and set targets and indicators.

We are preparing the internal review after 2 years (we come from the old system). When is our next submission? After 3 years or when we said in our Action Plan that we will finish?

Please refer to the graphic representation in the guidelines which allows you to calculate where your institution stands and what you need to do now. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact the EURAXESS team via RTD-CHARTER@ec.europa.eu

Institutions will be contacted by EC to provide internal assessment or must be a proactive action by the Institution? Is there a margin?

Institutions have to take their involvement seriously and should be proactive in submitting their assessment in time (or duly justify why they are running late). Reminders by the EURAXESS team might lead to 'suspension' of the use of the 'HR award' (on the website).

What to do for University that are already after 3 years waiting for the site visit. Do we have to fill out the new action plan form and the renewal form as soon as we can?

At some stage all institutions have to do a *'cut & paste'* exercise to transfer their data from the old version of the action plan to the new format which allows them from that moment onwards to update the same document each time. Institutions should not wait too long to get active because this gives the impression that they have stopped working what might lead to putting the HR award at risk.

This means that any action plan cannot last till the end of the 2(3) years because it includes also the time final reporting. In big institutions all the reporting must be approved by the management board; that is a very formal process taking at least 3 months. This is just for your information that must be told to the assessors. They have not to consider negative an action plan that seems not to cover 2 or 3 years completely.

In such cases, either institutions start early their approval process or explain why approval last so long and submit later than expected or announce lateness at the due date.

It is a prerogative of the Commission services to accept explanations of early or late submission; this analysis is part of the eligibility check.

So it is sufficient, if an organisation only submits the required template and answers the questions clearly? What about the - sometimes extensive - HRS4R-reports published on the websites of a lot of organisations?

Assessors need the filled templates and answers to the questions/recommendations given, especially when treating re-submissions. Since the assessors have to check publication of the documents on the institutions' website, these HRS4R reports can give info that might not be available in the applications.



FAQS WEBINAR TRAINING SESSION ON HRS4R (06/07/2017)

- 1. What about applications sent last year and declined? If they have the endorsement letter from April 2016 and decision of the European Commission from May 2017, should they send one more letter of endorsement with the date of 2017?**

The HRS4R procedure in place since 1.1.2017 has been strengthened compared to the 'old' procedure. One of the strengthened elements is the timeline imposed now to better structure the different phases. Therefore it is important to stick to the timeline.

During the current transition period when all institutions switch to the new procedure, we have a few intermediate solutions in place on a case-by-case basis.

Concretely, applications submitted before 1.1.2017 should make sure their corresponding endorsement letter has been signed within 12 months before their applications/re-submission. In case of an application submitted before 1.1.2017 and assessed as 'DECLINED (major modifications)', the applicants need to prepare their application on the new mandatory templates and check if the endorsement letter is still valid within the given time limit. This is particularly important if and when the highest authority of the institution changes.

- 2. Reference to the assessment template pt. 4 'recommendations': are the reviewers of later phases (e.g. interim / renewal) going to get the recommendations made in the initial phase (and consider them in their evaluation)? Will some of the initial assessors be used in the 3-year evaluations with the site visit?**

Ideally, the Commission services would like to ensure that the same group of assessors follows a given institution from the beginning onwards. On one hand it will ease the work of the assessors since they will acquire a good overview of the different phases the institution was monitored. On the other hand, the insight knowledge of the assessors should play a key role in preparation for the site visits; also here, the preparation work will be eased.



- 3. Can the templates for the strengthened HRS4R be (slightly) modified or adapted to one institution's need (either in application, interim or renewal phase).**

No, the use of templates in the strengthened process is motivated by the need to compare individual information in an easy and efficient way. The general information for example is used (once we are ready) for the preparation of contributions to briefings for the hierarchy. It also allows the assessors to situate more easily the frame within the institution is working.

- 4. Do individual assessment forms have to be hand signed and scanned, as was required before?**

Yes, the individual assessment forms need to be dated and signed by each assessor. The consensus form prepared by the 'lead assessor' must neither be dated nor signed.

The individual assessment forms (dated, signed and scanned) have to be sent to the lead assessor who transmits them together with the consensus form to the Commission services in one single set.

- 5. What about the Institution that was awarded logo HR in 2014 and sent to the European Commission a report in 2016 with the action plan for 2016-2018? Should the institution also prepare a revised and strengthened strategy in 2018?**

During the current transition period, we are flexible so that 2 options can be envisaged:

- 1) The institution submits (on the mandatory new templates) its application for closing the established action plan (2016-2018)
- 2) The institution revises its action plan (2016-2019) and submits its application for the interim assessment or for the internal review in 2019.

In both cases, explanations are needed.



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6. So if the submission was declined last year, and all the documents should be done from the beginning together with the endorsement letter, should the institution refer to the previous submission?

This is the choice of the institution:

- either the institution 're-submits' its applications although on the new templates and makes reference to the previous submission or;
- the institution decides to give it a 'new' run without any reference to the previous submission.

In any case, the Commission services need to know that the previous file is closed and can be archived.