

**UNIVERSITAS STUDIORUM FLUMINENSIS
SVEUČILIŠTE U RIJECI**

UNIRI



**University of Rijeka
Human Resources Strategy for Researchers
- Strategic Priority Areas and Action Plan for
their implementation-**

Rijeka, March 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

The [University of Rijeka \(UNIRI\)](#) is the principal education and research institution in western Croatia. Founded in 1973, UNIRI has 16 scientific-educational and artistic constituents, 14 scientific-development centres as well as the University Library and the Student Centre. UNIRI has 15.764 students and extensive experience in managing EU projects. By virtue of its [2021-25 Strategy](#), UNIRI implements its policies that are quantitative (learning and teaching, research, knowledge transfer and regional involvement, internationalization) and qualitative (open education, innovation in research and development, social responsibility, expanding horizons through strategic partnerships). UNIRI is part of the [Young Universities for the Future of Europe \(YUFE\) European University alliance](#), the [Young European Research Universities Network \(YERUN\)](#) and several other international fora.

The University of Rijeka is the first university in Croatia and one of the first ten in Europe to have signed "[The European Charter for Researchers](#)" and "[The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#)", thereby accepting the 2005 initiative of the European Commission of increasing employability and promoting careers in research as vital to economic growth, employment, and the setting up of a European Research Area (ERA).

We were, what is more, the first to sign the Charter for participation in the European Commission's Group for Human Resources Strategy Implementation. By signing the above-mentioned charters, we have committed ourselves to implementing these documents at the University of Rijeka, which is ever since a strategic goal included in all University of Rijeka strategies. The "[Strategy of Human Resources in Research](#)" project was adopted at [University's Senate](#) meeting in October 2009, while the HR Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) survey report, internal analysis, and activity report were adopted at the Senate's meeting in June 2010. In July 2010, the University of Rijeka received a formal acknowledgement by EC and the 'HR Excellence in research' logo.

The implementation of the HRS4R at the University has been entrusted to the [Council for Science](#), an advisory body established by the Senate in July 2010, after the acceptance of the HR Strategy for Researchers and after the University of Rijeka received the 'HR Excellence in Research' logo. In April 2012, the Council accepted the self-assessment document aimed at the mid-term HRS4R internal evaluation. Several of the tasks of the HR Strategy for Researchers were implemented in the University Strategy 2014 - 2021. After the first period in which the achievements related the Strategy goals were noticeable at the institutional level, the lack of support and clear policies at the national level caused a certain decrease in institutional motivation and interest.

The new University leadership appointed in April 2017, with Rectress Snježana Prijić-Samaržija, put renewed emphasis on the HRS4R activities. The rector initiated a revision of the HR Strategy activities and the enhancement of the implementation process. The regular annual report on the University's Strategy indicators ensures, among other planned measures and activities, the continuous monitoring of the progress of the relevant activities.

In the preparation for the internal review of 2018, the University relied thus on the results of the regular tools of institutional studies (focus groups and surveys).

Thanks to the visit and encouraging evaluation conducted by the HRS4R external review committee in 2019, the University of Rijeka deepened and more strongly implemented its HRS4R policy. Following the feedback received during the external review and site visit, as part of the renovation phase of the strategy, the University of Rijeka renewed in 2019 the HRS4R strategic priority areas and [created an Action Plan with clearly defined responsible bodies/persons and implementation deadlines](#). During this process, the initial proposal of the [UNIRI Open, Transparent, and Merit-based Recruitment \(OTM-R\)](#) policy was drafted and adopted by the Senate in 2020. In 2020 also the new UNIRI Strategy for the period 2021 – 2025 was adopted, with monitored activities related to the HRS4R.

In addition to the regular employee satisfaction surveys that are thoroughly analysed and presented at the sessions of the UNIRI Senate, a [renewed comprehensive analysis of employees' opinions \(GAP analysis\)](#) conducted in 2023 showed then that the University has made significant strides and progress in terms of the HRS4R principles and OTM-R, in line with the significant alignment of its overarching activities in this framework with the EU policies. As a result, the UNIRI policies and activities were updated during 2023 and at the beginning of 2024, as well as aligned with the currently valid practices and standards at the national and European levels.

UNIRI re-defines thus with this document its Action Plan with the respective priority areas, responsible person(s) and deadlines, renewed also its [OTM-R policy](#) accepted by the Senate in February 2024, and defined anew all the respective internal processes (Figure 1). These documents highlight the efforts and results achieved so far, establish clear, understandable, and transparent criteria and procedures for recruitment and development of research careers, and emphasize the further development plan of the University of Rijeka in the field of research careers.

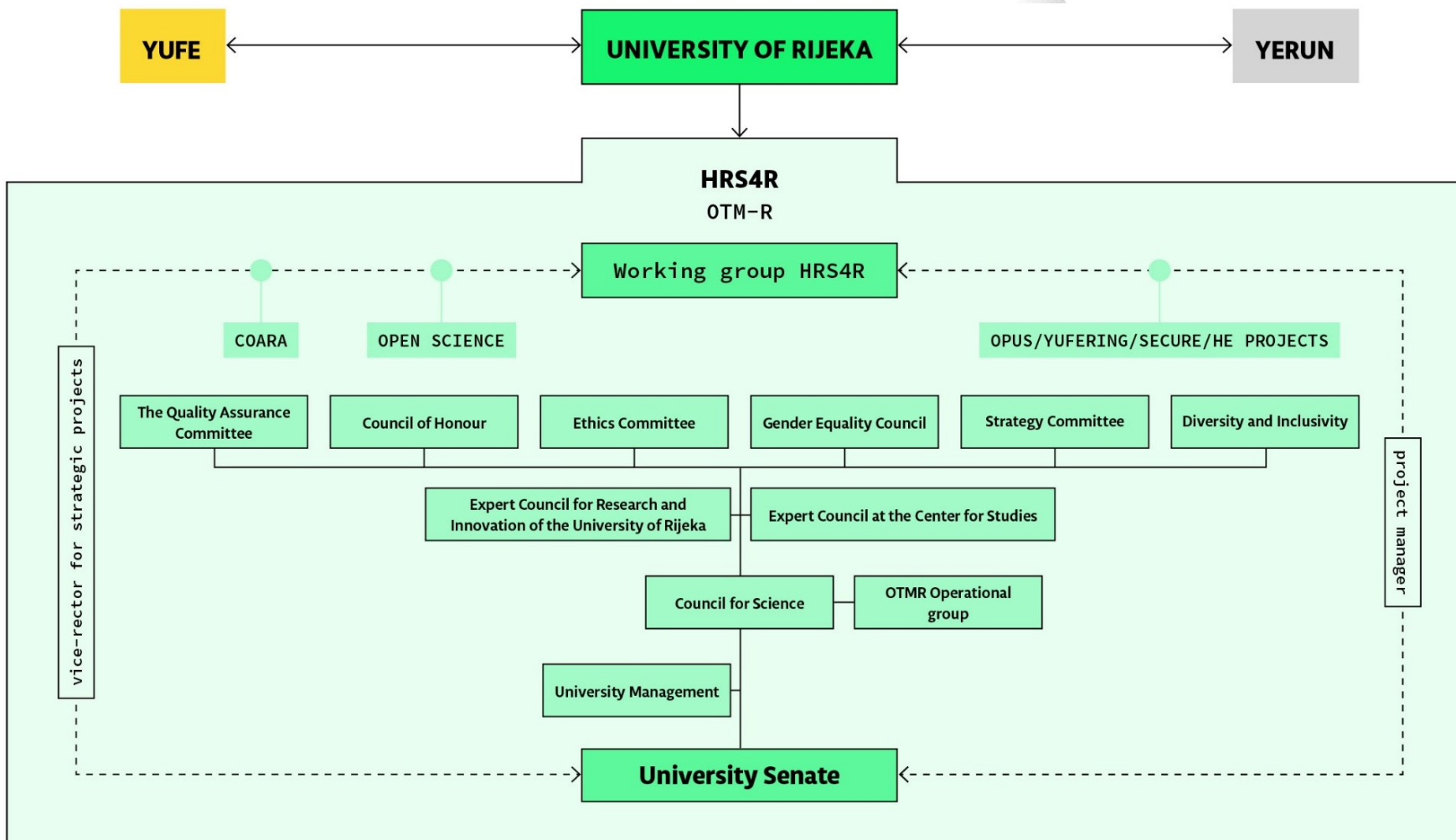


Figure 1: UNIRI HRS4R processes and responsibilities

2. UNIRI VISION AND MISSION

In its [Strategy 2021–2025](#), UNIRI defines its **vision** of becoming a **European University of the future** and its **mission** to conduct scientific, artistic, and development research, engaging its staff as:

- **teachers**, who prepare students for the jobs of the future and civic responsibility;
- **researchers**, who open and empower the University by boldly embarking on innovative research ventures and collaborations to develop the economy and improve the well-being of the local community; and
- **citizens**, who sincerely believe in the European values of freedom, human rights, and enlightenment, and are building a new European future;

relying in this framework on the following **values**:

- **responsibility** – we believe that institutional autonomy, academic integrity, academic freedom, and the pursuit of excellence and creativity in science and the arts are the prerequisites of authentic and quality achievements;
- **openness** – we nurture curiosity, courage, inclusiveness, diversity, participation, and solidarity as necessary conditions for progressive and just institutions;
- **innovation** – we recognize the importance of sustainable development, community engagement, education for the needs of the labour market and jobs of the future, and knowledge transfer as the pillars of social trust in academic institutions;
- **connection** – we cooperate in and encourage all forms of international relationships to promote the European values of peace, enlightenment, and harmonious relations.

UNIRI's **strategic objectives** are defined herein in four strategic areas within which the respective **quantitative and qualitative development goals** are defined:

- **learning and teaching** – promoting open education;
- **research** – promoting innovation and the development of the economy and community;
- **regional involvement** – promoting knowledge transfer and social responsibility for sustainable development; and
- **internationalization** – promoting the continuous expansion of horizons and strategic partnerships,

all within the **overarching objectives** of being internationally recognized as an open and modern European University that extends beyond the walls of institutions, research disciplines, and borders; one that continuously expands the horizons of sustainable development and development of competitive innovation ecosystems, and one that enhances all citizens' quality of life and work while advancing the community's resilience and well-being in cooperation with the local and regional government.

The UNIRI HRS4R priority areas and Action Plan for their implementation defined in this document are in line with these values and goals.

3. CURRENT STATUS

The existing career assessment and progression framework at UNIRI is **bound chiefly by national legislation**, in particular the renewed [Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity adopted in October 2022](#), as well as the new [Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science adopted in December 2022](#). This legal framework does provide a rather broad spectrum of elements for the assessment of research performing organisations (RPOs – higher education institutions, i.e., universities, faculties, research institutes and universities of applied science) and researchers themselves. In fact, in line also with the provisions of the [European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education \(ENQA\)](#), the RPOs are peer-reviewed assessed based on their internal structure, employees and strategies; infrastructure and finances; quality assurance system; tracking and improvement of teaching; scientific productivity; professional work and other activities.

On the other hand, the academic staff is assessed based on **National criteria for employment to scientific-teaching, artistic-teaching, research, and teaching positions**, which are still in course of revision, but it is in essence based on:

- **teaching contribution;**
- **research and professional contribution;**
- **contribution to society and the institutional profile.**

Despite the quite exhaustive breadth of these criteria, they are **still based almost exclusively on quantitative metrics**, and therefore fail to address the broadly established shortcomings in assessing, recognising, incentivising, and rewarding the true quality and impact of all the diverse and multifaceted valuable contribution of the national RPOs and the academic and other staff involved in all the various academic activities. With the aim of addressing these shortcomings, in the last few years the management of UNIRI has, therefore, strongly oriented its efforts towards **promoting a cultural shift towards qualitative and socially accountable research assessment initiatives and approaches, with the resulting enhancement of responsible, equitable, transparent, efficient, and sustainable recruitment and assessment practices, promoting in this framework also non-discrimination, gender equality and open science measures.**

UNIRI has, in particular, actively joined and contributed to several **international commitments, guidelines, initiatives and projects** and is strongly committed towards redefining its research(er) assessment procedures and criteria as defined in its **institutional documents, policies and practices** – all structurally outlined in the [University of Rijeka Reform of Research Assessment: CoARA Action Plan 2024–2027](#) which is intertwined and complements synergistically the areas and plans provided in this document.

Based on the above strategic and policy framework, as well as on the results on the thorough HRS4R Gap Analysis, UNIRI defines its renewed HRS4R strategic priority areas and the corresponding Action Plan with the responsible bodies/persons and the

implementation deadlines.

4. STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

1. Early and Mid-career Researchers and their Supervision

This area includes the following principles of the HRS4R charter and code: Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code), Postdoctoral appointments (Code), Career development, Complaints/appeals, Relation with supervisors, Supervision and managerial duties and Supervision. Although the gap analysis has shown that these principles at UNIRI are quite well addressed and implemented, it has also shown that early and mid-career researchers (EMCRs - PhDs and postdocs) are less satisfied with these aspects. Given then the importance and high prominence of our activities and policies directed towards talent attraction and retention, particularly directed towards EMCRs, the measures defined in this priority area are specifically defined and focused on them.

In particular, the following concrete activities are being implemented:

- the elements of the [YUFE Competence Framework for Researchers](#) (including candidates' narrative CV), developed within the [YUFE Transforming R&I Through Europe-Wide Knowledge Transfer \(YUFERING\)](#) Horizon 2020 project, are being implemented in the [Yufe4Postdocs](#) project co-funded by the Horizon Europe's Marie Skłodowska-Curie programme;
- measures and practices of enhancing the skills of EMCRs, that will allow them to acquire transversal skills such as e.g. those needed to initiate entrepreneurial activities, as well as of acquiring knowledge on open science, all developed within the [Developing and Implementing hands-on training on Open Science and Open Innovation for Early Career Researchers \(DIOSI\)](#) Horizon 2020 project, and being improved further via the activities of the [Young Universities for the Future of Europe \(YUFE\) European University alliance](#), and promoted by concrete measures of the [UNIRI Doctoral School](#);
- active participation towards implementing the [Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment \(CoARA\)](#) commitments (**UNIRI is one of its early signatories**), especially via the active involvement in two CoARA working groups (WGs), i.e., the WG "Reforming Academic Career Assessment (ACA)" and the WG "Early-and-mid-Career Researchers (EMCRs) – Assessment and Research Culture";
- development and piloting of interventions, indicators and metrics enhancing and promoting the application of open science practices in research assessment within the [Open and Universal Science \(OPUS\)](#) Horizon Europe project;
- development and piloting, within the [Sustainable Careers for Researcher Empowerment \(SECURE\)](#) Horizon Europe project, a research career framework aimed at the recruitment, employment, training, development, progression, and mobility of researchers, while improving research careers and reducing career precarity;

- raising awareness and promoting the implementation of the UNIRI [Guidelines for the additional \(institutional\) criteria for the selection of scientific-teaching, artistic-teaching, teaching, associate and professional staff at the University of Rijeka and its constituents](#) adopted by the Senate in September 2023, herein including the qualitative assessment of criteria related to **academic skills, skills related to academic and institutional behaviour** and **personal qualities and skills**, recommending again also the introduction of narrative-based CVs;
- assuring recognition and incentivising measures, such as **specific UNIRI EMCRs projects, financed via the UNIRI performance-based funding of scientific activities**, distributed via transparent peer-review-based procedures;
- the provisions of the [UNIRI Open Science Policy](#), adopted by the UNIRI Senate in September 2021, and the involvement in the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#), signed by UNIRI in 2021;
- concerning supervisor-related policies, specific **evaluation criteria and mechanisms of monitoring researcher advancement and supervisor's success (including feedback of the EMCRs themselves)** have been put in place and are being enhanced further via the UNIRI Doctoral School;
- the **UNIRI institutionally financed research projects** of senior scientists have as an evaluation criterion also the quality of supervision and the career development of EMCRs;
- UNIRI is introducing as a new measure also an **internal honorary 'Research Professorship' title**, accompanied by financial incentives, to its faculty members who are successful in obtaining competitive national or international research grants and employ EMCRs;
- the [Doctoral School](#), functionally integrating and coordinating the activities of all the UNIRI doctoral study programs, is also promoting via numerous measures a holistic approach to the main features of the doctoral study focused on research, scientific research training and the acquisition of new competencies through interdisciplinary research activities, internationalization, transparency, international quality standards and international competitiveness as well as knowledge transfer and its application in the economy and the community.

The implementation of all these undertakings has as its overarching framework the [UNIRI CoARA Action Plan](#) with its precisely and structurally set short-term (up to the end of 2024) and midterm (up to the end of 2027) actions.

2. Internationalisation and Mobility

This area includes the following principles of the HRS4R charter and code: Recognition of mobility experience (Code), Recognition of qualifications (Code) and Value of mobility. The gap analysis has shown that these principles are also quite well addressed and implemented at UNIRI, but there is also a clear improvement potential, that will be aimed at via the

following activities:

- Strong policies that **encourage professional growth by means of mobility programs** such as ERASMUS+, H2020/MCA and alike, enabling the mobility of both academic and professional staff. The results of such improved mobility are considered as a valuable contribution to the professional development, but also evaluated by assessing institutional research portfolios and recognized as relevant by the Ministry of Science and Education (MSE) criteria for institutional research funding. The **recognition of mobility experience** is also part of the national researchers' career progression criteria as defined in the Rulebook of the Conference of Croatian Rectors as well as of the provisions for doctoral education at the University of Rijeka. However, mobility is hindered because of the teaching workload; in practice senior researchers often cannot attend the professional and scientific trainings (see below under the strategic priority area "Teaching and Training").
- UNIRI encourages further the practices of mobility, especially for EMCRs, encourages professional specialization and other means of mobility, and stimulates these via various incentives. In fact, as evidenced above, internationalisation is also one of the four strategic priority areas of the [UNIRI Strategy 2021 – 2025](#), where, among others, **KPIs related to the number of academic staff in incoming and outgoing mobility**, number of cooperation agreements with international institutions and the number of participants in international activities are being monitored and enhanced via dedicated measures.
- For the sixth year in a row, **UNIRI has also issued a call for dedicated institutional funding for the internationalization of science and arts** and invites all its faculty to apply for dedicated institutional funding for the costs of the arrival and stay of prominent international scientists, artists, and teachers. The financing is intended for the realization of planned project activities in scientific research and artistic work in accordance with the [Strategy of the University of Rijeka 2021-2025](#), **incentivising especially the networking within the YUFE and YERUN alliances**.
- All the internal stakeholders are made aware of the importance of mobility. What is more, the fact that UNIRI is successfully using **the "repatriation" possibility** offered by MSE to attract and employ an increasing number of returning researchers (brain gain process), so that ca. 6 – 7 % of our researchers are returning scientists, is a very important element in fostering further internationalisation and mobility. In fact, more recently UNIRI has succeeded in **attracting foreign researchers** in joining our faculty staff as well, so that today their number tend to reach 2%.
- In 2018 UNIRI has established its [International Scientific Council](#) as an advisory body of the [University Management](#) and the [Council for Science](#) of the University of Rijeka for research and science issues and the development of strategies and policies in the field. Members of the International Science Council are distinguished scientists who, based on the experience and practices of reputable scientific institutions, can contribute to the development of the University through their valuable input, advice, and activities.
- In 2018 UNIRI also introduced the **role of 'honorary professors'** defined as „teachers and scientists of exceptional international reputation that actively cooperate and contribute

to the activities, or are willing to actively cooperate and contribute, as well as distinguish themselves, with the affiliation of the University of Rijeka". Each year at least 1-2 new honorary professors, mostly from abroad, are appointed, promoting therefore once more research excellence via openness, mobility, and internationalisation.

- Obviously, UNIRI's active participation in the [Young Universities for the Future of Europe \(YUFE\) European University alliance](#), the [Young European Research Universities Network \(YERUN\)](#), the [Rectors' Forum of Southeast Europe and Western Balkans](#), the [Alps-Adriatic Rectors' Conference](#), the [Uniadriion association of the universities of the Adriatic-Ionian region](#) and other fora, strongly promotes and fosters internationalisation and the alignment of UNIRI policies with EU/EC and international ones.

3. Teaching and Training

This area includes the following principles of the HRS4R charter and code: Teaching, Access to career advice, Continuing professional development, Access to research training and continuous development, Accountability and Public engagement. The gap analysis clearly showed that this area is characterised at UNIRI by the largest improvement potential, especially concerning Teaching and Access to Career Advice. In fact, the balance of teaching and research obligations is still a challenging issue due to national regulations and the limitation in institutional resources at certain university constituencies. The following activities are hence being implemented to alleviate this issue:

- Significant improvements have been made in the **training of skills and competencies in strategic management** (UNIRI is the only Croatia university offering programs in strategic management for higher education management) and in the **introduction of advanced learning and teaching methods** (e-learning, online lectures, hybrid learning and teaching (L&T)), which will continue to be systematically promoted in the future.
- Although UNIRI has a long tradition of using e-courses on the **Moodle Learning Management System (LMS)** as a complementary L&T platform, the pandemic situation in 2020 led to widespread use of Moodle, with additional digital tools being used. In preparation for the academic year 2020/21, a large number of academics participated in special **courses to improve teaching skills in the online environment** (> 600 training sessions conducted). In 2020, the university allocated funding for projects to develop and improve online didactics and for projects to develop international education programs in virtual/hybrid format. In 2021, a major investment was made in the area of L&T, in the form of projects to develop personalized student learning paths, introduce innovation in L&T, improve students' practical competencies and train academics and administration.
- **Five project (and grant) lines were recently established in the areas of research and development of micro-credentials, support for innovation in L&T, support for enhancing students' practical skills, support for students' health and well-being through strengthening the capacity of the [Student Counselling Centre](#), and training for all stakeholders (students, academics and supporting administration) through**

collaboration with Coursera for Campuses:

1. *Recognition of teaching activities:* on UNIRI central level there are several elements (incentives) which favour recognition for L&T engagement:

- annual rewards for excellence in L&T (the UNIRI QA Committee assures transparency in the criteria for excellence in teaching and learning, while QA Committees at faculties and departments are responsible for evaluating and selecting recipients);
- annual rewards for excellence in online L&T (the UNIRI Committee for online learning assures transparency in the criteria for excellence in teaching and learning and appoints independent panel responsible persons for evaluating and selecting recipients);
- **UNIRI CLASS projects** – R&D projects in L&T: UNIRI provides financial support for innovative projects in developing micro-qualifications, implementation of digital technology in L&T, development of e-courses and development of strong collaboration with employers in organization of supervised internships for students (where the involvement of the **UNIRI Economic Committee** is instrumental); project participation is also recognized as scientific project activity for academics and there are clear guidelines for project proposals, while resources are allocated effectively and interdisciplinary collaborations are encouraged;
- L&T is a necessary element in academic career assessment (Rectors' Conference Criteria for selection to academic positions are complemented with the abovementioned UNIRI Guidelines for the additional (institutional) criteria for the selection of scientific-teaching, artistic-teaching, teaching, associate and professional staff at the University of Rijeka and its constituents, containing specific recommendations for evaluating teaching engagement in the academic career assessment process).

2. *Professional development in teaching competencies:* UNIRI strongly supports the idea that improving quality and efficiency of teaching contributes to achieving better balance in teaching and research activities, while also improving personal satisfaction:

- UNIRI provides opportunities for continuous professional development through the educational programme Teacher Competencies in Higher Education: Learning and Teaching (10 ECTS); the curriculum of the Teacher Competencies in Higher Education program is aligned with current pedagogical trends and caters to diverse teaching styles and disciplines;
- UNIRI has a strategic partnership with **Coursera** in providing licenced access to Coursera offer for students and employees; the UNIRI-Coursera platform strongly suggests use of learning opportunities to enhance teaching competences and digital-educator competencies (aligned with DigCompEdu Framework), and there is a continuous encouragement of faculty to take advantage of Coursera courses and integrate the acquired skills into their teaching methodologies.

3. *Maintaining balance across different academic duties and responsibilities:* UNIRI encourages achieving an effective balance between teaching and research activities, especially when research productivity is given priority over teaching quality (e.g. by recommending allocating one or two whole days for research activities only, where possible). There is a continuous encouragement of faculty to schedule dedicated blocks of time for research activities to enhance productivity.
 4. *Career Advice support:* UNIRI has specific activities planned for empowering and strengthening the resources and services of its [Career Centre](#), particularly, based also on the outcomes of the mentioned [DIOSI](#) Horizon 2020 project, in terms of providing support for EMCRs seeking career advice, providing EMCRs with tailored advice and guidance and collaborating with experienced faculty members to mentor and guide EMCRs.
 5. *Measures for Improvement of Studies and Studying:* in December 2023 the UNIRI Senate adopted Measures and activities for the improvement of studies and studying at UNIRI, to be implemented in 2024; all UNIRI constituents should, thus, propose concrete measures and action plans, particularly addressing issues in the area of HR in teaching:
 - in every study programme there should be one semester free of obligatory courses, providing a window of opportunity both for students (for elective/mobility/micro-qualifications purposes) and academics (more freedom in planning and organizing research or mobility); UNIRI encourages faculties and departments to use this flexibility constructively for both students and faculty members (e.g. to encourage innovative course offerings or research-focused seminars during this period);
 - a model for continuous assessment and curriculum development is to be proposed, which should particularly address balanced teacher engagement and collaborative teaching approach; in this element UNIRI will facilitate workshops or collaborative sessions among faculty members to develop a model that aligns with the objectives and emphasizes the importance of balanced teaching engagement.
- As an important element of its accountability, but also of continuing professional development, **science communication and science outreach activities** are UNIRI's prominent focal areas. Many activities are thus promoted for the disclosure and public broadening of science and scientific results (Festival of Science, "open days", round tables, public fora, Rijeka of Psychology, Rijeka of Technology, Researchers' Night, new UNIRI webpage, etc.), services are put in place, longer-term policies are being elaborated and set as a global priority in our Strategy and the respective KPI, etc. In fact, members of UNIRI academic community have been awarded numerous national awards for their efforts in popularizing science.
 - What is more, through active participation in the H2020 project [YUFERING](#), UNIRI contributed towards establishing a **structured knowledge valorisation (KV) policy, focused on community engagement-based research & innovation (CERI) agenda and a**

YUFE KV network. Also, the University is highly engaged in building the Innovation Arena, an innovation hub conceived as a platform for efficient generation, development and testing of innovative ideas with high market potential and development impact. One of the important goals of the **Innovation Arena** is related to science outreach to be strongly reflected in its strategically located position, between the campus and the city, and its spatial disposition with open and directly accessible multi-functional halls. UNIRI and its Students' Centre are also creating a multifunctional space right next to the city centre's main pedestrian zone, Korzo.

- Last but not least, a dedicated UNIRI interdisciplinary [Science Outreach Centre \(SOCRI\)](#) was recently established with the aim of improving further the visibility of UNIRI in general, including the dissemination of research results within both the national and the international frames – for students, researchers, stakeholders of the broadest public and the media, and coordinating such activities at the YUFE level. [SOCRI](#) is in the process of setting up an online digital platform providing a comprehensive online repository for archiving of outreach activities (e.g. public speaking appearances), support and training in public outreach and science communication activities as well as a fully functional virtual centre, offering instructions for UNIRI constituents and academic staff on how to contribute to the outreach repository, complemented by a technical support system for video content creation.

4. Research Excellence and Impact on Society and the Economy

This area includes the following principles of the HRS4R charter and code: Research freedom, Professional attitude, Contractual and legal obligations, Good practice in research, Dissemination, exploitation and results, Recognition of profession, Research environment, Funding and salaries, and Intellectual Property Rights. The performed gap analysis showed that these principles are quite well addressed and implemented at UNIRI but, given their importance for research careers and the evidenced challenges, the following activities are being herein implemented:

- Full **research autonomy and freedom** are ensured by the provisions of the [Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity](#) (even by some provisions of the Croatian Constitution) as well as the [UNIRI Statute](#) and the [UNIRI Rules and regulations on scientific, artistic, and innovation activities](#) (cf. also the below section 5). In this framework UNIRI supports the progress of science and the spread of knowledge for the benefit of society by adopting practices of open, repeatable, and responsible research, basing its development and direction on relevant national and European Union documents. Moreover, all researchers are introduced to the relevant legislation and institutional rules and UNIRI is sensible and encourages the researchers to learn about these regulations through workshops, round tables, etc. This is particularly promoted via the established [Expert Councils and our UNIRI counselling and operative bodies](#). All relevant documentation is also made publicly available on the UNIRI website.
- As per national and institutional regulations, the researchers on the doctoral and

postdoctoral level are either public employees or are employed as research-contract staff. **The researchers on a higher level in their research career** (assistant professors, associate professors, full professors, and full professors with tenure) **are recognized as public employees and are treated accordingly.**

- Stable levels of financing from the national budget emerge as the most challenging issue, as does the lack of a sufficient and stable national support for research, development, and innovation (R&D&I). To address this problem, the [Croatian National Recovery and Resilience Fund \(RRF\) \(2021-2026\)](#) envisages a billion € for reforms and investments in education, science, and research with the aim of raising research and innovation capacity along with infrastructure investment and digital transformation of higher education. What is important in this frame is that the RRF and the adopted [Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity](#) foresee also the introduction of a compulsory performance-based lump sum financing of the RPOs, a model that UNIRI has been advocating for quite some time (along with the University of Pula, UNIRI was the only national university that signed the "[Program \(performance-based\) Funding Agreement](#)"), in the piloting activities of which we have shown success and are the first major national university to fully implement it. In February 2024 the negotiation for this phase of UNIRI financing have been initiated and, if everything goes according to plans, should lead to the implementation of the respective contract with MSE by the beginning of the next academic year (October 2024).
- The salaries of researchers at all career stages are defined by national regulations, i.e., the [Regulation on the coefficient of complexity of jobs](#) (revised anew and being implemented in the revised form). Although some increases did happen, the salaries in general lag compared to those in industry, so that, especially in the case of ECRs, the job prospects in the Croatian scientific sector are becoming less attractive.
- In the meantime, UNIRI pursues continuously to improve the national research framework via its representatives in relevant national bodies (such as the national [Rectors' Conference](#) and many of the national (science and higher education agencies, working bodies, implementation groups, ...) fora, but also by enhancing its internationalisation activities – i.e., via a strong involvement in the [European University Association \(EUA\)](#), via the active participation to the [Young Universities for the Future of Europe \(YUFE\)](#) alliance and the [Young European Research University Network \(YERUN\)](#), via international fora such as the [Alps-Adriatic Rectors' conference](#), the [Berlin process](#), the initiative of the [Rectors Forum of South-East Europe and the Western Balkan region](#), the [Uniadriion initiative](#), via bilateral contracts with EU universities, especially in neighbouring countries such as Italy, Austria, Slovenia and similar, etc. As evidenced in the above priority area relating to EMCRs, all this is, among others, finalised also towards adopting the culture of merit-based recruitment and advancement of researchers founded on transparent criteria whose levels ought to be increased towards those of the scientifically most developed EU member countries. The success in this endeavour is visible also in the fact that UNIRI's position in international ranking systems ([THE Times Higher Education](#), [QS Quacquarelli Symonds ranking](#), [RUR Round University Ranking](#) and the [U-Multirank system](#)), with all their known shortcomings, is improving,

including the research performance metrics.

- The now **available institutional funds for R&I** are, as already pointed out, **distributed via transparent calls for projects evaluated by independent external peer reviewers**, that also support the dissemination of research work both in scientific journals (increasingly open access) and via scientific conferences, seminars, workshops, book chapters, books, and other types of works.
- In addition, the **UNIRI Research Professorship programme** is being introduced, whereby the most successful project leaders will be provided with such a title and a corresponding monetary award during the project duration.
- The task of UNIRI researchers to **publish the results of scientific work** is determined also by the national conditions for career progression. Projects funded by the MSE, CSF and EU, as well as UNIRI ones, also prescribe conditions of conducting and subsequently reporting on the achieved scientific results. The results of research are regularly disseminated and exploited. The number and quality of peer reviewed scientific publications are KPIs of UNIRI strategy. Senior researchers, in particular, are expected to take lead in ensuring that research is substantial and that the results are either exploited commercially or made accessible to the public (or both) whenever the opportunity arises. As part of research planning, it is also necessary to create **Research Data Management Plans (DMP)** in accordance with FAIR principles. As of 2023 UNIRI has, in fact, made it obligatory to include DMP in both running research funding programme it carries - aimed both at senior scientists (levels R3 and R4) and young scientists (level R2).
- UNIRI supports thus the progress of science and the spread of knowledge for the benefit of society by adopting practices of **open, repeatable, and responsible research**, basing its development and direction on relevant national and European Union documents, and firmly supporting the position that scientific information and research data that are the product of scientific activities financed by public means must be open, as per the adopted [UNIRI Open Science Policy](#). According to the [Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity](#), all theses (BSc, MSc, PhD) are thus stored in institutions' repositories and are publicly available, as are researchers' open access publications in journals, conference proceedings, book chapters, books, research data, educational content, presentations from meetings and other types of works.
- Based on international best practices, within its R&I University Centre UNIRI has also recently established a specific [Pre-Award Research Support Centre](#) in charge of supporting all activities of UNIRI researchers aimed at applying for competitive national and EU R&I grants (Croatian Science Foundation, Horizon Europe, ERC, ...).
- UNIRI offers also state-of-the-art research equipment, facilities, and opportunities, including that for remote collaboration over research networks. The research environment was especially enriched by the equipment acquired through the ERDF "Research Infrastructure for Campus-based Laboratories and Centres at the University of Rijeka" project. The yearly call of MSE for the financing of repairs, maintenance and upgrades of scientific research equipment, coupled to the [CRORIS national database](#), are complemented by internal UNIRI yearly calls for (co)financing of the repair and

maintenance of research equipment. In the [YUFE](#) alliance, provisions for the joint usage of existing and development of new research infrastructure are being set. UNIRI has also launched the project "[Green transition of the University of Rijeka: implementation of the UN sustainable development goals and the European Green Plan](#)". Its goal is the improvement of infrastructure and human capacities.

- What is more, UNIRI is one of the most successful regional entities in the domains of strategic management and institutional research. The University is thus determined to put into action the necessary transformations as well as develop and implement, together with its YUFE partners, policies that include CERI, KV and knowledge transfer towards and in co-creation with the societal and business actors (SBAs) and with society at large, shared R&I agendas, support structures and research infrastructures, as well as the Open Science policy – all accompanied by incentive and reward schemes for researchers based on the new open science era (cf. especially the [results of the aforementioned YUFERING project reported on Zenodo](#)).
- A major obstacle in this regard to implementing more dynamic improvements aligned with the EU policies is the context of a non-integrated university, wherein the UNIRI constituents that are legal entities on their own do not have a formal obligation to enact university policies (a fact that was, unfortunately, enhanced by some provisions of the new Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity), leading often to lack of motivation for institutional results as well as resistance to reforms and to more intense collaboration with other relevant SBAs - regionally, nationally and internationally. The concept of continuing coordination with its constituents, leading towards functional integration policies, the positive influence that the performance-based lump sum financing could have in this regard, as well as the above-outlined activities aimed at enhancing the CERI and KV collaborations, are herein to be further emphasised and fully implemented.
- The [UNIRI intellectual property management rulebook](#) and other relevant policy mechanisms have also been enacted. In this framework it is important that, in line with its smart specialisation (S3) areas co-created with the regional public authorities (county) as well as the new [National S3 strategy up to 2029](#), **UNIRI is becoming the centre of gravity of the regional innovation ecosystem** via its leading role and/or participation to the [European Digital Innovation Hub EDIH Adria](#), the [INNO2MARE excellence hub](#), the [maritime innovation cluster MARINN](#) with the associated [Maritime Centre of Excellence](#), the [Kvarner Health Tourism Cluster](#), the [North Adriatic Hydrogen Valley](#) and other fora – all with its partners in the international academic sector but also the [Regional Development Agency of the Primorje - Gorski Kotar County PRIGODA](#), [Infobip](#), [Ericsson Nikola Tesla](#), Lürssen Design Centre Kvarner, [Jadranski Galenski Laboratorij \(JGL\)](#), the [Clinical Hospital Centre Rijeka](#), and the [more than 200 UNIRI's scientific, professional and teaching bases](#). The Regional Innovation Matchmaking platform [RIMAP](#) is instrumental in all these activities and it provides strong possibilities to extend the applicative career prospects and the networking of UNIRI faculty staff. In fact, the platform [has been recognised EU-wide as a best practice example](#), and its usage is being extended to become an innovation platform for the whole YUFE European University Alliance as well as for the WB & SEE Rectors' Forum adhering institutions. The platform

and the respective provisions are constantly being fostered. All these activities are aiming also at fostering brain and knowledge circulation with the respective intersectoral mobility of researchers, at strengthening the academia-business collaboration and embodiment in the global R&I ecosystem.

- An increase of financial means via knowledge transfer and collaborations with the economic and societal sectors is also incentivised by specific funding as well as via specific KPIs in the [UNIRI Strategy 2021-2025](#). UNIRI has also its [Science and Technology Park STEP RI](#) that promotes spin-off, start-up, commercialisation, and similar activities and promotes the respective educational possibilities.
- All the planning activities for the corresponding strategic infrastructural investments (Innovations Arena, TransMedRi Centre, Institute for Physical Activity & Sports Medicine & Health, ...) have also been made, but the funding opportunities are not yet included in the national funding provisions.
- UNIRI is also very active and contributes to the development of its **research management capacities**, especially those of the [University Centre for Research and Innovation](#). In this framework it is very active in the [EARMA European Association of Research Managers and Administrators](#), as well as in the associated [BESTPRAC network](#).

5. Diversity, Accountability and Academic Integrity

This area includes the following principles of the HRS4R charter and code: Ethical principles, Professional responsibility, Non-discrimination, Gender balance, and Co-authorship. The gap analysis has shown that these principles are well addressed and implemented at UNIRI, but their further strengthening is still to be pursued through structural support and via the following activities:

- According to the new [Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity](#), the [National Council for Science, Higher Education and Technological Development](#) is tasked with defining the national minimal ethical standards that will have to be reflected in the Codes of all the national institution of the science and higher education sectors. The UNIRI [Code of Ethics](#) is therefore continuously updated and adjourned ([last time in 2023](#) and currently undergoing the regular five-year revision) in accordance with the results of surveys carried out at the University about academic integrity and research codes of conduct (internal or mandated by EU funding frameworks).
- In all its process, including those related to research assessment, UNIRI **strongly fosters thus non-discrimination** based on any grounds, including sex, gender, age, ethnic, national, or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic conditions. In fact, [UNIRI's Code of Ethics](#) governs the ethical principles in the operation of the University of Rijeka and its constituents, scientific work, publication of results, relations between scientists, artists, teachers, and other participants in scientific, educational and any other process carried out within the University in the broadest sense. In this framework, [The Council of Honour of the University](#) is an advisory body that, together with the [Ethics Committees](#) (at the

University and at the level of its constituents) acts with the aim of promoting the ethical principles and values established by the Code, takes care of its implementation and gives opinions on the existence of its violation. Furthermore, numerous activities including round tables and scientific meetings are organised with the aim to emphasize and rectify ethical issues including the issues of academic integrity and the research(ers) code of conduct.

- In all its process UNIRI also **promotes gender equality**. In fact, UNIRI is the first university in Croatia to have adopted the [Gender Equality Plan 2021-2025](#), with one of the four strategic areas being Gender equality in scientific and artistic research. In this framework UNIRI was part of the [Supporting and Implementing Plans for gender Equality in Academia and Research \(SPEAR\)](#) Horizon 2020 project and, through the activities coordinated by its [Gender Equality Council](#), developed, among others:
 - the [Recommendations for improving gender balance in appointments](#), the [Guidelines on gender inclusive communication](#), the [A safe place without sexual harassment](#) guidelines and the [Policy statement on the prevention of and protection against sexual harassment](#),
 - the [Guidelines for balancing business and private life of employed parents/carers at the University of Rijeka](#), and the respective [Recommendations for ensuring the balance between professional and private life of working parents](#).
- It should be also emphasized that all above UNIRI's procedures are aligned not only with national, but also with international (ILO, EU, WEF) regulations and policy documents. UNIRI policies are also part of and aligned with the [YUFE Diversity and Inclusivity Strategy](#) and the [YERUN 2021 - 2025 Strategic plan entitled "Enabling talent to grow"](#).
- Additionally, an enhanced set of measures for the definition of co-authorship citing criteria, according to the role in research, is being included in the UNIRI institutional policies, also within the strong development of the [Open Science](#) practices. Provisions for dealing with the occasional disrespect of the co-authorship (e.g., in the sense of adding an author who did not participate in writing) are part of the [Code of Ethics](#) and the corresponding procedures. The aforementioned [UNIRI Guidelines for the additional \(institutional\) criteria](#) for the selection of scientific-teaching, artistic-teaching, teaching, associate, and professional staff, emphasise in this framework the quality of papers, as opposed to quantity, i.e., the mere number of papers. The cooperation and co-authorship with foreign research groups and with co-authors from the entrepreneurial sector are also encouraged via the KPIs of the [UNIRI Strategy 2021-2025](#).

6. OTM-R

This area includes the following principles of the HRS4R charter and code: Evaluation/appraisal systems, Recruitment, Recruitment (Code), Selection (Code), Transparency (Code), Judging merit (Code), Seniority (Code), Working conditions, Stability and performance of employment, and Participation in decision-making bodies. The gap

analysis has shown that these principles are well addressed and implemented at UNIRI, while the following concrete activities are being implemented to enhance them further:

- As thoroughly described in the new [UNIRI OTM-R policy](#) and [OTM-R checklist](#), the EC OTM-R toolkit and recommendations are fully addressed and the respective principles are continuously implemented via the relevant organisational instances of the University of Rijeka, especially by including them in the [University of Rijeka Strategy 2021-2025](#) (where both quantitative and qualitative criteria are considered).
- National **recruitment and advancement regulation ([Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity](#))**, with respective national and internal (statutory) rules of the University itself, define provisions of the procedures for the recruitment as well as the advancement in the placements and scientific ranks (based on peer-review) and on the working conditions in Rijeka. The selection process takes herein into consideration the whole range of experiences of the candidates. While focusing on their overall potential as researchers, their creativity and level of independence is also considered. As per national and institutional regulations, the required levels of qualifications are in line with the ranks of the position.
- The **public recruitment** announcements (from those relative to D. Sc. candidates, via those related to post-doc, assistant professors, associate professors, full professors and full professors with tenure) are systematically made publicly available in the [Croatian Official Gazette](#) and on the official websites of the University constituents, on the relevant [centralized website](#) of the University, and are also advertised in English through the EURAXESS job portal ([Euraxess Rijeka](#)). This process, which in several aspects is internationally comparable, as well as tailored to the type of positions advertised, includes three main stages: advertisement and application to advertised positions; evaluation of applicants and the selection of the candidate most qualified for the position; and appointment of the selected candidate. All these stages are, in turn, based on **openness, transparency and are merit-based** (cf. the [UNIRI OTM-R policy](#)).
- For all its researchers, including senior ones, UNIRI has also a **systematic evaluation / appraisal system for assessing their professional performances on a regular basis** and in a transparent manner by **independent committees**. It is part of nationally established tenure-track-like procedures for career progression, and it is based on peer-review. In order to protect objectivity, external experts always participate in committees for the evaluation and selection of candidates. The committee members must have the relevant experience, qualifications and skills needed to effectively assess the candidates. The international component is especially present during the quality assurance (accreditation and re-accreditation) of institutions (constituents of the University).
- The progress and development of UNIRI in this framework are assessed 1) by monitoring KPIs in accordance with world ranking systems as well as national and institutional monitoring and financial reward systems, and 2) by projects, collaborations, and activities whose value cannot be captured by a uniform quantitative metric, but its qualitative dimension is incorporated. UNIRI conducts also external evaluations with independent experts. As part of the activities concerning [CoARA](#) and the introduction of

institutional research assessment criteria, independent per review is being strengthened.

- The transparency and openness of the above processes is assured also by the involvement of the afore mentioned **advisory bodies** such as the [International Scientific Board](#) and the [Council for Science](#). These and other UNIRI bodies have an adequate gender balance and include members from different disciplines, backgrounds, and experiences.
- The national, sectoral, and institutional regulations concerning **health and safety in research** are fully observed and enforced at UNIRI, while all researchers are introduced to the relevant legislation and institutional rules, which are publicly available. The University has also a [Rulebook regulating safety measures](#).
- In line with its commitment to promoting the health and well-being of both students and staff, the University recognizes the imperative to ensure **inclusive access to university facilities** for individuals with disabilities and impairments, although not all the facilities have appropriate access for the persons with disabilities and impairments yet. For this reason, within the framework of the strategic project "[Students for the University - Green Transition of the University of Rijeka - Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN and the European Green Deal](#)", UNIRI aims at the removal of architectural barriers to enhance the mobility of students and personnel facing difficulties.
- Institutional rules regulate **sabbatical use**. **Flexibility of working hours** exists at most of the faculties, although it is not covered by the definition of monitoring criteria in achieving the results. Efforts are also being made to ensure flexibility in working conditions in accordance with the national legislative framework. Furthermore, in 2023 specific [Guidelines](#) were introduced at the University of Rijeka aimed at balancing the business and private lives of employed parents or caregivers.
- In all these activities UNIRI cherishes particularly the **participatory decision-making processes**, with month-long public consultations when defining or changing its statute, rulebooks and other strategic documents, through the involvement of faculty representatives in all its decision-making bodies, from [the Senate](#) to the [Expert Councils](#), via the other [participatory bodies at the University level](#), and via the participation of students, union, and other stakeholders' representatives in the University Senate and the constituent's councils. All professors, as well as representatives of students and administrative staff are thus present in the councils and faculties, and this is reflected also in the HRS4R procedures, as outlined also in the above figure.
- The overall **responsibility for the coordination and monitoring of the HRS4R activities and the priority areas defined in this document** are included in the portfolio of Vice-Rector for Strategic Projects and delegated institutionally to the [UNIRI Council for Science](#) with its president (currently Prof. Alen Ružić). In addition to the relevant bodies listed in the Action Plan below, and the Council for Science itself, instrumental in the operational activities relating to the implementation of this document is the OTM-R working group constituted by UNIRI researchers – representatives for each of the R1, R2,

UNIRI



R3 and R4 groups, whose participants are well gender-balanced and include national and researchers with international background.

Based on the conditions described above, UNIRI defines then herein its actions to be performed towards the implementation of the defined strategic areas, the respective timeframes, and the responsible institutional actors. The coherent and intertwined activities are hence planned to lead to gradual changes in the UNIRI institutional practices across all the institutional processes, having also in mind the given nationally-defined framework. The resulting action plan given below will be iteratively reviewed and revised in a 2-year cycle.

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ACTION PLAN RELATIVE TO STRATEGIC AREAS WITH DEFINITION OF RESPONSIBILITIES AND DEADLINES

The above outlined activities within the established set of strategic priority areas will be implemented by the set deadlines via the specified responsible University of Rijeka management roles and respective committees/councils.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA	GAP (1-40)	MAIN ACTIVITIES (TARGET(S) / INDICATOR(S))	CURRENT STATUS	DEADLINES	RESPONSIBILITY*
ALL	/	Publicly share this Action Plan on the UNIRI website and via other UNIRI communication channels	in progress	Q1 2024	HRS4R Project manager
ALL	/	Produce a comprehensive interim evaluation report on the UNIRI HRS4R activities outlined above and the respective revised version of this Action plan – to be again publicly shared on the UNIRI website and via other UNIRI communication channels		Q1 2026	Vice-Rector for Strategic Projects and HRS4R Project manager
1. EARLY AND MID-CAREER RESEARCHERS AND THEIR	- Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)	Monitor the adoption of the elements of the YUFE Competence Framework for Researchers for the Yufe4postocs candidates (incl. narrative CV), exchanging experiences with other YUFE partner universities	in progress	Q2 2024	Vice-rector for Science and Arts and UNIRI Centre for R&I

	- Postdoctoral appointments (Code)	Revise and update the UNIRI Open Science Policy	in progress	Q2 2024	UNIRI University Library
	- Career development	Introduce the internal UNIRI Research professorship title incentivising employment of EMCRs	in progress	Q3 2024	Vice-rector for Science and Arts, Expert council for R&I, Council for Science and UNIRI Senate
	- Complains / appeals				
	- Relation with supervisors	Advocate the enhancement of the recognition of Open Science practices in the national researchers' career progression criteria	in progress	Q3 2024	UNIRI Rector, Vice-rector for Strategic Projects, UNIRI Senate
- Supervision and managerial duties					
- Supervision	Build into the new performance-based lump sum financing of UNIRI the provisions for the continuation of the UNIRI EMCRs grants distributed via transparent peer-review-based procedures	in progress	Q4 2024	Vice-rector for Science and Arts and UNIRI Centre for R&I	

		Revise the criteria for EMCRs supervisors (incl. EMCRs' feedback) and raise awareness on the importance of the quality of supervision	in progress	Q1 2025	Vice-Rector for Science and Arts, Head of UNIRI Doctoral School and Expert Council of Doctoral School
		Based on YUFE/DIOSI and other project outcomes, define and EMCRs pilots related to the training on peer-review, on the transversal skill-enhancement, as well as the EMCRs career assessment-related actions focusing on Open Science Practices	in progress	Q3 2025	Council for Science (with Vice-rector for Science and Arts and Vice-rector for Strategic Projects), Head of UNIRI Doctoral School with Expert Council of doctoral School and UNIRI Career Counselling Office

		Monitor the UNIRI results for the chosen cohort of ECRs according to the adopted HE OPUS project Action plan and the planned HE SECURE project Action Plan	in progress	Q3 2025	UNIRI OPUS & SECURE WGs (coordinated by Vice-rector for Strategic Projects), with involvement of Faculty of Law, of the University Library and of the Centre for Science Outreach (SOCRI)
		Raise awareness on the UNIRI Guidelines for the additional (institutional) criteria for the selection of staff	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	UNIRI management, especially Vice-rector for Strategic Projects and Vice-rector for Science and Arts

		Overarching support to the activities of the UNIRI Doctoral School	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	UNIRI management, especially Vice-rector for Science and Arts, and Vice-rector for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance
		Actively participate in the activities of the CoARA WGs on “Reforming Academic Career Assessment (ACA)” and on “Early-and-mid-Career Researchers (EMCRs) – Assessment and Research Culture”	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	Vice-rector for Strategic Projects and Head of UNIRI R&I Centre
		Organize and carry out events that enhance the networking and development of EMCRs careers aimed at their empowerment, providing information about intersectoral opportunities, and skills development	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	Head of UNIRI Doctoral School, Vice-Rector for Science and Arts, and UNIRI Career Counselling Office

		Design and implement training activities for supervisors aimed at networking as well as peer learning / sharing of best practices	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	Head of UNIRI Doctoral School with Expert Council of Doctoral School, and Vice-Rector for Science and Arts
2. INTERNATIONALISATION AND MOBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition of mobility experience (Code) - Recognition of qualifications (Code) - Value of mobility 	Advocate the enhancement of criteria related to mobility in the national researchers' career progression criteria	in progress	Q3 2024	UNIRI Rector, Vice-rector for Strategic Projects, UNIRI Senate
		Continue using fully the national (MSE) researchers' repatriation model and promoting the UNIRI honorary professorship model	in progress	Q3 2024	Vice-rector for Science and Arts with Council for Science and Expert Council for R&I
		Monitor the results of the institutional funding for the internationalization of science and arts (incoming mobility of prominent international scientists, artists, and teachers) and build in the same instrument into the performance-based lump sum financing of UNIRI	in progress	Q4 2024	UNIRI management, Vice-rector for Strategic Projects and UNIRI Senate

		Monitor the KPIs related to mobility in the UNIRI Strategy 2021 – 2025, and build them into the provisions of the new performance-based lump sum financing of UNIRI (end of 2024 onwards) and the new UNIRI strategy (2026 onwards)	in progress	Q2 2025	UNIRI management and UNIRI Senate, UNIRI Strategy Board
		Continuously interact with the International Scientific Council and build in their advice into UNIRI institutional policies	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	UNIRI management and UNIRI Senate
		Actively contribute to and shape the activities of YUFE, YERUN and other international fora UNIRI is part of, advocate such networking towards national and international decision-making bodies and use these and other available instruments (Erasmus+, ERA/EHEA, EUA, ...) to foster mobility schemes	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	UNIRI management, UNIRI Committee and UNIRI Office for Erasmus+
3. TEACHING AND TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching - Access to career advice - Continuing professional 	Advocate the inclusion of the recognition of the adoption of advanced e-learning tools into teaching criteria in the national researchers' career progression criteria	in progress	Q3 2024	UNIRI Rector, Vice-rector for Strategic Projects, UNIRI Senate

	development - Access to research training and continuous development	Setup a fully functional UNIRI Centre for Science Outreach (SOCRI) online digital platform providing a comprehensive repository for archiving outreach activities (e.g. public speaking appearances) as well as providing support and training in public outreach activities	in progress	Q3 2024	Head of SOCRI
	- Accountability - Public engagement	Introduction at UNIRI constituents of flexibility in the studies via a semester free of obligatory courses as well as via balanced teacher engagement and a collaborative teaching approach	in progress	Q1 2025	Vice-rector for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance, Head of UNIRI Centre for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance, Expert Council for Learning and Teaching
		Monitor the KPIs related to learning and teaching and the respective qualitative reports on open education in the UNIRI Strategy 2021 – 2025, and build them into the provisions of the new performance-based lump sum financing of UNIRI (end of 2024 onwards) and the new UNIRI strategy (2026 onwards)	in progress	Q2 2025	UNIRI management and UNIRI Senate, UNIRI Strategy Board

		<p>Monitor and enhance the results of the five project lines dedicated to the introduction of micro-credentials, to the support for innovation in L&T, to the support for enhancing students' practical skills, and the support for students' health and, based on the monitoring results, build them into the provisions of the new performance-based lump sum financing of UNIRI (end of 2024 onwards) and the new UNIRI strategy (2026 onwards)</p>	<p>in progress</p>	<p>Q2 2025</p>	<p>Vice-rector for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance, Head of UNIRI Centre for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance, UNIRI and constituents' Quality Assurance and Improvement Centres, Expert Council for Learning and Teaching, UNIRI Strategy Board</p>
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		Monitor the satisfaction of UNIRI faculty (scientific-teaching, artistic-teaching, teaching and associate staff) based on the principles of communication and transparency, of feedback as well as of evaluation and adaptation	in progress	Yearly in 2024 and 2025	Vice-rector for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance, Head of UNIRI Centre for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance, UNIRI and constituents' Quality Assurance and Improvement Centres, Expert Council for Learning and Teaching
		Organise the regular yearly science outreach activities (Festival of Science, "open days", round tables, public fora, Rijeka of Psychology, Rijeka of Technology, Researchers' Night, new UNIRI webpage, etc.)	in progress	Yearly in 2024 and 2025	Centre for Science Outreach (SOCRI)

		Develop and implement on the SOCRI online digital platform a fully functional virtual SOCRI, offering instructions for UNIRI constituents and academic staff on how to contribute to the outreach repository, complemented by a technical support system for video content creation	in progress	Q3 2025	Head of SOCRI
		Foster and enhance the activities of the UNIRI Career Centre providing support to EMCRs (career advice, guidance and collaborating with experienced faculty members, ...).	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	Vice-rector for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance, Vice-rector for Science and Arts, Head of UNIRI Career Centre
		Monitor the implementation of the Guidelines for balancing business and private life of employed parents/carers, and the Recommendations for ensuring the balance between professional and private life of working parents with the aim of their continuous update and upgrade	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	Vice-rector for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance, UNIRI Diversity Officer

		Offer to UNIRI faculty, also via the educational programme “Teacher Competencies in Higher Education: Learning and Teaching” as well as the Coursera for Campuses modules, courses aimed at improving their teaching competencies, especially related to e-learning, as well as online and hybrid teaching modalities	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	Vice-rector for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance, Head of UNIRI Centre for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance, Expert Council for Learning and Teaching
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		Monitor and enhance the usage of the Moodle LMS system in UNIRI's teaching practices	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	Vice-rector for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance, Head of UNIRI Centre for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance, UNIRI and constituents' Quality Assurance and Improvement Centres, Expert Council for Learning and Teaching
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		Actively contribute to the YUFE activities related to community engagement-based research & innovation (CERI) and the YUFE KV network	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	Vice-rector for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance, Vice-rector for Strategic Projects, Heads of UNIRI Centres for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance and for R&I, UNIRI YUFE WGs, UNIRI Foundation, UNIRI Centre for Innovation Initiatives
4. RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AND IMPACT ON SOCIETY AND THE ECONOMY	- Research freedom	Actively contribute to the provisions of and the adoption of the new Collective contract for Science and Higher Education and promote its full adoption at UNIRI	in progress	Q4 2024	UNIRI management, UNIRI Senate
	- Professional attitude				
	- Contractual and legal obligations	Negotiate with MSE and the UNIRI constituents, sign and fully implement the performance-based lump sum financing of UNIRI	in progress	Q4 2024	UNIRI management, UNIRI Senate

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good practice in research - Dissemination, exploitation and results 	Build the internal UNIRI Research professorship model into the provisions of the new performance-based lump sum financing of UNIRI	in progress	Q4 2024	Vice-rector for Science and Arts, Expert council for R&I, Council for Science and UNIRI Senate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition of profession - Research environment - Funding and salaries - Intellectual Property Rights 	Adopt the new UNIRI Innovation Policy strengthening the role of the UNIRI internal (Centre for Innovation Initiatives) and associated (Science and Technology Park) bodies, of the UNIRI innovation hubs, and of the ties with the external societal and business actors (SBAs) – all using the principles of community engagement-based research & innovation (CERI) and of knowledge valorisation, thus strengthening the regional innovation ecosystems	in progress	Q4 2024	Vice-rector for Strategic Projects, UNIRI Centre for R&I, Expert council for R&I, Council for Science and UNIRI Senate
		Update and upgrade, based also on the provisions of the new UNIRI Innovation Policy, the UNIRI intellectual property management rulebook	in progress	Q2 2025	Vice-rector for Strategic Projects, Centre for Innovation Initiatives, Expert council for R&I, Council for Science and UNIRI Senate

		Upgrade the UNIRI regional innovation matchmaking platform RIMAP to a fully implemented YUFE Innovation Platform and the matchmaking platform of the Rectors Forum of Southeast Europe and Western Balkans	in progress	Q2 2025	Vice-rector for Strategic Projects, Director of the EDIH Adria project, YUFE and RF SEEWB stakeholders
		Build the exiting UNIRI financial instruments that contribute to the employment of EMCRs and those related to the maintenance of the research infrastructure, all based on transparent calls for projects evaluated by independent external peer reviewers, into the provisions of the new performance-based lump sum financing of UNIRI (end of 2024 onwards) and the new UNIRI strategy (2026 onwards)	in progress	Q2 2025	Vice-rector for Science and Arts, UNIRI Centre for R&I, Expert Council for R&I, Council for Science, UNIRI Senate, UNIRI Strategy Board
		Monitor the KPIs related to knowledge transfer and regional involvement and the respective qualitative reports on social responsibility in the UNIRI Strategy 2021 – 2025, and build them into the provisions of the new performance-based lump sum financing of UNIRI (end of 2024 onwards) and the new UNIRI strategy (2026 onwards)	in progress	Q2 2025	UNIRI management and UNIRI Senate, UNIRI Strategy Board

		Monitor and enhance the activities of the UNIRI Pre-Award Research Support Centre	in progress	Beginning of each year	Vice-rector for Science and Arts, UNIRI Centre for R&I, Expert Council for R&I, Council for Science, UNIRI Senate
		Continuously monitor the KPIs related to the quality and quantity of scientific publications (particularly those using Open Science provisions) as well as the adoption and implementation of Research Data Management Plans	in progress	Yearly in 2024 and 2025	Vice-rector for Science and Arts, UNIRI Centre for R&I
		Actively contribute and enhance the UNIRI research management capacities, also via the active participation and contribution to the EARMA European Association of Research Managers and Administrators, as well as in the associated BESTPRAC network	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	Vice-rector for Science and Arts, Vice-rector for Strategic Projects, UNIRI Centre for R&I

5. DIVERSITY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY	- Ethical principles	Continuously update the UNIRI Code of Ethics, especially when the National council for Science, Higher Education and Technological Developments defines the national minimal ethical standards	in progress	Q3 2025, continuously	UNIRI Council of Honour, UNIRI as well as Ethics Committees of UNIRI Constituents
	- Professional responsibility	Update and upgrade the UNIRI Gender Equality Plan and the derived documents on gender balance, inclusivity, prevention of harassment, and balance of business and private life	in progress	Q1 2026	UNIRI Diversity Officer, Gender Equality Council, UNIRI management and UNIRI Senate
	- Non discrimination				
- Gender balance	Continuously promote non-discrimination and align it with the development of national and supranational (ILO, EU, WEF, YUFE, YERUN and other) acts and provisions	in progress	At least yearly	UNIRI Diversity Officer, UNIRI management and UNIRI Senate	
6. OTM-R	- Evaluation / appraisal systems - Recruitment	Monitor, review and update the UNIRI CoARA Action Plan	in progress	Q4 2025	Vice-rector for Strategic Projects and Head of UNIRI R&I Centre

	- Recruitment (Code)	Regularly update and upgrade the UNIRI HRS4R webpage as well as the sections of the UNIRI webpage related to the employment rules and procedures and the announcements of employment positions	in progress	Quarterly throughout 2024 and 2025	HRS4R Project manager
	- Selection (Code)				
	- Transparency (Code)				
	- Judging merit (Code)	Carry on the strategic project "Students for the University - Green Transition of the University of Rijeka - Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN and the European Green Deal" and continuously monitor and continuously upgrade the inclusive access to UNIRI facilities	in progress	Q2 2025, continuously	Vice-rector for Digitalization and Development, UNIRI Campus Coordination, UNIRI office for working safety
	- Seniority (Code)				
	- Working conditions				
	- Stability and performance of employment	Biannually update the OTM-R policy and Checklist	in progress	Q1 2026	Vice-rector for Strategic Projects, UNIRI Operational Group for OTM-R, HRS4R Project manager, UNIRI Senate
	- Participation in decision-making bodies				

		Actively promote academic assessment that is open, transparent, focused on qualitative evaluation, ethical, respecting equality and non-discrimination, based on reliable data, and customized for various areas of science and arts, as well as the adaptable to the diverse needs of the UNIRI constituents – also by promoting and advocating the usage of the UNIRI Guidelines for the additional (institutional) criteria for the selection of academic staff at the University of Rijeka and its constituents and the related UNIRI Rulebook on Scientific, Artistic and Innovation Activities, by promoting the usage of narrative CVs, by promoting the increased appointment of foreign experts in the employment selection committees and similar activities	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	Vice-rector for Strategic Projects, Vice-rector for Science and Arts, UNIRI Operational Group for OTM-R, UNIRI Centre for R&I, Expert Council for R&I, Council for Science, UNIRI Senate
		Regularly monitor the implementation and, if and when the relevant national regulation changes, update the UNIRI Rulebook on safety measures	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	UNIRI office for working safety

		Regularly update the working principles of all UNIRI participatory bodies, especially of the Expert Councils	in progress	Continuously throughout 2024 and 2025	Vice-rector for Science and Arts, Vice-rector for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance
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* Cf. the structure of the UNIRI management and of the decision-making, counselling and operative bodies provided on <https://uniri.hr/en/about-university/structure/>

Rijeka, March 2024



University of Rijeka, Croatia