Conference on Research Careers 2023
The experience of a newly awarded Institution: the German Sports University, Cologne

HRS4R-Working Group
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1. The German Sport University Cologne – a brief introduction
International Reputation Concentrated in Cologne

• Germany's only and Europe's largest sport university
• Multifaceted research at 19 institutes, four affiliated institutes and five transfer centres
• Unique interdisciplinarity at one location
• Complex social topics examined from different perspectives of sport science
• European-oriented university with modern bachelor’s and master’s degree programmes
• 65 university partnerships worldwide
A Sporty Team

Professors: 35
Academic staff: 303
Non-academic staff: 318

Our Students (Total: 6,148)

- Bachelor: 2,695
- Master: 934
- Ph.D.: 351
- Other*: 319
- Physical Education: 1,849
- Other: 5%
- Ph.D.: 6%
- Master: 15%
- Bachelor: 44%

(winter term 2021/22)
Multifaceted Research

Sport and movement as an overarching reference point

Interdisciplinary:
- Humanities
- Social sciences
- Natural and Life sciences

Key topics:
- Performance
- Health
- Society
- Education

Research:
- Applied and basic research
2. Building up the team..
GSU’s organizational structure

No faculties! But discipline groups (life sciences and humanities)
Steering Committee = The President’s Office

left to right

- Univ. Prof. Dr. Heiko Strüder President
- Univ. Prof. Dr. Christoph Breuer Vice-President of University Development Planning, Resources and Appointments
- Marion Steffen Provost
- Prof. Dr. Anja Niehoff Vice-President of Knowledge and Technology Transfer
- Univ. Prof. Dr. Jens Kleinert Vice-President of Studies, Teaching and Quality Management
- Univ. Prof. Dr. Thomas Abel Vice-President of Communication, Digitalisation and Diversity
- Univ. Prof. Dr. Hedda Lausberg Vice-President of Research, Scientific Staff and Young Academics
Representative Community of Researchers

• Feedback to and advice for the Core Working Group
• Cooperation with Core Working Group if necessary
• Members:
  • University Commission of Research (14 researchers from R1 to R4 representing both discipline groups)
  • Staff Council for Academics (10 researchers from R1 to R3)
Composition of the project group

Core Working Group
- Project management and implementation
- Assessment of the required resources
- Development of process description, gap analysis, OTM-R checklist + action plan in accordance with EU templates and based on PE action plan
- Communication and exchange

Extended Working Group
- Advice and support for the Core Working Group as required
- Assessment of the required resources
- Responsibility for planning and implementing initial measures with the involvement of relevant stakeholders / areas
Core Working Group – Members and skills

Moritz Gamon, HR Development
- Employment and Recruitment
- CVs
- Advances Trainings
- Leadership Trainings
- Working Conditions
- Legal framework
- Management HR Working Group at GSU with all relevant stakeholders

Birte Ebbinghaus, Personal Advisor to the President
- Very good knowledge of university and internal processes
- Organization and communication with Committees
- Connection to the President’s Office = Steering Committee
- Good network with all relevant stakeholders
- Legal background

Dr. Birte Ahrens, Research Officer
- Overview of research at GSU + nationally and internationally
- Science Politics
- Research funding
- Promotion of young researchers
- Scientific background
- Interface between administration and researchers
Committees already implemented in the organizational structure of the GSU were used for the group of representative researchers and for the steering committee.

- Saving resources, optimal utilization of already functioning committees, ensuring effective work.

Core Working Group member's with different working areas, skills, backgrounds and perspectives.

- Experts for all pillars; overview of all internal processes, projects and stakeholders; comprehensive network.
3. GSU’s Run for HR Excellence
History/Preliminary Work

• First involvement with HRS4R and OTM-R as part of a personnel development project -> creation of an HR Action catalog 2019/2020
• Establishment of an HRS4R-project group in summer 2021
• Dispatch of the endorsement letter in December 2021
• Spring 2023 Receipt of the award
HRS4R-Process at GSU (initial phase)

- Weekly meetings of the Core Working Group
- More than 50 meetings and exchanges with relevant stakeholders, other working groups or members of the Steering Committee
- Writing retreats of the Core Working Group for gap analysis, action plan, strategy and process description
Gap Analysis

**Procedure**
- Division of the principles according to competencies
- Working through the entire table together
- Writing retreats
- Honest and realistic examination of own strengths and weaknesses

**Biggest Challenge**
- Interpreting the principles: What is meant, how can it be specifically applied to our university?

**What helped us**
- Good knowledge of our own university and the academic system in Germany
- Good network
- Best practice examples from other universities
- HRK table with references to relevant laws and regulations

**Conclusion**
- Long process, high workload but as a result a detailed and very helpful analysis of strengths and weaknesses for the development of measures
Structuring of the identified gaps according to pillars and voting for priorities by the members of the representative researchers.
Gap Analysis and Action Plan – Database and integration of researchers

- Survey of scientific employees (2017)
- Catalog of internal HR Action Plan (2020)
- Feedback representative community of researchers
- Further exchanges and coordination, e.g. equal opportunities office, HR exchange group, PostDoc Office etc.
Action Plan

**Procedure**
- Collection of all gaps
- Development of actions to close them
- Find synergy effects with ongoing or planned projects
- Consideration of the existing catalog of HR measures
- Writing retreats

**Biggest Challenge**
- Cost savings (= financing of actions)

**What helped us**
- Profound gap analysis
- Feedback from the researchers
- Existing catalog of HR measures
- Communication with all responsible units

**Conclusion**
- Relatively simple and unproblematic process due to the extensive preparatory work
# Development of actions based on the gaps and prioritizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>GAP Principle(s)</th>
<th>Proposed Timing</th>
<th>Responsible Unit</th>
<th>Indicators/Target(s)</th>
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</table>
| 1   | Further development and finalization of a 101-box programme, e.g., including trainings and mentoring and a structured supervision system for postdoctoral researchers (Main Action 34) | 37,38 | Q2 2023 | P&I (Postdoc Office) | • Programme is finalized and communicated  
• Programme is rolled out  
• Programme components are evaluated by participants (Q2 2024) |
| 2   | Discussion of a scope for annual interviews between employee and supervisor including aspects of career development | 20,37,40 | Q1 2023 | HR Development / Internal Management and Decision Boards | • Scope is discussed  
• If applicable, guidelines are developed and changes communicated |
| 3   | Development and implementation of an internal training concept for supervision and management / leadership competences (including elements of mental health assessment 2021 and health and safety topics) (Main Action 34) | 26,37,40 | start in Q2 2023 | HR Development | • Concept is developed  
• Requirement profiles are reflected in future realizations  
• Offers are communicated and rolled out  
• Offers are evaluated (Q3 2024) |
| 4   | Further development of existing qualification and development opportunities in the area of HR including a broader range of academic and non-academic issues, adjustment of different offers through the recently established human resources development working group | 2, 3, 5, 9, 11, 72, 73, 31, 32, 72 | Q2 2024 | HR Development Working Group | • Offers are aligned and adjusted  
• Offers are finalized and communicated |
| 5   | Standardization of registration, general needs assessment and evaluation procedures throughout all units regarding internal qualification and development offers | 39 | Q1 2024 | HR Development Working Group (TFV repository) | • Central registration and evaluation tool/platform is rolled-out and in use |
| 6   | Needs assessment regarding further qualification of professionals and development of respective offers (Main Action 34) | 30 | Q4 2024 | HR Development / P&I | • Needs are assessed  
• If applicable, offers are developed, communicated and rolled out |
| 7   | Reflection and evaluation of non-formal qualifications, e.g., job shadowing, internships, peer teaching etc. | 33,35 | Q2 2025 | HR Development Working Group | • New ideas are reflected and discussed  
• If applicable, offers are extended or adjusted and communicated |
Summary of the 28 single actions into 5 overarching clusters (= main actions) in the HR strategy
4. Challenges during the initial phase
Challenges... and solutions

Limited personnel resources with high workload at the same time

Consequences of the coronavirus pandemic

Understanding the HRS4R-formalities

Energy crisis from 2022:
• Cost-cutting measures necessary
• Review of all projects in terms of costs and benefits -> including HRS4R
• Fewer financial resources for the implementation of actions

• Working effectively
• Structuring the project
• Project management tool
• Writing retreats
• Clear task assignment
• Time buffer for submission at Euraxess

• Exchange with other universities
• Contacting euraxess support

• Presentation of benefits
• Highlighting project progress
• Transparent communication -> creation of expectations

Adjustment of actions and the financial plan

Challenges...

and solutions
5. Perception and benefits
Perception and feedback

Positive
• R1-R3 researchers regarding the planned actions
• R4 researchers and committee members tend to see strategic advantages
• Academic staff council is particularly supportive of the OTM-R area
• European Liaison Office of the German Research Organisations (Kowi): Helpful in the evaluation of EU funding applications
Benefits

External representation
- Attractive working environment for researchers
- International advertising for GSU
- Recruitment of highly qualified researchers
- Transparent, open, equal and internationally accepted system of recruitment and career development

Organisational benefits
- Inventory and analysis of all processes, services and measures relating to research environment
- Resulting measures are evaluated externally
  - Engine to implement actions, to really change something, continuous further development
- Consolidation of internal university processes and actions on a common strategic basis => clear allocation of tasks, increased transparency of measures, also prevents duplication of tasks
- Identification of synergies, increase in effectiveness
- Increased chances of approval for third-party funding applications (especially, but not only, EU)
Thank you!

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