

2016

HR Excellence in Research

**The Human Resources
Strategy for Researchers**

**University of Lower Silesia
GAP ANALYSIS & ACTION PLAN**





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I. INTRODUCTION

University of Lower Silesia (founded in 1997) is one of the leading academic and private schools of higher education on the market of Lower Silesia. Its basic activity subject is the education of students and PhD candidates and their preparation to perform certain jobs, the education of academic staff, conducting scientific research and development works as well as rendering research services, developing and propagating the national culture, knowledge and the results of scientific research in the society. The University of Lower Silesia ensures that its graduates are thoroughly prepared to undertake social and professional roles that meet the needs of contemporary times, simultaneously attempting to shape lifelong learning citizens who care about their self-development. The University of Lower Silesia aspires to maintain and strengthen its position as an significant scientific and research centre which supports the exchange of thoughts and inspires to undertake domestic and international research activity.

The University of Lower Silesia owns all academic rights to award the academic degrees and titles of doctor of social science in pedagogy (the Faculty of Education), doctor of of social science in cognitive studies and social communication (the Faculty of Social Sciences and Media Studies), the postdoctoral degree of dr hab (doctor with habilitation) of social sciences in pedagogy (the Faculty of Education) as well as to confer the academic degree of professor and the title of the ULS doctor honoris causa (the Faculty of Education).

The University of Lower Silesia monitors the publication records of the ULS academic staff as well as of other authors who include the university name in the affiliation of their scientific output. Since 2012 a publication record PUB – Publications of the employees of the University of Lower Silesia, has been functioning in the University. The collected data have a bibliographic and bibliometric character. Since 2013 the data about the publications have been introduced also into the Polish Scientific Bibliography (a module of the POL-on system). The ULS owns also a dedicated software application that registers the scientific and research activity (projects, conferences, expertise, commercialisation of results, etc.) as well as the teaching and organisational activity of a researcher (e-NDO).

The academic potential of the university consists of 137 scholars, including 45 so-called independent academics (professors and doctors with habilitation degree). For 93,5% employees the ULS is the main workplace. The development of the academic staff is very dynamic.

In years 2009-2012 12 academics were awarded the PhD degree, six – the academic degree of doctor with habilitation and two – the academic title of professor. In the following years (2013, 2014, 2015) 13 received the PhD degree, four - the degree of the doctor with habilitation and five – the title of professor.

The ULS academics carry out numerous research projects financed by external funds (NCN-National Science Centre, NCBiR – National Centre of Research and Development, MNiSzW-Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Norway Grants, UE programmes: Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships, Horizon 2020); are members of scientific councils and editorial boards of Polish and foreign magazines as well as of various deciding, advisory and assessment bodies; they hold top positions in the authorities of Polish nationwide, European and international associations, where the ULS has the institutional membership (<http://www.dsw.edu.pl/nauka-i-badania/>).

ULS academic units (faculties) have undergone a parametric assessment, as a result of which they were rated the B category (the Faculty of Pedagogic Sciences and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Media Studies). It enabled them to apply for funding the statutory activity and obtaining subsidies for maintaining the research capacity.

In the process of commercialisation and dissemination of research results and development works the ULS academics are supported by the ULS Publishing House. The publications (in Polish and English) are reviewed and magazines published in accordance with the standards of academic publications and then made available in the *open access* version. All the magazines are included on the list of Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and one is on the international list of ERIH.

In the annual ranking of universities published by „Perspektywy” and „Rzeczpospolita” every year the ULS is ranked number one in the region of Lower Silesia among private schools of higher education that offer master’s degree and is placed in the top ten or twenty in the country (the 11th in year 2015; the 8th in 2014; the 12th in 2013; the 16th in 2012). In years 2004-2015 the ULS obtained over 22 MPLN from European funds for its activities, mainly from the European Social Fund. Thanks to the received funding it was possible to carry out many educational and social initiatives to the benefit of social environment.

In June 2015 the Senate of the University of Lower Silesia passed a resolution on the implementation, dissemination and improvement of the execution of guidelines included in the

European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. The Rector appointed a Team for HR Excellence in research, which consists of the representatives of all university faculties: dr hab. Ewa Kurantowicz (Vice-Rector for research and development), dr hab. Tomasz Zarębski (the Faculty of Education), dr hab. Ludmiła Dziewięcka-Bokun (the Faculty of Social Sciences and Media Studies), dr Michał Gusin (Kłodzko Campus), dr hab. Wojciech Anigacz (the Faculty of Technical Sciences).

II. INTERNAL GAP ANALYSIS

1. Methodology

The team adopted two main data sources: documents of external and internal law regarding the academics and opinions of the ULS academic staff and PhD candidates. Each team member chose one of the four areas of HR Excellence, thoroughly analysing those issues in the legal documentation, as well as the academics' utterances. Legal acts binding in the ULS were analysed in the respective areas. Besides the wordings of the Law of Higher Education those were the following: the Statute, Strategy 2012-2016, Organisational Bylaws, Terms and conditions of evaluating academic teachers, Management of copyright and related rights and of industrial property rights as well as the commercialisation rules of the research results and development works in the University of Lower Silesia and the ISO Procedure regarding education, research and commercialisation of research results.

The first stage of the analysis was the collection of data. The team prepared two tools for data collection (1) a template for the analysis of legal documentation and the existing solutions/practices in the ULS and (2) a questionnaire to examine the academics' opinions in the ULS with respect to HR Excellence (attachment no. 5). Both tools were based on examples published on the website <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/rights> („Example of a standard template for the internal analysis"). The questionnaire consisted of 40 closed questions (the answers were given in the five-point scale) and a commentary (an open question) to each issue (optional). The poll was anonymous and the questionnaires were filled in on-line by the academics and the only differentiating data was the academic's status: a member of the academic staff (professor, doctor with habilitation, PhD, Master) and PhD candidate.

In the second stage – the data analysis – the Team decided on a collective analysis of data and engaged all the members to interpret them and, in the end, to formulate the recommendations for the four HR areas. In order to improve the analytical work the Team decided on creating the so-called CARD-QUESTION. In each card there is a diagram illustrating the opinion of the analysis subjects with the regard to each question, the comments quoted *expressis verbis* and the result of the analysis of the legal status of that particular issue. Subsequently, the Team identified gaps in each issue and specified the direction of the action.

The compiled CARDS-QUESTIONS (40) can serve in future as a comparative material in the next analysis assessing the implementation and improvement of the rules of the Charter and the Code in the ULS. In the final report the notes high, rather high were categorised as 'university strengths' and the notes: low, rather low were categorised 'challenges/areas for improvement'.

The last stage of the analysis is the drawing of an action plan based on the results of the analysis, taking into account the areas for improvement, strengths and recommendations for the ULS in order to improve the researchers' working conditions.

2. The analysed group

In the ULS the group of academics consists of full professors and doctors with habilitation (45), employed doctors and masters doing the PhD (92), masters who are PhD students (125). In total 262 researchers from the ULS were invited to participate in the analysis. The number of received returns equalled 87. The participation index in the analysis equalled approximately 30%.

3. Documentation

Full documentation regarding (1) the ULS application for the logo of *HR Excellence in Research* and (2) the detailed compilation of the analysis results made with the method of analysing the contents and polls among the ULS academics is stored in the office of the Vice-Rector for research and development. Both data, tools and the partial reports of the team members are available for inspection. The basic analytical material consists of 40 CARDS with data, answers and interpretations of all issues included in the exemplary EU tool for the analysis of implementing the rules of the Charter and the Code.

4. Results

In the further part of the report the following four areas are discussed jointly: (I) Ethical and professional aspects; (II) Recruitment; (III) Working conditions and social security; (IV) Training. The Team analyses show that the ULS strengths in executing the guidelines of the Charter and the Code are, first of all, the areas I and IV. The areas that require a particular concern from the university are areas II and III. There is most room for improvement there,

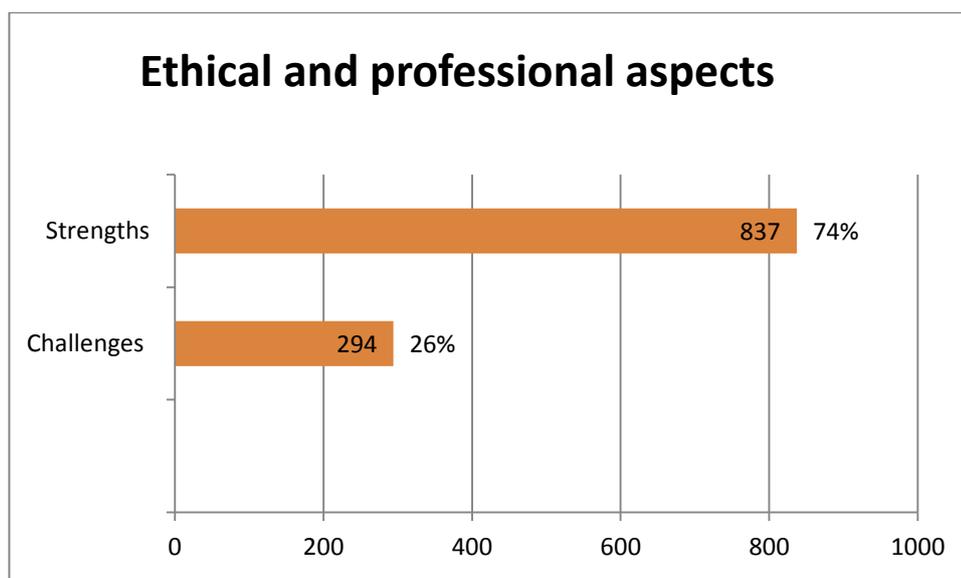
which is confirmed also by the analysis of internal university documents. The Team decided to present in the report remarks to all areas, despite their high joint evaluation made by the ULS academics. Charts and diagrams in the attachments confirm the actions included in the plan – the Team’s recommendations.

4.1. ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS

The analysis of documents regarding the part of *Ethical and professional aspects* shows the fundamental compatibility of internal legal acts of the University of Lower Silesia or external legal acts, to which the University of Lower Silesia is subjected, with the principles specified in the European Charter of a Researchers. The legislative and executive actions mentioned below are to eliminate small gaps in the internal regulations of the ULS and their closer link with the principles of EKN.

The analysis of the poll results shows that the academics usually evaluate the ethical and professional aspect of the ULS academic environment highly. However, what they write in the survey comments are important remarks and suggestions, which may improve the conditions of conducting the academic work in the ULS and make them more friendly. The comments indicate the need of revising or making more precise some legal regulations (e.g. the system of employee evaluation), the need of extra training (e.g. regarding the intellectual property rights) and also the change of some practices (e.g. consistent use of the ULS electronic mail in professional correspondence). The below action plan takes into account the remarks reported in the comments.

Drawing 1. General evaluation of area I by the ULS employees



What results from the analysis of the ULS legal acts is the fact that the improvement in the area of ethics and professionalism will consist in completing and elaborating the already existing legal acts, e.g. the formal adoption of the researcher's ethical code, the extension of the catalogue of factors with the discrimination ban or the introduction of precise criteria in the process of evaluating academic and organisational activity of the staff.

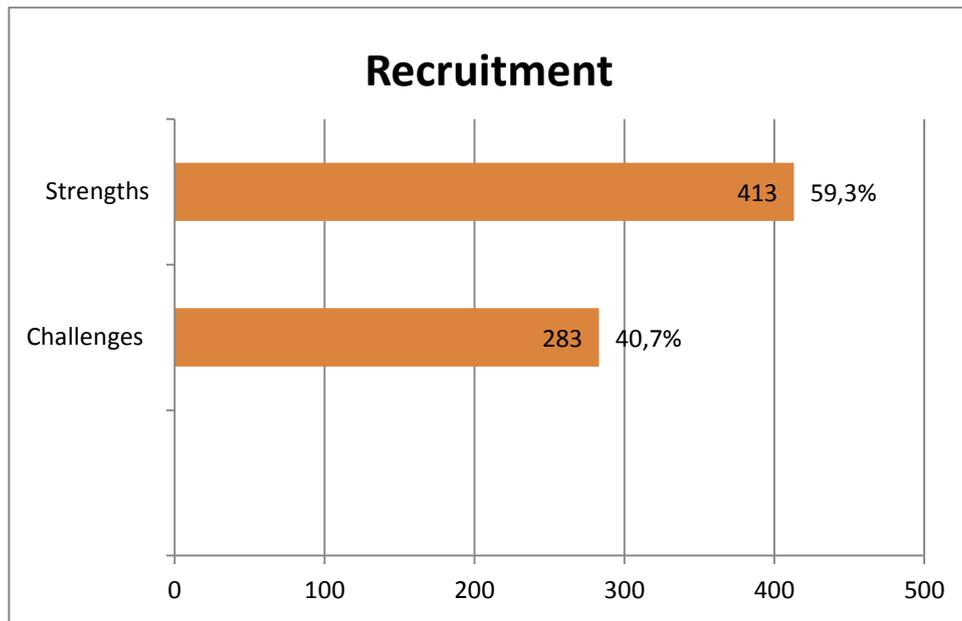
The poll results indicated that in the area of ethics the following should be improved above all: forms of disseminating the knowledge on intellectual property rights among the scholars; solutions regarding the division of organisational duties among the ULS employees, security mechanisms of data which are transmitted and used by the university employees.

4.2 RECRUITMENT

The analysis of the ULS Statute and the academics' utterances regarding the second area, i.e. the recruitment and employment of new didactic and researching employees indicates the need of specifying Statute general wordings and creating precisely functioning rules of the body that is in charge of recruiting the employees (a commission recruiting new employees and evaluating their scientific output). The contents included in the commentaries reveals that, according to the researchers, there are no such procedures and at the same time they are convinced of the necessity of appointing a commission and creating clear recruitment procedures.

It is an important observation and a solution supported also by the academics – which will facilitate the introduction of this change into the structure and documentation of the ULS, so that the requirements of the Charter, and of the Code in particular, are met.

Drawing 2. General evaluation of area II by the ULS employees



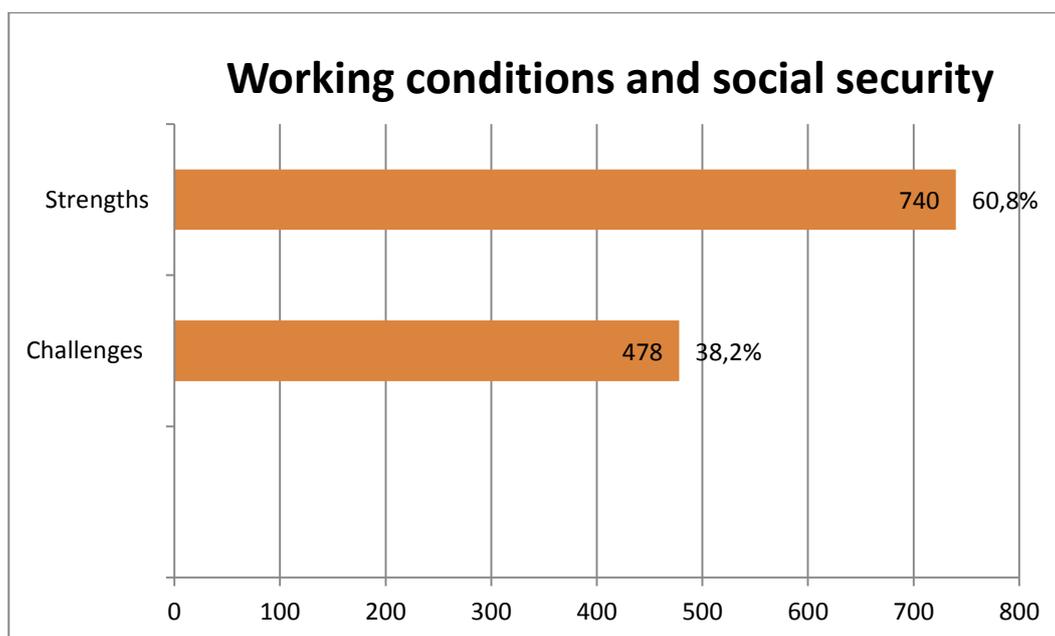
4.3. WORKING CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The results of the analysis of documents and opinions indicate that the conditions of conducting research, the environment and the policy of equal chances are evaluated very highly.

The challenge for the University in that area is the care for the sense of employment stabilisation among the employees. It is connected with the elaboration and dissemination of the university strategy of developing researchers' academic career and making the information about financing, bonuses and employee remuneration available.

The area worth improving is also the work organisation conducive to the balance between employees' research, didactic and organisational work or these duties should be appropriately regulated depending on the employee's and university priorities (e.g. sabbatical leaves, reductions of hours, etc.).

Drawing 3. General evaluation of area III by the ULS employees

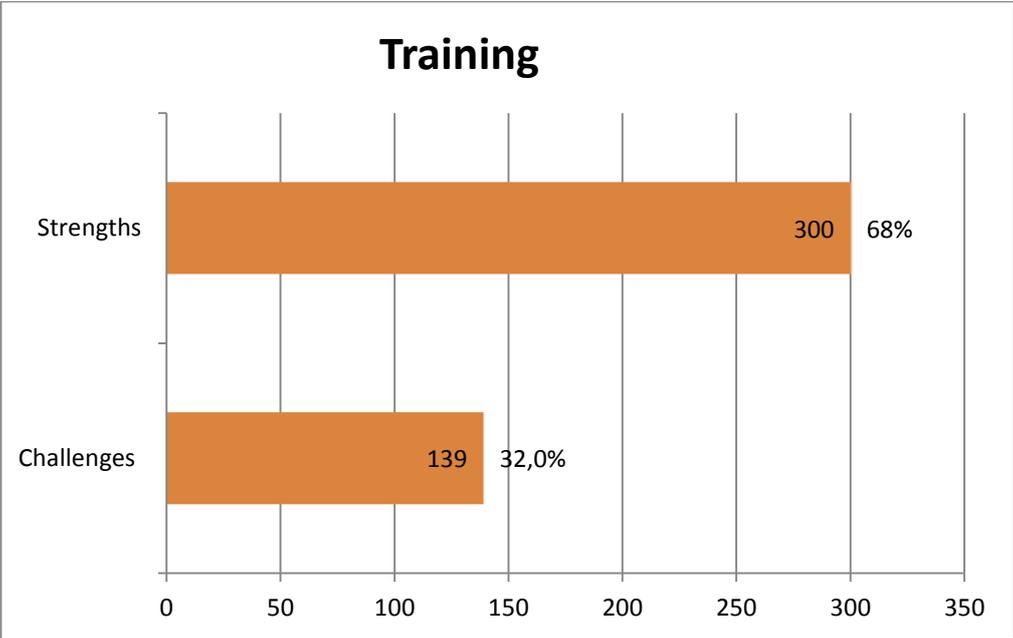


4.4. Training

The evaluation of formal and non-formal contacts of training and educational nature is positive. At the university there are held cyclic educational meetings with the research supervisor (it is ensured by the by-laws of doctoral studies and the doctorate programme) or open periodical meetings for all academics. The university educational offer for the employees includes conferences, seminars, methodology workshops and summer schools.

The analyses of the academics' opinions indicate that forms of educational contact should be improved. Learning in action is a favoured form, but the researchers say that it is only occasionally performed. Including young employees in research projects, joint work on filling-in the grant and project applications, etc., conducting scientific research in the field with experienced researchers or joint writing of texts are unexploited forms of researchers' mutual learning.

Drawing 4. General evaluation of area IV by the ULS employees



III. ACTION PLAN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF LOWER SILESIA IN WROCLAW

Challenges and areas for improvement 2016 - 2018

Areas	Planned actions	Date and person in charge
Ethics and legal awareness of the ULS employees	1. We recommend the <i>Researcher's Ethic Code adopted by the means of the resolution of the PAN General Meeting dated 13 December 2012.</i>	October 2016 Rector
	2. Completion of §6.4 and §9 of the Order no. 45/2013 of the ULS Rector dated 2 October 2013 regarding the introduction of changes into the Work Rules of the University of Lower Silesia by the means of a wording about the discrimination ban regarding language, political views and social or material status.	October 2016 Rector
	3. Monitoring of the interoffice memo on the necessity of using a university electronic mail address by the ULS employees in order to ensure data security and efficient communication with the university authorities.	June 2016 Head of Rector's Office
	4. Organisation of an annual open training on the internal ULS law and external law, strengthening the consulting system with the ULS legal advisor.	December 2016 Head of Rector's Office
	5. Preparing and conducting a campaign disseminating knowledge about intellectual property (auto-plagiarism, property rights)	December 2017 Head of the Scientific Information Centre
Academic career and strategy of researchers' development	1. Carrying out an audit of the functioning of the Rules of on-going and periodical employee evaluation.	April 2017 Rector
	2. Appointing the University expert commission, which shall specify criteria of the research and organisational activity of ULS employees, based on the audit results and taking into account the strategies of university development.	October 2017 Rector
	3. Preparing the procedures of building and functioning	

	<p>of research and project teams, including consortia with external parties considering social and practical character of scientific research (implementation, commercialisation) as well as the remaining guidelines of the Charter and Code about cooperation and partnership of researchers.</p> <p>4. Preparing the schedule of meetings and consultations of the employees of the Legal Department, Scientific Information Centre and Project Office regarding the intellectual property rights, mechanisms of obtaining an academic category and statutory means as well as financing scientific research.</p>	<p>March 2017 Vice-Rector for research and development</p> <p>December 2016 Deans</p>
Employee recruitment	<p>1. Specification of wordings existing in the ULS Statute (chapter IV, paragraph 29 and 32) as well as in the ISO procedure (PS-10) regarding the appointment of <i>recruitment commission</i>.</p> <p>2. Introduction of law regulating the functioning of recruitment commission being in charge of the assessment of candidates for the research and teaching work in the ULS, including wordings about (i) the evaluation scale of the candidate's scientific output, (ii) the evaluation of the multidimensional aspect of the candidate's development path (such as the work outside academic environment, participation in voluntary services, work in business sector, etc.), (iii) evaluations of experiences in geographical mobility (work in the candidate's foreign or domestic academic institution or of ULS employees, (iv) evaluations of professional and academic qualifications of both candidates and employees, (v) evaluation of the continuity of candidate's professional development, (vi) rules of employing people with PhD degree and making the laws on their further professional development as ULS employees more detailed.</p>	<p>June 2016 Rector's Proxy for ISO</p> <p>September 2017 Rector</p>
Financing and incentive scheme	<p>1. Dissemination and making available the information on rules and criteria of financing and rewarding employees, i.e. obtaining financial and non-financial gratification</p> <p>2. Preparation of information on an incentive scheme connected with researchers' career.</p>	<p>October 2017 Rector</p> <p>October 2017 Rector</p>