

Revised Action Plan and OTM-R policy 2024-2026

HRS4R | Human Resources Strategy for Researcher

HRS4R Working Group | September 2023

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Foreword by Human Resources

With great pride, the Human Resources Unit of UAS Technikum Wien continues the university's decade-long commitment to fostering a strong, people-centered research culture. Assuming responsibility for the HRS4R process marks not only a transition in governance, but a renewed promise: to strengthen an environment where researchers can grow, connect, and excel.

As the HR Unit proudly takes on this role, we reaffirm what defines Technikum Wien — a research culture driven by people, purpose, and progress.

Grounded in collaboration, transparency, and integrity, we are dedicated to advancing Technikum Wien's mission: empowering researchers and sustaining excellence in applied science and innovation.

Together, we continue to shape a future in which research thrives, people are valued, and Technikum Wien remains a driving force of progress and inspiration.

Introduction

In 2012, the University of Applied Sciences Technikum Wien (UASTW) committed to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, underscoring its dedication to a transparent, supportive and attractive research environment.

Building on this commitment, UASTW launched its Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) in 2014, accompanied by a two-year Action Plan. The European Commission awarded UASTW the "HR Excellence in Research" label in 2015 – the first and only Austrian University of Applied Sciences to receive it at that time.

Development and Review Phases

Following the initial implementation (2015–2017), a first review and updated Action Plan for 2017–2020 were completed.

Due to significant organisational restructuring (transition to a matrix organisation and curriculum standardisation), activities slowed temporarily between 2018–2019.

A renewed internal review and survey in 2020 led to a revised Action Plan for 2021–2023, integrating feedback from all research career stages (R1–R4) and administrative units.

The renewal assessment was successfully completed in 2022. Since May 2025, the HR Unit has assumed overall responsibility for the HRS4R process, ensuring systematic monitoring via a shared project management tool.

R&D and Institutional Context

Founded in 1994, UASTW became Vienna's first University of Applied Sciences in 2000. Around 4,700 students study in over 30 Bachelor's and Master's programs, supported by four interdisciplinary departments.

R&D at UASTW is application-driven, bridging academia, industry, and society. UASTW has consistently ranked among the leading Austrian UAS in R&D turnover (data up to 2017/18).

Strategic research focuses include:

- Embedded & Cyber-Physical Systems
- Renewable Energy Systems
- Data-Driven, Smart & Secure Systems
- Bioengineering & Molecular Life Science Technologies
- Automation & Robotics

Academic staff typically engage in both teaching and research. Dissertation collaborations with partner universities support the qualification of researchers, aiming to increase the proportion of PhD-level staff.

UASTW is an active member of the European University Association (EUA), Dual Career Service Network, and Euraxess Austria.

HRS4R Implementation, Governance and Outlook

Since its inception in 2013, the HRS4R process at UAS Technikum Wien has been characterised by broad internal participation and transparent governance.

Over the years, all actions completed under previous HRS4R cycles have been successfully integrated into regular institutional operations. Their effectiveness is periodically evaluated and adjusted as part of ongoing HR and quality management processes. This approach ensures continuity, sustainability, and a living culture of improvement across all HRS4R dimensions.

After the organisational restructuring in 2020, the Human Resources Unit assumed overall responsibility for HRS4R coordination in May 2025, embedding the process firmly within the university's strategic HR and quality management systems.

The HRS4R Working Group, re-established in 2020, includes representatives from all researcher career stages (R1–R4), is gender-balanced, and covers all departments and administrative units.

The Management Team (Managing Director, Rector, Heads of Faculties) acts as a steering committee in close coordination with the research advisory board and the HR Unit when strategic decisions are required, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities.

All actions and progress indicators are maintained in a shared project management tool, guaranteeing traceability, consistent updates, and visibility for all members of the working group.

The group meets regularly to review progress, propose new actions, and monitor implementation in line with the European Charter and Code.

In 2025, the OTM-R Policy – originally adopted in 2020 – was revised to further clarify procedures for recruiting and developing R&D staff.

The OTM-R process is understood as a continuous improvement mechanism, closely linked to the UASTW career path for researchers.

Through this structure, HRS4R has become an integral part of UASTW's strategic HR development and organisational governance, ensuring sustainability and institutional commitment.

Outlook 2024–2026

The next HRS4R cycle will continue to:

- Strengthen researcher career development pathways
- Enhance transparent and inclusive recruitment
- Foster cross-disciplinary and international collaboration
- Expand measures for research quality and integrity
- Further integrate HRS4R principles into institutional strategy and HR processes

Recruiting Standards and Data Protection in Recruitment (OTM-R)

Introduction

As part of the continuous OTM-R development, UAS Technikum Wien has introduced standardized Recruiting Standards (2025) and a legally compliant Data Protection in Recruiting Policy (June 2025). These ensure that recruitment remains open, transparent, merit-based, and aligned with the European Charter & Code.

These standards operationalize UASTW's OTM-R Policy by embedding legal compliance, transparency, and equality in all recruitment processes. Together, the policy and procedures ensure the institution's continued adherence to the HRS4R principles and EU expectations for researcher recruitment excellence.

Key Principles and Practices

Topic	Key Measures
Recruitment Management	All job postings managed via the recruiting tool "Softgarden". Only HR and authorized faculty members have access.
Communication	All applicant contact handled exclusively by HR; no external email or data transfer.
Data Protection (GDPR)	Applicant data processed only for the respective vacancy, deleted automatically after 6 months. Consent obtained via "Softgarden" per Art. 13 GDPR.
Transparency & Equal Treatment	Standardized selection criteria; documented feedback and decisions; no discrimination.
Collaboration	Regular HR–faculty meetings ensure consistency; HR oversees the entire process to maintain fairness and compliance.

Revised Action Plan 2024 – 2026

For each theme cluster, the situation at the UASTW in September 2025 will first be presented and the implementation of the action plan 2024 - 2026 discussed. Under "Challenges and Measures 2024-2026" the priority areas of action for the period 2024 - 2026 (based on principles in Charter & Code) will be listed, with the corresponding measures, responsibilities for the implementation of these measures, time windows and potential indicators.

Ethical and professional aspect

Situation at UASTW (September 2025)

UAS Technikum Wien maintains a strong foundation in research integrity, data protection, and open science. The university is a member of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity and the Alliance for Responsible Science. Institutional guidelines and checklists for ethics and data protection were updated in 2023 and 2024; an Ombuds Office for Students and Researchers was formally established via the university statute in 2023.

Open access and open innovation are firmly anchored, supported by the institutional repository ePub (2025) and continuous engagement in the Open Science Network Austria.

Areas requiring further development include strengthening ethical assessment expertise in technical fields, refining open data policies, and enhancing awareness for the Ombuds Office and dual-use topics.

Challenges and Measures 2024–2026

Challenge / Focus Area	Measure	Responsible Unit	Indicator
Awareness and accessibility of research integrity resources	Develop targeted internal communication (campaign, intranet section, short videos) about the Ombuds Office and ethics guidelines	HR & Research Coordination	Staff awareness level (survey)
Strengthening ethical expertise in technical disciplines	Explore creation of a joint "Ethics in Technology" commission with Vienna-based HEIs	Rectorate & Head of Research Organization	Cooperation agreement or MoU
Open Data governance	Develop and implement institutional Open Data policy and RDM guidelines	Research Coordination & Legal	Policy document approved and published
Dual use and responsible innovation	Integrate "Ethics & Dual Use" module in researcher training and onboarding	HR	Training completion and feedback statistics

Recruitment and selection

Situation at UASTW (September 2025)

Recruitment processes have been fully centralized and digitalized through the Softgarden platform since 2024.

Uniform recruiting standards define responsibilities, timelines, and communication channels between HR and faculties. The revised OTM-R Policy (Sept. 2025) integrates these standards and ensures compliance with the European Charter & Code principles of open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment.

The HR Unit now leads onboarding, evaluation, and process control, with career path development linked to the implementation of the EU Pay Transparency Directive.

Challenges and Measures 2024–2026

Challenge / Focus Area	Measure	Responsible Unit	Indicator
Align academic career path with EU Pay Transparency Directive	Conduct evaluation and integrate results into updated salary and career model	HR	Approved framework
Introduce evaluation and appraisal system for researchers	Develop consistent evaluation criteria linked to career stages	HR	Framework piloted
Recruitment quality monitoring	Define recruiting KPIs and establish regular reports from Softgarden	HR	KPI report established
Structured onboarding	Maintain and enhance monthly “Welcome Days” with research-specific modules	HR	Participation and satisfaction rates

Working conditions

Situation at UASTW (September 2025)

Working conditions at UASTW have improved through new job structures, harmonized starting salaries, and the introduction of the “Junior Lecturer/Researcher Advanced” role.

The HR Unit now integrates Gender & Diversity and centralized continuing education management institutionally.

An ESG-Manager was established because the FHTW has committed to voluntarily ESG-reporting.

FHTW regained certification as a family-friendly university and is the only Austrian HEI holding the national Ecolabel for educational institutions (as by April 2025).

Remaining challenges include contract harmonization for existing staff, improved communication on available support programs, and gender balance among academic personnel.

Challenges and Measures 2024–2026

Challenge / Focus Area	Measure	Responsible Unit	Indicator
Harmonize employment contracts and development opportunities	Implement standardized salary and job frameworks per EU Pay Transparency Directive	HR	Updated job scheme approved
Strengthen internal communication on researcher support	Launch intranet “Research@Technikum” hub for HR and R&D information	HR & R&D Coordination	Hub launched and evaluated
Improve gender balance in academic staff	Establish scholarships and mentoring for women in STEM fields	HR & Gender Equality Officer	% female researchers increase
Embed sustainability (ESG) in working culture	Develop guidelines connecting ESG goals to academic and R&D work	ESG Manager & HR	Published ESG in Academia guide

Training and development

Situation at UASTW (September 2025)

Training and career development for researchers are centrally coordinated by HR.

Programs for management and research skills were implemented in 2024 and expanded into Master Classes in 2025. Institutional cooperation agreements for doctoral studies exist with TU Wien and UTAD (Portugal).

Next steps focus on developing postdoctoral support, mentoring programs, and expanding structured continuing education offerings.

Challenges and Measures 2024–2026

Challenge / Focus Area	Measure	Responsible Unit	Indicator
Postdoctoral development	Pilot framework to support 1–2 postdoc theses per year	HR	Pilot launched
Mentoring & career counselling	Design and implement mentoring program aligned with career path	HR	Pilot program launched
Expand doctoral cooperation	Establish new institutional PhD collaborations	Research Coordination	Signed MoUs
Centralized continuing education	Annual modular training plan for all R&D staff	HR	Annual report published

Extended and Ongoing Actions

*(as of September 2025)

Action No.	Title	GAP Principle(s)	Status	Responsible Unit	Current Status / Remarks
1	Elaboration of binding principles for R&D employees	1, 2, 3, 7	IN PROGRESS	Head of Research	July 2022: New guideline on fake journals and fake conferences December 2023: FHTW's research integrity guideline and the checklist on ethics and data protection have been updated.
8	Internal support for dissertations	28	EXTENDED	Operator (HR)	The HR department is currently reviewing and evaluating the options for supporting dissertations. In a further step, the options will be communicated transparently and a clear process for utilizing them will be defined. This will also be taken into account in the questionnaire for employee appraisals.
9	Definition of sabbatical and parental leave models	28, 29	IN PROGRESS	Head of HR	The regulation of sabbaticals is part of the catalog of measures for certification as a family-friendly university, and implementation will begin in the 2025/2026 academic year.
13	Definition and implementation of policy on research freedom and dual use	1–4, 7	IN PROGRESS (re-evaluation)	Head of Research	Action has been halted and will be re-evaluated in the 2025-2027 period, from a more specific perspective of research freedom and responsibility.
15	Definition of criteria for development along the career path	11	EXTENDED	Head of Research	The existing career path for academic staff will be evaluated in the 2025/2026 academic year and further developed as part of another project to introduce a salary system in line with the EU Pay Transparency Directive. The project is being supported by renowned Austrian experts and is firmly anchored in all areas of strategic and operational HR work.

Action No.	Title	GAP Principle(s)	Status	Responsible Unit	Current Status / Remarks
17	Monitoring of quality OTM-R	12–16	EXTENDED	Head of Quality	Since the introduction of the recruiting tool in September 2024, it is now possible to query recruiting-related KPIs from the tool. The relevant meaningful KPIs will be determined by the HR department and presented in the form of a report, which is still to be discussed.
25	Development of institutional dissertation cooperation in at least two research areas	38	EXTENDED	Rectorate & Head of Research Organisation	Institutional cooperations with Technical University of Vienna and Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro have been established. As a next step, further cooperative PhD programmes with national and international partners shall be established and promoted (application for funding already pending for a second doctoral programme with the Technical University of Vienna).
28	Review current solutions and new possibilities to provide resources (e.g. work hours) for research related activities	22, 23	IN PROGRESS	Head of Research Organization and Head of HR	Since 2022, the time tracking tool has included the option to record these activities as a separate activity. This is also institutionalized in personnel resource planning and scheduled by managers. The next steps planned are an evaluation and the creation of standard reporting.
29	Supporting mobility for researchers	18, 24	IN PROGRESS	HR & International Office	The topic of internationalization has been included in the guidelines for employee appraisals to enable early planning of mobility. A position for business trip administration has been created in the International Office to provide support in planning trips. The existing Moodle course containing all information on business trips is continuously updated and expanded. International Office and HR are evaluating and adapting the existing process to the needs of the lecturers/researchers based on their role.

Action No.	Title	GAP Principle(s)	Status	Responsible Unit	Current Status / Remarks
30	Review framework conditions and start a pilot project for support of postdoctoral theses	21, 38	IN PROGRESS	HR & Management	The possible framework conditions for supporting post-doctoral theses are being discussed between management and the HR department. A proposal is to be submitted to the faculty management for feedback in the coming academic year.
32	Adaptation of the guidelines for staff appraisal interviews with regard to research career paths	28	IN PROGRESS	HR & Research Organisation	The existing career path for academic staff will be evaluated in the 2025/2026 academic year and further developed as part of another project to introduce a salary system in line with the EU Pay Transparency Directive. The project is being supported by renowned Austrian experts and is firmly anchored in all areas of strategic and operational HR work. The guidelines for employee appraisals will be adapted accordingly based on the results of this project and will be continuously taught as part of management training.
33	Analyse feasibility of career counselling for researchers	30	EXTENDED	Head of Research	After careful consideration, we are postponing discussions about implementing career coaching until the career plan project has been completed. At the same time, we are considering the implementation of a mentoring program.
34	Anchor international experience as a requirement for a full professorship in UAS TW's Statutes	21, 28, 29	EXTENDED	Head of Quality Assurance	As part of the current organizational restructuring, internal responsibilities have been redefined. Therefore, this task has not yet been examined in depth, but will be integrated into the new workflow in the next step.
36	Promoting Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions	28, 29, 38	EXTENDED	Head of Research Organisation	Marie Curie Offerings are advertised centrally by the HR department as part of the recruitment process, and the application process is supported. The positions are taken into account accordingly in personnel budget planning.