Report of the Working Group for the Implementation of the European Charter for Researchers

Date: 25 May 2026

On 28 January 2026, a joint meeting of the Steering Committee for Monitoring the Implementation of the European Charter for Researchers and the Working Group for the Implementation of the European Charter for Researchers at the UL was held. The assumptions underlying the **HR Excellence in Research** Strategy and the action plan for the remainder of the year were presented. The newly appointed Steering Committee and Working Group were introduced, and a schedule of meetings was proposed. Within the Working Group, sub-groups were established, within which meetings, consultations and further work took place:

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Results of the Sub-groups' Work

PROMOTION

- meetings held on 17 February, 25 March and 24 April;.
- a shared file was created containing a list of University of Lodz activities contributing to the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. This information will be published on the HR Excellence webpage and will also be required for reporting purposes. The collection of activities is still ongoing;
- a new HR Excellence webpage has been launched and updated: https://www.uni.lodz.pl/o-uniwersytecie/hr-excellence-in-research;
- further work is ongoing to update information on the implementation status of HR Excellence at the UL;
- on the EURAXESS portal, it was possible to merge the incorrect account: Uniwersytet Lodzki, which contained previous documents, including reports and the HR Excellence award, with the current University of Lodz account, which is now used for publishing vacancy announcements (the email correspondence with the EURAXESS Helpdesk required more than six months to complete).

ACTION PLAN

- meetings held on 18 February and 9 April;
- as a result of consultations and discussions, it was agreed that the Action Plan should be closely linked to the Gender Equality Plan. Certain HR Excellence activities should be directly aligned with the Gender Equality Plan, as the GEP supports the implementation of selected principles

of the European Charter for Researchers, particularly in the areas of equal treatment, inclusiveness, organisational culture and process transparency;

- the following actions were proposed:
  - an employee satisfaction survey to be conducted every two years (GEP),
  - a Code of Ethics for Employees (GEP),
  - an Inclusive Language Guide (by 2027) (GEP),
  - an Inclusive Recruitment Guide (GEP),
  - a human resources management dashboard (GEP),
  - training for UL managerial staff (under the Impuls project, implemented since January 2026, through which 100 administrative staff members develop their competencies in the areas of green transition and digital skills) (a need identified in the 2024 employee satisfaction survey),
  - work-life balance guidance and an information campaign (a need identified in the 2024 employee satisfaction survey),
  - support for researchers' professional development, including career paths, career guidance and the opportunity to consult a trainer (coach) with academic experience.
- attention was drawn to several necessary actions which, however, relate more directly to the implementation of the OTM-R policy:
  - Recruitment Standardisation

    Recruitment processes across faculties should be standardised, covering both formal compliance and the justification for initiating recruitment procedures (discipline management).

    The Inclusive Recruitment Guide (GEP 2.0) is expected to be completed by the end of June. Information meetings and a good-practice awareness campaign are also planned.

    Common document templates should be developed, including standard declarations for recruitment committee members (including declarations regarding the absence of conflicts of interest). An HR representative from the Employee Affairs Centre should participate in recruitment procedures.
  - Faculty Staffing Policy

    Recruitment processes should be managed with reference to academic disciplines, including the development of strategies concerning the number of posts and generational succession at faculty level. A long-term staffing strategy is needed, covering the number of

posts, workforce renewal and succession planning. A key challenge is the limited availability of new posts and the existence of micro-appointments (e.g. 1/16 of a full-time post), which restrict opportunities to create more substantial positions for early-career researchers.

The University should seek to attract individuals interested in pursuing a long-term academic career, including doctoral candidates.

OTM-R POLICY (OPEN, TRANSPARENT, MERIT-BASED RECRUITMENT)

- meetings held on 19 February, 7 April and 4 May;
- the Inclusive Recruitment Guide, which will constitute an important tool for individuals involved in recruitment processes (as part of the GEP), is expected to be completed by the end of June. Information activities are planned from autumn onwards;
- based on the provisions of the OTM-R Policy, consultations with academic staff involved in the work of the sub-group, feedback from early-stage researchers (R1 – doctoral candidates), interviews conducted with newly recruited employees in 2025, and numerous discussions within the Employee Affairs Centre the following key guidelines were developed.

Guidelines for Recruitment Processes and the Implementation of the OTM-R Policy at the UL

1. Purpose and Scope of the OTM-R Policy

The OTM-R (Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment) Policy at the UL aims to ensure:

- high-quality recruitment processes,
- equal treatment of candidates,
- compliance with European standards,
- support for the University's strategic development.

The Policy applies to all employees:

- academic staff,
- administrative staff,
- technical staff.

It covers the entire employment cycle:

vacancy announcement → recruitment → decision → employment → onboarding → evaluation

2. Key OTM-R Principles

2.1. Openness and inclusiveness

- Equal access regardless of:
  - age,
  - gender,
  - origin,
  - language,
  - disability.
- Use of language that is:
  - clear,
  - gender-neutral,
  - inclusive.
- Ensuring the accessibility of vacancy announcements:
  - in both Polish and English,
  - for international candidates (including full online application functionality).

2.2. Transparency

- Transparency of information in vacancy announcements regarding:
  - academic staff remuneration – salary ranges and statutory minimum levels (for administrative staff, following the job evaluation and grading process),
  - benefits,
  - development opportunities.
- Standardised and publicly available job advertisements.
- Feedback provided to all candidates.
- Possibility of introducing (following full automation of the process):
  - an effective appeals procedure,
  - **public information on the outcomes of recruitment competitions**.

2.3. Merit-based assessment

- Clear requirements and assessment criteria.
- Verification of competencies and qualifications (a two-stage process, including **a mandatory interview**).
- Alignment of duties and responsibilities with the post.

- **For recruitment to administrative positions, preference should be given to candidates with English proficiency (if possible).**
- **Participation of the Employee Affairs Centre in recruitment processes** (particularly in interviews with candidates from outside the EU; however, challenge: staffing shortages).

2.4. Confidentiality and reliable communication

- Protection of candidates' personal data.
- Timely and professional communication (**automation within the Employee Portal (PP),** documents submitted by faculties to the Employee Affairs Centre within the required deadlines).
- Consistent information standards at every stage of the process (including the introduction of uniform documentation across all faculties).

3. Standardisation and Digitalisation of the Recruitment Process

3.1. Recruitment system (challenge: workload pressure within the IT Centre)

- Centralisation of the recruitment process within a single system (preferably through the Employee Portal), including:
  - publication of vacancy announcements,
  - submission of applications,
  - communication with candidates,
  - management of application status.
- Automation of:
  - responses to candidates,
  - interview invitations,
  - decisions (acceptance/rejection),
  - candidate satisfaction surveys regarding the recruitment process.

3.2. Careers website

- Updating the “Careers” webpage:
  - in both Polish and English,
  - with automatic import of vacancy announcements from the recruitment system.

- Elimination of inconsistencies (e.g. between announcements published in the Public Information Bulletin (BIP) and EURAXESS, or between Polish and English language versions).

3.3. Standardisation of announcements (a practical tool and facilitation for recruiting managers)

- A standardised job advertisement template:
  - compatible with the Employee Portal (PP), BIP, EURAXESS, Pracuj.pl, etc.
- Checklists covering duties and requirements.
- Automatic completion of selected information (e.g. descriptions of organisational units).

3.4. Documents

- Standardisation of documents:
  - visually (font, logo and layout),
  - structurally.
- Maximum possible digitalisation:
  - online documentation,
  - reduction in the number of required attachments and supporting documents.

4. Recruitment Process – Target Model (desired direction for recruitment processes at the UL)

Some measures can be implemented organisationally in the short term, whereas full automation requires a separate implementation timetable, prioritisation decisions and IT resources.

Stage 1: Announcement

- Publication through a single system (with automatic transfer to other platforms).
- Consistent Polish and English versions.
- Clear requirements and employment conditions.
- Consistent vacancy descriptions and keywords.

Stage 2: Application submission

- Applications submitted exclusively through the recruitment system (i.e. the Employee Portal (PP); this is not yet fully feasible).
- A minimum set of required documents (further consultation is required).

Stage 3: Selection and interviews

- Standardisation of recruitment procedures across faculties:
  - standard question sets, **a mandatory two-stage recruitment process consisting of shortlisting and a recruitment interview**,
  - clear guidelines for recruitment committees (application of the Inclusive Recruitment Guide and a declaration confirming that committee members have read the information available in the Knowledge Database and Inclusive Recruitment materials),
  - **standardised documentation** (including recruitment committee reports with declarations by committee members confirming the absence of nepotism, impartiality and the absence of conflicts of interest in relation to candidates).
- **Training for recruiting managers and committee members (mandatory; this measure has already been included in the Action Plan).**
- Participation of the Employee Affairs Centre representatives in recruitment competitions (on a sample basis in Polish competitions and obligatorily in international recruitment procedures, particularly within research projects). However, staffing shortages mean that **additional support for the process is required**.

Stage 4: Decision (requires only clarification of the standard procedure)

- Clear selection criteria.
- Written notification to candidates (with information on remuneration, already introduced).

Stage 5: Employment

- The employment contract available from **the first day of employment**.
- Monitoring of administrative deadlines in cooperation with faculties and those responsible for recruitment processes.

5. Onboarding and Employee Experience

5.1. System onboarding

- An onboarding pathway is already available in Polish and English.
- A modular structure **(with a need to improve navigation and ease of locating onboarding materials within the Employee Portal**.

- A guide for managers explaining how to prepare for a new employee; the quality of job-specific training should also be improved.

5.2. Employee support

- Onboarding training available in the Employee Portal (the onboarding pathway is in place).
- Induction training (e.g. anti-mobbing).
- Webinars on the organisational culture of the UL (UL values).

5.3. Integration

- Welcome Pack (a package of UL promotional items for new employees is being prepared).
- Integration events (e.g. Coffee with the Rector 2x a year for new employees, other).
- Local activities at the level of organisational units.

6. Management of Candidate and Employee Experience

- **Candidate experience surveys** (a short questionnaire automatically sent to all candidates following the completion of the recruitment process).
- **Surveys for newly appointed employees** (during their first year of employment).
- Post-exit surveys for former employees (currently being prepared as part of the ongoing Welcome to Poland Pathways project).
- Continuous improvement of processes.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation of the OTM-R Policy

- Recording of all recruitment procedures.
- An annual report to the Rector covering:
  - the number of recruitment procedures,
  - effectiveness indicators (committee reports in electronic form, particularly important from the perspective of the GEP),
  - appeals.
- Process audits (with the participation of the Employee Affairs Centre).
- Monitoring of compliance of announcements with the Policy.

8. Recommendations

Short-term actions:

- alignment of announcements and documentation, the formal introduction of mandatory document templates for recruitment committees recruiting academic and administrative staff,
- improvement of the Careers webpage and greater availability of announcements in English (it is currently not possible to submit applications through the Employee Portal in English),
- simplification of language and procedures and reduction of the number of documents required at the application stage,
- introduction and application of the Inclusive Recruitment Guide.

Long-term actions:

- increased automation of the recruitment system (in the Employee Portal, implementation timelines will depend on the availability of software developers from the IT Centre and other priority digitalisation projects),
- training for staff involved in recruitment and the organisation of regular information sessions,
- involvement of the Employee Affairs Centre in recruitment interviews (additional staffing resources).

Strategic long-term objectives:

- development of an organisational culture based on OTM-R principles, implementation of faculty staffing strategies and promotion of HR Excellence,
- integration of the OTM-R Policy with the UL strategy,
- development of HR analytics tools, analysis of recruitment survey data and use of information from the HR Dashboard (GEP) to support human resources management at the UL.