HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS OF THE SILESIAN UNIVERISTY OF TECHNOLOGY
ACTION PLAN 2022-2024

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Silesian University of Technology

RESEARCH UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

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RESEARCHERS IN MOTION

Contents:

Introduction

The Action Plan as a part of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers at Silesian University of Technology is one of the key documents of the University, which sets the directions for improving the recruitment processes, talent management and supporting the scientific and personal development of academic staff, based on the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. It is a set of challenges in the form of strategic objectives and tasks to achieve them. It also outlines the key values that the University will follow in its human resources management activities, i.e. the promotion of equal opportunities and transparency, mutual respect, tolerance and respect for different scientific approaches, beliefs, and cultures.

The Action Plan adopted for 2022-2024 foresees the continuation of the initiatives undertaken in 2017, with the start of the implementation of the first HR strategy for researchers following the "HR Excellence in Research" award, as well as those introduced in subsequent years. The Silesian University of Technology benefits from the knowledge and experience gained during their implementation, as well as from the opportunities arising from its participation in two strategic programmes - the "Excellence Initiative - Research University" (IDUB) and the European University EURECA-PRO, which additionally increase the motivation to implement a quality policy in the area of human resources, which is a key element of both projects.

Before starting to formulate a new action plan, a detailed analysis was made of the results of surveys on experiences and perceptions of the problem of equal treatment, of the self-evaluation reports of individual faculties, and of the results of external audits carried out by former vice-rectors of the Polytechnic University of Turin, the Polytechnic University of Valencia and the University of Porto. This process was complemented by focus group interviews with representatives of researchers at different stages of their scientific career - PhD students, assistants, assistant professors, university professors and professors, extended to include the perspective of administrative and technical staff, to better understand the concerns of all members of the academic community. Based on this comprehensive data, the proposed action plan for 2022-2024 will focus on several key areas: promoting equality and diversity, developing effective models for improving work-life balance, ensuring transparency in recruitment processes, and developing researchers' skills and career support.

The aim of Silesian University of Technology is not only to attract outstanding scientific talent, but also to create an environment in which every researcher can reach his or her full potential.

In 2019, the Silesian University of Technology was subject to the first mid-term evaluation of the European Commission in the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers and received a positive review, which confirmed the correctness of the activities carried out so far. The results achieved were described by the experts as impressive and the process of obtaining them as professional work. Such positive assessments motivate us to continue our activities and improve human resources practices, which contributes to the main strategic goal in this area, i.e.

to support the individual scientific and professional development of employees and doctoral students in the spirit of freedom of research and worldview, as well as to attract outstanding scientists.

I. Strategic diagnosis and the course of work for updating the Action Plan for 2022-2024

Silesian University of Technology – key information

The Silesian University of Technology is the oldest technical university in Upper Silesia and one of the largest in the country. It was established in 1945 as a research and teaching base for the most industrialized area in Poland and one of the most industrialized in Europe. For more than 77 years, it has been a leading public institution with a worldwide academic reputation and active collaboration with major industrial partners.

At the end of 2019 the Silesian University of Technology was awarded the title of laureate in the first competition of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education as part of the "Excellence Initiative - Research University" programme, which aims to support institutions aspiring to become research universities and compete with the best academic centres in Europe and in the world. A year later, the SUT was among the winners of the second edition of the "European Universities Initiative" competition as part of the EURECA-PRO consortium, which currently consists of 8 universities from Europe. The main mission of the European University EURECA-PRO is to enable staff, including students, PhDs and staff, to educate and conduct research in fields and disciplines focused on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, with a long-term plan to create a connected, virtual and integrated European campus by 2040.

The Silesian University of Technology consists of 13 faculties and 1 Institute, of which 10 are located in Gliwice - the main seat of the University - 2 in Zabrze and 2 in Katowice. It offers undergraduate and graduate studies, MBA studies and doctoral education in the field of engineering and technology, natural sciences and social sciences. Scientists from the Silesian University of Technology conduct innovative research focused mainly in 6 identified priority research areas (POB):

- POB1 - Computational Oncology and Personalized Medicine,
- POB2 – Artificial Intelligence and Data Processing,
- POB3 – Materials of the future,
- POB4 – Smart Cities and Future Mobility,
- POB5 – Process Automation and Industry 4.0,
- POB6 – Climate and environmental protection, modern Energy.

As the only technical university in the region, the Silesian University of Technology focuses its efforts on applied research, technology transfer and undergraduate and postgraduate education based on modern didactic methods derived from scientific research and the solution of real-life problems, thus contributing to the improvement of living conditions and the health of society, as

well as to economic development. The University also strongly supports basic research, which is an essential foundation for applied research, enriching the work carried out, enabling the dynamic development of scientific careers and the acquisition of prestigious projects.

Mission of the Silesian University of Technology

> The Silesian University of Technology, as a prestigious European research university, creates scientific development and technical progress, educates highly qualified staff, and actively influences the development of the country, region and local communities.

Vision of the Silesian University of Technology

> The Silesian University of Technology is a European research university, guided by respect for universal values and academic traditions, recognized in international rankings, supporting the improvement of the quality of life and the dynamic development of the economy by conducting the highest quality scientific research and education. It builds its high position and prestige thanks to self-improvement in an atmosphere of partnership cooperation between employees, doctoral students, students and the socio-economic environment, which is conducive to creativity, innovation and technology transfer.

Main values of the Silesian University of Technology

> The Silesian University of Technology, by participating in the development of science, technology and culture, shapes the values of social activity, mutual respect, tolerance, honesty and justice in its community and promotes good manners in science. In accordance with the principles of freedom of science and entrepreneurship, the University respects the diversity of scientific disciplines, sustainable development and differences in ideology and culture.

Silesian University of Technology in numbers in 2022 (as of December 31, 2021)

Number of PhD students: 782

Number of academic teachers: 1630 (1602.38 FTEs), *including:*

- o 1264 in the group of research and teaching staff,
- o 129 in the group of research staff
- o 237 in the group of teaching staff
- o 28 foreigners

34.11% of female teachers and academic staff employed in the group of teaching, research and research and teaching staff are women (556 women employed in the group of academic teachers, 545.73 FTEs).

Number of PhD degrees conferred: 35

Number of habilitated doctoral degrees conferred: 16, of which 11 to employees of the Silesian University of Technology and 5 to persons from outside the University.

Number of university professors: 436, including 128 women (29.3%)

Number of professors: 137, including 21 women (15%)

Number of students: 16,577

Number of projects awarded: 72

Number of acquired scientific and research papers: 386

Composition of the Steering Committee and the Project Team

The composition of the Steering Committee and the project team were appointed on the basis of the strategic task adopted and approved on 15 February 2017 by the Rector of the Silesian University of Technology entitled "Implementation of procedures and monitoring of the "Human Resources Strategy for Researchers" programme under the leadership of Magdalena Kudewicz-Kiełtyka, MSc, in accordance with Ordinance No. 42/16/17. Work on the update of the Human Resources Strategy for researchers began in the third quarter of 2019. 2021 in remote mode and ended in May 2022 with the release of an updated action plan of the HR Strategy for Researchers for 2022-2024.

Composition of the Steering Committee:

Prof. Arkadiusz Mężyk – Rector of the Silesian University of Technology, Chairman
Prof. Marek Pawełczyk – Vice-Rector for Science and Development of the Silesian University of Technology
Prof. Bogusław Łazarz – Vice-Rector for General Affairs
Tomasz Trawiński, PhD, DSc, Associate Professor – Vice-Rector for Education and Student Affairs
Marcin Górski, Ph.D. – Director of the Project Management Center
Magdalena Kudewicz-Kiełtyka, M.A. – Head of the Development Office

Composition of the project team:

Prof. Marek Pawełczyk – Vice-Rector for Science and Development
Prof. Tadeusz Wieczorek, PhD, DSc – Director of the Doctoral School
Marcin Górski, Ph.D. – Head of the Project Management Center
Magdalena Letun-Łątka, Ph.D. – Director of the Center for Incubation and Technology Transfer
Jerzy Mościński, Ph.D. – Director of the IT Center
Ewa Bronika, M.A. – Legal Services Office
Beata Borszcz-Grela, M.A. – Head of the Human Resources Department
mgr Grażyna Maszniew – Head of the Department of Student Affairs and Education
Marta Snopkowska, M.Sc. – Head of the Scientific Research Office
Magdalena Kudewicz-Kiełtyka, M.A. – Head of the Development Office
Prof. Joanna Polańska – representative of scientists (R3 & R4)
Barbara Balon, M.Sc. – representative of PhD students (R1)
Joanna Bartnicka, Ph.D. – representative of scientists (R2)

Progress of work on the update of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers

Work on the development of the action plan for 2022-2024 as part of the Human Resources Strategy for researchers included the following stages:

Internal assessment and summary of the implementation of the current objectives of the Human Resources Strategy for researchers, introduced in 2016 and updated for 2019-2021. The scope of the analysis included:

— review of annual reports on the performance of individual tasks assumed in the modified plan for 2019-2021 along with the opinions of individual members of the project team,
— identification of strengths and weaknesses of the Strategy implementation process,
— revision of tasks that have not been completed by the agreed deadline, together with suggested corrective actions,
— assessment of the functioning of the introduced policies, regulations and orders resulting from the implemented Strategy,
— monitoring issues related to personnel matters, including the development of scientific careers, recruitment and functioning at the Silesian University of Technology, reported in the "University close to everyone" programme,
— preparation of a list of issues suggested by the project team to be discussed with scientists (R1 – R4) and representatives of research support personnel during focus group interviews.

• Analysis of the self-evaluation reports of the faculties and the written results of audits carried out by representatives of the former authorities of the Polytechnic University of Turin, the Polytechnic University of Valencia and the University of Porto, the Educational Foundation "Perspektywy" and an external entity in the field of commercialization of intellectual property.

• Conducting interviews with scientists in four focus groups selected according to the level of scientific development of the participants (PhD students, assistant professors, university professors, as well as professors) and in a group of administrative, engineering, and technical staff.

In response to the need to examine the compliance of the University's procedures and practices with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code, it was decided to use focus group interviews rather than traditional surveys. The main reason for this decision was that a comprehensive questionnaire on equality, diversity and inclusion was being distributed at a similar time. It was anticipated that another large survey would have a limited response from scientists who might feel overwhelmed by this type of investigation. In addition, there are significant advantages to using focus group interviews. They allow a deeper and more detailed understanding of respondents' perspectives through direct interaction. They enable to get more personalised responses and discuss issues that might be overlooked in a more rigid survey format. In addition, focus group interviews encourage a more open dialogue where participants

can freely express their thoughts and opinions, which is crucial when exploring sensitive issues such as compliance with codes of ethics and scientific values.

List of issues addressed during focus group interviews

The list of topics and questions prepared for the purpose of conducting focus group interviews with representatives of scientists at different stages of their career development – from R1 to R4 and representatives of staff supporting research processes was aimed at identifying potential gaps, understanding different perspectives and needs to improve the action plan, as well as effective implementation of the Human Resources Strategy based on compliance with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Topics and Questions for Interviews with Scientists from R1 to R4

- **Career Development & Support**

1. How do you assess the current career opportunities at the Silesian University of Technology?
2. What is your experience of accessing training and mentoring from more experienced researchers?
3. In your opinion, does the Silesian University of Technology have sufficient support programmes for young scientists (R1, R2) compared to experienced scientists (R3, R4)?

- **Recruitment and retention of researchers at the Silesian University of Technology**

1. What factors influenced your decision to work at the Silesian University of Technology?
2. In your opinion, does the University offer satisfactory working conditions ensuring career development and job satisfaction?
3. Do you see any challenges that the SUT should face in order to attract talent and retain recruited scientists?

- **Collaboration and interdisciplinarity**

1. In your opinion, does the Silesian University of Technology support interdisciplinary cooperation? If so, how?
2. What barriers do you face in undertaking interdisciplinary cooperation?

- **Equality & Diversity**

1. In your opinion, does the University take action to promote equality and diversity among its academic staff? If so, do you think the strategies being launched are effective?
2. In your opinion, do foreign scientists undertaking work/education at the Silesian University of Technology receive sufficient support in the first months after joining the University? Is there anything you think should be improved?

   Additional questions asked only to foreign scientists.

1. Did you receive sufficient support from the university in the first months after your move? What would you improve in this process?
2. How do you assess the availability of information and administrative assistance for foreign workers?
3. Are language barriers a problem for you at work or in everyday life? How does the university help in overcoming them?
4. What is your experience with internal communication at the university? Do you feel up to date?
5. What measures have been taken by the university to help you integrate into the academic community? How do you assess these activities? Do you think they were sufficient?

- **Salary**

1. Do you think the university offers salaries that are competitive with other public universities in Poland?
2. What do you see as the main challenges in funding your research?
3. In your opinion, does the University provide sufficient support in the application and settlement phase of the acquired projects?

Topics and questions for administrative staff interviews

1. What are the main tasks and challenges in your research support work?
2. What are the most frequently reported needs for administrative support by researchers?
3. How do you assess the communication between administrative staff and researchers?
4. In your opinion, what are the biggest barriers to effective cooperation between these groups?
5. Do you have access to training related to improving your skills in supporting research processes?
6. What changes in the structure or administrative procedures have affected your area of work at the University because of the implementation of the HR Strategy for academics? Have these changes in your opinion had a positive impact on the effectiveness of supporting research?
7. What do you see as the main challenges in the implementation of the HR Strategy for researchers?

II. Strategic objectives and activities of the Human Resources Strategy of the Silesian University of Technology for researchers

Based on the diagnosis, as part of the modified Human Resources Strategy for researchers, 7 strategic objectives were set in 7 areas, which will be implemented through 18 tasks in accordance with the adopted action plan for 2022-2024.

Strategic objectives of the HR Strategy for Researchers for 2022-2024

1. **Improving support for the development of researchers' scientific careers at different stages**

- Facilitate access to information and resources to support the career development of researchers at all stages of their careers by creating and maintaining a website with educational resources, information on career paths, and dedicated training programs.

2. **Improving the efficiency of the use of research and administrative infrastructure**

- Development of IT systems, including electronic document workflow, project management system and accounting for research infrastructure costs.

3. **Promoting Equality and Diversity at the Silesian University of Technology**

- Development and implementation of the policies and training programmes for under-represented groups, maintaining a section on the website dedicated to gender equality issues.

4. **Facilitating integration and support for researchers from abroad.**

- Creation of the Welcome Point unit, translation of main regulations/ordinances into English, development of multilingual information materials.

5. **Improving employee well-being by supporting initiatives that stimulate *work-life balance* and stress management.**

- Implementation of training programs on time management, coping with burnout and support for people returning to work after a long-term absence.

6. **Increasing openness and improving the transparency of recruitment processes and remuneration**

- Conducting training programs for recruitment committees, modification of remuneration regulations, distribution of information packages on internal regulations functioning at the University.

7. **Development of leadership and negotiation skills among faculty, especially in underrepresented groups.**

- Development and implementation of the appropriate training programmes for academic staff at all levels.

III. Action Plan 2022-2024

ACTION	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE UNIT	INDICATOR(S)/TARGET(S)	CURRENT STATUS
ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS				
1. Creating and maintaining a section on the website of the Silesian University of Technology devoted to gender equality issues and communication tools supporting information and training policy in this area.	Q4 2022	Equal Treatment Structure	Launching and maintaining an appropriate tab on the website of the Silesian University of Technology	New action
2. Development and implementation of the awareness campaign on the University's policy on preventing and responding to gender discrimination, including harassment and sexual harassment.	Q2 2022	Anti-mobbing and anti-discrimination bodies	− Launching and running the campaign, − Conducting trainings on counteracting mobbing and discrimination	New action
RECRUITMENT				
3. Development of a website with information on the development of scientific careers in the following areas:	March 2023	Vice-Rector for Research and Development	Launching a website/subpage	Extended task (moved from the 2019-2021 plan)

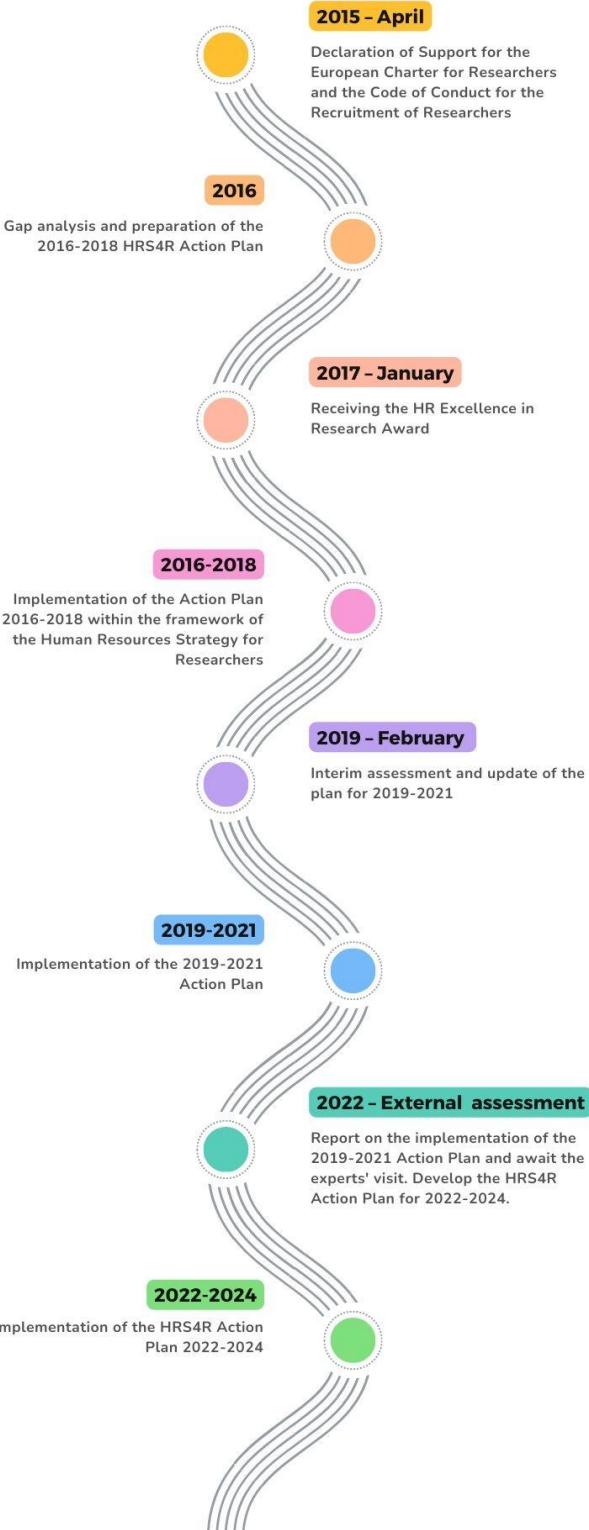|				
- Contacts and information on where to look for vacancies and general requirements, as well as possible career paths with links to faculty websites, - Rules for moving to research positions and salary reductions				Originally, it was planned to be implemented in March 2021.
4. Implementation of a state-of-the-art IT tool supporting the recruitment process of academic teachers	Q4 2023	Human Resources Department	Implementation and launch of an IT system supporting the recruitment process of academic teachers	New action
WORKING CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL SECURITY				
5. Improvement of the system of use and settlement of research infrastructure costs in the following areas: - Rules for sharing equipment between units of the Silesian University of Technology to increase efficiency and working time	January 2023	Centre for Incubation and Technology Transfer	Implementation of the rules in the form of an ordinance/regulations	Extended – task transferred from the 2019-2021 plan (originally planned for implementation in December 2021)
6. Introduction of teleworking to the internal Work Regulations in the following areas: - methods of remote cooperation, including the use of international research infrastructure (for researchers in justified cases),	April 2023	Human Resources Department	Modification of the Work Regulations and introduction of telework rules	Extended – task transferred from the 2019-2021 plan (originally planned for implementation in December 2021)

- methods of cooperation, specifying the rights of persons with disabilities				
7. Extension of the functionality of the document circulation system to increase the efficiency and comfort of work, including the workflow in English.	Q4 2024	IT Centre	Number of implemented/modified IT systems increasing efficiency and comfort of work	New action
8. Implementation of the procedure of successive translation of most of the issued internal regulations into English.	Q4 2023	Development Office	Implementation of procedures/system enabling successive translation of internal legal acts into English	New action
9. Launch and development of the "Welcome Point" for researchers from abroad	Q1 2023	International Relations Office	Creation of a "Welcome Point" for employees, academic teachers from abroad and people who want to work at the University.	New action
10. Supporting mechanisms (procedures, actions, initiatives) to stimulate *work-life balance*	Q4 2024	Equal Treatment Structure	Implementation of feasible solutions (taking into account applicable laws and costs)	New action
11. Creation or extension of the responsibilities of the internal unit within the existing organizational structure in order to offer integrated support and advice in the area of scientific development of employees, in particular at the beginning of their scientific career.	Q4 2023	Vice-Rector for Research and Development	Supporting the development of scientific careers in terms of offering integrated tools enabling, m.in, mentoring based on complex and individual development plans at the University, - with particular emphasis on the group of young scientists - R2.	New action
12. Development of information materials addressed to the management staff at various levels	Q4 2023	Equal Treatment Structure	Development of a digital catalogue of good practices on	New action

of the organizational structure of the Silesian University of Technology on the benefits of diversity management for development and achievement of the set goals.			the benefits of diversity management, – Disseminate a catalogue of good practices in diversity management among executives and leaders.	
13. Monitoring the development of scientific careers within the scientific disciplines of the Silesian University of Technology of young scientists by gender	Q4 2022	Development office	Cyclical collection and analysis of data on the scientific achievements of young scientists starting their scientific careers within the scientific disciplines conducted at the Silesian University of Technology,	New action
14. Modification of the remuneration regulations and introduction of appropriate provisions on the regulation of supplementary remuneration in the implemented projects	Q3 2022	Human Resources Department	Supplementing the existing Remuneration Regulations with appropriate provisions on the remuneration rate for persons employed under projects.	New action
15. Development and distribution of an information package on the basic internal regulations of the Silesian University of Technology for scientists, visiting professors and PhD students from Polish and abroad	Q3 2022	Development Office	Development and distribution of an informative set in Polish and English on basic internal regulations for researchers, visiting professors and PhD students.	New action
TRAININGS				

16. Developing an offer and implementing a training program in team management, leadership and leadership skills, as well as negotiation skills, especially for underrepresented groups	Q2 2023	Human Resources Department	Development of the offer and implementation of training in the development of leadership competences and leadership qualities and other key soft skills (at least 2/year) and training in the development of soft skills and leadership qualities for young researchers (at least 4/year)	New action
17. Creating and implementing a remote course on gender equality, diversity and inclusion, human rights and the fight against stereotypes and violence, open to all people working and studying at the Silesian University of Technology.	Q3 2023	Equal Treatment Structure	Preparation and launch of the course on the Distance Learning Education Platform	New action
18. Conducting training for academic staff sitting on recruitment committees in the field of OTM-R principles and their practical application in recruitment.	December 2022	Development Office	Preparation and implementation of internal trainings	Extended task (moved from the 2019-2021 plan) Originally, it was planned to be completed in September 2019.
19. Development of remote courses, information and training materials for people returning to work after long-term absence, including parental leave.	Q3 2023	Equal Treatment Structure	Development of the offer and thematic scope of courses and materials. Dissemination of information and training materials through the platforms	New action

			and tools available at the University.	
20. Preparation and implementation of a training plan in the field of effective time management and organization of work and dealing with professional burnout	Q2 2023	Equal Treatment Structure	Development of the offer and thematic scope of trainings, Conducting training for groups of academic teachers and non-academic staff (at least 4/year)	New action
OGÓLNE				
21. Conducting the 2nd edition of a survey among academics assessing the degree of compliance of procedures, policies and legislation of the Silesian University of Technology with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers	Q4 2024	Development Office	Developing and conducting a survey	Extended – task transferred from the 2019-2021 plan (originally planned for September 2019)

IV. Timeline

2015 – April

Declaration of Support for the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

2016

Gap analysis and preparation of the 2016-2018 HRS4R Action Plan

2017 – January

Receiving the HR Excellence in Research Award

2016-2018

Implementation of the Action Plan 2016-2018 within the framework of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers

2019 – February

Interim assessment and update of the plan for 2019-2021

2019-2021

Implementation of the 2019-2021 Action Plan

2022 – External assessment

Report on the implementation of the 2019-2021 Action Plan and await the experts' visit. Develop the HRS4R Action Plan for 2022-2024.

2022-2024

Implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan 2022-2024

V. Monitoring

The implementation of the Action Plan and the effective achievement of the assumed results require ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring will be carried out – in accordance with the applicable Organisational Regulations of the Silesian University of Technology – by the Development Office, a unit operating in the division of the Vice-Rector for Science and Development. Monitoring will be carried out on the basis of qualitative and quantitative indicators reported in relation to the assigned tasks on a quarterly and annual basis. In addition, a risk analysis will be prepared for the implementation of activities planned in a given calendar year. Overall supervision over the implementation of the Action Plan is exercised by the Chairman of the Steering Committee – the Rector of the Silesian University of Technology, and executive supervision in individual areas – by the Vice-Rectors. In order to ensure reliable feedback on the implementation of the plan, it is necessary to systematically report the achieved indicators by the units responsible for the implementation of a given task.

For Q3 and Q4. In the first quarter of 2022, it is planned to prepare for an internal assessment of progress in the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, i.e. the appointment of an appropriate team, as well as an internal analysis of the needs of researchers to develop a new Human Resources Strategy for researchers for 2025-2027.