Comparative Analysis of international practice in the field of habilitation, HR audit and intellectual capital. HR process audit in top universities of EU space

1st – 3rd of November 2012, Mutual Learning Workshop

Case study inclusion criteria: top 50 EU universities of diverse cultural backgrounds

QS World University Rankings considers over 2000 universities, of which 700 are assessed. Six target criteria are thus distributed:

Academic reputation (scored by a global survey) – 40%

Perceived reputation, as assessed by employers (calculated by global survey) – 10%

Quotations per faculty in scientific databases – 20%

Academic staff, compared to the students' headcount – 20%

Ratio of international / expatriate students – 5%

Ratio of expatriates / visiting professors of total academic staff – 5%

Global and specific assessments concern five main academic areas: arts & humanities, bio-medical sciences, engineering & technology, natural sciences, social & economic sciences

13 Universities selected as case studies:

- Cambridge University
- Copenhague University
- Freie Universität Berlin
- Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium)
- Amsterdam University
- Uppsala University (Sweden)
- Karolinska Institutet Stockholm
- Utrecht University
- Ludwig-Maximilians Universität München
- Oxford University
- Zurich University
- Heidelberg University
- Helsinki University

Comparison factors

- Defining organizational HRM identity, philosophy & strategy
- Employer Branding
- HR planning
- Recruitment & selection
- Compensation & benefits
- HR Administration
- Performance Management
- Ethics and deontology
- Anti-discrimination policies
- Labor relations (including trade union negotiations)
- Organisational development & change
- Mobility policy
- Work-life balance
- Training & development (including e-training resources)
- Employees' opinion survey (involvement, trust, work satisfaction)

Online vacancies pool

I.1. Recruitment & selection (sourcing) process

- **First phase:**
- Applications assessment by consultative panels at college level
- Interviews and / or seminars / assessment centres organised for selected candidates, based on research reports

- **Second phase:**
- Deans and vice-rectors evaluate the panel reports and applicants' files
- Employment decisions drafted inside meetings
- **Third phase:**
- Applicants are announced in writing about the result / conclusions of decisions and HR Dept. launches the on-boarding procedure

External communication about vacancies. Employer Branding

•**KU Leuven (Belgium) focuses on employer branding, starting with the motto: "Discover yourself! Start with your job"**
•**KU Leuven takes action to enhance its employer of choice reputation – designated by *Corporate Research Foundation (CRF).***

•Electronic applications database / system applications – coordinates:
•Vacant jobs description implies the faculty / affiliated research institute presentation (strategy, mission, vision, values), including the validity of recruitment adds
•Concrete activities, cooperation with other departments / cross-function teams, necessary competencies, contact data, contract duration
•Documents to be included in the application file for different positions: PhD students, post-doc researchers, assistants, professors, specialists in support-departments
•The need for preliminary information – spontaneous applications need to be directed towards a reference department and a contact person, otherwise they are not processed

Payroll, Compensation & Benefits Policies

•Flexibility regarding the options concerning benefits, employment terms & conditions, provision of decent work conditions

•Throughout the employment duration, employees can opt for a portfolio of facilities, e.g.:

•Increased quantum of retirement fund subscription

•Several holidays (deductible from the salary package)

•Reimbursement of transport costs

•Preferential conditions for life or medical insurance delivered by University partners

•Maximum of five days annually for volunteering or extra-curricular assistance

•Discounts or promotional offers for software & hardware procurement

•Access to digital library

•Museum subscription, subsidies for participation to (inter)national events, conferences budget, museum & cultural events subscription

Education, corporate culture, organisation principles

•Organisational climate featuring intercultural openness, creativity, innovation, equality of opportunities, civic involvement.
•Focus on work-life balance
•Engagement for confidential data protection, anti-corruption & ethical conduct standards
•Standardised selection process – transparency, "zero paper" policy, temporary assignments (instead of permanent employment) & mobility policy . Researchers & academic staff are involved in public debates, conferences, various seminars inside cultural academic centres that function as open meeting forums for scientists, journalists and other trend-setters (open gates, alumni events)
•Organisational charts: centralised vs. de-centralised models for HR Dept.

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Immigration Support

A substantial staff ratio is composed of visiting teachers, temporary detached personnel and expatriates – the Immigration Office handles issues such as:

Processing authorisation requests for temporary / permanent residency and work permits

Offers counselling regarding:

- Immigration procedure, housing, financial information
- Family issues, permit extension
- Useful contacts to institutions such as: Public Health services, local administration, police, education system

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Cambridge University

HR division is responsible for the elaboration & implementation of HR-related policies, procedures & programs
•Recruitment & selection (Professional opportunities)
•Training, counselling & personal, professional development (including e-learning centre with comprehensive resources
•Payroll (Compensation & benefits)
•Immigration
•Internal mediation service, Resource Centre for Persons with disabilities
•Workplace safety & occupational health service
•Reporting, HR policies & procedures
•Internal mediation service
•Corporate ethics & compliance (equality of treatment, diversity, preventing discrimination)
•Childcare service centre

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Relocation package

The package includes:

- Reimbursement scheme for relocation costs

- Insertion package – counseling services for all students & visiting professors looking for housing (e.g. partner real estate agencies)

- Information about schools, medical services, banks & finance, service providers etc.

- Volunteers' group (Newcomers and Visiting Scholars Group) has the mission to organise partners' welcome, events for accompanying spouse/family and introduction to the scholar community

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Social partnership & decent work conditions

- HR policies encourage 'Whistleblowing' – the disclosure of information of public interest
- Stimulate civic involvement for denunciation of diverse fraudulent acts (abuse of power, corruption, conflict of interest)
- Internal mediation for support in amiable resolution on work litigation and the re-establishment of a productive professional relationship
- Mediation attempts adhere to an impartiality-based code of conduct, with a facilitation function (they offer recommendations, not resolutions)
- Committees for the promotion of diversity and equality of chances – discussions on gender, race, disabilities, inside trainings, conferences
- Online resources for documentation, reporting, audit

Job Analysis & Evaluation

- Online HR platforms provide users with standardised job descriptions for:
  - Academic positions (researcher, research assistant, professor, reader)
  - Support-functions (IT specialist, laboratory technician, administrative clerk, receptionist). Reference for job description creation and function catalogue
- Job evaluation supposes a hierarchy according to the comparative position impact
- Professional role evaluation system tailor-made for universities - HERA (Higher Education Role Analysis).
- HERA – designed by the partnership between 100 leading universities

- Evaluation chart – recognized as non-discriminatory, ensuring equity, transparency, consistency & parity at University level – *equal pay for work of equal value*

Academic Job evaluation system HERA – 16 criteria (1)

Criterion		Ratio
Communication	Written, electronic, visual, oral, formal & informal communication. Rendering information clearly, coherently, rigurously, regarding both shape & content, by explaining complex, detailed or specialised data	8%
Team work & motivating others	Internal & external teams coordination, by active contributions and integration of individual roles	7%
Relationship & networking	Creating networks of potentially useful networks for partnership inside & outside the University. Indicators: prompt information of colleagues, facilitating constructive ideas exchange, building external reputation	6.5%
Customer-centric service delivery	Providing top-standard assistance directed towards all beneficiary groups (students, visistors, colleagues, partners, subordinates, managers etc.). Quick reaction to demands, pro-active offer of support or promoting the University as employer brand, setting	7%

Academic Job evaluation system HERA – 16 criteria (2)

Decisional processes & outcome	Decision impact inside & outside the institution, at diverse levels or time slots (short-, mid- & long-term decisions)	7%
Resource planning & organisation	Human, operational & financial resource coordination & priority setting; operational & strategic planning	7%
Initiative & problem-solving	Identifying options & selecting solutions when an immediate solution is inapparent, anticipating problems with major potential repercussions	8%
Analysis & research	Reality investigation by standard procedures, building new methods or fine-tuning existig ones, collecting data from different sources	7%
Physical & sensory load	Physical effort, coordination, precision & accuracy competencies	5%
Work environment	The job holder's ability to control the environment in conditions of safety, exposure to toxic substances, extreme temperatures, outside work	6.5%

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Academic Job evaluation system HERA – 16 criteria (2)

Support, mentorship & collaboration	Supplying support, guidance & supervision, across both formal & informal contexts	6%
Team development	Developing the other team members' skills: new colleagues induction, coaching, assessment for supervised colleagues, feedback giving & receiving	7%
Pedagogical training & educational support	Delivery of teaching sessions, training, student evaluation	9.5%
Knowledge, know-how & experience	Knowledge, competencies, needed attitudes for role performing, required experience level, the need to act as authority in a discipline	8%

eTraining Platform – "Oxbridge" case study

• Training, mentoring, eCoaching for employees (Intranet, access to forums, professional wellbeing & personal development)

- Cambridge handles online, offline (one-to-one / team or mixed Training & coaching sessions
- Departments acting as internal training suppliers:
- Oxford Learning Institute
- Foreign language centre
- Information system centre
- Administration careers
- CareerStart service
- Continuous education Dept.

Social equality & counter-discriminatory measures

• Family support centre promoting work-life balance

• Action Plan for equal treatment & equalizing the ratio between genders at managerial level (target: 40%-60% distribution). Risk of positive discrimination (political correctness)

• Guiding principles for handling harassment, encouraging freedom of gender equality expression

- Departmental support for preventing & limiting mobbing & discrimination
- Support for projects that fulfill identified needs & local initiatives
- Induction training guide covering equal treatment legislation
- Freedom to associate in trade unions
- Candidates with special needs are not required to specify their medical condition (e.g. impairing disabilities, chronic disease) in their application / throughout the selection process, unless their condition does not interfere with performing job tasks

Internal communication initiatives

Uppsala University's periodical internal magazine – *New Horizons.* Employees can read about future research directions, success stories about mobility, intercultural diversity, ground-breaking innovation & development, new educational curricula, cross-function cooperation

The HR section involves: organisational chart, strategy, objectives, mission, vision, values & guiding principles (e.g. sustainability, success through excellence, family-friendly – work-life balance, mature interaction)

Workplace safety & occupational health

- Purpose: illness & invalidity prevention, supporting employees with special needs
- Mental & physical health, ergonomics, workplace risks, mobility/relocation risks,morbidity / illness incidence per family of positions
- Assistance for mental healthcare: drug & alcohol abuse (addiction), stress, depression, harrassment, sleep deprivation, smoking cessation
- Confidential online support, including cognitive-behavioural therapy (anxiety, depression). Subsidies access for wellbeing promotion (health centers)
- Employees are encouraged to report to the Equality & Diversity Unit any misconduct (offensive, humiliating, aggressive behaviour)

Talent retention & development by succession planning

- Succession planning – talent & high potential spotting – gifted employees with the capacity to take over organisational key- or critical positions in the future Planning ensures the employees' availability & talent pool tracking once managerial or niche positions become vacant
- Roles:
    - Accelerate the professionals' transition from individual contributors, to managers & leaders
    - Prepare & support employees for long-term, sustainable evolution
    - Enhance employees' global capabilities & performance
    - Streamline organisational intelligence by minimising risks & highlighting opportunities
    - Optimise involvement, trust & engagement for valuable employees, consequently facilitating their retention
    - Fulfill existing employees' requirements & expectations for career building
    - Maintaining a healthy level of staff fluctuation

Ethical principles & organisational identity (@ Helsinki Univ.)

- University mission: „UHe is the most versatile scientific, education & intellectual capital institution in Finland, a pioneer in future building

- 2020 Vision: defined by strategic plan: "To the Top and Out to Society"

- „UHe will consolidate in the future its position inside the world elite universities focused on multi-disciplinary research. It will be actively involved for the humanity wellbeing & for contributing to a fair, just society"

- Fundamental values: critical analysis, creativity, the pursuit of truth

Objectives & development axis

- Empowerment & leadership through growth – stimulating participation, influence, democratic decision-making
- Skill enhancement esp. in the following fields: international activities, project management, applying for grants, network communication, leadership, entrepreneurship, financial management, work community interaction
- Enhancing students' employability & making them attractive, competitive on the labor market by career guidance services
- Cross-field exchange, developing multi-disciplinary teams to design & implement ground-breaking research

Conclusions

- These HR programs & practicies can serve as inspirational models to migrate / be adapted in Romanian academic contexts where there are precious little such initiatives

- Action plans & best practice models incorporate many elements from the functioning of corporations

- Focus on providing a full-option set of solutions targeting all stakeholders: employees, professional associations, potential job candidates, trade unions, employers, other partners, state authorities etc.