Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)

Action Plan

1. Introduction

1.1. De Vrije Universiteit Brussel

The origins of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) lie in the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), which was founded in 1834 by the Brussels lawyer Pierre-Théodore Verhaegen. His intention was to establish a university that would be independent of state and church and where academic freedom would reign. Although some courses were taught in Dutch as early as 1935, it took until 1963 before courses in Dutch could be taken in almost all faculties. In 1969, the old university was divided into a Dutch-speaking (VUB) and French-speaking (ULB) university.

The faculties, academic and operational services of the VUB are spread over different campuses. The Brussels Humanities, Sciences and Engineering Campus is the main campus located in Etterbeek; the Brussels Health Campus is in Jette; the Brussels Photonic Campus in Gooik. Educational masters are offered at the COOVI Campus in Anderlecht and the campuses of the CVOs De Oranjerie in Leuven and in Diest. The Brussels University Hospital, located on the Brussels Health Campus, is also part of the VUB's legal entity.

In 2021, the VUB employed 3.597 people (47% women, 53% men), of which 2333 belonged to the academic staff (909 women, 1424 men) and 1264 to the support staff (788 women and 476 men). About 4000 people are employed at the University Hospital Brussels.

The VUB offers 30 bachelor's programs, 76 initial master's programs, of which 15 in collaboration with one or more Flemish universities, 19 master after master's programs, of which 11 in collaboration with one or more Flemish universities, 20 postgraduates and 8 educational masters (academic year 2019-20). The VUB offers 3 Erasmus Mundus joint masters. In 2020, the VUB had 123 research groups and 10 research clusters. The total research budget of the VUB in 2020 amounted to 274 Mio Euro. In 2020, the VUB was good for 2895 publications in refereed journals.

The VUB is associated with the *Erasmus Hogeschool Brussel*. In addition to administrative consultation within the framework of the Brussels University Association (UAB), there is mainly cooperation in the field of care training with regard to the shared use of infrastructure on the Brussels Health Campus.

Since 2018, the VUB, today together with 9 other European universities, has been a partner in the new European university alliance, EUTOPIA. Together with the ULB, VUB is also a founding member of the UNICA network of universities in capital cities.

2. The general strategic policy of the VUB

2.1. The governance structure of the VUB

The VUB has a dual governance structure, based on a central and a decentral level. The university is centrally led by the Rector, assisted by four Vice-Rectors, each responsible for a specific policy domain (Education and Student Affairs, Research, Innovation and Valorization, Internationalization). At the central level, the governance of the university is conducted through four bodies: the University Council, the Board of Directors, the Academic Council and the Executive Committee. Four consultative bodies support academic policy: the Education Council, the Research Council, the Innovation and Valorization Council and the International Policy Council. The various sections of staff and students are represented in each of these councils.

At the decentral level, the university consists of 8 faculties and 2 institutes, each headed by a dean or chair. Each faculty also consists of various departments and research groups. The Faculty Council is the highest governing body of a faculty and determines the policy of the faculty in the field of education, research and services. It is composed of representatives from all levels of staff and students. The Faculty Board is responsible for the day-to-day management of the faculty and consists of at least the dean, the vice dean and the academic secretary.

The personnel policy of the VUB also has both a central and a decentral component. The recruitment and appointment of researchers is administratively monitored by the central personnel department. The actual recruitment, selection, follow-up and supervision of researchers takes place at the level of the faculties, departments and research groups. The regulatory framework regarding the recruitment, selection, follow-up and supervision of researchers is determined centrally by the R&D department and the Research Council.

2.2. The General Strategic Plans

The policy of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel is based on multi-year general strategic plans (in Dutch: *Algemeen Strategische Plannen*, ASPs). Currently General Strategic Plan 4 is running, from 2021 to 2024. The ASPs are primarily based on the policy memorandum on which the Rector is elected. In 2016, Prof. dr. Caroline Pauwels was elected rector with the policy memorandum "*The Universitas for the 21st Century*", which was operationalized into the third General Strategic Plan, which was given the name ASP 3 (or "*ASP 2030*"). She was re-elected in 2020, with the policy memorandum *"The future is a foreign country, they do things differently there"*, which was operationalized in ASP 4.

Although General Strategic Plans are primarily based on the policy memoranda of the Rector, they are made concrete based on broad consultation, discussion and approval in the appropriate governing bodies of the VUB. In addition to the representatives of the faculties, all these governing bodies also have representatives from all levels of staff, as well as from the students.

The General Strategic Plans form the context in which the Vice-Rectors, the faculties and the support services of the university draw up their specific policy plans. In order to get a good idea of the human resources policy aimed at researchers, one should gain insight both into the

general plan, and the specific plans of vice-rectorates, faculties and support services. In addition, several transversal priorities, or cross-cutting projects, are set (diversity, sustainability, health and well-being) and academic coordinators (ACs) appointed. ACs act as a bridge between the Rector and the faculties, the Vice-Rectors, and the administrative services. In the context of HRS4R, the policy plans of the academic coordinators for diversity and for health and well-being are of relevance.

With regards to diversity, during the ASP3 policy cycle, in collaboration with *Actiris*, the Employment Agency for the Brussels region, a Diversity Charter and a related code of conduct were implemented, along with the Equality Action Plan (GAP I). The inclusion of various target groups (gender, migration background, LGTBQI+) and focus on topics such as staff, students and curriculum, data monitoring, visibility & events, as well as awareness raising and training on bias, ensured a truly cross-cutting embedding.

2.3. The General Strategic Plan 4 (2021-2024)

The current ASP policy plan builds on the previous ASP3 policy plan. Four thematic so called "development sites" were defined in it: the VUB must become an "open", "connected", "learning" and "warm" institution. The thematic site "warm attitude" included a series of measures and initiatives aimed at making the VUB a reference place to work and study. The thematic project of "learning" included measures and initiatives to optimize the continuous training and professionalization of employees.

On the one hand, ASP4 resumes these four sites and adds three more, under the headings: "solid framework", "research-driven educational institution" and "horizon Europe". In particular, the "solid framework"-site is relevant in this context. The VUB experienced significant growth in student numbers, but also in staff and in the number of research projects to run. This growth requires specific guidance measures. The aim is to set up a solid framework, based on specific actions related to governance, leadership, infrastructure and professionalization.

In her 2020 policy memorandum, the Rector stated that sharper choices will be made. For example, the aim is to achieve a strong European anchoring of the VUB through the European University Network EUTOPIA. The VUB wants to position itself in Flanders and internationally as an "urban engaged university", located in multicultural Brussels. This is expressed in concrete terms in the campaign, "*The World Needs You*", aimed at students and staff, which draws attention to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). The SDG's also form the context in which the universities' policy plans are framed.

The ASP4 strategic policy plan was subsequently translated into specific policy plans at the level of the various vice-rectorates, faculties and services.

In addition to these specific policy plans, the VUB continues to prioritize the current cross-cutting projects (diversity, sustainability, and health and well-being). Academic Coordinators (AC's) have been appointed to support these cross-cutting projects.

The 2021-2024 Equality Action Plan (GAP II) has a cross-cutting strategy with objectives and actions on gender and diversity that embed the policy throughout the organization. Also,

specific measures are taken, e.g., training about gender in research (conform Horizon Europe). With regards to health and well-being, the academic coordinator, in collaboration with a core team and an advisory board, developed a Health and Well-being Action Framework (HWAF). The framework focusses on the seven well-being domains as defined in the Belgian law on Occupational Well-Being (occupational safety, health, psychosocial aspects, ergonomics, occupational hygiene, workplace aesthetics, VUB workplace culture).

Actions and initiatives will be embedded in the existing consultation structures (labor relations board, workers' safety committee) and in the policy plans of the Vice-rectors, faculties, and support services. Internal communication channels will be used to raise awareness among the employees and students, through targeted campaigns and events in cooperation with internal and external partners. An online platform on health and well-being will make the existing initiatives more accessible. Health and well-being related topics will also be integrated in the curricula and in the professionalization trainings (via LRN, the enabling platform for the professional development of VUB employees) in order to train tomorrow's leaders.

3. The follow-up of the previous Action Plan

The VUB was among the pioneers of HRS4R and belonged to the very Second Cohort institutions when it first submitted its gap analysis and action plan in 2011.

Since the first submission in 2011 (reporting period 2012-2014), the VUB had witnessed an ongoing process at the level of HR strategic planning, but primarily a whole series of measures were taken aiming at the implementation, refining, steering and upgrading of its HR policies for researchers, in compliance with the Charter & Code.

The renewal of the HR Excellence in Research award in 2014 came with a new action plan for the period 2015-2016. Since then, the VUB not only accomplished and completed most of the actions as conceived in 2014, but went beyond the targets that were then set.

A significant growth in the number of students enrolled at all levels (bachelor, master and PhD), a multiplicity of prestigious EU and other projects awarded to its outstanding research groups and faculty (including ERC) and the continuous endeavours to apply best practices in all fields have all led to an inspired professionalisation of all central and support departments.

Through the introduction of transparent and accessible online tools and data, researchers have easy access to valuable information, from basic rights & duties to all applicable rules regarding research ethics, funding opportunities, human resources, rights & duties, learning and development and much more.

At this stage the VUB can proudly report that most of the actions envisaged in 2011 and 2014 were completed. Most of these actions are now incorporated in its day-to-day policy and embedded in the daily practice of all internal stakeholders involved in supporting research and researchers.

Yet, policies and strategies are never static. Each new academic year means a new strategic plan which is then translated into operational and practical actions to further enhance all levels of support to its main human asset, i.e., its researchers.

4. The new Action Plan integrated in the VUB Policy Cycle

4.1. Context and specific approach

In her 2020 Policy Memorandum, Rector Caroline Pauwels regretted that she had not been able to conclude her first term with a comprehensive and widely supported health and well-being plan, covering all categories of staff and students. She emphasized that, although a great number of specific measures had been taken, these however did not add up to a conclusive whole. Therefore, a new academic coordinator was appointed to work, in dialogue with the trade unions, on an integral and more articulated welfare policy. Unfortunately, the COVID 19-crisis made it necessary to once again prioritize specific urgent measures, with a focus, on the one hand of supporting teaching staff in the transition to teaching in a largely digital environment and, on the other hand, the mental well-being of staff and students. As a result, the drafting of a general plan was delayed.

When drafting ASP4, a conscious choice was made not to approach well-being as a topic that is separate and therefore unconnected to other policy areas. On the contrary, the choice was made to make human resources- and welfare-related themes (HRS4R actions) part of the policy plans of vice-rectorates, faculties and support services. In this way, these themes are anchored in the policy of the institution and become an integral part of the strategic policy cycle of the university. HRS4R actions will be monitored and, where necessary, adjusted in the context of the general follow-up of the policy plans. The Health and Well-being Action Framework (HWAF) ensures coherence between the various specific human resources for research-related actions (HRS4R actions) and guarantees the coherence and the integration of the concrete policies.

Policy plans are monitored based on the PDCA cycle methodology ("*Plan-Do-Check-Act*"). PDCA cycles are defined at the level of the university, support services and faculties. At each of these levels, policy plans or action plans are developed to which ideally qualitative objectives and/or critical performance indicators (KPIs) are linked. Periodic monitoring of these objectives measures project progress and the degree of realization of the policy plans. If the objectives are not achieved, the reasons are documented, and remedial actions are proposed and the project planning and/or objectives are adjusted.

The university-level PDCA cycle is part of the ASP process and, together with the multi-year budget, which is submitted to the Board of Directors for approval, forms the university's external accountability to the government and to the public. Process responsibility for the cycle at this level lies with the Strategy and Policy Department (STBE).

The General Strategic Plan (ASP) is the multi-year plan document for the course and strategy of the university. Its monitoring mainly includes the semi-annual reporting on the progress of the projects and the action plans, and the requests to the respective councils (Executive Committee, Academic Council, Board of Directors, University Council) for possible amendments of the projects or plans.

Within the academic policy areas of education & student affairs, research, internationalization and innovation & valorization, the responsibility for monitoring the action plans lies with the respective vice-rectorates and/or their supporting councils, who report on this annually to STBE.

The faculties and support services contribute to the realization of the ASP through their action plans, each with specific strategic and operational objectives. These objectives are translated into annual action plans. Each year, the faculties and services must draw up a progress report using a template that indicates whether the various operational objectives of the annual action plan have been met and which actions are, if necessary, proposed for remedy.

Finally, the global final evaluation of the ASP takes place at the level of the Executive Committee and the Academic Council, after which a report is made to the various councils.

4.2. The HRS4R Action Plan integrated in ASP4

4.2.1. The **Health and Well-being Action Framework** (HWAF) ensures the coherence between the various specific human resources for research-related actions (HRS4R actions) and guarantees the coherence and the integration of the concrete policies.

Strategic objective 1: Well-being will be embedded in the VUB by 2024; it will be the responsibility of every member of the VUB community and all VUB members will find their way in the relevant structures and platforms.
KP 1: The VUB is working on a policy framework for the well-being of its students and staff that is integrated into the existing structures.
KPI 2: The VUB is working on a knowledge platform on well-being, with a section for people who are doing well but who want to ameliorate their situation, as well as a section for people who are not feeling well and want to seek help. This is also the place where bottom-up initiatives can be announced.

Strategic objective 2: By 2030, the VUB will become a reference place in the field of well-being, based on research, a data-driven policy and the gradual construction of a (self) learning network around well-being.
KPI 3: The VUB is working on a data-driven welfare policy, without losing sight of the radical humanistic aspect.
KPI 4: The VUB focuses on interdisciplinary research into well-being, involves its community and disseminates the results.
KPI 5: Based on research, the VUB develops structural measures to improve the well-being of its community.

The specific HRS4R actions are included in the policy plans drawn up by the faculties and services in the context of ASP4. Of relevance are:
- **Global Prevention Plan**[1] (Department Prevention and Environment)
- **Policy Plan Education and Student Affairs** (Vicerector Education and Student Affairs)
- **Policy Plan Research** (Vicerector Research)
- **Policy Plan Innovation & Valorization** (Vicerector Innovation & Valorization)
- **Policy Plan Internationalization** (Vicerector Internationalization)

---

[1] A Global Prevention Plan (GPP) contains the prevention measures that an employer formulates on the basis of the risk analysis. The GPP runs over five years and serves as the basis for the annual action plans (JAP's). The legal codex on Well-being At Work prescribes that employers must prevent dangerous working conditions and take measures to protect the employees.

- **Policy Plan Human Resources** (Human Resources Department)
- **Equality Action Plan** (Academic advisor Gender & Diversity)

In all, throughout the different policy plans, 79 HRS4-related action points can be discerned, covering 24 of the 40 HRS4R codes. The largest number of action points are related to "working conditions" and to "continuing professional development" / "access to research training and continuous development". This is not surprising, because both the Rector's Policy Memorandum and ASP 4 strongly emphasize the need to provide a "solid framework" to enable the university to cope with the strong growth it has experienced in recent years, in student numbers, in staff and in the number of research projects to run. The aim is to set up a solid framework, based on specific actions related to governance, leadership, infrastructure and professionalization.

A detailed list of the specific HRS4R action points as included in the various policy plans can be found in annex to this text.

5. The new Action Plan

The Vrije Universiteit Brussel's new action plan includes five key areas:

1. Research environment
2. Working conditions
3. Continuing professional development
4. Access to research training (and continuous development)
5. Nondiscrimination.

Within these areas, various subtopics and projects were identified.

The choice of these five key areas stems from the priorities defined in ASP4. In recent years, the university has experienced particularly strong growth, in number of students, in research projects, and in personnel, and this growth must be firmly framed with a view to sustainability and well-being. The university has therefore set itself the goal of making significant improvements in the area of infrastructure and the conditions in which research and teaching must be carried out. For this reason, we also focus on continuing professional development and access to research training (with special attention to leadership development), in order to offer our people a professional environment with a view to their personal and professional growth. Finally, the focus is on non-discrimination, because we want to play a pioneering role in making society inclusive, beginning with the university.

5.1 RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT: HRS4R CODE 23
A sustainable research environment implies providing optimal support for researchers, guaranteeing optimal administrative support to fast growing research groups, a sustainable

research infrastructure, support regarding research data management and open science policy, with regards to ethics and research integrity, with regards to facilitating interdisciplinarity. The new action plan provides several action points dealing with these subjects.

Action 1	*Providing optimal support for researchers (from PhD to senior ZAP)*	Project Leader: R&D (Research & Data Management)
RE-OD 1.1		Status: ongoing

RE-OD 1.1. Providing optimal support for researchers (from PhD to senior ZAP)
- Code HRS4R: 23, 24, 28, 38

The functioning of the research administration was improved during ASP 3 and better geared to the needs of the researchers. In the coming years, this policy will be continued and, where necessary, strengthened or adjusted. Elements from previous policy that will be rolled out further in the period 2021-24 include:

- A specific approach was developed, directed at the post-Doc community, with a strong focus on support and community building,
- Investments were made in three Research Grant Officers who act as a direct liaison between the R&D-office and the researchers, in support of applying for funding in fundamental funding channels (e.g., FWO, BELSPO, BAEF, ...).
- Investments were made in EU grant officers to support the application and follow-up of ERC and MSCA grants.
- Information and communication about research via the VUB website was professionalized, by creating a user-friendly and up to date Sharepoint-site that acts as a 'one stop shop' for first-line information about research, thus centralizing all information concerning funding options.
- Investments were made in support regarding ethical advice extension and research data management.
- The needs of the researchers regarding campus licenses were identified and central funding was provided for campus licenses for students and researchers.
- A first draft of Core Facility policy is being rolled out.

Operational objectives:
1. At least 3 activities are organized and supported annually for and by the post-Doc community.
2. By the end of 2022, sufficient internal and external visibility will be achieved for the operational Core Facilities.
3. The process of enrollment and registration of PhD students is optimized and simplified, with specific attention for international PhD students.
4. The process of recruiting researchers (including the temporary recruitment of voluntary academic staff and of foreign visitors) is optimized and simplified.

Action 2, 3	*Delivering optimal administrative support to fast growing research groups* and *Implementing the "Better service provision"-project*	Project Leader: M&O (HR Department)

MO-OD 2.2		
MO-OD 3.2		Status: new

MO-OD2.2 – Delivering optimal administrative support to fast growing research groups and
MO-OD3.2 – Implementing the "Better service provision"-project
- Code HRS4R: 23

During the academic year 2019-2020, a pilot project was set up in which tailor-made support was provided for rapidly growing research groups, by providing administrative support (with regards to human resources, finance and infrastructure) based on the "single point of contact"-principle (MO-OD3.2). The project was completed and evaluated at the end of 2021. Based on the positive evaluation, the specific approach and the lessons learned will form the basis for a more general policy concerning adequate administrative support for research groups (MO-OD2.2).

Operational objectives: the specific approach and the lessons learned from the "Better service provision"-project will form the basis for a more general policy concerning adequate administrative support for research groups.

Action 4	*Providing a sustainable research infrastructure*	Project Leader: R&D
RE-OD 1.3.		Status: ongoing

RE-OD 1.3. Providing a sustainable research infrastructure

- Code HRS4R: 23, 24, 38, 39

Ensuring an optimal research environment is one of the most important tasks of research policy. This means having state-of-the-art research infrastructure, preferably housed in central core facilities and in technology/infrastructure platforms. Two "Core Facilities" have already been designed in policy cycle 2016-2020. The necessary financing lines and budgetary reserves were provided.
In addition, researchers must have the necessary experimental equipment and computing capacity, the necessary software and IT support, literature (electronic or printed), data storage capacity and access to open repositories to make the research data available to the international research community. In the policy cycle 2016-2020, the infrastructure needs for research were mapped out and reserves were created via the Research Council to finance the establishment and installation of Core Facilities.
In the 2016-2020 policy cycle, the introduction of campus licenses for students and researchers also started. The library's purchasing and subscription policies (including pricing policies for Open Access memberships) and quality management of the library's digital objects should be reviewed and evaluated, with a view to ensuring access to literature for both researchers and researchers. students. In the previous policy cycle, first steps were taken in this regard.

Operational objectives:
1. The roll-out of the Core Facilities, technology and infrastructure platforms will continue, with the objective that by 2024 at least 8 Core Facilities (including the two already operational Core Facilities) and 3 technology infrastructure platforms have been started up.
2. The existing infrastructure available to other researchers will be mapped and the information will be available online (via the PURE research data management system) for the entire VUB research community.
3. The digital infrastructure of the VUB is optimized and completed. The necessary storage capacity for research data is provided (incl. archiving and adequate security); an Open Access purchasing policy is being rolled out in consultation and in accordance with the new policy on the university library.
4. The campus license policy will be continued and evaluated with a view to adaptation and expansion.

Action 5	*Providing research data management and open science policy*	Project Leader: R&D
RE-OD 1.4		Status: ongoing

RE-OD 1.4. Providing research data management and open science policy
- Code HRS4R: 23, 24

In the 2016-2020 policy cycle, priority was given to the roll-out of a Data Management Policy. Both the preparation of a data management plan (DMP) for research data and the legal framework, with a view to privacy and confidentiality of the data, were included in this data management policy, as well as the policy regarding data retention, access and backup management, continuity management and archiving.
Making research data available online via an open repository infrastructure became mandatory from 2018 for various externally funded research projects. In this context, a policy on Open Access and Open Data was developed and approved by the university.

Operational objectives:
1. Further investments will be made in central ad hoc support for researchers who are confronted with issues related to Research Data Management, Open Data or Open Access in the context of their research.
2. A diversified storage offer for research data is organized in collaboration with internal and external partners, considering both internal and external possibilities. A catalog of data services is being developed for the benefit of the research community.
3. The Open Access policy will be further rolled out, initially focusing on an awareness campaign among researchers and on meeting the minimum requirements of the funding bodies. The aim is to maximize cooperation with the library and to optimize access via PURE. A joint Open Science policy will also be developed within the EUTOPIA network. In this context, the VUB is leading a work package on awareness-raising and training.
4. Guidelines on Open Access filing obligation are being developed, based on the principle that there is a locally accessible copy of every VUB publication.
5. The accessibility of the scientific data of the VUB will be further improved with a view to making the research of the VUB as visible as possible.

6. The KPIs agreed at the level of the Flemish Open Science Board (FOSB) regarding ORC-ID, DMPs, FAIR and Open Data and Open Access publications are achieved.

Action 6	*Strengthening interdisciplinarity*	Project Leader: R&D
RE-OD 3.3		Status: ongoing

RE-OD 3.3. Strengthening interdisciplinarity

- Code HRS4R: 12/13, 23, 24, 38, 39

The Research Council finances Interdisciplinary Research Programs and Platforms (IRPs) with a view to the creation or successful continuation of cross-disciplinary thematic networks. With this IRP funding, the Research Council wants to support excellent research groups that jointly develop a sustainable, innovative, interdisciplinary network focused on societal challenges. In addition, investments are made in interdisciplinary ZAP-mandates as an engine for interdisciplinary research at the VUB. The monthly organization of "Food for Thoughts" also contributes strongly to cross-disciplinary contacts that often result in actual collaboration. Food for Thought is therefore an important tool in strengthening our internal interdisciplinary collaboration.

Operational objectives:
1. Further investments will be made in Interdisciplinary research programs and in Reference Institutes.
2. Further investments will be made in Senior Research Fellowships, specifically aimed at interdisciplinary ZAP recruitment.
3. Through the Brussels Institute for Advanced Studies (BRIAS), interdisciplinary research is carried out in a structural manner, in collaboration with the ULB.

5.2 WORKING CONDITIONS: HRS4R CODE 24

The university has experienced particularly strong growth, in number of students, in research projects, and in personnel, and this growth must be firmly framed with a view to sustainability and well-being. The university has set itself the goal of making significant improvements in the area of infrastructure and the conditions in which research and teaching must be carried out. In addition to guaranteeing a good material research environment, we also want to focus on guaranteeing the physical and mental well-being of the university community. This is operationalized in several specific action points, in accordance with the seven well-being domains as defined in the Belgian law on Occupational Well-Being (occupational safety, health, psychosocial aspects, ergonomics, occupational hygiene, workplace aesthetics, workplace culture).

Action 7 - 11	*Conducting and analyzing risk analyses*	Project Leader: PRMI (Department Prevention and Environment)
GP-OD 1.1 – GP-OD 1.5		Status: ongoing

The legislation on well-being at work requires employers to identify risks in the field of well-being. These differ depending on the organization, the nature of the job or the group of employees. Based on this risk analysis, employers formulate measures to ensure the well-being of employees. The prevention measures are bundled in the Global Prevention Plan (GPP). The plan helps to manage the risks specific to the organization. The current GPP for the VUB is valid for the period 2019-2023. In yearly Annual Action Plans, the GPP is elaborated in concrete terms, by listing the concrete prevention activities for the coming working year.

GP-OD1.1: Evaluation and optimization of the individual risk analyses
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: insufficient knowledge of special risks at the level of the individual (e.g., during pregnancy, adapted workstations).
Operational objective: knowledge of the individual risks of special employee categories and other special cases. Criteria for evaluation: up-to-date overview of the individual risk analyses.

GP-OD1.2: Conducting and analyzing the risk analyzes in the faculties and services
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: insufficient knowledge of the risks present and the associated ambiguities among managers/hierarchical line.
Operational objective: reducing the risk of accidents and incidents and preparing the employer to adjust the hierarchical line regarding labs. Criteria for evaluation: presence of the risk analyses, impact on the number of accidents at work – possible adjustment hierarchical line.

GP-OD1.3: Optimization of the fire risk analysis
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: increased risk of fire and inefficient evacuation.
Operational objective: to limit the risk of human and material damage by reducing the fire risk. Criteria for evaluation: presence of fire risk analyses.

GP-OD1.4: Conducting a risk analysis of the psychosocial aspects
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: increased risk of dropping out due to stress, emotional burden and burnout.
Operational objective: to reduce the risk of dropping out due to stress, emotional burden and burnout. Criteria for evaluation: risk analysis performed.

GP-OD1.5: Conducting an indoor air quality risk assessment
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: increased risk of complaints and failure due to poor indoor air quality.
Operational objective: reducing the number of complaints, optimizing air quality. Criteria for evaluation: risk analysis performed.

Action 11 - 13 GP-OD 2.1 – GP-OD 2.3	Promoting Physical health and well-being	Project Leader: PRMI Status: ongoing

GP-OD2.1: Developing a culture around exercise and sport
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: increase in sedentary behavior with all the associated negative health consequences.
Operational objective: to get more people moving. Criteria for evaluation: drawing up an action plan (together with the Faculty of Physical Education and with the Campus Sports Department), with a focus on providing opportunities to exercise more for all members of the university community. Explore how we can fit this into the existing employee benefits system.

GP-OD2.2: Optimizing health surveillance
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: insufficient knowledge of the occupational risks to which employees and trainees are exposed.
Operational objective: efficient and transparent health surveillance, prevention of occupational diseases. Criteria for evaluation: annual report External Service for Prevention and Protection at Work (EDPBW).

GP-OD2.3: Promoting a healthy diet
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: health risks due to unhealthy diet.
Operational objective: to make employees aware of the importance of healthy food. Criteria for evaluation: Drawing up an action plan to promote healthy food (together with the Faculty of Physical Education and with the Campus Restaurant).

Action 13 - 15 GP-OD 3.1 – GP-OD 3.4	Promoting Mental health and well-being	Project Leader: PRMI Status: ongoing

GP-OD3.1: Developing a prevention policy on psychosocial risks
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: risk of psychosocial (over)load and absenteeism.
Operational objective: to promote psychological well-being of employees. Criteria for evaluation: reduction in absenteeism, employee satisfaction.

GP-OD3.2: Communication about the existing initiatives available to support psychosocial risks (Meldpunt, Confidential advisers, coaching, social partners)
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: insufficient knowledge of the different channels and services available to support psychosocial risks.
Operational objective: the employee is made aware and informed and is supported with questions regarding psychosocial well-being. Criteria for evaluation: campaigns, analysis of awareness among the different target groups.

GP-OD3.3: Developing and implementing support and guidance in acute risk situations
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: lack of support in situations where there is a serious risk of dropping out due to mental causes (shocking events, conflicts…).
Operational objective: policy on adequate support and effective guidance for employees who are in a work situation with an acute psychosocial risk. Criteria for evaluation: increase in the number of positive feedbacks from involved actors.

GP-OD3.4: Working on engagement and self-leadership
- Code HRS4R: 37, 38

Risks: lack of resilience, focus and creativity in challenging work situations.
Operational objective: to promote psychological well-being of employees. Criteria for evaluation: employee satisfaction (as measured in surveys), absenteeism.

Action 17 - 23 GP-OD 4.1 – GP-OD 4.7	Promoting Safety at work	Project Leader: PRMI Status: ongoing

GP-OD4.1: Applying and updating pictograms and evacuation plans
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: delayed evacuation in emergency situations due to illegibility of the buildings.
Operational objective: smooth evacuation of the buildings in emergency situations. Criteria for evaluation: presence of pictograms and plans, smooth evacuation during the annual exercises.

GP-OD4.2: Inventory of Chemical Products
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: exposure to the hazardous properties of chemical agents.
Operational objective: to avoid or reduce risks arising from the use of chemical agents. Criteria for evaluation: Inventory of the hazardous properties of chemical agents is present where relevant.

GP-OD4.3: Optimization and practice of internal emergency plan
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: less efficient management of crisis situations, wrong or bad reactions, panic.
Operational objective: a well-functioning emergency plan that is known by the university community. Criteria for evaluation: an up-to-date internal emergency plan, reports of exercises.

GP-OD4.4: Setting up and implementing a policy on working with third parties
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: introduction of hazards by third parties, ignorance of the hazards present.
Operational objective: exchange of information about risks between the VUB (client) and the third party (external company). Criteria for evaluation: presence of procedure "working with third parties", plans, supporting documents and other necessary documentation.

GP-OD4.5: Granting BA4/BA5 privileges
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: risk of electrification, electrocution, fire.
Operational objective: knowledge about risks and granting of authorizations when working on or in the vicinity of electrical installations (the BA4 or BA5 certificate indicates the authorization level for working in and around electrical installations). Criteria for evaluation: presence of authorization documents and overview.

GP-OD4.6: Developing and implementing a policy on the safe use of work equipment
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: chance of incidents and accidents at work.
Operational objective: reducing work accidents and incidents. Criteria for evaluation: e.g., commissioning reports, CE certificates (compliance with the applicable regulations within the European Economic Area), instruction cards, etc., impact on the number of occupational accidents.

GP-OD4.7: Increasing safety in the laboratories
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: risk of damage to people, material and the environment.
Operational objective: lab employees are aware of the dangers and risks for humans, materials and the environment in the lab. Criteria for evaluation: lab regulations, website prevention, tours, risk analyses…, impact in terms of the number of occupational accidents and incidents.

Action 24 - 28 GP-OD 5.1 – GP-OD 5.5	Promoting Safety on campus	Project Leader: PRMI Status: ongoing

GP-OD5.1: Setting up and communicating a parking policy
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: emergence of unsafe situations due to incorrect parking, nuisance during deliveries.

Operational objective: implement and ensure respect of a parking policy. Criteria for evaluation: impact on the number of "traffic incidents" and notifications on campuses.

GP-OD5.2: Overseeing safety and welfare aspects of the various projects and sites
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: insufficient awareness and knowledge about safety aspects during renovations, construction and maintenance works, legal non-conformities.
Operational objective: increase safety and legal compliance. Criteria for evaluation: approved plans, fire advice, environmental permits.

GP-OD5.3: Improving the environmental factors at work
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: chance of increased stress, annoyances and physical complaints (e.g., headache) due to unadjusted temperature and poor air quality, including too high CO2 values.
Operational objective: improve situation, improve comfort. Criteria for evaluation: decrease in the number of complaints.

GP-OD5.4: Drafting and implementation of a legionella control plan
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: risk of contamination with legionella.
Operational objective: prevent legionella contamination. Criteria for evaluation: Legionella management plan present where relevant.

GP-OD5.5: Making the campus environment greener and more pleasant
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: negative effect on the well-being of campus residents.
Operational objective: making the campus greener. Criteria for evaluation: realization of two substantial greening projects (as defined in the Campus Development Plan) during the term of this Global Prevention Plan.

Action 29	*Setting up a policy on ergonomics*	Project Leader: PRMI
GP-OD 6.1		Status: ongoing

GP-OD6.1: Setting up a policy on ergonomics
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: increased risk of RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury) and MSA (musculoskeletal disorders).
Operational objective: adapting the workstations to people. Criteria for evaluation: decrease in the number of complaints.

Action 30	*Setting up and implementing a structural policy on reintegration*	Project Leader: PRMI

GP-OD 7.1		Status: ongoing

GP-OD7.1: Setting up and implementing a structural policy on reintegration
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: Long-term absence due to illness, suboptimal reintegration, relapse.
Operational objective: Optimal return to work after long-term illness in accordance with legislation. Criteria for evaluation: increase of the number of successful work resumptions.

Action 31 - 36 GP-OD 8.1, 8.3 - 8.6 MO-OD 1.1	Optimizing communication and awareness concerning health and well-being	Project Leader: PRMI, M&O Status: ongoing Status: new

GP-OD8.1: Expanding the PRMI website
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: insufficient information regarding safety and well-being in general, but also concerning pregnancy and breastfeeding, first aid facilities, inclusive toilet infrastructure etc. (cf. Equality Action Plan II) available to the university community.
Operational objective: easy access to the necessary information. Criteria for evaluation: website regarding safety and well-being available to the university community is present.

GP-OD8.3: Raising awareness about alcohol and smoking
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: health risks, safety risks.
Operational objective: to reduce use (alcohol and smoking). Criteria for evaluation: decrease in alcohol use and smoking as measured in quantitative research (survey).

GP-OD8.4: Communication regarding the existing medical facilities
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: ignorance about the existing facilities.
Operational objective: to provide information about the existing facilities. Criteria for evaluation: information readily available, e.g., via website.

GP-OD8.5: Optimizing safety and well-being training
- Code HRS4R: 24, 38

Risks: insufficient awareness of the hazards present.
Operational objective: raising awareness, recognizing hazards and risks. Criteria for evaluation: decrease in the number of incidents and first aid accidents.

GP-OD8.6: Evaluation and adjustment of the introductory days (new employees)
- Code HRS4R: 24

Risks: insufficient knowledge of the risks at organizational level.

Operational objective: informing new employees. Criteria for evaluation: turnout percentage of new employees during the welcome days.

Action 37 – 40 MO-OD 1.1, 1.3, 1.4	Raising and monitoring the well-being of VUB staff	Project Leader: M&O Status: new

MO-OD1.1 – Reintegration after long term absence
- Code HRS4R: 24

The to be implemented policy concerning reintegration after long term absence (see *GP-OD7.1: Setting up and implementing a structural policy on reintegration*) will result in a manual for heads of departments and supervisors.
Operational objective: a manual for heads of departments and supervisors concerning reintegration after long term absence is provided.

MO-OD1.3 – Interpersonal Relations Policy
- Code HRS4R: 24

How do we deal with relationships between students, employees among themselves and between employees and students? The stakeholders will be consulted in preparation of a policy memorandum concerning interpersonal relations, which will then be presented to the relevant governing boards of the university.
Operational objective: a policy memorandum concerning interpersonal relations, is presented to the relevant governing boards of the university.

MO-OD1.4 – CWOW - campus way of working
- Code HRS4R: 24

How do we organize work post-covid? In the summer of 2021, a new policy proposed as a framework for the supporting services and administrations was developed; M&O (the HR-department) will take the lead in implementing the new policy.
Operational objective: the CWOW-policy is implemented.

Action 41 - 45 MO-OD 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.8	Simplification of administrative processes and procedures	Project Leader: M&O Status: new

MO-OD3.1 – Making the personnel expenditure budget more accessible and *MO-OD3.8 – Delivering the Budget module as an indispensable instrument for personnel planning*
- Code HRS4R: 24

We provide a manual for personnel expenditure, with regards to budget preparation and control. This should enable faculties, departments and research groups to make a better estimate of the annual expenditure on personnel.

Operational objective: a manual for personnel expenditure, with regards to budget preparation and control is provided.

MO-OD3.3 – Simplification of reviewing procedures/regulations
- Code HRS4R: 24

Existing procedures and regulations concerning HR-related processes will be reviewed and, where possible, simplified.

Operational objective: a review and evaluation of existing procedures and regulations concerning HR-related processes is made, leading, where possible, to the simplification of reviewing procedures/regulations.

MO-OD3.4 – Improving VUB welcome policy for new employees
- Code HRS4R: 24

Implementing *GP-OD8.6 (Evaluation and adjustment of the introductory days - new employees)*, a pilot project "Onboarding 2.0" will be started and, after evaluation, possibly implemented.

Operational objective: a pilot project "Onboarding 2.0" is started and, after evaluation, possibly implemented.

MO-OD3.5 – Implementing the flexible mobility budget
- Code HRS4R: 24

Implementing *MO-OD1.4 (CWOW - campus way of working)*, a pilot project is running in cooperation with the national railway company (NMBS). After evaluation, a system based on a flexible mobility budget will possibly be implemented.

Operational objective: after positive evaluation of the pilot project running in cooperation with the national railway company, a system based on a flexible mobility budget is implemented.

5.3 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: HRS4R CODE 38

One of the priorities of ASP4 is the need to invest in training programs for colleagues who end up in academic or administrative-technical leadership positions or for colleagues who are preparing to take up these positions. Although in ASP3 the professionalization programs (for researchers and teaching staff) were further expanded and integrated in the LRN programs, we are not yet able to offer adequate support to those who start a leadership trajectory. Good leadership is not always appreciated enough, problems in leadership are not sufficiently remedied. We must therefore not only form good leadership, but also recognize and value it, so that people want to remain committed and take responsibility.

Even broader, we must continue to create the conditions that guarantee the optimal development of all talents. To this end, we are currently rolling out via LRN programs that provide in the guidance, training and coaching that people need at different times during their career. This applies to both administrative-technical and academic personnel. Since it is also important that colleagues learn from each other and share experiences and good practices, we will optimize mutual exchanges and learning trajectories.

Action 46 - 48	Leadership	Project Leader: M&O, ED (Educational Department)
GP-OD 8.2 MO-OD 2.1, 2.3		Status: ongoing Status: new

GP-OD8.2: Defining the hierarchical line and its responsibilities
- Code HRS4R: 37, 38

Risks: chance of damage within all domains of welfare legislation.
<u>Operational objective</u>: correct definition and accountability of the hierarchical line. Criteria for evaluation: up-to-date document with an overview of the members of the hierarchical line, presence during training, proactive cooperation on welfare themes, including risk analysis, forum on welfare, …

MO-OD2.1 – Articulating a vision on leadership
- Code HRS4R: 28, 37, 38

Vision on leadership: At the end of 2021 the policy preparatory research project (BVO) "Leadership", outlining an adequate academic leadership-model, will be finalized and proposed as a possible model for VUB and EUTOPIA.
<u>Operational objective</u>: the BVO on leadership is finalized and proposed as a possible model for VUB and EUTOPIA.

MO-OD2.3 – Implementing Leadership development courses
- Code HRS4R: 37, 38, 39

Evaluation of the first leadership development courses for both academics and support staff. Implementation of the results will be followed up after completion of the BVO (policy preparatory research project) on leadership, with special attention to the concept of inclusive leadership (*MO-OD 2.1 – Articulating a vision on leadership*).
<u>Operational objective</u>: the first leadership development courses for both academics and support staff are evaluated; implementation of the results will be followed up after completion of BVO Leadership.

Action 49-50	*LRN - continuing professional development*	Project Leader: M&O
MO-OD 2.4		Status: new

MO-OD2.4 – Articulating the LRN vision (continuing professional development)
- Code HRS4R: 37, 38, 39

The LRN vision concerning continuing professional development will be articulated as a basis for developing an adequate LRN training offer.
<u>Operational objective</u>: The LRN vision concerning continuing professional is developed as a basis for developing an adequate LRN training offer.

MO-OD4.2 – Contributing to the Eutopia TRAIN- project (European HR strategy)
- Code HRS4R: 28, 37, 38

The VUB takes the lead in the Eutopia – "TRAIN co-lead HR strategy". The project will be completed and implemented by the participating Eutopia partners.
<u>Operational objective</u>: the Eutopia – "TRAIN co-lead HR strategy" is completed and implemented by the participating Eutopia partners.

Action 51 - 56	*We contribute to the valorization of education*	Project Leader: ED
ED-OD 4.1, 2.2, 2.3, 4.2 -4.5		Status: ongoing

ED-OD 4.1. We contribute to the valorization of education
- Code HRS4R: 24, 33, 37, 38

The academic staff at VUB is highly committed to providing quality education and is sometimes willing to move proverbial mountains for this. The COVID-19 pandemic showed this very clearly again. However, the strong and sustained growth of our university in recent years puts great pressure on staff, who often do not find the space to thoroughly go through time-consuming processes such as course or curriculum (re) design. Education-related tasks are perceived to be insufficiently valued and rarely included in the context or evaluation and promotion. This leads to discouragement and problems of well-being. During this policy cycle we want to make a significant contribution to set some benchmarks in this area.

<u>Operational objectives</u>:
1. We contribute to the framework for valorization of education and educational leadership in the academic file.
2. We contribute to the BVO (policy preparatory research project), academic leadership.
3. We continue to develop *fORum* (the consultative body consisting of the program directors) as a learning community for educational leadership.
4. We investigate the possibility of financing sabbaticals for education.

ED-OD 2.2. We build a cohesive set of digital education tools linked to the CANVAS learning platform
- Code HRS4R: 24, 33, 38

The new Canvas education platform was successfully implemented in the past policy cycle. The learning platform focuses on optimal integration of online/offline learning (e.g., flipped classroom), formal/informal learning (e.g., interactive and collaborative learning), and offers various monitoring and evaluation methods. Since the launch of Canvas, we have seen that the learning platform is used to everyone's satisfaction by both teachers and students. The use of

the more interactive, more complex tools has also risen sharply since the start of the Covid-19 crisis in March 2020.

Operational objectives:
During the policy cycle 2021-2024 we optimize the support, the manuals and the website around our electronic educational platform Canvas. By the start of the academic year 2022-2023, we will have a cohesive set of teacher support materials, with a greater focus on audiovisual material, in addition to written material.

ED-OD 2.3. We evaluate the ad hoc development (due to COVID-19), in the context of the transition to blended education, of materials and support initiatives, and integrate these into the regular support offer for teaching staff
- Code HRS4R: 24, 33, 38

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all current educational activities were converted to distance learning and preparations were made to reduce the number of 'on campus' exams as much as possible and to replace them with alternative assignments or online variants. Not only the educational activities were converted, but also the educational support offer for teachers was radically changed. In the context of a BVO (policy preparatory research project) an evaluation was made of the transition to distance learning and online examination.
Operational objectives:
Considering the recommendations of the BVO and the blended education policy framework to be developed, we will focus on the sustainable embedding of this recently developed support for online education. In 2021 we will investigate which ad hoc demos, workshops, Q&As and initiatives by faculty education support staff can be made more sustainable in the recurrent annual support offer (cfr ED-OD 4.2.). We also evaluate the developed asynchronous materials and integrate them on the (renewed) website. This integration exercise has been completed by the start of the academic year 2021-2022. By then, we will also create clarity about the future of the support initiatives.

ED-OD 4.2. We integrate existing education professionalization initiatives and trajectories aimed at teaching staff in an aligned and recurring annual support offer.
- Code HRS4R: 24, 33, 38

During the past ASP3 policy cycle, we optimized the residential multi-day basic training (which has been organized for more than 20 years and has been mandatory for starting ZAP since the 2014-2015 academic year as part of a one-year educational professionalization trajectory) and many new professionalization initiatives were launched. Based on a survey among ZAP members, additional initiatives will be deployed, in accordance with the needs as formulated in the survey.

Operational objectives:

1. We consolidate the existing professionalization initiatives in a recurring annual support offer.

2. We consolidate the existing offer of asynchronous support materials (i.e., online materials).

3. We develop a framework for thematic expansion of the support offer.

4. We develop, in collaboration with other vice-rectorates and M&O, an overarching vision on professionalization, which will help us in expanding the VUB LRN-initiative.

ED-OD 4.3. We support training in educational innovations (team professionalization)
- Code HRS4R: 24, 33, 38

If we want to structurally anchor educational innovations and improvements such as blended learning, interdisciplinary education and CERL (Community Engaged Research & Learining), or inclusion in curricula of topics such as internationalization, sustainability, diversity, etc., we must reach not only the individual teacher but also and above all the team that is responsible for the entire training process.

Operational objectives:

In addition to continuing support aimed at individual teachers (cf. OD 4.2), during this policy cycle we will strongly focus on trajectory-based support for programs and teaching teams that are confronted with challenges in the field of curriculum (re)design. We conceptualize a generic methodology to streamline these support processes and embed them in the renewed quality cycle. We supplement generic support with thematically linked expertise. We provide appropriate training.

ED-OD 4.4. We design a methodology for the evaluation and adjustment of professionalization and support initiatives, with a view to their effectiveness
- Code HRS4R: 33, 38

The reiterative development of a mutually aligned and recurrent annual support offer (OD 4.2) and the development of a support offer at educational level (OD 4.3) will be accompanied by the optimization of the current methodology for evaluation and adjustment. To this end, we work closely with educational researchers within MILO (Teaching Department) and EDWE (Research group on education). We want to map the effectiveness of our professionalization and support initiatives.

Operational objectives:

What (sustainable) changes are noticeable in the beliefs and actions of teachers who participate in our individual or team-oriented initiatives, and do we also see effects on student learning? How do we design our initiatives to maximize their effectiveness?

Action 57	*Enhancing Internal mobility policy*	Project Leader: M&O

		Status: ongoing
MO-OD 3.6		

MO-OD 3.6 – Enhancing Internal mobility policy
- Code HRS4R: 18, 29

A pilot project was set up with the aim to enhance internal mobility, with a focus on simplification of the existing procedures and sensibilization of personnel. After evaluation, the results of the pilot will be implemented throughout the university.

5.4 ACCESS TO RESEARCH TRAINING AND CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT: HRS4R CODE 39

The career of researchers and the support of training and continuous development is one of the pillars of the research policy of the VUB. From the start of the research career as a doctoral student, up to the ZAP trajectory (senior staff in tenure track or tenured), coaching and supervision are used to help shape a positive and stimulating research environment and to stimulate personal and professional development.

| Action 58 - 64

RE-OD 1.2, 1.5, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3
IV-OD 4.3.
IN-OD 1.4 | *Providing optimal training of researchers* | Project Leader: RE, IV, IN (Departments Research, Innovation & Valorization, Internationalization)

Status: ongoing |
|---|---|---|

RE-OD 1.2. Providing optimal training of researchers (from PhD to senior ZAP)
- Code HRS4R: 23, 24, 38, 39

Elements from previous policy cycle (ASP3) that will be rolled out further in the period 2021-2024:
1. A welcome policy has been expanded for PhD students (including: introduction to the process of making a Ph.D.; to the services provided by the Researcher Training & Development Office and the Doctoral Schools; to all related services that PhD students can use; to the intranet-pages for PhD students). A welcome policy has been rolled out for post-Doc's (Postdoc welcome day) and for ZAP (welcome email and invitation). These policies will be further fine-tuned and consolidated.
2. An interactive research guide is available on the R&D sharepoint with an overview of all research-related aspects relevant to the design and management of research projects (Ethical and legal aspects, Integrity, Data management and analysis, Publications, including Open Access)

3. Support for junior researchers during the doctoral program is continuously adjusted based on:
    a. Monitoring and further adjusting the PhD process based on the results of the annual survey for PhD students (PhD survey). The results of this annual survey are the basis of continuous progress monitoring and for recommendations for improvement, monitored by the Research Council and discussed annually with the faculties.
    b. Encouraging different forms of guidance through the dissemination of "Best Practices" is done, on the one hand, based on the biennial presentation of a PhD supervision award and, on the other hand, on a checklist and documents based on experiences of promoters.
4. Career guidance is ensured by means of testimonials from PhD graduates working in different sectors, in order to demonstrate and promote the diversity of careers. The career guidance offer was split into four parts:
    a. career orientation: career chats, thematic sessions, career orientation trajectory for post-Docs.
    b. career inspiration: inspirational testimonials.
    c. job application skills: career coaching, online branding, CV and cover letter writing.
    d. labor market: international careers (EU, NATO, UN), labor market for researchers, internships for post-Docs, collaboration with VOKA (Flemish association of employers).
5. The training offer is further expanded with specific attention to the specific needs of postdoctoral researchers, as identified in the research professionalization trajectory.
6. During the previous policy cycle, based on feedback from researchers, it became clear that research professionalization relies to a large extent on professionalization in academic leadership, and that training and support for ZAP in this regard is still insufficient or has not been sufficiently applied to the specific academic context and tasks. From this point of view, as a first concrete step, in close collaboration with other services within LRN, a professionalization trajectory in academic leadership is being rolled out for starting ZAP. The starting trajectory consists of the following modules (which are offered in a blended trajectory):
    a. Basic academic leadership training – this focuses on gaining insight into your personal leadership style, the usefulness of different styles in different contexts, and on the skills that form the building blocks for leading a team (such as listening and giving feedback, providing structure, roles and clarify expectations, motivate).
    b. A follow-up session (individually or in group) linked to the basic training.
    c. A VUB policy session with presentations, discussion moments, etc. The exact themes can change depending on what is going on at that moment (e.g., a new open access policy), but always has at least the fixed components of Research policy, ZAP policy and HR policy.
    d. Shorter modules with a focus on:
        i. Financial project management (in collaboration with the Department of Finances).
        ii. Selection and recruitment + bias in selection and recruitment (in collaboration with M&O, the HR-department).

      iii.   Well-being (in collaboration with M&O).

      iv.   Prevention and security for the hierarchical line (in collaboration with PRMI, Prevention and Environment department).

      v.   Meeting techniques (in collaboration with VUB LRN).

<u>Operational objectives</u>:

1. Training offer will be further expanded (based on input from annual PhD survey, evaluations of individual training courses, ASP3 research professionalization project, ad hoc via Doctoral Schools and Research Council).
2. Further digitization of our education and training offer for all target groups (doctoral students, post-Docs, ZAP).
3. Contribute to VUB-wide vision on training (within LRN).
4. Further process optimization of documentation (forms, regulations, faq's,...) and use of systems (TEO Personnel data management system, Portfolio) with an eye for minimal burden on the researchers.

RE-OD 1.5. Providing an ethical scientific framework
- Code HRS4R: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 31, 39

Ensuring an optimal research environment means that the necessary support and training is available for conducting research in an ethical-scientific framework. Researchers must adhere to the ethical practices of their discipline(s) and to the fundamental ethical principles and standards laid down in (inter)national or institutional codes of ethics. In this context, the VUB has already introduced a "Charter of the good researcher", with clear guidelines on correct scientific-ethical conduct, as well as regulations on violations of scientific integrity. In the policy cycle 2016-2020 a charter of the researchers was drawn up (NL and E) containing the guidelines for correct scientific practice. In addition, an "*Ethics Casebook*" was compiled that can be used by teachers, researchers and students.

New European and Belgian legislation forced the university to extend formal ethical controls and to introduce new control bodies and adapt the functioning and structure of existing committees. Today, four ethical committees are fully active at the VUB, namely the Medical Ethics Committee, the Ethics Committee on Animal Experimentation, the Ethics Committee for Human Sciences and the Ethics Committee on Dual Use, military research and misuse of research. The secretariat support of the last 3 committees is provided by R&D. The support of the Medical Ethics Committee takes place via the UZ Brussel.

<u>Operational objectives</u>:

Further investments will be made in the central support and in the training and career guidance of the researchers regarding a good research culture and the importance of scientific integrity. In the new policy cycle, it will be investigated how the training in ethics and integrity can be better embedded with a view to a broader reach of the research community.

RE-OD 3.2. We continue to build our collaboration with EUTOPIA partner universities

- Code HRS4R: 38, 39

The Research Council's budget for international cooperation will be used for stimulating cooperation projects within the EUTOPIA network. The training offer will be further enhanced, where possible in cooperation with EUTOPIA partners, in order to create a European training and mentoring 'bubble', with a focus on Open Science and EU project recruitment.

Operational objective:

We further expand our collaboration with the EUTOPIA partner universities, focusing on attracting new EU-funded collaboration projects and on Open Science. We continue to build an EUTOPIA research community (a joint training offer, including a MSCA Doctoral Network; a joint PhD training offer; a joint post-Doc training offer and a joint training offer on Open Science are being developed).

RE-OD 4.1. We stimulate science communication as a driving force behind participatory & community-based research.
- Code HRS4R: 8, 9, 38, 39

As an urban engaged university, the VUB wishes to make its knowledge available to the community, but conversely also uses the city as a source of inspiration and as a unique research lab.

The Science Communication Expertise Center (WECOM) increases the impact of research at the VUB through various actions and campaigns informing and/or actively involving the general public, with special attention to young people.

WECOM also promotes a culture of science communication: researchers are encouraged and supported in their (science) communication activities.

Operational objectives:

1. further investments will be made in the development of a Community Service-Learning program together with Brussels non-profit organizations in which the VUB Campus Facilities functions as a Living Lab for the students.
2. further investments will be made in the expansion of the VUB Science Shop as an engine of Communication Service Learning.
3. further efforts will be made on participatory research and community-based research. To provide the accompanying framework for this, information and guidance will be provided centrally about Citizen Science, Living Labs and co-creation, and other participative methods. In addition, a central contact point within the Research Department will be designated, to assist researchers with the starting up and development of such research projects.
4. investments are made in communication about research to the general public, with special attention to communication about fundamental research.
5. further efforts will be made on science communication training, in close collaboration with the Doctoral Schools and through outreach projects such as Bright Club, VUB Children's University and *wtnschp.be*.

6. WECOM supports researchers in devising and writing out the "communication and dissemination" section in FWO (Research Foundation – Flanders) and EU project applications.

RE-OD 4.2. We organize informal consultations to promote interdisciplinarity
- Code HRS4R: 8, 9, 23, 24, 38, 39

Informal consultation moments, both internally with colleagues and externally with social, cultural, political and social partners, are a crucial source of information and inspiration for the researchers and for university policy. Through the organization of monthly "Food for Thoughts"-events, professors are invited to an informal chat around theme-oriented lunch tables. As a result, efforts are being made to stimulate internal informal networks, which are a much-needed basis for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Operational objectives:
1. The monthly Food for Thoughts-events will be continued, with attention to themes that tie in with the new policy priorities.
2. Theme-oriented scientific discussion moments are regularly organized for a limited audience, in which guests from the social, cultural, political and scientific sector are brought together for a challenging discussion about polarizing topics.

IV-OD 2.3. Providing coaching; promoting interdisciplinary collaboration; mobilizing networks (Fellows)
- Code HRS4R: 23, 24, 38, 39

The VUB has grown 'organically' and after the original 'spontaneous self-organization', in recent years there has been a strong focus on improved structures and services. But research groups would also be able to work more efficiently if they cluster together, aiming for economies of scale, for cooperation and division of tasks. The department of Innovation and Valorization supports groups in this exercise on how to develop their research and valorization policy. It will provide coaching, promote the sharing of "best practices", bring forward inspiring role models and facilitate the broadening and deepening of networking.
can structure.

Operational objectives:
In order to promote interdisciplinary collaboration with regards to innovation and valorization, we will provide coaching, promote the sharing of "best practices", bring forward inspiring role models and facilitate the broadening and deepening of networking.

IN-OD 1.4 Optimizing internationalization policy
- Code HRS4R: 18/29, 38, 39

We focus on a high-performance strategic internationalization policy and optimize the operation and structure of the service. To this end, tools and expertise are being developed for the benefit of staff.

Operational objectives:

The staff members increase their expertise in various aspects of internationalization:

1. a range of training courses is available within LRN; information sessions on project calls are organized and the information is bundled on the website.
2. training for internationalization is included in the LRN-professionalization programs.
3. International staff mobility for participation in missions, introduction to new partner institutions and exploration for joint projects will be centrally supported.

5.5 NON-DISCRIMINATION: HRS4R CODE 10

The Equality Action Plan 2019-2021 (GAP I) was concluded on a positive note. Despite the difficult covid context, many things were realized (e.g., website, vision text and code of conduct, curriculum scan) and steps were taken on urgent themes such as ethnicity and anti-racism. The new Equality Action Plan II (GAP II) is the elaboration of the transversal policy line 'Radically Diverse' that will be continued during the policy cycle 2021-2024. GAP II consists of six strategic objectives, which are included in this Action Plan.

Action 65	*A bias-proof recruitment policy and equal opportunities in career (development) with a focus on a healthy work-life balance*	Project Leader: ET (Equality Team)
EP-SD1		Status: new

EP-SD1. A bias-proof recruitment policy and equal opportunities in career (development) with a focus on a healthy work-life balance.
- Code HRS4R: 10, 12/13, 14, 15, 27, 28, 37, 38

Operational objectives:

1. Initiation of a participatory dialogue with the faculties with the aim of developing a faculty-specific policy with associated actions and follow-up.
2. Bias training for all decision makers on recruitment and leadership
3. Bystanders training for staff about harassment, sexually transgressive behavior and racism, and how to react.

Action 66	*Continuing the institution-wide trajectory on social and academic inclusion – diversity is a distinguishing characteristic*	Project Leader: IN
IN-OD 4.2		Status: ongoing

IN-OD 4.2 Continuing the institution-wide trajectory on social and academic inclusion – diversity is a distinguishing characteristic
- Code HRS4R: 10, 12/13, 38

VUB has a welcoming policy and ensures inclusive access and appropriate guidance for groups that need it. More diverse groups of students improve the quality of education. Through a more diverse input, decisions are often more creative, and discussions include different perspectives,

making final decisions richer, more supported and so of better quality. A diversity-sensitive personnel policy should lead to a more diverse workforce and a workforce that can adequately deal with the presence of various groups, in order to help unlock all talents.

Operational objectives:
1. increase in recruitment from different cultural, geographical, linguistic backgrounds and from disadvantaged groups
2. staff with specific backgrounds as role models for students (student refugee program)
3. professionalizing teachers and administrators in this matter through training

Action 67	*Anti-racism, decolonization and diversity in the classroom and curriculum, with a focus on themes and voices that are currently missing and with a critical reflection on the impact of colonialism on the university*	Project Leader: ET
EP-SD2		Status: new

EP-SD2. Anti-racism, decolonization and diversity in the classroom and curriculum, with a focus on themes and voices that are currently missing and with a critical reflection on the impact of colonialism on the university.
- Code HRS4R: 10

Operational objectives:
1. Start of lecture series on anti-racism, with the perspective of anchoring it in the curriculum as an interdisciplinary course open to all students; clustering of scientists who offer thesis projects on this theme.
2. Elaboration of an attractive tool for training courses, i.e., a roadmap based on the results of the curriculum scan "*Yes we scan - diversity in the curriculum*".
3. Support for training courses on diversity.

Action 68	*Supporting students from underrepresented groups in their path to academia and the labor market*	Project Leader: ET
EP-SD3		Status: new

EP-SD3. Supporting students from underrepresented groups in their path to academia and the labor market.
- Code HRS4R: 10, 12/13

Operational objectives:
1. Connecting students with VUB-Fellows that can act as role models and as mentors.
2. Organizing a pilot career coaching program for students of underrepresented groups.
3. Development of a (financial) scheme to support students of underrepresented groups to start an academic career.

Action 69	*Inclusive campuses, with an accessible work and learning environment, where everyone is treated with respect.*	Project Leader: ET
EP-SD4		Status: new

EP-SD4. Inclusive campuses, with an accessible work and learning environment, where everyone is treated with respect.
- Code HRS4R: 10, 24

Operational objectives:
1. Improve campus accessibility, security and inclusiveness. Drawing up a vision and roadmap based on a screening by an external consultant.

Action 70	*Community building and participation within the VUB and collaboration with external partners, regarding the VUB equality policy and the themes of equality, equality and inclusion.*	Project Leader: ET
EP-SD5		Status: new

EP-SD5. Community building and participation within the VUB and collaboration with external partners, regarding the VUB equality policy and the themes of equality, equality and inclusion.
- Code HRS4R: 10, 27

Operational objectives:
1. Increase participation of, and co-creation with, students and employees in the making and implementing of the VUB-equality policy (via the "Equality Ateliers" in the context of the "The World Needs You"-campaign to promote the introduction of SDGs in teaching and research).
2. Connect, strengthen and make more visible groups and individuals working on inclusion and equality through the VUB Equality Network (VEN).
3. Expand visibility and participation in the Belgian Pride.

Action 71	*Measuring is knowing. The monitoring of diversity parameters will be continued and expanded.*	Project Leader: ET
EP-SD6		Status: ongoing

EP-SD6. Measuring is knowing. The monitoring of diversity parameters will be continued and expanded.
- Code HRS4R: 10, 27

Operational objectives:
1. Mapping of researchers around the themes of diversity, inclusion and equality at the VUB.

2. Monitoring of existing career paths from the perspective of diversity, inclusion and equality (conform Horizon Europe)
3. Monitoring the composition of committees and councils from the perspective of gender-balancing (in accordance with the application of the existing regulations).

Action 72	*Diversity in practice – Implementation and pilot project*	Project Leader: M&O
MO-OD 1.2		Status: new

MO-OD1.2 – diversity in practice
- Code HRS4R: 10, 24, 27

Implementing EP-SD1 (*A bias-proof recruitment policy and equal opportunities in career development*) and EP-SD3 (*Supporting students from underrepresented groups in their path to academia and the labor market*), we will adapt our HR procedures (e.g., recruitment), set up pilot projects with job students and monitor progress in the recruitment of ATP (administrative and technical personnel) on a yearly basis.
Operational objectives:
Our HR procedures (e.g., recruitment) will be adapted in line with EP-SD1 and EP-SD3; we will set up pilot projects with job students and monitor progress in the recruitment of ATP (administrative and technical personnel) on a yearly basis.

5.6 OTHER ACTIONS
The Action Plan also contains some action points that fall outside the five main thematic categories. These actions deal primarily with (international) recruitment and international mobility.

Action 73, 74, 75	*International recruitment policy – designing and implementing new guidelines / Improving academic recruitment policy / Rethinking recognition of external expertise*	Project Leader: M&O
MO-OD 3.7, 4.1, 4.3		Status: new

MO-OD4.1 – International recruitment policy – designing and implementing new guidelines, MO-OD3.7 – Improving academic recruitment policy and MO-OD4.3 – Rethinking external expertise
- Code HRS4R: 12/13, 14, 29

Our international recruitment policy can be optimized and strengthened. Together with external partners new guidelines will be designed and implemented.
Operational objective:
New guideline(s) are designed and implemented with involved partners.
New agreements will be concluded with an external partner to facilitate the employment of non-EU researchers and staff members. The external partner will be advising on issues related to international payroll, income tax, social security, pensions etc).

New internal guidelines and flows will be drafted to inform faculty and admin support staff on the formalities and timeframes relating to international mobility (visa & entry, Single Permit, residence permits). At the same time, information brochures will be made available to future researchers and staff members informing them of all formalities related to their employment/grant in Belgium, including visa and residence formalities.

Action 76	*We strengthen our position in the EU Framework Program*	Project Leader: R&D
RE-OS 3.1		Status: new

RE-OD 3.1. We strengthen our position in the EU Framework Program
- Code HRS4R: 12/13

In the next policy cycle, further efforts will be made to increase and strengthen participation in the various European funding programs for fundamental research. The vice-rectorate for research focuses on the programs within the European Framework Program for Fundamental Research, such as ERC (European Research Council) and MSCA (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions - EU program for doctoral education and postdoctoral training). The Research Council recently provided a new funding channel for writing mandates for ERC advanced grants. With this, in the next policy cycle we have a tool to give ZAP members the necessary time to prepare for project proposals. Last year we also started with a large-scale Marie-Curie Individual Fellowship campaign to attract foreign researchers to interested VUB research groups.

Operational objectives:
1. The European Liaison Office (ELO) will focus on proactively approaching (scouting) researchers and research groups in order to work with them to develop a strategy for EU fundraising.
2. We are committed to a policy aimed at attracting top international researchers, whereby we create a good mix of external intake and promotion of 'in-house' researchers.
3. We are committed to better monitoring of VUB participation in European programs and to provide more targeted advice to candidate applicants through systematic analysis of the Evaluation Summary Reports.
4. The VUB's participation in the framework program will be systematically analyzed.

Action 77	*Expertise on academic, economic and cultural diplomacy is used as an instrument of international relations*	Project Leader: IN
IN-OD 3.1.		Status: new

IN-OD 3.1 Expertise on academic, economic and cultural diplomacy is used as an instrument of international relations
- Code HRS4R: 18/29, 38, 39

Academic diplomacy is enhanced through participation in various strategic international missions. Collaboration between ULB, the Brussels region and VUB allows us to put Brussels on

the map as a strong international knowledge center. Academic expertise can be used as an instrument in international diplomacy.

Operational objectives:
Participation in international state or other government missions will be enhanced. Where relevant, a parallel academic mission is anchored with central funding for several staff mobilities ("academic diplomacy"-mobilities) to start up or maintain cooperation and explore opportunities in the region.

Action 78	*Accentuating our European positioning*	Project Leader: IN
IN-OD 2.1		Status: new

IN-OD 2.1 Accentuating our European positioning
- Code HRS4R: 18/29, 38, 39

VUB is a member of European networks - EUTOPIA, UNICA, EUA (European Universities Association), ... - and uses its membership to strengthen institutional internationalization and international positioning. In this policy cycle, we will further strengthen the international positioning of the VUB through the extending and deepening of partnerships and networks.

Operational objectives:
In order to further strengthen the international positioning of the VUB through partnerships and networks, we make several dedicated staff mobilities centrally available via IRMO.

Action 79	*Creating Synergy: clustering international partnerships*	Project Leader: IN
IN-OD 5.2		Status: new

IN-OD 5.2 Creating Synergy: clustering international partnerships
- Code HRS4R: 18/29, 38, 39

In international collaborations, we strive for sustainable forms of collaboration. Academics are therefore encouraged to pursue both educational and explore research opportunities with the same international partner, thus achieving synergy.

Operational objectives:
In order to encourage academics to explore and pursue both educational and research opportunities with the same international partner and to achieve synergy, additional mobility grants are provided to further develop these partner relationships.

ANNEX: A detailed list of the specific HRS4R action points as included in the various policy plans.

4.2.2. HRS4R Actions related to working conditions are concentrated in the **Global Prevention Plan**. Eight strategic goals describe the different domains in which specific policies will be developed in the coming years. Each of these strategic goals is translated in specific operational goals.

SD1: Risk analyses

GP-OD1.1: *Evaluation and optimization of the individual risk analyses*
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD1.2: *Conducting and analyzing the risk analyses in the faculties and services*
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD1.3: *Optimization of the fire risk analysis*
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD1.4: *Conducting a risk analysis of the psychosocial aspects*
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD1.5: *Conducting an indoor air quality risk assessment*
     (code HRS4R: 24)

SD2: Physical health

GP-OD2.1: *Developing a culture around exercise and sport*
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD2.2: *Optimizing health surveillance*
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD2.3: *Promoting a healthy diet*
     (code HRS4R: 24)

SD3: Mental health

GP-OD3.1: *Developing a prevention policy on psychosocial risks*
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD3.2: *Communication with regard to the existing mental health-related initiatives (Meldpunt, Confidential advisers, coaching, social partners)*
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD3.3: *Developing and implementing support and guidance in acute risk situations*
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD3.4: Working on engagement and self-leadership
     (code HRS4R: 24, 38)

SD4: Security

GP-OD4.1: Applying and updating pictograms and evacuation plans
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD4.2: Inventory of Chemical Products
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD4.3: Optimization and practice of internal emergency plan
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD4.4: Setting up and implementing a policy on working with third parties
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD4.5: Granting BA4/BA5 privileges
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD4.6: Developing and implementing a policy on the safe use of work equipment
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD4.7: Increasing safety in the laboratories
     (code HRS4R: 24)

SD5: Environment and patrimony

GP-OD5.1: Setting up and communicating a parking policy
     (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD5.2: Overseeing safety and welfare aspects of the various projects and sites

---

(code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD5.3: Improving the environmental factors at work
    (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD5.4: Drafting and implementation of a legionella control plan
    (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD5.5: Making the campus environment greener and more pleasant
    (code HRS4R: 24)
SD6: Ergonomics
GP-OD1: Setting up a policy on ergonomics
    (code HRS4R: 24)
SD7: Reintegration
GP-OD1: Setting up and implementing a structural policy on reintegration after long term absence
    (code HRS4R: 24)
SD8: Education, communication and awareness
GP-OD1: Expanding the PRMI site
    (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD2: Defining the hierarchical line and its responsibilities
    (code HRS4R: 24, 37)
GP-OD3: Raising awareness about alcohol and smoking
    (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD4: Communication regarding the existing medical facilities
    (code HRS4R: 24)
GP-OD5: Optimizing safety and well-being training
    (code HRS4R: 24, 38)
GP-OD6: Evaluation and adjustment of the introductory days (for new employees)
    (code HRS4R: 24)

4.2.3. The **Policy Plan Human Resources** covers a great number of HRS4R related topics. In particular regarding working conditions, administrative support, leadership development and well-being.

SD1: Raising and monitoring the well-being of VUB staff
MO-OD1 – Reintegration after long term absence
    (code HRS4R: 24)
MO-OD2 – Diversity in practice
    (code HRS4R: 10, 24, 27)
MO-OD3 – Interpersonal Relations Policy
    (code HRS4R: 24)
MO-OD4 – CWOW - campus way of working
    (code HRS4R: 24)
SD2: Investing in Leadership
MO-OD1 – Articulating a vision on leadership
    (code HRS4R: 28, 37, 38)
MO-OD2 – Delivering optimal administrative support to fast growing research groups
    (code HRS4R: 23, 24, 37)
MO-OD3 – Implementing Leadership development courses
    (code HRS4R: 37, 38, 39)
MO-OD4 – Articulating the LRN vision (continuing professional development)
    (code HRS4R: 37, 38, 39)
SD3: Simplification of administrative processes and procedures
MO-OD1 – Making the personnel expenditure budget more accessible
    (code HRS4R: 24)
MO-OD2 – Implementing the "Better service provision"-project
    (code HRS4R: 24)
MO-OD3 – Simplification of reviewing procedures/regulations
    (code HRS4R: 24)
MO-OD4 – Improving VUB welcome policy for new employees
    (code HRS4R: 24)

MO-OD5 – Implementing the flexible mobility budget
   (code HRS4R: 24)
MO-OD6 – Enhancing Internal mobility policy
   (code HRS4R: 18, 29)
MO-OD7 – Improving academic recruitment policy
   (code HRS4R: 12/13, 14)
MO-OD8 – Delivering the Budget module as an indispensable instrument for personel planning
   (code HRS4R: 23/24)
SD4: Eutopia: Supporting Research and Innovation
MO-OD1 – International recruitment policy – designing and implementing new guidelines
   (code HRS4R: 12/13, 29)
MO-OD2 – Contributing to the Eutopia TRAIN- project (European HR strategy)
   (code HRS4R: 28, 38)
MO-OD3 – Rethinking recognition of external expertise
   (code HRS4R: 12/13, 29)

4.2.4. Two of the strategic goals of the **Policy Plan Education and Student Affairs** (Vicerector Education and Student Affairs) deal explicitly with HRS4R-related actions. These strategic goals are operationalized in several operational goals. Almost all of the actions have to do with the continuous development, the training and support of teaching staff. Since almost all of our researchers combine their research with teaching assignments or envisage an academic career in which they will have to combine both, continuous development in this field is of the utmost importance. Since researchers very often experience the administrative environment associated with teaching as burdensome, it is important that they are assured the necessary support in this regard.

SD 2 Innovating education through new educational forms and technology
ED-OD 2.2. We build a cohesive set of digital education tools linked to the CANVAS learning platform
   (code HRS4R: 24, 33, 38)
ED-OD 2.3. We evaluate the ad hoc development (due to COVID-19), in the context of the transition to blended education, of materials and support initiatives, and integrate these into the regular support offer for teaching staff
   (code HRS4R: 24, 33, 38)
SD 4 We stimulate the quality of education, putting teacher and training in the center (quality assurance and professionalization)
ED-OD 4.1. We contribute to the valorization of education
   (code HRS4R: 24, 33, 37, 38)
ED-OD 4.2. We integrate existing education professionalization initiatives and trajectories aimed at teaching staff in an aligned and recurring annual support offer
   (code HRS4R: 24, 33, 38)
ED-OD 4.3. We support training in educational innovations (team professionalization)
   (code HRS4R: 24, 33, 38)
ED-OD 4.4. We design a methodology for the evaluation and adjustment of professionalization and support initiatives, with a view to their effectiveness
   (code HRS4R: 33, 38)

4.2.5. The **Policy Plan Research** highlights three strategic objectives, translated into several operational objectives, that deal explicitly with HRS4R topics such as training of researchers, providing excellent working conditions, disseminating good practice in research (ethical principles, integrity).

SD1: Creating an optimal research environment
RE-OD 1.1. Providing optimal support for researchers (from PhD to senior ZAP)
   (code HRS4R: 23, 24, 28, 38)
RE-OD 1.2. Providing optimal training of researchers (from PhD to senior ZAP)
   (code HRS4R: 23, 24, 38, 39)

RE-OD 1.3. Providing a sustainable research infrastructure
     (code HRS4R: 23, 24)
RE-OD 1.4. Providing research data management and open science policy support
     (code HRS4R: 23, 24)
RE-OD 1.5. Providing an ethical scientific framework
     (code HRS4R: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 31, 39)
SD 3 : Creating an international & interdisciplinary research culture
RE-OD 3.1. We strengthen our position in the EU Framework Program
     (code HRS4R: 12/13, 38, 39)
RE-OD 3.2. We strengthen our collaboration with EUTOPIA partner universities
     (code HRS4R: 38, 39)
RE-OD 3.3. We strengthen interdisciplinarity
     (code HRS4R: 12/13, 23, 24, 38, 39)
SD 4 : Stimulating participative & community based research
RE-OD 4.1. We stimulate science communication as a driving force behind participatory & community based research
     (code HRS4R: 8, 9, 38, 39)
RE-OD 4.2. We organize informal consultations to promote interdisciplinarity
     (code HRS4R: 8, 9, 23, 24, 38, 39)

4.2.6. The **Innovation & Valorization Policy Plan** incorporates in one of its strategic objectives an HRS4R-related topic.

SD2: Setting up Reference Institutes
IV-OD 2.3. Providing coaching; promoting interdisciplinary collaboration; mobilizing networks (Fellows)
     (code HRS4R: 23, 24, 38, 39)

4.2.7. In several of its strategic objectives, the **Policy Plan Internationalization** incorporates HRS4R-related topics. These topics deal mainly with recognition of the mobility experience and with the ethical principles of international collaboration in research.

SD 1 We focus on a high-performance strategic internationalization policy and optimize the operation and structure of the service.
IN-OD 1.4. Optimizing the internationalization policy
     (code HRS4R: 18/29, 38, 39)
SD 2 We strengthen the international positioning of the VUB through partnerships and networks.
IN-OD 2.1. Accentuating the European positioning
     (code HRS4R: 18/29, 38, 39)
SD 3 We rely on diplomacy to get our message across
IN-OD 3.1. Expertise on academic, economic and cultural diplomacy is used as an instrument of international relations
     (code HRS4R: 18/29, 38, 39)
SD 4 The VUB's internationalization policy is committed
IN-OD 4.2. Continuing the institution-wide trajectory on social and academic inclusion – diversity is a distinguishing characteristic
     (code HRS4R: 10, 12/13, 38)
SD 5 VUB is internationally known as an excellent knowledge destination
IN-OD 5.2. Creating Synergy: clustering international partnerships
     (code HRS4R: 18/29, 38, 39)

4.2.8. In the **Equality Action Plan** HRS4R-related topics concerning recruitment policy, gender balance, diversity are integrated in the strategic objectives.

EP-SD1. A bias-proof recruitment policy and equal opportunities in career (development) with a focus on a healthy work-life balance.
     (code HRS4R: 10, 12/13, 14, 15, 27, 28, 37, 38)

EP-SD2. Anti-racism, decolonization and diversity in the classroom and curriculum with a focus on themes and voices that are currently missing and a critical reflection on the imp act of colonialism on the university.
(code HRS4R: 10)

EP-SD3. Supporting students from underrepresented groups in their path to academia and the labor market.
(code HRS4R: 10, 12/13)

EP-SD4. Inclusive campuses with an accessible work and learning environment where everyone is treated with respect.
(code HRS4R: 10, 24)

EP-SD5. Community building and participation within the VUB and collaboration with external partners regarding the VUB equality policy and the themes of equality, equality and inclusion.
(code HRS4R: 10, 27)

EP-SD6. Measuring is knowing. The monitoring of diversity parameters will be continued and expanded.
(code HRS4R: 10, 27)