

# Human Resources Strategy for Researchers at TH Köln

## Interim report 2023

### Preliminary remark

In 2014, TH Köln was the first German university to be awarded the "HR Excellence in Research" seal of quality by the EU Commission, which stands for fair recruitment procedures and good working conditions for researchers.

To this end, TH Köln has drawn up a "Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)", in which the implementation of the 40 principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers at TH Köln are anchored.

For the regular evaluation of the "HR Excellence in Research" seal of quality, an interim report must be submitted every three years to the EU Commission on the current status of implementation of the 40 principles of the Charter and Code with an updated action plan, which is evaluated by external experts.

Further information: [www.th-koeln.de/hrs4r](http://www.th-koeln.de/hrs4r)

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## 1 Organisational Information

### Staff and students (FTE)

Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students (either full-time or part-time involved in research)	607.1
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	45.5
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	140.0
Of whom are women	190.1
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	389.3
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	23.2
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	194.6
Total number of students (if relevant)	24,184
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	1,647.1 (people: 1,912)

### Research funding (figures for most recent fiscal year) €

Total annual organisational budget:	213,968,815 euros
Annual organizational direct government funding (designated for research) <sup>1</sup> :	180,641,922 euros
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding):	23,180,886 euros
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research:	2,071,967 euros

### Profile:

TH Köln sees itself as a 'University of Technology, Arts, Sciences' in which teaching and research are inextricably linked. Internationally oriented and regionally anchored, it fulfills a social mission with strong research and excellent, sustainable teaching: to generate knowledge through research and to make it effective for economy, civil society, culture and politics.

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<sup>1</sup> Core funding

## 2 Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

### 2.1 Ethical and professional aspects

In the previous reporting period 2020-2023, TH Köln initiated, implemented and improved the following measures in relation to ethical principles (Principle 2), professional conduct (Principle 4), best practices in research (Principle 7), dissemination and exploitation of results (Principle 8) and anti-discrimination (Principle 10):

- In July 2021, a separate **KCommission for Responsibility in ScienceW** was established at TH Köln. It supports and advises researchers at TH Köln by issuing statements on ethical and safety-related aspects before and during the implementation of research projects.
- In 2022 and 2023, six representatives of TH Köln were able to take part in a comprehensive train-the-trainer course on "**Good Scientific Practice**", so that further training for scientists with regard to ethical standards in scientific practice can be offered in-house in the future.
- With the **Open Science Policy** published in October 2022, TH Köln draws up principles and measures to create the necessary conditions for an open science and to support the commitment of its researchers in the field of open science. In addition, an **Open Access Policy is currently being developed**, which is scheduled to be completed by mid-2024. Moreover, TH Köln has been supporting Open Access publishing since January 2023 with a **newly established publication fund**. Applications for financial support can be submitted for Open Access journal articles and Open Access books. The university library monitors and evaluates the publication fund with regard to possible further developments.
- The conception and implementation of a **Digital University Bibliography** took place in 2021 with the aim of making research achievements visible, supporting the maintenance of autobiographical publication lists and automating the creation of publication lists for websites, research reports and applications.
- The associated project **Research Information System (German abbrev.: FIS)** was also launched in January 2021 and aims to establish a system in which data on research activities of researchers at TH Köln are combined and made accessible in one place. TH Köln aims to reduce the effort involved in data collection and create opportunities for the subsequent use of the collected data.
- The **advisory services for Research Data Management** have been expanded. In addition to setting up a website on research data management, a **guideline for handling research data** was adopted in November 2021, which defines principles, responsibilities, advice and infrastructure for efficient research data management.
- TH Köln's **Research Strategy 2030** was adopted in December 2021. Within the framework of the research strategy, five strategic objectives are defined and operationalized: 1. intensify research; 2. raise the profile of research; 3. internationalize research; 4. finance research; 5. communicate research.
- With regard to the dissemination and utilization of results in the form of start-ups, new **measures to promote women interested in founding a company** were developed and an application for funding (Exist Women) has been submitted; a pilot is planned for 2024.
- Since 2020, an annual "**Research Day**" has been held with changing focus subjects. The event is established as a regular networking format for researchers. In 2023,

doctoral researchers were also invited. As part of the Research Day, **science prizes** are awarded in three categories: research, transfer and doctorate.

- In 2022, the Senate of TH Köln determined the need to develop a university-specific **anti-discrimination regulation**. This is intended to ensure that the regulations on non-discrimination anchored in the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany are specifically applied to TH Köln. The working group on anti-discrimination regulations was established for this purpose. The anti-discrimination regulation is to be developed and legally adopted in 2023. It will be implemented from 2024 and great importance will be attached to the involvement of all relevant persons (groups) and organizational units.

Remark:

Further information on the individual measures is linked on the HRS4R website of TH Köln: [www.th-koeln.de/hrs4r](http://www.th-koeln.de/hrs4r)

## 2.2 Recruitment and selection

The recruitment of highly qualified and motivated employees for teaching, research and administration from Germany and abroad is a decisive success factor for the development of TH Köln as a university of the future. TH Köln promotes diversity, a variety of perspectives and equal opportunities. Against this background, the regular evaluation and further development of recruitment procedures is a key concern and is closely related to the university's key values and principles.

The recruitment and selection of professors and academics at early career stages was strengthened by the following developments and measures at the university:

- In March 2023, TH Köln was the first German university of applied sciences (German abbrev.: HAW) to receive the **DHV seal of quality** for fair and transparent procedures in the appointment of new professors. In its evaluation, the German Association of University Professors and Lecturers (German abbrev.: DHV) concluded, among other things, that the university management, the dean's offices and the administration work together closely and in a spirit of trust during the appointment procedures.
- The **workshops for high-quality implementation of the OTM-R standards**, established by the HR department in 2018, are continuously implemented. The in-house training program comprises a wide range of workshops. Examples include the "Appointment Workshop", which is mandatory for members of the Appointment Committee, as well as the workshops "Tips, Tools and Techniques for Professional Selection Interviews" and "Assessing skills and Competencies Correctly in Selection Interviews". Workshops on the topic of "Unconscious Bias" are being planned.

A need for action has been identified and addressed in the following areas:

- The current Appointment Regulation has been in force since November 2016 and need to be updated to reflect the strategic and procedural developments of recent years. For this reason, the **new version of the Appointment Regulation** and an **Appointment Guideline** based on it are currently being prepared. A final resolution is scheduled for spring 2024.

- As part of the development of the Internationalization Strategy published in June 2021, the need for a **concept for the international marketing of the university as an employer and for the international recruitment of students, doctoral candidates and academic as well as administrative staff** was identified. The measure will be systematically driven forward from fall 2023.

Remark:

Detailed information on the individual measures is linked on the HRS4R website of TH Köln: [www.th-koeln.de/hrs4r](http://www.th-koeln.de/hrs4r)

## 2.3 Working conditions

TH Köln attaches great importance to valuing its academics at all career levels and is constantly striving to further improve the working conditions for academics. Against this background, the systematic further development of appropriate framework conditions, such as family-friendly and health-promoting working conditions, is a high priority.

The establishment of a balanced gender ratio (Principle 27) as well as gender-inclusive organizational development in research was strengthened by the following measures at the university: since January 2021, **gender monitoring** has been carried out annually at TH Köln by the Equal Opportunities Office on the basis of the data on which the official university statistics are also based. A more in-depth differentiation is being planned.

- Furthermore, in July 2021, the gender **equality quotas** to ensure equal opportunities for women and men for appointments in the period from winter semester 2021/22 to summer semester 2024 were defined, communicated within TH Köln and published on the website. The TH Köln **Gender Equality Plan 2021 - 2024** published in May 2021 is currently being evaluated.
- Both the **Regulations on Dealing with Sexualized Discrimination and Violence** published in April 2020 and the **Catalog of Prevention and Awareness-Raising Measures** published in September 2020 are regularly evaluated, reviewed and updated. The Commissioner for Cases of Sexualized Discrimination and Violence reports annually to the Senate.

Good working conditions for researchers (Principle 24) were strengthened by the following ongoing measures and addressed by new measures:

- The measures of the **"Family-Friendly University" audit** are continuously implemented. The certificate was awarded permanently in March 2021. As part of regular evaluations and assessments, relevant stakeholder groups or their representatives are involved both on an ongoing basis and after the implementation of individual measures. The measures include advice and support from the university's family service, including childcare options (daycare/holiday programs), questions about maternity leave, parental leave, the return to work of mothers and fathers and care for relatives, as well as family-friendly infrastructure (children's corners, nursing and changing rooms, parent-child office and mobile play boxes) and training opportunities.
- Due to the reform of national regulations on the employment of researchers in the qualification phase (Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz/Scientific Time Contracts Act),

the **adoption of a guideline on the employment of academic staff** has been delayed and is scheduled for 2025. However, an information sheet on the employment of doctoral research assistants is already in preparation and is expected to be published by Q1 2024.

- The need for a **"Welcoming Culture" Guideline to integrate new employees of international origin** was identified as part of the Internationalization Strategy. The concept will be launched in June 2024.
- In order to increase the diversity of researchers at TH Köln with a focus on the proportion of international researchers, the aim is to develop an **internationalization concept for the training of doctoral researchers** at TH Köln in the medium term.
- In addition, communication at TH Köln is to be designed and maintained **bilingually in German and English** in all dimensions. The measure will be implemented from 2024.
- As part of a university-wide participation process, TH Köln is currently developing a **digitalization strategy** that includes measures to improve working conditions and processes for researchers. The focus here is on the structural and content-related transformation of research and teaching.

Remark:

Detailed information on the individual measures is linked on the HRS4R website of TH Köln: [www.th-koeln.de/hrs4r](http://www.th-koeln.de/hrs4r)

## 2.4 Training and development

As university strong in research for social innovation, TH Köln sees itself as particularly committed to providing structured support to early career researchers and to provide optimal conditions for further qualification.

The promotion of academics at early career stages was strengthened by the following measures at the university:

- Regular **information events** for those interested in doing a doctorate have been held since 2019. The event "Pathways to a PhD" has become established and takes place online and in person several times a year at various university locations. In addition, the Graduate Center has established quarterly virtual onboarding sessions for doctoral candidates, which facilitate the start of the doctorate by presenting relevant offers and contact persons.
- The **Graduate Center of TH Köln** offers comprehensive advice (e.g. weekly open Zoom consultation hours) for doctoral candidates, doctoral researchers and postdocs as well as - in cooperation with relevant institutions at TH Köln - a comprehensive **qualification and coaching program** for doctoral researchers.
- The **collegial coaching program** for all doctoral researchers has been established and is carried out in cooperation with the Center for Academic Development and the Equal Opportunities Office.
- In the coming reporting period, the **doctoral qualification program** is to be linked even more closely with the offer of the Doctoral College for Applied Research NRW (PK NRW)(see question 2.5.2 below on changes in circumstances) and those of the universities in the region.

- Regular "**Doctoral Afternoons**" are held to enable doctoral researchers to **network**. In addition to the option of networking, this format offers an opportunity to exchange ideas with the Executive Board with a focus on current topics such as "International Doctorates", "New Working Worlds" and "Open Science".
- In order to improve supervision and advice for doctoral candidates, the introduction of an **electronic database for doctoral candidate management** is planned in the coming reporting period.
- As part of the **Mathilde von Mevissen doctoral funding program**, which aims to increase the participation of women in the academic system, six additional female doctoral positions have been funded at TH Köln since October 2020. This is already the second round of funding (period 2020-2025). An intermediate program starting in 2025 with the possibility of flexible funding for women in early career stages is being planned.
- The first networking meetings for **postdocs** at TH Köln were organized in October 2022 and May 2023 to exchange ideas and discuss the needs of postdocs at the university. Further meetings are being planned.

The following measures are also being pursued as part of the university-wide "PLan\_CV" project (duration 2021-2027; see question 2.5.3 below for explanation):

- The establishment of **focus professorships** enables the deepening or development of subject areas that characterize the profile of TH Köln. This not only makes the university even stronger in terms of research, but also creates space for cross-faculty collaboration and the individual academic further qualification of postdocs.
- As part of the integrated career development program "**Karriere hoch 3 (German)**", doctoral candidates and postdocs are accompanied on their path to academic skills development with a view to the triad of teaching, research and practice. The program consists of various elements such as coaching, mentoring, self-study and workshops.
- The measure "**Working@TH Köln - Wissenschaft erleben (German)**" has been bringing together students and professors as part of a temporary learning arrangement since April 2021. The main aim of the measure is to encourage professors to engage in a self-reflection about their selection routines when recruiting student assistants and to inspire and recruit a diverse group of students for an academic career over the next five years.

In addition, the following measures were initiated to expand the range of further development opportunities for researchers:

- The "**International Competencies**" certificate program for lecturers and researchers at TH Köln was launched in June 2022 and supports employees in using internationality, diversity and cultural diversity as resources for their personal development. The aim is to consolidate the international skills development program for researchers.
- The first **training courses in the field of "Gender and Diversity Competence"** took place in 2021. These will be implemented as an ongoing offer. Regular evaluations of the events ensure continuous quality assurance.
- **Gender equality coaching** for women in teaching, research and self-administration has been expanded and the coaching for newly appointed professors has been developed into "**Coaching for Academic Practice - Networking of Teaching, Research and Transfer**".

Remark:

Detailed information on the individual measures is linked on the HRS4R website of TH Köln:  
[www.th-koeln.de/hrs4r](http://www.th-koeln.de/hrs4r)

## **2.5 Explanations on current practice**

### **2.5.1 Have any of the priorities for the short- and medium term changed?**

No, the priorities have not changed. In the coming years, the measures will focus in particular on supporting early career researchers.

### **2.5.2 Have any of the circumstances in which your organisation operates, changed and as such have had an impact on your HR strategy?**

In November 2022, the Doctoral College for Applied Research NRW (PK NRW), as a cross-university scientific institution of the 21 universities of applied sciences in North Rhine-Westphalia, was granted the right to award doctoral degrees independently in the future. This was previously reserved for universities in North Rhine-Westphalia. With this important step in terms of science policy, doctoral candidates will be directly supervised in teams of three by researching professors at TH Köln in the future. The independent right to award doctorates strengthens research as well as the promotion early career researchers at TH Köln and opens up new opportunities for cooperation.

### **2.5.3 Are any strategic decisions under way that may influence the action plan?**

TH Köln continues to pursue the goals and measures defined in the University Development Plan 2030. The measures will be further strengthened by the university-wide project "PLan\_CV - Rethinking Professorship Careers at Universities of Applied Sciences: Collaboration and Networking", which was launched in April 2021 and will run for six years with a budget of 12.8 million euros. The project focuses on attracting suitable applicants for a HAW (university for applied sciences) professorship, strengthening dual academic and professional qualifications and improving the permeability between science and industry.

### 3 Action Plan

Number (Online Tool)	Area	Proposed Actions	Gap Principle <sup>2</sup>	Timing	Responsible Unit <sup>3</sup>	Indicators/ Target	Current Status	Remarks
	A	<b>Ethical and Professional Aspects as well as Good Practice in Research</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 23, 31, 32, 34</b>					
1	A	Updating and revising our guidelines on GSP in accordance with the amendments of the German Research Foundation	2, 3, 6, 7, 31, 32, 34	Q3/2014	F&WT	Document	completed	The guidelines were adopted in 2016.
2	A	Providing TH Koeln guidelines on Good Scientific Practice in English	2, 3, 6, 7, 31, 32, 34	Q4/2016	F&WT	Engl. document	completed	Translation completed in 2016
3	A	Annual seminars on Good Scientific Practice for researchers at all career levels, also offered in English	2, 3, 6, 7, 31, 32, 34	ongoing since 2014	GZ / F&WT	Agenda, participant figures	completed	Seminars are held once a year in German and English.

<sup>2</sup> Abbreviations: 1 Research Freedom; 2 Ethical Principles; 3 Professional Responsibility; 4 Professional Attitude; 5 Contractual and Legal Obligations; 6 Accountability; 7 Good Practice in Research; 8 Dissemination and Exploitation of Results; 9 Public Engagement; 10 Non-Discrimination; 11 Evaluation/Appraisal Systems; 12 Recruitment (Principles); 13 Recruitment (Processes); 14 Selection; 15 Transparency; 16 Judging Merit; 17 Variations in the chronological order of CVs; 18 Recognition of Mobility Experience; 19 Recognition of Qualifications; 20 Seniority (Code of Conduct); 21 Postdoctoral Appointments; 22 Recognition of the Profession; 23 Research Environment; 24 Working Conditions; 25 Stability and Permanence of Employment; 26 Funding and Salaries; 27 Gender Balance; 28 Career Development; 29 Value of Mobility; 30 Access to Career Advice; 31 Intellectual Property Rights; 32 Co-Authorship; 33 Teaching; 34 Complaints/Appeals; 35 Participation in Decision-Making Bodies; 36 Relation with Supervisors; 37 Supervision and Managerial Duties; 38 Continuing Professional Development; 39 Access to Research Training and Continuous Development; 40 Supervision

<sup>3</sup> Abbreviations: AS&GF: Workplace safety and health promotion; AwW: Academy of Continuing Education; Bib: University Library; Fak: Faculties; F&WT: Department of Research and Knowledge Transfer; GB: Equal Opportunities Officer; GZ: Graduate Center; HS verw: University Administration; K: Department Communication and Marketing; IA: Department of International Affairs; P: Department of Human Resources; PE: Human Resources Development Team; PR & Ö: Press and Public Relations Team; SK WN: Permanent Commission for the Promotion of Early-Stage Researchers; VP F & WT: Vice-President for Research and Knowledge Transfer; VP3: Vice President for Financial Affairs and Human Resources; ZLE: Center for Academic Development

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4	A	Raising the prominence of the ombudsperson (academic integrity officer) and his/her mediator role (through events, web presence, etc.)	2, 3, 6, 7, 31, 32, 34	ongoing since 2014	F & WT/ PE	Number of events, participant figures	completed	The ombudsperson is presented more prominently on the website. She/he is present at all seminars on good scientific practice and actively involved in the organization of the event. A representative has been appointed.
5	A	Establishing a Code of Conduct for national and international research co-operations at THK	4,5	Q4/2020	F&WT	Document	completed	The Code was presented to the Senate and adopted by the Executive Board in December 2020. The document is handed out to all new employees (welcome folder) and published in English and German on the homepage.
6	A	Ensuring that research projects at THK may – if required – be revised and approved by an internal or external ethics commission	2	Q4/2016	F&WT	Minutes of the ethics commission	completed	Research projects at TH Köln can be reviewed by the Ethics Committee of the University of Cologne if required. The Commission on Responsibility in Science was established in July 2021 and has started its work. Reports on its activities are submitted to the Senate once a year.
7	A	Optimizing processes for third-party funded projects	23	Q2/2017	University admin.	Tools and documents, number of participants in events	completed	Tools and provisions were developed which are available for improvements in the service area of third-party funding. In December 2018, the third-party funding navigator, the process portal and other project results were presented to the process participants.
8	A	Continuing to develop and complete the research strategy	23	Q4/2021	VP F&WT	Document	completed	The research profile of TH Köln was defined on the basis of three profile areas and the key points of the research strategy were set out in the University Development Plan 2030. The research strategy has been published on the website.
9	A	Revising guidelines on Good Scientific Practice in accordance with the DFG's new Good Scientific Practice Code and adopt them as an legally binding order in the Senate	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 23, 31, 32, 34	Q1/2020	F&WT	Order	completed	The new regulations on good scientific practice were drawn up, approved by the Senate and published on the website at the beginning of 2020.
10	A	Development of consulting services for research data management	7, 23	Q3/2021	F&WT	Guideline	completed	A website for research data management was created and a guideline adopted and published on the website.

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11	A	Expanding the Research and Knowledge Transfer activities (support in terms of preparation and implementation of transfer measures and regarding exploitation of results of R&D projects)	8	ongoing since 2014	VP F & WT/ F & WT	Number of cooperation partners, document transfer strategy	completed	The Research and Knowledge Transfer activities are being continuously expanded, and the Transfer Strategy 2025 has been adopted.
12	A	Developing an entrepreneurship strategy	8	Q1/2017	VP F&WT / F&WT	Document	completed	The start-up strategy has been adopted in July 2018.
13	A	Analyzing and informing about the region's academic and institutional structure; presenting THK as a transfer partner	8	Q1/2015	VP F & WT/ F & WT	Number of cooperation partners, events	completed	Strategic activities have been combined in the Transfer Strategy 2025.
14	A	Conceptualization & implementation of a digital university bibliography with a research information system (presentation of research achievements)	8	Q4/2024	VP F&WT / F&WT / Bib	established system	in progress	The digital university bibliography has been implemented, the action has been extended to establish a research information system. The research information system project has started on 1.1.2021; go live is planned for the end of Q1/2024
15	A	Implementing a "Research Day" / a "Research Future Workshop"	8, 9	Q4/2018	F&WT	Participant figures	completed	The 1st Research Day took place in February 2020. New edition in 2022 and 2023. Established as an ongoing event.
16	A	Improving the presentation of research activities on the new website; possible launch of a research magazine	8, 9	Q4/2016	F & WT/ PR & Ö	Increase in the number of clicks	completed	Since the launch of the new website in 2015, research activities have been presented more prominently online.
17	A	Developing IP strategy as an extension stage of the patent strategy	8	Q2/2021	F&WT	Document	completed	Action completed, new name: Strategic Guideline on Intellectual Property and Exploitation. Adopted in February 2023
51	A	Establishment of a scientific board of advisors	1,2,7,8,9	since Q1 2020	VP F	Minutes of Meetings	completed	The scientific board of advisors held its first meeting on October 19th and 20th, 2020
52	A	Publication service, advice on publishing and OA; financial support for publications (including Open Access publication fund)	2,4,7,8	since 2020	Bib	Number of consultation cases, number of (funded) OA publications in progress	in progress	Publication service advises researchers at TH on planned publication projects and all questions relating to the publication of research results. Open Access Publication Fund since 01.01.2023. Funding for Gold OA publications (OA journal articles and OA books). The fund is continuously evaluated and further development is planned.
53	A	Development and implementation of an Open Science Policy and an Open Access Policy	7, 8	2023	VP F&WT, Bib	Document	new	The Open Science Policy was adopted and published in October 2022. The key points of the OA policy were presented to the Senate on 1.3.2023 and approved, planned completion: mid-2024

54	A	Development and implementation of a social media guideline	8,9	2023	K	Document	new	Development and implementation of a social media guideline to support researchers in science communication and in dealing with hate speech.
55	A	Expand support services for women interested in starting a business	8	Q4/2024	VP F&WT; F&WT	Number of women in start-ups	new	Funding has been applied for, pilot planned for 2024 (Exist Women)
56	A	Development, adoption and implementation of anti-discrimination regulations	10	2024	VP L&St ; GB	Document (Order)	new	Adoption in the Senate planned for Q4/2023, followed by implementation
	<b>B</b>	<b>Recruitment and Selection</b>	<b>12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21</b>					
18	B	Evaluating and editing the appointment guidelines to fulfill new requirements. Guaranteeing transparent and objectivized recruitment processes	12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20	Q4/2014	P	Document	completed	Revision of the appointment guideline completed
19	B	Defining the requirements of competency for professorships in appointment processes in selected fields	15	Q4/2017	PE	Document	completed	The competence profile was defined in 2016 and coordinated with the Executive Board.
20	B	Improving the recruitment processes for research associates based on the appointment guideline	12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20	Q4/2017	P / PE	Information on website	completed	Continued development of the diagnostic selection procedure for research associates, taking into account the requirements/standards defined in the OTM-R Report.
21	B	Publishing job vacancies via EURAXESS	12	ongoing since 2017	PE	Number of job vacancies on EURAXESS	completed	Selected job vacancies are advertised via EURAXESS.
22	B	Developing THK guidelines on the recruitment of researchers based on OTM-R criteria and presenting them to the university's committees and panels	12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21	Q4/2018	PE	Document	completed	An OTM-R guideline has been drafted, discussed with the stakeholders and adopted.
23	B	Developing workshops on the high-quality implementation of the OTM-R standards and making them available to the groups involved in the selection process	12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21	from Q4/2018	PE	Workshop program	completed	Training courses for managers and moderators "Aspects of professional personnel selection" have been held.

24	B	Regular implementation and ongoing evaluation of workshops on high-quality realization of the OTM-R standards	12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21	from Q1/2020	PE	Participant figures, workshop program	completed	Carry out workshops during ongoing operations, evaluate offers on an ongoing basis.
57	B	Development and adoption of new appointment regulations for professors	12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20	until Q1/2024	P	Document	new	New appointment regulations are in preparation and planned for Q1/2024. The appointment guidelines based on this will be developed at the same time and, like the new appointment regulations, will be widely published at the university in order to ensure transparent and objective appointment procedures.
58	B	Development of a concept for international marketing and international recruitment of students, doctoral candidates and academic and administrative staff	12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20	starting 09/2023	IA;P&ÖA	Document	new	This measure was defined as part of the internationalization strategy and is to be implemented in the coming reporting period.
	C	<b>Working Conditions and Social Security</b>	<b>22,23, 24,25,26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35</b>					
25	C	Implementing the measures of the Family-Friendly University Audit	24	ongoing since 2017	P	Audit application, documentation of measures	completed	Measures are continuously implemented. The certificate was awarded permanently in 2021.
26	C	Successful re-auditing in the Family-Friendly University Audit and implementing corresponding family-friendly measures for researchers	24	ongoing since 2017	P / PE	Certificate, flyer, website	completed	Re-audit in 2018 was successfully completed.
27	C	Continuing to improve health-promoting measures	24	ongoing since 2017	P	Events, participants	completed	All members of TH Köln are offered a health promotion scheme. Seminars on stress prevention were included in the internal advanced training program.

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28	C	Developing a health management concept	24	from Q1/2018	P / AS&GF	Document	completed	University-wide project under the leadership of Team 10.3 Occupational Safety and with the involvement of HR 9. Health prevention measures are offered on an ongoing basis; a comprehensive health promotion kick-off event including a presentation of the current offers took place on October 11, 2023.
29	C	Implementing the already signed framework contract for good employment conditions of MIWF NRW: Creation of a guideline for research associates as component of the already signed framework contract for good employment conditions of MIWF NRW	24,25,26	Q4/2020	P	Document	extended	The framework agreement has been signed. A draft guideline has been prepared, but the reform of national regulations (Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz) must be awaited before it can be introduced. An information sheet on the recruitment of doctoral WMAs is being prepared and is to be published by Q1/2024.
30	C	Adoption of an order on dealing with sexualized discrimination and violence in the workplace, development of a catalog of measures	24	Q3/2020	GB	Documents (Order and catalog of measures)	completed	The new regulations were adopted by the Senate in 2020. A catalog of measures was developed and two representatives were elected by the Senate. The catalog of measures is being successively implemented, e.g. website on the topic is online, onboarding course for the complaints offices created and accessible, regulations are handed out to new employees, regulations are also available in English, training and further education for managers, advisory and complaints offices are being planned.
31	C	Implementing measures of the Equal Opportunities Concept (women promotion schemes by the faculties; "Diversity-Conducive in Speech and Writing" guideline, promotion programs, etc.)	10, 27, 35	ongoing since 2014	GB	Document	extended	The Equal Opportunities Plan 2021 - 2024 of TH Köln, consisting of the framework plan for the entire university and the plans for the individual areas, have been drawn up and were approved and published by the Senate on April 7, 2021. The measures and offers will be continuously developed.
32	C	Implementing career coaching for female doctoral candidates	27	ongoing since 2017	GZ / GB	List of events, participant figures	completed	The program is established and continues to be implemented successfully, network day, coaching workshops, individual coaching take place.
33	C	Mathilde-von-Mevissen doctorate promotion: Advertisement for applications 2017	27	Q1/2017	GZ	List of beneficiaries	completed	The advertisement for applications in 2017 was successfully carried out. So far, 8 doctoral researchers have been supported in the program.

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34	C	Mathilde-von-Mevisen doctorate promotion: Implement new round of funding as of 2020	27	from Q1/2020	GZ / GB	List of beneficiaries	completed	The call for applications has been published in March 2020 and six female doctoral researchers have been selected for funding.
35	C	Establishing target-group-specific career advice, personal advice, mentoring programs and further education programs	28, 29, 30	Q4/2015	PE	Programs, participant figures and evaluation	completed	Individualized career advice for employees in management positions is offered by the human resources development team as part of the internal further education program. The Family Services Office offers personal advisory services on the topic of life/work balance for researchers.
36	C	Developing target-group oriented personal career counseling and networking programs & verifying the expansion of the female doctoral researchers' coaching to other target groups among the doctoral researchers	28, 29, 30	Q1/2019	PE / GZ	Programs and evaluations	completed	Coaching program has been expanded; doctoral researchers coaching for men was offered for the first time in the WiSe 2018/19
37	C	Expanding mobility & internal advanced training programs and making information on mobility programs available	29	ongoing since 2014	IA / F & WT	Brochure, mobility participant figures	completed	A scholarship brochure with information on mobility promotion for doctoral candidates and postdoctoral researchers has been created and made available for download on the university website. A travel grant for conference participation for doctoral students of TH Köln was established.
38	C	Updating brochure on mobility programs for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers and translating into English	29	Q1/2017	GZ	Document	completed	The brochure has been updated and translated into English.
39	C	Creating & implementing action concept for guest researchers	29	2016-2019	IA / F&WT	Concept	completed	The International Scholar Services were established in the Department of International Affairs. A member of staff acts as the central contact person for guest researchers.
40	C	Career family coaching program for early-stage researchers	28, 30	Q4/17	PE	Agreement	completed	Cooperation with the University of Cologne. Project completed.
41	C	Development of an internationalization strategy	29	Q3/2021	IA	Document	completed	Internationalization strategy has been adopted and published.

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59	C	Gender equality funding: Create doctoral positions for female scientists in combination with a WMA activity as flexible funding (multi-year doctoral position, one-year start-up or final funding) including part-time options	24,25, 27	starting Q1/2025	GZ, GB	number of women funded	new	Application for funding submitted as part of the Women Professors Program IV, implementation expected from 2025
60	C	Development and communication of "gender monitoring"	27	starting 2021	GB	Document	new	Gender monitoring has been established with the most important basic values. More detailed differentiation is being planned.
61	C	Development of a welcoming culture guideline for the integration of new employees of international origin	24	starting 2024	IA;PE	Document	new	This measure was defined as part of the internationalization strategy and is to be implemented in the coming reporting period.
62	C	Bilingual communication: Communication at TH Köln is designed and maintained bilingually in German and English in all dimensions	24	until Q4/2024	IA;HSVerw.	Bilingual consultation, websites, signs	new	Initial steps have been taken to commission a translation service.
63	C	Development and implementation of a digitalization strategy	23, 24	until Q4/2024	VP 3	Document	new	The digitalization strategy is to be developed by 2024.
	<b>D</b>	<b>Training and Development</b>	<b>36,37,38,39,40</b>					
42	D	Developing a concept for the establishment of a Graduate Center	36, 37, 38, 39, 40	Q3/2014	VP F & WT/ F & WT	Concept	completed	The Graduate Center was successfully established on January 1, 2016.
43	D	Developing internal qualification program and organizing networking activities for doctoral researchers	36, 37, 38, 39, 40	ongoing since 2014	F & WT/ AwW	Agenda, participant figures, program overview	completed	The program has been expanded and is constantly updated, there are at least 10 general workshops/networking events per year.
44	D	Developing Code of Conduct supervision (guideline for supervisors) and presenting it to the university's committees and panels	36, 37, 38, 39, 40	Q4/2017	SK WN / GZ	Document	completed	The "Guidelines for the Good Supervision of Doctorates" were successfully adopted

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45	D	Developing a concept for the qualification of supervisors at TH Köln. Measures for a nationwide conclusion of supervision agreements.	36, 37, 40	Q4/2018	SK WN / GZ	Agenda, participant figures	completed	Networking meetings for supervisors are held once a year.
46	D	Establishing doctoral positions for doctoral candidates and developing human resources concepts for this purpose (these positions are to dedicate two-thirds of their workload to activities related to their doctorate)	38	ongoing since 2017	Fak / P	Document	completed	The University Development Plan 2030 sets out the principles of staff planning.
47	D	Recording of the postdoctoral researchers & conceptualizing & implementing actions for this target group	38	ongoing since 2017	GZ	List of postdoctoral researchers, concept paper	extended	Postdocs are registered at the Graduate Center service point and advised individually. Networking meetings to discuss requirements with the Executive Board took place in October 2022, May 2023 and September 2023.
48	D	Regular information events for those interested in a doctorate	38	from Q1/2019	GZ	Agenda, participant figures	completed	An event "Ways to a doctorate" was held in summer 2019, in spring 2020 (due to the corona situation) online consultation hours "Ways to a doctorate" were offered, regular events at least once a year established
64	D	Expanding qualification programs for doctoral candidates in cooperation with the Doctoral School for Applied Sciences NRW and the region's universities	36, 37, 38, 39, 40	from 2023	GZ	Number of joint workshops, number of participants	new	Interlinking the Graduate Center with the Doctoral School for Applied Sciences NRW and the universities in the region to expand the range of qualification opportunities for doctoral candidates
65	D	Introduction of a digital database for doctoral candidate management	36, 37, 40	from 2024	GZ	Number of data records in the database	new	A digital database for doctoral candidate management is intended to improve the registration of doctoral candidates at TH Köln and to improve the service for doctoral candidates and supervisors with regard to advice requirements.
66	D	Working@THKoeln	17, 28	until Q1/2027	HS Verw.; Präsidium, Fakultäten	Number of SHK contracts	new	Working@TH Köln - Wissenschaft erleben" brings students and professors together: students support research projects and teaching as student assistants. In return, students expand their academic skills, learn about the academic career path and gain an insight into the HAW professorship.

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67	D	Focus Professorships: Postdocs	17, 20, 22, 23, 24, 27, 33, 36	until Q1/2027	Fakultäten, F&WT	Filling positions, acquiring third-party funding, publications, career development	new	Focus professorships enable the deepening or development of subject areas that characterize the profile of TH Köln. This not only makes the university even stronger in terms of research, but also creates space for cross-faculty collaboration and the training of postdocs.
68	D	career <sup>3</sup>	17, 23, 24, 25, 28, 30, 32, 33, 36, 37	until Q1/2027	ZLE	Documentation of the exchange formats, qualitative and quantitative interviews	new	As part of PLaN_CV, the "Career3" development program supports doctoral candidates and postdocs on their path to developing their academic skills.
69	D	Introduction of an international skills certificate program for teachers and researchers	38	starting 06/2022	IA;PE	Participants in the programme	in progress	Program has started, work is underway on continuation funding
70	D	Development of an internationalization concept for the training of doctoral researchers at TH Köln	28, 29, 38, 39	until Q2/2025	IA; GZ	Document	new	This measure was defined as part of the internationalization strategy and is to be implemented in the coming reporting period.
71	D	Establishment of further training courses in the area of "gender and diversity competence"	27, 38, 39	Q4/2024	GB; PE	Number of participants	new	First offers took place in 2021. Ongoing offer implemented.
72	D	Expand gender equality coaching for women in teaching, research and self-administration and expand coaching for academic practice for new appointees	10, 38, 39	since 2021	GB;ZLE; F&WT	Number of participants	new	Gender equality coaching has been expanded and is to be established as an ongoing service. Newly appointed coaching for teaching for all newly appointed professors is to be expanded into comprehensive coaching for academic practice. Already implemented in the first year, establishment planned for the coming year.
	<b>x</b>	<b>Communication</b>	<b>1 bis 40</b>					
49	x	Creating and implementing a target-group oriented internal communication strategy for the HRS4R	1 to 40	Q4/17	F & WT / PE	Document	completed	Communication media were collected, the HRS4R is communicated via TH Köln's internal magazine "In" and the website, the logo is included in publications.

50	X	Interacting with stakeholders, e.g. through surveys and events	1 to 40	ongoing since 2017	HRS4R Steering Committee	Documentation of the exchange	completed	Stakeholders are involved in personal discussions, the strategy is discussed once a year in the relevant committees (in SK2 and SKWN and in the extended Steering Committee once a year since 2020). Measure has become established as part of the implementation of the individual measures.
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	completed actions
	new actions since last evaluation 2020

## 4 Implementation

### 4.1 General overview of the implementation process

Since the development and publication of TH Köln's first HRS4R in July 2014 and the award of the "HR Excellence in Research" seal of quality in December 2014, the implementation of the HRS4R at TH Köln has been led by the Vice President for Research and Knowledge Transfer and supported by an interdepartmental steering group (one employee from the Department of Human Resources and one from the Department of Research and Knowledge Transfer), which was established at the beginning of the HRS4R process at the university.

Researchers at all career levels are regularly and comprehensively involved in ongoing measures as well as in the design and implementation of new measures. Participation takes place both by elected representatives of the various research groups in the university's committees and, on occasion, by the open involvement and approach of researchers as part of the implementation of the defined measures.

The HRS4R is discussed at least once a year with the Standing Committee for Research and Knowledge Transfer (members: Vice President for Research and Knowledge Transfer, Head of the Department of Research and Knowledge Transfer and eleven experienced researchers from all faculties (R3/R4)) as well as the Standing Committee for the Promotion of Early Career Researchers (members: Vice President for Research and Knowledge Transfer, three experienced researchers (R4) and three early career researchers (R1/R2)). The University Senate is involved at least once per reporting period.

Following the external evaluation with an expert visit in November 2020, an extended HRS4R Steering Committee was set up in addition to the previous participation of researchers and research support staff, which meets at least once a year to discuss the current status of the measures. The extended HRS4R Steering Committee includes representatives from the Department of Research and Knowledge Transfer, the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Communication and Marketing, the Department of International Affairs, the Center for Academic Development and the Equal Opportunities Officer.

### 4.2 How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?

The steering group records the progress of the measures on a semi-annual basis and the extended steering committee meets at least once a year to monitor the progress of the measures. The current status of the measures is reported to the HRS4R project management by those responsible for the measures and recorded in an updated action plan.

### 4.3 How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?

As part of the University Development Plan 2030 adopted in 2019, it was defined as a central goal of the university that professors, academic staff, instructors for special tasks as well as

employees in technology and administration should play a greater role in the development of the university's strategy, in concepts for its implementation and in central and decentralized projects, as this is the only way to manage the university's diverse and closely networked tasks and processes and to design them appropriately and efficiently.

As part of the HRS4R measures, the participation and collaboration of researchers has already been continuously expanded in the previous reporting period. In addition to discussions in the University Senate, which consists of professors, academic staff, technical and administrative staff and student representatives, attention is always paid to an appropriate participation procedure for researchers in the context of all other measures.

Early Career Researchers stages are involved through regular discussions of the HRS4R with the elected representatives of the Doctoral Convent and as part of the "Doctoral Afternoons" networking events. Supervisors were involved in the development of new measures as part of the annual "Networking meetings for doctoral supervisors" and other researchers were involved in regular faculty discussions.

With regard to the comprehensive participation of researchers in the development of new strategies, the following is an example of the process of developing the Internationalization Strategy 2030: The Internationalization Strategy of TH Köln was developed between September 2019 and June 2021 in a participatory, discursive and open-ended process. Within the area of responsibility of the President of TH Köln, the strategy was developed by two working groups: the project group and the forum: The ten members of the project group were appointed by the project management on the basis of their expertise and were not subject to any official or functional bias. During their meetings, the project group members prepared the content of the strategy and other elements of the development process, processed the input from various groups and the university committees and used this as a basis to drive forward the creation of the strategy. In the forum, delegated representatives from the twelve faculties, relevant central institutions and the student body met with the members of the project group. The members of the forum designed the building blocks of the strategy, contributed the international dimension of their respective fields of specialization and acted as multipliers of the strategy process in their institutions. In addition, seven thematic working groups were included in the strategy process to review the objectives. The discourse was opened up to other internal and external stakeholders as part of a review workshop on the development status of the strategy. Comparable procedures for the participation of researchers are used, for example, in the development of the digitalization strategy and the anti-discrimination regulations.

#### **4.4 How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? Make sure the HRS4R is recognized in the organisation's research strategy, as the overarching HR policy.**

The implementation of the HRS4R with its defined measures is firmly anchored and consistent with the University Development Plan 2030. The HRS4R is also anchored in the Research Strategy 2030.

#### **4.5 How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?**

Through regular monitoring by the HRS4R steering group and the extended steering committee, the status of the measures is surveyed every six months and implementation is ensured. Developments and possible delays are discussed with those involved in the measures. Solutions regarding implementation and resource issues are found together with the Executive Board of the university.

#### **4.6 How will you monitor progress (timeline)?**

Progress is recorded at least every six months by the steering group in the internal HRS4R action plan (Excel spreadsheet) using the defined indicators.

#### **4.7 How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?**

Indicators have been defined for each measure and are reviewed annually. For the reporting period 2023-2026, 20 new measures have been included in the action plan, the progress of which will be measured by TH Köln in view of the next evaluation.

#### **4.8 Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process:**

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