

FWF Self-Assessment Report

Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)

1. The institution at a glance

The Austrian Science Fund (FWF) is **Austria's central funding organisation for basic research** and supports the ongoing development of Austrian science and basic research at a high international level. In this way, the FWF makes a significant contribution to cultural development, to the advancement of our knowledge-based society, and thus to the creation of value and wealth in Austria. The FWF's objective is to strengthen Austria's international performance and capabilities in science and research as well as the country's attractiveness as a location for high-level scientific activities, primarily by funding top-quality research projects for individuals and teams and by enhancing the competitiveness of Austria's innovation system and its research facilities. The FWF develops Austria's human resources for science and research in both qualitative and quantitative terms based on the principle of research-driven education. The FWF emphasises and enhances the interactive effects of science and research with all other areas of culture, the economy and society. In particular, the FWF makes great efforts to increase the acceptance of science and research through concerted public relations activities. The FWF's annual funding budget in 2013 was €202.6 million, nearly 80% of which is invested in personnel costs. In this way, the FWF plays a key role in supporting the next generation of researchers.

2. The HRS4R background

In 2006, the Austrian Science Fund endorsed the general principles and requirements laid out in the **European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers**.¹ Upon the invitation of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research (BWF), the FWF decided to take part in the **Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) Programme**,² not least in order to ensure that the institutional, programme-related and research policy-related aspects of the FWF's work are handled in such a way that they comply with (or support the implementation of) the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment (Charter & Code).

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/brochure_rights/am509774CEE_EN_E4.pdf

² <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/strategy4Researcher>

3. Approach and methodology applied in the development of HRS4R

The FWF adheres to high quality standards in the projects funded as well as its own activities. As a result, all of the FWF's funding programmes are evaluated by external institutions to guarantee ongoing quality assurance as well as continuous improvement in the organisation's procedures and structures. Thus, the FWF has been able to demonstrate that it has already implemented most of the high standards of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers in its programmes as well as its methods. In December 2010, the FWF Executive Board decided to take part in the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) Programme, an initiative of the European Commission which was set up to help and support research institutions and funding organisations put the principles of the Charter & Code into practice. The HRS4R procedure is to be carried out in **five steps**:

- 1) Internal gap analysis
- 2) Action Plan
- 3) Application for acknowledgement by the Commission
- 4) Implementation and self-evaluation
- 5) External assessment

The FWF Executive Board set up a working group which comprised 10 key persons/departments of the FWF and a representative of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity. The HRS4R initiative for the implementation of the Charter & Code was presented at a kick-off event in March 2011. The working group developed a number of suggestions for improvement as well as an Action Plan which assigned priority levels (1: highest, 2: medium, 3: low) to the measures to be taken. During the procedure, a broad consultation with Austrian researchers was conducted; this involved a large-scale survey of opinions on the FWF among people working in science and research.

Main steps and activities undertaken by the FWF in the development of HRS4R:

- Establishment of HRS4R task force to perform internal gap analysis based on the Charter and Code and focusing on FWF funding activities
- Several in-house workshops and meetings to exchange ideas and opinions on the task force's findings
- Development of the FWF HRS4R Strategy and Action Plan, including a table of measures (approved by the FWF Executive Board and FWF Board)
- Large-scale survey of opinions on the FWF procedures including specific questions on the Charter & Code³
- Publication of FWF Human Resources Strategy for Researchers brochure and table of measures⁴
- Award of HR Excellence logo in October 2012.

³ http://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/Ueber_den_FWF/Publikationen/FWF-Selbstevaluation/iFQ-FWF-Umfrage-Executive-Summary-Englisch.pdf

⁴ <http://www.fwf.ac.at/en/about-the-fwf/organisation/hrs4r/>

4. FWF HRS4R Action Plan – Overview of measures to be implemented

The FWF's Action Plan with regard to **ethical and professional aspects** comprises five measures, four of which have been accorded top priority:

- Broader publication and more customer-friendly (prioritised) presentation of relevant rules and regulations
- Standardization of rules of good scientific practice at the national level
- Expansion of advising services
- A comprehensive self-evaluation
- Enhancement of science/society activities and public engagement of FWF project leaders (principal investigators).

The FWF's Action Plan in connection with **recruiting** comprises two measures, both of which were regarded as medium priorities:

- Address important issues on measures and realistic options to be introduced in FWF programmes in order to ensure that recruitment and (continuing) education for employees are in line with the Charter & Code
- Export the FWF job portal vacancies into the EURAXESS jobs portal of the European Commission.

In line with the third dimension of the Charter & Code, which relates to **working conditions and social security**, the FWF's Action Plan lists five top and medium term priority measures:

- Awareness measures regarding social security for project employees
- Intensification of the dialogue with universities regarding career models for FWF-funded researchers and the development of a best-practice model for this purpose
- Increasing the share of women on the FWF Board
- Extension of grant portability
- Networking measures for female researchers (role models and mentoring).

Finally, the FWF's Action Plan in connection with **training** provides for the expansion of the Doctoral Programmes' educational concept to other FWF programmes as a medium-term priority. The FWF considers the training of researchers – most notably junior researchers – to be one of the pillars of its mission (“education through research”) and funds approximately 1,700 jobs for doctoral candidates in various programmes each year:

- Examine ways to extend training aspects which have already been successfully implemented in the FWF Doctoral Programmes to other FWF funding programmes or instruments

5. Review of the FWF Human Resources Strategy for Researchers Action Plan – Self Evaluation

The internal **self-evaluation** was initiated in December 2014. The reporting and monitoring of the HR Strategy for Researchers has mainly been coordinated by the two FWF strategy departments for national and international programmes, while the implementation of individual tasks has been assigned to the working group members and FWF departments in charge.

The members of the FWF working group were asked to comment on achievements and progress regarding the HR Strategy Action Plan published in 2012. Each individual measure was checked regarding its output and progress. Possible next steps, particularly for actions that could not be implemented (mostly due to budget restrictions), were discussed on the basis of the **FWF Multi-Year Plan 2011-2015**⁵ and the **FWF Work Programme for 2015**. As a funding organisation financed by the Austrian government, the FWF needs to present its strategic objectives in a multi-year plan which also provides an overview of planned developments in the FWF’s funding portfolio in the coming five years as well as the general budget situation. Both programmes are subject to approval by the FWF’s supervisory authority (the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy). As outlined in the original **FWF Human Resources Strategy for Researchers Action Plan**, which was approved by the Commission in October 2012, most of the FWF’s actions and measures which were identified after the “internal gap analysis” are also framed within the context of other FWF policy and strategy documents.

The following self-assessment table shows the FWF’s activities with regard to the HR Action Plan during the last 2 years and includes information about the status and progress of each action. Evidence or further information, if available, can be found by following the appropriate hyperlinks.

I Ethical and professional aspects

1.1 Broader publication and more customer-friendly (prioritised) provision of relevant documents

Activities during the last 2 years	Status	Evidence / Information
In 2014, the new FWF website was launched . It includes a completely new design, a separate section on research funding with easier and more customer-friendly access to FWF programmes and application guidelines, additional features such as the FWF calendar (including events as well as calls, deadlines and award dates), a box with FWF facts and figures and an improved section (including search options) about FWF-funded projects. In January 2015, the new electronic application portal “elane” was successfully implemented. The portal allows applicants to submit funding applications to the FWF in electronic form.	completed electronic portal ongoing	Click here

⁵ http://www.fwf.ac.at/fileadmin/files/Dokumente/Ueber_den_FWF/Publikationen/FWF-relevante_Publikationen/fwf-mehriahresprogramm-2011-15.pdf

The FWF conducted an internal project to standardise and streamline commonly used terms, words and definitions related to the FWF application guidelines and programme documents. In the course of the project, the first FWF glossary (for documents in German) and an electronic tool to identify (and eventually replace) non-suitable words and phrases was developed.	ongoing	
The FWF has made extensive changes to its funding application guidelines in order to ensure greater transparency and clarity as well as an improved presentation of decisions.	completed	Click here

1.2 Standardisation of rules of good scientific practice at the national level

Activities during the last 2 years	Status	Evidence / Information
In 2013, the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (OeAWI) obtained and compared all of the documents setting out the guidelines for good practice in science and research in its 37 member organisations (public and private universities, universities of applied sciences, non-university research institutions and research funding organisations). With due attention to international documents on the topic, such as the Singapore Statement (1), the European Code of Conduct published by the ESF and ALLEA (2), and the Recommendations of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) (3), a set of national guidelines for good practice in science and research was then drafted. This draft was discussed during the OeAWI's General Assembly in September 2014, after which it was dispatched to all member organisations as a basis for discussion. The feedback from member organisations was subsequently integrated into the document. In February 2015, the final will be sent out for review one last time, after which the guidelines will be finalised and adopted. The individual member institutions will then be urged to implement the national guidelines accordingly. The FWF was among the driving forces behind the establishment of the Agency and has appointed its Chairperson since its establishment. In addition, the FWF has contributed actively to developing the content of the new guidelines.	ongoing	(1) Singapore Statement (2) European Code of Conduct published by SF and ALLEA (3) Recommendations of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)

1.3 Expansion of advising services concerning legal, financial and auditing issues

Activities during the last 2 years	Status	Evidence / Information
In the last two years, the FWF has expended the advising services offered by its Finance, Auditing and Legal Affairs departments with regard to legal and operational aspects of research project management. These services are now offered in additional programmes (in addition to the services offered to START grant recipients on an annual basis, the same services are provided for Doctoral Programme [DK] spokespersons) and to non-university research institutions. Telephone and face-to-face advising services for principal	ongoing	

investigators as well as individual advising services for administrative employees at research institutions have also been expanded in all three departments. In the years 2013 and 2014, special advising sessions were held for the University of Vienna, the Austrian Institute of Technology and the Institute of Science and Technology Austria. In 2015, the FWF plans to organise a large-scale information event for universities subject to the Austrian Universities Act (UG) 2002. A further expansions of advising activities would only be possible given an increase in human resources in the three departments mentioned above.		
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1.4 Self-evaluation

Activities during the last 2 years	Status	Evidence / Information
The FWF commissioned the Institute for Research Information and Quality Assurance (iFQ) to carry out a large-scale survey of research personnel at institutions of higher education and non-university research institutions in Austria. The survey primarily focused on the activities of the FWF. More than 30,000 people were invited to take part in the survey and to give the FWF feedback on its procedures. Overall, the results indicate that the researchers believe the FWF performs its project support activities very well and has improved substantially in comparison to a similar study conducted in the year 2002. In light of the general conditions under which the FWF is currently operating (e.g. approval rates have fallen to half of their 2002 levels), this is a remarkable result and a clear indication of the organisation's high professionalism. The FWF enjoys an excellent reputation in the scientific community, and confidence in the FWF's work has remained high. One key reason why the FWF commissioned the survey was to gather suggestions as to how the organisation might adapt and improve its decision-making procedures.	completed	Click here
Together with a number of FWF staff members, the newly elected FWF Executive Board embarked on an information tour of all Austrian university cities and towns in 2014. The purpose of the tour was to enhance the FWF's dialogue with research institutions and above all to gain a first-hand impression of the institutions' concerns, expectations and requirements. The FWF views this feedback as an opportunity to learn and as a mandate to continue developing and (where necessary) improving its programmes and funding activities.	completed	Click here
The FWF has also implemented and successfully completed an extensive package of self-evaluation measures . In this process, a number of internal and external studies (some of which were conducted by the world's leading experts in the field) on the FWF's decision-making procedures have been carried out in recent years. These studies also included an evaluation of the FWF's largest funding category (the Stand-Alone Projects programme) and of its <i>ex ante</i> evaluation procedures. The FWF's analysis of the final reports (including extensive bibliometric analyses) was completed in 2012 and has provided in-depth information	completed	Click here

<p>on project output and its relationship to <i>ex ante</i> and <i>ex post</i> evaluation activities, as well as enabling meaningful international comparisons.</p>		
<p>In the last two years, the FWF's open access activities have been expanded significantly so that the FWF now has one of the largest shares of open access funding worldwide (€2.8 million in 2013, 1.5% of the overall budget).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2/2013: The FWF open access Twitter account is established. ▪ 2/2013: The FWF publishes a position paper on open access. ▪ 3/2013: Initiated and coordinated by the FWF, the Open Access Network Austria (OANA) is founded with almost 50 members. ▪ 8/2013: The FWF publishes a position paper on European open access policy in NATURE. ▪ 10/2013: The FWF announces annual funding of \$3,000 for the arXiv repository. ▪ 10/2013: The FWF covers a third of Austria's contribution to the SCOAP³ initiative until 2016. ▪ 3/2014: One of the first open access offsetting models worldwide with IoP Publishing ▪ 12/2013: The FWF funds 8 open access journals from the social sciences and humanities. ▪ 3/2014: Full transparency of FWF's publication costs in 2013. ▪ 3/2014: Commissioned together with the Wellcome Trust, Research Councils UK and other funding agencies, the study Developing an Effective Market for Open Access Article Processing Charges is published. ▪ 9/2014: The FWF initiates an Austrian consortium for funding the OAPEN book repository. ▪ 1/2015: Adaptation of the FWF's Open Access Policy ▪ 1/2015: Applicants for research grants are explicitly asked to budget funds for processing, archiving and re-using open research data. ▪ 1/2015: The Stand-Alone Publications programme is extended to include new digital publication formats. ▪ 1/2015: Applicants are advised to use ORCID persistent digital identifiers, which will be compulsory from January 1, 2016 onward. ▪ 1/2015: FWF survey among members of the Austrian scientific community shows high need for open access funding. ▪ 1/2015: A second offsetting agreement is signed with the publisher Taylor & Francis. 	<p>completed</p>	<p>Click here</p>
<p>At the beginning of 2015, the FWF put a number of changes to its application guidelines and peer review procedures into effect. The basis for these changes was the feedback received from universities as well as the suggestions from researchers surveyed.</p>	<p>completed</p>	<p>Click here</p>

1.5 Enhancement of science/society activities and public engagement of FWF project leaders

Activities during the last 2 years	Status	Evidence / Information
The FWF's Science Communication Programme was launched in 2013. The target groups are researchers and scientists from all disciplines who work in Austria and who are currently receiving grants under FWF-sponsored projects or whose FWF grant period ended no more than three years prior to application. Grants are awarded for outstanding science communication measures related to the research project funded by the FWF. Funding is possible for up to 12 months, with a current funding level of up to €50,000 per application. There is one call per year. Grants are awarded by the FWF Board on the basis of reviews by an expert jury. In the year 2013 the FWF received 24 applications, of which six were funded (€263,000), and in 2014 the FWF approved four projects (€151,000) out of 18 applications.	completed	Click here

II Recruitment

II.1 Implementation of measures to ensure recruitment in line with the Charter & Code as well as training and continuing education for employees in all FWF funding programmes

Activities during the last 2 years	Status	Evidence / Information
This discussion was conducted internally at the FWF. However, as the role of employer is assumed by the research institutions hosting FWF-funded projects (i.e. not by the FWF), the FWF is convinced that it is their obligation to observe the standards of the Charter & Code. Moreover, current budgetary constraints make it impossible for the FWF to fund education and training activities for FWF project employees. Given an increased budget, however, the FWF would be willing to re-open the discussion of funding such education and training measures for project employees.	stopped	

II.2 Export of the FWF job portal into EURAXESS

Activities during the last 2 years	Status	Evidence / Information
After the relaunch of the FWF website at the end of June 2014, there was another drastic increase in the use of the FWF Job Market . As envisioned in the FWF's Action Plan, the site's relaunch also laid the foundation for the XML export of job advertisements from the FWF Job Market. The new site remained in the testing phase for an extended period of time (until October 2014). Once the site had been accepted, the FWF took further steps to automate the export of its job advertisements to the Euraxess job portal. The	ongoing	Click here

<p>differences in the FWF's mandatory data fields on the one hand and Euraxess' data field requirements on the other create a level of technical complexity which will require a substantial amount of adaptation and fine-tuning. By mid-2015, the FWF plans to roll out the automatic export function, assuming that the data transferred by the FWF is suitable for import into the Euraxess system. As Euraxess includes a far larger number of mandatory fields in its job portal, an adaptation of mandatory field requirements (or their definition) would be necessary on Euraxess' part in the case of incompatibility.</p>		
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III Working conditions and social security

III.1 Awareness measures regarding social security for project employees

Activities during the last 2 years	Status	Evidence / Information
<p>The FWF collects data on the share of part-time employees in its projects. Recent data indicate that the FWF has been able to stop the general trend toward part-time employment on 0.5 FTE contracts, especially among Ph.D. candidates, who account for the largest share of people on the FWF's "payroll", with approximately 70% in the range of 0.6-0.8 FTEs.</p>	ongoing	See table on Working Contracts, 2011-2014 ⁶
<p>In FWF projects, the option of employing students writing their master's/diploma theses with a research grant was eliminated and replaced with a contract of employment that ensures social security coverage. In the Erwin Schrödinger fellowship programme, the FWF has made it possible to remunerate grant recipients for voluntary pension insurance contributions.</p>	completed	Click here Click here

FTE*	Doctoral students		Post-docs		All	
Working Contract	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
0,01 - < 0,2	3,8%	4,7%	3,3%	4,5%	3,6%	4,6%
0,2 - < 0,4	8,7%	9,3%	5,3%	7,1%	7,3%	8,5%
0,4 - < 0,6	10,2%	10,6%	14,4%	18,6%	11,9%	13,7%
0,6 - > 0,8	69,8%	70,9%	8,0%	12,4%	44,7%	48,4%
0,8 - < 1	1,4%	1,0%	3,5%	4,9%	2,3%	2,5%
1	6,0%	3,5%	65,4%	52,4%	30,2%	22,3%
Total	4,910	3,524	3,364	2,201	8,274	5,725

6 * Full Time Equivalent

III.2 Intensification of the dialogue with universities regarding career models for FWF-funded researchers and the development of a best-practice model for this purpose

Activities during the last 2 years	Status	Evidence / Information
At the European Forum Alpbach in 2012, the FWF cooperated with the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research to organise a working group on "Supporting Careers in Science" . Likewise, the FWF has actively participated in the Improving Career Opportunities in Science and Research effort within the framework of the Action Plan for a Competitive Research Area project. The FWF's career development programmes were evaluated by external experts, and both evaluation reports were published and give the FWF's programmes outstanding marks.	ongoing	Click here and here

III.3 Increasing the share of women on the FWF Board

Activities during the last 2 years	Status	Evidence / Information
In 2014, the periodic appointment of a new FWF Board was carried out, and for the first time it was possible to compel a sufficient number of female researchers to apply for the position of Reporter on the FWF Board. The election of new FWF Board members increased the share of women in this key decision-making body to 40% , which is in line with the target set by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy. The FWF Board now comprises a total of 54 Reporters, who will be responsible for deciding on the approval of research proposals submitted to the FWF for a three-year term.	achieved	Click here
In 2013, the share of women on the FWF Supervisory Board, in the Assembly of Delegates and on the Executive Board reached the 50 percent mark . Since 2013, the FWF has also been headed and represented by its first female president.		Click here

III.4 Extension of grant portability

Activities during the last 2 years	Status	Evidence / Information
<p>The FWF introduced funding portability within the framework of the DACH Agreement (DFG, FWF, SNF: Money follows researcher) in 2003. This initiative has been expanded to include more European funding agencies, in addition to EUROHORCs (2004) and Science Europe (2014). In these efforts, the FWF paid out grants totalling EUR 6.4 million for 57 projects conducted at research institutions outside of Austria between 2003 and 2013. An average of five FWF projects were transferred abroad each year. Most of those transfers went to Germany, with Switzerland in second place. In the "Money follows researcher" initiative, the FWF adheres to the principle of reciprocity, meaning that the FWF only enables transfers to those host countries where a comparable funding agency allows projects to be transferred to Austria.</p>	ongoing	Click here

III.5 Networking measures for female researchers (role models and mentoring)

Activities during the last 2 years	Status	Evidence / Information
<p>The FWF's annual two-day workshops for (former and current) Firnberg and Richter grant recipients were expanded to include the regular invitation of leading female researchers as role models. The annual Firnberg/Richter award ceremony was changed for the first time in 2014; what was once a purely ceremonial event has now been expanded to include networking opportunities for women researchers. On March 9, 2015, ten established female researchers will assume the role of "hosts" (mentors) with a view to improving networking in this community.</p>	ongoing	

IV Training

IV.1 The FWF has launched a discussion of the extent to which the training aspects implemented in its Doctoral Programmes (DKs) should be emphasised in all other FWF programmes and, subsequently, what measures can be taken in order to reinforce this aspect.

Activities during the last 2 years	Status	Evidence / Information
<p>For budgetary reasons, the FWF was forced to suspend its call for Doctoral Programmes (DKs) in 2014. As a result, it was not possible to consider expanding the training measures for Ph.D. candidates to other funding programmes.</p>	stopped	