



**UNIVERSITEIT
GENT**

**HR Excellence in Research:
Strategy and Action Plan
Interim Report 2016**

1. Developing the HR strategy (2014)

The HR strategy as developed at Ghent University was the result of three complementary sources of information and input. These three processes of information gathering and discussions contributed primarily to the gap analysis, but also helped to shape the priorities in the HR strategy:

- Input provided by experts across the university administration, involving in particular the Department of Personnel and Organisation and the Research Department, but also the Departments of Education and of Administrative Affairs;
- Data collected from ECOOM, the Flemish policy centre for R&D Monitoring – in particular data on research careers and survey results on researchers' expectations ;
- Input provided by focus groups with the entire research community – involving PhD researchers, postdoctoral researchers and professorial staff.



Figure 1: Overview of input provided to HR strategy and action plan, Ghent University 2013-2014

The HR Strategy and Action plan generated in 2014 by this process, consisted of strategic components and practical implementation into 29 actions. Each of the 29 actions was assigned to one or more policy experts in the university's central administration offices.

The draft was submitted to various advisory bodies within the university. Their feedback helped to finetune the strategy and action plan. In addition, it helped to stimulate discussion on the role of Human Resources within the university's overall research policy and to embed the HR strategy deeper into the university's general decision-making process.

The endorsement process can be visualized as follows:

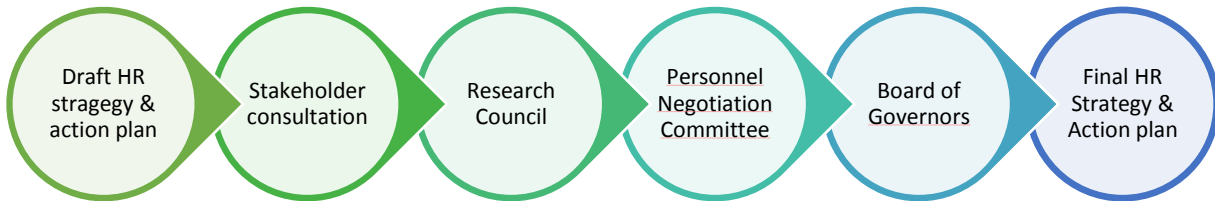


Figure 2: Endorsement process of HR strategy and action plan, Ghent University, January-April 2014

Ghent University's **Board of Governors** gave its approval to the initial HR Strategy and Action plan at its meeting of 4 April 2014.

The HR strategy was **submitted for approval to the European Commission** on 11 April 2014. The Commission's response on 16 May 2014 was highly positive. Ghent University was granted the permission to use the HR Excellence in Research badge for its internal and external communication. This award meant the end point for the development process, but also indicated the start of an ambitious follow-up process and implementation phase.

The two coordinators who managed the entire development process (Jasmien Van Daele and Karen Vandevelde, Department of Personnel & Organisation and Research Department respectively) also committed themselves to managing the implementation process.

2. Following up the HR strategy (2014-2016)

Upon approval by the University Board and the European Commission, an **internal communication strategy** was set up to increase awareness of the university's HR strategy amongst the entire research community. Letters to each of the faculties by our Rector, direct mailings through the university's electronic newsletter as well as a featured news message on the university's website contributed to this awareness campaign.

A number of faculties invited the project managers to give presentations on the HR strategy and to discuss the expected outcome of some of the measures. These discussions were very helpful in promoting a high-quality HR process throughout the university, to take into account discipline-specific issues and to engage a wider community of researchers than the group of stakeholders consulted in the start-up phase.

A webpage devoted to the HR Excellence in Research process was set up, informing the Ghent University Community as well as interested web visitors about the project and the process:

- <http://www.ugent.be/nl/vacatures/hr-actieplan-onderzoekers/hrexcellenceinresearch.htm> (Dutch)
- <http://www.ugent.be/en/work/hr-excellence/overview.htm> (English)

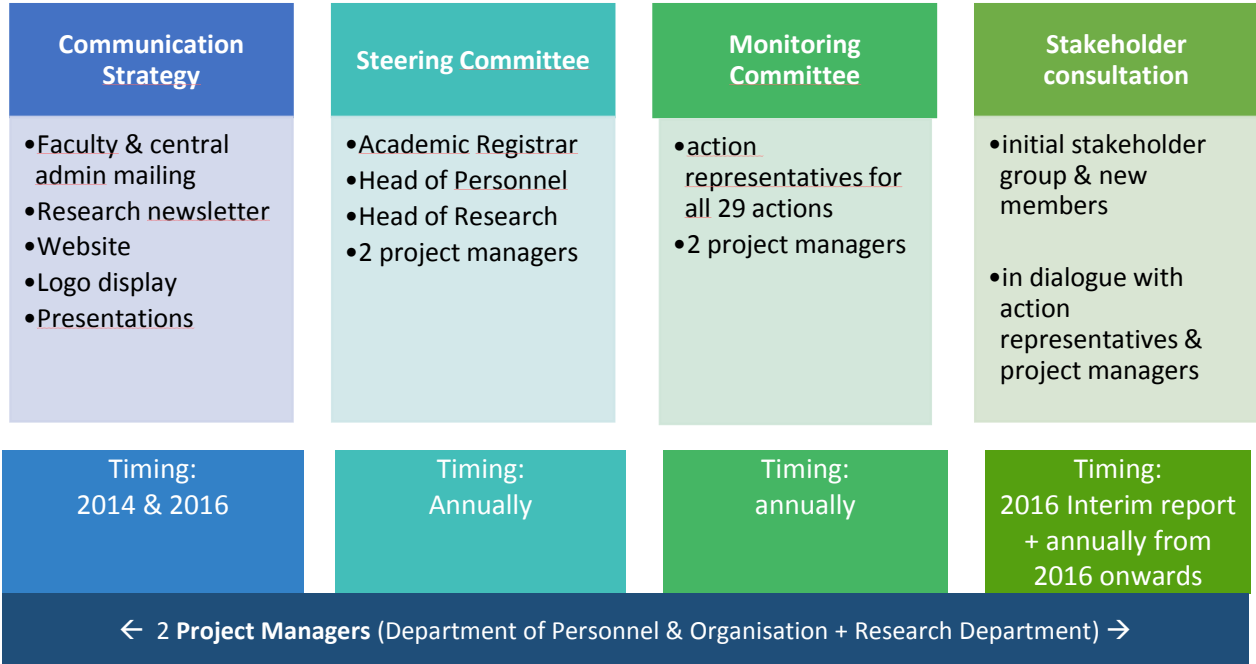
In addition, a solid **management structure** was initiated in order to guarantee a successful follow-up of the action plan. Key tool for this management structure was – and still is – the overview table identifying each of the actions, their timing, their action representative, and the status of the action at each monitoring moment.

First of all, a **Steering Committee** was set up with the role to regularly monitor the progress as scheduled in the action plan, and secondly to have the power to intervene should any stumbling blocks occur. The Committee consists of the highest levels of management under the university’s Rector and Vicerector. They meet formally once a year, receive an annual monitoring report designed by the two project managers, and formulate recommendations to the action representatives should any re-steering be desirable.

A **Monitoring Committee** was set up as a collective of all the university policy experts who provided input to the initial gap analysis and action plan, and who ended up taking responsibility for one or more of the 29 actions in Ghent University’s HR-action plan. They also meet formally once a year – usually a few weeks before the Steering Committee meetings – but in addition have regular contacts and informal meetings with the project managers.

The **two project managers** (Jasmien Van Daele, Karen Vandeveldel) who coordinated the HR strategy in its development phase as such, became the key coordinators in the implementation phase. They are members of the Steering committee as well as the Monitoring Committee, and are the first point of contact for any communication initiatives. They organize the communication and feedback loops between the individual action representatives, the monitoring committee and the steering committee.

In 2016, the project managers felt the need to reconnect with the initial group of stakeholders who provided input to the university’s gap analysis, HR strategy and action plan. Their views on the university’s progress in implementing its actions may differ from those of the Steering Committee and Monitoring Committee members, and they may signal new needs to be addressed. For the purposes of the current interim report, the project managers brought the **stakeholder focus group** back to life to address these issues. As quite a number of researchers who had provided input to the initial action plan were temporary research staff, the deans of all faculties were contacted to contact new interested staff members and to guarantee maximum participation of all researchers. This stakeholder group discussed the progress within the HR Strategy during a meeting on 12 May 2016. All participants at this meeting agreed that the stakeholder consultation should become a regular event once every year: this will help in communicating the HR-related achievements within the university and will contribute to a closer feedback loop with the research community on the implementation plan.



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Figure 3: Management structure for implementation of HR Strategy, Ghent University 2014-2017. For members of the Steering Committee, Monitoring Committee, Initial Stakeholder group and Follow-up Stakeholder group: see Annex 1.

3. Preparing the interim review (2016)

For the interim report and the updated action plan, the following provided input:

- **Each action representative** provided an update on the progress of their individual action
- The **monitoring committee**, consisting of the group of action representatives, composed the overall monitoring table
- The **steering committee** performed a first quality check on the progress
- The **stakeholders** provided a second quality check on the progress & reflected on future priorities
- The **two project managers** coordinated the internal evaluation process

The draft interim report and the revised Action plan were updated on the basis of their input.

The interim report was discussed during meetings of the university's Research Council (9 May 2016) and of the Personnel Negotiation Committee (25 May 2016).

Finally, the interim report was submitted to the university's Executive Board (10 June 2016).

4. Transversal achievements: Dialogue, collaboration, effectiveness

The **combination of bottom-up initiatives and top-down support** throughout the entire process has given all actors involved in the process a great sense of responsibility and achievement. The university's overall support – although critical initially considering the ambitious number of activities – has positively inspired everyone involved. More than ever before, **HR-issues are treated as policy-relevant challenges rather than merely administrative pursuits**. The culture of reflection and the university's commitment to improve has also contributed to the dialogue between the research community on the one hand and the university's administration on the other.

This has effects which are entirely positive to everyone involved, but has also **raised the expectations** of the research community and of the university management. As such, this posed new challenges. The attention given to HR issues at Ghent University over the last three to four years, as illustrated by the HR Excellence in Research award in 2014, has **brought new elements to the surface which had laid dormant before** (take, for example, the situation of researchers without government funding or appointment contract) or has **intensified the debate over difficult topics** (such as, for example, a pension plan for staff on temporary contracts). It would not be fair to assign *all* of these developments entirely to the HR Excellence in Research process. However, **the fact that these challenges are addressed and not ignored is part of the same culture of change that has provided the room for designing, developing and implementing the HR Excellence in Research strategy**. While positively an indication of a more active HR culture, these developments do place extra burdens on staff members and often also on funds, and require managerial decisions on setting the right kind of priorities. These challenges are discussed further below.

Secondly, the way in which the HR Strategy and action plan were implemented generated a number of **unexpected side benefits**. By bringing the action representatives together on a regular basis – experts fragmented across five different Departments in the university's administration services – a **culture of trust, constructive criticism and collaborative engagement** has developed which results in more coherence across all activities. The meetings organized by the Monitoring Committee, for example, do

more than just tack stock of progress. The action representatives share good practices, establish transversal links across actions, nurture collaboration, and inspire each other to overcome hurdles.

The **light management structure** and **high level of individual responsibility** in this project – entirely in line with Ghent University’s overall culture of participation – has so far proven to be an **efficient and effective way of working**. The responsibilities are clear to every individual, unit and department involved. The progress is monitored regularly without being burdensome.

5. Specific achievements

The actual implementation status (actions completed and actions in progress) is summarized in the attached **overview monitoring table**.

The colour coding in the monitoring table indicates the status of each of the actions.

GREEN = actions which have been completed or which are now a part of the regular operations of the university. They require no active follow-up by the action representatives or the HR strategy project managers and will no longer feature in the updated action plan.

YELLOW = actions which were already listed in the initial HR strategy, but either they have not been started or they are still under development within the foreseen timeline. They will remain a part of the updated HR strategy covering the period 2016-2017.

ORANGE = actions which have not yet been completed as foreseen, are delayed or modified.

13 of the 29 (original) actions are registered as “completed” or “part of the regular operations”.

A number of the **completed actions** may be defined as “**quick wins**”: relatively small interventions, or activities which were already in the process of being set up – even if Ghent University had not participated in the HR strategy. The “new way of working” policy (target 13) is a nice example: the pilot was already in preparation before the HR strategy was embarked on, but having it embedded within the HR Strategy made it more coherent with other HR-related interventions within the university. In addition, it enhanced the HR benefits of the project (trust and autonomy) rather than the practical and economic benefits (work space management, IT infrastructure).

Other actions are the result of **thorough consideration and discussion** with the research community. An interesting example here is the budgetary autonomy for postdoctoral researchers (target 20). This change in regulations required a mind-shift from the community of professors who had previously been the sole academic staff category who could apply for project funding and manage finances and personnel. More researchers now spend a longer time in postdoctoral positions. Prestigious grants and appointments at tenure track level now expect applicants to demonstrate independence and project management skills. In this changing context postdoctoral researchers were right to demand the opportunity to gain such management experience within our own institution. The fact that this action was embedded in the HR strategy and in line with the postdoc career policy at Ghent University, helped to convince the University Board of the importance of this change in regulations. Their decision in December 2015 required technical modifications in the financial workflows as well as a good communication strategy, but its implementation is **certainly successful**.

The balance between quick wins and more complex targets is important. Short-term achievements demonstrate progress to the research community, help to legitimize participation the HR Strategy, and contribute to the action representatives’ motivation. More challenging projects demonstrate ambition

and commitment. When completed, they give a great sense of achievement but more importantly, they contribute to the trust between the research community and the university management.

6. Specific challenges

Ghent University experienced challenges related to the HR strategy in three areas:

Delay in implementation

A small number of actions **did not proceed as planned** or proved to be more difficult to implement than foreseen. In some cases, practical obstacles or time pressures came in the way. In others, the action turned to be **more complex** than foreseen and was **redefined** by the monitoring committee. We describe the progress in the monitoring table (Annex 2), but elaborate briefly on the reasons for steering a different course here:

- **Target 1: Ghent University has the necessary processes in place to guarantee quality screening in the application procedure for all foreign PhD researchers and to introduce better quality processes in supervision for all PhD researchers:** The initial ‘good practice’ approach was no longer deemed sufficient when the Doctoral Schools developed a quality framework for doctoral training in 2015 and held an extensive stakeholder consultation. The scope of the initial action 1 was therefore broadened. In the updated HR Strategy, action 1’s progress is therefore still on track in terms of timing, but has been redefined.
- **Target 14: Ghent University initiates a better pension rights plan for all researchers employed by the university:** the situation of researchers proved to be particularly difficult. General principles on a new career structure model for research staff are being discussed and elaborated within a special advisory committee, which is currently investigating the feasibility of a pension plan for some categories of research staff. Negotiations with the staff union representatives will hopefully reach an acceptable solution for all within a reasonable time period.
- **Target 19: Ghent University makes sure that faculties adopt the current regulation for postdoctoral researchers with substantive teaching responsibilities to be formally entitled as co-lecturer.** While the central system (OASIS) allows registration (and thus formal acknowledgment) of all staff members involved in teaching courses, some faculties set internal limitations and only allow a maximum of 3 officially registered (co-)lecturers. Further follow-up with the faculty administrations is required.
- **Target 29: Ghent University develops a Research Data Management policy and infrastructure:** the target has been broadened in scope. Initially defined as a policy for “the opening up of research data”; this action now includes investments in infrastructure.

Transversal priority of “career prospects”

In addition to the four main themes of the European Charter & Code (Recruitment & Evaluation, Labour Conditions & Social Security, Training & Development, Ethical & Professional Aspects) Ghent University had already defined a fifth transversal focus on “Career Prospects” as a major theme in its HR strategy in 2014. The stakeholder consultation in 2016 identified this theme as one that will continue to require close attention. Despite a wide range of available information, hands-on training and courses made available, some researchers still hold unrealistic expectations with regard to their professional careers, strengthened in some cases by professors and supervisors who are unaware of the changing role of the PhD degree and the widening career opportunities for researchers. Events organized to address these issues often do not attract the researchers who need this information most. A number of actions in our strategy related to this topic are ongoing. On the occasion of this mid-term evaluation a commitment was

made to reassess the extent to which current and ongoing activities can be strengthened, in consultation with the stakeholder group, the Doctoral Schools and the Ghent University Postdoc Community.

New priorities

Based on the experiences of the Monitoring Committee and the Steering Committee and on informal feedback from other members of the Ghent University Research Community, **3 new actions (30, 31, 32) have been added to the initial 4-year action plan**. Their feasibility has been checked with the departments and action representatives responsible for carrying them out; the institution's commitment has been guaranteed by the Steering Committee.

These newly added actions are also marked in YELLOW in the monitoring overview as they are currently under development as foreseen.

We briefly describe the motivation for these changes here:

- **NEW Target 30: Developing a policy on minimal social security entitlements for researchers without regular funding or employment contract:** a staff member responsible for development collaboration projects pointed out that not all PhD researchers enjoy the same entitlements in terms of facilities (e.g. library loan term) or insurance (e.g. accident insurance), especially when their scholarship or appointment is funded from abroad. In such situations they are registered as students, not staff. An overall study was deemed necessary to compare various entitlements and to examine the feasibility of equal treatment for all.
- **NEW Target 31: Open & transparent Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R):** a number of grievances regarding recruitment procedures have been voiced at Ghent University over the previous years. An internal analysis was made of the proportion of internally versus externally recruited professors, providing a solid basis for reflection and discussion. The European Commission's OTM-R guidelines provide an excellent tool to address these issues.
- **NEW Target 32: Eliminating the obstacles to intersectoral mobility for researchers:** in January 2016 an ad-hoc stakeholder meeting was organized to examine whether researchers find sufficient opportunities to engage in intersectoral activities during their research work at Ghent University. A number of obstacles were identified and a first coherent analysis was made on the issues of internships, entrepreneurship and non-academic activities, focusing primarily on the PhD phase. All agreed that 'something' needed to be done – with this new action as a result.

7. Continued commitment to implementing the HR strategy

Gathering strengths to implement an action plan requires energy and focus. Continuing this level of dedication long-term requires an even stronger commitment. We can envisage a number of threats to this commitment, but we foresee manageable ways to address these:

- **Time constraints** → the HR strategy at Ghent University is ambitious and the most complex actions are still in progress. There is substantial risk that the next interim report will identify more actions as 'delayed' than is currently the case, as the increasing workload is not met by an increase in staff numbers taking responsibility for new actions. While the Steering Committee will oversee that such delays remain limited, we need to be realistic and allow for some flexibility in the implementation phase. The expected changes in the HRS4R process, as announced by the European Commission, will continue to provide external monitoring opportunities and require the submission of revised action plans. We are confident that this

continuation will allow for some flexibility while still guaranteeing the commitment to implement the actions we have promised.

- **Financial constraints** → the majority of the actions in our Action Plan have been tested as to their financial viability. However, there is cause for concern for some of these. Target 14 (developing a pension plan for all researchers, regardless of their contract or duration of employment) is expected to pose a considerable financial burden on the institution. Negotiations with staff unions are currently in place, trying to find an appropriate balance between financial feasibility and researchers' fair entitlements.
- **Turnover of staff members appointed as responsible for particular actions** → as each action representative is a member of an administrative unit or department within the university, the head of these units/departments are expected to delegate this responsibility to another staff member.
- **Turnover of staff members coordinating the HR strategy** → despite the light management structure, continued commitment requires coordination. This is in the hands of two people rather than one. If one was to leave their function, each still have their head of department as members of the Steering Committee and new staff members can be appointed to take over.

Annex 1: Stakeholders

Steering Committee members:

- Prof. Koen Goethals, Academic Registrar
- Prof. Ignace Lemahieu, Director of Research
- Mr. Hugo De Vreese, Director of Personnel & Organisation
- Dr. Jasmien Van Daele, HR Policy Advisor/Postdoc Career Manager
- Dr. Karen Vandeveldde, Policy Advisor Research

Monitoring Committee members:

- Dr. Dirk De Craemer, Head of Research Coordination Office
- Dr. Nele Bracke, Doctoral Schools Policy Advisor
- Esther De Smet, Policy Advisor Research
- Lieve Vanhelleputte, Head of Recruitment Office
- Christa De Coster, Recruitment Officer
- Stefanie Van der Burght, Policy Advisor Research
- Luc Van de Poele, Head of Educational Quality Assurance Office
- Prof. Guido Van Huylbroeck, Director Internationalisation
- Angelo De Bruycker, HR Policy Advisor
- Els Verhoye, Head of Career Development Office
- Dr. Katrien De Gelder, Doctoral Schools Policy Advisor
- Dr. Dieter De Bruyn, Doctoral Schools Policy Advisor
- Mieke Van de Putte, Legal Advisor Human Resources
- Sigried Lievens, Diversity Policy Advisor
- Dr. Tine Brouckaert, Gender Policy Advisor
- Hilde Van Overberghe, Welcome Officer
- Annik Leyman, Research Quality Assurance Officer
- Sara Drieghe, Confidential Advisor & Staff Councillor
- Helke Baeyens, Development Cooperation Officer
- Dr. Jasmien Van Daele, HR Policy Advisor/Postdoc Career Manager
- Dr. Karen Vandeveldde, Policy Advisor Research

Stakeholder group members (Interim report, 2016)

- Mieke Audenaert, postdoctoral researcher, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration
- Wim Peersman, postdoctoral researcher, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
- Katia Levecque, postdoctoral researcher, ECOOM & Faculty of Psychology & Educational Sciences
- Hans Dierckx, postdoctoral researcher, Faculty of Sciences
- Dieter De Coninck, postdoctoral researcher, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences
- Jana Asselman, postdoctoral researcher, Faculty of Bioscience Engineering
- Olga Petintseva, doctoral researcher, Faculty of Law
- Annelies Verdoolaege, postdoctoral researcher, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy
- Frederik De Grove, postdoctoral researcher, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences
- Freddy Haesebrouck, professor, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
- Lieve Balcaen, postdoctoral researcher, Faculty of Sciences
- Maarten Oosterlinck, postdoctoral researcher, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
- Rob De Staelen, postdoctoral researcher, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture

C & C THEME	GHENT UNIVERSITY ACTION	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE ACTOR	STATUS May 2016	KPI/Evidence/Outcome
RECRUITMENT AND EVALUATION	Target 1: Ghent University has the necessary processes in place to guarantee quality screening in the application procedure for all foreign PhD researchers and to introduce better quality processes in supervision for all PhD researchers.	2017 Q4	Doctoral Schools	The quality screening in recruiting, welcoming and supervision of international PhD researchers was initially intended as a 'good practice' approach. In 2015, however, the Doctoral Schools developed a quality framework for doctoral training. Consultation with a number of stakeholders prompted the necessity to broaden the scope of the initial action 1. Collecting good practices and adopting a "soft approach" was no longer deemed sufficient. In the updated HR Strategy, action 1's progress is therefore still on track in terms of timing, but has been redefined including open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment policies (and as such is linked with the new action 31); a policy on progress and re-registration for the PhD degree; and multiple supervisor arrangements. Still to be developed is a better embedment in the university's internationalization policy.	Quality framework for doctoral training has been approved by the University's Board (8 May 2015) and webpages are updated (https://www.ugent.be/en/research/research-staff/organisation/phdqualityframework.htm); procedure for blocking re-registration in case of insufficient research progress (with the possibility to stop the research project) is realized; the obligation of a second supervisor for each PhD researcher is included in the Education and Examination Code; training for supervisors on coaching of PhD students is in place.
RECRUITMENT AND EVALUATION	Target 2: Ghent University raises more awareness within faculties and research departments for making better use of various online international job portals. If feasible through an automated process, all academic vacancies are also published on the Euraxess website.	2015 Q3	Dept. of Personnel & Organisation	All academic job vacancies are posted on the English-language Ghent University website and, as part of a long-term structural agreement, within the Academic Positions network, the Euraxess and VDAB (Eures) websites. This is the case for professorial and assisting staff, and in 50 % of the cases also for research staff - depending on whether the position is attractive to international candidates. Since January 2016 vacancies for professorial staff can additionally be published through ResearchGate. The job postings are now integrated in the regular operations of the Recruitment and Selection Office.	This target has resulted in an increased visibility of Ghent University vacancies via Academic Positions (+25%) and an increased number of applications. Ghent University's English vacancies webpage: https://www.ugent.be/en/work
RECRUITMENT AND EVALUATION	Target 3: Ghent University implements a new mobility funding scheme at the level of the faculties according to new guidelines and commits itself to a regular review of this new scheme.	2015 Q2	Research Dept.	Every faculty of Ghent University has a specific Mobility Fund in place to support incoming and outgoing mobility, especially for early-stage researchers. All faculties have drawn up specific rules and regulations, within a university-wide regulatory framework, on how to apply for mobility funding. The University's Research Council is in charge of quality control.	A total institutional budget of 1.1 million euros is allocated to this purpose. http://www.ugent.be/en/research/funding/mobilityfund.htm
RECRUITMENT AND EVALUATION	Target 4: Ghent University has a clear view on the feasibility of initiating an institutional sabbatical system for professorial staff and acts upon the recommendations of this study.	2017 Q4	Research Dept.	To be started.	Expected outcome: (1) feasibility study and (2) recommendations for implementation
RECRUITMENT AND EVALUATION	Target 5: Ghent University regularly reviews its services for newly appointed staff – local and foreign.	Continuous	Dept. of Personnel & Organisation	Continuous efforts to improve the welcome services for new staff e.g. individual and group welcome sessions (for some staff categories) are in place, with a focus on administrative matters and getting started in the job; the buddy system for new arrivals at departmental level is currently under revision; social welcome events for different staff categories are in place - with special attention for internationals (and their their partners) (since 2015 for postdocs; since 2016 for other categories). As part of the university's internationalisation policy, continuous improvements are expected to be made in the near future, in consultation with the international staff community.	Positive feedback on continuous improvements from the international staff community
RECRUITMENT AND EVALUATION	Target 6: All Ghent University departments guarantee adequate and easily accessible information in English related to working at Ghent University.	Continuous	Academic Director Institutional Internationalisation Strategy	Progress, but slow: continuous efforts by individual departments to deliver English information on the website, e.g. http://onderwijsstips.ugent.be/en/ is a new practical tool with educational tips and tricks for all teaching staff. A centrally coordinated action has not been launched yet due to a change in the management position of the academic director on Internationalisation. In general, there are budgetary limits for translations on the departmental level.	Continued increase of English webpages. E.g. http://onderwijsstips.ugent.be/en/
RECRUITMENT AND EVALUATION	Target 7: Ghent University sets up good practice guidelines for the evaluation of individual research performance at the time of recruitment of new academic & research staff.	2017 Q4	Research Dept. + Dept. of Personnel & Organisation	This target has been moved forward (expected timing 2016 Q4) due to urgency and intensified link with target 8: Evaluation criteria have been discussed by the Ghent University Research Council. A plan for implementation is under preparation.	Expected outcome: vision text with general principles, positively received by the Research Council and approved by the University Board, and application of these principles in revised application forms for Research Council. Implementation in revised processes for recruitment is linked to the outcome of target 31.
RECRUITMENT AND EVALUATION	Target 8: A review of the personalized evaluation system is carried out and recommendations for further improvement will be implemented.	2016 Q4	Dept. of Personnel & Organisation + Research Dept. + Dept. of Education	A structural institutional review of the personalized evaluation system for professorial staff is being planned in 2016 - focus is on the review of the faculty frameworks and the fast-track procedure.	Expected outcome: modifications to the existing regulations on the promotion of academic staff, and the personalised target system in particular, approved by the University Board
RECRUITMENT AND EVALUATION	Target 9: Upon implementation of a solid research information system, Ghent University reduces the workload and increase transparency in the evaluation process of funding applications to its Special Research Fund, in reviewing personalized performance targets, in assessing applications for promotion, etc.	2017 Q4	Research Dept. + Dept. of Information and Communication Technology + Financial Dept.	Data collection on researchers, projects and publications (delivered by the Flemish Dept. for Economy, Science and Innovation), as phase 1 of the development of a new research information system (GISMO), will be completed by the end of 2016 Q4. Phase 2 (adding or developing project workflows, other scientific output and activities, electronic academic CV) will start in 2017.	By 2018 Ghent University researchers will be able, through GISMO, to electronically manage their administrative workflows and (re)use for multiple purposes all available research data. https://www.ugent.be/en/research/research-staff/organisation/gismo.htm
CAREER PROSPECTS	Target 10: Ghent University increases its number of initiatives drawing attention to the competencies of doctorate holders and raising awareness in the non-academic labour market regarding the value of research experience.	Continuous	Doctoral Schools + Dept. of Personnel & Organisation	In addition to strengthening the career awareness and employability of its researchers, Ghent university continuously invests in building long-term contacts with employers, recruiters and intermediaries on the external labour market through organizing on a structural basis and participating in events and fora fostering the value and competencies of PhD holders for a wide range of careers (e.g. Job Market for Young Researchers, From PhD to Job Market, debate with external employers on competencies and jobs for postdocs, intersectoral mentoring). For sharing best practices with partners of the U4 network (Gent, Groningen, Göttingen, Uppsala), Ghent University career professionals are participating in a staff training (two-year cycle 2016-2017).	http://www.ugent.be/doctoralschools/en/careersupport http://www.ugent.be/en/work/career/postdoc-talent-management/postdoc-community.htm
CAREER PROSPECTS	Target 11: Ghent University further develops postdoc talent management, setting up: postdoctoral training (see under "talent and development"); contact events in order to increase the exposure to other labour markets (academic and non-academic); a postdoc community, a grass roots postdoc association, intended to strengthen the mutual career interests of this group.	Continuous	Dept. of Personnel & Organisation	Since 2015, after a pilot phase in 2013-2014, the University's Postdoc Talent Management programme is part of the regular activities of the Department of Personnel & Organisation. A vision text on postdoctoral career policy and guidance was approved by the University's Board of Governors, a postdoc support programme has been put together consisting of skills trainings, mentoring schemes (towards an academic career and the external labour market) and individual career coaching. A website with online career resources is in place and continuously updated. The Ghent University Postdoc Community has been launched in 2014 and coordinates (4 times a year) postdoc career events, organized by postdoc representatives for their peers (e.g. the central theme in 2015-2016 is careers outside academia).	Vision text on postdoctoral career policy and guidance was approved by the University's Board (14 February 2014). Full webpages available: https://www.ugent.be/en/work/career/postdoc-talent-management

CAREER PROSPECTS	Target 12: Ghent University communicates openly about realistic career perspectives within and outside the university, both at the institutional level as on the departmental level. The heads of department and the PhD supervisors have the responsibility to raise career awareness amongst their research staff by giving them all possible exposure and opportunities in order to develop their competencies and skills.	Continuous	Doctoral Schools + Dept. of Personnel & Organisation + PhD supervisors + Heads of department	Continuous efforts at different levels, e.g. top-down, overall career support programme by the Doctoral Schools, involving PhD students and supervisors, the declaration by the University's Board on a shared responsibility in raising awareness and career prospects of postdoctoral researchers, professorial staff, the university and the external labour market; bottom-up, the Ghent University Postdoc Community launched a campaign to make faculty board members and deans aware of the responsibility of PI's to make their research staff aware of the next career step.	See also targets 10, 11, 22, 23.
CAREER PROSPECTS	Target 13: Ghent University completes a feasibility study investigating a new type of long-term appointment for a limited number of researchers with a designated management or coordination role.	2016 Q3	Dept. of Personnel & Organisation + Research Dept.	The possibility of establishing a new type of long-term appointments for research staff is part of the analysis and ongoing negotiations on a new transparent career model for research staff (see also the status of target 14).	A taxonomy of different research staff roles, with a limited number of research staff posts (as senior research managers/coordinators) with contracts of indefinite duration.
LABOUR CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL SECURITY	Target 14: Ghent University initiates a better pension rights plan for all researchers employed by the university.	2015 Q3 => 2017 Q2	Dept. of Personnel & Organisation	Since September 2015, a special advisory committee, designated by the Rector, is elaborating a new transparent career model for research staff. This involves a coherent package of fair labour conditions and social security rights, employment contracts, and guidance and support measures strengthening the career prospects of research staff members within and outside the university. The feasibility of supplying a pension plan for specific categories of research staff is currently under discussion within this committee.	A new career model & structure for research staff, with the possibility of a pension plan for specific categories of research staff, is expected to be approved and in place by mid 2017.
LABOUR CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL SECURITY	Target 15: A strategy and action plan introducing "a new way of working" is undertaken with the aim to abandon the current ad hoc arrangements.	2015 Q4	Chief registered administrator + Dept. of Personnel & Organisation + Dept. of Information and Communication Technology + Dept. of Infrastructure and Facilities	A pilot project on teleworking (running in all central administration departments and two research departments in 2014 and 2015) was positively evaluated. The University's Board has approved a university-wide regulatory framework for the (gradual) application of teleworking, based on formal regulations and working arrangements in 3 domains: HR, ICT and (activity- and result-based instead of fixed) workspaces. From 1 January 2017 teleworking will be formally extended to all Ghent University employees.	Approval by the University's Board of the university-wide implementation (1 April 2016). Teleworking charters for individual staff members have been developed. www.ugent.be/en/staff/a-new-way-of-working
LABOUR CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL SECURITY	Target 16: Ghent University implements the actions of its recently launched gender policy plan.	2015 Q4 (policy plan); implementation continuous	Diversity and Gender Policy Unit	A general policy plan is completed. Implementation on the faculty level is the next step, e.g. with support of the deans, faculties have launched a gender policy campaign. On the central level, a plan on international mobility criteria for tenure track professorial staff members is carried out by the Dept. of Personnel & Organisation.	Ghent University commits to reach 40 % of women in tenure track professorial staff positions. http://www.ugent.be/nl/univgent/waarvoor-staat-ugent/diversiteit-en-gender/genderbeleidsplan (in Dutch)
LABOUR CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL SECURITY	Target 17: Ghent University implements the actions of its recently launched policy plan for researchers with disabilities.	2015 Q4 (policy plan); implementation continuous	Diversity and Gender Policy Unit	A general policy plan is completed. The implementation is ongoing, e.g. a special staff network on the theme of working with disabled staff members and chronic diseases is established.	http://www.ugent.be/nl/univgent/waarvoor-staat-ugent/diversiteit-en-gender/functiebeperking/personeel/functiebeperkingpersoneel.html (in Dutch)
LABOUR CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL SECURITY	Target 18: Ghent University ensures a better evaluation and recognition of teaching skills in both the recruitment process (e.g. by explicitly mentioning teaching responsibilities in researcher vacancies) and in the general evaluation/appraisal system.	2017 Q1	Dept. of Education + Dept. of Personnel & Organisation + Research Dept.	Ghent University formally acknowledges an important set of teaching criteria (experience by evaluation, expertise, responsibilities) in the recruitment process of professorial staff members. Teaching as part of evaluation criteria for researchers is included in target 8.	University's Board approved the changes in the regulations for professorial staff with regard to teaching criteria in the recruitment phase on 10 October 2014. Templates for professorial staff vacancies have been updated with explicit criteria for teaching skills/experience.
LABOUR CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL SECURITY	Target 19: Ghent University makes sure that faculties adopt the current regulation for postdoctoral researchers with substantive teaching responsibilities to be formally entitled as co-lecturer.	2015 Q4 => 2017 Q4	Dept. of Education + Faculty Boards	The central system allows to register 1 main lecturer and as many co-lecturers as needed, acknowledging all those who have actual teaching responsibility. However, some faculties apply internal restrictions (e.g. they officially register maximum 3 staff members as (co)lecturers, while in practice often more than 3 people are involved in teaching courses). Faculties need to be encouraged to formally register all actual (co-)lecturers. This target requires further follow-up in close connection with the faculty administrations.	Expected outcome: faculties register all (co)lecturers correctly.
LABOUR CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL SECURITY	Target 20: Ghent University develops a policy with appropriate conditions and circumstances in which research autonomy, budget management and a co-supervising role for postdoctoral researchers can be formally recognised.	2016 Q1	Research Dept. + Board of Governors	Since the end of 2015 postdoctoral researchers enjoy the same entitlements to apply for and to manage research projects as professorial staff. This means they can be principal investigator (as long as the funding agency accepts them as as promotor of the project, e.g. European funds). This allows postdocs to take formal responsibility, not only as a researcher, but also as a (budget) manager, providing evidence for their budget management responsibilities and experience, which strengthens their career prospects.	New regulation approved by the Executive Board on 11 December 2015. The Finance Dept. and Research Dept. have introduced the quality control mechanisms required by the electronic project management system. New webpages with practical information on financial project management were developed: https://www.ugent.be/en/research/research-staff/projectmanagement.htm
LABOUR CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL SECURITY	Target 21: Ghent University develops an action plan to implement a psychosocial welfare policy framework, targeted at the different groups and levels of the institution.	2015 Q2	Office of Prevention & Protection at Work	A university-wide policy and action plan on psychosocial welfare of all staff members, approved in 2013, is further implemented and followed-up. The purpose is to inform, raise awareness, activate and help staff members preventing and treating psychosocial risks. There are actions on the central, the faculty and the individual level. Current focal action points are leadership, community-building and specific approaches for different staff categories (professorial staff/assisting staff and temporary research staff). There is special attention for stress reduction and prevention (as a legal obligation) and burn-out via coaching and training modules. Focus/working groups on the faculty level are being setup. A follow-up staff survey will be carried out in 2017.	Since the University launched its plan, there is a significant increase in the amount of psychosocial risk related advice questions.
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT	Target 22: Ghent University further develops strategies for embedding the doctoral training programme in the everyday research practice of PhD researchers and supervisors.	Continuous	Doctoral Schools	Ghent University is constantly developing its doctoral training programme in order to meet the real and changing needs of the PhD researchers. A wide range of specialist and transferable skills courses (in 4 clusters: career management, communication, leadership & personal efficiency, research & valorization) is built upon by adding new courses, e.g. on research integrity (see also target 27). Small group trainings are complemented with other learning formats e.g. a welcome and introduction day for starting PhD researchers (since 2013). Continuous efforts are made to involve supervisors and raise awareness on the added value of doctoral training for their PhD researchers, especially paving the way for a career after finishing a PhD. The Ghent University Doctoral Schools are currently looking into the call of the Flemish Interuniversity Council to further develop doctoral training for pure academic career purposes and a recommendation of the Flemish Council for Science and Innovation to introduce mandatory doctoral training.	Currently, 35% of the researchers obtaining a PhD holds a doctoral training certificate; 72 % has followed at least one doctoral training course. The Doctoral Schools continue these efforts.
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT	Target 23: A training programme is available designed to position postdoctoral researchers in good jobs either inside or outside academia. There are 3 clusters of skills training: Career management; Leadership (e.g. supervising PhD researchers); Positive impact: creativity, pitching and resilience.	2015	Dept. of Personnel & Organisation	A training package tailored to the postdoctoral working context and with the purpose to support postdocs in their career and skills development is now part of the University's regular staff training programme. This includes: career management, leadership, creativity/pitching/resilience. In the Spring of 2016 a pilot on negotiation skills was organized and will be evaluated to complement the regular programme.	http://www.ugent.be/en/work/career/postdoc-talent-management/postdoctrainingprogram.htm . Along the needs of the postdocs, the training programme will be further developed.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT	Target 24: Ghent University continues elaborating academic leadership and development for its professorial staff at all levels in close collaboration with the concrete needs of the target group (i.e. short and experience-based).	Continuous	Dept. of Personnel & Organisation	Training courses on leadership skills for professorial staff (in Dutch and English) are now part of the University's regular training programme. This is complemented with the format of learning peer networks e.g. for heads of department. A mentoring scheme for new professorial staff members, with special focus on the internationals, will be launched in September 2016.	Based on continuous evaluation, the leadership training programme for professorial staff will be further developed.
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT	Target 25: Ghent University co-organises a new programme on strategic leadership for senior management.	2016 Q2	Dept. of Personnel & Organisation	The 2nd cycle of the two-year Academic Leadership programme for deans and directors within the U4 partnership (Ghent, Groningen, Göttingen, Uppsala) is completed in the Spring of 2016 and positively evaluated. A coaching trajectory on leadership styles and skills was set up for the University's senior management level (Chief administrators and directors of the Central Administration).	Leadership development for senior management level completed (top down) - in line with the University's vision on leadership development for other target groups (bottom up).
ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS	Target 26: As part of its review of evaluation criteria, Ghent University incorporates societal impact and public engagement as an aspect of research practice that deserves specific incentives and requires recognition in research evaluation.	2015 Q2 (policy plan) & 2017 Q4 (implementation)	Research Dept.	A policy plan on societal impact has been approved in May 2015. Based upon this plan, a number of initiatives are being taken (in synergy with targets 6, 7, 8, 9 and 23) to increase researchers' awareness of the societal value of research, to strengthen their involvement in outreach activities and to reward achievements in this area. A steering committee has been appointed to implement these.	By 2018 these actions, amongst others, should be realized: structural inclusion of societal impact in institutional and decentralized research policy (e.g. as part of evaluation criteria), support to researchers (e.g. via contact points and a community of practice), database of expertise and service to society activities (GISMO), online information with good practices, funding information, and in-depth information on the types of societal value creation and a training programme for researchers, minimal expertise about ethical and legal aspects of societal impact. https://www.ugent.be/en/research/research-staff/organisation/soc-value
ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS	Target 27: The Doctoral Training Programme introduces sessions on scientific integrity and on the professional responsibilities of researchers as part of its regular programme.	2015 Q3	Doctoral Schools	A training package (4 sessions per year) on research integrity for individual PhD researchers has been launched and positively evaluated. There is a growing interest for introduction and awareness workshops at group level (on the request of faculties/departments/research groups). Research integrity training is promoted via different channels and formats, e.g. the introduction day for new PhD researchers, EIDS Spring School, external policy communication.	A workshop training format is developed and research policy advisors are trained in (via train-the-trainer format). Webpages have been developed: https://www.ugent.be/en/research/research-staff/organisation/research-integrity/overview.htm
ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS	Target 28: A Code of Conduct is drawn up serving as a framework for good practices in the supervisor – PhD researcher relationship.	2015 Q2	Doctoral Schools	A Ghent University Charter for doctoral students and their supervisors is introduced in the summer of 2015. The Charter, signed by all new PhD students at the start of a PhD project, states in broad terms the rights and duties of the PhD researcher and the supervisor and aims to align the expectations of each. It is based on the general principles of the European Charter for Researchers and good practice guidelines derived from a broad stakeholder consultation at Ghent University. The follow-up is integrated in the regular activities of the Doctoral Schools.	Approval by the University's Executive Board (26 May 2015). Webpages available: http://www.ugent.be/en/research/doctoralresearch/charter.htm
ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS	Target 29: Ghent University develops a Research Data Management policy and infrastructure.	2016 Q4 (policy) and 2017 Q4 (infrastructure)	Research Dept.	Initially this target focused on developing an institutional open data policy. Meanwhile, the scope of the target has broadened. The topic of Open data started out as a side-track of the bigger policy topic on research integrity. During the last few years however, it became clear that the importance and range of the data topic increased and it became a self-contained topic. The actions involved contain a lot more than the opening up of research data; Research Data Management is about all actions needed to make research data discoverable, accessible and understandable in the long term and contains organization, documentation, storage, sharing and archiving of research data. A policy plan is expected to be completed in 2016; implementing the infrastructure is scheduled for 2017 – but may require more time for completion.	A draft policy plan is in preparation. Webpages with information, tips & tricks, tools, datamanagement plans are available (intranet): https://www.ugent.be/en/research/research-staff/organisation/datamanagement
	ADDITIONAL NEW TARGETS				
LABOUR CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL SECURITY	Target 30: Developing a policy on minimal social security entitlements for researchers without regular funding or employment contract	2017 Q4	Research Dept. + Dept. of Personnel & Organisation	Ghent University is currently reviewing its insurance and admission badge policies for 'visiting' researchers without regular funding or employment contract and will prepare a draft proposal on guaranteeing minimal rights and social security protection for all temporary researchers.	Expected outcome: new regulation for visiting researchers, approved by the University Board
RECRUITMENT AND EVALUATION	Target 31: Open & transparant Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R)	2017 Q1	Research Dept. + Dept. of Personnel & Organisation	In 2016 a flyer was designed to promote open recruitment policies in the recruitment of externally funded research staff, adopting the principles laid out in the OTM-R guideline. For internally funded professorial staff, an internal analysis was made of the proportion of internally versus externally recruited professors, providing a solid basis for discussion. In addition, a new working group was set up in 2016 with a task of developing a more adequate recruitment policy. Based on this policy, a number of procedures are expected to change, such as criteria for the composition of selection committees, procedures for endorsements of job vacancy descriptions, and regulations with regard to the various selection stages. Their task is expected to be completed at the end of 2016.	Expected outcome: flyer raising awareness on OTM-R principles is distributed across the university; the University Board gives its approval to a strengthened recruitment process.
CAREER PROSPECTS	Target 32: Eliminating the obstacles to intersectoral mobility for researchers	2017 Q4	Research Dept.	A first coherent analysis was made on the issues of internships, entrepreneurship and non-academic activities, focusing primarily on the PhD phase. A plan was developed to address the discrimination in regulations between various types of scholarships, to remove obstacles at institutional level and to engage a discussion with Flemish and federal government agencies regarding legislative barriers. Expected timing: 2016 & 2017.	Expected outcome: information campaign on internships; extension of entrepreneurial support from BA-MA level to PhD-level; more transparent regulations on IP protection for PhD researchers; meetings with the ministries in order to address legislative barriers (the success of these is however outside our remit).

STATUS (Did we achieve our target?)

Action completed & now part of the regular operational activities. No intervention or detailed monitoring required

Ongoing (on track in foreseen timeline) and continuously improving

Scope has changed or target has been postponed