

HR Excellence in Research

Action Plan

Action Plan

Case number

2025BA19082

Name Organisation under review

UNIVERSITY OF BANJA LUKA

Organisation's contact details

Bulevar vojvode Petra Bojovica 1A, Banja Luka, Republic of Srpska, 78000, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Submission date to the European Commission

21/04/2026

1. Organisational Information

Please provide a limited number of key figures for your organisation. Fields marked with * are compulsory.

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD students either full-time or part-time involved in research *	805
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	0
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	362
Of whom are women *	419
Of whom are R3 or R4 = established or leading researchers with a large degree of autonomy (e.g. holding the status of principal investigator or professor) *	453
Of whom are R2 = recognised researcher (e.g. postdoctoral researcher, junior researcher) *	148
Of whom are R1 = first stage researcher (e.g. doctoral candidate, research apprentice) *	206
Total number of students (if relevant) *	15000
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching, and research staff) *	1397
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for the most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	46022860
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	9824799

RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for the most recent fiscal year)

€

Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	3551567
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	120242

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)

The University of Banja Luka is the second largest public university in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the leading higher education and research institution in the Republic of Srpska. Established in 1975, the University has developed into a comprehensive academic institution that plays a key role in education, scientific research, innovation, and regional development.

The University of Banja Luka comprises 17 faculties and one Academy of Arts, offering a wide range of study programmes across natural sciences, medical sciences, engineering, social sciences, humanities, and arts. The University educates approximately 15,000 students at undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels.

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Please provide an overview of the organisation in terms of the current strengths and weaknesses of the current practice under the four thematic headings of the European Charter for Researchers at your organisation.

Note: Click on the name of each of the four thematic headings of the European Charter for Researchers to open the editor and provide your answer.

Ethics, integrity, gender, and open science*

**Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)**

The University of Banja Luka is an integrated university and consists of 18 member units: 16 faculties, the Academy of Arts, and the Institute for Genetic Resources. A total of 623 out of 800 researchers employed at the University completed the survey. The overall mean score for the questions in the first pillar is 4.42, with a standard deviation of 0.97 and a coefficient of variation of 22%, which is also the highest mean score among all four pillars.

Descriptive statistics for the individual questions included in the first pillar are presented below in Table 1.

Table 1: Survey results related to ethics, integrity, gender equality and open science (M – mean, SD – standard deviation, Me – median, Mo – mode)

Question	M	SD	Me	Mo
1. In my research work, I consistently adhere to ethical principles appropriate to my discipline and practise honesty, reliability, impartiality and open communication throughout the research process.	4.95	0.24	5.00	5.00
2. I avoid plagiarism and respect the rules governing the use of authorship and intellectual property at all stages of the research process.	4.97	0.19	5.00	5.00
3. I am familiar with the institutional rules and procedures for reporting and addressing research misconduct.	4.26	0.87	4.00	5.00
4. I have the freedom of scientific research, which I exercise responsibly when formulating research questions, selecting samples and analytical methods, and presenting research results, while respecting legal and operational constraints.	4.79	0.49	5.00	5.00
5. I make the results of my research publicly available for further use and, where appropriate, for social or commercial application.	4.72	0.62	5.00	5.00
6.1. There is no discrimination at the University on the following grounds: [Sex or gender]	4.31	1.07	5.00	5.00
6.2. There is no discrimination at the University on the following grounds: [Age]	4.26	1.08	5.00	5.00
6.3. There is no discrimination at the University on the following grounds: [Ethnic or national origin]	4.42	1.04	5.00	5.00
6.4. There is no discrimination at the University on the following grounds: [Religion or belief]	4.40	1.06	5.00	5.00

6.5. There is no discrimination at the University on the following grounds: [Social origin]	4.40	1.05	5.00	5.00
6.6. There is no discrimination at the University on the following grounds: [Sexual orientation]	4.31	1.08	5.00	5.00
6.7. There is no discrimination at the University on the following grounds: [Language]	4.46	1.01	5.00	5.00
6.8. There is no discrimination at the University on the following grounds: [Disability]	4.39	1.03	5.00	5.00
6.9. There is no discrimination at the University on the following grounds: [Political opinion]	3.72	1.33	4.00	5.00
6.10. There is no discrimination at the University on the following grounds: [Social or economic status]	4.29	1.07	5.00	5.00
7. I am familiar with the University's strategic objectives, funding mechanisms and the procedures required to conduct research.	3.87	0.97	4.00	4.00
8. I strive to conduct socially relevant research and to inform stakeholders about changes and obstacles in the research process.	4.30	0.84	5.00	5.00
9. I use funding sources responsibly, transparently and efficiently, respect the principles of sustainability, and take responsibility for my own actions in research.	4.79	0.53	5.00	5.00
10. The University supports and formally recognises different forms of researcher mobility.	4.29	0.91	5.00	5.00

Particularly high scores and low variability are observed for the questions relating to adherence to ethical principles and the avoidance of plagiarism (mean \approx 4.95–4.97; standard deviation \approx 0.19–0.24), indicating a strong consensus among researchers regarding the acceptance of these standards. On the other hand, relatively lower scores for familiarity with institutional procedures for reporting irregularities (mean = 4.26; standard deviation = 0.87) and familiarity with strategic objectives, funding mechanisms and procedures (mean = 3.87; standard deviation = 0.97) suggest that, although normative principles are largely adopted, there is room for more systematic internal communication, training and more detailed familiarisation with research procedures. The lowest score within this pillar relates to the perception of the absence of discrimination on the grounds of political opinion (mean = 3.72; standard deviation = 1.33), where a high standard deviation indicates heterogeneity of experiences and potential polarisation of views.

Based on the results obtained, it is necessary to systematise and highlight the institutional procedures for reporting irregularities, as well as the University's strategic objectives, funding mechanisms and relevant administrative procedures, through short targeted training sessions, clear protocols and simple guides available to researchers.

Researchers assessment, recruitment, and progression*

**Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)**

The mean score for the questions in the second pillar is 4.29, with a standard deviation of 0.95 and a coefficient of variation of 22%, indicating that respondents generally perceive the appointment and reappointment procedures as relatively efficient and largely aligned with the principles of merit and transparency. A detailed overview of the descriptive measures by question is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Survey results related to the assessment, recruitment and advancement of researchers (M – mean, SD – standard deviation, Me – median, Mo – mode)

Question	M	SD	Me	Mo
11. The system for evaluating and assessing researchers takes into account a range of activities, and the assessment relies on the qualitative evaluation by relevant experts, with the responsible use of quantitative indicators.	4.00	0.96	4.00	4.00
12. Evaluation systems used in appointment and reappointment procedures are transparent, merit-based and include experts from outside the institution.	4.26	0.96	5.00	5.00
13. The evaluation criteria used in appointment and reappointment procedures are publicly available, comprehensive and clear.	4.51	0.84	5.00	5.00
14. Changes in career paths are not an obstacle to further academic advancement.	4.02	1.02	4.00	5.00
15. There is no discrimination in appointment or reappointment procedures.	4.20	1.05	5.00	5.00
16. Members of appointment committees have relevant experience for assessing the candidates' abilities and include members from the relevant scientific or artistic fields.	4.44	0.82	5.00	5.00
17. Candidates for academic appointment are provided with information about the appointment procedure and are informed of the results of the competition.	4.63	0.71	5.00	5.00
18. In the selection of candidates, different forms of mobility are appropriately valued, including geographical, sectoral, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary mobility.	4.10	0.99	4.00	5.00
19. In appointment and reappointment procedures, in addition to professional contributions, achievements in teaching are also taken into account.	4.43	0.93	5.00	5.00

20. The evaluation of candidates' results in appointment or reappointment procedures is based on objective indicators, regardless of the reputation of the institution at which those results were achieved.	4.33	0.91	5.00	5.00
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The highest scores are observed for items relating to publicly available and clearly defined criteria (mean = 4.51) and the provision of information to candidates about the procedure and outcomes of the competition (mean = 4.63), which are key elements of good governance practice. The lowest score (mean = 4.00; standard deviation = 0.96) relates to the extent to which the evaluation system sufficiently combines the qualitative assessment of experts with the responsible use of quantitative indicators, which may indicate the need for further alignment of criteria, greater consistency of practices across the University's member units, and clearer explanation of how indicators are used in decision-making.

Working conditions and practices*

**Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)**

The mean score for the questions in the third pillar is 4.16, with a standard deviation of 1.04 and a coefficient of variation of 25%, with descriptive values by question presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Survey results related to working conditions and social security (M – mean, SD – standard deviation, Me – median, Mo – mode)

Question	M	SD	Me	Mo
21. The University provides a stimulating environment for research and education in accordance with national occupational health and safety legislation.	3.98	1.04	4.00	5.00
22. I am provided with flexible working conditions (for example, accessibility for persons with disabilities, the ability to freely use annual leave, flexible working hours, and the use of paid leave), in accordance with the legal framework and the collective agreement regulating higher education and research activity.	4.39	0.94	5.00	5.00
23. Secure employment is guaranteed regardless of the type of contract concluded, in accordance with national legislation.	4.30	1.00	5.00	5.00
24. I have health and pension insurance in accordance with the applicable legal framework.	4.92	0.33	5.00	5.00
25. The research environment is adequately equipped (e.g. appropriate equipment, infrastructure, resources for remote work, etc.) and corresponds to the needs of researchers.	3.44	1.20	4.00	4.00
26. I have access to the necessary administrative and technical support.	3.82	1.16	4.00	5.00
27. I am aware that the University has a legal act regulating the protection of intellectual property rights, in accordance with national legislation.	4.24	0.97	5.00	5.00
28. The University has developed clear and impartial rules for submitting and resolving complaints.	3.99	0.99	4.00	5.00
29. University bodies responsible for decision-making, consultation and information always include researchers.	3.91	1.01	4.00	5.00
30. I apply the principles of open science and adequately present the results of my research to the public, in accordance with the rules on the protection of intellectual property, which the University recognises.	4.57	0.70	5.00	5.00

The highest scores and the greatest level of agreement relate to the basic elements of social security, indicating compliance with legal obligations. In contrast, the lowest scores relate to material and technical conditions and administrative and technical support, which, together with the relatively high variability, suggests uneven working conditions among the University's member units and a potentially significant impact on research productivity.

Taking into account the heterogeneity of the University, an analysis was conducted to determine whether differences exist in material resources and technical support among the University's member units. Descriptive statistics show a clear range of mean scores, from the lowest at the Faculty of Technology (mean = 2.80), the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (2.95), the Faculty of Mining (3.00) and the Academy of Arts (3.03), to the highest at the Institute for Genetic Resources (4.22) and at member units with averages above 3.8, such as the Faculty of Political Sciences (3.97), the Faculty of Medicine (3.94) and the Faculty of Philosophy (3.84). This pattern suggests that perceptions of the adequacy of material resources are weakest in member units that are structurally more dependent on laboratory or technical infrastructure or specialised equipment, while the most favourable perceptions are found in units with better resources or where researchers perceive available resources as more adequate for their needs.

For question 26 (administrative and technical support), the lowest average scores occur at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering (mean = 3.51), the Academy of Arts (3.51), the Faculty of Mining Engineering (3.44) and the Faculty of Technology (3.31), while the highest scores are observed at the Faculty of Philosophy (4.27), the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport (4.25), the Faculty of Political Science (4.23), the Faculty of Security Science (4.08) and the Institute for Genetic Resources (4.56). This indicates that administrative and technical support is perceived as systematically stronger in certain member units, although the range of differences is smaller than in the case of material resources. A graphical presentation of the scores for questions 25 and 26 is provided in Figure 1.

Resource scores by faculty/unit (Q25–Q26)

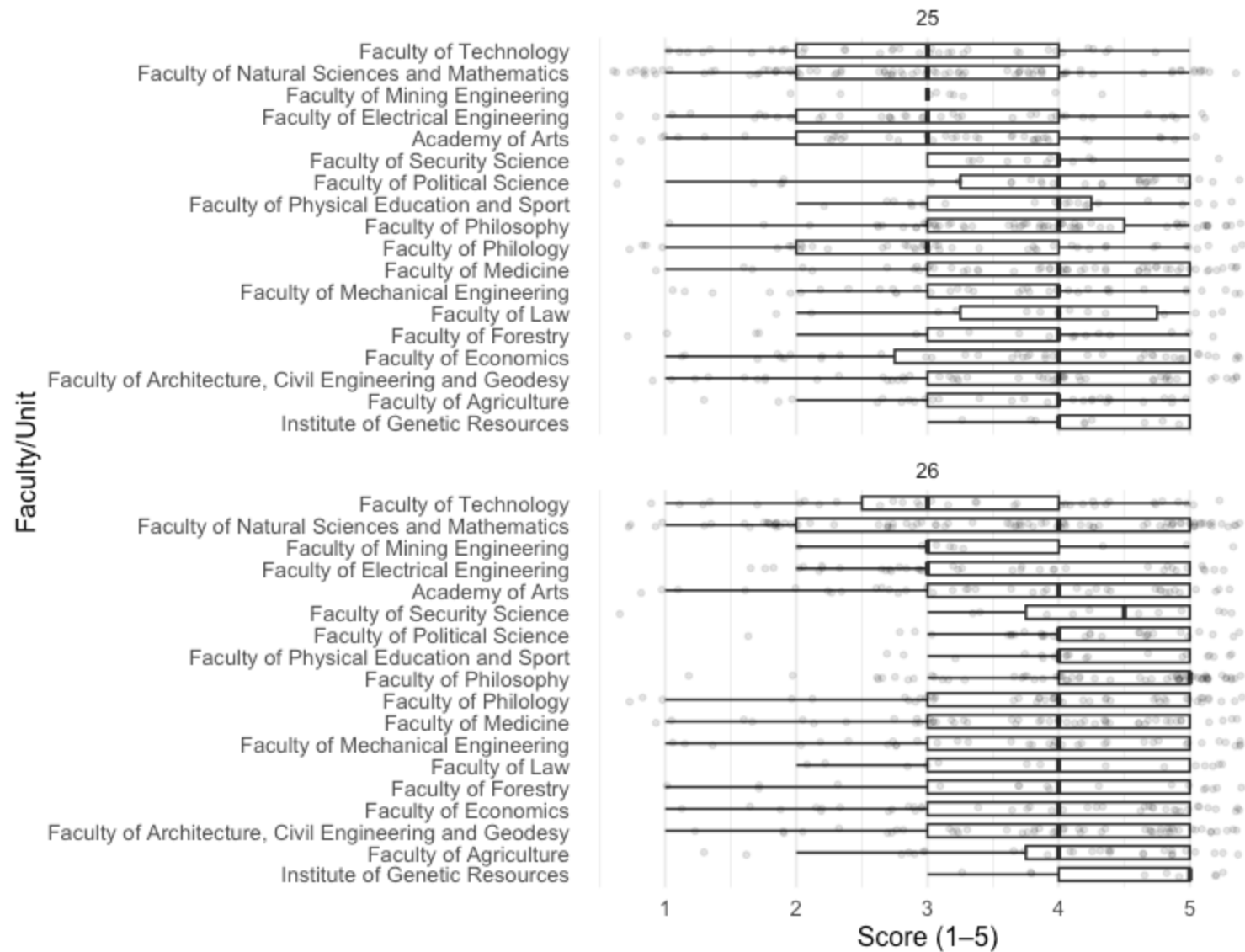


Figure 1: Scores for material resources and technical support by University member units

Lower scores are also observed in segments relating to the development and perception of complaint mechanisms and the inclusion of researchers in decision-making processes, indicating room for strengthening participatory governance and clearer procedures for the protection of rights.

Additional analysis by member unit should be conducted to determine the equipment available and what improvements are needed, and on that basis to develop a capital investment plan. In operational planning, priority should be given to member units with the lowest averages and the greatest dependence on infrastructure (e.g. the Faculty of Technology, the Faculty of Mining and the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics).

Research careers and talent development*

**Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)**

The mean score for the questions in the fourth pillar is 3.85, with a standard deviation of 1.09 and a coefficient of variation of 28%, making it the lowest-rated area and the one requiring the most interventions and alignment with the recommendations of the European Charter for Researchers.

Descriptive analysis is presented below in Table 4.

Table 4: Survey results related to research career development (M – mean, SD – standard deviation, Me – median, Mo – mode)

Question	M	SD	Me	Mo
31. Early-career researchers have access to a structured mentoring system within the institution, which clearly defines the role and activities of mentors.	3.88	1.15	4.00	5.00
32. Experienced researchers have a sufficient level of knowledge and expertise to mentor early-career researchers and have access to the necessary professional development.	4.03	0.97	4.00	4.00
33. Experienced researchers are committed to and approach their roles as mentors, advisers or project leaders in a professional manner, and actively support early-career researchers.	4.05	0.98	4.00	5.00
34. The University enables researchers to continuously develop their skills and competences.	3.97	1.05	4.00	4.00
35. The University pays particular attention to the professional development of early-career researchers.	3.69	1.10	4.00	4.00
36. The University equally values different research career paths (academic, professional, public, etc.).	3.78	1.09	4.00	5.00
37. The University values different types of research outputs (e.g. publications, teaching competences, knowledge and technology transfer, mentoring, entrepreneurship, cooperation with industry, participation in public policy development, etc.).	4.09	1.05	4.00	5.00
38. The University has a clear career development strategy for different levels of researchers.	3.72	1.09	4.00	4.00
39. The University provides professional support and advice for career development.	3.59	1.17	4.00	4.00
40. The University evaluates the quality of the formal and informal professional development of researchers.	3.73	1.10	4.00	4.00

Although the elements of mentoring and the role of experienced researchers are rated moderately positively, lower scores for support for early-career researchers, the career development strategy, and professional counselling and career support indicate that researchers recognise the lack of systematised and institutionally visible mechanisms for career planning and management. This is particularly important because these components directly affect talent retention, the motivation of early-career researchers and competitiveness in the national and international research environment.

Differences in perceptions of mentoring: Junior and senior academic staff

Given that the fourth pillar, which relates to mentoring, has the lowest mean scores, an analysis was conducted to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in perceptions between early-career researchers (those holding junior academic titles, i.e. teaching assistants and senior teaching assistants) and their potential mentors (those holding senior academic titles, i.e. professors). Research titles were not taken into account due to the small sample size. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Perception of mentoring (M – mean, SD – standard deviation)

Question (ID)	Category of academic title	Number of respondents	M	SD
31	(Senior) teaching assistant	149	3.65	1.32
	Professor	467	3.94	1.09
32	(Senior) teaching assistant	149	3.99	1.02
	Professor	467	4.03	0.96
33	(Senior) teaching assistant	149	3.94	1.10
	Professor	467	4.07	0.94
34	(Senior) teaching assistant	149	3.98	1.09
	Professor	467	3.95	1.04
35	(Senior) teaching assistant	149	3.60	1.12
	Professor	467	3.70	1.07
36	(Senior) teaching assistant	149	3.75	1.05
	Professor	467	3.79	1.11

37	(Senior) teaching assistant	149	4.10	0.97
	Professor	467	4.10	1.07
38	(Senior) teaching assistant	149	3.75	1.02
	Professor	467	3.70	1.11
39	(Senior) teaching assistant	149	3.64	1.14
	Professor	467	3.55	1.18
40	(Senior) teaching assistant	149	3.85	0.97
	Professor	467	3.68	1.14

A graphical presentation of the descriptive analysis results is provided in Figures 2a and 2b.

Differences in scores by academic staff category (Q31–Q35)

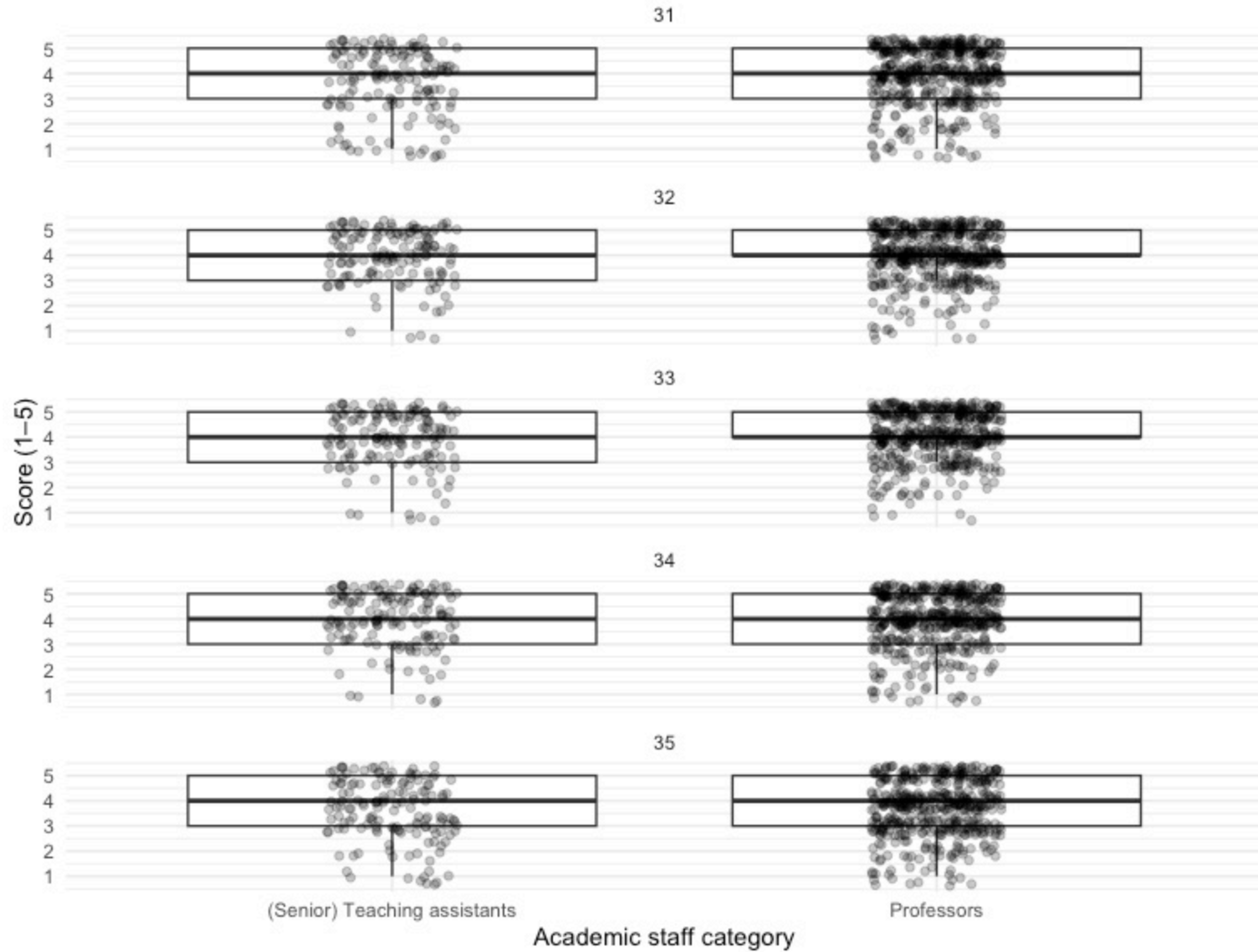


Figure 2a: Differences in scores by academic title

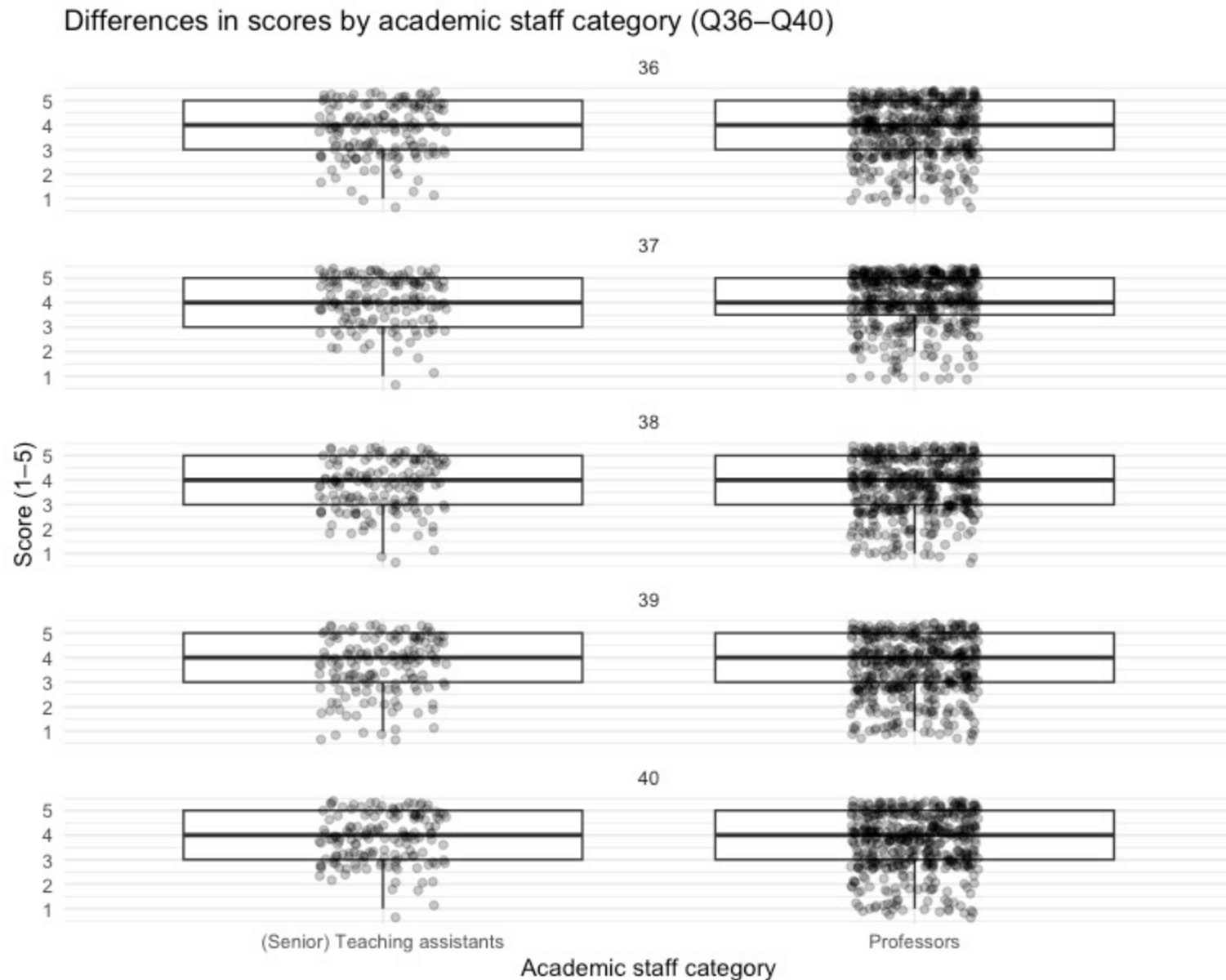


Figure 2b: Differences in scores by academic title

Within questions 31–40, which relate to research career development, differences in scores between respondents holding junior academic titles and those holding senior academic titles were examined. Teaching assistants on average rate this segment somewhat lower than professors. In questions 31, 33 and 35, which relate to a structured mentoring and professional

development system, as well as the commitment of mentors, teaching assistants give lower mean scores and show greater variability compared to professors. In questions 39 and 40, which relate to support and the evaluation of quality in career development, professors gave slightly lower mean scores than teaching assistants. In addition, the relatively larger number of professors who participated in the survey (467) compared to the number of teaching assistants (149) should be taken into account. The survey results indicate that early-career researchers are not satisfied with the mentoring system within the process of formal education (second- and third-cycle studies), while process lack support for career development after the completion of formal education.

Researchers at the University expressed dissatisfaction with the current mentoring system. These results point to the need to standardise the mentoring process, increase its visibility, clearly define roles and monitor indicators of quality fulfilment.

Differences in perceptions of mentoring by category of academic title

In order to ensure that potential differences in the perception of mentoring are not obscured by aggregated categories, an analysis was conducted to determine whether perceptions of mentoring and research career development differ across specific academic titles, and then scores for questions 31–40 were compared, broken down by academic titles. The descriptive results are presented in Figures 3a, 3b and 3c.

Mentoring perceptions by academic rank (Q31–Q33)

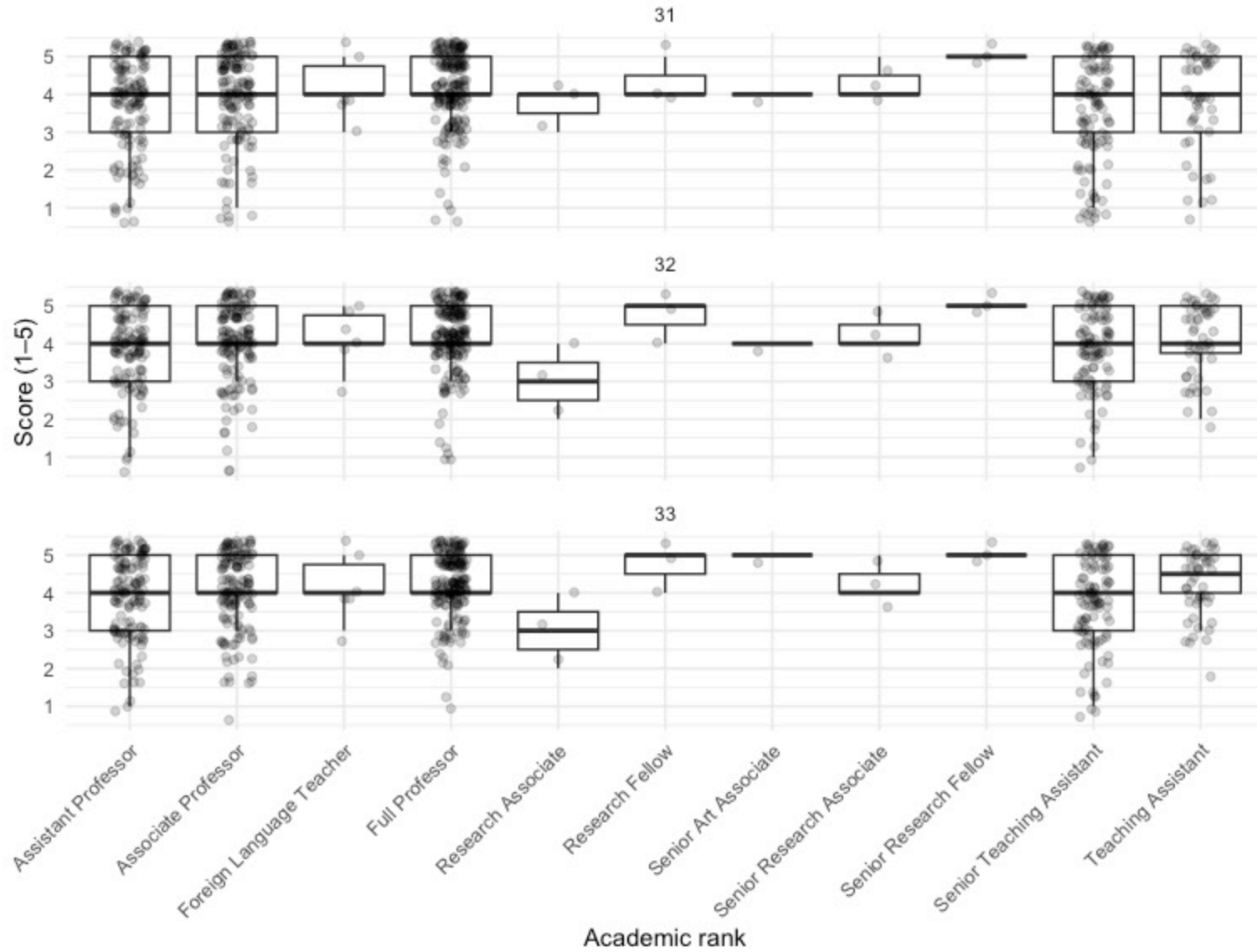


Figure 3a: Perception of mentoring, by academic titles

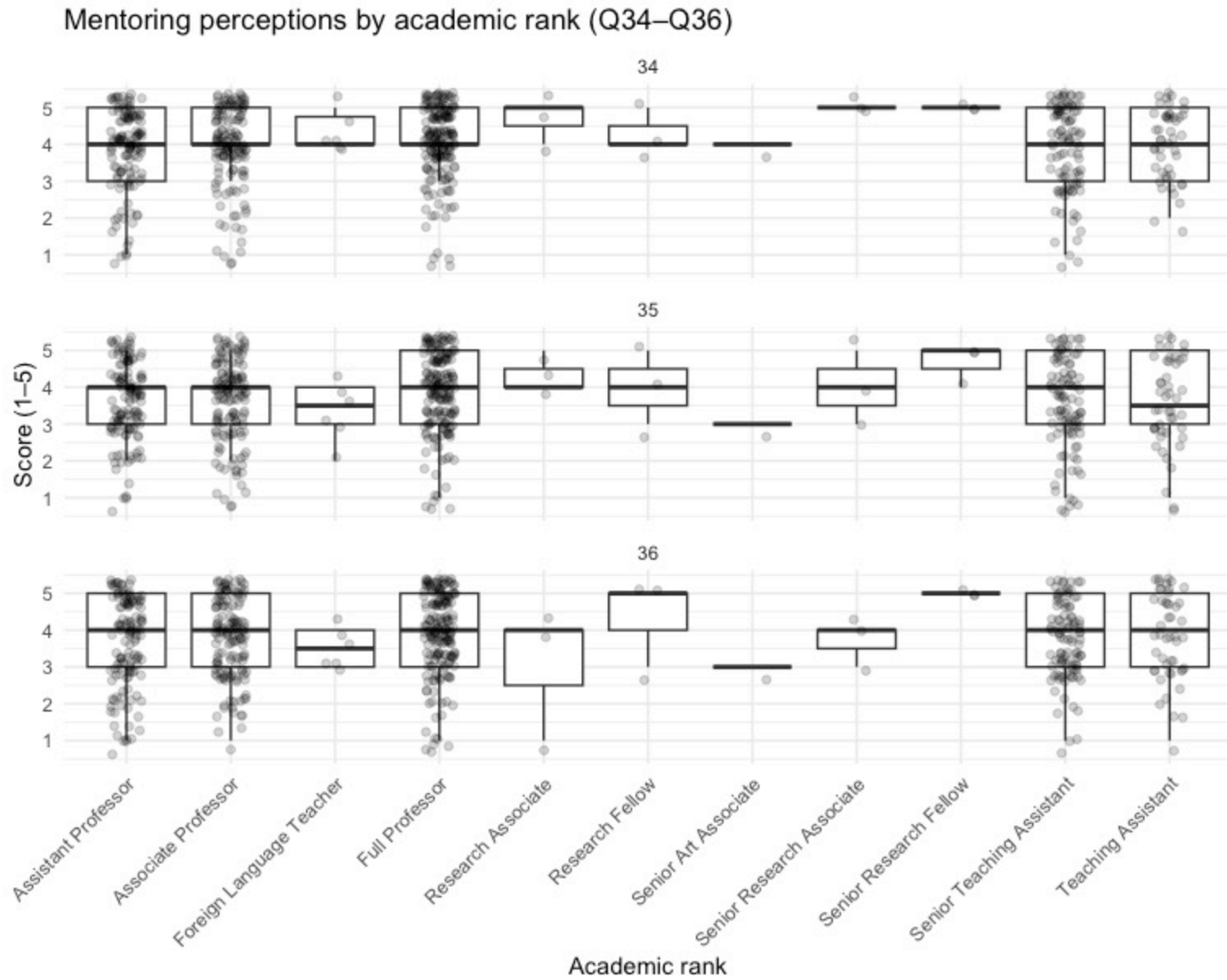


Figure 3b: Perception of mentoring, by academic titles

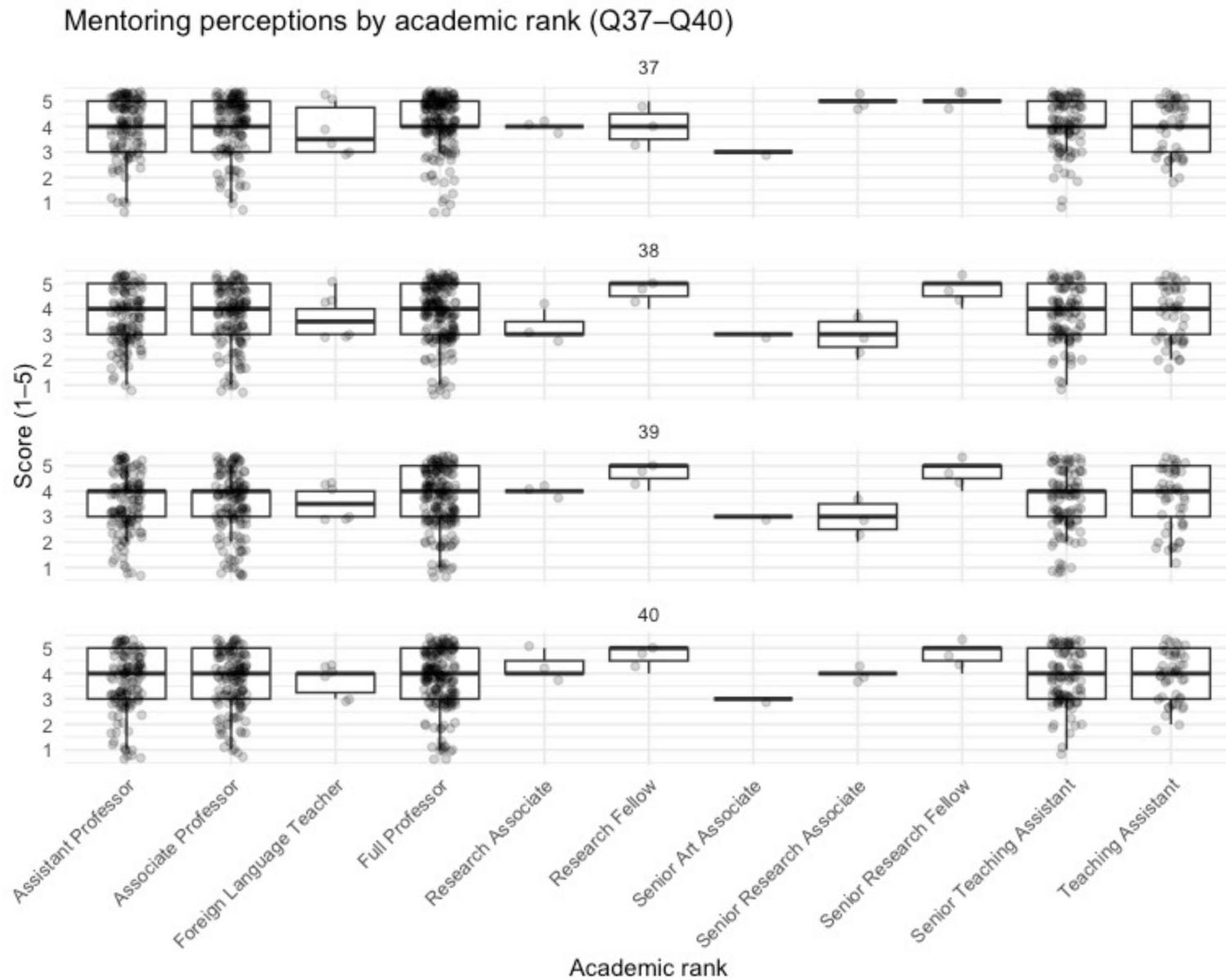


Figure 3c: Perception of mentoring, by academic titles

The figures show greater variability in responses for academic titles with a larger number of respondents, which is to be expected. The graphs indicate that perceptions of mentoring and researcher development are generally positive across most academic titles, with medians around 4 for questions 31–34 and 37, but with visible variability in the larger groups, suggesting

uneven practices across the University's member units. The lowest scores relate to dimensions that require a systemic approach, particularly the existence of a clear approach to career development (38), career counselling and professional support (39), as well as targeted support for early-career researchers (35).

Differences in perceptions of mentoring between the University's member units

Additional analysis focused on possible differences in perceptions between the University's member units. Descriptive statistics by member unit indicate variations. Figure 4 shows the mean scores by member unit for questions 31–40, which relate directly to mentoring.

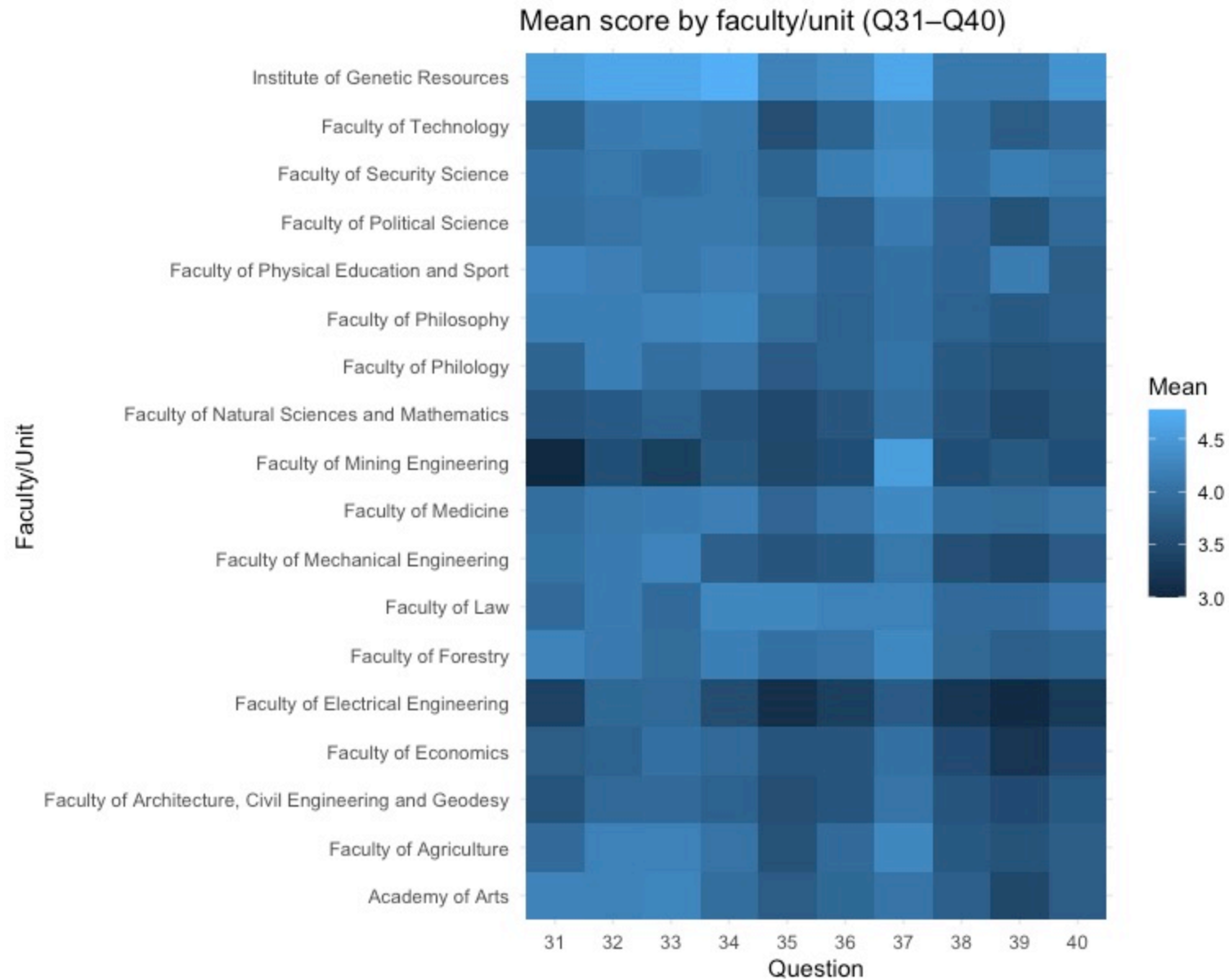


Figure 4: Perception of mentoring, by member unit

A similar pattern of variation is also visible for questions 35 and 39, where some member units record lower averages, which is consistent with the general conclusion that support for early-career researchers and career counselling are potential weak points of the system. Since these differences are uneven across questions and do not retain statistical significance after

controlling for multiple comparisons, they are methodologically treated as indicative and useful for operational planning, but not as evidence of systematic misalignment between member units.

3. Actions

The Action Plan and HR Excellence in Research strategy must be published in an easily accessible location of the organisation's website.

Please provide the web link(s) to the organisation's action plan / strategy for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. Multiple links must be comma-separated.

Please fill in the list of all individual actions to be undertaken in your organisation's HR Excellence in Research strategy to address the weaknesses or strengths identified in the gap analysis. It is recommended that the listed actions are concise but detailed enough for the assessors to determine the level of ambition, engagement, and planning for the implementation process. Please ensure that you provide a detailed plan, with precise and quantifiable KPIs, not just an enumeration of the institution's action.

Note: Choose one or more of the principles automatically retrieved from the gap analysis with their ratings.

Proposed actions

Action 1

Establishing a network of contact points for SRD (scientific research development) in faculties and a regular channel of communication.

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 3. OPEN SCIENCE

(+/-) 6. THE RESEARCHER

(+/-) 16. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

(-/+) 19. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

at least once per semester

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Office of the Vice-Rector for Scientific Research Development

• Appointing contact points in all the faculties •
Holding at least 2 meetings per year

Proposed actions

Action 2

Translating relevant university acts into the English language

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 3. OPEN SCIENCE

(+/-) 6. THE RESEARCHER

(++) 7. FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS

(++) 10. RECRUITMENT

In the continuity

(++) 11. SELECTION

(+/-) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION

(++) 15. CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Rectorate services

• Performed analysis of relevant documents to be translated into English
• Publishing bilingual versions at the University website

Proposed actions

Action 3

Acquainting researchers with national legislation and institutional rules

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 3. OPEN SCIENCE

(++) 4. GENDER EQUALITY

(+/-) 6. THE RESEARCHER

(++) 10. RECRUITMENT

(++) 11. SELECTION

(+/-) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION

(++) 13. WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES

(++) 14. STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT

(++) 15. CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

In the continuity

Proposed actions

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Office for legal, personnel and administrative issues; Office of the Vice-Rector for Human and Material Resources; Secretaries at individual faculties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting regulations through workshops and round tables (number of workshops and round tables; number of participants) • An Informant that will be periodically sent to researchers, informing them about changes and amendments to the acts and regulations of the UNIBL (number of notifications)

Proposed actions

Action 4

Strengthening the IT system and educating users in the sphere of data protection and safety

GAP Principle(s)

(++) 1. ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY

(-/+) 3. OPEN SCIENCE

(+/-) 6. THE RESEARCHER

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

In the continuity

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Office for legal, personnel and administrative issues; Office of the Vice-Rector for Human and Material Resources; Secretaries at individual faculties; University Computing Center

• Number of performed trainings • Number of participants per training

Proposed actions

Action 5

Presenting scientific results to the public, stimulating interest and presence of science in the media and society

GAP Principle(s)

(++) 2. FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

(-/+) 3. OPEN SCIENCE

(+/-) 16. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

In the continuity

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Senior Associate for Public Relations; Faculties

- Organizing promotional events, public lectures, and thematic round tables to promote science and higher social engagement (number of events, number of participants)

Proposed actions

Action 6

Analyze the criteria for valuing scientific and technical results

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 9. RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT

(++) 10. RECRUITMENT

(++) 11. SELECTION

(+/-) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION

**Timing (at least
by year's
quarter/semester)**

once per year

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

The Senate;
Office for
legal,
personnel,
and
administrative
issues

• A Body established to perform the analysis of
criteria • Recommendations written

Proposed actions

Action 7

Initiate changes to the Rules on publishing scientific publications and harmonize categorization

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 9. RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT

(+/-) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION

(++) 15. CONTRACTUAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

(+/-) 17. VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

2026

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

The Senate

• Harmonized initiative towards the Ministry of Science, Technological Development, and Higher Education for changes to the Rules on publishing scientific publications • Application in reports/scoring

Proposed actions

Action 8

Publishing vacancies and research positions in English on the Euraxess portal

GAP Principle(s)

(++) 10. RECRUITMENT

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

In continuity

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Office for legal, personnel and administrative issues; Office of the Vice-Rector for Human and Material Resources; Rector's Cabinet; Euraxess Office

• Number of published research positions on Euraxess portal

Proposed actions

Action 9

Standardize vacancies for election into titles

GAP Principle(s)

(++) 10. RECRUITMENT

**Timing (at least
by year's
quarter/semester)**

2026/27

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Office for
legal,
personnel,
and
administrative
issues; Office
of the Vice-
Rector for
Human and
Material
Resources;
Faculties;
The Senate

• Changes to the vacancy call form with a clear
definition of a title • Established interview protocol
and Minutes form

Proposed actions

Action 10

Creating Guidelines on open, transparent, and merit-based employment at the University of Banja Luka

GAP Principle(s)

(++) 10. RECRUITMENT

(++) 11. SELECTION

(++) 13. WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES

2026/27

(++) 14. STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Office of the
Vice-Rector
for Scientific
Research
Development

• Produced Guidelines • Guidelines published on the UNIBL website

Proposed actions

Action 11

Analyzing the possibility of introducing the eEmployment system

GAP Principle(s)

(++) 10. RECRUITMENT

(+/-) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

2028/29

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Office for legal, personnel, and administrative issues; Office of the Vice-Rector for Human and Material Resources; University Computing Center

• Performed analysis for the activity
• Written Recommendations

Proposed actions

Action 12

Improving the criteria for election into the title by introducing the valuation of qualitative elements

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 5. EMBRACING DIVERSITY

(++) 10. RECRUITMENT

(++) 11. SELECTION

(+/-) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION

**Timing (at least
by year's
quarter/semester)**

2027/28

Proposed actions

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Office for legal, personnel, and administrative issues; Office of the Vice-Rector for Human and Material Resources; Office of Vice-Rector for Scientific Research Development; The Senate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Recommendations for the activity

Proposed actions

Action 13

Developing Guidelines for the valuation of mobility

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 6. THE RESEARCHER

(++) 7. FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS

(+/-) 9. RESEARCHERS' ASSESSMENT

(+/-) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION

(+/-) 17. VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS

(-/+) 18. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE

(-/+) 19. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

2027/28

Proposed actions

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Office of Vice-Rector for International and Inter-University Cooperation; The Senate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guidelines with clear instructions for the valuation of mobility• Established module eMobility

Proposed actions

Action 14

Analyzing the possibility of introducing postdoctoral positions and creating institutional opportunities for the absence of a researcher

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION

(-/+) 18. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND
ADVICE

(-/+) 19. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

**Timing (at least
by year's
quarter/semester)**

2028/29

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Office for
legal,
personnel,
and
administrative
issues; Office
of the Vice-
Rector for
Human and
Material
Resources;
Office of
Vice-Rector
for Scientific
Research
Development;
The Senate

• Performed analysis with Recommendations •
Stimulating professional advancement abroad
(number of trainings) • Encouraging mobility
(number of researchers who participated in mobility
programs)

Proposed actions

Action 15

Identifying the needs of researchers in relation to research infrastructure

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 6. THE RESEARCHER

(++) 13. WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING AND SALARIES

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

In the continuity

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Faculties;
Office of
Vice-Rector
for Scientific
Research
Development;
The Senate

• Conducted analysis of research infrastructure at the faculties • Written Recommendations for improvement

Proposed actions

Action 16

Analyzing the possibility of establishing a University Career Center

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 17. VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS

(-/+) 18. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE

(-/+) 19. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

2028/29

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

The Senate;
Office of the Vice-Rector for Human and Material Resources

- Formed a Working Group to conduct the analysis
- Recommendations given to establish the Center
- „Guidelines for young researchers“ published and updated

Proposed actions

Action 17

Creating a Strategy of Human Resources at UNIBL

GAP Principle(s)

(++) 10. RECRUITMENT

(++) 11. SELECTION

(+/-) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION

(++) 13. WORKING CONDITIONS, FUNDING
AND SALARIES

**Timing (at least
by year's
quarter/semester)**

2027/28

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Office of the
Vice-Rector
for Human
and Material
Resources;
Faculties;
The Senate

• Strategy and implementation plan adopted

Proposed actions

Action 18

Creating a Strategy of University Development in the period 2026–2032

GAP Principle(s)

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

(++) 1. ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY

(++) 2. FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

(-/+) 3. OPEN SCIENCE

2026

(++) 4. GENDER EQUALITY

(+/-) 5. EMBRACING DIVERSITY

(-/+) 8. SUSTAINABILITY OF RESEARCH

Proposed actions

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Office of Vice-Rector for Teaching, Students' Issues and Quality; Office for legal, personnel, and administrative issues; Office of the Vice-Rector for Human and Material Resources; Office of Vice-Rector for Scientific Research Development; The Senate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted Strategy

Proposed actions

Action 19

Promotion of researchers' mobility

GAP Principle(s)

(++) 2. FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

(++) 7. FREE CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS

(+/-) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION

(-/+) 18. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

In the continuity

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Office of Vice-Rector for International and Inter-University Cooperation

• Number of promotional activities • Number of realized mobilities

Proposed actions

Action 20

Strengthen visibility and practical support for intellectual property and open science (tools/ repositories/ guidelines)

GAP Principle(s)

(++) 1. ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY

(-/+) 3. OPEN SCIENCE

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

In the continuity

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Office for legal, personnel, and administrative issues; Office of Vice-Rector for Scientific Research Development; University Computing Center

• Published practical Guidelines for the protection of Intellectual property • Improved institutional repositories • Published practical Guidelines for deposition of research data and papers to open access repositories

Proposed actions

Action 21

Analysis of co-authorship regulations

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION

(+/-) 17. VALUING DIVERSE RESEARCH CAREERS

(-/+) 18. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE

(-/+) 19. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

2027/28

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

The Senate

• Conducted analysis of the situation and needs of researchers
• Analysis report

Proposed actions

Action 22

Creating mechanisms for the development and education of researchers to work in the teaching field

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 19. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

(-/+) 20. SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

In the continuity

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Office of Vice-Rector for Teaching, Students' Issues and Quality

• Number of implemented trainings • Number of researchers who attended education programs

Proposed actions

Action 23

Analysis of faculties and securing regular maintenance of a list of teachers who fulfil conditions to be mentors on the 3rd cycle (with a scientific field specified therein)

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 20. SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

2027/28

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Faculties

• List of mentors published on the faculty's websites

Action 24

Analyzing possibilities to stimulate mentorship

GAP Principle(s)

(-/+) 20. SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

2028/29

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Faculty
Deans;
Finance
office;
Rectorate;
The Senate

• Adopted analysis of possible stimulation of mentorship (e.g. covering a Paper publication expense, participation in a conference, or providing a financial stimulus) • Analysis of mentorship quality standard performed

Proposed actions

Action 25

Developing recommendations to support R1 and R2 researchers in the aim of continual professional development

GAP Principle(s)

(+/-) 6. THE RESEARCHER

(+/-) 12. CAREER PROGRESSION

(-/+) 20. SUPERVISION AND MENTORING

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

In the continuity

Responsible

Unit

Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Faculties;
Rectorate

• Perform analysis of needs for professional development
• Recommendation of supporting measures provided

Unselected principles:

The establishment of an open recruitment policy is a key element in the strategy for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. Please also indicate how your organisation will use the OTM-R toolkit and how you intend to implement / are implementing the principles of OTM-R. It is helpful to include a brief commentary demonstrating this implementation even if there is some overlap with the actions listed above. If this is the case, please link the OTM-R checklist with the overall action plan (max. 1000 words).*

The University of Banja Luka is strategically dedicated to the continual improvement of the quality of the research surrounding, development of human resources in research and harmonization of institutional policies with European standards and principles. In that context, the Action plan is a key instrument for the implementation of the European Charter principles for researchers and the

Code of conduct for hiring researchers, as well as principles of open, transparent, and merit-based employment (OTM-P). These principles are an important part of a wider strategic orientation of the University towards strengthening the research excellence, international competitiveness, and attractiveness of the institution for researchers in different stages of their careers.

The Action plan is designed based on a comprehensive analysis of the existing framework in practice, in the field of managing human resources in research. The process included collecting feedback from relevant actors through surveys, workshops, and consultations with representatives of the academic community and managing structures of the University. The results of the GAP analysis provided identification of key areas with room for improvement, as well as defining priority measures and activities directed towards further development of institutional policies and procedures.

The Action plan defines a set of concrete measures directed towards improvement of transparency and efficiency of employment procedures and researchers' career development, strengthening institutional support to researchers, improvement of professional development and mobility, as well as promoting an inclusive, open, and ethically based research environment. Particular attention is dedicated to developing mechanisms that contribute to attracting and keeping talented researchers, strengthening international cooperation and integration of principles of open science and responsible research and innovations.

Implementation of the Action plan involves coordinated action of the University leadership, faculties and supporting services, with clearly defined responsibilities and deadlines for realization of individual measures. At the same time, there is a system of continual monitoring and evaluation of advances in the implementation of planned activities, in order to secure their efficiency and long-term sustainability.

Through the implementation of this Action plan, the University of Banja Luka confirms its dedication to developing a modern and competitive research environment that encourages excellence, innovation, and the professional development of researchers and actively contributes to the development of the European research space.

If your organisation already has a recruitment strategy which implements the principles of OTM-R, please provide the web link where this strategy can be found on your organisation's website. Multiple links must be comma-separated.

URL:

4. Implementation

General overview of the expected overall implementation process of the action plan (max. 1000 words).

The implementation of the Action Plan at the University of Banja Luka will be carried out in a structured and coordinated manner, involving all relevant members of the University, departments, and support services. The process will follow the defined timeline and priorities outlined in the Action Plan and will be subject to continuous monitoring and evaluation.

The overall coordination and supervision of the implementation process will be ensured by the Steering Group for the HRS4R process. This body consists of representatives of the University's top-level management, including the Rector and Vice Rectors, a legal expert from the University's legal department, and the Financial Director. The Steering Group will play a central role in guiding the implementation, ensuring alignment with institutional policies and European standards.

The Steering Group will meet regularly, at least once per month, within the framework of the Rector's collegiums. During these meetings, the Group will review progress in the implementation of planned activities, assess achieved results, identify potential challenges, and propose corrective measures where necessary. Particular attention will be given to monitoring adherence to the planned timeline and ensuring the timely execution of all actions.

The implementation process will be further supported by key institutional bodies and services, including the Centre for Information Systems, which will provide ICT support and develop web-based tools; the Scientific Board; the Centre for Career Planning; the Centre for International Affairs; and the EURAXESS Office. These units will contribute to the realization of specific activities, particularly those related to digitalization, researcher support, internationalization, and mobility.

Faculties and research institutes will play a crucial role in the implementation process. Through deans' collegia and faculty councils, these organizational units will be responsible for executing specific actions, collecting relevant data, disseminating information within the academic community, and adopting necessary internal regulations. Continuous communication between the Steering Group and faculty management will be ensured through guidelines, instructions, and regular consultations.

To strengthen coordination and ensure transparency, the Steering Group will organize biannual meetings within the Rector's collegium, involving deans and vice-deans. These meetings will serve to present progress, exchange feedback, and address operational challenges related to implementation.

For more complex and strategically important tasks, such as the development or revision of rulebooks, institutional strategies, and intellectual property rights (IPR) policies, the Rector will establish dedicated working groups composed of relevant experts. Furthermore, capacity-building activities will be supported through the appointment of internal experts responsible for organizing regular training sessions for researchers.

The University will also actively engage external experts, at least twice per year, to provide specialized training and workshops in areas such as open, transparent and merit-based recruitment (OTM-R), research ethics, capacity building, mechanisms for attracting external funding, and enhancing researcher mobility.

Through this comprehensive and participatory approach, the University aims to ensure effective, transparent, and sustainable implementation of the Action Plan, fully aligned with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Make sure you also cover all the aspects highlighted in the checklist below, which you will need to describe in detail.

Note: Click on each question of the checklist to open the editor.

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



Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

The University of Banja Luka ensures regular oversight of the Action Plan implementation through the HRS4R Steering Group. The Group meets monthly, typically within Rector's collegiums, to review progress, assess implementation against defined milestones, and ensure alignment with the planned timeline. Each activity is assigned to responsible units, which provide periodic progress reports. Based on these inputs, the Steering Group identifies potential challenges, proposes corrective measures, and ensures coordination across organisational units.

In addition, biannual meetings with deans and vice-deans are organised to review overall progress and address operational issues. The Steering Group is supported by relevant services (e.g. HR, quality assurance, ICT), ensuring data-driven monitoring and informed decision-making.

This structured approach guarantees transparent, efficient, and continuous supervision of the implementation process.

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



Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

The University of Banja Luka ensures active involvement of the research community throughout the implementation process by adopting a participatory and inclusive approach. Researchers are engaged through regular consultations, workshops, and surveys, which provide opportunities to contribute to the design, validation, and evaluation of Action Plan measures. Representatives of different researcher categories (R1–R4) are included in working groups and governance structures, ensuring balanced representation.

Faculties and research institutes play a key role by facilitating communication with researchers, collecting feedback, and supporting the implementation of activities at the local level. In addition, periodic meetings with deans and vice-deans ensure that researchers' perspectives are integrated into decision-making processes. Continuous communication is maintained through institutional channels, including newsletters, the University website, and targeted information sessions. This approach ensures that the research community is not only informed but actively involved in shaping and implementing HRS4R-related activities.

How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HR Excellence in Research award process?*

Make sure it is recognised in the organisation's research strategy as the overarching HR policy.



Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

The University of Banja Luka ensures the alignment of its organisational policies with the HR Excellence in Research (HRS4R) process through a systematic and strategic approach that integrates HRS4R principles into the University's overall research and institutional development framework.

At the strategic level, the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers are embedded in the University's key policy documents, including the research strategy, human resources development strategy, and institutional action plans. In this context, HRS4R is recognised as the overarching framework guiding HR policies related to researchers, ensuring consistency across all faculties and organisational units.

The alignment process begins with a comprehensive GAP analysis, which identifies discrepancies between existing institutional practices and HRS4R principles. Based on the findings, targeted measures are defined within the Action Plan to address identified gaps. These measures are then systematically integrated into relevant internal regulations, rulebooks, and procedures.

A key aspect of this alignment is the continuous revision and harmonisation of institutional documents, such as recruitment procedures (OTM-R), career development policies, ethical guidelines, and performance evaluation systems. The University ensures that all newly adopted or revised policies explicitly reflect HRS4R principles, particularly those related to transparency, merit-based recruitment, equal opportunities, and researcher support.

The process is coordinated by the HRS4R Steering Group, which works closely with the University management, legal services, and relevant administrative units to ensure coherence between strategic objectives and operational implementation. Faculties and research institutes actively contribute by adapting institutional policies at the local level and ensuring their consistent application.

Furthermore, HRS4R principles are embedded into the University's research strategy as a central component of human resource development, reinforcing the link between high-quality research and responsible HR management. This ensures that the HR Excellence in Research award is not treated as a standalone initiative, but as an integral part of the University's long-term strategic vision.

Regular monitoring, internal evaluations, and stakeholder consultations ensure that the alignment process remains dynamic and responsive to both institutional needs and European standards. Through this approach, the University guarantees the sustainability of HRS4R implementation and its full integration into the institutional culture.

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



Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

The University of Banja Luka will ensure the implementation of the proposed actions through a structured governance, monitoring, and accountability framework. Each action within the Action Plan is clearly defined with assigned responsibilities, timelines, and measurable indicators. Responsible units (faculties, administrative offices, and support services) are accountable for implementation and required to provide regular progress reports.

The HRS4R Steering Group oversees the process through monthly monitoring meetings, where progress is reviewed, delays are identified, and corrective measures are proposed. Additional oversight is ensured through biannual review meetings involving key stakeholders. Implementation is further supported by institutional services (HR, quality assurance, ICT), which provide data, technical support, and performance tracking. For complex actions, dedicated working groups may be established. Through this combination of clear responsibilities, continuous monitoring, stakeholder involvement, and corrective mechanisms, the University ensures timely, effective, and sustainable implementation of all planned actions.

How will you monitor progress (timeline)?*



Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

The University of Banja Luka will monitor progress through a clearly defined timeline linked to the Action Plan, with milestones, deliverables, and deadlines assigned to each activity. Progress will be reviewed quarterly by the HRS4R Steering Group, ensuring continuous tracking of implementation against planned timelines. Responsible units will submit regular progress updates, enabling timely identification of delays. In addition, biannual reviews will assess overall progress, evaluate achieved results, and adjust timelines if necessary. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be used to measure progress and ensure alignment with expected outcomes. This structured timeline monitoring ensures timely implementation, accountability, and flexibility in addressing challenges.

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



Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

The University of Banja Luka will measure progress using a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators aligned with the objectives of the Action Plan and HRS4R principles.

Quantitative indicators will include:

- number of implemented actions and adherence to timelines,
- number of revised or newly adopted institutional policies (e.g. OTM-R procedures),
- participation rates in training, workshops, and mobility programmes,
- number of researchers involved in HRS4R-related activities.

Qualitative indicators will include:

- feedback from researchers collected through surveys and consultations,
- level of satisfaction with working conditions and institutional support,
- assessment of transparency and fairness in recruitment and career development processes.

Progress will be evaluated through regular monitoring reports and periodic internal reviews, ensuring readiness for the next external assessment and continuous improvement of institutional practices.

Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process (max. 1000 words)

The University of Banja Luka approaches the implementation of the Action Plan as a continuous and participatory process, ensuring that HRS4R principles are fully integrated into institutional practices. Strong support from top-level management ensures strategic guidance and efficient decision-making, while active involvement of researchers and staff guarantees a bottom-up approach and broad ownership of the process. In addition to policy development, emphasis is placed on capacity building, training, and awareness-raising, supporting the practical application of key principles such as OTM-R, research ethics, and career development.

The implementation process remains flexible, allowing adjustments based on monitoring results and stakeholder feedback. The University will also seek synergies with ongoing projects and initiatives to maximize impact and efficiency. Sustainability is ensured through the integration of HRS4R principles into strategic documents and institutional regulations, guaranteeing long-term

improvements in research management and working conditions.