



INSTYTUT SLAWISTYKI POLSKIEJ AKADEMII NAUK



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

The Institute of Slavic Studies Polish Academy of Science (ISS PAS) initiated the third phase of the HRS4R Implementation Process in 2020, aiming to renew its HR Logo and comply with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

A dedicated team was formed to conduct an Internal Review and assess the current practices of the institute. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the team had to work remotely and communicate online. The team leader presented the renewal plan to the ISS PAS staff and proposed a Focus Group Interview (FGI) as the preferred method of data collection. The staff agreed and six researchers from different career stages (R1-R4) participated in the FGI. The team leader guided the discussion based on a predefined scenario that covered four main topics:

- A) ethical and professional aspects,
- B) recruitment and selection,
- C) working conditions
- D) training and development.

The team analyzed the results of the FGI and identified the strengths and weaknesses of each topic.

A. ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS

The survey clearly indicated that the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences (ISS) provides freedom of scientific research. Employees are not restricted in their research topics and methods. Freedom of expression is ensured. This is evidenced by the very wide range of research topics conducted at the ISS of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

The existing regulations at ISS clearly define the ethical basis and requirements, which are given priority. This is reflected in the internally adopted regulations, viz. Work Regulations. It should be noted that the Polish Academy of Sciences has its own Research Ethics Committee, which operates in accordance with Article 39 of the Act on the Polish Academy of Sciences. Every researcher who takes

up a job at ISS is obliged to familiarize himself with the regulations in question and comply with them. The survey did not identify any problems related to compliance with ethical rules.

The high quality of scientific output, a very large number of publications of both articles and monographs, testifies to the high professional responsibility of employees and their professional approach. This is also confirmed by the numerous grants awarded to our scholars, both young researchers and experienced scientists. The results of research projects are published in journals with a high IF index.

Research workers are aware of the basic regulations concerning various aspects of their work. The survey results suggest that some academics are not always familiar with detailed legal solutions. Too many regulations, which are frequently changed or amended, were cited as the reason. In legal aspects, researchers are supported by the Research Service Team and a lawyer employed by ISS.

The principles of transparent financial management are followed at ISS. Funds provided for the implementation of grants are monitored on an ongoing basis. Project managers submit final financial reports and, if they are long-term projects, annual reports as well. This requirement is strictly followed and supervised by the ISS finance department. Internal audits to date have not revealed any deficiencies in this regard.

ISS complies with European and national data protection regulations, such as the EU General Data Protection Regulations 2016/679 and the Personal Data Protection Act. In accordance with the obligations of the requirements, the Institute employs a data protection officer and a person responsible for matters related to the storage of research data. In addition, ISS informs its employees at general meetings about their obligations under the legal acts on personal data protection. Also, work safety rules are communicated to employees in periodic health and safety training. According to the survey, employees have good knowledge of personal data protection.

According to Article 2 (1) of the Act of April 30, 2010 on the Polish Academy of Sciences - the Academy serves the development, promotion, integration and dissemination of science and contributes to the development of education and enrichment of national culture. The results of research and research projects carried out at ISS are disseminated through scientific publications (monographs and articles). They are presented at national and international scientific conferences. They are also presented in the media and at book fairs.

An expression of the social commitment of the scientific staff of ISS PAN is participation in a great number of projects aimed at popularizing knowledge. These include: participation in annual Science Festivals, publication of popular science articles, popularization lectures, workshops for children and young people. The ISS of the Polish Academy of Sciences holds monthly scientific meetings, which are open to the public.

At ISS, employees are evaluated at every stage of their scientific career. Due to the importance of the process, it is regulated by the Regulations approved by the President of PAN. The evaluation process is carried out regularly and transparently, and the evaluation criteria are known before the evaluation. The evaluation of the scientific progress of doctoral students is carried out by their supervisors. In doctoral schools, a mid-term evaluation is conducted after the second year of training.

The survey confirms that the information campaign implemented at an earlier stage on knowledge of work obligations is bearing fruit. Due to the frequent revision of the law, continued activities in this area are required.

B. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Employee recruitment issues are regulated by relevant laws, such as Article 91 of the Law on PAN dated 25/04/2010 and internal regulations at ISS PAN. They are clearly formulated and transparent. Job advertisements contain a detailed description of the recruitment criteria and a precise description of the required knowledge and qualifications. ISS internal regulations also regulate the composition of the recruitment committee and the stages of the recruitment procedure. ISS has an OTM-R policy in place.

All information about the recruitment of new employees is announced on the ISS PAN website, the EURAXESS website and the BIP website of the Ministry of Education and Science. It is not possible to fill a position without an open competition procedure.

The selection of an employee is always made through a competition, despite the very narrow specializations of the employees sought by the Institute, which involves a small number of candidates. Each stage of the evaluation involves experienced employees

At the first stage of the recruitment process, applications submitted by candidates are checked for compliance with the requirements of the competition. If the documents meet the formal requirements of the competition, candidates are invited for an interview. The recruitment committee consists of: A) the Deputy Director for Scientific Affairs, B) the Head of the Research Team for which the employee is sought C) other scientific employees, designated by the Director or by the Deputy Director, with at least a postdoctoral degree (Ph.D. / associate professor. Such a selected body, which selects the candidate, ensures a high level of proceedings. During the interview, knowledge is tested, qualifications and aptitude for the position are assessed. Candidates are informed of the results of the competition. Interviews can be held by means of electronic communication.

The presented method of conducting the recruitment process ensures the best possible selection. It also gives grounds for extending the procedure to foreigners and people with disabilities due to the use of electronic communication. Thus, it also allows equal access to the process regardless of age, gender, origin or degree of disability.

Recruitment committees at ISS follow all regulations on the recruitment procedure. During the recruitment procedure, the candidate is informed about the recruitment process and the selection criteria. The prospects for the development of a researcher are defined in the Law on the Academy of Sciences, which regulates the requirements and subsequent stages of a research career, thus there is no justification for creating additional regulations inside the ISS.

The evaluation of candidates is always based on clearly formulated criteria. The following are taken into account: education or previous work in the field, knowledge in the required field, professional experience, internship, bibliometric indicators, knowledge of foreign languages. Due to the nature of ISS, knowledge of one Slavic language is additionally required. An interview with selected candidates, which is part of the recruitment procedure, plays an important role in the evaluation. It allows to assess the whole range of candidates' experience, their creativity and level of independence.

The Institute does not have a specific regulation for deviating from the chronological order of resumes. Their absence does not cause any manifestation of discrimination. In terms of employment, aspects such as a break due to maternity/paternity or parental leave are respected as much as possible. These issues are regulated by the Labor Code.

ISS management highly values the mobility of employees and candidates, especially when it includes international education and/or international research experience. The Institute also attracts researchers from abroad. The working languages at the Institute are Slavic and Anglo-Saxon. Many seminars and team meetings are conducted in these languages, which facilitates the integration of foreign researchers who are not fluent in Polish.

Candidates' experience and qualifications are one of the most important factors considered in hiring. Recognition of qualifications and their evaluation is an important element when evaluating a candidate in the recruitment process.

The Institute fully complies with the rules related to seniority by supporting researchers at every stage of their scientific career. The scientific recruitment committee always evaluates a candidate's achievements and qualifications according to their seniority. This is one of the most important criteria considered for recruitment.

According to Polish legislation, doctoral students are not employees of the Institute, they are only pursuing third-degree studies. For each job position at ISS, the candidate is selected in an open competition. Capable doctoral students from ISS are more likely to win the competition, as they are implemented in the research work carried out, often showing better knowledge of the research topics carried out at the Institute than other candidates.

C. WORKING CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The ISS employs researchers of varying scientific sophistication in diverse positions. The Institute recognizes all researchers as professionals and cares about their scientific development.

The Institute's activities are directed to provide the best possible working environment for scientific research. The Institute supports researchers and conducts activities to ensure appropriate conditions. The Institute allocates certain funds for the implementation of research topics. Work is undertaken to create the best possible premises and develop infrastructure.

The issue of working conditions is shaped by a number of legal acts, including internal regulations. The leading document is the Act on the Polish Academy of Sciences, which assigns scientific employees an increased vacation leave of 10 days. In addition, issues related to occupational health and safety are regulated by national laws, the observance of which is the employer's responsibility. ISS allows flexible working hours. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a remote and/or hybrid work mode has been introduced.

The Institute provides opportunities for stable and permanent employment for its scientific and administrative staff. The Institute fully complies with the provisions of the Polish Labor Code, which stipulates that after two fixed-term employment contracts, the third employment contract must be for an indefinite period. Temporary contracts are used at the initial stage of employment, related to verification of the suitability of the hired employee.

The ISS is a public (state) institution and the salaries of employees are defined by law. Also, salaries earned from research projects are regulated by the Polish funding system. It should be noted that the Institute promotes employee activities by granting financial allowances for additional achievements, such as obtaining grants, number of publications, leading research teams.

ISS PAN has adopted a Gender Equality Plan for 2022-2025, a document created for the Institute's community, as well as for all those who work with the Institute. Its goal is to provide a safe and

welcoming place to study and work, free from discrimination, enabling everyone to develop freely in their scientific, professional and personal development. The Institute creates an environment that enables women to thrive, regardless of their involvement in family life. No discrimination is allowed on the basis of gender or attempts to reconcile family life with scientific life. The Institute respects women's rights and tries to be as flexible as possible to allow employees to maintain an appropriate balance between work and family at every stage, including for male scientists. Many of the young women employed at the Institute have returned to work after maternity and parental leaves, achieving high scientific results. The Institute's activities focus on creating conditions for reconciling professional and scientific work, such as creating flexible working hours, creating equal professional opportunities.

The Law on the Polish Academy of Sciences defines the rules under which scientific employees can be employed at PAN and subordinate Institutes. The pattern of positions for scientific employees is strictly defined. We distinguish the following positions: assistant, assistant professor, institute professor, professor. Currently, the timing of the acquisition of further degrees and titles depends largely on the activity of scientists, especially in the early stages of their scientific careers. The survey emphasized that the institute provides opportunities for professional development and transparent rules for promotion.

Issues of mobility have been given a lot of space in national regulations, which lay the groundwork for its development and emphasize its role in science. Numerous measures are being taken to increase mobility, through various types of academic/travel grants. One of the most important goals guiding the Institute's activities is to increase the competitiveness of science in the international arena. Mobility is an important factor in the growth of scientific potential. For this reason, all activities related to participation in international conferences, as well as international exchanges, are supported.

The institute supports the activities of employees as much as legally and financially possible. As far as possible, activities are undertaken for the continuous development of skills and competencies. These include both events at the Institute (seminars, conferences, workshops) and access to a wide range of external events, trainings and workshops. The Institute contributes to access to such events by: A) spreading awareness of new events, B) providing travel expenses, and C) providing financial support for employees who wish to attend training outside the Institute.

ISS policies and practices are fully compliant with the Polish Copyright and Related Rights Act. The Institute employs a lawyer to ensure that the Institute's work complies with the national legal framework. ISS ensures that the copyrights of researchers at all stages of their careers are respected.

ISS has a number of co-authored publications produced by researchers collaborating on a single research project. Publications are also produced in collaboration with scholars from foreign academic centers. These works are listed in regularly updated researcher profiles on the ISS website. The interdisciplinary nature of much of the work and narrow specialization naturally "forces" cooperation between researchers inside the Institute, as well as with researchers employed outside the Institute.

The Institute conducts teaching activities to a very limited extent focused exclusively on doctoral studies. Thus, scientific employees are not burdened with teaching duties, which are carried out on a very small scale

The measures taken by the Institute allow for fair and equal treatment of employees and their problems, which contributes to improving the overall quality and working environment. The Institute at all times has bodies that mediate between employees and the ISS Director and in cases of conflict:

A) disciplinary committees (separate for employees and doctoral students), B) Staff Council, C) Disciplinary Ombudsman. The ISS has an anti- mobbing policy in place at all times.

The Institute supports the participation of academic staff in all kinds of bodies and organizations, as this promotes cooperation, exchange of experience, professional development, and indirectly promotes the Institute itself.

D. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The ISS management strives for the managers of the various units to be scientific supervisors and advisors for the employees, to ensure good relations between employees. It should be emphasized that these measures are recommendations. There are various forms of care for budding scientists at ISS, These can include: master-student meetings, numerous seminars and research team meetings. There is also a series of meetings, the so-called "Slavic Wednesdays", where young scientists present their research.

Senior scientists at ISS combine the work of research team leaders and principal investigators in grants. They also develop professional relationships with junior staff, including doctoral students who prepare dissertations under the supervision of professors.

Scientists at ISS PAN have many opportunities for professional development through participation in conferences and seminars. The Research Service Team sends information about upcoming events, new grant programs on a regular basis, and the department for cooperation with foreign countries functions very efficiently.

Implementation of such activities is carried out at the Institute, for example, through dedicated language courses aimed at all employees and doctoral students. Due to the specific nature of the tasks performed, specific training courses are not indicated, but nevertheless all forms of qualification improvement and continuous development through participation in various national and international projects are supported. Additionally, the Research and Foreign Cooperation Department sends information on new projects and training courses on an ongoing basis.

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