



Lodz University of Technology

Lodz University of Technology (TUL) Action Plan for 2024-2028 in the context of the CoARA Agreement



Short introduction & general information

When did TUL sign the agreement?

In November 2022, Lodz University of Technology, Poland, signed the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment. This Action Plan outlines the University's dedication to responsible research assessment and, more specifically, how the Agreement is implemented.

The general principles of research and researchers' assessment in Poland and at TUL – setting the stage

TUL together with other 364 scientific institutions is a part of the science ecosystem in Poland.¹ Research and development activities are conducted at 132 academic institutions (including 103 from the public sector), 77 institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences, 69 research institutes, 26 institutes of the Łukasiewicz Research Network, and 60 other scientific institutions. In Poland research activity is assigned to defined scientific disciplines, which undergo periodic evaluation every four years at the national level. This evaluation results in the assignment of specific categories based on a grading scale, with A+ being the highest and C being the lowest. According to the POL-on system (an integrated data system on Polish science and higher education²) in 2023 (as of August 16, 2023), a total of 1,145 scientific categories in 47 disciplines were awarded during the 2022 evaluation of the quality of scientific activities. 10% of the disciplines submitted for evaluation received the highest A+ category, one-third of the disciplines were awarded category A (37%), almost half of the evaluated disciplines received category B+ (46%), 4% of disciplines received category B, and the lowest category C was awarded to 2% of disciplines. TUL obtained excellent results in the latest evaluation of the quality of scientific activities in 2021: of the 12 disciplines conducted at Lodz University of Technology, 3 received the A+ category, 6 received category A, and 3 received category B+. When evaluating, individual achievements of employees representing a given discipline are taken into account. Subsequently categories awarded to scientific disciplines determine the rights of an evaluated institution to conduct studies, doctoral schools, and grant degrees, and titles. They also affect the amount of subsidies, i.e., the financial resources that scientific units receive from the state budget.

The quality of research in Poland is evaluated using three main criteria: (i) Scientific or Artistic Level of Conducted Research Activities: this includes the assessment of scientific articles, monographs, books and chapters therein, and patents. The evaluation uses the ministerial list of journals and publishers as a reference point. (ii) Financial Effects of Research and Development Activities: this is assessed based on the magnitude of financial support received from national and international funding calls. Additionally, the commercialization of research results, development works, and research activities initiated by external stakeholders outside the higher education sector are considered. (iii) Impact of Research and Innovation on Societal and Economic Surroundings: institutions must describe the direct effects of their research on society and the economy. This involves case studies to measure and assess the impact.



These criteria ensure a comprehensive evaluation of research quality, considering both the academic merits and broader impacts of research activities.

Public universities comprise the largest group of researchers employed by Polish research institutions (81%). As previously mentioned, the performance of individual researchers, which undergoes periodic assessment, is closely related to the evaluation of research quality within scientific disciplines at the institutional level. This assessment uses criteria determined by the Rector after consulting with the Senate, trade unions, student government, and doctoral student government.

Periodic appraisal is conducted through a self-evaluation questionnaire completed by the academic staff members being appraised. The final assessment is made on an individual basis by the appraisee's immediate supervisor, who is the head of the organizational unit where the academic staff member works.

Although the periodic questionnaire considers teaching, research, and organizational activities based on the position of the academic employee, its nature and content closely resemble the surveys used to evaluate higher education institutions. The general rules for these surveys are established at the national level by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

TUL mission&vision&strategy

The goals, the University aims to achieve, the destination it strives towards, and the way it wants to create space for work, scientific research, education, and collaboration with external stakeholders are described in the strategy of Lodz University of Technology.³

In 2016 TUL has been awarded the HR Excellence in Research and since then the Award has been regularly and successfully renewed.⁴ At the moment, the University is conducting an internal review and GAP analysis. Based on the outcomes, a new Action Plan for 2025-2028 will be prepared.

What has been so far in the context of the CoARA Agreement?

In 2023 the internal CoARA team was set comprising researchers at various stages of their career as well as other professionals working at the University. The members of the team signed up to various working groups within the CoARA Polish national chapter.

Who has prepared and accepted the document?

Agnieszka Dybała-Defratyka (Director of Research Support Center, TUL)

Łukasz Albrecht (Vice-Rector for Science, TUL)

Krzysztof Jóźwik (Rector of Lodz University of Technology)



A tentative calendar of events/actions and Strategy

CoARA Agreement Commitment	TUL's current status and proposed/planned actions	Schedule / Timeframe
1. Recognising the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research	<p>While TUL recognizes the diversity of contributions and research outputs beyond journal publications within the periodic assessment of scientific personnel, a quantitative approach is still used for some of them. As mentioned in the introduction, TUL cannot independently establish criteria for research and researchers' assessment that deviate from the national-level evaluation standards. However, Polish universities do possess significant freedom and autonomy, allowing for the proposal, testing, and potential implementation of specific criteria for periodic assessment within the University.</p> <p>A thorough examination of existing criteria and their impact on overall research evaluation will be conducted to identify key challenges and propose new policies, solutions, and criteria. E.g. new policies related to hiring researchers in positions not involving teaching duties.</p> <p>TUL is also committed to further participate in the HR Excellence in Research programme. Within this framework internal review and gap analysis will be performed to identify areas that require special attention and stimulation. Based on the results new Action Plan for HRS4R will be developed with the aim to retain and further develop scientific excellency of Lodz University of Technology.</p>	Starting phase of AP, 2024-2025
2. Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators	<p>As shown in the Introduction part, the quality of research is evaluated based on three criteria which content directly originates from individual researcher's contributions (publications, projects, impact). Most of these contributions are primarily peer-reviewed (publications and project proposals) and the use of quantitative indicators is centralized.</p> <p>Nevertheless, scientific promotion in Poland (earning a Ph.D., habilitation, and full professorship) is fully peer-reviewed, and each institution is required to follow the same rules.</p>	2025



	<p>In the institutional periodic assessment of individual researchers, the implementation of peer-reviewed recognition has so far been limited to evaluating researchers partly based on their membership in associations, expert boards, teams, committees, and councils (as part of the organizational component of the periodic assessment).</p> <p>(i) One possible solution to consider in the case of a formal appeal after the appraisal is that the summary of the periodic evaluation, conducted at least once every four years, could be carried out by the panel of three people. The evaluated individuals should have the opportunity to present on one hand their professional activities in the form of a narrative CV, including all aspects of their work that they consider important and on the other, personal circumstances (e.g., caring for close family members due to medical issues).</p> <p>(ii) Additionally, within the TUL Action Plan for further implementing the Gender Equality Plan, there are plans to improve the system for deferring periodic researcher evaluations due to special leave, especially parental leave.</p> <p>(iii) Furthermore, the expansion of the periodic assessment questionnaire to include recognition of participation in conferences as invited, keynote, or plenary speakers will be considered.</p>	
3. Abandon inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication based metrics, in particular inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index	<p>While some metrics are still in use, primarily related to research evaluation regulations at the Polish national level, TUL has introduced several criteria that extend beyond a narrow set of quantitative journal and publication-based metrics. These criteria emphasize researchers' creativity, activity, and potential (patents, projects, spin-off companies, awards, reviews). In the recruitment process, all aspects of candidates' experience are considered, including their industry-related work experience. In addition to the candidate's scientific or teaching potential, their creativity, social activity, and outreach efforts are also considered. During the implementation of The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers University's OTM-R Policy (Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment) was developed.⁵</p>	2025-2028



	<p>(i) TUL is going to continue activities related to the HRS4R award. One focus will be preparation and implementation of one application form for researchers' recruitment process.</p> <p>(ii) Another area will involve reviewing the status of researchers hired on a project basis and establishing rules for retaining the best talents within university on permanent contracts.</p>	
4. Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment	<p>In most of the cases TUL does not follow the international rankings in research assessment, in particular individual researchers' evaluation.</p> <p>To ensure that the international ranking will not be misused for instance during researcher recruitment process appropriate provisions will be included in the OTM-R Policy.</p>	-
5. Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to	<p>The periodic assessment criteria are ultimately determined by the Rector after consulting representatives of the University community, student and PhD student governments, and trade unions. Additionally, TUL has allocated personnel resources (CoARA TUL working team) to develop and oversee the reform. This team consists of researchers at various career stages as well as professionals with non-scientific expertise.</p> <p>(i) To undertake certain activities effectively, increased engagement and closer collaboration between the CoARA TUL working team and the Steering Committee (SC) for HR Excellence in Research will be necessary. The SC, which includes the Vice-Rector for Research, 12 chairs of scientific disciplines, the chair of the Rector's Committee for Good Academic Practices, and the chair of the PhD student government, makes key decisions and oversees the strategic directions of actions to be implemented within the HRS4R framework at Lodz University of Technology.</p> <p>(ii) Additionally, a closer cooperation with the Monitoring Committee for HR Excellence in Research, comprising representatives from the university's units involved in implementing the principles of the Charter and Code, will be established. Further cooperation with the national chapter and other bodies at the national level could also be beneficial.</p>	2025-2026



<p>6. Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools and processes</p>	<p>Periodic questionnaire and all bodies involved in its preparation&modification:</p> <p>Periodic appraisal is carried out by means of a questionnaire for the periodic evaluation of academic staff by appraised persons themselves. It is then concluded on a one-person basis, by an appraisee's immediate supervisor, who is the head of the organizational unit that is the place of work of the academic staff member.</p> <p>Although the periodic questionnaire takes into account both teaching, research, and organizational activities depending on the position of the academic teacher, its nature and content are very similar to surveys used to evaluate HE institutions, which are established at the national level by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.</p> <p>(i) To some extent dependent on legislative changes regarding the evaluations of HE units at the ministerial level, TUL will strive to incorporate adjustments in internal evaluations concerning individual research and researchers. This will enable us, on one hand, to reflect the university's status, and on the other hand, to ensure a fair, transparent, and responsible assessment of individuals.</p> <p>(ii) This also involves the work of the CoARA team, whose main tasks will include developing recommendations for other University teams/units engaged in implementing those principles for the evaluation of researchers.</p> <p>(iii) One way to test new solutions might rely on conducting a pilot program in a selected unit and implementing: (i) alternative criteria or (ii) an alternative form of assessment.</p>	<p>2025-2028</p>
<p>7. Raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use</p>	<p>TUL undertakes strategic actions aiming to create an attractive working environment for the academic staff of Lodz University of Technology, which is an element of the university's mission, realized through conducting scientific research, as well as the education and development of academic staff, in accordance with the principles of academic freedom and respect for academic values.</p> <p>TUL ensures that its researchers have appropriate conditions for creating, transferring, exchanging, and</p>	<p>2025-2026</p>



	<p>disseminating knowledge, as well as fostering the development of their scientific careers. Building strong research teams and conducting research at the highest possible level, based on existing global standards, is one of the key tasks that define the strategic direction of the university's development. Therefore, the HRS4R TUL Action Plan for 2022-2024 focused on four areas defined in the European Charter for Researchers: Ethical and Professional Aspects, Recruitment, Working Conditions, and Training.</p> <p>(i) In this respect trainings for decision makers, recruitment committees, researchers are planned. Additionally, TUL will continue training to strengthen research potential of academic staff via raising motivation for continuous professional development by introducing specific recognition system e.g. within the periodic appraisal. Part of it will be devoted to enhancing cooperation with the societal and industrial stakeholders and the University strategic partners like for instance European Consortium of Innovative Universities, https://www.eciu.eu/.</p> <p>(ii) TUL is committed to establish a laboratory for Citizen Science combining researchers from different scientific fields and at various career stages as well as supportive staff members to ensure that research and innovation in TUL is inclusive and responsible, benefit societal challenges and at the same time its evaluation includes its various outputs and impacts.</p>	
8. Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition	<p>Some discussions at the national level take place within various committees, such as KRPUT and conferences for VPs for Research.</p> <p>(i) TUL is going to expand the exchange of practices internationally via discussions within the University Alliance TUL is the member of (European Consortium of Innovative Universities, https://www.eciu.eu/ and its internal groups dedicated to research and innovation such as ECIU (R&I Expert Group, VPs for Research).</p> <p>(ii) At the national level TUL is going to strengthen the engagement in the national chapter and respective working groups.</p>	2024-2028



9. Communicate progress made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments	The working version of Action Plan will be shared on the zenodo platform, annually updated also on the University website. Members of the CoARA TUL working team will continue their engagement in the PL national chapter working groups.	2024-2028
10. Evaluate practices, criteria and tools based on solid evidence and the state-of-the-art in research on research, and make data openly available for evidence gathering and research	TUL plans to regularly monitor and (re)evaluate its assessment criteria, tools, and processes. Once a year feedback coming from appraising panels as well as employees in managerial positions will be collected and analyzed. The TUL CoARA team will be also involved in those activities.	2025-2028

¹ Nauka w Polsce 2023, OPI, MEiN

² <https://polon.nauka.gov.pl/en/>

³ <https://p.lodz.pl/en/about-tul/tul-strategy>

⁴ <https://p.lodz.pl/en/employees/hr-excellence-research-lodz-university-technology>

⁵ <https://p.lodz.pl/en/employees/implementation-hr-excellence-research-tul/otm-r-policy>