



אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS INCORPORATING THE CHARTER AND THE CODE

1. INTRODUCTION

Brief Summary of the Establishment of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

“The Institute for Higher Education in the Negev” was founded by the residents of Beer-Sheva and the Negev during the early 1960s, utilizing instructors from other academic institutions in Israel to provide post-secondary education in Beer-Sheva. Continuous efforts to convince the government to establish a full-fledged university in the Negev, the southern region of Israel, bore fruit on November 9, 1969, when Yigal Alon, then Minister of Education and acting Prime Minister, announced that the Government had decided to build and support the “University of the Negev.” In November 1970, the first meeting of the Board of Governors took place, and the “Institute for Higher Education in the Negev” became the “University of the Negev.”

The University was formally accredited by the Council for Higher Education (CHE) in 1973 and, after the death of David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s first and legendary Prime Minister, it was officially renamed “Ben-Gurion University of the Negev” (BGU).

The University has five campuses: (a) three in Beer-Sheva: the Marcus Family Campus (the main campus), the David Tuviyahu Campus (formerly Beit HIAS) and the David Bergmann Campus (b) one in Sede Boqer, which includes: the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research, the Albert Katz International School for Desert Studies and the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism (c) and the University’s newest campus in Eilat, established in 2003. The Eilat Campus offers B.A. & B.Sc. and M.A. & M.Sc. degrees in several disciplines. Approximately 700 students are currently studying there.

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev encompasses six academic faculties: the Pinchas Sapir Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Natural Sciences, the Faculty of Engineering Sciences, the Faculty of Health Sciences, the Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management and the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research.

BGU ranked #292 in QS University Global Ranking and #30 in the global QS ranking of universities under 50.

The total number of students enrolled (fall semester 2014/15) on all campuses is 19,500 – 1/3 in master's and doctoral programs.

BGU ranks in the top 100 global universities for number of US utility patents awarded annually.

Vision, Aims and Goals

BGU aspires to be among the world's top interdisciplinary research universities, a leader in scientific innovation, interdisciplinary research and applied sciences – all of which impact daily life. It is committed to social and environmental responsibility and is working to develop the Negev, Israel and the world.

The University attracts excellent students and researchers from Israel and abroad, original thinkers with a developed social consciousness, who integrate into the country's leadership in various ways.

Universality

BGU is open to all, regardless of race, religion, nationality or gender. There is no discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, sex or political views. The University is committed to safeguarding academic freedom.

There are 1012 Academic faculty members; most of them completed significant professional training outside Israel.

Goals

- A. Constitute a scientific, educational and cultural center in Israel and assist in the development and advancement of the State of Israel, particularly in the Negev.
- B. Maintain, develop and advance education, teaching and research in all fields of human knowledge.
- C. Contribute to the crystallization of the spiritual, cultural and moral values of the State of Israel, and assist in developing its society and economy.

Duties

- A. Establish and maintain research and teaching institutions, particularly in Beer-Sheva and the Negev region.
- B. Encourage and develop the humanities and social, natural, engineering, technological, health and other sciences; engage in research, teaching and other activities for the advancement of these sciences; ensure the professional level of the academic staff, their ability to impart knowledge and to spread values of culture, education and learning to the University's students and the population of the Negev and Israel.
- C. Constitute an academic community based on close cooperation between teacher-researchers and students.
- D. Engage and train an academic cadre in research and instruction.

BGU has embraced and signed the [European Code of Conduct and Charter for Researchers](#) in 2006, accessible on its website.

2. INTERNAL ANALYSIS

BGU has decided to make the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers Incorporating the 'Charter and Code' a priority, and has, for this purpose, carried out an internal gap analysis.

Two different surveys were conducted:

One survey took place from March 7 to April 14, 2011. It included 4,690 BGU staff members: academic, technical and administrative staff. 4,258 survey forms were filled out: 15.3% by technicians, 27.9% by administrators and 56.8% by academic staff members. The survey was analyzed on two levels: at the University level and at the unit

level. The aims of the survey were: 1. Evaluation of faculty members' satisfaction with the services provided to them by the staff and management units; 2. Identifying areas needing improvement and conservation of services provided by each unit, to increase the satisfaction level in future; 3. Identifying needs and unmet requirements.

A second survey took place from May 24 to June 16, 2012. This survey was sent to 166 newly recruited researchers (i.e. less than 5 years at the University); the group was comprised of Recognized Researchers, R2, Established Researchers, R3 and Leading Researchers, R4. The aims of this survey were: 1. Evaluation of satisfaction of new researchers in their work interfaces and with the level of service provided by the University units, from the researchers' application to BGU, through their recruitment to their daily work at the institution; 2. Identifying areas for improvement and defining the actions required to increase their level of satisfaction in the future; 3. Identifying needs and unmet requirements; 4. Improved and more efficient services to raise the level of satisfaction with the integration process among new academic staff members.

Both surveys were designed to examine the current institutional processes with regard to the principles of the Charter and Code and to point out the areas in which there is a need for action. The University's management, administration, and representatives of the academic staff jointly conducted the internal analysis. Highlights of the survey results are presented below, and the topics and actions to be taken to improve the situation are summarized in the conclusions and action plan.

For the purpose of submitting the request for the recognition of "HR Excellence in Research," a steering committee was established by the BGU's Vice President & Director General and the Vice President & Dean for Research and Development. It is led by the Office of International Academic Affairs, with representatives from the Research and Development Authority, Human Resources and the Academic Secretariat.

The gap analysis is based on the internal analysis, touching upon the four components of the Charter:

- i. Ethical and Professional Aspects**
- ii. Recruitment**
- iii. Working Conditions**
- iv. Training**

For each criterion, we considered and evaluated the relevant laws and regulations of the State of Israel, as well as internal BGU regulations. The results of the surveys and missing institutional regulations were taken into consideration in defining the final concrete ideas for implementation, following which a realistic timetable was conceived.

3. EXISTING PRACTICES

Below is a brief description of each of the four components, with a sample list of existing internal regulations, processes and structures, providing insight into the strategies and activities that have already been implemented and the potential for further development.

i. Ethical and Professional Aspects

BGU is a free research community, founded on the universal values of truth and liberty and their derivatives: impartiality, honesty, justice, equality and respect for all human beings.

There are profound links between these values: we cannot ensure truth without freedom of research, while freedom of research in turn requires impartiality. The reverse of these values, in its various forms of arbitrariness, inequality or lack of respect for human autonomy, also affects the ability of truth to stand up to the relevant critical tests that are required.

The implementation of these values finds its expression at the institutional level in the principles of academic freedom, in scrupulously guarding civil rights and human dignity, in the prevention of discrimination of any kind, in an internal regimen of tolerance with respect to difference and diversity, uncompromising integrity in research, teaching and the publication of professional work, through the strict pursuit of truth in research, teaching and administrative conduct, in the prevention of any kind of academic fraud or

dishonesty, and in respect for the theoretical and administrative independence of the academic community as a free research community.

The academic ethical code (herewith) reflects those values and is regulated by an institutional committee (Ethics Committee members are named at:

<http://www.bgu.ac.il/acadsec/Pages/ethics.aspx>). To the best of our knowledge, BGU is the only university in Israel with an ethical code. It can be accessed at:

<http://www.bgu.ac.il/acadsec/DocLib/Pages/ethics/EthicalCodeenglishversion.pdf>

Ethical Regulations

The following apply to research involving human subjects/specimens:

- Health regulations (Clinical trials on humans) 5741 – 1980*
- Ministry of Health regulations concerning human trials 2006
- Genetic Information Law 5761 – 2000*
- Prohibition of Genetic Intervention Law (Human Cloning and Genetic Modification reproductive cells) 5759 – 1999*

The BGU Helsinki Committee for Protection of Human Subjects oversees that these aspects are observed.

The following apply to research involving animals:

- The Animal Welfare Act (trial on animals) 5754 – 1994*
- The Animal Welfare rules (trial on animals) 5761 – 2001*

These are overseen by the BGU Committee for Ethical Care and Use of Animals in Research.

Intellectual Property Rights:

The exploitation of intellectual property is regulated together with the patent guidelines, which are handled by BGU's Technology Transfer Company, BGN Technologies.

A translation of the guidelines is available.

BGU strives to solicit resources in support of research activities from foundations, funding agencies and granting organizations in Israel and abroad. The University solicits

* The number represents the numbering of the relevant Israeli Laws

and administers these funds through its Research & Development Authority, which is an integral part of BGU management and engages in the following activities:

1. Searching for sources of research funding
2. Linking research projects with funding sources
3. Assisting and supporting researchers in project development
4. Liaison to prospective funding organizations prior to and throughout the proposal submission and evaluation process
5. Grant and contract negotiations vis-à-vis funding agencies
6. Post-award administration of grants and contracts received by University researchers
7. Preparation and submission of financial reports, accounting and invoices; monitoring the submission of scientific and technical reports by researchers
8. Monitoring compliance with funding agency and government standards

Green Campus

BGU has undertaken the responsibility to care for and work towards a cleaner and better environment as part of the Green Campus initiative.

Green Campus is an initiative of the Israeli Ministry of Environmental Protection, aiming to implement the concern for environmental quality in higher education institutions. As such, the University is committed to:

- Environmental Studies – each campus will allow students to take one elective course on the subject of the environment
- Contribution to the Community – each of the campuses selects a community-oriented environmental project, to be implemented by the administration, the students and the community, leading to a change in behavioral and conceptual norms in terms of the community's approach to the environment
- Responsible Use of Resources – saving energy by reducing the use of electricity, water, private vehicles and paper, and increasing recycling (bottles, toners, batteries, etc.).

In 2014, BGU ranked 24th on the UI GreenMetric World University Ranking, out of 360 universities (<http://greenmetric.ui.ac.id//ranking>).

More information about BGU's Green Campus initiative is available at:

<http://in.bgu.ac.il/green/Pages/EN.aspx>

BGU is a smoke-free University. Smoking is prohibited on all campus grounds, except in designated areas.

BGU complies with Israeli laws concerning control of alcohol use and drug abuse.

Distribution, dispensation, marketing, possession, advertising or use of a controlled substance, such as drugs and alcoholic beverages, is prohibited everywhere on the University campuses and in the dormitories.

On special occasions, when it is appropriate to serve alcoholic beverages, a special permit is required (in accordance with Israeli law).

BGU has an internal Drug Free Workplace policy that is currently being revised and updated.

Any student or staff member convicted of conduct unbecoming a student/employee of the University is liable to disciplinary sanctions.

ii. Recruitment

BGU has instituted precise regulations regarding appointment procedures and the professional promotion of both newly recruited and tenured academic staff members.

- BGU policy 05-051, for recruitment of academic staff members, is specified (in Hebrew) on the University website at: <http://in.bgu.ac.il/osh/HumanresocharP/05-051.pdf>
- BGU policy 05-011, prohibition of employment of relatives, specified (in Hebrew) at: <http://in.bgu.ac.il/osh/HumanresocharP/05011.pdf>

These regulations include our standardized internal workflow, starting at the time when a department files a request for the recruitment of a new academic staff member, the advertisement of the job posting and the process undertaken until the position has been filled. The request is initiated at the departmental level and is then passed on to the faculty and faculty committees, then to the Rector and the hiring advisory committee.

The hiring advisory committee, headed by the Rector, includes representatives from each faculty, whose responsibility is to review all candidates for recruitment to ensure academic excellence. All open academic positions are advertised nationally and internationally (in newspapers and on websites relevant to the specific field). Our gap analysis indicated that the majority of newly recruited researchers did not express high satisfaction with the information they obtained before their employment. The feedback revealed that there was no structured procedure for passing on the information and some details (concerning salary) were missing. Nevertheless, 78% of newly recruited researchers were very satisfied with the search and negotiation procedures and stated that information supplied was broad and relevant.

There is little awareness of the EURAXESS Jobs portal at the University level, and therefore job vacancies are only posted there occasionally. The University abides by Israeli laws concerning equality of employment:

- Equal Employment Opportunities 5748 – 1988*
- Equal Rights for People with Disabilities Law 5758 – 1988* and Regulations thereunder

BGU regulations specify that the employment of relatives is forbidden. Exceptions are evaluated on a case-by-case basis as detailed in the above-mentioned BGU by-law 05-011.

In addition to the above-mentioned BGU regulations regarding procedures for the recruitment of new faculty members, BGU has special regulations for the professional promotion of both newly recruited and tenured academic staff members, as detailed on the Senate website (in Hebrew): <http://in.bgu.ac.il/acadsec/Pages/regulations.aspx>.

Women in Science

The percentage of women in academic positions at the University is significantly lower than that of men. In order to bridge the gap, BGU has established the Office for the Advancement of Women in Academia, which approaches the issue on several different levels:

- Following and analyzing trends by collecting statistical data, and delivering it to the University directorate for regulation of the status of women

- Offering consultations to women at all academic levels
- Establishing a website publishing all the relevant information, as well as the Office's activities (in Hebrew): <http://in.bgu.ac.il/women-forum/Pages/default.aspx>
- Organizing several activities promoting the absorption of young female scholars into academic professions, especially in the more "manly" scientific fields

BGU places special emphasis on women in science, giving priority to women in the general recruitment process, and particular attention to the recruitment of women in scientific areas in which they are underrepresented.

The Beit Fanny Daycare Center, collaboration between WIZO and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, intended for the children of BGU staff members, including scientists, research students, as well as technical and administrative staff, has been fully operational since September 2013, with 3 daycare classes and one preschool class, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education.

The daycare center implements the University's policy of providing its young scientists with optimal conditions for developing their academic careers alongside their family life.

<http://in.bgu.ac.il/en/daycare/Pages/default.aspx>

iii. Working Conditions

Working conditions, social security and health insurance are all reviewed during a personal meeting with the Human Resources Division representative. These issues are published by the Human Resources Division in a special booklet distributed to all newly recruited academic staff members and published both in English and in Hebrew on the University website: "Guide for Senior Academic Staff"

<http://in.bgu.ac.il/hr/Pages/senior.aspx>.

New academic staff members will find there information on a wide range of topics of interest, such as internal University regulations, general information about Beer-Sheva, tourism, accommodations, schools, kindergartens, shopping centers, entertainment, etc.

The departments' Administrative Assistant is the first contact point for almost all services needed by the academic staff member. The Research and Development Authority provides services concerning research grant management and related topics and the

* The number represents the numbering of the relevant Israeli Laws

Human Resources Department is the address for all services and information concerning human resources from the moment of negotiation of working conditions (before arrival) until retirement.

In the survey for newly recruited academic staff members, more than 80% of respondents gave a high grade for satisfaction with the services provided by the departments' Administrative Assistants and the Human Resources Department. At the University level, 79.5% of academic, technical and administrative staff members agreed to the above and added that services were provided in a courteous manner; 76.8% stated that service was professional; and 71.8% said that it met their needs. At the unit level, more than 70% of academic staff members were satisfied with the services obtained from their faculties, but in one unit only 50% of the staff expressed satisfaction with technical services obtained. For the facilitation of new staff members' absorption, an allocation ("Absorption Basket") is available. The Absorption Basket is an initial grant provided by the University for basic research purposes. The allocation of the Basket is made in accordance with the different needs and with University resources. According to the survey, newly recruited academic staff members expressed discontent with the information they received about the Basket and complained about its limitation for purchase of equipment.

Internationalization

BGU places particular emphasis on internationalization and mobility. Beside the fact that the European R&D agreements and the curricula allow for student and staff exchanges, BGU has also signed hundreds of bilateral agreements. Moreover, all academic staff members accrue an entitlement to two months' sabbatical leave for every year worked at the University. A senior academic staff member is entitled to take his/her first sabbatical leave after attaining tenure. In addition, all academic staff members receive an annual allocation specifically meant to fund International Scientific Relations. The sum depends on the rank and scope of the faculty member's position and is updated annually. The fund is earmarked for covering the expenses of participating in conventions and advanced studies and for paying membership fees to professional associations.

Since 2004 Ben-Gurion University has been recognized and participates in the EURAXESS Mobility Network as a Mobility Center under the Israeli Ministry of Science (its BHO).

In 2007 BGU established the Office of International Academic Affairs, which handles all international agreements (Memoranda of Understanding), short-term study programs in English, the Ginsburg-Ingberman Overseas Student Program and EU projects concerning education, mobility of researchers and students, Erasmus Mundus and Tempus.

Accessibility for People with Disabilities

Among the rules followed by the Human Resources Division are: accessibility for people with disabilities, taking care of their particular needs (following the Israeli Law for Equal Rights for People with Disabilities 5758 – 1988* and regulations thereunder), equal opportunity for women (according to the Law for Encouragement of Integration and Promotion of Women's Work and Women's Jobs Matching, 5768 – 2008* and the Employment of Women Law 5714 – 1954*) and responsibility for the wellbeing of all staff members under the care of professional social workers.

iv. Training

Every year BGU organizes a meeting and a special coaching program for its new researchers to acquaint them with BGU regulations concerning research and training responsibilities with regards to the working conditions in their laboratories, the terms of their contract and the obligation of advancement for promotion, including the obligation to submit research proposals.

A special section of the internal R&D website is dedicated to guiding new faculty members, including a list of funding resources for new faculty members:

<http://in.bgu.ac.il/en/osr/Pages/RDA-Internal/Information-for-New-Researchers.aspx>

Personal meetings are held with each new academic staff member recruited by BGU with a designated representative from the Human Resources Division, who personally explains national laws and internal University regulations, such as IPR, patent rights, etc., and guides the new staff member through internal bureaucratic procedures, salary details, pension rights, promotion procedures, etc. The new staff member also receives the

"Guide for Senior Academic Staff." More than 50% of newly recruited academic staff members complained that in the Human Resources meeting, no general information was provided about BGU, its vision and goals, and that it was unclear what the Department's responsibilities are. Nevertheless they agreed that these meetings are very important. Before the beginning of the academic year, a general Orientation Day for all new academic staff members/researchers is held by the Human Resources Division, during which representatives of various University units, such as the Research and Development Authority and the Security Unit, give short presentations. An additional Orientation Day is organized annually for the family members of the newly recruited academic staff. In some faculties, additional Welcome Meetings are held at the departmental level, giving the new staff member the opportunity to meet colleagues.

A mentor is appointed by the Head of the Department to guide the new staff member/researcher on his/her new path. BGU instructs and prepares all mentors for their role, in which capacity they continue to assist the newly recruited staff member for as long as necessary, up until tenure has been granted. 75% of newly recruited researchers were only partially satisfied with their mentoring procedure, but stated that mentoring is a strong necessity and that it is very important to appoint a mentor to newly recruited staff members.

A University Forum providing support to new academic staff members has been established. The Forum is composed of senior researchers who meet once a month with the new academic staff members. They supply information on research collaborations, networking, etc., offer coaching and answer all questions/problems raised by the new recruits regarding the University or their personal lives. New academic staff members are informed about the Forum's existence by the Human Resources Division and then receive e-mail invitations to attend the Forum's meetings.

All academic staff members at BGU are also required to teach. Therefore, all new academic staff members are encouraged to participate in the teaching workshops. During their first year, new faculty members are assigned reduced teaching hours, to assist in their absorption and in the building of their independent career.

Senior academic staff members who receive low grades in internal teaching evaluations are required to participate in these workshops. In case of serious problems with teaching quality, a special individual coaching system is offered.

4. CONCLUSION AND ACTION PLAN

In all four areas, in addition to statutory regulations and internal guidelines, functioning processes and practical experience are also of great importance. Challenges exist in several areas and special measures are required in order to address them. The first action plan is part of the continued process of improvement and focuses above all on supporting young scientists. The individual measures planned are listed in the following table:

Principle	Action Required	Responsible	Timetable
Ethical and professional aspects	Organization and guidance of mentors' workshop.	Human Resources (in collaboration with the Rector, Deans and Department Heads)	The next meeting is scheduled for December 2015. The following meetings will take place annually.
	Organizing seminars on good academic practice for researchers at all stages of their career.	Human Resources	The next meeting will take place September 2016. Following meetings will be held once or twice a year.
	Guiding faculty in the submission of research proposals to external funding agencies as independent researchers.	R&D Authority	An annual meeting to introduce each bi-national funding source. In addition a weekly newsletter is distributed to all researchers which list all the calls for proposals, awardees and events.
	Encouraging researchers to initiate scientific collaborations between academia and industry.	R&D Authority	Ongoing - B.G.N. Technologies Ltd., BGU's commercialization company

			holds individual meetings with researchers. In addition they connect them with relevant industries. Researchers receive 40-60% of Royalties for technology that was transferred from the university to the industry.
	BGU internal regulations concerning a drug-free workplace and alcohol use	Organization and Management Department	Currently undergoing revision
Recruitment	Computerizing the process for approving recruitment of academic staff.	Human Resources	Implementation of the new software is expected in 2020
	Raising University awareness of the EURAXESS Jobs portal and creating a platform for the automatic posting of all University vacancies.	Office of International Academic Affairs	Automatic posting is expected to be active by August 2016
	Launching a new dedicated website advertising vacant academic positions at BGU.	Human Resources	August 2016
	Addressing obstacles in the recruitment of faculty members posed by the University's location in the Negev.	Human Resources + R&D Authority	September 2016
	Reducing brain-drain of new faculty members by improving their absorption at BGU. Responding to the various needs of faculty and family: housing, employment and children's education.	Human Resources	January 2017
Working conditions	Raising awareness among senior academic staff of their duties and rights with regards to working conditions.	Human Resources	June 2015
	Development of a new database portal	Rector's Office	August 2016

	assisting researchers with the maintenance of their updated CV and list of publications, thus improving their career advancement process.		
	Continuing to monitor University regulations and policies concerning working conditions.	Human Resources	Ongoing
	Promotion of the importance of health insurance for young researchers.	Office of International Academic Affairs	Ongoing – monitored upon arrival of young researchers to BGU. Promoted as part of a welcome packet which will be published October 2015 and revised annually.
	Continuing to provide assistance and representation vis-à-vis government agencies regarding visas and work permits.	Office of International Academic Affairs	Bi-monthly meeting of BGU representative at the Ministry of Interior on visa issues of relevant BGU staff.
	Conducting a BGU satisfaction survey.	Organization and Management Department	Will be completed within 3 years
Joint group learning and support	Maintenance of the Forum for newly recruited faculty members. Organizing joint learning and sharing sessions.	Faculty with Human Resources	A two day orientation is held at the beginning of each academic year. The Forum then continues to meet once a month.
Training	Expanding existing assistance at the departmental level.	Human Resources	October 2015
	Revision of the information supplied before new researchers' arrival.	Human Resources	Ongoing – annual monitoring
	Creating a research skills workshop.	Human Resources	1 st course devoted to the subject of writing research proposals took place this year (January 2015)

	Offering workshops dedicated to improving teaching skills.	Human Resources	December 2015 The following meetings will take place at the annually.
	Overseeing academic staff's teaching abilities through Student Surveys	Teaching Quality Control Committee	This is an ongoing process, conducted at the end of each semester
	Questionnaires for newly recruited staff members	Human Resources	A yearly questionnaire is sent to all newly recruited staff members
HR Strategy for Researchers	Monitoring of the Code of Conduct strategy in order to evaluate the implementation of the action plan.	Office of International Academic Affairs	Annually