



Summary results of a survey at the J. Heyrovský  
Institute of Physical Chemistry

HR Award – Interim Assessment  
(November 2020)



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## Introduction

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The main purpose of the survey was to find out what awareness the staff of the J. Heyrovsky Institute of Physical Chemistry (HIPC) has about the changes that the institute's management has started to focus on since 2017 by the commitment to The European Charter for Researchers and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. These changes are intended to bring us closer to the standards of internationally recognized research institutions and thus lead to the strengthening of the international position of the HIPC.

As not all employees are aware of what activities and changes are taking place in connection with the HR Award, the survey also served as an overview of all measures implemented so far. By answering our questions, we have not only received feedback, but also the input for the revised action plan.

A total of 71 respondents participated in the anonymous survey, which was carried out using the online form between 5/10/2020 and 25/10/2020. The survey was available in both Czech and English versions and was disseminated via e-mail.

We would like to thank everyone who used this opportunity to influence the future working environment of our Institute and took the time to complete the survey.

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## Basic overview

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**Number of respondents:** 71

**Number of staff:** 297

**Gender**

Woman: 51 %

Man: 41 %

Not relevant: 8 %

**Age**

20-29 years: 10 %

30-39 years: 44 %

40-49 years: 16 %

50-59 years: 21 %

60-69 years: 6 %

70-more years: 3 %

**Job classification**

R1: 11 %

R2: 17 %

R3: 24 %

R4: 31 %

O3: 4%

O4: 12 %

O5: 1 %

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## Summary of the survey results

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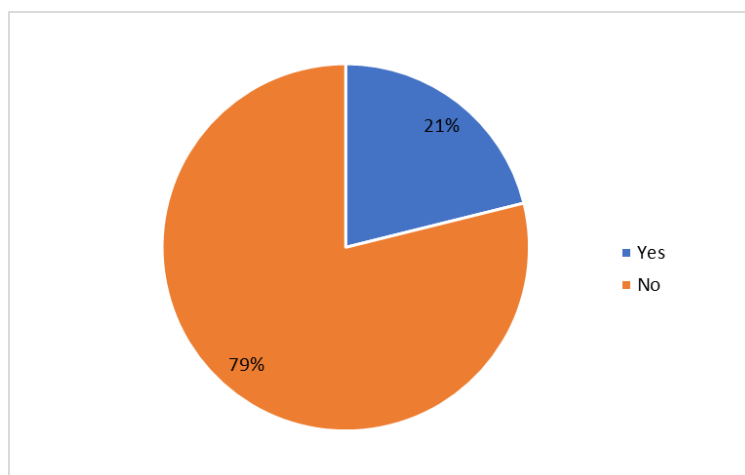
**Question 1: A Committee for Ethics of Research Involving Human Subjects and a Committee for Scientific Work Ethics were established at the Institute. The Committee for Scientific Work Ethics is dedicated to solving difficult situations that might appear as a result of bad scientific practice, e.g. plagiarism, falsification, or fabrication of data.**

Have you ever faced a situation during your scientific career when you would appreciate the intervention of the Committee for Scientific Work Ethics? Yes/Not

If yes, can you outline a character of such a situation?

### The summary of comments on this question 1:

The first question concerned the Committee for Scientific Work Ethics, which is designed to address difficult situations that may arise as a result of poor scientific practice. In the first part, it focused on whether respondents faced a situation during their scientific career in which they would appreciate the Committee's intervention. A total of 21% of respondents replied that they did.



**Graph 1.1.** Have you ever faced a situation during your scientific career when you would appreciate the intervention of the Committee for Scientific Work Ethics?

The most common situations mentioned were: authorship of an article (confusion about co-authorship, attribution of ghost authors to the publication, omission from the author's collective, although the person contributed more than 50%), conflicts with the supervisor, and research misconduct.

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**Question 2: Independent on the management of the Institute, there are three entities you can address in case you need help in an uneasy situation. Ombudsman (male and female) confidentially mediate remediable misconduct (authorship, the discrepancy in data use, poor mentoring), and promote the good scientific practice. Trade Union Chair deals with issues in labour disputes. Vice-director for Education facilitates mentoring for students and an advisor in education.**

Who would you currently approach in resolving various issues?

Indicate one or more of the following

- An ombudsman;
- The Trade Union;

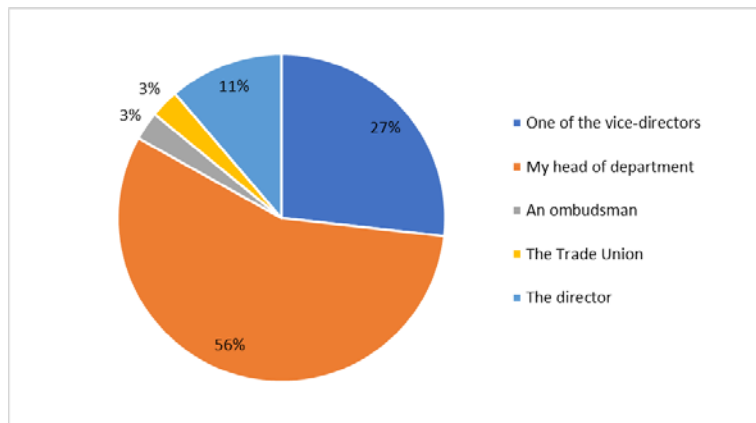
- c) My head of department;
- d) One of the vice-directors;
- e) The director.

For each of the areas:

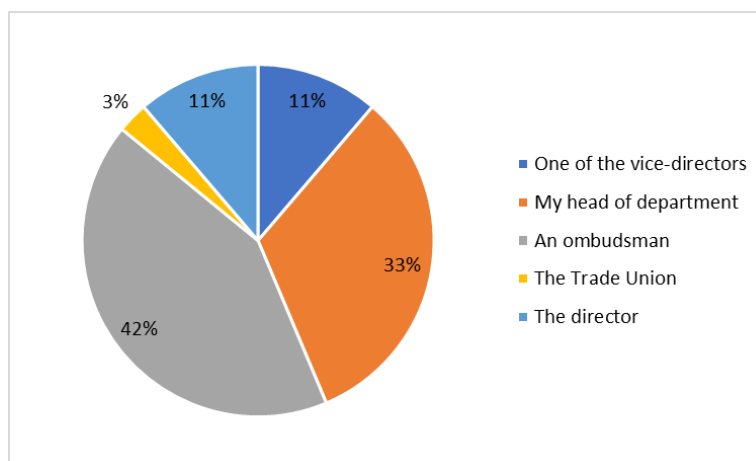
- Advice on career development, information and/or recommendation on student fellowship abroad;
- Misconduct or violation of good scientific practice rules, the discrepancy in data use;
- Conflicts resulting from poor mentoring of undergraduate and early-stage researchers;
- Bullying, bossing, sexual or racial harassment, discrepancies in job contract, suggestions for the Collective Agreement;
- Concerns about workplace conditions.

**The summary of comments on question 2:**

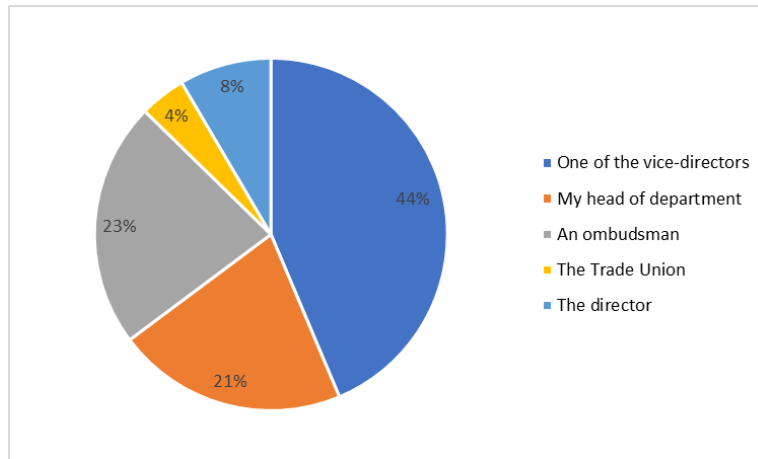
Respondents selected from the options offered who they would contact for help in the event of unpleasant situations. The following charts show who they would most often turn to:



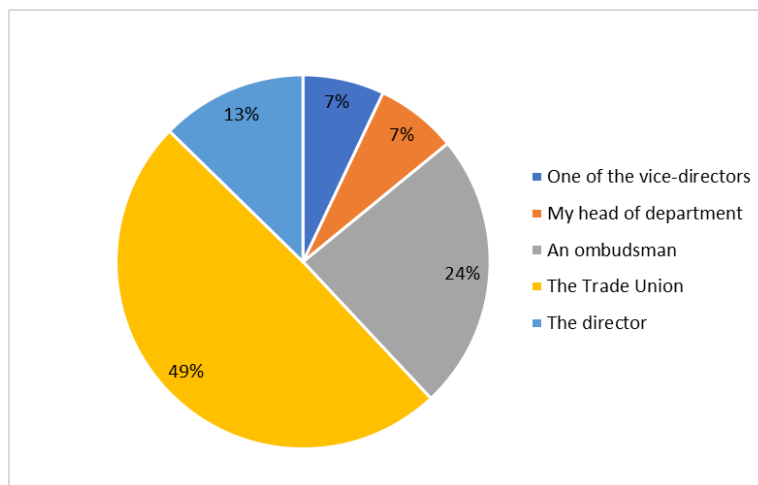
**Graph 2.1.** Advice on career development, information and/or recommendation on student fellowship abroad.



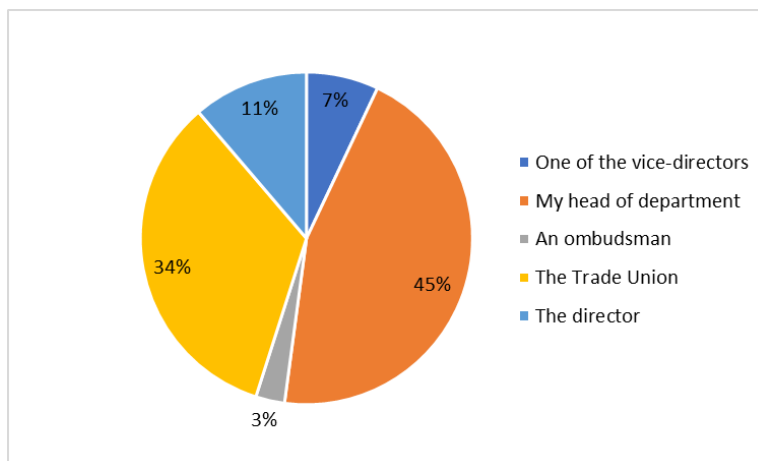
**Graph 2.2.** Misconduct or violation of good scientific practice rules, the discrepancy in data use.



**Graph 2.3.** Conflicts resulting from poor mentoring of undergraduate and early-stage researchers



**Graph. 2.4.** Bullying, bossing, sexual or racial harassment, discrepancies in job contract, suggestions for the Collective Agreement.



**Graph 2.5.** Concerns about workplace conditions.

In most examples, respondents gave the most appropriate option for who to contact in these situations.

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**Question 3: The Employee Handbook which has been created recently offers much useful information not only for newcomers but also for established employees (The handbook is only in the Czech language).**

Is there any information missing in the Handbook which you would appreciate in your day-by-day work?

If yes, please specify.

**The summary of comments on question 3:**

The third question dealt with whether there was any information missing in the Employee Handbook that respondents would appreciate. The most common remark was the absence of an English version of the manual. They considered the administrative part to be beneficial, but some of the respondents pointed out the out-of-date of some information (especially contacts) and suggested more frequent and careful updates. Another proposal was missing information on the existence of an ombudsman. Last but not least, the absence of topics related to scientific work and evaluations was mentioned.

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**Question 4: In the Czech Republic, research and innovations are to a large extent funded from public resources. The Institute increases public awareness on our research through media coverage, e.g. press releases, articles in printed and online media, interviews with scientists, Open Doors Day, social media, etc.**

Is there any way how you would like to address a broad audience, and which has not appeared at the current practice of communicating science?

If yes, please specify

**The summary of comments on question 4:**

In the fourth question, respondents should have considered whether there were any other forms of presentation of science that the Institute does not yet use when presenting science to the public. Respondents most mentioned a greater focus on social networks. They suggested, for example, writing contributions in Czech and English, sharing short news items and articles, etc. They also mentioned media promotion.

Some of the respondents suggested other popular approaches nowadays, such as podcasts or educational portals like Coursera. Others see opportunities in cooperation with high (or secondary) schools at popularization events, as well as the open day with wider employee involvement.

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**Question 5: The Institute is building a bilingual environment. Many official documents were translated into English, you can find them on an Intranet page. Other essential documents are being gradually translated and posted one-by-one on the Intranet. Personnel from the Economic Department is attending English courses, their language knowledge is improving continuously.**

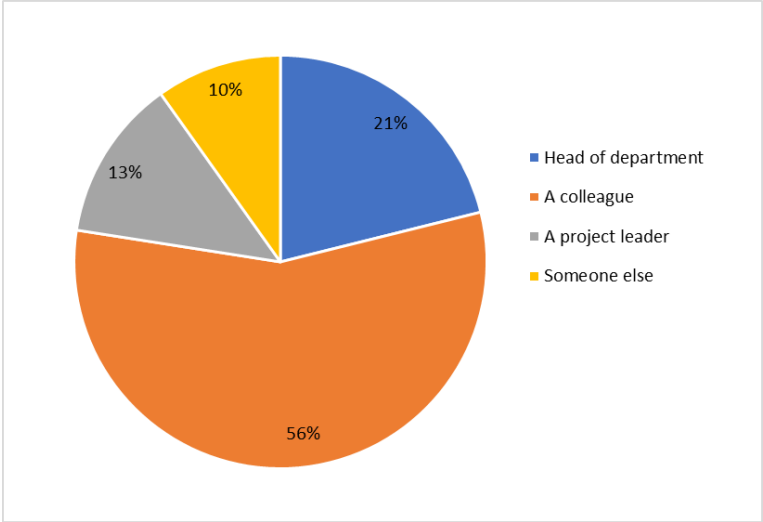
Nevertheless, should you experience a situation when it is difficult to communicate and requires advanced knowledge of English, whom would you ask for assistance?

- a) Head of Department
- b) A project leader
- c) A colleague
- d) Someone else – please specify

**The summary of comments on question 5:**

The fifth question focused on the bilingual environment of the Institute and who respondents would turn to when faced with a situation where it is difficult to communicate and which requires advanced knowledge of English.

Respondents would most often turn to one of their colleagues in more than half of the cases. They would then turn to the head of the department, the project leader, or someone else.



**Graph 5.1.** Whom would you ask for assistance in a situation when it is difficult to communicate and requires advanced knowledge of English?

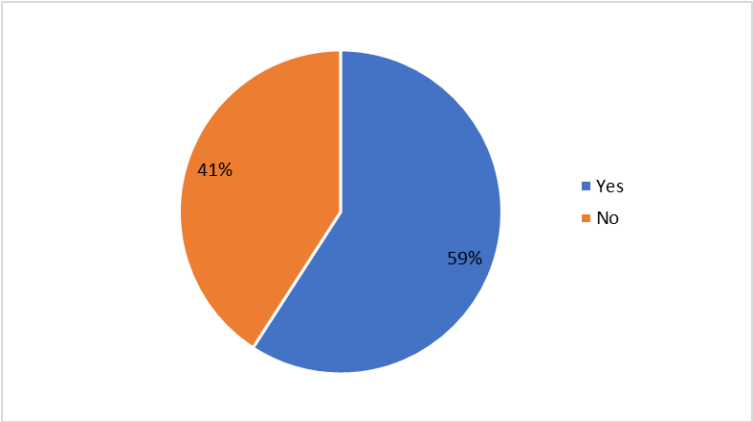
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**Question 6.** A document providing information on how to proceed to obtain a recognition of foreign qualifications was published on the web page of the Institute.

If a new colleague from abroad join your department, would you know how to navigate him or her where to find this document?

**The summary of comments on question 6:**

The sixth question was whether respondents would be able to navigate newly arriving foreign colleagues and advise them on where to find a document describing how to obtain recognition of foreign qualifications. A total of 41 % of those surveyed said they would know where to find such a document on the institute's website.



**Graph 6.1.** If a new colleague from abroad joins your department, do you know how to navigate it, where to find this document?

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**Question 7.** As you might know, all researchers are obliged to undergo an evaluation of their scientific work at least once in five years. Several documents were created to ensure fairness and clarity of this evaluating procedure, such as a Methodology of Evaluation, a Manual for researchers and heads of departments, and a

**Manual for the Evaluation Committee. The recommendation of an International Advisory Board has been implemented. Besides, the whole process turned out to be paperless.**

If you have already undergone the improved evaluation procedure after the year 2018, have you noticed a simplification of the whole process?

If yes, which aspect of the above-mentioned changes do you appreciate the most?

**The summary of comments on question 7:**

The seventh question focused on whether respondents who had gone through the new evaluation procedure noticed its changes, as well as which aspects were most valuable. Most respondents appreciated the online process, as well as the connection with citation databases, the comprehensive approach, and clarity of the criteria and simplicity.

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**Question 8. Selection and recruitment of researchers are being formalized according to the Open, Transparent, and Merit-based Recruitment principles (OTM-R) in these days. A guideline for members of the selection committee which will contain clear instructions on how to choose the most suitable candidate is being prepared. A document presenting an OTM-R policy of the Heyrovský Institute is available on the web page of the Institute. A template for advertising scientific positions was created.**

Have you already used the template for advertising a scientific position?

Yes / No.

Do you usually advertise open positions in your department at the portal Euraxess which use is highly recommended, and since 1st October 2020 its use will be mandatory?

Yes / No.

**The summary of comments on question 8:**

The eighth question dealt with OTM-R policy at the HIPC and a prepared form for advertising a scientific position. Only 6 % of those surveyed replied that they had already used the prepared form. Less than 30 % of respondents replied that they advertised open positions on Euraxess.

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**Question 9. A number of training programs in various areas of interest took place in our Institute in the last two years. For instance:**

- members of the Selection committee attended training related to OTM-R principles and the best practice in selection and recruitment procedure;
- interested employees attended training dedicated to the preparation of the advertisement, how to pre-screen CV and motivations letters, and how to manage a successful phone interview;
- many researchers attended training on Intellectual Property Rights;
- leading researchers underwent training on improving managerial and communication skills;
- interested scientists attended training on 3D modelling in an application "Blender".

Is there any area you would like to improve your knowledge or skills and which has not been offered to you yet?

If yes, please specify.

**The summary of comments on question 9:**

A total of 30 % of respondents replied that an area for improvement exists. The most frequently mentioned answer was the writing of quality scientific articles, writing proposals, reports, and preparation of the financial part of scientific projects. Several responses also focused on areas of personal development, namely



assertiveness courses, team and student leadership, teamwork, or stress management. Other areas included popularization of science, ethics in scientific practice, IT and graphic courses, 3D modeling, tungsten inert gas welding.

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**Question 10.** The Institute established a Group for intellectual property rights (IPR Group). The IPR Group provides advice and recommendation on intellectual property to the Director of the Heyrovský Institute. An updated internal directive Management of Intellectual Ownership and Protection and Application of Industrial Property Rights (Directive SM-09) was published on the Intranet. You can address a Centre for transfer of technologies (Ing. Jiří Trnka) which has been established recently with IPR issues. A new system for evidence of IPR is being developed.

Have you applied for any patent in the last two years?

If yes, did you find the Directive SM-09 useful?

**The summary of comments on question 10:**

The tenth question focused on whether respondents had applied for a patent in the last two years. Only two of the respondents answered yes. Furthermore, the question continued as to whether the Directive on the Management of Intellectual Property and the Protection and Application of Industrial Property Rights (Directive SM-09), which also deals with patents, is useful. 35% of those surveyed found this directive useful.

Unfortunately, this question was not asked correctly and although the respondents did not apply for a patent, they were also forced to answer a follow-up question (whether they consider the directive useful). The results of this question are thus not significant.

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**Question 11.** The Institute published the Methodology of active reintegration of researchers into research and development of activities after a period of time off not only due to maternity/parental leave.

How do you feel about the idea of providing specific support to parents, especially mothers, to support equality between men and women at the workplace? What kind of support would be most effective?

**The summary of comments on question 11:**

The last eleventh question allowed respondents to comment on the Methodology for active re-integration of researchers into R&D activities after a period of time off not only due to maternity/parental leave.

Respondents very positively supported such activities. The three most common types of support mentioned time flexibility, a constitutional school or a children's group, and the possibility of part-time work. Another of the answers is related to the last point, the possibility of working in the form of a home-office. Besides, some have focused on the financial side, a good form of support would be the existence of small internal projects to help bridge the gap before returning researchers can write a proposal. They also see tuition fees as a possible form of support. Last but not least, respondents mentioned the gradual introduction to current research projects and leniency in evaluations.

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### *Acknowledgement*

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