

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARIBOR – AN ENCOURAGING WORKING ENVIRONMENT

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The article discusses the development of human resources at the University of Maribor (UM), which is crucial for academic, research, and organisational excellence. Since its establishment in 1975, the University of Maribor has been systematically professionalising its employees, including academic, research and non-pedagogical professional staff. Staff development has been adapted to societal needs, as reflected in the introduction of new pedagogical approaches, digital technologies, and the Bologna study system. An analysis of the 2004–2023 period shows fluctuations in the number of employees, peaking in 2023 with 2,093 staff members. There is a noticeable trend of growth in research and teaching staff with higher academic titles and the professionalisation of the workforce, especially in higher pay grades within groups H and J. The UM Strategy 2021–2030 (Univerza v Mariboru, 2021b) emphasises the importance of interpersonal relations, work-life balance, and continuous skills development through programmes such as "Enhance UM". It has been established that the University of Maribor follows modern trends in digitalisation, innovation and lifelong learning, contributing to the development of its staff and society as a whole.

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1 Introduction

Human resource development is one of the fundamental HRM processes and represents an important part of employee satisfaction and the long-term progress of the organisation. As such, it systematically contributes to staff retention and career development. From the very beginning, the University of Maribor has ensured the systematic training, education and guidance of employees in the development of their competencies. The development of digital technology has enabled the implementation of such training and education remotely, which gives employees additional opportunities to participate and engage in acquiring new knowledge. This method of training and education of employees at the University of Maribor thus encompasses a broader concept of human resources development, as it goes beyond the Slovenian space and integrates into the international environment. This opens up new opportunities for the development of individual potential, enabling individuals to structure and shape new knowledge from various fields.

2 A Brief Overview of Human Resource Development at the University of Maribor

Human resource development at the University of Maribor began even before the University was established, namely in the Association of Higher Education Institutions of Maribor, which was founded in 1961. With the development of society and adaptation to the needs of the economy, the association strengthened the professional and scientific knowledge of its staff until, in 1975, the need to establish the University of Maribor became apparent. In its early days, the University focused primarily on developing study programmes and forming an academic staff, which was the basis for the implementation and development of study programmes. With the growing number of students in the following years, there was also an increased need to develop not only academic but also non-pedagogical professional staff. This was reflected in higher levels of education among academic staff and greater professionalism among non-pedagogical professional staff (Rozman, 2005).

Before 1993, the status of academic staff was regulated by the predecessor to the current law, which is the Career-Oriented Education Act (Tancer Verboten, 2019). In the 1980s and 1990s, with the introduction of new pedagogical approaches, teacher training programmes also began to develop. This was prompted by the

adoption of the Higher Education Act in 1993. Tertiary education began to strengthen, and the University of Maribor experienced broader growth with the establishment of new higher education institutions, which also led to accelerated staff development (Radonjič, 2005).

In the new millennium, the University of Maribor continued its expansion with new higher education institutions and an increase in the number of students. During this time, the Bologna Process developed and became established, contributing to the professionalisation and strategic development of human resources. This coincided with the development and establishment of the Bologna Process, which enabled the creation of comparable and transparent study programmes, a uniform credit system, and international student mobility. The University of Maribor began implementing programmes for the training of teaching staff with an emphasis on new didactic approaches and Bologna standards based on the internationalisation of students (Univerza v Mariboru, 2024). As a member of the European Union, Slovenia has committed itself to implementing the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy (Kolar & Komljenovič, 2011).

In 2013, the University of Maribor adopted the University of Maribor Development Strategy 2013–2020, which aimed not only to continue the existing staff development system, but also to become a globally recognised innovation ecosystem that would enable a collaborative and creative environment for all employees. In preparing and adopting the University of Maribor Development Strategy 2013–2020, the University of Maribor followed the guidelines for human resource development set out in the National Higher Education Programme 2011–2022. In 2011, the Republic of Slovenia set goals for the successful operation of the higher education sector, which focused primarily on increasing the number of researchers and doctors of science, requiring universities to strengthen the qualifications of their staff, improving career opportunities, and incorporating the principle of equal opportunities for researchers.

In the field of staff development, the University of Maribor consequently set the following strategic goals (Univerza v Mariboru, 2014b):

- promoting academic values and developing professional and ethical practices;
- developing human resources;

- pursuing an active employment policy;
- ensuring more appropriate working conditions and social security;
- developing university culture.

The University of Maribor Development Strategy 2013–2020 (Univerza v Mariboru, 2014b) also highlighted the development of research staff, based on the Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia 2011–2022. In 2010, the University of Maribor adopted the University of Maribor Human Resources Strategy for Researchers for the period 2010–2014, which highlighted the following areas of researcher development (Horvat, 2010):

- ethical and professional aspects;
- employment;
- working conditions and social security;
- training.

In line with the development of research staff, the University of Maribor Development Strategy 2013–2020 (Univerza v Mariboru, 2014b) focused on promoting the transfer of scientific, research, and artistic achievements to the environment and thus the cooperation of university staff with the economy.

3 Analysis of Personnel Data at the University of Maribor From 2004 to 2023

The following section presents statistical data on employees at the University of Maribor. The trend in the total number of employees from 2004 to 2023 is presented. The trend in employees by individual groups is also presented, specifically the trend in higher education teachers and associates employed in group H (researchers and professional associates) by pay grade, and employees in supporting positions or employees in positions in group J (professional staff, administrative staff, and other professional technical staff) by pay grade.

3.1 Total Number of Employees at the University of Maribor by Year

Table 1 shows data on the total number of employees as of 31 December from 2004 to 2023.

Table 1: Number of employees as of 31 December by year

Year	Total number of employees at the UM
2004	1377
2005	1530
2006	1736
2007	1803
2008	1775
2009	1747
2010	1740
2011	1816
2012	1809
2013	1795
2014	1725
2015	1875
2016	1739
2017	1804
2018	1865
2019	1955
2020	1961
2021	1988
2022	2007
2023	2093

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021a, 2022, 2023, 2024)

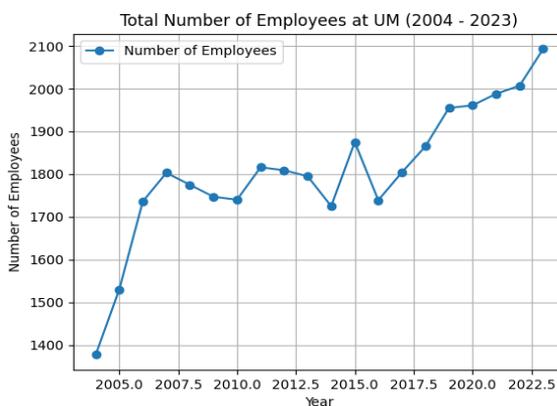


Figure 1: Trend in the number of employees at the University of Maribor from 2004 to 2023

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021a, 2022, 2023, 2024)

Between 2004 and 2007, the number of employees grew significantly. In 2004, there were 1,377 employees, and by 2007, this number had increased to 1,803, representing a 31% growth in four years. In 2008, the trend reversed. The number of employees

began to fluctuate and then decline. In 2008, there were 1,775 employees, but by 2014, there were only 1,725. This represents a decrease of approximately 3%. Since 2015, the number of employees has been increasing again. In 2015, there were 1,875 employees, and by 2023, the number had risen to 2,093, representing 11.6% growth over nine years.

The year 2023 represented the peak in the number of employees, with 2,093 people. This is almost 52% more than in 2004 and 21% more than in 2014, when the number of employees was the lowest in the analysis period (Figure 1).

3.2 Employees in the Positions of Higher Education Teachers and Higher Education Associates at the University of Maribor

The following shows the trend in the number of employees in the positions of higher education teacher and higher education associate from 2004 to 2023. The data is presented in five-year periods.

Table 2: Higher education teachers and associates from 2004 to 2008

Title	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Librarian	2	4	2	2	2
Professional associate	4	5	11	13	15
Senior professional associate	2	2	2	3	3
Assistant	118	107	110	127	108
Assistant with a master's degree	97	104	107	97	83
Assistant with a doctor's degree	97	103	128	128	141
Lecturer	23	34	30	28	27
Senior lecturer	41	44	49	48	40
Research assistant	15	15	18	20	19
Assistant professor	130	131	127	154	168
Associate professor	128	142	174	172	169
Full professor	106	118	147	142	157
Other	35	125	117	103	108
Total	798	934	1022	1037	1040

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009)

Table 2 shows the numbers of higher education teachers and higher education associates from 2004 to 2008. During this period, the University of Maribor experienced significant growth in the number of highly qualified staff.

The number of assistants with a doctor's degree increased significantly (from 97 to 141), reflecting a greater emphasis on research-qualified staff. The number of assistant professors also increased (from 130 to 168), as did the number of full professors (from 106 to 157). The number of lecturers and senior lecturers, who were mainly teachers in professional higher education programmes, initially increased slightly, but then declined again as a result of the restructuring of study programmes, the strengthening of university programmes and the abandonment of professional higher education programmes. The number of professional associates increased significantly (from 4 to 15), while the number of senior professional associates remained low. The number of research assistants increased slightly (from 15 to 19), while librarians as higher education associates remained low in number (2). The total number of higher education teachers and associates increased from 798 to 1040 between 2004 and 2008. The trend is shown in Figure 2.

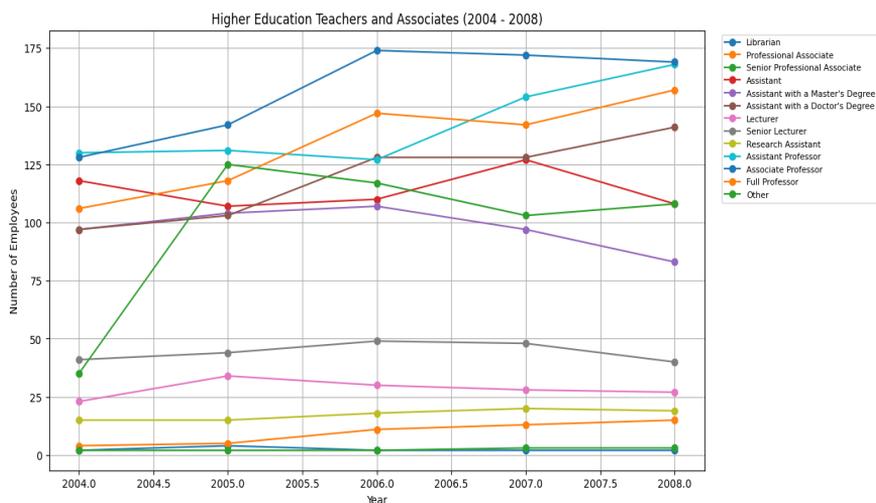


Figure 2: Trend in the number of higher education teachers and associates from 2004 to 2008

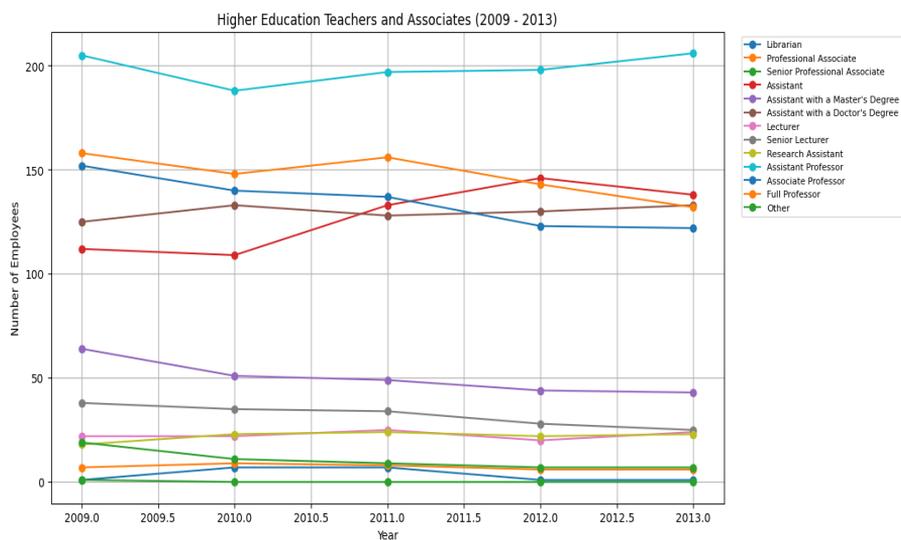
Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009)

The period between 2009 and 2013 (Table 3) is marked by a stabilisation in the number of employees, with slight declines in lower titles.

Table 3: Higher education teachers and associates from 2009 to 2013

Title	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Librarian	1	7	7	1	1
Professional associate	7	9	8	6	6
Senior professional associate	1	0	0	0	0
Assistant	112	109	133	146	138
Assistant with a master's degree	64	51	49	44	43
Assistant with a doctor's degree	125	133	128	130	133
Lecturer	22	22	25	20	24
Senior lecturer	38	35	34	28	25
Research assistant	18	23	24	22	23
Assistant professor	205	188	197	198	206
Associate professor	152	140	137	123	122
Full professor	158	148	156	143	132
Other	19	11	9	7	7
Total	923	865	907	869	860

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014a)

**Figure 3: Trend in the number of higher education teachers and associates from 2009 to 2013**

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014a)

The number of assistants with a doctor's degree remained almost unchanged (a slight increase from 125 to 133), the number of assistants with a master's degree decreased (from 64 to 43), while the number of assistants without a doctor's or master's degree

fluctuated slightly. The number of assistant professors remained largely stable, while the number of associate professors (from 152 to 122) and full professors (from 158 to 132) declined slightly, which may indicate termination of employment at the university or retirement. Lecturer and senior lecturer positions remained stable, albeit with minor fluctuations. The number of librarians and professional associates remained low. The number of higher education teachers and associates declined slightly over this five-year period, from 923 to 860. The trend is shown in Figure 3.

Table 4 shows the trend in higher education teachers and associates from 2014 to 2018. During this period, the University of Maribor achieved a major shift towards more qualified staff.

Table 4: Higher education teachers and associates from 2014 to 2018

Title	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Librarian	1	1	0	0	0
Professional associate	3	3	2	2	3
Senior professional associate	0	0	1	1	1
Assistant	156	130	108	109	100
Assistant with a master's degree	42	30	29	28	25
Assistant with a doctor's degree	132	178	189	187	180
Lecturer	23	20	13	13	12
Senior lecturer	22	27	31	29	33
Research assistant (LD, LM, L)	23	20	19	19	20
Assistant professor	226	184	161	159	158
Associate professor	114	138	149	154	168
Full professor	125	152	177	199	208
Other	4	6	9	8	7
Total	871	889	888	908	915

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019)

The number of assistants without a doctor's degree fell from 156 to 100, while the number of assistants with a doctor's degree peaked (180 in 2018). The number of assistant professors decreased (from 226 to 158), indicating a transition of employees to higher positions, such as associate and full professors. The number of associate professors increased significantly (from 114 to 168), as did the number of full professors, which almost doubled (from 125 to 208), indicating an emphasis on research excellence and teaching skills. The number of other higher education teachers and associates, such as research assistants and professional associates,

remained stable or saw a slight decrease in numbers. Despite minor declines in lower titles, the university is strengthening its academic power through recruitment of higher positions. The number of higher education teachers and associates in this period remained stable with a slight increase (from 871 to 915). The trend is shown in Figure 4. At the national level, the number of higher education teachers also began to rise in 2016 (Bohinc, 2020).

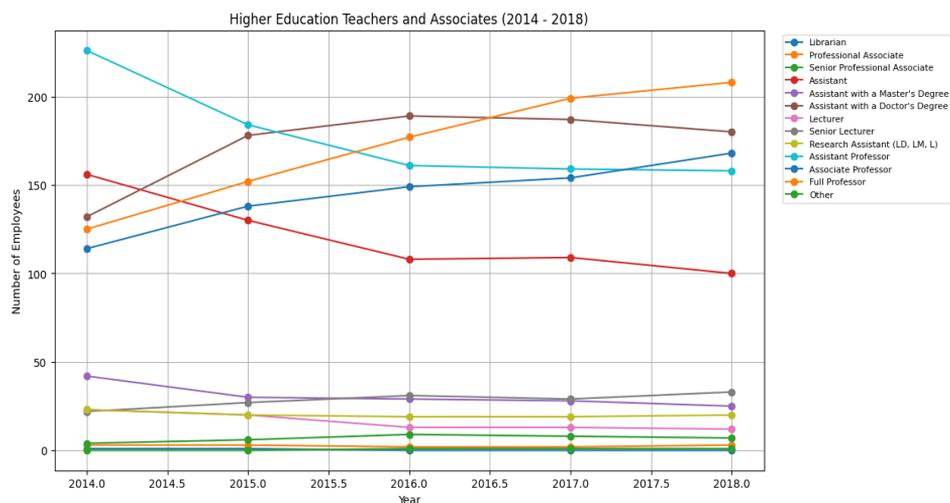


Figure 4: Trend in the number of higher education teachers and associates from 2014 to 2018

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019)

In the recent period (Table 5), restructuring trends have emerged. After peaking in the previous period, the number of assistants with a doctor's degree first declined slightly and then increased again.

The number of assistants increased (from 113 to 134), while the number of assistants with a master's degree continued to decline (from 24 to 14); due to the restructuring of titles and positions, these positions will no longer exist in the future. The number of assistant professors and associate professors has grown slightly, while the number of full professors peaked at 267 in 2023. The number of research assistants has fallen slightly (from 21 to 18), as has the number of senior lecturers (from 32 to 23). The number of librarians remained zero, while professional associates remained stable at very low levels. The growth trend in higher education teachers and associates

continues, with the total number of higher education teachers and associates increasing from 940 to 1004 (Figure 5).

Table 5: Higher education teachers and associates from 2019 to 2023

Title	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Librarian	0	0	0	0	0
Professional associate	2	2	2	2	2
Senior professional associate	0	0	0	0	0
Assistant	113	120	130	132	134
Assistant with a master's degree	24	23	18	16	14
Assistant with a doctor's degree	177	167	169	176	187
Lecturer	8	8	11	14	7
Senior lecturer	32	30	30	24	23
Research assistant (LD, LM, L)	21	20	19	19	18
Assistant professor	162	164	162	169	172
Associate professor	172	171	177	169	174
Full professor	222	228	237	249	267
Other	7	7	5	7	6
Total	940	940	960	977	1004

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2020, 2021a, 2022, 2023, 2024)

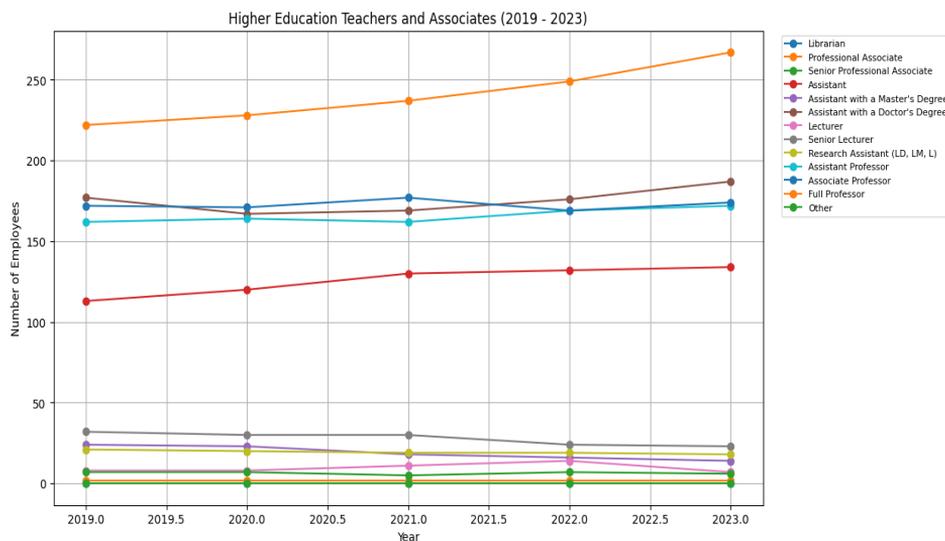


Figure 5: Trend in the number of higher education teachers and associates from 2019 to 2023

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024)

The graph (Figure 6) shows the trends in the number of employees by different groups of higher education teachers and associates between 2004 and 2023. The data shows that, over the years, the University of Maribor has reduced the employment of lower-qualified staff (assistants without a doctor's degree, librarians) and focused on increasing the number of research-qualified and academically higher titles, such as full professors. Research assistant and professional associate positions remain stable, but to a lesser extent. This indicates a clear strategy of the university for achieving academic and research excellence.

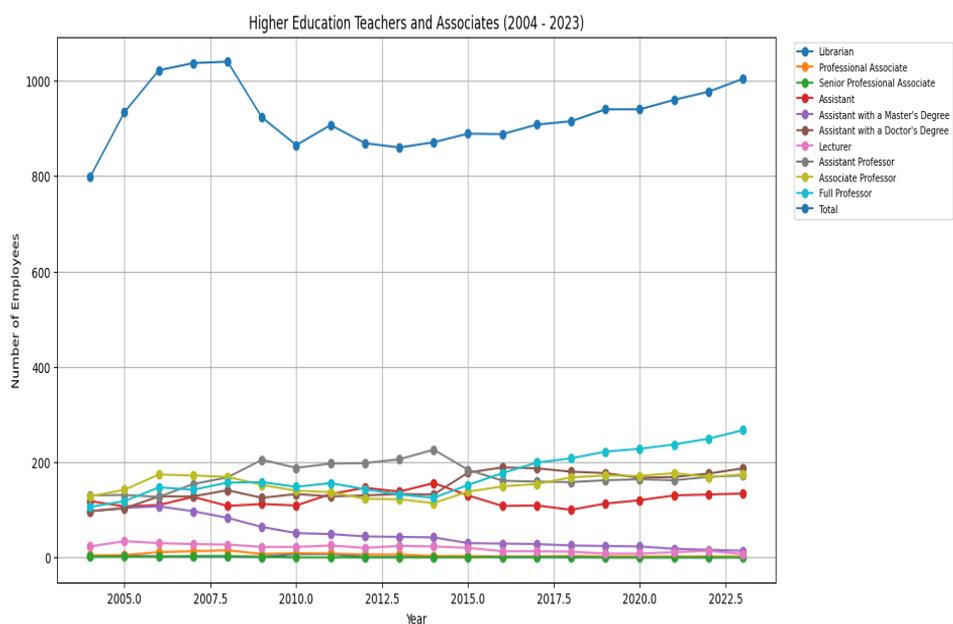


Figure 6: Trend in the number of higher education teachers and associates from 2004 to 2023

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021a, 2022, 2023, 2024)

The previous graph (Figure 7) shows the trend in the total number of higher education teachers and associates at the University of Maribor between 2004 and 2023. After initial intensive growth, the number of higher education teachers declined and then rose again.

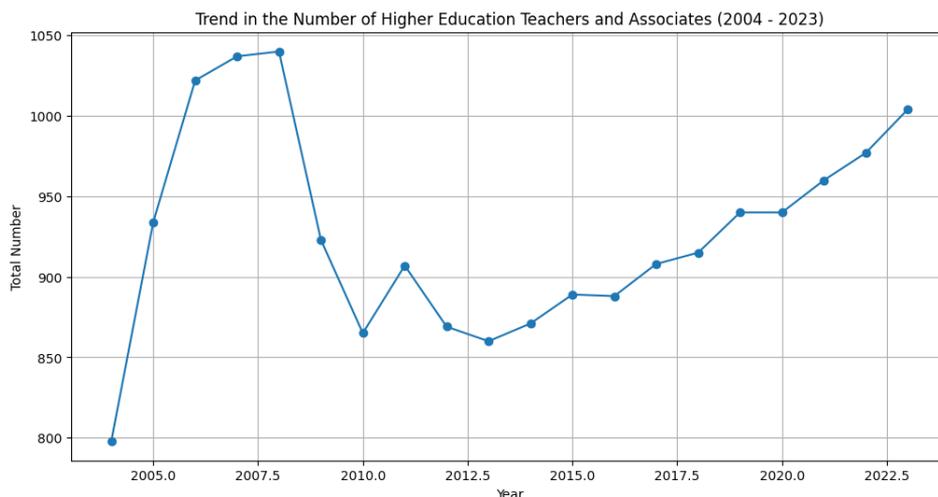


Figure 7: Trend in the total number of higher education teachers and associates from 2004 to 2023

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021a, 2022, 2023, 2024)

3.3 Employees in Research and Professional Associate Positions by Pay Grade

Between 2004 and 2008 (Table 6), the total number of employees in group H (researchers and professional associates) increased from 181 to 234. Most employees were in pay grade VII, which applies to researchers. Their number gradually increased, which indicates a growing demand for research staff and the expansion of research work at the University of Maribor, as well as increased efforts to acquire research projects. The number of scientific advisers (pay grade IX) grew significantly during this period, from 2 employees in 2005 to 12 in 2008. On the other hand, the number of researchers with a master's degree (pay grade VIII) declined. The number of employees in lower pay grades, such as laboratory assistants, remained relatively stable, with less pronounced fluctuations between years.

Figure 8 shows the trend in the number of employees in group H positions, which include researchers and professional associates, by pay grade from 2004 to 2023. The data is presented in five-year periods.

Table 6: Researchers and professional associates by pay grade from 2004 to 2008

Pay grade	Workplace	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
IX	Scientific adviser	No data available.	2	1	2	12
	Scientific associate and Senior scientific associate		3	4	8	12
	Senior researcher		0	20	21	21
	Senior research and development assistant		0	1	0	0
	Senior research and development associate		13	0	0	0
	Independent, senior professional associate		1	0	1	0
	Assistant with a doctor's degree		0	1	0	0
VIII	Researcher with a master's degree (senior, young, independent)		28	21	12	9
VII	Researcher		121	155	157	159
	Professional associate		0	1	0	0
	Assistant	0	0	0	8	
VI	Laboratory assistant (Technical associate)	10	34	23	10	
V	Laboratory assistant	3	2	4	3	
TOTAL		181	240	228	234	

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009)

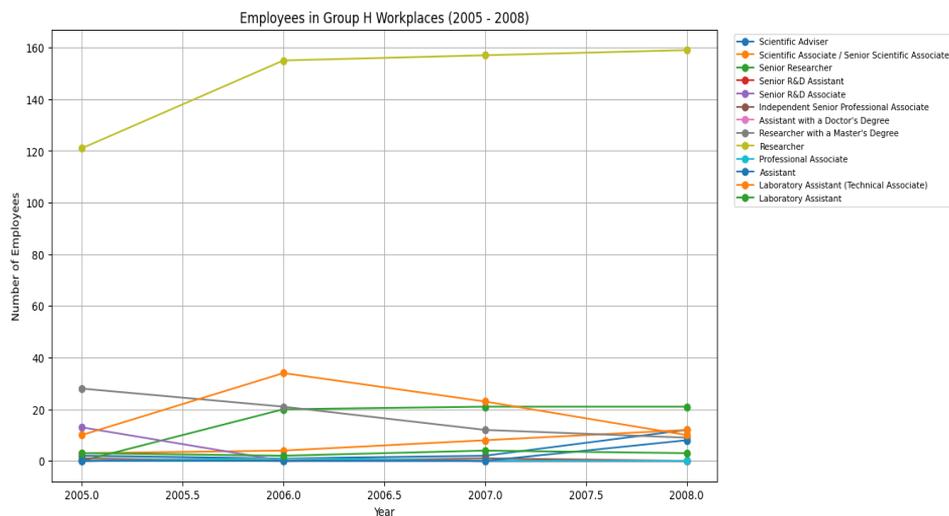


Figure 8: Trend in the number of researchers and professional associates by pay grade from 2005 to 2008

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009)

Between 2009 and 2013 (Table 7), the total number of employed researchers and professional associates fluctuated. In 2011, the number of employees in group H positions was the highest in this five-year period, at 244, but then fell to 211 by 2013. During this period, there was a noticeable increase in the number of scientific advisers (pay grade IX) and senior scientific associates. Researchers in pay grade VII/2 remained the largest group of employees in group H positions. Their number remained stable, averaging around 85 per year.

Table 7: Researchers and professional associates by pay grade from 2009 to 2013

Pay grade	Workplace	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
IX	Scientific adviser	3	3	3	5	7
	Senior scientific associate	0	6	6	4	7
	Scientific associate	9	13	8	9	13
	Senior professional and research associate	0	1	1	1	1
	Assistant with a doctor's degree	37	45	54	47	50
VIII	Researcher with a master's degree (senior, young, independent)	1	0	0	0	0
	Young assistant with a master's degree in doctoral studies	1	0	1	0	0
	Assistant with a master's degree	12	14	8	5	4
	Professional associate with specialisation/master's degree	1	0	0	0	0
VII/2	Researcher (senior, young, independent)	76	68	94	89	90
	Young researcher in a single-cycle doctoral programme	57	66	44	29	17
	Senior developer	0	0	0	0	1
	Assistant and senior assistant	10	21	24	21	21
VII/1	Professional associate	0	1	1	0	0
TOTAL		207	238	244	210	211

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014a)

On the other hand, the number of young researchers enrolled in single-cycle doctoral programmes declined during this period, as shown in Figure 9.

Between 2014 and 2018 (Table 8), the total number of employees increased from 175 to 219. The number of scientific advisers and scientific associates (pay grade IX) increased significantly during this period, indicating a need for highly qualified researchers. Research associates have become one of the largest groups in the highest pay grade. Researchers in pay grade VII/2 remained the largest group of employees, with their number reaching 83 in 2018.

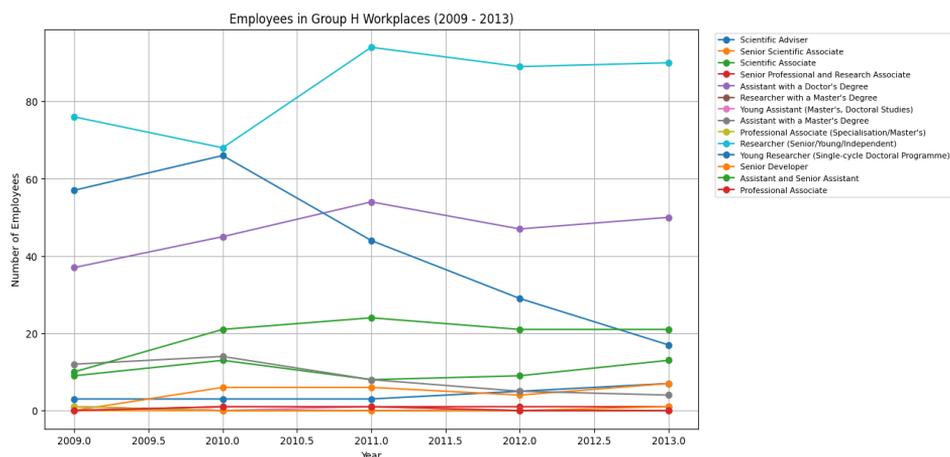


Figure 9: Trend in the number of researchers and professional associates by pay grade from 2009 to 2013

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014a)

Table 8: Researchers and professional associates by pay grade from 2014 to 2018

Pay grade	Workplace	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
IX	Scientific adviser	4	4	8	8	9
	Senior scientific associate	6	4	4	9	8
	Scientific associate	6	14	16	22	30
	Senior professional and research associate	1	0	0	0	0
	Assistant with a doctor's degree	39	37	31	41	46
VIII	Researcher with a master's degree (senior, young, independent)	0	1	0	0	0
	Assistant with a master's degree	6	3	3	3	4
VII/2	Researcher (senior, young, independent)	74	61	68	73	83
	Young researcher in a single-cycle doctoral programme	11	4	4	5	3
	Developer and senior developer	3	1	1	1	2
	Professional and research assistant	0	0	1	5	3
	Assistant and senior assistant	25	19	22	17	31
VII/1	Professional associate	0	1	1	0	0
Total		175	149	159	184	219

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019)

Nevertheless, the number of young researchers in single-cycle doctoral programmes continued to decline (Figure 10), indicating a continuation of the downward trend in this category, mainly due to the possibilities of obtaining funding for the

employment of young researchers at what was then the Slovenian Research Agency (Sl. *Agencija za raziskovalno dejavnosti Republike Slovenije*, ARRS).

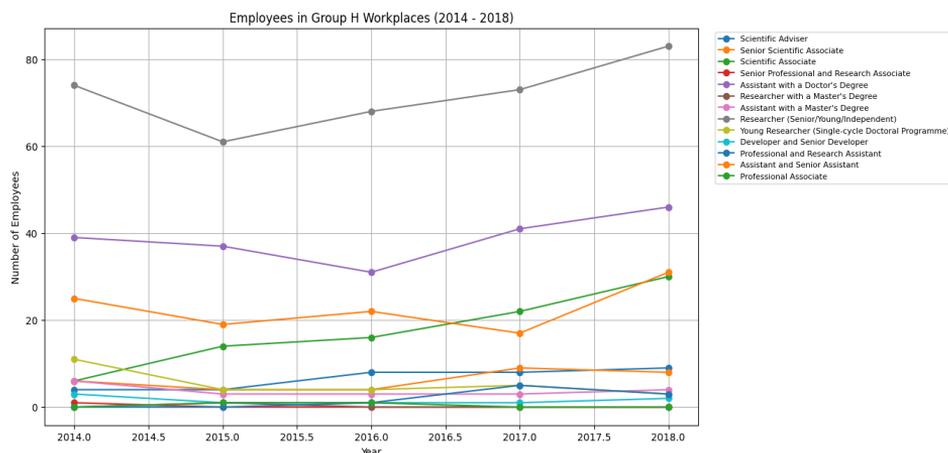


Figure 10: Trend in the number of researchers and professional associates by pay grade from 2014 to 2018

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019)

Table 9: Researchers and professional associates by pay grade from 2019 to 2023

Pay grade	Workplace	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
IX	Scientific adviser	11	9	11	10	11
	Senior scientific associate	8	7	7	8	12
	Scientific associate	34	36	44	36	51
	Leading professional associate with a doctor's degree	0	0	0	0	2
	Assistant with a doctor's degree	72	51	50	46	44
VIII	Researcher with a master's degree (senior, young, independent)	2	2	3	3	2
	Young researcher in a doctoral programme	0	0	2	0	0
	Assistant with a master's degree	3	1	8	1	1
VII/2	Researcher (senior, young, independent)	117	138	121	108	116
	Young researcher in a single-cycle doctoral programme	1	0	6	0	7
	Developer and senior developer	2	2	1	1	2
	Senior professional and research assistant	4	5	4	4	6
	Assistant and senior assistant	35	38	38	43	48
	Leading professional associate	0	0	1	2	1
Total		289	289	296	262	303

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2020, 2021a, 2022, 2023, 2024)

The most recent period has seen the largest growth in the number of employed researchers and professional associates (Table 9), reaching 303 in 2023. The largest increase is noticeable among researchers in pay grade VII/2, in which 116 were employed in 2023. This confirms that researchers in this category are the core of research work in group H.

The number of scientific advisers (pay grade IX) remained stable, while the number of scientific associates increased significantly (to 51). Nevertheless, the number of assistants with a doctor's degree declined slightly during this period (Figure 11).

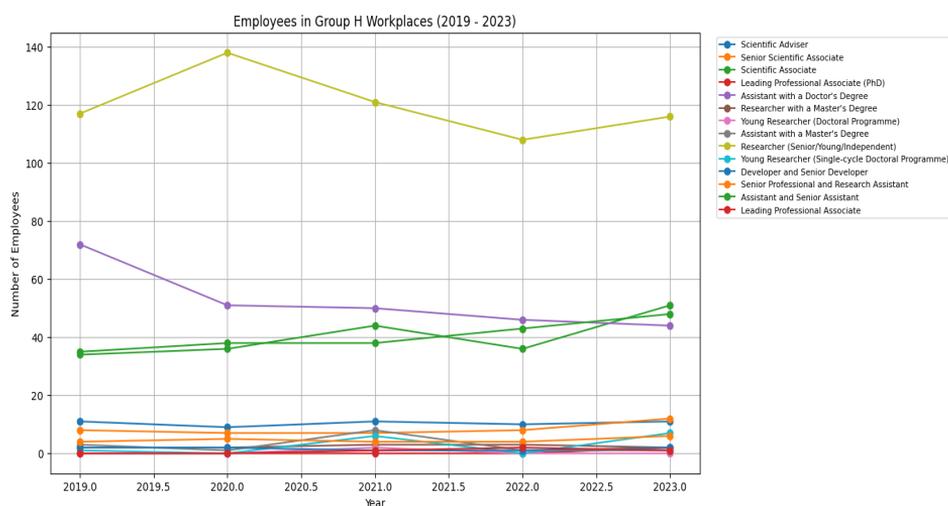


Figure 11: Trend in the number of researchers and professional associates by pay grade from 2019 to 2023

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2020, 2021a, 2022, 2023, 2024)

Data analysis shows that the number of employees in group H grew steadily between 2004 and 2023, with an emphasis on researchers (pay grade VII/2), who represent the largest share of staff. The graph below (Figure 12) shows trends in the number of employees in group H positions (researchers and professional associates) in the period 2004–2023.

The graph (Figure 12) shows changes in various categories, including scientific associates, researchers, assistants with a doctor's degree, and other related titles. There has been a noticeable increase in highly qualified personnel, such as scientific

advisers, accompanied by a decline in the number of young researchers, indicating a need for new strategies to attract young talent. Group H focuses on the growth and development of research capacities and skilled personnel, reducing the need for lower-skilled positions such as laboratory assistants.

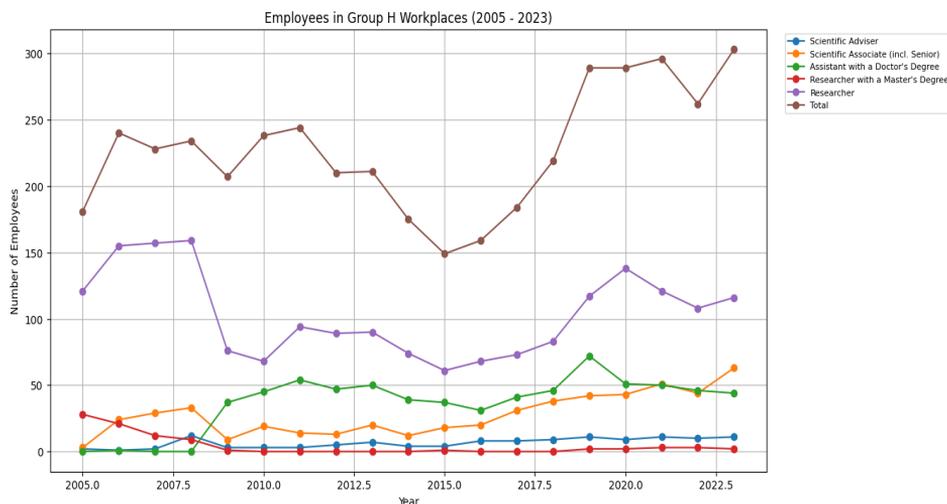


Figure 12: Trend in the total number of employees in group H positions from 2005 to 2023

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021a, 2022, 2023, 2024)

3.4 Employees in professional, administrative and other professional and technical positions by pay grade

The following table shows data on employees in accompanying positions in group J (professional associates, administrative workers, and other professional and technical workers), which includes professional associates, administrative workers and other professional and technical workers by pay grade. The data is presented in five-year periods for the years 2004 to 2023.

Table 10 shows the trend in the number of employees in group J positions from 2004 to 2008. During this period, the number of employees increased from 415 in 2005 to 503 in 2007, then decreased slightly to 500 in 2008. The largest number of employees was in pay grade VII, where the number increased from 148 to 239. The

number of employees in the lower pay grades (IV, III, II, I) remained relatively stable, while pay grade VI peaked in 2005 with 193 employees.

Table 10: Employees in group J positions by pay grade from 2004 to 2008

Pay grade	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
IX	No data available.	5	0	0	0
VIII		12	2	2	2
VII		148	200	234	239
VI		80	193	95	98
V		111	99	105	94
IV		31	40	35	36
III		12	12	14	13
II		11	12	12	13
I		5	6	9	5
Total		415	474	503	500

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009)

Figure 13 shows a steady increase in the number of employees in pay grade VII and a sharp decline in the number of employees in pay grade VI in 2005.

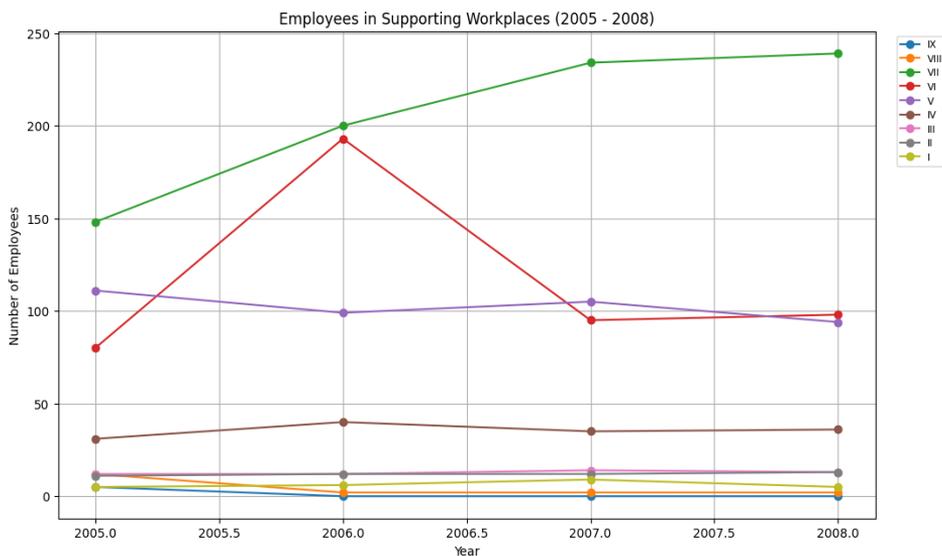


Figure 13: Trend in the number of employees in group J positions by pay grade from 2004 to 2008

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009)

The number of employees peaked in 2012 with 710 employees (Table 11) in the period from 2009 to 2013, which is a result of the introduction of a new pay system and the distribution of technical staff and laboratory assistants among employees in pay group J. The largest share was represented by employees in pay grade VII/2, in which the number rose to 271 in 2012.

Table 11: Employees in group J positions by pay grade from 2009 to 2013

Pay grade	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
VII/2	244	251	270	271	266
VII/1	93	103	122	131	135
VI	122	105	114	108	107
V	107	97	90	90	82
IV	30	31	31	24	24
III	11	10	11	10	10
II	9	8	8	76	82
I	0	0	0	0	0
Total	616	605	646	710	706

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014a)

An increase is also noticeable in pay grade VII/1, while the number of employees in pay grades VI and V began to decline. In pay grade II, there was a sudden increase in 2013, indicating additional employment in support roles (Figure 14).

Table 12: Employees in group J positions by pay grade from 2014 to 2018

Pay grade	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
VII/2	255	277	290	313	326
VII/1	123	124	124	125	128
VI	95	79	76	74	71
V	81	77	73	69	76
IV	20	23	24	25	19
III	3	3	3	3	3
II	80	79	82	82	85
I	0	0	0	0	0
Total	657	662	672	691	708

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019)

Table 12 shows the trend in the number of employees in group J positions from 2014 to 2018. The number of employees gradually increased during this period, from 657 in 2014 to 708 in 2018.

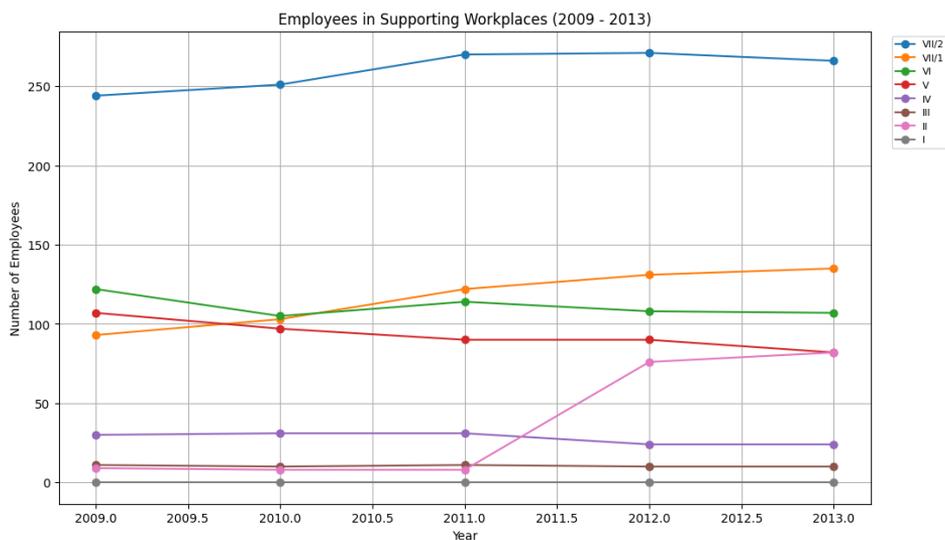


Figure 14: Trend in the number of employees in group J positions by pay grade from 2009 to 2013

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014a)

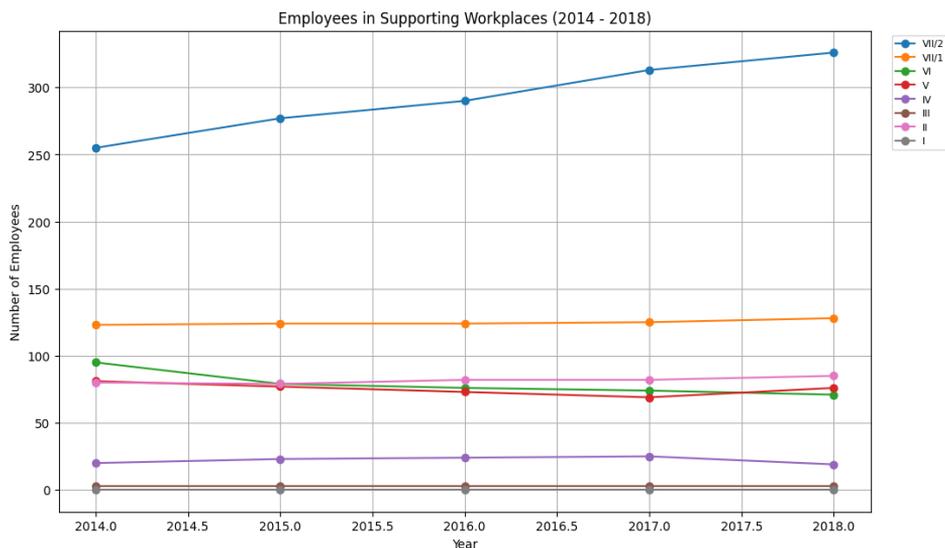


Figure 15: Trend in the number of employees in group J positions by pay grade from 2014 to 2018

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019)

Pay grade VII/2 remained the most numerous, increasing to 326 employees in 2018. Lower pay grades (III and IV) remained under-represented. Pay grades VI and V recorded a further decline, indicating a shift towards more qualified positions (Figure 15).

In the most recent period (Table 13), the number of employees in group J positions reached a new peak in 2023 with 777 employees.

Table 13: Employees in group J positions by pay grade from 2019 to 2023

Pay grade	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
VII/2	330	356	360	390	431
VII/1	121	111	116	135	126
VI	62	62	58	52	52
V	83	78	76	71	69
IV	26	24	21	20	20
III	3	1	1	1	2
II	77	78	77	79	77
I	0	0	0	0	0
Total	702	710	709	748	777

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2020, 2021a, 2022, 2023, 2024)

Pay grade VII/2 continued to grow, reaching 431 employees, which indicates growth in professional staff in higher job grades. Pay grade VII/1 remained stable, while pay grades VI and V continued to decline. Pay grade II remained stable, indicating a steady demand for support positions (Figure 16).

Data on employees in group J positions, which include professional associates, administrative workers and other professional technical workers, shows a clear trend toward professionalisation of the workforce in group J, with an increase in the number of employees in higher pay grades (VII/2 and VII/1) and a decrease in lower pay grades (VI, V, IV). In support positions at the University of Maribor, there is a clear focus on increasing the professionalism and responsibility of employees, which indicates a transition to more structured and demanding work tasks. There has also been an increase in the educational structure, which was influenced by the decision of the Management Board of the University of Maribor to offer employees in pay group J positions the opportunity to obtain higher education free of charge through study programmes at the University of Maribor.

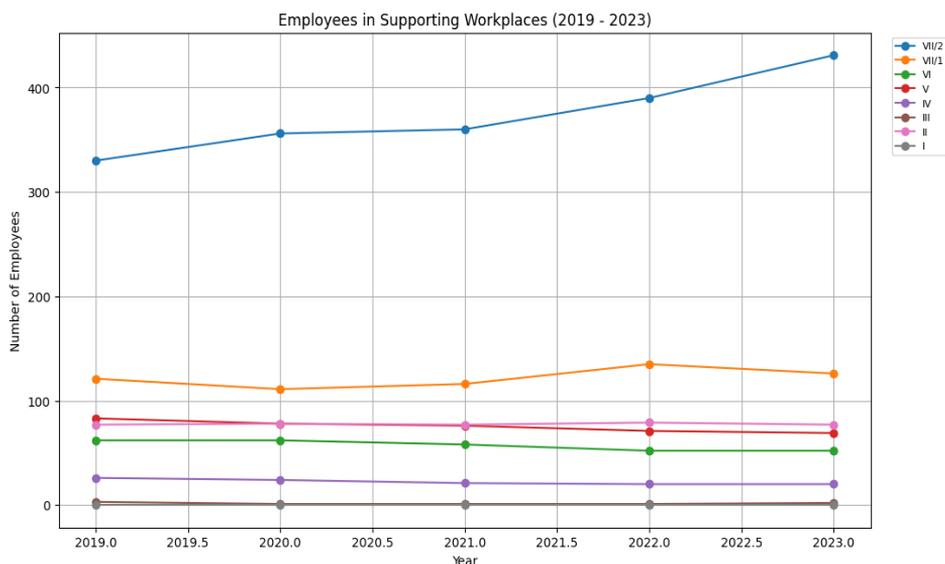


Figure 16: Trend in the number of employees in group J positions by pay grade from 2019 to 2023

Source: Univerza v Mariboru (2020, 2021a, 2022, 2023, 2024)

The increase in the number of employees in pay grade J was also a result of the University of Maribor taking on new tasks, for which employees in pay grade J were hired for individual tenders, such as the establishment of a career centre, a technology transfer office, and a project office.

4 Human Resource Development at the University of Maribor Today

Today, the University of Maribor offers a range of opportunities for staff development. In addition to ways of developing individual talents and encouraging critical thinking, it provides a stimulating and innovative environment for teaching, research, and high-quality service delivery (Univerza v Mariboru, n.d.). The University of Maribor organises numerous workshops and training courses for all employees within the framework of the Department for Quality and Sustainable Development of the University of Maribor. The University of Maribor offers Enhance UM educational programmes, which are mostly conducted by higher education teachers and associates at the University of Maribor. The training courses cover eight content areas, namely learning and teaching, research, leadership and

management, quality development, soft skills development, improvement of professional skills, internationalisation and knowledge transfer to the environment. The purpose of these training courses is to follow the strategy of the University of Maribor and improve not only the quality of the work of employees, but also to follow the development of individual competencies (Majcen, 2016).

Staff development follows the University of Maribor Strategy 2021–2030, which emphasises the importance of caring for interpersonal relationships and a creative working environment for employees and their well-being at work. The University of Maribor Strategy 2021–2030 encourages employees in their research, teaching and professional work and strives to achieve the following goals (Univerza v Mariboru, 2021b):

- an open, transparent, and performance-based approach to employment that will strengthen the reputation of the University of Maribor as an employer in the domestic and international environment;
- promoting interdisciplinary cooperation and networking among teaching, research and professional staff, and strengthening good interpersonal relationships, a culture of dialogue, respect for personal circumstances and intergenerational connectedness;
- implementing the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of all internationally and constitutionally recognised personal circumstances by increasing the accessibility of the university to persons with disabilities and persons with functional limitations;
- strengthening employee training and assisting in their career development;
- ensuring an appropriate work-life balance, strengthening health, social security and employment stability;
- compliance with internationally recognised standards of professional ethics to establish a work culture in which employees are encouraged to strive for excellence and to enthusiastically implement the strategy of the University of Maribor.

The University of Maribor Strategy 2021–2030 highlights in its objectives the provision of equal opportunities for all employees, the promotion of their career development, and the provision of a work-life balance in accordance with international ethical standards. In 2022, the Resolution on the National Programme

of Higher Education to 2030 (“Resolucija o nacionalnem programu visokega šolstva do 2030 (ReNPVŠ30)”, 2022) was adopted. This envisages two main measures in the field of human resources: promoting a system of internationally open human resources policy or promoting systematic human resources strengthening of higher education institutions, as well as ensuring attractive research conditions, which is also an obligation for the University of Maribor to follow.

5 Conclusion

The analysis of personnel data shows that the University of Maribor has continuously focused on employee development over time. Despite constant social changes that have affected the development of the University of Maribor, the trend of employee development has continued.

Human resource development in Slovenia and around the world is currently undergoing a transition process, with individual sub-processes being automated and adapted to operate in a global environment. The University of Maribor is following this development and successfully integrating modern digital technologies and the green transition into the employee development process. Their use enables the growth of both the professional and the personal development of employees.

The extremely rapid development of digital technology around the world will lead to new approaches to human resource development in organisations in the future. The most prominent will be knowledge and skills in the areas of digital literacy, critical thinking and innovation, and the green transition. Due to constant changes in the environment, lifelong learning will become an integral part of an individual's life. The University of Maribor is already taking a strategic approach to these challenges and incorporating new didactic approaches and forms of lifelong learning as an integral part of the development of its employees. It is also actively involved in the process of developing micro-credentials. In doing so, it goes beyond the framework of established staff development, as it enables its employees to be active and responsible members of society who are able to think outside the box and thus contribute to the development of society as a whole.

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