



Human Resources Strategy for Researchers Action Plan 2023



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

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Introduction

The European Commission's Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) aims at better employment and working conditions for researchers throughout Europe. The main tools in achieving this goal is the implementation of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. At Tampere University, this work is part of the university's quality work which is continuously developing operations based on evaluations.

To monitor and further develop the implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan, Tampere University conducted a survey among its research community with the aim of developing practices and support related to working conditions, careers, and the recruitment of researchers. HR Excellence in Research survey was open from 26 January to 9 February 2023. A request for responses was sent to persons who are either employed by Tampere University or who conduct full-time research at the University without being employed, i.e., supported by a grant. The request for responses was sent to 3,638 people of whom 403 answered the survey. The response rate was 11% of the target group. Fifteen of the respondents said that they do not authorise processing their answers, which meant that their responses were not included in the data. After this, the total number of respondents was 388.

Revised Action Plan is based on internal assessment at Tampere University (HR Excellence in Research survey; discussions in HRS4R steering group, in Science Council and in quality team led by the Provost; also, the results of other evaluations and development plans at the university were used). This document describes university's strengths and weaknesses of the HRS4R thematic areas, as well as the most significant changes and development measures since the previous assessment report.

Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Ethical and professional aspects

Strengths

The researchers at Tampere University enjoy academic freedom in choosing their research topics and methodologies. Tampere University is committed to the national guidelines on responsible conduct of research and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct issued by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity. The University is an active member of the regional Ethics

Committee of the Tampere University Hospital and the Ethics Committee of the Tampere Region. Tampere University's Doctoral School provides education on sound scientific practices and research ethics.

Tampere University Library assists in developing skills and competences in research data management and open access publishing and provides guidance on open science. The University has an open science policy and action plan to promote openness in research (<https://www.tuni.fi/en/research/responsible-science-and-research/open-science-and-research>). By signing the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and joining the COARA, the University has committed to the responsible assessment of research and researchers.

The University has published guidelines and instructions for Principal Investigators (PIs) related to their responsibilities in research projects as promised in the previous HRS4R Action Plan. Agreeing on the authorship is discussed at the starting meeting of a research project and recorded in the minutes.

Support and training have been provided for researchers on the dissemination of research results (social media workshops, article collaboration with MustRead Academy, press conferences with researchers and journalists, how to make news training etc.) and presentation events for the public (Researchers' Night, ScienceSlam, inaugural lectures of new professors, research presentations on YouTube). Researchers will continue to be encouraged to open their research results and topics to audiences outside academia.

Weaknesses

Even though national guidelines for agreeing on authorship exist, they have not yet been systematically incorporated into the University's processes of starting a research project. A data management plan is a compulsory part of many funding applications, but not of all the projects, meaning that we will take into account information dissemination also in these cases in the future. Much training is available on managing research projects, but the training does not reach all the parties concerned yet.

Based on the internal HRS4R survey in 2023, the university community wished that more training should be organised on authorship issues, data management plans and project management for researchers and PIs. Based on the respondents' wishes, the updated HRS4R Action Plan identified the organisation of research skills training courses and the strengthening of ethical support services for project leaders as new development areas.

The results of the internal HRS4R survey also highlighted the need for even very concreted support in matters related to research communications. Researchers are not always aware of the

HRS4R work, related services, or guidelines that the University is already offering. Fields of science also vary in terms of how actively researchers participate in the public debate as experts. Based on the results, the next development measures will concentrate on increasing the researchers' awareness of communication support.

Remarks

In the HRS4R self-assessment, the objectives of the previous Action Plan were found to be achieved in line with the indicators. However, the internal HRS4R 2023 survey showed that further awareness raising is needed about the existing guidelines and support for researchers.

Recruitment and selection

Strengths

Even though the predecessors of Tampere University were already committed to implementing the HR Excellence in Research principles, the merger of two universities brought many changes to recruitment processes and practices in 2019. The processes have been critically reviewed and the best recruitment practices have been widely discussed with the deans and other supervisors. Based on the feedback received from supervisors during development work, its own section on recruitments was opened on the Intranet where practical guidelines conforming to the OTM-R principles and guidance videos are centrally available to all personnel involved in recruitment. The guidelines have clarified the different phases of recruitment as the supervisors had wished, illustrated the current practices used in recruiting and described the roles of the actors involved in the process. On the public website, the description of recruiting was specified especially from the perspective of applicants (<https://www.tuni.fi/en/about-us/working-at-tampere-universities/tampere-university-as-an-employer/principles-of-recruitment>).

According to the principles of recruitment at Tampere University, recruitment processes are transparent and consider the principles of fairness, equality, and non-discrimination. We mainly use an open recruitment process for filling the vacancies. International recruiting is encouraged, and it is done in a goal-oriented manner. The University uses an electronic recruitment system, which facilitates managing recruitments and works well from the applicants' perspective. The recruitment software automatically transfers vacancy ads to EURAXESS and Academic Positions. Key steps in the process –such as the composition of appointment committees that plan the recruitment of research and teaching personnel – are centrally approved by senior management, with attention being paid to the efficiency and transparency of the processes.

Tampere University has joined COARA and is committed to the DORA Declaration and national undertakings to further develop the responsible evaluation of researchers. The University is

committed to publishing the implementation plan for Responsible Assessment of Research (COARA) by the end of 2023.

Weaknesses

Based on the HRS4R survey in 2023, the University's recruitment guidelines need to be more readily available and made more widely known. In the feedback, respondents wished for a more versatile induction of recruiters at the beginning of recruitments and more time for discussions. The feedback also highlighted the slowness of recruitment processes. Based on the responses and the discussion in the Science Council, development work will next concentrate on making the OTM-R recruitment guidelines better known by organising, i.e., events for the faculties. So far, training on the updated guidelines has mainly been organised for HR personnel. The training of supervisors has begun, but much still remains to be done.

The provider of the recruitment software made an applicant feedback tool available in autumn 2022, which means that we have started to collect applicant feedback just recently. In the future, we will be able to use applicant feedback to analyse and develop recruitments, the applicant experience and employer image. One of our development targets in revised Action Plan is to clarify the practices of applicant communications and we will use applicant feedback as a tool in development.

Remarks

In the HRS4R self-assessment, the objectives of the previous Action Plan were found to be partly achieved in line with the indicators. A further development target is to prepare a checklist for supervisors and appointment committees that is shared at the beginning of recruitments. In addition, based on the internal HRS4R survey, awareness still needs to be raised about the existing recruitment guidelines, policies, and support at the University.

Working conditions

Strengths

In Finland, work legislation and other complementary legislation as well as the General Collective Agreement for Universities ensure very good working conditions at universities. At Tampere University, special attention is paid to the equal and non-discriminatory treatment of employees by an Equal Opportunities Committee. Equality and non-discrimination aspects are also included in the induction material of supervisors.

At Tampere University, salaries and job titles were harmonised in 2020–2021 with the aim of ensuring the fair treatment of employees after the merger of two universities. The salaries in each post are determined according to the general salary system of universities.

Tampere University has a four-level research career model supported by the tenure track model. The guidelines of the tenure track model (<https://www.tuni.fi/en/about-us/working-at-tampere-universities/tampere-university-as-an-employer/tenure-track-career-path>) were updated in 2022 based on the feedback collected in a tenure track survey for tenure track staff and comments received from the work community. Tenure Track Steering Committee guides and monitors the implementation of the tenure track model. In addition, the Provost holds regular discussion sessions of tenure track issues with the recruited tenure track staff.

Based on the results of the staff's well-being survey in 2021, employees have been challenged by workload and burnout issues. Steps have been taken to improve occupational well-being, for example, focusing on daily workflows, reducing workloads, developing the prerequisites for supervisors' work, fostering a sense of community, and improving the predictability of operations. Making the support for occupational well-being and professional development more visible has also been identified as a development target in the updated Action Plan. The development will be monitored by the survey. As suggested by the Science Council, alternative ways to gather views from the community will also be considered.

The personnel and students have opportunities to participate in the work of the University's decision-making bodies on several organisational levels. As examples of these bodies can be mentioned the Faculty Councils of each faculty, Academic Board on the university level and the Science Council, a university-level body that concentrates on research development.

As promised in the previous HRS4R Action Plan, a description of the research infrastructure has been published on the University's website (<https://www.tuni.fi/en/research/research-tampere-university/research-infrastructures>). However, based on the internal HRS4R survey, further awareness raising is required about existing guidelines and support at the university.

Weaknesses

According to the external research assessment TAU RAE 2022, the diversity and gender balance strategy implemented at all levels of the University needs to be developed. The matter will be coordinated by the Equal Opportunities Committee when it updates the University's current Equality and Non-Discrimination Policy.

The previous development period especially focused on reviewing the tenure track model and updating the guidelines on the basis of feedback. Staff have given feedback that the other

academic career paths also need to be clarified. This has now been highlighted as a development target in the updated HRS4R Action Plan.

Based on the results of developmental assessments (2022), the University needs to ensure that international staff can participate in the activities of the University community. This has been included as a development target in the updated HRS4R Action Plan.

Remarks

In the HRS4R self-assessment, the objectives of the previous Action Plan were found to be achieved in line with the indicators. However, an internal HRS4R survey discovered that awareness needs to be raised about the current policies and the support given to researchers at the University.

Training and development

Strengths

At Tampere University, doctoral education is given in 21 faculty-based doctoral programmes, spanning all the disciplines at the university. Each of the seven faculties has at least one doctoral programme, and each programme hosts specific fields of research. Doctoral programmes serve as versatile research and study environments for doctoral students. The University's joint Doctoral School (<https://www.tuni.fi/en/research/doctoral-school>) is an umbrella organisation that provides systematic, cutting-edge, and high-quality education to all doctoral researchers across faculty borders. The curriculum of the joint doctoral studies organised by the Doctoral School consists of 24 course units, for which there are about 70 implementations per academic year, resulting in 2,500-3,000 ECTS. The Doctoral School supports the development of diverse, multidisciplinary, and international expertise among doctoral researchers and works to promote the well-being and employability of doctoral graduates.

Each doctoral researcher is appointed a responsible supervisor and at least one co-supervisor, or a responsible supervisor and a follow-up group, or a responsible supervisor, at least one co-supervisor and a follow-up group. The responsible supervisor oversees the supervisee's degree studies and the supervision arrangements. Doctoral researchers work closely with their dissertation supervisor. With their supervisors, doctoral researchers draft a personal study plan, which is discussed and updated regularly. There are also regular supervisory discussions and research seminars. Staff supervising doctoral dissertations are provided training and resources to support their work (e.g., PhD Supervisor coffees, PhD supervisor trainings).

Guidelines to support research and competence development have been updated both on the university's public website and Intranet. In the context of the Intranet renewal in 2022, a website was set up to bring together the key content areas of research activities for researchers. The site was planned to help researchers strengthen their versatile researcher skills and continuous learning.

The Vitae tool has been presented to faculties' deans and researchers to assist in the identification and development of competences. Research Leadership Mornings for research project leaders and research managers have become regular. The mentoring programme for doctoral researchers has been extended to young researchers and doctoral researchers can also apply to become mentees.

Supervisory work has been highlighted as promised in the previous HRS4R Action Plan. Supervisory work has been given more prominence in work plan guidelines and the tenure track model. The University also provides the 360-feedback process for employees in supervisory roles, which supports the development of supervisors' leadership skills and other competences.

Supervisors and employees conduct annual development discussions. Plenty of training is offered to supervisors on supervisory work and career support. Researchers at all stages of their career, including those in fixed-term employment relationships, are offered a wide range of training and mentoring to update and develop their skills.

Weaknesses

Despite the common guidelines for the supervision of doctoral dissertations and for the rights and responsibilities of both the supervisors and supervisees, there are differences in practices and supervisory skills between and even within doctoral programmes, which sometimes lead to the unequal treatment of doctoral researchers. Information regarding doctoral education is partly fragmented and scattered. Based on the results of the external research assessment (TAU RAE 2022) and the discussions conducted by the doctoral education coordination group, it has been decided to compile a more consistent documentation about doctoral education.

Tampere University has been able to provide ample training and support for researchers and supervisors from the outset, but the effectiveness of training has not yet been evaluated. There are still differences in managerial skills, but the matter has been addressed through regular training. Based on the results of the internal HRS4R survey in 2023, renewing the training of supervisors has been included as a development target in the updated Action Plan.

Currently, researchers' career planning support is spread across different actors in HRD, Research and Innovation Services and the Doctoral School. The updated HRS4R Action Plan

has identified the need to clarify the situation as one of the development targets by defining what career planning support is available and who is responsible for arranging it.

Remarks

Based on the results of the HRS4R self-assessment, the objectives of the previous Action Plan have been partly achieved. Compiling more consistent documentation on doctoral education was identified as a further development target. Based on the HRS4R survey in 2023, more awareness-raising on the University's existing guidelines and support for researchers is also needed.

Actions

Action Plan 2023

Actions	GAP Principle(s)	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicators / Target(s)	Current Status
Development and clarification of academic career paths	12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 15. Transparency (Code) 16. Judging merit (Code) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code) 28. Career Development	1Q/2024	Provost	Career path of teaching and research personnel guidelines / model approved.	New action
Implementation plan of responsible research assesment agreement (CoARA)	12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 14. Selection 15. Transparency (Code) 16. Judging merit (Code) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs 18. Recognition of mobility experience 19. Recognition of qualifications	4Q/2023	Open Sciences Steering Group	Implementation plan published.	New action
Strengthening research skills and competence development	38. Continuing Professional Development	4Q/2025	Research and Innovation Services, HRD Services, Library	First course of project management implemented. Scientific leadership course programme / pilot done.	New action
Strengthening ethical support services for responsible PIs	2. Ethical principles 38. Continuing Professional Development	3Q/2024	Research and Innovation Services, Doctoral School, Library	Service model planned.	New action

Supporting international personnels' opportunities to participate in the activities of the university community	10. Non-discrimination 35. Participation in decision-making bodies	4Q/2025	Language Policy Working Group, Equal Opportunities Committee, work community	The language policy published and implemented. The concept of Finnish language courses established (number of trainings and participants).	New action
Equality plan updated and promoted	2. Ethical principles 10. Non-discrimination 24. Working conditions 27. Gender balance	4Q/2024	Equal Opportunitites Committee	Equality plan updated and stakeholders being involved in the progress. Monitoring metrics are in use and followed regularly.	New action
Communications services familiar for researchers	3. Professional responsibility 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results 9. Public engagement	4Q/2024	Communications and Marketing	Implemented events	New action
Raising internal awareness of OTM-R and TAU recruitment guidelines. Training and support in the implementation of the recruitment guidelines	12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 15. Transparency (Code)	4Q/2025	HR Services	Number of Faculty specific information / training sessions. List of various ways of promoting the guidelines.	New action
Clarification of applicant communication practices in recruitment	12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 15. Transparency (Code)	4Q/2024	HR Services	Feedback from applicants through feedback questionnaire. Development measures implemented based on results.	New action

Renewing the induction of supervisors	37. Supervision and Managerial Duties 39. Access to research training and continuous development 40. Supervision	4Q/2023	HRD Services	Creating an orientation Moodle course for supervisors (number of supervisor users, orientation feedback from supervisors); Starting plans to ensure that supervisors' induction reaches all necessary people (conducted discussions).	New action
Making services for professional development and occupational well-being better known	28. Career Development 30. Access to career advice 38. Continuing Professional Development 39. Access to research training and continuous development	4Q/2024	HRD Services	Introducing new means to communicate and clarifying the opportunities for using the services for researchers, a survey to gauge the issue.	New action
Developing the support for researchers' career planning	28. Career Development 30. Access to career advice 38. Continuing Professional Development 39. Access to research training and continuous development	2Q/2025	HRD Services, Research and Innovation Services, Doctoral School	Model published, what kind of career planning support is available (especially for R1 and R2 levels) and which parties are responsible for it.	New action

Action Plan 2020

Actions	GAP Principle(s)	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicators / Target(s)	Current Status
Including the national recommendation on agreeing on the authorship of scientific publications and a data management plan into the starting phase of new research projects	3. Professional responsibility 32. Co-authorship	Spring semester 2021	Research and Innovation Services, Library	Available guidelines and forms. Adding an issue in the project management system.	Completed
Encouraging researchers to open their research results and topics for a wider audience outside the scientific community	6. Accountability 9. Public Engagement	Autumn semester 2021	Communications and Marketing	Organising events and training. Considering efforts to popularise research as a merit. Follow-up on and the development of visibility. Communication services and library organise needs-based training, guidance and support. Training is provided for all staff on a training by demand basis; R1-R4 researchers can participate in the events and training if they wish. Target is to organize at least two events a term. We will also follow indicative figures from non-scientific publications.	Completed

Gathering regular feedback from applicants on the recruitment process and employer image	12. Recruitment	Autumn semester 2020	HR Services	A questionnaire and a regular survey for applicants. Development measures implemented based on results. In the survey we will also take into account perspectives that are in accordance to the European Charter & Code.	Completed, On-going A feedback survey was implemented as part of the recruitment software in Autumn 2022.
An info package and training for supervisors on the new practices in recruitment	13. Recruitment	Autumn semester 2020	HR Services	Videos and other types of training, a check list for supervisors on matters that must be considered in recruitment. Clear practical guidelines. Equality and non-discrimination policy is part of the supervisor's information package.	Extended Practical guidelines published in Autumn 2022. The publication of guide videos started in Autumn 2022. A check list for appointment committees / supervisors on matters that must be considered in recruitment. Timing: Q2/2024
Posting a clear description of the research infrastructure on the website	23. Research Environment	Spring semester 2021	Research and Innovation Services	A clear description of the research infrastructure on the University's website.	Completed

Documentation and sharing of good practices in doctoral education	36. Relation with supervisors	Autumn semester 2021	Doctoral School	An easily retrieved document.	Extended A more consistent documentation of doctoral education will be put together. Timing: 4Q/2023
Highlighting supervisory work	37. Supervision and Managerial duties	Autumn semester 2020	HR Services	Teaching and research staff are required to prepare a work plan, which outlines how working time is divided between research, teaching and other duties (including supervisory work). Target is that supervisory work is given more prominence in work plans.	Completed
The development of research skills and supporting researchers' career advancement	38. Continuing Professional Development	Autumn semester 2021	Research and Innovation Services	Information for researchers in one place. Introducing Vitae or some other tool for researchers to facilitate describing research skills and raising development needs.	Completed Intranet site for researchers was set up in beginning of 2022.
Conceptualising the training of supervisors	40. Supervision	Autumn Semester 2021	Doctoral School	Training courses and career counselling services provided. Training events at least twice a term and at least 100 participants a year.	Completed

Implementation

The revised HRS4R Action Plan covers the period of 2023–2025. Actions to develop researchers' careers at Tampere University, based on conducting a gap analysis, are described, together with the information on the schedule, responsible person/or units and indicator data. The Action Plan is in line with University's Strategy 2030, the Equality and Non-Discrimination Policy and the Work Community Development Plan.

The HRS4R steering group monitors the implementation of the HR Excellence principles, guides HRS4R development work at the Tampere University and decides on development actions. Operational support for the steering group is provided by a HRS4R working group. The working group collects the indicator data, monitors the progress of actions and reports the progress to the HRS4R steering group. Regular discussions take place between the management of the units responsible for developments and the HRS4R working group. HRS4R issues are also discussed by the Science Council which consist of teachers and researchers.

The progress made with the actions is annually reported to Tampere University's Management Group chaired by the President and to the quality team led by the Provost. Provost and vice presidents oversee the development of both teaching and research, meaning that development initiatives are supported and clearly connected to teaching and research.

The participation opportunities of teaching and research personnel will be the focus of HRS4R work and the implementation of development activities. In 2023, an internal survey was conducted for the first time at Tampere University and another one will be conducted before the external review.