



HR Excellence in Research Action Plan 2026-2028



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Introduction

Tampere University (TAU) was established in 2019 by merging the University of Tampere (1925) with Tampere University of Technology (1972) to form a new foundation-based university. With some 23,200 students and 4,400 employees, Tampere University brings together research and education in technology, health and society. Tampere University has seven faculties and is one of the most multidisciplinary universities in Finland. The University spreads across three campuses in Tampere and also operates at the University Consortiums of Pori and Seinäjoki.

After the merge, Tampere University stated its re-endorsement of the HR Excellence in Research as the Award had already been received by Tampere University of Technology in 2014 and the University of Tampere in 2015. In its Letter of Endorsement to the European Commission, Tampere University articulated its commitment to being a responsible employer adhering to the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. The Letter emphasised that the continuous improvement of researchers' working conditions and career opportunities is one of Tampere University's top priorities.

This report documents Tampere University's human resources strategy for researchers. It serves as an internal review for the European Commission as part of the assessment for the HR Excellence in Research Award. The Award is granted to research organisations committed to the ongoing development of operations in accordance with the European Charter for Researchers.

The report describes the University's strengths and weaknesses in the thematic areas of the European Charter for Researchers, the actions taken since the previous assessment in 2023, and the action plan for the period of 2026–2028. The structure and contents of this report are based on the European Commission's guidelines and requirements.

Tampere University's HR Excellence in Research working group has participated in the compilation of this report. Especially the following units have been involved in the process: Communications and Marketing, Doctoral School, HR Services, Library, Operations Management and Administrative Services, and Research and Innovation Services.

Senior Specialist Sivi Aalto at HR Services is responsible for coordinating the process and is the contact person for any questions (sivi.aalto@tuni.fi).

Implementation and monitoring

At Tampere University, HR Excellence in Research development work is overseen by a Steering Group chaired by the Vice President for Research and includes researchers from different faculties and research career levels. The Steering Group monitors the implementation of the HR Excellence in Research principles at the University, decides on the implementation of the internal assessment, and reviews the feedback and development proposals received from researchers during assessment.

A Working Group provides operational support for the Steering Group. The Working Group is responsible for the practical implementation of the policies endorsed by the Steering Group and for administrative tasks, such as collecting follow-up data for the Steering Group on the actions included in the action plan. Working Group members keep the management of their respective Units informed about the development work. Progress is reported to Tampere University's Management Group which is chaired by the President. The President makes decisions on new development measures.

At Tampere University, the development of working conditions happens in a collaboration of several actors. The HR Excellence in Research Working Group shares information with the Vice President's Quality Group and Equal Opportunities Committee to avoid overlapping development actions. The Vice President's Quality Group leads Tampere University's operations in quality management. The Equal Opportunities Committee is responsible for monitoring and assessing the achievement of the objectives set out in the University's Equality and Non-discrimination Policy.

HR Excellence in Research development work is carried out together with faculty members, and feedback from the academic community is at the heart of development work. In this round of internal reviews, researchers have had representation in the following groups: HR Excellence in Research Steering Group, Management Group for Research, Academic Board, Equal Opportunities Committee and the Vice President's Quality Group. The progress of the HR Excellence in Research development work has also been discussed by the Cooperation Council and Tampere University's Management Group.

The HR Excellence in Research development work implements the Strategy of Tampere University 2030, the Research Strategy of Tampere Universities and Tampere University's International Strategy 2030. Tampere University's strategic goal for 2030 is to be an internationally esteemed and diverse research university whose research is of high quality, impactful, and promotes Open Science, and whose operations are guided by the principles of sustainable development.

Involvement of the research community

The 2026 internal review was based on feedback from staff surveys conducted at Tampere University in 2024-2025. The review was based on especially the following surveys: well-being at work survey in 2025, survey for early career researchers, supervisors and line managers in 2025, new employee survey in 2025, feedback from applicants in recruitments, feedback on Tampere Universities' services in 2025 and the doctoral researchers' survey in 2025. These surveys cover the thematic areas of the European Charter for Researchers comprehensively.

In addition, four discussion sessions were organised for faculty members in February 2026. A session was arranged for each research career level, and representatives from all the faculties were invited to each event. A total of 24 members of the academic community participated and discussed the themes of the European Charter for Researchers and Tampere University's development work. The participants included both salaried researchers and grant recipients. Among other things, they emphasised the importance of positive experiences of belonging to the community and welcomed the fact that their views were being heard.

Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Ethical and professional aspects

Strengths

Tampere University's researchers enjoy academic freedom of inquiry to choose their research topics and methodologies. The University is committed to the Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity 2023 issued by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity. The University is an active member of the regional Ethics Committee of Tampere University Hospital and the Ethics Committee of Tampere Region. The Doctoral School educates researchers on sound scientific practice and research ethics. Based on feedback from the University's internal review, the research ethics courses, the guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity and the support given by Tampere University Library are widely known by researchers.

Tampere University Library assists in skills and competence development in research data management and open access publishing and gives advice on open science. The University has an Open Science Policy and an action plan for promoting openness in research. By signing the

San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and joining the CoARA Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment, the University has committed to the responsible assessment of research and researchers.

In accordance with the goals of the previous action plan, Tampere University has published an implementation plan for responsible research assessment. Tampere University has also actively promoted CoARA's vision in collaboration with the University of Oulu and Ruhr University Bochum by producing 19 short instructional videos for persons assessing research, those planning or leading research assessments and those being assessed. Tampere University has also published an intranet site titled Phases of responsible research and a video describing the responsibilities of Principal Investigators (PIs) as part of an induction programme in the Moodle learning environment.

Each faculty has appointed a communication contact person to support the dissemination and exploitation of research results. During the previous action plan, 50 trainings were arranged to familiarise researchers with the University's Communication Services. Science communication recommendations have also been prepared. Researchers will continue to be encouraged to open their research results and topics to audiences outside academia.

Weaknesses

Growing geopolitical tensions also affect universities through international sanctions and export controls. It is important for the university community to adhere to these regulations to ensure that external parties do not misuse our research outcomes in ways that violate the University's mission or ethical principles. Based on the feedback given in the internal review, there is a need to ensure research security competence in the changing operating environment. Research security means the management of critical information, the anticipation and management of unwanted transfers of knowledge and technology, and protection against harmful influencing. This has been included as a development target in the updated action plan.

The results of the internal review also indicated that the fields of science vary in terms of how actively researchers participate in expert roles in the public debate. Developing science communication skills has been made a development measure in the updated action plan.

Remarks

In the University's internal review was noted that the targets of the previous action plan had been achieved in line with the indicators.

Recruitment and selection

Strengths

During the initial phase of HR Excellence in Research process in 2019, Tampere University noted that its recruitment guidelines align with the European Commission's OTM-R checklist. Two development targets – introduction to recruitment guidelines and collecting feedback from applicants – were identified and the goals set for them have now been achieved.

In line with the targets of the previous action plan, the induction of managers is carried out through a Moodle-based onboarding programme, which includes recruitment principles and guidelines as one of the themes. The Moodle course was launched in 2024, and by the end of 2025 approximately half of the managers had completed the programme. Recruitment instructions for managers and appointment committees as well as a checklist of issues to be considered in recruitment, which was requested in the previous internal review, are available on the intranet. Tampere University's HR Services also provide support to managers and appointment committees on a recruitment-specific basis. Monitoring and developing recruitment are part of the continuous work of HR Services, and HR staff supporting recruitment maintain close communication with each other.

The University began to collect applicant feedback on recruitments in 2022 in line with the targets of the previous action plan. HR Specialists have reviewed the feedback collected and prepared faculty-specific development proposals based on it that faculties can utilise in their annual planning. Monitoring feedback from applicants is an established part of HR Services' regular work.

Based on researchers' feedback in Tampere University's internal review, the principles of responsible assessment are well known and generally taken into account in recruitment. Researchers' experiences of being evaluated varied. During previous action plan periods, several development actions have been targeted at recruitment guidelines and practices while the long-term impact of these measures is still being monitored.

Tampere University incorporates the principles of equality and non-discrimination into HR planning and recruitment processes. The University seeks to address identified gender imbalances through recruitment practices. The University is also preparing for the enforcement of the EU Pay Transparency Directive. Both these goals are included in the University's Equality and Non-discrimination Policy for HR 2026-2028.

Weaknesses

The changes of national legislation due to the EU Pay Transparency Directive are not yet known, but amendments to national equality and non-discrimination legislation will be forthcoming in 2026. The changes are expected to also impact Tampere University's recruitment practices. The University's job advertisements mostly feature salary details already, but the University needs to be prepared for all the changes that will follow from the enactment of the Pay Transparency Directive.

Remarks

In the University's internal review, the targets of the previous action plan were found to be achieved with the following changes. Instead of general training sessions on recruitment guidelines, it was found to be most useful to provide information to appointment committees and recruiting managers when the matter is relevant to them, i.e. when they start to recruit. At this point, HR Specialists give appointment committees and recruiting managers information on the University's general recruitment policies and offer recruitment-specific support. This also ensures consistent support for the faculties.

Working conditions

Strengths

In Finland, labour legislation and other complementary legislation as well as the General Collective Agreement for Universities ensure stable working conditions at universities. At Tampere University, the Equal Opportunities Committee pays special attention to the equal and non-discriminatory treatment of employees. Updating and monitoring the Equality and Non-discrimination Policy is part of the University's continuous operations. Equality and non-discrimination aspects are also included in managers' induction materials.

Tampere University has adopted the four-level research career model which is supplemented by the University's separate guidelines on career path models. As part of the development of academic career paths, the guidelines of the tenure track model were updated during the previous action plan period. The tenure track monitoring group of the Academic Board has operated since 2023. The monitoring group's task has been to monitor the functionality of the tenure track model, make suggestions and give feedback. To support the development of tenure track practices and operations, a "traffic light" model has been prepared for faculties for monitoring key areas. Annual meetings have also been arranged for persons on the tenure track.

A merit-based model for teaching staff was introduced during the previous action plan period in 2024. The criteria and process for the model are monitored and modified as necessary. The model was updated in March 2026.

One of the targets in the previous action plan was to develop a language policy aimed at supporting the participation of international staff in the activities of the university community. The Language Policy was published in 2024 and is being implemented accordingly. Information on language training is also available on the intranet.

Weaknesses

The results of the internal review show that researchers are burdened by administrative duties. As this issue is already being handled elsewhere at the University, there is no separate development target for it in this updated action plan. The Services Management Group has begun the preparation of Tampere University's service vision. The objective of the service vision process is to formulate a joint service vision and development direction for Tampere University's support services in a context of diverse and partly conflicting expectations. One of the principles of the service vision is to reduce unnecessary administrative burden.

Based on feedback from researchers, there is a need for greater predictability and clarity regarding the duration of employment contracts. Promoting the stability of working conditions of early-career researchers has been prioritised as one of the development targets in the updated action plan.

Based on the outcomes of the developmental assessments in 2024, the University needs to ensure that international staff can participate in the activities of the University community. The results of the well-being at work survey in 2025 also highlighted that strengthening both Finnish and English language skills would support the equality and inclusion of personnel. A long-term language training plan has now been included as a development target in this updated action plan.

Remarks

In the University's internal review was noted that the targets of the previous action plan had been achieved in line with the indicators.

Training and development

Strengths

At Tampere University, doctoral education is given in faculty-based doctoral programmes which span 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 researchers. The University's joint Doctoral School 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 38 course units with some 50–60 implementations in each academic year, resulting in about 3,500 ECTS. Key content on doctoral education is available on the University's intranet and public web pages. 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. With their supervisors, doctoral researchers draft a personal study plan, which is regularly discussed and updated. There are also regular supervision discussions and research seminars. The staff supervising doctoral dissertations is given training and resources to support their work (e.g., PhD Supervisor coffee events, PhD Supervisor trainings).

Tampere University is included in the national doctoral education pilot whose aim is to test a more flexible model of doctoral education and to promote the mobility of doctoral researchers. It is important to ensure that the practices developed in the doctoral pilot are extended to all doctoral researchers which is why increasing awareness of diverse career paths and supporting doctoral researchers' networking beyond academia have been identified as development areas in the updated action plan.

Researchers and their line managers conduct annual professional development reviews. Plenty of training is offered to managers on developing their leadership skills, including the new Research Leadership Programme, which was piloted during the previous action plan and received positive feedback from participants. The managers' induction course is available on Moodle, and all managers are expected to complete the course. The induction course has also received positive feedback from managers who completed it. The University also provides the 360-

feedback process for employees in managerial positions, which supports the development of their leadership skills and other competences.

Researchers at all career stages, including those in fixed-term employment relationships, are offered a wide range of training and mentoring activities to update and develop their skills. Communications related to these services have been developed during the previous action plan period and will continue to be improved to enhance awareness and visibility among researchers. Early career researchers are offered career planning support, and these services are clearly structured and presented on the intranet. The range of services has been expanded, and the services will also be further developed in the next action plan period. One of the development targets in the updated action plan is to develop a material package for managers and supervisors to support career guidance.

Weaknesses

The internal review identified the need for support and training for dissertation supervisors to develop their supervision skills. To develop supervision skills, a doctoral supervisor training model has been included as a development target in the updated action plan.

During the previous action plan period, the University identified a need to review the administrative structures of doctoral education. The position and tasks of the Doctoral School were clarified in spring 2026. The University has also decided to establish a more inclusive and interactive Doctoral Education Forum to facilitate more comprehensive sharing of experiences and benchmarking of good practices, and this is one of the development targets in the updated action plan.

In their feedback, researchers highlighted the need for more diverse support during the postdoctoral phase to promote career planning and the long-term sustainability of career paths. The updated action plan includes, among other things, a workshop model based on the European Competence Framework for Researchers to support the identification of researchers' strengths and areas for development. Researchers also expressed the need for more support for career planning and identifying different career options. One of the objectives in the updated action plan is to offer researchers individual coaching to support career planning and well-being as part of an internal coaching pilot.

Finnish society has rapidly adopted widely used digital modes of operation. This development also affects universities, and AI competence has become part of professional expertise. Researchers' feedback highlighted a diverse range of needs for developing AI-adjacent skills. Technological developments, artificial intelligence and plagiarism pose ethical and pedagogical

challenges and increase the need for monitoring. Strengthening general AI competencies has been included as a development target in the updated action plan.

Remarks

Based on the results of the internal review, the targets of the previous action plan have been partly achieved. The action “Making services for capacity building and occupational well-being better known” was extended. Describing the competence development model and related services in more detail on the intranet was identified as a further development target.

It was also concluded that instead of a separate new document describing good practices in doctoral education, the management and structures of doctoral education at Tampere University need to be clarified. This is why a comprehensive survey of the structures and responsibilities of doctoral education was conducted, and the University’s Management Group approved the report and related action plan on 18 November 2025. The changes will come into effect on 1 August 2026. Key doctoral education content is available on the University’s intranet and public web pages.

Action Plan 2026-2028

This action plan spans the period of 2026–2028. The action plan together with other development plans, such as the Equality and Non-Discrimination Policy for HR 2026–2028 and the continuously updated Work Community Development Plan promote the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers at Tampere University.

Actions	EU Charter & Code	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicators / Target(s)	Current Status
Ensuring research security competence in the changing operating environment	Professional attitude Good practice in research	Q2/2027	Research and Innovation Services, Library (in cooperation with the Legal team)	Target: Ensuring researchers’ research security competence throughout the different stages of the research process. Tampere University does not violate export restrictions and sanctions regulations. Indicator: Moodle course on research security.	New

Developing science communication skills	Public engagement	Q4/2028	Communications and Marketing	Target: Communication and media training for researchers Indicator: Two training sessions per campus; 6 sessions in total.	New
Promoting the stability of working conditions for early-career researchers	Stability and permanence of employment	Q4/2026	HR Services, Research and Innovation Services	Target: Transparent, university-wide principles for the duration of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers' employment contracts. Indicator: Principles published. Target: Development of reporting to support the review of fixed-term employment contracts and improving predictability and monitoring. The median duration of doctoral researchers' fixed-term and full-time employment contracts grows. Indicator: A decision on the monitoring indicators is made.	New
Participatory development model for doctoral education	Participation in decision-making bodies	Q4/2026	Doctoral School	Target: To establish a participatory and interactive operating culture for the development of doctoral education. Indicator: Establishing a forum that meets twice a year, involving doctoral researchers and persons responsible for doctoral education. A description and documentation of the forum's activities.	New

A doctoral supervision model for doctoral supervisors	Relation with supervisors; Supervision and managerial duties	Q4/2027	Doctoral School	Target: A model for doctoral supervisor training and modes of activity (incl. materials) are planned to develop supervision skills. Mapping the required resources and division of responsibilities. Indicator: A description of the model and division of responsibilities.	New
Increasing the reach and participation opportunities of language training to support integration into the academic community	Participation in decision-making bodies; Continuing professional development	Q4/2027	HR Services / HRD	Target: A long-term language training plan becomes part of the wider work community development plan. Indicator: Language training plan is available on the intranet.	New
Strengthening general AI competences (materials and support for faculties)	Continuing professional development; Access to research training and continuous development	Q4/2028	HR Services / HRD (in cooperation with IT Services)	Indicator: Offering at least one training, workshop, set of materials, or similar to each faculty. Indicator: A Moodle course for all staff.	New
Strengthening and developing researchers' competences at the postdoctoral career stage	Career development; Access to research training and continuous development	Q4/2028	HR Services / HRD, Doctoral School	Target: A workshop model based on the European Competence Framework for Researchers to support postdoctoral researchers' academic career advancement by identifying strengths and development areas in researchers' skills. Indicator: Three workshops.	New
Increasing awareness of diverse career paths	Access to career advice; Supervision and managerial duties	Q4/2028	HR Services / HRD, Research and Innovation Services	Target: Supporting managers and supervisors in providing career guidance to	New

				<p>researchers. Indicator: A set of materials to support career guidance as part of managers' induction and support for conducting professional development reviews. Target: Supporting doctoral researchers' networking outside the academia. Indicator: Development, piloting and implementation of a model for building external networks. The model is completed and embedded in operations.</p>	
Promoting individual career coaching for researchers	Access to career advice	Q4/2028	HR and HRD Services	<p>Target: Piloting individual coaching for researchers to support well-being and career planning. Indicator: Target of 15 participants. Based on the number of participants and the feedback received from them, the continuation of the activities will be planned.</p>	New

Report on the previous action plan

Action Plan 2023-2025

Actions	EU Charter & Code	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicators / Target(s)	Current Status
Development and clarification of academic career paths	Recruitment; Recruitment (Code); Transparency (Code); Judging merit (Code); Postdoctoral appointments (Code); Career development	1Q/2024	Provost HR Services, President, Vice President in Education	Career path of teaching and research personnel guidelines / model approved.	Completed
Implementation plan of Responsible research assesment agreement (CoARA)	Recruitment; Recruitment (Code); Selection; Transparency (Code); Judging merit (Code); Variations in the chronological order of CVs; Recognition of mobility experience; Recognition of qualifications	4Q/2023	Open Sciences Steering group Extended management group (from 2026 onwards)	Implementation plan published.	Completed
Strengthening research skills and competence development	Continuing professional development	4Q/2025 1Q/2026	Research and Innovation Services, HRD Services, Library	First course of project management implemented. Scientific leadership course programme / pilot done.	Completed
Strengthening ethical support services for responsible PIs	Ethical principles; Continuing professional development	3Q/2024	Research and Innovation Services, Doctoral School, Library	Service model planned.	Completed
Supporting international personnels' opportunities to participate in the activities of the	Non-discrimination; 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	Completed

university community				trainings and participants).	
Equality plan updated and promoted	Ethical principles; Non-discrimination; Working conditions; Gender balance	4Q/2024	Equal Opportunites Committee	Equality plan updated and stakeholders being involved in the progress. Monitoring metrics are in use and followed regularly.	Completed
Communications services familiar for researchers	Professional responsibility; Dissemination, exploitation of results; Public engagement	4Q/2024	Communications and Marketing	Implemented events	Completed On-going
Raising internal awareness of OTM-R and TAU recruitment guidelines. Training and support in the implementation of the recruitment guidelines	Recruitment; Recruitment (Code); Transparency (Code)	4Q/2025	HR Services	Number of Faculty specific information / training sessions. List of various ways of promoting the guidelines.	Completed with alterations Instead of general training, information and support will be provided to managers and appointment committees when they start to recruit. Information available also in induction for managers Moodle course.
Clarification of applicant communication practices in recruitment	Recruitment; Recruitment (Code); Transparency (Code)	4Q/2024	HR Services	Feedback from applicants through feedback questionnaire. Development measures implemented based on results.	Completed On-going

Renewing the induction of managers	Supervision and managerial duties; Access to research training and continuous development; Supervision	4Q/2023	HRD Services	Creating an induction for managers Moodle course. (number of manager users, orientation feedback from managers); Starting plans to ensure that managers' induction reaches all necessary people (conducted discussions).	Completed
Making services for capacity building and occupational well-being better known	Career development; Access to career advice; Continuing professional development 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.	Extended Description of the competence development model and related services available on the intranet Q4/2028
Developing the support for researchers' career planning	Career development; Access to career advice; Continuing professional development; Access to research training and continuous development	2Q/2025 4Q/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.	Completed

Actions extended from the action plan 2020

Actions	EU Charter & Code	Timing	Responsible Unit	Indicators / Target(s)	Current Status
An info package and training for managers on the new practices in recruitment	Recruitment	Autumn semester 2020	HR Services	Videos and other types of training, a check list for managers on matters that must be considered in recruitment. Clear practical guidelines. Equality and non-discrimination policy is part of the manager's information package.	Completed Practical guidelines published 2022. The publication of guide videos started in 2022. A check list for appointment committees / managers on matters that must be considered in recruitment, published 2024.
Documentation and sharing of good practices in doctoral education	Relation with supervisors	Autumn semester 2021	Doctoral School	An easily retrieved document.	Completed with alterations Instead of a separate new document describing good practices in doctoral education, document describing the structures of doctoral education have been published in 2025. Central content regarding doctoral education is also available on the intranet and public websites.