Implementation of HR Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) at Aalto University

Aalto HR Services
August 2015

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Pictures: Aalto University Communications, Academy of Finland, Lehtikuva Picture Agency
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HR Strategy for Researchers in a nutshell
HR Strategy for Researchers in a nutshell

- A tool (by EC) for implementing the Charter & Code* principles targeting towards better employment and working conditions for researchers, and the attractiveness of research career
- European Commission grants the right to use HR Excellence in Research-logo for organizations that have successfully demonstrated an action plan and concrete actions to comply with the Charter & Code principals
- Regular internal and external audits (every second year) are required
- Since the adoption of the Charter & Code in 2005, over 230 organisations have obtained the "HR Excellence in Research" logo
- Aalto University was the first Finnish university to obtain the logo in 2012

* Charter and Code

1. European Charter for Researchers
   - Framework for researchers’ activities and career management
   - Roles, responsibilities and rights of researchers, their employers and funding organisations

2. The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers
   - Fair and transparent recruitment procedures, incl. means of evaluating merit

Horizon 2020

- A new Article 32 in Horizon 2020 grant Agreement sets out that the beneficiary of Horizon 2020 funding ‘must take all measures to implement the principles set out in the Commission Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers’.
- The article requires institutions to be proactive in taking and documenting specific measures, and ensure that researchers are aware of these measures.
Revised Action Plan* - Status and targets 2015

The HRS4R is based on continuous development and points out the areas that can be further developed
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Plan Targets 2012</th>
<th>Actions taken 2012-2014</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Time-line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of research community and working environment that supports co-operation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of the integration of the international faculty.</td>
<td>Focus on departmental and school level integration. Continuous development on other areas.</td>
<td>HR, departments</td>
<td>2012 – Actions 2014-2015, 2015-2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for the academic faculty in career planning.</td>
<td>Systematic career coaching services available, continuous development of services.</td>
<td>HR, Research and innovation</td>
<td>First groups during 2012, since that continuous offering and development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarification of decision making bodies and processes.</td>
<td>Evaluation of matrix leadership: clarifying the management system, decision making and preparation processes</td>
<td>Management team</td>
<td>During academic years 2012-2013, 2014-2015, 2015-2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background of HRS4R process at Aalto
Aalto HRS4R – process description
Implementation of the HRS4R at Aalto University

The implementation of the HRS4R at Aalto University

2. The discussions with faculty and staff (Spring 2012)
3. The Strategy of Aalto University.

Action plan to implement the HRS4R at Aalto University
Process for the creation of the gap analysis and action plan at Aalto University

Introduction to the Charter and Code (C&C)

Discussions with faculty and staff

Comparison of the challenges expressed during the discussions and the C&C principles

Evaluation in line with Aalto Strategy

Selected actions to create an environment of excellence for researchers
Step 4 - Self evaluation

- Self-evaluation process took place during 2014
- The self evaluation workshop was organized in November
- An approval of the revised action plan was received in July 2015 from the EC
- An external evaluation will take place in 2016
Implementation steering group, Step 4

- Ilkka Niemelä, Provost
- Virpi Tuunainen, Professor (BIZ)
- Jussi Ryynänen, Associate Professor (ELEC)
- Ville Pulkki, Associate Professor (ELEC)
- Vili Heinonen, Doctoral Candidate (SCI)
- Päivi Hovi-Wasastjerna, Research Director (ARTS)
- Riitta Hynynen, HR Manager
- Tiia Tuomi, HR Director
- Rita Heinrichs, HR Manager
- Hanna Nurmela, HR Specialist
Step 1: January-March 2012
- Internal gap analysis

Step 2: April-May 2012
- Discussion groups in each School
- Action Plan based on C&C and Aalto Strategy

Step 3: November 2012
- Acknowledgement by the Commission

Step 4: Start January 2012 (continuous process)
- Implementation of the people strategy
- Selected actions

Step 5: November 2016
- External assessment and renewal of Acknowledgement

Revised action plan approved by EC (7/2015)
Discussion topics

- Recruitment
- Orientation and integration
- Academic careers
- Competence development
- Careers outside Aalto

Participants

- 20 doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers
- 6 HR coordinators facilitated discussions
- Invitations sent to 2-3 doctoral students and 2-3 postdoctoral researchers per Aalto School and one HR-coordinator per School
Development over the past two years

Recruitment
+ Open positions are publically announced.
+ Search groups used in recruitments.
- Less positions due to decreased funding.

Orientation and integration
+ Emphasis on integration of international staff
+ BIZ off-site intensive two days orientation for doctoral candidates

Academic careers
+ Increased awareness of research career opportunities.
+ More competition and international mobility
+ Post docs find fixed term period generally good.
- Own graduates are encouraged to pursue experience also outside Aalto.

Competence development and careers outside Aalto
+ Improved pedagogical training and training provided by research support services.
+ More CV clinics/workshops and other training.
## What could be further developed?

| • Communication: how positions advertised, recruitment criteria, support opportunities (e.g. competence development) |
| • Uniformity of processes |

### Recruitment
- Marketing of open positions.
- Competitive recruitment process preferred when recruiting postdocs or doctoral students.
- Funding models for doctoral students.
- Encouragement for MA students to become doctoral students.

### Orientation
- Responsible person and a tutor named for each new employee.
- Checklist for tutors and supervisor of things to be discussed.

### Integration
- More support at School or Department – level for integration.
- International staff members encouraged to participate in Finnish courses (marketing of Finnish courses).
- Use of English language.

### Academic career
- Appreciation of doctoral students.
- "Small scale to big scale" – way of thinking. Etc. postdoc could lead small projects, be co-teaching with a senior faculty member etc.
- Positions between postdoc and tenure track?
- How to find international academic jobs?

### Competence development
- Continuing the discussion of academic leadership.
- Success stories
  - jobs outside Aalto
  - funding
- Mentoring and interview training with people outside the academic world.
- Problematic to participate longer training due to short contracts.
- Continuation of cv and interview workshops.
http://www.aalto.fi/en/
http://www.aalto.fi/en/about/careers/human_resource_strategy_for_researchers/