

Aalto University Research Assessment Exercise 2009

STRATEGIC SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE UNITS OF ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE UNITS OF ASSESSMENT



These instructions guide the self-assessment exercise and should be read in conjunction with the Terms of Reference for Assessment Panels document.

The instructions are meant to help the Units in writing their Self-Assessment Reports; all the questions need not be answered and the Units are free to include considerations not mentioned in the instructions.

The submission of the Self-Assessment Report consists of

- (i) A single MS Word-file that includes
 1. Title page bearing the title (Aalto RAE Self-Assessment Report), the name of the Unit and the name of the Unit Contact Person and a table of contents.
 2. Sections 1-7 (instructed below); maximum of 2 pages each (except Section 2 only: 2 pages *and* a separate list of main research achievements) and submitted as instructed by the University Assessment Coordinator.
- (ii) The short CVs of the Unit's Professors as instructed in Appendix 1 below and submitted separately as instructed by the University Assessment Coordinator.

1. Unit's Present Research Profile

(The maximum length: 2 A4 pages, Times New Roman 12 pt, all margins – left, right, top, bottom – minimum of 2 cm, line spacing minimum of 1.)

Give a short history of the Unit.

What are main fields and foci of research at the Unit? Has the Unit defined its strategic, long-term research plans – and if so, how does the Unit seek to realize those plans? How does the Unit develop and maintain structures and practices that foster good research and help early-career researchers to make their way into the profession? Is there a shared plan for publishing the research results, for employing research personnel and guiding the research of the Unit?

How does the university-level research strategies and/or research priority areas of the Unit's home university show in the Unit's research activities?

How does the Unit perceive itself in the international context? What is the 'niche' of the Unit in the global research environment? What characteristic features distinguish the Unit from its international competitors? What are the most relevant competitors and role models (university departments or other research institutions) of the Unit in the international context?

2. Scientific Quality of the Unit's Research in 2003-2008

(The maximum length *excluding the list*: 2 A4 pages, Times New Roman 12 pt, all margins – left, right, top, bottom – minimum of 2 cm, line spacing minimum of 1.)

In this Section the Units are asked to provide

- (a) a separate list of the Unit's research achievements during 2003-2008 that the Unit considers to belong to a very high international quality level (note that the Unit may be asked to present the items listed here to the Assessment Panel for verification and examination)
and

- (b) a (maximum of) 2 page free-form statement that includes:
- short descriptions of the items on the list discussed in Section (a) above
 - a discussion concerning how the Unit understands excellence in research in its own field of research, and how does the Unit strive for greater excellence in its research activities.

Note: Only research achievements of individuals submitted as belonging to the Unit's research active staff may be listed, described and discussed here.

What are the Unit's main research results and scientific/scholarly achievements in 2003-2008? Please compile a list of the Unit's main research-related achievements. The types of achievements that may be listed here include concrete research results, published articles, scholarly books or chapters in books, awarded patents, software, exhibitions, design products, performances, artifacts, exhibitions, prototypes etc. Describe the items briefly in the (maximum of) 2-page free-form statement.

*The items listed should represent the very best of the Unit's research from the point of view the Unit's field of research. The maximum number of items on the list is **twice the number of Senior Research Staff of the Unit (but no more than 25 items in any case)**. Only truly exemplary research achievements should be reported, and thus the number of reported items may well be considerably smaller than the maximum.*

Please give the list in an informative and readable form by applying the following table format:

Number and title of the Research Achievement:	Year:	Type of Achievement:	Title and publication information for verification:	Authors:
1.				
2.				
3.				

3. Scientific Impact of the Unit's Research in 2003-2008

(The maximum length: 2 A4 pages, Times New Roman 12 pt, all margins – left, right, top, bottom – minimum of 2 cm, line spacing minimum of 1.)

What is the present strategic impact of the Unit on scientific community? What are the main channels through which the Unit interacts (in both ways) with the international scientific community?

Is the placement record of the Unit's doctoral graduates from 2003-2008 available for inspection? Has the Unit been able to place doctoral graduates into foreign universities on non-Finnish funding? Give examples of recent placements of doctoral graduates into the university sector in Finland and abroad.

Are the professors and other senior researchers at the Unit active in international learned societies, editorial boards of international journals, tenure and doctoral committees etc.? Have the members of research active staff received notable international research awards or other research-related honours in recent years? What are the most relevant research projects the Unit has been engaged in during the Assessment Period jointly with units from other universities? Has the Unit been the main organizer of major international conferences? Does the Unit host a national or international Center of Excellence?

4. Societal Impact of the Unit's Research in 2003-2008

(The maximum length: 2 A4 pages, Times New Roman 12 pt, all margins – left, right, top, bottom – minimum of 2 cm, line spacing minimum of 1.)

What is the present strategic impact of the Unit on society and industry? What are the main channels through which the Unit interacts (in both ways) with the society at large?

Give examples of recent placements of doctoral graduates outside the university sector in Finland and abroad.

What are the most important research projects the Unit has carried out with non-university partners from the public or private sector during the Assessment Period? Has the research of the Unit produced spin-off companies? Have the members of the Unit been able to secure national or international patents? Are the members of research active staff preferred experts also outside the academia?

5. Research Environment at the Unit of Assessment

(The maximum length: 2 A4 pages, Times New Roman 12 pt, all margins – left, right, top, bottom – minimum of 2 cm, line spacing minimum of 1.)

Please comment on the strategic role of the research infrastructure (research management, support services, technical staff, instruments, databanks etc.) available at the Unit.

Please comment on the balance of teaching and research at the Unit and the influence of the Unit's student/teacher ratio on the Unit's research activities. Is there an active international research seminar at the Unit? Can the Unit offer researchers a research environment that is fully competitive in international comparison?

Which aspects of the Unit's research environment are assets that should be further strengthened? Are there structural obstacles that prevent the Unit from realizing its full potential for international excellence in research?

6. Future Potential of the Units of Assessment

(The maximum length: 2 A4 pages, Times New Roman 12 pt, all margins – left, right, top, bottom – minimum of 2 cm, line spacing minimum of 1.)

Please assess the future research potential of the Unit.

What are the most promising future research directions of the Unit in international and strategic perspective? Evaluate the expected impact of the Unit on scientific community and society at large over the next 5-10 years. Is the research environment at the Unit suitable for realizing and further developing these future prospects? What changes in the general working conditions of the Unit are required for fulfilling the Unit's full potential and reaching the high international research level expected from an Aalto University Unit? What kind of support would the Unit need for reaching the highest international level in its research in the foreseeable future? How does the Unit plan to take advantage of the new interdisciplinary possibilities offered by the Aalto University?

How is the Unit's recruitment strategy designed to strengthen the future potential of the Unit and its staff? What is the present age profile of the senior research staff? What were the Unit's most important research recruitments in 2003-2008 and how does the Unit plan to attract the best international talent to join the Unit in the future? Is there notable emerging talent among the Unit's post-doctoral students (please give examples of exceptional publications, national and international prizes won etc)?

7. SWOT-analysis

(The maximum length: 2 A4 pages, Times New Roman 12 pt, all margins – left, right, top, bottom – minimum of 2 cm, line spacing minimum of 1.)

What are the major internal Strengths and Weaknesses as well as external Threats and Opportunities in the Unit's research activities and research environment? Please comment these factors from the scientific, strategic, financial and organizational perspectives.

The SWOT-analysis forms the Unit's own summary of the most important aspects described in sections 1-6 above. Thus, the Unit may use the SWOT-analysis to highlight the issues it wishes in particular to bring to the attention of the Assessment Panel.

The maximum number of items in each four categories (strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities) is limited to 5.

Appendix 1: *Curricula Vitæ* of the Unit's Professors

Please submit the *Curricula Vitæ*, including a selected list of the main publications, of those members of the Unit's Senior Research Staff who were holding at least a five-year Professor's appointment (including Academy Professors, and in the case of research institutes only, senior Research Directors) at the Unit on the Census Date of 1st October 2008.

The length of the CV (including the publications list) of a single individual is strictly limited to the maximum of 3 pages (Times New Roman 12 pt, all margins – left, right, top, bottom – minimum of 2 cm, line spacing minimum of 1).

Please find enclosed an example of a recommendable structure of such a short CV.

The CVs are submitted separately as instructed by your University Assessment Coordinator.