HR Excellence in Research

Renewal Review

Internal Review

Case number

2019FI386615

Name Organisation under review

Aalto University

Organisation's contact details

Otakaari 24, Espoo, 02150, Finland

1. Organisational Information

Please provide an update of the key figures for your organisation. Fields marked with * are compulsory.

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, doctoral candidates either full-time or part-time involved in research *	2657
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	1378
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is the host organisation) *	25
Of whom are women *	1731
Of whom are R3 or R4 = established or leading researchers with a large degree of autonomy (e.g. holding the status of principal investigator or professor) *	666
Of whom are R2 = recognised researcher (e.g. postdoctoral researcher, junior researcher) *	708
Of whom are R1 = first stage researcher (e.g. doctoral candidate, research apprentice) *	1694
Total number of students (if relevant) *	21599
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching, and research staff) *	4809

RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for the most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	135357000
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	7922000
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	105484000
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	21951000

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)

Aalto University (https://www.aalto.fi/en) is a multidisciplinary university in Finland, established in 2010 through the merger of universities in technology, economics, and art and design. Aalto's mission is to shape a sustainable future by advancing high-quality research, education, innovation and societal impact. The university combines science, art, technology and business to address complex global challenges and foster radical creativity and entrepreneurial thinking. As an international research community (49 % of our academic personnel are international), Aalto is committed to responsible research practices, open science, equality, diversity and inclusion, and the continuous development of attractive and supportive research careers and working environments.

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Please review the strengths and weaknesses under the four pillars of the European Charter for Researchers, as provided by your organisation in the initial assessment phase. When doing so, you should do not only look back, but also consider new priorities, strategic decisions, etc. which may further influence the action plan. Please also provide a brief commentary in the 'Remarks' column if major changes have occurred versus the initial plan.

Note: Click on the name of each of the four thematic headings of the European Charter for Researchers to open the editor and provide your answers in the section dedicated to internal review for the interim assessment.

Ethical and professional aspects*

Strengths and weaknesses (initial phase)

Strengths and weaknesses (interim assessment)

Strengths and weaknesses (award renewal, max. 500 words) *

Strengths

Aalto University has established university-level policies, procedures and support structures covering research integrity, research ethics, open science and responsible conduct of research.

Aalto University is committed to the guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK) (https://tenk.fi/en), including the Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and the Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland (https://tenk.fi/sites/default/files/2023-05/RI_Guidelines_2023.pdf). Research integrity principles are embedded in the Aalto Code of Conduct (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/331686). Research integrity, ethics review processes and related support services are coordinated jointly by Research Services and the Research Ethics Committee (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/11326/). In addition, all doctoral researchers are required to complete a mandatory research ethics course (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/907826) covering good scientific practice, research ethics, research legislation and compliance-related topics.

Open science is promoted through the Open Science and Research Policy (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/250301), which covers open access publishing, research data management, open data, open code and open educational resources. Further, open research infrastructures (https://www.aalto.fi/en/research-and-learning-infrastructures/aalto-universitys-open-access-policy-for-research-infrastructures) have now its own policy. The university follows the principle “as open as possible, as closed as necessary”, while taking into account ethical, legal, confidentiality, data protection and security requirements. Contributions to open science are recognised in recruitment and career development processes.

The Aalto Code of Conduct (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/331686) defines the principles and expectations that apply to all members of the university community. Similar principles are also reflected in the Code of Conduct for Partners and Suppliers (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/1318906/). Aalto University has established procedures and support structures for addressing harassment, inappropriate conduct and breaches of ethical principles (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/4181/), including an anonymous Ethical Channel

(https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/873006) for reporting suspected misconduct and ethical concerns. The Ethical Principles for Guidance (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/1229636) and Principles for a Safer Space (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/1308950) provide further guidance on respectful and inclusive interaction.

Aalto University is committed to academic freedom and supports researchers' freedom to define research questions, methods and collaborations within the framework of research integrity, legal requirements and ethical principles. In response to the changing geopolitical environment, the university has also strengthened its policies, guidance and support related to responsible internationalisation, research security, export control and sanctions compliance (https://www.aalto.fi/en/services/export-control-sanctions-and-research-security-policy?check_logged_in=1).

In addition, sustainability is integrated into Aalto University's strategy, operations and research activities, and researchers are encouraged to consider environmental sustainability and responsible resource use in their work.

Research Services regularly organises training and provides guidance related to research ethics, responsible conduct of research, open science, research data management, legal aspects of research, commercialisation, intellectual property rights and the responsible use of AI in research. Equality, diversity and inclusion are supported through the EDI Learning Hub (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/219221), university-wide training, events and learning materials.

Weaknesses / development areas

The rapid development of AI technologies requires continuous updates to guidance, training and support related to the responsible use of AI in teaching, research and everyday work.

Ensuring consistent awareness and implementation of ethical principles, responsible conduct of research and inclusive practices across a large and diverse university community remain an ongoing development area.

Remarks (max 500 words)

Since the previous review, Aalto University has updated several policies, training courses and support services related to ethical and professional conduct.

In 2025, Aalto University updated its Code of Conduct (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/331686) e-learning. The updated training includes the university's Principles for a Safer Space (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/1308950) as well as more detailed guidance on harassment, inappropriate conduct and respectful interaction. All members of the Aalto community were required to complete not only the renewed Code of Conduct e-learning but also updated training on data protection (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/204731) and information security (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/8296) as well as introductory cyber security (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/106401) training. Almost 90% of employees completed all required training by the deadline. After a few rounds of reminders, almost all employees have completed the

mandatory courses. In addition, compliance-related checks covering topics such as data protection, secondary employment, sanctions and responsible international collaboration were integrated into the Aalto Project List (APL) system used for managing research and education projects and proposals.

Aalto University has also adopted the national Ethical Principles for Guidance (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/1229636). The principles apply to all members of the university community involved in guidance and advisory roles, including academic staff, other staff, peer tutors and external advisors, and provide a common framework for ethical, respectful and equitable guidance practices.

The rapid adoption of generative AI created a need for new guidance, training and support. Since the previous review, Aalto University has introduced university-level guidance for the use of AI in teaching and learning (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/1314650), covering topics such as transparency, assessment practices, learning objectives and the responsible use of generative AI tools. In research, Aalto developed guidance on the responsible use of AI in the research process (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/914216/), addressing issues such as research integrity, authorship, reliability, data protection, confidentiality and ethical use of AI tools. In addition, Aalto University has organised training, support and practical guidance for staff on the use of generative AI in everyday work (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/980111) tasks. To support the secure use of AI tools, the university has also developed an internal Aalto AI Assistant service enabling the use of generative AI in a university-managed and data-secure environment.

Recruitment and selection*

Strengths and weaknesses (initial phase)

Strengths and weaknesses (interim assessment)

Strengths and weaknesses (award renewal, max. 500 words) *

Strengths

Aalto University has university-level policies and procedures covering professors' tenure track (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/10791), lecturers' career system (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/30471) and other academic positions (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/4711). The policies are aligned with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and OTM-R principles. Aalto University is also committed to responsible researcher assessment through DORA (https://sfdora.org/), the Finnish national recommendations for responsible researcher evaluation (https://vastuullinentiede.fi/en/responsible-assessment/national-recommendation-responsible-evaluation-researcher) and CoARA (https://aaltofi.sharepoint.com/sites/PODtesti/Shared%20Documents/Academic%20Careers/HR%20Excellence/5%20Renewal%20AUDIT%202026/coara.org)

Regarding the responsible assessment of the researcher, Aalto University also contributes actively to national and international discussions on responsible research assessment and researcher careers. By sharing experiences and developing practices together with partner organisations, the university supports greater alignment of recruitment, assessment and career evaluation principles across institutions and countries. More consistent and transparent assessment practices facilitate researcher mobility, support fair evaluation of candidates, strengthen the attractiveness of research careers and make academic career paths easier to navigate internationally.

Recruitment and advancement decisions are based on holistic peer evaluation. Qualitative assessment forms the basis of evaluation, while quantitative indicators are used only as complementary information when relevant. Assessment criteria cover research, teaching, supervision, leadership, open science, societal impact and other academic contributions.

Recruitment committees and other actors involved in recruitment are supported through university-wide guidance materials, including the "Recruitment at Aalto" and "Understanding Unconscious Bias in Higher Education" eLearning courses and the "Handbook on Diversity in Recruitments (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/219351)". Recruitment and committee orientation materials have been updated, and equality, diversity and inclusion perspectives are integrated throughout the guidance instead of being addressed as a stand-alone topic. Inclusive recruitment practices have also been strengthened, for example by promoting the use of gender-neutral and inclusive language in job descriptions and recruitment communications.

The role and responsibilities of HR Partners in academic recruitment and advancement processes are now clearly established and defined in university-level policy. In addition, HR Services has introduced dedicated orientation materials for chairs of recruitment and advancement committees covering process responsibilities, timelines, assessment practices and collaboration between academic leadership and HR.

We have further expanded our internal headhunting concept, Aalto Talent Search, which supports the identification and attraction of highly qualified international candidates, particularly in fields where women are underrepresented. Talent Search supports diversity and inclusion objectives while maintaining open calls and merit-based evaluation and selection practices. As a result, Aalto has succeeded in recruiting several new female professors especially in STEM fields.

As a new practice, Aalto University has introduced academic leadership assessments in tenure track professor recruitments. The assessments are conducted after the academic evaluation phase and provide additional information on leadership potential, collaboration skills and the ability to lead research teams and academic communities. Academic merit evaluation remains the primary basis for recruitment decisions.

Weaknesses / development areas

Ensuring consistent awareness and implementation of responsible recruitment and assessment practices across the university community remains an ongoing development area. Particular attention will be paid to the implementation and monitoring of the CoARA Action Plan (https://zenodo.org/records/10985757) and to further integrating responsible assessment principles into recruitment, advancement and evaluation practices across the university.

Remarks (max 500 words)

Since the previous review, we have continued to strengthen responsible, transparent and inclusive recruitment, assessment and researcher career practices through concrete policy updates, new support structures and targeted development actions.

In 2024, Aalto published its CoARA Action Plan (https://zenodo.org/records/10985757) guiding the implementation of responsible assessment principles through 2027. Since the previous audit, several university-level recruitment and career policy documents and assessment practices have been updated in line with CoARA principle. For example, we have introduced narrative portfolios and updated the support materials and templates used by committees and external reviewers participating in the evaluations in accordance with the CoARA principles.

The guidelines for inbound academic visitors (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/11561) were updated to strengthen research security, clarify responsibilities related to hosting academic visitors and ensure compliance with export control, sanctions and other legal requirements. The updated process supports responsible international collaboration and more consistent visitor management practices across the university.

Recruitment-related training, orientation and support practices have also been further developed. HR Partners' expertise has been strengthened in areas such as unconscious bias, structured interviews and assessments, and in utilising leadership assessments. In 2025, HR Services launched university-level recruitment and academic careers networks to support competence-sharing and harmonisation of

recruitment and career practices across schools. Recruitment and advancement committee orientation materials were also updated and structured according to different phases of the recruitment process to improve practical usability and timely guidance.

Aalto University has continued to strengthen international recruitment and integration support through further development of dual career support, relocation support and integration services for international researchers and their families. In spring 2026, the university launched a project to harmonise site visit practices across schools and improve candidate experience. As part of the project, optional “Living in Finland” discussions were further developed and invested. In these discussions, candidates invited to site visits can freely ask questions about matters that particularly interest them regarding moving to Finland and living in Finland.

The working conditions and career support of early career researchers have also been strengthened. Salaries of doctoral researchers were harmonised between schools, recruitment principles were further harmonised, and nearly all schools adopted a 2+2-year contract model for doctoral researchers. Postdoctoral appointment practices were also reviewed and unified across the university. In parallel, Aalto contributed to researcher career support development through the Unite! (https://www.unite-university.eu/) university alliance, including the development of a Career Guide for Young Researchers (https://facultyandstaff.unite-university.eu/career-path-guide).

Measures to increase diversity in academic careers have also shown concrete results. The share of female professors increased from 11% in 2010 to 20% in 2020 and further to 25% at the end of 2025. In 2025, 45% of newly recruited professors were women. The internationalisation of academic staff has also continued steadily. At the end of 2025, 28% of professors (2020: 26%; 2010: 4%) and 49% of academic staff (2020: 44%; 2010: 16%) came from international backgrounds.

Working conditions*

Strengths and weaknesses (initial phase)

Strengths and weaknesses (interim assessment)

Strengths and weaknesses (award renewal, max. 500 words) *

Strengths

Working conditions at Aalto are supported by a comprehensive framework of Finnish labour legislation, occupational safety and health regulations, collective agreements and university-level policies. This framework also covers research-specific risks and responsibilities related to laboratory work, fieldwork, information security, data protection and research security. Within this framework, Aalto has established systematic support services and monitoring practices related to wellbeing at work, work ability and occupational safety. Employees have access to occupational health care, mental wellbeing services, coaching, HR support and supervisor support models. Particular attention is paid to early support, work ability management and psychologically safe working environments. Occupational safety, wellbeing and work ability are continuously monitored and developed to support sustainable working conditions. All researchers are covered by salary systems aligned with national legislation and collective agreements. Gender- and nationality-based salary inequalities have been eliminated, and pay equality is monitored annually as part of the university's equality and salary review processes.

The working conditions of early career researchers have been strengthened through harmonised doctoral researcher salary structures, more consistent recruitment practices and the introduction of a 2+2-year contract model in nearly all schools. Support for doctoral researchers includes structured supervision, onboarding and progress monitoring practices.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are integrated into university operations through the EDI Plan 2025–2028 (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/299271), school-level action plans and university-wide support services. Aalto promotes inclusive and safe working and learning environments through training, onboarding practices and leadership development. To support data-informed development, Aalto University monitors wellbeing, equality, inclusion and community experience systematically through regular wellbeing surveys, EDI indicators and the university-level EDI Dashboard.

Aalto University has also strengthened services supporting international mobility, relocation and integration. Mobility-related services and support structures have been increasingly centralised across the university in order to provide smoother processes and broader support services for international employees and international assignments. Additional integration measures include collaboration through the HEI LIFE

Spouse Network (https://www.aalto.fi/en/aalto-university/spouse-network), activities organised through the Aalto Club community, and events together with the Finnish Immigration Service and the City of Espoo.

Support structures and supervision practices for doctoral researchers have also been significantly strengthened. Aalto University has developed pedagogical supervision training, introduced supervision plans and strengthened onboarding, peer support and mid-term review practices for doctoral researchers and supervisors.

Researchers are widely represented in relevant consultation and decision-making bodies across the university. Participation in committees, leadership and administrative responsibilities is recognised as an important part of academic citizenship and academic career development.

The 2025 university-level wellbeing survey achieved a response rate of 66%, while the response rate among professors was approximately 80%, supporting broad staff participation and data-informed development. Aalto University also ranked first among Finnish universities in the overall wellbeing index and all measured sub-areas in the national university comparison.

Weaknesses / development areas

Rapid changes in the global operating environment, including geopolitical developments, changes in research funding and increasing uncertainty affecting international researchers, require us to continuously adapt their support structures and ways of working.

Workload, administrative burden and fragmentation of work remain challenges, particularly among academic staff.

Remarks (max 500 words)

Since the previous review, Aalto University has strengthened its equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) structures, support services and data-informed development practices. In 2025, the university launched the EDI Plan 2025–2028 (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/299271), the EDI Learning Hub (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/219221) and the EDI Dashboard to support implementation, monitoring and decision-making.

Concrete measures have included renewed Code of Conduct eLearning, a new Inclusive Aalto Community eLearning, appreciative communication training, leadership development sessions and expanded workplace mediator training. Additional actions have focused on onboarding, multilingual and inclusive teaching, accessibility improvements, support for international staff and spouses, and the Aaltogether (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/1089176/) initiative, which integrates inclusive practices into onboarding, events, leadership development and everyday community interaction. Gender- and nationality-based salary inequalities have been eliminated and are monitored annually. In addition, the Finnish university sector has pioneered more equal and family-friendly family leave practices.

Further, Aalto also launched the “My Hour – Time for Wellbeing” initiative, enabling employees to use one working hour per week to support their physical or mental wellbeing.

Onboarding and integration practices have been further developed through onboarding lunches and discussions with university leadership, strengthened peer networking through the Aalto Social (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/912921) Newcomers community and improved onboarding feedback processes. Approximately 63% of newcomers have an onboarding buddy and around 90% of new assistant professors participate in mentoring arrangements. Schools have also piloted new onboarding models for early career researchers.

Development work increasingly follows a cycle of data collection, dialogue, targeted actions and follow-up evaluation. For example, the 2023 wellbeing survey identified international female professors as the group with the lowest wellbeing and community experience scores. In response, Aalto organised targeted discussions and interviews and implemented actions related to onboarding, mentoring, recruitment, leadership and community culture. Follow-up results showed clear improvements: the workplace culture index increased from 3.28 to 3.65, the experience of being part of the work community from 3.44 to 3.95, and the experience of being valued in the community from 3.44 to 3.85. Experiences related to equality and diversity also improved significantly.

Based on these experiences, Aalto now systematically identifies teams with low wellbeing indicators and offers facilitated discussions, HR support and jointly agreed development actions. Survey findings have also informed university-level actions related to recruitment, mentoring, onboarding, leadership assessment practices and reducing administrative burden among academic staff.

Aalto also collaborates actively with its own researchers in developing wellbeing, equality and inclusion practices, including participation in the national Diversity and Inclusion at Work Survey and the new TAIMI consortium project.

The interviews conducted for this audit support these findings. Interviewees described Aalto as an international and inclusive working environment and highlighted the use of English as a working language, the presence of international colleagues, and the importance of onboarding, integration support and practical guidance for international employees and their families.

Training and development*

Strengths and weaknesses (initial phase)

Strengths and weaknesses (interim assessment)

Strengths and weaknesses (award renewal, max. 500 words) *

Strengths

Aalto University supports competence development throughout different career stages through training, coaching, mentoring, networking and leadership development. Competence development discussions are integrated into annual “My Dialogue” discussions between supervisors and employees. According to the 2025 wellbeing survey, 74% of respondents reported having had a development and goal-setting discussion during the previous 12 months. Tenure Track professors have also an Academic Career Memorandum, which aims to support the professor to advance in their career. The Memorandum is to be made after each positive recruitment or advancement decision. The Memorandum describes an individual discipline-specific path towards excellence based on tenure track criteria.

The university’s approach to competence development is based on the 70/20/10 learning model, combining learning through work, peer learning and formal training. Researchers and other staff members are supported through project work, mentoring, coaching, networking, leadership responsibilities, eLearning and self-study opportunities.

Aalto provides university-wide training and support related to research, supervision, leadership, teaching, wellbeing, equality and inclusion, internationalisation, research integrity, open science and responsible assessment. Digital learning opportunities have expanded significantly in recent years, and the Unite! (https://www.unite-university.eu/) university alliance has further broadened access to training opportunities offered by partner universities.

Leadership development is provided at different career stages. The Aalto Academic Leader (AAL) programme for associate professors combines leadership training, peer learning, coaching, networking and 360 feedback. Approximately one third of participants have later advanced to academic leadership positions such as dean, vice dean or head of department. Dedicated onboarding and leadership programmes are also available for heads of department and vice deans, and a new Aalto Strategic Leader programme will be launched in 2026 for experienced academic leaders. Employment legislation, employer responsibilities and rights and responsibilities in employment have been integrated into leadership onboarding and development programmes. In addition, a new eLearning course on rights and responsibilities in employment has been introduced for supervisors and managers.

Aalto University also provides coaching and mentoring services supporting leadership development, career planning, wellbeing and organisational change. Available services include individual coaching, mentoring, work coaching, team coaching and 360 coaching, delivered through both internal and external coaches.

Networking and peer learning are supported through university-wide and school-level events and forums. Examples include Aalto Leaders Dialogues, Assistant Professors' Lunches, Professors' Summits, Lecturers' Get Togethers and school-level leadership events. In addition, the Aalto Networking Platform supports networking and collaboration across organisational and disciplinary boundaries.

Weaknesses / development areas

Rapid changes in the operating environment require continuous updating of training content, leadership development programmes and learning materials, particularly in areas related to AI, research practices and academic leadership.

Ensuring that all researchers and staff are aware of the available training, coaching and development opportunities remains an ongoing development area, although visibility and participation have improved in recent years.

Remarks (max 500 words)

Since the previous review, Aalto University has continued to develop competence development, leadership training and digital learning services through several concrete actions. Following the implementation phase of the Workday Learning solution, the system has become the university's primary platform for training and competence development. It has increased the availability of eLearning content and brought university-organised training, external webinar recordings and self-study materials into a single portal. In addition, collaboration within the Unite! (https://www.unite-university.eu/) university alliance has expanded access to courses and training opportunities offered by partner universities.

To improve awareness of development opportunities, HR Services now provides regular university-level training summaries for HR Partners, who communicate relevant opportunities within schools and departments. Participation data and feedback suggest that awareness and participation have improved, particularly among younger academic generations.

The Aalto Academic Leader (AAL) Programme was updated in 2025. The revised programme places greater emphasis on strategic leadership, communication, collaboration, self-leadership and community leadership. Participant feedback has highlighted the value of peer networking, multidisciplinary dialogue and direct interaction with university leadership. Approximately one third of programme participants have later advanced to academic leadership positions.

Leadership onboarding for heads of department and vice deans has also been further developed. In addition to updated orientation materials and onboarding events, the programme now includes dedicated sessions on leaders' rights and responsibilities, alumni sessions supporting peer learning, and a new module on strategic communication, media interaction and crisis communication.

Aalto University has also continued to develop coaching, mentoring and networking services supporting leadership development, career development and wellbeing. Alongside individual and group coaching services, networking and peer-learning opportunities have been expanded through initiatives such as the Aalto Networking Platform, Aalto Leaders Dialogues, Professors' Summits and Assistant Professors' Lunches.

Interviews conducted for this audit highlighted the value of mentoring, coaching, leadership development and career support services. Researchers referred to mentoring programmes, coaching services, supervision-related training and opportunities to discuss career development with colleagues and supervisors. While the overall feedback was positive, some interviewees noted that mentoring arrangements do not always meet individual needs, highlighting the importance of continuing to develop mentoring practices and matching processes.

The interviews also confirmed that visibility of available services remains an important development area. Although support structures were generally viewed positively, some researchers indicated that they were not fully aware of all available training, networking and career support services. Improving the visibility and findability of these opportunities therefore remains a priority.

Have any of the priorities for the short- and medium-term changed? (max. 500 words)

Since the previous review, the rapid development and adoption of generative AI have become an important new area of development at Aalto University. The university has introduced guidance, training and support for the use of AI in teaching, learning, research and everyday work. Particular attention has been paid to the responsible use of AI, assessment practices, research integrity, data protection and information security.

The pace of change has also highlighted the need for a more coordinated university-level approach. To support this work, Aalto University has appointed a Vice President responsible for AI-related development and the preparation of a university-level AI strategy. The strategy work addresses the implications of AI for research, education, leadership, university services and academic work more broadly.

The rapid emergence of generative AI required the university to develop new guidance, training and support services within a relatively short timeframe. These needs were not yet visible when the previous HRS4R Action Plan was prepared and are therefore expected to influence future development priorities.

Have any of the circumstances in which your organisation operates changed and, as such, have had an impact on your strategy for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers? (max. 500 words)

Rapid changes in the global operating environment have increasingly affected universities, researchers and international academic collaboration. Changes in research funding landscapes, restrictions affecting international collaboration and researcher mobility, geopolitical tensions and growing societal polarisation have also required Aalto University to adapt its practices and support services.

At the same time, Aalto University has observed growing international interest from researchers considering Europe and Finland as potential destinations for research careers. This has increased the importance of effective international recruitment, relocation and integration services.

These developments have highlighted the need to further strengthen support for international researchers and their families, develop leadership capabilities for managing uncertainty and change, and maintain an inclusive and psychologically safe working environment. They have also increased the importance of organisational preparedness and the ability to respond quickly to emerging challenges affecting the university community.

Are any strategic decisions under way that may influence the action plan? (max. 500 words)

Aalto University is currently preparing a university-level AI strategy led by the newly appointed Vice President responsible for AI-related development. The strategy is expected to influence staff training, competence development, research support services, teaching practices and university-level guidance related to the use of AI. The rapid emergence of generative AI has already required the university to develop new guidance, training and support services for teaching, learning, research and everyday work.

To support this work, Aalto University is establishing a new AI Capability Officer role. The role will focus on identifying AI-related competence needs across different staff groups, coordinating training and support activities, and helping units integrate AI into their work in a responsible and practical way. Particular attention will be paid to staff development, leadership support, sharing of good practices and the responsible use of AI in teaching, research and university services.

3. Actions

Please consult the list of all the actions you have submitted as part of your strategy for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers. Please add to the overview the current status of these actions as well as the status of the indicators. If any actions have been revised or omitted, please provide a commentary for each action. You can also add new objectives.

Note: Choose one or more of the principles automatically retrieved from the gap analysis with their ratings.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 1
Dissemination of good research practices

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
4. Professional attitude 5. Contractual and legal obligations 6. Accountability 7. Good practice in research 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results	During academic years 2012-2013 2013-2014 2014–2015 2015-2016	Provost, Vice Presidents of Aalto, Deans	Continuation of introduced discussion forums, workshops and networking events. Emphasis on orientation processes and Faculty Club

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	Planned discussion forums, workshops and networking events established are integrated as a part of academic year and activities. This theme is in a state of continuous development, and the existing forums are renewed and new ones launched when necessary.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 2
Development of research community and working environment that supports co-operation

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
1. Research freedom 3. Professional responsibility 9. Public engagement 22. Recognition of the profession 23. Research environment 39. Access to research training and continuous development	During academic years 2012-2013 2013-2014 2014–2015 2015-2016	Provost, Vice Presidents of Aalto, Deans	Continuation of introduced discussion forums, workshops and networking events. Emphasis on orientation processes and Faculty Club

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	Planned discussion forums, workshops and networking events established are integrated as a part of academic year and activities. This theme is in a state of continuous development, and the existing forums are renewed and new ones launched when necessary.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 3	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Clarification of the principles and criteria for academic recruitments	12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 14. Selection (Code) 15. Transparency (Code) 16. Judging merit (Code) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code) 20. Seniority (Code)	During academic years 2012-2013 2013-2014 2014–2015 2015-2016	Provost, HR, Career systems task force	Aalto Tenure Track, Aalto Lecturer Career System, and Aalto Other Academic Policies established and up to date.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	Career policies for all our academic positions (Tenure track, Lecturer career system, Other Academic Positions) are now updated/established and implemented in our schools.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 4	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Development of the Aalto academic career systems and recruitment criteria for different academic positions	12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 14. Selection (Code) 15. Transparency (Code) 16. Judging merit (Code) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code) 20. Seniority (Code) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)	Implementation ongoing 2013 -> Development actions 2014-2015 Review and follow-up 2015-2016	Provost and career systems task force	Aalto Tenure Track, Aalto Lecturer Career System, and Aalto Other Academic Policies established and up to date.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	Career policies for all our academic positions (Tenure track, Lecturer career system, Other Academic Positions) are now updated/established and implemented in our schools.

Action 5	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Development of the integration of the international faculty	23. Research environment	2012 -> Actions 2014-2015, 2015-2016	HR, departments	Focus on departmental and school level integration. Continuous development on other areas.

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 6	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Improvement of the solutions and support for well-being at work	1. Research freedom 2. Ethical principles 3. Professional responsibility 4. Professional attitude 5. Contractual and legal obligations 6. Accountability 7. Good practice in research 10. Non discrimination 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems 24. Working conditions 25. Stability and permanence of employment 26. Funding and	During academic years 2012-2013 2013-2014 2014-2015 2015-2016	HR, service providers	Development of supporting tools for all areas of well-being: Work and leadership, motivation, competences, health

PROPOSED ACTIONS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
salaries 27. Gender balance 28. Career development 29. Value of mobility 30. Access to career advice 31. Intellectual Property Rights 32. Co-authorship 33. Teaching 34. Complains/ appeals 35. Participation in decision-making bodies 36. Relation with supervisors 37. Supervision and managerial duties			

PROPOSED ACTIONS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
38. Continuing Professional Development 39. Access to research training and continuous development 40. Supervision			

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	In a state of continuous development based on our quality work.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 7
Support for the academic faculty in career planning

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
28. Career development 37. Supervision and managerial duties 38. Continuing Professional Development 39. Access to research training and continuous development 40. Supervision	First groups during 2012, since that continuous offering and development	HR, Research and innovation	Systematic career coaching services available, continuous development of services

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	In a state of continuous development based on our quality work.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 8
Clarification of decision making bodies and processes.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
35. Participation in decision-making bodies 37. Supervision and managerial duties 38. Continuing Professional Development 40. Supervision	During academic years 2012-2013 2014-2015 2015-2016	Management Team	Evaluation of matrix leadership: clarifying the management system, decision making and preparation processes

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 9
Development of doctoral programmes (e.g. curriculum, supervision)

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
40. Supervision	Renewal process during 2012-2013 2013-2014 2014-2015 2015-2016	Provost	Development of the doctoral programmes

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	In a state of continuous development based on our quality work.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 10	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Improve the attractiveness of Aalto for foreign and female faculty	10. Non discrimination 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems 12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 14. Selection (Code) 15. Transparency (Code) 16. Judging merit (Code) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)	4/2020	Provost, HRS, EQU Committee, Academic Careers Management Team	Candidate sourcing methods improved. Candidate evaluation tools and practices to support equality and to tackle unconscious biases developed. Position marketing, candidate communications and employer branding activities improved. Awareness of unconscious biases in recruitment situations improved.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
20. Seniority (Code) 27. Gender balance			

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	In a state of continuous development based on our quality work.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 11	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Support the career development of young faculty, with special attention to foreign and female faculty	10. Non discrimination 27. Gender balance 28. Career development 30. Access to career advice 38. Continuing Professional Development 39. Access to research training and continuous development	4/2020	Provost, HRS, RIS, LES, EQU Committee, Academic Careers Management Team	New onboarding model for PhD students developed. New onboarding model for professors developed (all new tt recruits participate in the onboarding process and have an onboarding buddy). Individual mentoring for all new assistant professors offered after onboarding. Group

PROPOSED ACTIONS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
			mentoring for women assistant professors offered.

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	In a state of continuous development based on our quality work.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 12	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Attracting talent	11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems 12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 15. Transparency (Code) 16. Judging merit (Code) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code) 22. Recognition of the profession 27. Gender balance 35. Participation in decision-making bodies	2022-2024	Provost, ACMT	Utilising Talent Search more broadly for talent attraction (Talent Search 2.0.), Strengthen support for dual careers, Identifying new ways to attract female professors by utilising HR analytics.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	As several of the measures introduced during the previous Action Plan period have become established practices and demonstrated positive results, the focus is gradually shifting from piloting and implementation towards continuous improvement and further development. Successful initiatives, such as Aalto Talent Search and other proven recruitment, career development and support practices, will continue as part of the university’s normal operations and quality management processes.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 13	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Fostering Talent	10. Non discrimination 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems 15. Transparency (Code) 16. Judging merit (Code) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code) 20. Seniority (Code) 22. Recognition of the profession 23. Research environment 24. Working	2022-2024	Provost, ACMT	Developing our mentoring offering, Identifying new ways to support international families to better integrate to Finland, Strengthen the offering of Finnish language courses, Strengthening the support for tenure track

PROPOSED ACTIONS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
conditions 25. Stability and permanence of employment 26. Funding and salaries 27. Gender balance 28. Career development 29. Value of mobility 30. Access to career advice 34. Complains/ appeals 35. Participation in decision-making bodies 36. Relation with supervisors 37. Supervision and managerial duties			

PROPOSED ACTIONS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
38. Continuing Professional Development 39. Access to research training and continuous development 40. Supervision			

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	Integrated into the new Integrating & Engaging International Faculty development theme.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 14
Digital HR & Data driven HR

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems 12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 15. Transparency (Code) 16. Judging merit (Code)	2022-2024	Provost, ACMT	Developing process for gathering, maintaining and utilising the following statistics: 1) Percentage and reasons for professor attrition (at assistant and tenured levels), and 2) Percentage and reason for not accepting offers.

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	Planned actions completed. Action Plan have been integrated into normal operations.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 15
Gender Balance

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
2. Ethical principles 10. Non discrimination 12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 14. Selection (Code) 27. Gender balance	2022-2026	HRS	Share of female faculty

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	Added to Action Plan based on Commission feedback. See action 'Attracting talent' for further information.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 16
Foreign Faculty

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
2. Ethical principles 10. Non discrimination 12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 24. Working conditions 29. Value of mobility	2022-2026	HRS	Added to Action Plan based on Commission feedback. See actions 'Fostering Talent' and 'Integrating & Engaging International Faculty' for further information.

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	Integrated into the new Integrating & Engaging International Faculty development theme.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 17	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Postdoctoral appointments policies and guidelines	5. Contractual and legal obligations 10. Non discrimination 12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 14. Selection (Code) 15. Transparency (Code) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code) 22. Recognition of the profession 25. Stability and permanence of employment 28. Career development	2022-2024	HRS	

PROPOSED ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	COMPLETED	Added to Action Plan based on Commission feedback. Appointment policies updated and harmonised across schools.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 18	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Integrating & engaging international faculty	1. Research freedom 2. Ethical principles 3. Professional responsibility 4. Professional attitude 5. Contractual and legal obligations 10. Non discrimination 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems 12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 14. Selection (Code) 15. Transparency (Code) 16. Judging merit (Code) 18. Recognition of mobility experience	2026-2030	Supervisors and managers ACMT and EDI officer HR and other service providers	Wellbeing survey data; Onboarding experience data; Onboarding buddy status; Participation in language and cultural training; International faculty retention; Exit data

PROPOSED ACTIONS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(Code) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code) 25. Stability and permanence of employment 28. Career development 30. Access to career advice 37. Supervision and managerial duties 38. Continuing Professional Development 39. Access to research training and continuous development			

PROPOSED ACTIONS

	Current Status	Remarks
	NEW	Key development areas: Onboarding and integration Language and cultural integration Family and dual-career support Community engagement and networking Target 2030: International employees experience a seamless and welcoming end-to-end journey from arrival to full integration into the Aalto community, Finnish working life and society.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 19	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Enhancing sustainable work	2. Ethical principles 5. Contractual and legal obligations 10. Non discrimination 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems 24. Working conditions 25. Stability and permanence of employment 35. Participation in decision-making bodies 36. Relation with supervisors 37. Supervision and managerial duties 38. Continuing Professional Development 39. Access to research training and	2026-2030	Supervisors and managers supported by HR; HR, ACMT, EDI officer	Wellbeing survey data; Number of work plans completed; EDI indicators; Participation in leadership development; Retention and exit data

PROPOSED ACTIONS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
continuous development 40. Supervision			

Current Status	Remarks
NEW	Key development areas: Sustainable work planning Wellbeing and work ability Leadership and supervision Data-informed management Target 2030: Researchers experience sustainable working conditions, supportive leadership, meaningful career development opportunities and a psychologically safe working environment throughout their careers.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Action 20	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Enabling inclusive and thriving teams and communities	1. Research freedom 2. Ethical principles 3. Professional responsibility 4. Professional attitude 5. Contractual and legal obligations 6. Accountability 7. Good practice in research 10. Non discrimination 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code) 22. Recognition of the profession 23. Research environment	2016-2030	Supervisors and managers supported by HR; HR and other service providers; EDI officer, ACMT	Wellbeing survey data; EDI indicators; Retention and exit data

PROPOSED ACTIONS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
24. Working conditions			
25. Stability and permanence of employment			
26. Funding and salaries			
27. Gender balance			
28. Career development			
29. Value of mobility			
30. Access to career advice			
34. Complains/ appeals			
35. Participation in decision-making bodies			
36. Relation with supervisors			
37. Supervision and managerial duties			
38. Continuing Professional Development			

PROPOSED ACTIONS

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
39. Access to research training and continuous development 40. Supervision			

Current Status	Remarks
NEW	Key development areas: Inclusive leadership Team and community development Psychological safety and wellbeing Data-informed development Target 2030: Inclusive leadership, psychological safety and support for wellbeing are integrated into everyday leadership and team practices.

Unselected principles:

The extended version of the reviewed strategy for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers in your organisation over the next three years, including the OTM-R policy, must be published on your organisation's website.
Please provide the link to the dedicated webpage(s) on your organisation's web site. Multiple links must be comma separated. *:

URL *:

https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/123236/ (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/123236/)

Please also indicate how your organisation is working towards / has developed an open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment policy (OTM-R). Although there may be some overlap with the range of actions listed above in the action plan (as they emerged from the gap analysis), please provide a short commentary demonstrating the progress made.

Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles (initial phase)

Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles (internal review for interim assessment)

Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles (internal review for award renewal)

According to our self-assessment based on the OTM-R checklist and toolkit, Aalto University's recruitment and career advancement policies and procedures are well aligned with the principles of open, transparent and merit-based recruitment. Since the previous review, recruitment-related policies, procedures and assessment practices have been further developed in line with the European Charter for Researchers, OTM-R principles, CoARA commitments and responsible research assessment recommendations. Policies and guidance materials are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure transparent, fair, inclusive and merit-based recruitment and career advancement practices across the university.

Please be aware that your OTM-R policy should be embedded into the institutional strategy for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers at the award renewal phase. The extended version of the reviewed strategy for the implementation of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers including the OTM-R policy and actions should be published on your organisation's website.

4. Implementation process

General overview of the implementation process (max. 1000 words)

Development of academic careers and HR Excellence in Research activities are embedded in Aalto University's quality management and continuous improvement processes (PDCA cycle (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/518926)).

The previous HRS4R Action Plan focused on three broad themes: **Attracting Talent**, **Fostering Talent**, and **Digital & Data-driven HR**. In addition, based on the previous audit feedback, specific actions related to **gender balance**, **international faculty support** and **postdoctoral appointment practices** were incorporated into implementation activities.

Attracting Talent: Focus was on strengthening inclusive and international recruitment practices. The use of the internal Talent Search concept was significantly expanded, particularly in recruitment areas where women are underrepresented. Inclusive recruitment practices were strengthened through the use of gender-neutral language in recruitment materials, targeted outreach activities and internal headhunting practices supporting the identification of minority candidates. Training related to unconscious bias and inclusive recruitment practices was provided for supervisors and recruitment committees. In addition, we piloted academic leadership assessments in tenure track recruitments.

Fostering Talent: We developed mentoring, onboarding and integration support for researchers. New mentoring practices included, for example, group mentoring for international female professors. Support for international staff and families was strengthened through spouse support initiatives, networking activities, targeted onboarding measures, Finnish language learning opportunities and open online “Finland Studies” and “Finland Works” courses introducing Finnish society and working life. Aalto University also contributed actively to the national ‘Kielibuusti'collaboration promoting multilingualism and language learning.

Support for tenure track professors and early career researchers was further strengthened through targeted networking and support activities, such as assistant professors’ lunches and networking meetings, mentoring, pedagogical training and guidance supporting preparation for tenure evaluations. The use and implementation of career memorandums was also further developed across schools.

Digital HR & Data-driven HR: We strengthened the systematic use of HR data and feedback processes supporting strategic development and retention. Annual monitoring of professor attrition and exit reasons was established, and new practices for exit interviews are currently being further developed in collaboration with school HR Managers. In addition, a new process was introduced in 2026 for systematically collecting information from tenure track candidates declining recruitment offers in order to better understand recruitment-related challenges and improve attractiveness and recruitment processes.

The additional actions requested in the previous audit were implemented as follows:

Gender balance: See Attracting Talent.

International faculty: Integration support was strengthened through onboarding, language learning opportunities, networking activities, spouse support, multilingual services and renewed university language guidelines.

Postdoctoral appointments: Postdoctoral recruitment and appointment practices were clarified and harmonised through updated university-level policies and procedures.

The previous audit also highlighted the need for **clearer indicators** and **improved visibility of HR Excellence in Research** activities. In response, measurable indicators have been incorporated into the new Action Plan. Link to HR Excellence page has been added to the Careers at Aalto (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/609161) pages, and direct links to the relevant policies, support services and development activities have been incorporated to HR Excellence in research (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/123236) webpage to improve accessibility and visibility of information.

The new HR Excellence Action Plan will continue to focus on strengthening internationalisation, inclusion, sustainable working conditions and data-informed development practices across the university community. For the next strategy period, we propose the following development themes and actions:

1. Integrating and engaging international faculty

Vision 2030: International employees experience a seamless and welcoming end-to-end journey from arrival to full integration into the Aalto community, Finnish working life and society.

Key Actions:

Onboarding and integration

- Provide tailored onboarding and integration support for international researchers and key personnel.
- Strengthen onboarding buddy practices and peer support networks.
- Develop onboarding processes based on onboarding feedback and integration data.

Language and cultural integration

- Ensure access to Finnish language learning opportunities for all international employees.
- Promote Finland Studies and Finland Works learning resources.
- Support multilingual working and learning environments.

Family and dual-career support

- Further develop dual-career support models.
- Strengthen support for spouses and families through collaboration networks and targeted services.

Community engagement and networking

- Support international employees in building professional and social networks within Aalto, Finland and industry.
- Develop support models based on integration data and employee feedback.

2. Enabling inclusive and thriving teams and communities

Vision 2030: Inclusive leadership, psychological safety and support for wellbeing are integrated into everyday leadership and team practices.

Key Actions:

Inclusive leadership

- Integrate inclusive leadership themes into leadership development programmes.
- Develop and disseminate practical tools supporting inclusive leadership and team development.
- Recognise and promote good leadership practices through awards, communication and peer learning.

Team and community development

- Strengthen peer-learning opportunities, grassroots initiatives and community dialogue.

- Support employee resource groups (ERGs) and staff networks.
- Provide targeted support for teams experiencing wellbeing, inclusion or collaboration challenges.

Psychological safety and wellbeing

- Strengthen psychologically safe and respectful working cultures.
- Promote wellbeing and community-building practices across schools and units.
- Increase awareness and utilisation of available wellbeing support services.

Data-informed development

- Use wellbeing survey results and EDI indicators to identify development needs and target interventions.
- Monitor the effectiveness of team and community development actions.

3. Enhancing sustainable work

Vision 2030: Researchers experience sustainable working conditions, supportive leadership and meaningful career development opportunities throughout their careers.

Key Actions:

Sustainable work planning

- Develop and implement sustainable work planning practices across the university.
- Pilot and scale tools supporting workload planning and prioritisation.
- Strengthen managers' and supervisors' capabilities in workload management.

Wellbeing and work ability

- Continue developing practices supporting work ability, recovery and wellbeing.
- Strengthen early support and work ability management practices.

Leadership and supervision

- Strengthen leaders' competencies in supporting sustainable work and diverse teams.
- Continue developing supervision practices and supervisor support.

Data-informed management

- Utilise wellbeing survey data, workload indicators and other people analytics in decision-making.
- Monitor the effectiveness of sustainable work initiatives and continuously improve practices.

While the Action Plan focuses particularly on the actions listed above, we will continue to maintain and further develop existing practices supporting all principles of the European Charter for Researchers through its established policies, processes and continuous improvement activities.

Make sure you also cover all the aspects highlighted in the checklist, which you will need to describe in detail.

Note: Click on each question of the checklist to open the editor.

How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?*

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

The implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan is integrated into Aalto University's established quality management and continuous improvement processes (PDCA cycle (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/518926)).

Overall coordination and monitoring of the Action Plan is carried out by the HR Excellence in Research coordinator in collaboration with Academic Careers Management Team (ACMT) and relevant university services and academic units responsible for implementing the agreed actions. Progress is monitored through the indicators defined for each development theme, including wellbeing survey results, onboarding and integration data, participation data and other relevant HR metrics.

Academic Careers Management Team and Academic Careers Working Group (https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/6831) will continue to contribute to the implementation and monitoring of actions related to researcher careers, recruitment, assessment and academic leadership. In addition, responsibility for individual actions is shared across several university functions, including HR Services, Learning Services, Research Services, Doctoral Education Services, International Mobility Services and the schools.

Progress will be reviewed regularly through existing management and governance structures. Action owners will report on the implementation and outcomes of agreed actions, and the need for corrective or additional measures will be assessed based on feedback, indicator data and changes in the operating environment.

How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?*

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

The implementation of the HRS4R Action Plan will be carried out in close collaboration with researchers, academic leaders, university services and other key stakeholders across the university.

The priorities included in the new Action Plan are based on multiple sources of information, including wellbeing surveys, onboarding feedback, researcher interviews, discussions with the Professors' Council, HR Excellence self-assessment activities and feedback collected through various university networks and development groups. Similar dialogue and feedback mechanisms will continue throughout the implementation period.

Researchers and other members of the university community will be involved through regular wellbeing and onboarding surveys, interviews, workshops, development projects, staff networks and consultation forums. Feedback collected through these channels will be used to identify development needs, evaluate the effectiveness of actions and prioritise future activities.

The Academic Careers Working Group and other university-level development groups will continue to provide important forums for discussion, feedback and co-creation related to researcher careers, recruitment, assessment and working conditions. In addition, the Professors' Council and other representative bodies will contribute to discussions concerning the implementation and further development of the Action Plan.

Many of the planned actions will be implemented in close collaboration between academic units and university services. This enables development activities to be adapted to local needs while maintaining university-level consistency and alignment with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers.

Progress and key developments will be communicated regularly through existing governance structures, staff communications, university webpages, workshops and other engagement activities to ensure transparency and broad awareness across the university community.

How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? Make sure the HRS4R is recognized in the organisation’s research strategy, as the overarching HR policy. *

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

The principles of the European Charter for Researchers are integrated into Aalto University’s strategic development, quality management and people processes. Rather than being implemented as a separate initiative, HR Excellence provides an overarching framework guiding the continuous development of researcher careers, recruitment, assessment, working conditions and competence development across the university.

The implementation of HR Excellence is closely linked to Aalto University’s quality management system and continuous improvement processes (PDCA cycle). HR Excellence principles are reflected in university-level policies, procedures and development programmes related to academic careers, recruitment, responsible research assessment, open science, equality, diversity and inclusion, researcher wellbeing, leadership development and internationalisation.

During the current review period, several university-level policies and practices have been further developed in line with Charter principles, including the implementation of the CoARA Action Plan, updates to recruitment and career policies, strengthened support for international researchers, the renewal of the EDI Plan, developments related to responsible AI use, and new policies addressing responsible internationalisation, research security, export control and sanctions compliance.

Alignment with the Charter principles will continue through the implementation of the new HR Excellence Action Plan and through regular policy reviews, monitoring, stakeholder engagement and continuous development activities across the university.

How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?*

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

The implementation of the HR Excellence Action Plan is supported by Aalto University’s established management, quality assurance and continuous improvement processes. Each development theme includes identified responsibilities, indicators and monitoring mechanisms, which help ensure that actions are translated into practice.

Progress will be monitored regularly through existing governance and management structures using the indicators defined for each development area. Implementation will be supported by annual reviews of progress, analysis of survey and HR data, stakeholder feedback and discussions with relevant university bodies and networks.

The Action Plan follows the university’s PDCA approach, where development actions are planned, implemented, monitored and continuously refined based on evidence and feedback. This enables the university to respond to emerging needs and changes in the operating environment while ensuring that the agreed actions remain relevant and effective throughout the implementation period.

The implementation status and key outcomes will be reviewed regularly and reported through the university’s normal management and decision-making processes.

How will you monitor progress (timeline)?*

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

Progress of the HR Excellence Action Plan will be monitored through Aalto University's established management, quality assurance and strategic planning processes. The Action Plan is aligned with the university's HR strategy and its roadmap-based implementation model, which provides a structured framework for planning, prioritising and reviewing development activities on an annual basis.

Each strategic development theme includes defined indicators and monitoring mechanisms. Progress will be reviewed regularly using wellbeing survey results, onboarding and integration data, participation data and other relevant HR metrics. In addition, feedback from researchers, staff and university stakeholders will be used to complement quantitative monitoring.

The implementation follows the university's continuous improvement approach based on the PDCA cycle (Plan–Do–Check–Act). Development actions are planned and implemented, their outcomes are monitored and evaluated, and further actions are adjusted based on evidence, feedback and changes in the operating environment.

Annual reviews will be used to assess progress against the objectives and indicators of the Action Plan. This enables the university to monitor implementation systematically while maintaining flexibility to respond to emerging needs and priorities throughout the implementation period 2026–2030.

How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?*

Detailed description and justification (max. 500 words)

Progress will be measured using a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators defined for each strategic development theme of the HRS Excellence Action Plan.

For the theme *Integrating and Engaging International Faculty*, progress will be monitored through wellbeing survey results, onboarding experience data, onboarding buddy participation, participation in Finnish language and culture training, integration-related feedback and relevant retention and exit data.

For the theme *Enabling Inclusive and Thriving Teams and Communities*, progress will be monitored through wellbeing survey results, EDI indicators, participation in development activities and feedback related to leadership, inclusion, psychological safety and community experience.

For the theme *Enhancing Sustainable Work*, progress will be monitored through wellbeing survey results, work planning indicators, work ability and workload-related measures, participation in development activities and other relevant HR metrics.

In addition to indicator-based monitoring, progress will be assessed through researcher interviews, onboarding feedback, discussions with representative bodies and other stakeholder feedback channels. The indicators will be reviewed regularly as part of the university's annual planning and review processes to ensure that they remain relevant and support evidence-based decision-making.

The introduction of clearly defined indicators for each development theme directly addresses one of the recommendations from the previous HR Excellence review and strengthens the university's ability to monitor progress and evaluate the impact of development actions.

Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process (max. 1000 words)

How is the next action plan connected to the principles of the updated Charter for Researchers?

Integrating & Engaging International faculty

- **Link to charter principles:** Embracing Diversity; Free Circulation of Researchers; Working Conditions and Practices; Recruitment; Selection; Career Development and Advice; Supervision and Mentoring

Enabling inclusive and thriving teams and communities

- **Link to charter principles:** Gender Equality; Embracing Diversity; Working Conditions and Practices; Career Development and Advice; Continuous Professional Development; Supervision and Mentoring

Enhancing Sustainable Work

- **Link to charter principles:** Working Conditions and Practices; Funding and Salaries; Stability of Employment; Career Development and Advice; Continuous Professional Development; Supervision and Mentoring; Sustainability of Research