# *Promoting* a *sustainable* and *attractive* environment for research and art

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### *HRS4R Strategy* and *Action Plan* for 2019-2021

# Aalto
# *Profile*

- Aalto University was founded in 2010 as a merger of three universities. It is a unique combination of *science*, *art*, *design*, *technology* and *business*.

- Our research and education emphasizes *excellence*, *a multidisciplinary game-changing attitude*, *innovations*, and *an entrepreneurial mind-set*.

- We have improved markedly in international university rankings, especially in field-specific rankings as well as in those comparing young universities.

- Aalto hosts high-level facilities for research, teaching and innovation, including unique nationally significant research infrastructures. Aalto is committed to *balance* and *wellbeing* of its employees. We believe that great results can only come from *healthy and happy employees*.

- For more information, visit our web site (http://www.aalto.fi/).

# *HRS4R-*
# process
# at
# Aalto

- The European Commission's *Human Resources Strategy for Researches (HRS4R)* aims at better employment and working conditions for researchers throughout Europe.

- The main tools in achieving this goal is the implementation of the *European Charter for Researchers* and *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*.

- For more information on HRS4R, visit here: https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/hrs4r.

- Since committed to complying with HRS4R-policies in 2012, Aalto University has gone through the different steps of the HRS4R-process:

  **1** Gap analysis and action plan in 2012.

  **2** Interim assessment in 2015.

  **3** Award renewal in 2019.

- Aalto is the first university in Finland awarded the "*HR Excellence in Research*" -award.

# Aalto *HRS4R Strategy Statement*

- Commitment to HRS4R-policies supports Aalto University in implementing its *people strategy* and achieving the goals set.

- Aalto University aims to offer its employees an *inspiring working environment*, *challenging tasks*, *good working conditions* and *encouraging career systems*.

- Aalto University implements effective people processes that support academic leadership and enable high-quality research and education.

- As an employer, Aalto University invest into *staff well-being*, *competence development*, and the *creation of a well-functioning*, *multicultural community*.

- For more information, visit here: https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/123236.

*Strengths* and *weaknesses* of our current practices

# *Strengths* of ethical and professional aspects

The principles and bodies guiding ethical and professional aspects are well-established, and these issues are brought up in the orientation of the researchers:

- Aalto University is committed to follow the guidelines for ethical principles of research in the humanities and social and behavioural sciences as well as the guidelines for responsible conduct of research, both given by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity.

- Within Aalto University, Research Ethics Committee handles issues concerning research ethics.

- Research Services organises regularly training events and information sessions in research ethics. These trainings cover, for example, research related ethics legislation and instructions, ethically good scientific practices and procedures, research data management, open access publishing, legal issues regarding contracts, commercialization of research results and patenting.

- In addition, Research Services evaluate, develop and transfer research project results and inventions to commercial use in close co-operation with researchers. This service covers for example protecting intellectual property rights and negotiating the license agreements.

- The Aalto Code of Conduct summarizes the principles of fair play and integrity that govern our activities and sets out guidelines for the kind of behavior that we expect of each other. The Code of Conduct applies to every single person at Aalto University: students, employees, members of the Board and companies in which Aalto University has a majority shareholding. All Aalto employees must complete an online course on Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct was welcomed when it was introduced and it is well received among the researchers.

- Furthermore, Aalto has clear shared principles and processes for handling harassment or inappropriate conduct including harassment contact persons (one male and one female).

# *Weaknesses*
## of ethical and professional aspects

- Aalto community is still too hesitant to take action or ask for help when experiencing harassment or inappropriate conduct, although this culture has started changing.

- Researchers' different backgrounds sometimes pose challenges in receiving and understanding a message or, for example, the code of conduct. In general, deeper discussion and explaining our research traditions helps.

- Analytics is not very widely exploited from this point of view.

# *Strengths* of recruitment and selection

- We have established recruitment and advancement policies and procedures for professors' tenure track, lecturers' career and other academic positions. Our policies and procedures in researchers' recruitments are aligned with the Commission's Code of Conduct for the Recruitments of Researches. Our procedures covers also the Charter and Code policies on Recruitment, Selection, Transparency, Judging merit, Variations in the chronological order of CVs, Recognition of mobility experience, Recognition of qualifications and Seniority.

- We develop our academic career systems according to the principles of continuous development (PDCA cycle, Plan-Do-Check-Act). Development of our academic careers are embedded in the Aalto University quality policy and management. For the past few years, we have focused on the further development and fine-tuning of our tenure track policies and procedures.

- In addition to continuous development, the University management annually selects a few larger development themes related to our academic careers. Current development themes are: 1) Improve the attractiveness of Aalto for foreign and female faculty (incl. reducing unconscious biases in recruiting and promotion) and 2) Support the career development of young faculty, with special attention to foreign and female faculty. More information on these development themes in the "Actions"-section.

- We develop and introduce new and innovative HR-policies, procedures and tools. For example, our internal headhunting concept, Aalto Talent Search, works great in identifying, engaging and attracting the best possible candidates. Talent search is also an excellent way to find much-desired qualified female candidates for technical fields. However, Talent Search is never the only recruitment method used, and it does not displace open calls.

- Furthermore, we also develop high-end digital tools that make HR services more visible and easily accessible: currently we are piloting HR-Chat and HR-Bot.

# *Weaknesses*
## of recruitment and selection

- Although the policies and procedures of professors' recruitment and advancement (tenure track) is now well-established and in the stage of continuous development, there are still room for further development of our other academic careers. Especially the post doctoral appointments are in need of clear policies and guidelines that are aligned between schools.

- Female scientists are under-represented especially in technical fields. Increasing diversity among our research personnel is one of our key strategic HR-goals.

- In recent RAI-report, our tenure track system was broadly applauded. However, it was suggested to speed up the professor appointment process to be competitive internationally for the best talent.

- Based on the survey for associate professors, advancement criteria are not entirely clear to all professors on the track. There is clearly need for increasing awareness of the criteria.

- Furthermore, according to RAI-report, communication of the decisions concerning tenure track recruitments and advancements are not clear in all departments.

# *Strengths* of working conditions

Our aim is to be an employer that offers its staff members an inspiring working environment, challenging tasks, good working conditions and encouraging career systems. In particular, we invest into staff well-being, competence development, and the creation of a well-functioning, multicultural community. In Finland, employee rights are regulated comprehensively by national legislation, but we also apply a number of our own policies and practices to ensure a good working environment and conditions for our researchers:

- Our Code of Conduct (see the link above) summarises the principles of fair play and integrity that govern our activities and sets out guidelines for the kind of behaviour that we expect of each other.

- We have established principles for mobile work and flexible working hours as we believe they promotes employee welfare.

- As regards health and safety in research, we comply with national legislation, i.e. the Act on Occupational Safety and Health Enforcement and Cooperation on Occupational Safety and Health at Workplaces (No 44/2006), the Occupational Safety and Health Act (No 738/2002) and the Agreement on Cooperation on Occupational Safety and Health (1.10.2012). Occupational safety involves continuous monitoring and development of the work environment. Its aim is to support the personnel's working ability, physical, psychological and social well-being, and eliminate hazards associated with the working conditions. Occupational safety, human resources, and occupational health care work together to monitor and develop Aalto's common operating methods and guidelines, which subsequently make it possible to increase well-being at work among work communities and employees.

# *Strengths* of working conditions

- All our researchers in different career stages are covered by one of our commonly agreed pay system, which are aligned with existing national legislation as well as national or local collective bargaining agreement.

- Aalto University recognizes, and in some cases even demands, the value of mobility as an important means of enhancing scientific knowledge and professional development. For example, professors to be tenured are required to work outside Aalto preferably at least 6-12 months. However, the principles may somewhat vary between schools, and therefore the guidelines will be refined during the autumn 2019.

- We offer a wide variety of training and development solutions for personal and professional growth at each stage of researcher's career. These include, for example, language and multicultural training, pedagogical, leadership, safety and communications training as well as training for IT and digital tools in research. In addition, we offer training for self-support and career planning, including mentoring and coaching. All researchers are also offered support for career planning.

- Our Research and Innovation Services support researchers at all career stages throughout the whole research project, including legal protection on R&D as well as intellectual property rights. We have clear instructions on what rights belong to researchers and/or their employers or other parties.

- Researchers are widely represented in the relevant information, consultation and decision-making bodies. Participation in different kind of committees and administrative bodies is a prerequisite for academic career advancement.

# *Weaknesses*
## of working conditions

- Although we strive to improve the stability of employment conditions for our researchers as far as possible, it is still a common fact that the majority of the early stage researchers works under a fixed-term contract. This is due the fact that they are pursuing a university career, and their task is to acquire the qualifications required for transfer to the next phase of the career within a prescribed time. Although this is a common practice in universities, fixed-term contracts may cause uncertainty.

- Foreign faculty and their spouses need more support to adapt to Finnish society.

- Even though we already offer mentoring to all our research staff, there is more demand for it. Mentoring possibilities especially for PhD students, post docs, untenured professors and international staff should be increased.

- Supervisors (especially department heads) should provide more coaching and mid-term evaluation for untenured Tenure Track faculty (assistant professors).

# *Strengths* of training and development

- We strongly believe that highly competent and motivated people who are committed to the university's objectives form the foundation of our success. Thus, we actively support the career and competence development of our staff by offering different solutions for personal and professional growth at each stage of researcher's career. Few examples of our training solutions are mentioned above.

- The competence development at Aalto is based on the 70/20/10 model: 70% of learning takes place on the job, in other words learning through experience and self-reflection, for instance, gaining more responsibility, handling projects or job rotation; 20% is learning from others, for example through feedback, mentoring, coaching and team and pair work; and 10% is learning in formal settings, such as on courses, seminars or using self-study materials.

- We offer to all our new supervisors the "New Leaders' Onboarding Journey" as well as further training for the advanced supervisors: 1) Providing direction and leading operations, 2) Leading and engaging people, and 3) Collaboration towards excellence.

- We provide an "Aalto Academic Leader Programme" to Assistant and Associate professors. The Programme aims at 1) supporting the academic leaders in growing as thought-leaders across the university's borders, 2) vision together the future for universities, research and teaching, 3) strengthen participants' skills in leadership and university management, 4) strengthen participants' self-awareness and increase the understanding of their own leadership and influencing style, and 5) providing time and space for reflection and sharing and thus create a strong network among the participants.

- Furthermore, we provide also training for Doctoral Dissertation Supervisors.

# *Weaknesses* of training and development

- Although we offer a wide range of training and development solutions, there seems to be some difficulty in visibility of the available solutions. Despite extensive advertising and marketing, not all researchers are aware of the existing training and development possibilities.

# Action plan
## for
## 2019-2021

| Actions | GAP Principle(s) | Targets | Timing | Current Status | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dissemination of good research practices<br><br>Development of research community and working environment that supports co-operation | 1. Research freedom<br>3. Professional responsibility<br>4. Professional attitude<br>5. Contractual and legal obligations<br>6. Accountability<br>7. Good practice in research<br>8. Dissemination, exploitation of results<br>9. Public engagement<br>22. Recognition of the profession<br>23. Research environment<br>39. Access to research training and continuous development | Continuation of introduced discussion forums, workshops and networking events. Emphasis on orientation processes and Faculty Club | During academic years 2012-2013 2013-2014 2014–2015 2015-2016 | 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. |
| Clarification of the principles and criteria for academic recruitments | 12. Recruitment<br>13. Recruitment (Code)<br>14. Selection (Code)<br>15. Transparency (Code)<br>16. Judging merit (Code)<br>17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)<br>18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)<br>19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)<br>20. Seniority (Code) | Emphasis on the communication of transparent recruitment criteria and recruitment processes | During academic years 2012-2013 2013-2014 2014–2015 2015-2016 | EXTENDED | Principles and criteria are well-established for tenure track professors, but the development work is still ongoing for lectures career system and other academic careers. |

| Actions | GAP Principle(s) | Targets | Timing | Current Status | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Development of the Aalto academic career systems and recruitment criteria for different academic positions | 12. Recruitment<br>13. Recruitment (Code)<br>14. Selection (Code)<br>15. Transparency (Code)<br>16. Judging merit (Code)<br>17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)<br>18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)<br>19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)<br>20. Seniority (Code)<br>21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code) | Implementation of attractive, clear, transparent and predictable career systems. Support for personal development for all academic career paths. | Implementation ongoing 2013 -> Development actions 2014-2015 Review and follow-up 2015-2016 | EXTENDED | Career system and recruitment criteria are well-established for tenure track professors, but the development work is still ongoing for lectures career system and other academic careers. |
| Development of the integration of the international faculty | 23. Research environment | Focus on departmental and school level integration. Continuous development on other areas | 2012 -> Actions 2014-2015, 2015-2016 | COMPLETED | |

| Actions | GAP Principle(s) | Targets | Timing | Current Status | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Improvement of the solutions and support for well-being at work | 1. Research freedom<br>2. Ethical principles<br>3. Professional responsibility<br>4. Professional attitude<br>5. Contractual and legal obligations<br>6. Accountability<br>7. Good practice in research<br>10. Non discrimination<br>11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems<br>24. Working conditions<br>25. Stability and permanence of employment<br>26. Funding and salaries<br>27. Gender balance<br>28. Career development<br>29. Value of mobility<br>30. Access to career advice<br>31. Intellectual Property Rights<br>32. Co-authorship<br>33. Teaching<br>34. Complains/ appeals<br>35. Participation in decision-making bodies<br>36. Relation with supervisors<br>37. Supervision and managerial duties<br>38. Continuing Professional Development<br>39. Access to research training and continuous development<br>40. Supervision | Development of supporting tools for all areas of well-being: Work and leadership, motivation, competences, health | During academic years 2012-2013 2013-2014 2014-2015 2015-2016 | COMPLETED | In a state of continuous development based on our quality work. |

| Actions | GAP Principle(s) | Targets | Timing | Current Status | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Support for the academic faculty in career planning | 28. Career development 37. Supervision and managerial duties 38. Continuing Professional Development 39. Access to research training and continuous development 40. Supervision | Systematic career coaching services available, continuous development of services | First groups during 2012, since that continuous offering and development | COMPLETED | In a state of continuous development based on our quality work. |
| Clarification of decision making bodies and processes | 35. Participation in decision-making bodies 37. Supervision and managerial duties 38. Continuing Professional Development 40. Supervision | Evaluation of matrix leadership: clarifying the management system, decision making and preparation processes | During academic years 2012-2013 2014-2015 2015-2016 | COMPLETED | |
| Development of doctoral programmes (e.g. curriculum, supervision) | 40. Supervision | Development of the doctoral programmes | Renewal process during 2012-2013 2013-2014 2014-2015 2015-2016 | COMPLETED | |

| Actions | GAP Principle(s) | Targets | Timing | Current Status | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Improve the attractiveness of Aalto for foreign and female faculty | 10. Non discrimination<br>12. Recruitment<br>13. Recruitment (Code)<br>14. Selection (Code)<br>15. Transparency (Code)<br>16. Judging merit (Code)<br>17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)<br>18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)<br>19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)<br>20. Seniority (Code)<br>23. Research environment<br>24. Working conditions<br>27. Gender balance | Improve candidate sourcing methods to attract underrepresented candidate segments Improving candidate evaluation tools and practices to support equality and to tackle unconscious biases. Improving position marketing, candidate communications and employer branding activities to support diversity. Building awareness of unconscious biases in recruitment situations. Setting KPI's and monitoring development of diversity statistics in recruitments more thoroughly. | 4/2020 | NEW | |
| Support the career development of young faculty, with special attention to foreign and female faculty | 10. Non discrimination<br>27. Gender balance<br>28. Career development<br>30. Access to career advice<br>38. Continuing Professional Development<br>39. Access to research training and continuous development | PhD student onboarding model (LES) and competence development package (HRS, RIS, LES). PhD career coaching and mentoring. Professor onboarding model (HRS) and competence development package (HRS, RIS, LES); onboarding mentoring for professors. Female faculty mentoring. Group mentoring for assistant professors to support their career development. | 4/2020 | NEW | |

# *Development* of our HR Processes

# *Development* of the academic career systems

- Development of the academic career systems is part of the Aalto University quality system. The annual clock for academic career development is linked to the Aalto University's annual clock. The development work is based on annual reviews and the view of Management on the required development measures. Furthermore, the view of the Academic Careers Working Group has an important role in the making of decisions on development actions.

- Development of the academic career systems is prepared and implemented by the Provost and the Chief Human Resources Officer. The President of the University decides on the development measures to be taken. When implementing development measures, the various parties are consulted and feedback is actively collected. The deans make decisions on matters involving the academic career systems that are specific to the individual schools..

- Feedback is systematically collected in many different ways. For example:
  - statistical information
  - development workshops
  - regular meetings with the Academic Careers Working Group
  - interviews and discussions with the key tenure track actors
  - feedback from applicants and those advancing on their career paths
  - feedback from other stakeholders of key importance for the career system

- Statistical information and feedback are used to align the implementation of the academic career systems in the Aalto University schools. Further, information is collected to make it possible to compare the Aalto academic career system with national and international practices. Different actors are brought into the development processes through seminars, visits, and workshops.

- Information on the development processes of the career system is communicated in accordance with roles and responsibilities so that all actors are aware of the direction and measures of development. If necessary, seminars and workshops will be arranged for passing on information - for example by holding HR workshops to ensure the spread of best practices.

# *Further* readings

# Important *Links*

## University management

- University strategy:
https://www.aalto.fi/node/6036

- Annual clock for university management:
https://www.aalto.fi/node/8041

- Assessment and development:
https://www.aalto.fi/node/8061

## Operating principles

- Code of Conduct:
https://www.aalto.fi/node/5926

- Quality: https://www.aalto.fi/node/8066

- Equality and equal opportunity:
https://www.aalto.fi/node/6881

## Academic Career Systems

- Tenure Track:
https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/6236

- Lecturers' Track:
https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/30471

- Other academic positions:
https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/4711

## Competence Development

- Objective discussions:
https://www.aalto.fi/node/4326

- Competence and career plan:
https://www.aalto.fi/node/4776

- Coaching and guidance of work:
https://www.aalto.fi/node/4356

- Staff mentoring programme:
https://www.aalto.fi/node/4366

- Training possibilities:
https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/11481

## Other useful links:

- Finnish National Board on research integrity: https://www.tenk.fi/en/tenk-guidelines and
https://www.tenk.fi/en/statements

- Aalto University Research Ethics Committee:
https://www.aalto.fi/en/node/11326