

# EURAXESS

## Internal Review

**Case number**

2020SE526196

**Name Organisation under review**

University of Skövde

**Organisation's contact details**

Högskolevägen, Skövde, Västra Götaland, SE - 541 28, Sweden

**Submission date to the European Commission**

19/10/2023

### 1. Organisational Information

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

<b>STAFF &amp; STUDENTS</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research *	250
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality) *	47
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation) *	49
Of whom are women *	97
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor. *	40
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level *	18
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level *	30
Total number of students (if relevant) *	4200
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff) *	540
<b>RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)</b>	<b>€</b>
Total annual organisational budget	12697009
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	6264410
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	2903356
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	3529242
<b>ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)</b>	

The University of Skövde, established in 1977, is a modern and welcoming university with first-class education and internationally competitive research. It offers both Bachelor's and Master's studies in Informatics, Game Development, Business and Economics, Engineering science, Bioscience, Health Sciences, and Behavioural Studies. In 2022, the university had 10 300 students in 35 undergraduate and 24 graduate programmes.

Research is conducted within five fields: Informatics, Systems Biology, Virtual Engineering, Digital Health Research, and Enterprises for the Future. The research is conducted in close collaboration with the local community and businesses, aiming to make a difference locally, nationally and internationally.

## 2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Please review the strengths and weaknesses under the 4 thematic areas of the Charter and Code, 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 Charter & Code to open the editor and provide your answers in the Internal Review for Interim Assessment dedicated section.

### Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)

HS is one of a relatively small number of Swedish state universities, which are governed by widely encompassing governmental legislation that is required to be followed and is checked by external auditors. Together with further legislation covering research ethics and requirements on the workplace means that the university has strong ethical and professional attitudes.

In spite of the national legislation, practical local implementation often requires fine tuning of processes and practices.

It is essential that updated steering and information documents at HS covering ethical and professional aspects are easily available online, additionally in English, and that researchers know where to find such information. This is not always the case at present and needs to be rectified.

#### *Research freedom*

While research freedom has always been a pillar of Swedish research legislation, much of today's research is externally funded, and often in collaboration with industry. Due to contractual reasons, this can limit the freedom to conduct research and to publish freely.

#### *Ethical principles*

Stringent national legislation regarding human ethics research is overseen by a recently reorganised national authority. There is a separate agency that handles animal research ethics.

Although HS has a Research Ethics Council, information on ethics in research and the processes around ethical permissions needs to be more widely disseminated, particularly to new incoming/international researchers. At the same time, a Management and Staff Policy needs to be published.

#### *Professional responsibility and Professional Attitude*

The Swedish Higher Education Act and The Administrative Procedure Act place strict demands on Swedish universities for how teaching and research are conducted as well as financial reporting. The Swedish Higher Education Authority is responsible for regularly following up how universities live up to standards of education and research. The Swedish National Audit Office oversees financial reporting and compliance.

Better information regarding such matters at HS could well improve the local understanding of the review processes. Information should be provided on the university's intranet and in the abovementioned Management and Staff Policy.

#### *Contractual and legal obligations*

While the managers of projects may be well aware of the significance of research contracts, junior researchers (R1-R2) are seldom made aware of the importance of contract compliance. This needs to be addressed.

GDPR has been a problematic area for most researchers and further training in GDPR needs to be offered, as does training to better understand the law of public procurement and intellectual property rights.

#### *Accountability; Good practice in research*

Results from research financed by public funds, both Swedish and international, belong in the public domain. The strong Swedish legislation on the right to access official documents is key in this aspect even though the extent of the legislation is not fully understood by researchers. Open Access

publication is usually included in research financing contracts and Open Data is steadily becoming the norm. Furthermore, HS applies the Open Source model of decentralised software development. In these “open” approaches, HS, like other Swedish universities, is compliant.

Good practice in research is a far-reaching concept and is largely covered by Swedish legislation that HS is required to follow. However, there are some areas that need improvement as stated in the Action Plan.

Understanding of the importance of safe and secure data storage is high among researchers but is not always followed in practice. The need for a GDPR-compliant, convenient and universally used data storage system is a priority for HS.

#### *Dissemination, exploitation of results; Public engagement*

Dissemination of research results is now often a contractual requirement from research financing bodies, as is the exploitation of results. Dissemination is a wide ranging concept, from publishing in journals to providing information to the general public. HS has the infrastructure to fulfil these requirements, but improvements can always be made. The effect that dissemination can have on future IPR needs to be more widely understood among researchers.

The concept of public engagement in and about research is well understood among researchers at HS. Public information activities are often regarded as an enjoyable and rewarding activity. HS needs to find better ways of allowing time for such activities and awarding merits for involvement.

#### *Non-discrimination*

Non-discrimination is covered by a number of legislations, not least the National Discrimination Act. Gender equality is also strongly rooted in education. While there is some fine-tuning that HS needs to undertake, as shown in the Gap Analysis, this is an area at HS that does not require immediate attention.

#### *Evaluation/appraisal systems*

This is an area that is not clearly legally regulated; much is left up to the individual universities. Annual employee evaluations at HS can be one valuable tool in career planning and gaining feedback. Although such evaluations are standardised, and indeed required at the doctoral student level (R1), they are not always as useful at other researcher levels (R2-R4), which is something that needs to be considered.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)**

#### *General comments*

One of the original weaknesses identified was the lack of texts and webpages in English. This has been significantly improved but is still a work in progress.

The translation of any necessary governing documents (<https://www.his.se/en/about-us/facts-and-figures/governing-documents/>) is being carried out in conjunction with updates to said documents.

The planned manual for incoming staff/researchers instead became a development of the Researcher Portal on the HS internal website, providing links to all necessary information. This solution allows immediate updates of changes.

General ethical information is available through the website of The Research Ethics Council (<https://www.his.se/en/about-us/facts-and-figures/organisation/namnder-rad-och-andra-organ/the-research-ethics-council/>) as well as the Researcher Portal. Knowledge of the existence of the Researcher Portal needs to be improved.

### *Research freedom*

HS continues to monitor contracts with commercial partners to ensure that freedom of research is not compromised.

### *Ethical principles*

The Research Ethics Council (<https://www.his.se/en/about-us/facts-and-figures/organisation/namnder-rad-och-andra-organ/the-research-ethics-council/>) (FER) at HS, also reached through the Researcher Portal, provides information on ethics in research. FER has initiated new policies and modified existing ones. However, FER's activities and outreach needs to be further improved.

### *Professional responsibility and Professional Attitude*

The development of a Management and Staff Policy in Action 5 is delayed due to factors described under Remarks. Action 10 regarding administrative training has similarly been delayed although a prototype course is currently being tested.

The Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) regularly follows up how universities live up to standards of education and research. Their findings (<https://www.his.se/nyheter/2022/januari/uka-ger-hogskolan-godkant-pa-fem-av-sex-omraden/>) and required improvements must be implemented within a specific timeframe.

### *Contractual and legal obligations*

A new updated checklist for contracts for externally funded projects will soon be available on the Researcher Portal. In a recent internal survey, nearly three-quarters of researchers said that they had discussed contractual and legal obligations in their research groups. While this is positive, it should be a higher percentage.

GDPR was identified as an area to be improved. Action 12 is extended because a new Information Security Coordinator is being recruited, the role of Data Protection Officer has been appointed through an external party.

An IPR policy and structured support are being developed. See Remarks for explanation of delays.

### *Accountability; Good practice in research*

HS needs to upgrade its IT infrastructure to meet increased requirements for data management and storage. Management has recently approved plans for significant changes

### *Dissemination, exploitation of results; Public engagement*

The concept of public engagement is well understood among researchers at HS though time is generally a restricting factor. HS is actively involved in the European Researchers' Night. The use of LinkedIn is encouraged, with instructions available on the Researcher Portal. A Media Training programme is being developed

### *Non-discrimination*

As an employer, HS is required to take active measures to prevent discrimination based on the Swedish Discrimination act. HS also has an action plan (<https://www.his.se/en/about-us/facts-and-figures/quality-assurance-system/gender-equality/>) for gender equality.

#### *Evaluation/appraisal systems*

HS has an Action to develop a better individual researcher appraisal system covering both research and career development. As planned, this has not yet been started.

#### **Remarks (max 500 words)**

##### *Management changes*

Since the application for the HR Excellence in Research award in 2021, the university has appointed a new vice-chancellor and a new university director. Even some heads of schools and directors of support units have changed. Towards the end of their tenures, the outgoing leadership was cautious in making decisions that would have a significant impact on the future, considering the incoming leadership. Recruitment processes typically take longer for this type of personnel category, hence there was a delay before they were in place. As is customary, it has taken some time for the new persons to familiarise themselves with the strategic work at the university. Therefore, a significant portion of the strategic work at the university has been impeded due to a change in top leadership.

##### *IT*

The university has diversified operations and consequently, varying IT needs. Following a comprehensive review of our IT infrastructure, it has become evident that the university requires significant upgrades on multiple levels. This coincided with an extended process of recruiting a new IT director, meaning that we have significant investments and work ahead concerning our IT infrastructure.

##### *Portal*

The development of the Researcher Portal has offered a significant improvement for information dissemination to researchers. However, we are aware that the portal is located within the intranet. Steps are being taken to move the portal to the external website, while ensuring necessary information integrity.

##### *Conclusions*

With all these changes in place, we see momentum building in the university's development work. With new leadership from various other organisations and even industries, we can expect an abundance of fresh insights that the organisation can embrace and benefit from. In summary, much has been accomplished, and we look optimistically towards the future of the development work at the university, which will also impact our work with the Charter & Code.

**Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)***Recruitment; Recruitment (Code); Selection (Code)*

Recruitment and selection are governed by national legislation and thereby guided in many respects. Furthermore, internal steering documents describe how the processes should be carried out and unions follow the processes to ensure that they are implemented as required. Labour law in Sweden is strong and strict. In particular, doctoral students at HS are given employment contracts and are not funded by stipends. HS has steering documents that cover recruitment and selection. However, there are a number of improvements that HS needs to make in terms providing English language steering documents and explanations of Swedish legislation. Some of the advertising processes are not as transparent as they should be, with the occasional use of customised adverts (aimed at a specific person). Additionally, Euraxess is not universally used for advertising open positions.

Similarly, with selection, in spite of national legislation, some of the local processes are not sufficiently transparent and it is not obvious to international applicants how the Swedish process works and why it takes a long time. Ways of streamlining the process need to be investigated.

*Transparency (Code); Judging merit (Code); Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code); Recognition of mobility experience (Code); Recognition of qualifications (Code); Seniority (Code)*

The *Reach Mee* web-based recruitment system used by HS allows easy feedback to applicants and Swedish legislation allows access to recruitment decisions. However, even though Transparency in the Gap Analysis did not reveal any gaps *per se*, it was felt that there were some areas for improvement.

The Public Employment Act specifies how merit should be judged. This works well for Nordic applicants, but during discussions in one of the Gap Analysis focus groups, it was felt that HS sometimes lacks the competence and processes for assessing merits, particularly for applicants outside of Europe.

Variations in CV structure are not an issue and time gaps in CVs are acceptable as long as there is an acceptable explanation.

Mobility is of course a positive feature of job applicants and is taken positively into account.

The Appointments Procedure at HS gives clear criteria on the assessments of qualifications. Better written guidelines and processes are necessary for applicants from outside of Sweden.

Seniority is governed by national legislation against age discrimination and the normal retirement age is 65, although this is set to rise soon. HS has guidelines for Professor Emeritus/Emerita status after retirement.

*Postdoctoral appointments (Code)*

National legislation in the form of the Employment Protection Act and a Collective Agreement for Post-doc positions govern the terms for post-docs. The latter applies primarily to post-docs carrying out research and who are only allowed to teach a maximum of 20% of their time.

Post-doc appointments are also regulated in the HS Appointments Procedure.



The current system at HS is not regarded as having any significant weaknesses.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)**

#### *Recruitment; Recruitment (Code); Selection (Code)*

Recruitment and selection are governed by national legislation. Labour law in Sweden is strong and strict.

The translation of steering documents into English with publication on the HS website is proceeding as described earlier. Additionally, Euraxess is still not universally used for advertising open positions. This will be rectified.

The “merit-based recruitment” process has been improved. A new reference management system has been implemented. Refapp (<https://www.refapp.com/>) helps with professional, and secure reference checking, increasing the validity and GDPR compliance of reference checks in recruitment processes. The information is encrypted and provides an even more structured and objective overview of candidates.

Similarly, with selection, the local processes are updated and sufficiently transparent. The recruitment process (<https://www.his.se/en/about-us/job-opportunities/our-recruitment-process/>) is now described and provided to international applicants as well.

#### *Transparency (Code); Judging merit (Code); Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code); Recognition of mobility experience (Code); Recognition of qualifications (Code); Seniority (Code)*

The *ReachMee* web-based recruitment system continues to be successfully used by HS. The Public Employment Act specifies how merit should be judged. This works well for Nordic applicants and for the assessment of international candidates.

The Appointments Procedure at HS gives clear criteria on the assessment of qualifications. The latest version (<https://www.his.se/mot-hogskolan/sa-har-fungerar-hogskolan/styrdokument/>) was published in June 2022, but currently only in Swedish. This weakness will be addressed in 2024 with an updated version, also in English, aligned with new national agreements and regulations.

Seniority is governed by national legislation against age discrimination, which is a part of Swedish anti-discrimination legislation. HS has guidelines for Professor Emeritus/Emerita status after retirement.

#### *Postdoctoral appointments (Code)*

A new national agreement ([https://www.arbetsgivarverket.se/globalassets/avtal-och-skrifter/avtal/avtal-om-tidsbegransad-anstallning-som-postdoktor/avtal-om-tidsbegransad-anstallning-som-postdoktor-2021-11-19\\_en.pdf](https://www.arbetsgivarverket.se/globalassets/avtal-och-skrifter/avtal/avtal-om-tidsbegransad-anstallning-som-postdoktor/avtal-om-tidsbegransad-anstallning-som-postdoktor-2021-11-19_en.pdf)) for postdoctoral researchers took effect in 2022 and has been incorporated into HS's updated employment regulations. New rules for fixed-term employment, known as SÅVA (<https://www.arbetsgivarverket.se/arbetsgivarguiden/tidsbegransade-anstallningar/>) (link in Swedish), were introduced at the national level in 2022. This

was done to strengthen job security for individuals, and, above all, to limit the possibility of stacking consecutive employment periods in accordance with clause 5 of Directive 1999/70/EC. This new regulatory framework does not significantly impact researchers but rather restricts the ability of support functions at HS to bring in additional personnel during peak periods when there is a high workload.

**Remarks (max 500 words)**

*Note regarding HS employees*

HS employees are part-time researchers and part-time teachers. This limits possibilities for international recruitments as the vast majority of all undergraduate courses are held in Swedish.

**Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)**

Working conditions and social security are very strictly governed by Swedish legislation, including mandatory holiday allowances, parental leave, sick leave, and pension payments by employers. HS follows these regulations, often offering even more generous conditions. Doctoral students are employed on work contracts and are not funded by stipends.

*Recognition of the profession*

Researchers in Sweden inspire a high degree of public confidence and are frequently consulted and quoted by national and local media. HS actively promotes the role of researchers in the local community.

*Research environment; Working conditions*

The research environment and working conditions are strictly governed in Sweden. During the Gap Analysis consultations, HS researchers regarded working conditions as good and regular assessments are carried out. As regards research environment, some weaknesses were identified in terms of equipment utilisation, research support, new routines and processes etc. These are addressed in the Action Plan.

*Stability and permanence of employment; Funding and salaries*

There is significant Swedish legislation covering temporary and permanent employment, which HS follows. HS also has its own regulations, but these need to be better clarified for R1 researchers.

Much of the research funding at HS comes from external sources but salaries are still governed by national collective agreements and internal guidelines, as well as by individual negotiations. These are usually carried out at the beginning of the employment and then on an annual basis. Although Swedish universities cannot compete with commercial salaries, the salary levels at HS were regarded as acceptable in the focus group analyses.

*Gender balance*

Gender balance is governed by national legislation. HS generally has an acceptable gender balance except at R4 where only 28% of professors are female. This is a nationally addressed problem that is improving with time and HS will strive to make its own improvements.

*Career development; Access to career advice; Value of mobility*

Career development is not nationally legislated. Many smaller universities do not have the capacity to keep their doctoral students after dissertation. HS does not have any particularly clear processes for career development, which will be addressed.

Additional complementary training courses and mentorship programmes at HS will enable R1 and R2 researchers to develop a competitive edge in their research careers.

Career advice at HS is not organised and tends to be decentralised and *ad hoc*, depending on the researcher's and supervisor's contact networks. Small universities like HS cannot afford a centralised career development unit but by collaborating with other universities and national facilities, it is possible to provide more organised career advice. This is addressed in the action plan.

Mobility is positive, but lack of mobility must take into account the individual's prerequisites. HS will improve information on mobility, including interdisciplinary and intersectoral, as part of career advice.

#### *Intellectual Property Rights*

In Sweden, individual researchers normally own the rights to their research. However, in industry-funded research there may be restrictions. Increasingly, research results are expected to be utilised and it is important that researchers understand IPR. While there is some national IPR legislation, HS needs its own IPR policy and offer more structured IPR information to researchers.

#### *Co-authorship*

There is no national co-authorship legislation but rather some central guidelines from the Association of Swedish Higher Education. International guidelines and initiatives are often followed. Furthermore, many journals now have requirements for co-authorship. HS has an internal policy regarding co-authorship taking into account international guidelines.

#### *Teaching*

Doctoral students (R1) in Sweden are normally expected to teach a maximum of 20% of their time. R2 researchers at HS usually have less than 5% teaching. For R3-R4 researchers, the amount of teaching is variable but is very seldom less than 20%. It is unusual, particularly in small universities, that a researcher can devote all their time to research. It is important, particularly for R1 researchers, that teaching is not too burdensome. Furthermore, incoming international researchers who are cannot speak Swedish can only teach courses held in English. HS needs to have better regulation of the actual amount of teaching that researchers are expected to carry out. More frequent courses in pedagogics are necessary.

#### *Complaints/appeals*

There are a number of national legislations covering complaints and appeals processes. It became apparent during the Gap Analysis discussions that these processes are not optimal at HS. This needs to be investigated and improved, not least in the form of information available to researchers and improving transparency.

#### *Participation in decision-making bodies*

All researchers are free to become involved in decision-making bodies at HS, at any level, although this can be a problem for non-Swedish speakers. While not a high priority, HS should look at the possibility of a more general involvement of international researchers in decision-making bodies.

A number of essential documents regarding working conditions must be made easily available online, additionally in English.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)**

#### *Research environment; Working conditions*

HS researchers regard working conditions as good and regular assessments are carried out. Some weaknesses were identified in the original Gap Analysis. They were updated following a recent survey and are addressed in the new Action Plan.

#### *Stability and permanence of employment; Funding and salaries*

There is significant Swedish legislation covering temporary and permanent employment. HS also has additional regulations, which have been clarified for R1 researchers (<https://www.his.se/en/research/doktorandhandbok/regulations-forms-and-templates/>). The salary levels at HS were regarded as acceptable in the original focus group analyses.

### Gender balance

The aim for gender balance is governed by national legislation. At R4, 28% of professors are female at HS, which has not changed in the past 2 years. This is a nationally addressed problem that is improving with time. However, in some parts of the university's activities, the gender balance is unbalanced, in both directions. This is often due to the nature of the subject (e.g. nursing).

### *Career development; Access to career advice; Value of mobility*

Career advice at HS is not organised and tends to be decentralised and *ad hoc*, depending on the researcher's and supervisor's contact networks. Action 16 investigates possible solutions to this problem. A career mentor programme for R2, including mentors from different universities, has been recently implemented.

Complementary training courses and mentorship programmes at HS will enable R1 and R2 researchers to develop a competitive edge in their research careers.

Mobility is positive, but lack of mobility must take into account the individual's situation. HS will improve information on mobility, including interdisciplinary and intersectoral, as part of career advice programmes.

### *Intellectual Property Rights*

In Sweden, individual researchers normally own the rights to their research. However, in industry-funded research, there may be restrictions. Increasingly, research results are expected to be utilised and it is important that researchers understand IPR. While there is some national IPR legislation, HS still needs to formalise its own IPR policy. HS is now offering more structured IPR information to researchers.

### *Co-authorship*

HS has an internal policy regarding co-authorship (<https://www.his.se/globalassets/styrdokument/forskning/riktlinjer-for-vetenskapligt-forfattarskap.pdf>) taking into account international guidelines.

### *Teaching*

Most researchers at HS do a significant amount of teaching, in line with their contracts. Information about rights and duties related to teaching has been clarified but HS needs to continue overseeing and following up work load.

### *Complaints/appeals*

There are a number of national legislations covering complaints and appeals processes. The Gap Analysis discussions indicated that these processes were not optimal at HS. This has been improved, not least in the form of information available to researchers and improving transparency. There is an anonymous whistleblowing function (<https://www.his.se/mot-hogskolan/sa-har-fungerar-hogskolan/visselblasning/>) (currently only in Swedish) for university staff. The complaints' procedure (<https://www.his.se/en/research/doktorandhandbok/complaints/>) for R1 researchers has been published.

### *Participation in decision-making bodies*

All researchers are free to stand for election to decision-making bodies at HS, although this can be a problem for non-Swedish speakers.

**Remarks (max 500 words)**





### **Strengths and Weaknesses (Initial Phase)**

Even though training and development at HS are generally regarded as good, improvements must be continuously implemented, not least to follow any new legislation and internal requirements.

It is essential that updated steering and information documents covering all aspects of training and development are easily available online, additionally in English, and that researchers know where to find such information. This is not always the case at present and needs to be rectified.

#### *Relation with supervisors; Supervision and managerial duties; Supervision*

The Swedish Higher Education Ordinance stipulates the number and role of supervisors for R1 researchers. However, the Gap Analysis revealed that the supervisory burden for R3 and R4 researchers in supervising R1 researchers is often greater than the time that is normally allocated for such tasks. This is suboptimal for both the supervisor and the supervisee. Steps need to be taken to ensure that the supervisory tasks are in proportion to the time available and that individual supervisors are not overloaded. Improvements also need to include updated and improved training of supervisors and the publication and implementation of an aforementioned Management and Staff Policy.

#### *Continuing Professional Development; Access to research training and continuous development*

Such training and Development cannot be separated from career development, which has been covered above.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses (Interim Assessment)**

Training and development opportunities at HS are generally regarded as good, with improvements being continuously implemented. Updated steering and information documents in English covering all aspects of training and development are now available online (see Supervision and follow-up in doctoral studies (<https://www.his.se/globalassets/styrdokument/utbildning-forskarniva/eng-guidelines-supervision-doctoral-studies.pdf>)).

#### *Relation with supervisors; Supervision and managerial duties; Supervision*

The Swedish Higher Education Ordinance stipulates the number and role of supervisors for R1 researchers. However, the Gap Analysis revealed that the supervisory burden for R3 and R4 researchers in supervising R1 researchers is often greater than the time that is normally allocated for such tasks. This is suboptimal for both the supervisor and the supervisee. Steps still need to be taken ensure that the supervisory tasks are in proportion to the time available and that individual supervisors are not overloaded. Improvements also need to include the publication and implementation of an aforementioned Management policy. One successful improvement is the introduction of a regular seminar series for PhD supervisors.

#### *Continuing Professional Development; Access to research training and continuous development*

Such training and development cannot be separated from career development, which has also been covered above.

A recent survey indicated that courses that researchers wish included research methodology (wide ranging), project initiation, grant writing, pedagogics and communication. We are addressing project initiation and grant writing as part of the new Action 22.

**Remarks (max 500 words)**

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

The priorities for the short and medium term have not changed significantly

**Have any of the circumstances in which your organisation operates, changed and as such have had an impact on your HR strategy? (max 500 words)**

The recent changes in the circumstances under which our organisation operates have significantly impacted our HR strategy, with substantial modifications in several key areas.

Firstly, the introduction of the new employee appraisal document in 2023 marks a shift towards openness and flexibility. By allowing managers and employees the freedom to define discussion topics during these meetings, we aim to create a more adaptable and individually strategy for employee development. This has direct implications on our strategy, which now needs to support and promote this more open approach to employee discussions.

Similarly, the new guidelines for salary setting, introduced concurrently to the above, have created a more transparent approach. By permitting increased flexibility in the criteria for salary assessment, we aim to establish a more motivating reward structure.

The planned change in the employment regulations in 2024, incorporating new laws, regulations, and agreements, adds another layer of complexity. This will impact the recruitment process to align with the new guidelines and ensure compliance with legal requirements.

One of the most influential factors is the change in leadership, with a new vice-chancellor and university director. Their vision and strategic direction will permeate most of the governing documents and consequently directly influence our HR strategy. Particularly, the changes are expected to be notably evident in the new development plan and the revised employee and leadership policies. This will require our HR strategy to reflect and support these overarching organisational changes, especially in promoting a culture of engagement and shared responsibility.

In summary, these changes mean that our HR strategy must be adaptable and oriented towards supporting the organisation's overall goals and values. It requires a strategic perspective on how HR processes can be altered to meet the circumstances and promote a positive and effective working environment.

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



The new vice-chancellor has appointed a group to suggest a new structure for research and research support at the University. The group consists of the pro-vice-chancellor, all heads of schools and the director of research support and is expected to come with suggestions on university-wide research questions. This work is scheduled until early 2024 and the outcomes will greatly affect the action plan, since some responsibilities might change and priorities might be adapted. It will also allow a better alignment of actions and lead to a deeper integration of planned actions into the ongoing work at HS.

### 3. Actions

Please consult the list of all actions you have submitted as part of your HR strategy. Please add to the overview the current status of these actions as well as the status of the indicators. If any actions have been altered 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 implementation ratings.

**Proposed ACTIONS**

<b>Action 1</b>	<b>GAP Principle(s)</b>	<b>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</b>	<b>Responsible Unit</b>	<b>Indicator(s) / Target(s)</b>
Identify and improve webpages in English, make sure all content is machine-readable.	(++) 3. Professional responsibility	Q4 2022	AMK (Marketing & Communication Office), SITS (IT Services and Security Office)	Targets: • Greater availability of English webpages or content that can be machine-translated. Indicators: • At least 90% of our content on external webpages shall be machine-readable so that translation tools can be used. • Install and increase use of Ally, a tool to make website content more accessible ( <a href="https://help.blackboard.com/Ally/Ally_for_Websites">https://help.blackboard.com/Ally/Ally_for_Websites</a> )
	(++) 4. Professional attitude			
	(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations			
	(+/-) 7. Good practice in research			
	(++) 10. Non discrimination			
	(++) 12. Recruitment			
	(+/-) 13. Recruitment (Code)			
	(+/-) 14. Selection (Code)			
	(+/-) 34. Complains/ appeals			
	(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties			
(++) 38. Continuing Professional Development				
(+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development				

**Proposed ACTIONS**

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<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
EXTENDED	Action is nearly completed but Ally will not be used because alternative tools have come up and are implemented

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**Proposed ACTIONS**

**Action 2**

Identify and translate governing documents into English, make priority list of those that need to be translated and make them available on HS website.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(++) 3. Professional responsibility			
(++) 4. Professional attitude			
(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations			
(+/-) 7. Good practice in research			
(++) 10. Non discrimination			
(++) 12. Recruitment			
(+/-) 13. Recruitment (Code)	Q1 2023	Faculty Board, AMK, HR, Vice-Chancellor's Office	Targets: • To translate all relevant documents into English. Indicators: • 50% of the prioritised documents are translated by Q1 2022.
(+/-) 14. Selection (Code)			
(+/-) 34. Complains/ appeals			
(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties			
(++) 38. Continuing Professional Development			
(+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development			

**Proposed ACTIONS**

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<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
EXTENDED	The relevant documents described in this action have been identified, and most of them have now been translated and published in English. The work will continue as the governing documents are updated regularly, and therefore, they will need to be translated into English.

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## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 3

Create a manual for incoming staff/researchers with information about practical issues and good practice in research. How to find everything. How everything works. Etc. Inform incoming researchers about relevant external documents and guidelines. Reference will be made to the CODEX website for Ethics rules and guidelines for research.

#### GAP Principle(s)

- (+/-) 2. Ethical principles
- (++) 3. Professional responsibility
- (+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations
- (+/-) 7. Good practice in research
- (+/-) 23. Research environment
- (++) 32. Co-authorship

#### Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

Q4 2023

#### Responsible Unit

AFSI (Office for Research Support, Collaboration & Innovation), Research Ethics Council, SITS, University library

#### Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Targets: • Make all researchers aware of national legislation and GDPR and know where to find more detailed information. • A "manual" containing all relevant information for incoming staff/researchers, made available on the internal websites of HS (see also action 12). Indicators: • Necessary content collected (Q4 2022). • Manual fully and available online (Q4 2023). (<https://www.vr.se/english/analysis/reports/our-reports/2017-08-31-good-research-practice.html>, <https://codex.uu.se/?languageId=1>, <https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/>, <https://www.casrai.org/credit.html>, [https://www.vr.se/download/18.5639980c162791bbfe697882/1555334908942/Good-Research-Practice\\_VR\\_2017.pdf](https://www.vr.se/download/18.5639980c162791bbfe697882/1555334908942/Good-Research-Practice_VR_2017.pdf)) • Distribute Good Practice in Research document (Q1 2022 and update regularly) • Updated and translated document "Good scientific practice – an overview with recommendations". Uploaded to HS web.

#### Current Status

COMPLETED

#### Remarks

A new research portal has been developed to address the goals and indicators described in this action. However, it is in its initial stage, and we see that there is a need to continue developing and improving the portal continuously over time. "This task will be addressed in a new action."

**Proposed ACTIONS**

**Action 4**

Improve outreach of the Research Ethics Council

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 2. Ethical principles	Q4 2022	Research Ethics Council	Target: • Increased visibility of Research Ethics Council. • Increased knowledge among researchers about the activities of the Research Ethics Council. Indicators: • Improved Research Ethics Council webpage published. • Questionnaire to researchers to measure visibility and activities of Research Ethics Council.

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	The work of FER (Forskningssetiska rådet, which translates to Research Ethics Council) has been focused on actively contributing to a research ethics foundation for the University of Skövde. This has involved initiating new policies and contributing to existing governance documents, such as those related to handling suspicions of research misconduct, ethical review processes, and authorship. Throughout this work, collaborative discussions have been held with, for example, the dean. FER has also organized courses and seminars on the subject. By working purposefully and strategically on research ethics issues, the level of knowledge at the institution has increased, and more informational resources have been made available. We have invited representatives from the Ethical Review Authority, the Swedish Research Council's research ethics experts, and others to conduct open lunch seminars for the staff.

**Proposed ACTIONS**

**Action 5**

Develop a Management and Staff Policy. HS will benefit from a Management and Staff policy to define the expectations, roles and responsibilities among employees and managers at HS. It will reflect the organisation's daily operations, core values and the University's culture in general. It will cover the main areas of HRS4R: Ethics and professional aspects, Recruitment and Selection, Working conditions and Training.

<b>GAP Principle(s)</b>	<b>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</b>	<b>Responsible Unit</b>	<b>Indicator(s) / Target(s)</b>
(++) 3. Professional responsibility			
(++) 4. Professional attitude			
(++) 6. Accountability			
(+/-) 7. Good practice in research			
(+/-) 9. Public engagement	Q4 2022	HR	Target: • Develop a Management and Staff policy for HS. Indicators: • Working group formed. • Draft of the policy available for review. • Policy distributed and published online.
(++) 10. Non discrimination			
(++) 24. Working conditions			
(++) 25. Stability and permanence of employment			
(++) 27. Gender balance			
<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Remarks</b>		
EXTENDED	Work group is formed. Due to a change in the school's top management in 2022 and 2023, the work has been awaiting the new leadership before proceeding to develop a new management and personnel policy.		



## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 6

Update checklist for new projects with external funding.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations	Q4 2022	Finance Office, AFSI	Target: • Revise and update the current document. Indicator: • New document available (Q3 2022), translated to English and available online (Q4 2022).
(+/-) 23. Research environment			

Current Status	Remarks
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EXTENDED	Extended, will be aligned with a more structured process for research support (see new action).
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### Action 7

Develop an IPR policy with structured support regarding IPR issues and improve information flow towards researchers.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(++) 31. Intellectual Property Rights	Q3 2022	AFSI	Target: • Develop an IPR policy for HS. Indicator: • Policy written and approved by Vice-Chancellor (Q1 2022). • Information available online and in English (Q3 2022).

Current Status	Remarks
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EXTENDED	Action is extended due to change of vice-chancellor. Exptected to be completed Q2 2024.
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**Proposed ACTIONS**

**Action 8**

Discuss, with other universities in Sweden and Europe, whether an individual researcher appraisal system is possible.

<b>GAP Principle(s)</b>	<b>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</b>	<b>Responsible Unit</b>	<b>Indicator(s) / Target(s)</b>
(+/-) 11. Evaluation/appraisal systems	Q4 2024	HR, AFSI	Target: • To see whether an individual researcher appraisal system is possible and appropriate. Indicators: • Contact made with several universities in Sweden. • Contact made with several universities in Europe. • Report on results of discussions (any further actions will be included in next Action Plan).
<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Remarks</b>		
IN PROGRESS	In the starting blocks. Contact has been made with 8 different universities in Europe.		

## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 9

Improve “merit-based recruitment” process HS currently works with a merit-based recruitment process, as described in various internal documents. This project aims to review our process, update documents where necessary and disseminate information about how the process works both internally and externally via the HS web (in Swedish and English).

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(++) 12. Recruitment			
(+/-) 13. Recruitment (Code)			
(+/-) 14. Selection (Code)			
(+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)	Q4 2022	HR	Target: • Updated recruitment process with information about the recruitment process more accessible. Indicators: • Project group formed. • Recruitment process updated. • Updated process published on HS web in Swedish and English.
(+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)			
(++) 27. Gender balance			
Current Status	Remarks		
COMPLETED	The “merit-based recruitment” process has been improved. A new reference management system has been implemented. Its purpose is to provide an even more structured and objective overview of candidates after reference checks. Similarly, with selection, the local processes are updated and sufficiently transparent. The recruitment process is now described and provided to international applicants as well. See link <a href="https://www.his.se/en/about-us/job-opportunities/our-recruitment-process">https://www.his.se/en/about-us/job-opportunities/our-recruitment-process</a>		

## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 10

Ensure that sufficient administrative training is given to those to whom responsibility is delegated, e.g. research group leaders.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(++) 3. Professional responsibility	Q2 2022	Heads of Schools, research group leaders.	Target: • Routines developed. Indicators: • Information seminars/web course held once a year for the coming years. • Information material available on internal webpages.
Current Status	Remarks		
EXTENDED	Regarding Academic Leadership roles and sufficient administrative training, foundational work has been undertaken. The School of Health Sciences has secured collaborative funding and initiated a pilot project in 2023. This will serve as a model for the entire University.		

### Action 11

Adaptations and update of IT infrastructure to meet requirements for data management.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 7. Good practice in research	Q3 2023	SITS	Target: • GDPR-compliant platform for data storage and sharing available. Indicators: • Availability of GDPR-compliant platform for data storage and sharing. • Information sent to staff. • Widespread use of platform for data storage and sharing available.
(+/-) 23. Research environment			
Current Status	Remarks		
EXTENDED	There is a group of researchers at the University that evaluates a Nextcloud solution (SUNET drive). The IT department's plan is that a solution is implemented in Q3 2024.		

**Proposed ACTIONS**

**Action 12**

Inform (re-inform) researchers about GDPR, research data management and related national legislation.

**GAP Principle(s)**

(++) 3. Professional responsibility  
  
(+/-) 7. Good practice in research

**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**

Q2 2023

**Responsible Unit**

SITS, AFSI, University library

**Indicator(s) / Target(s)**

Target: • All researchers are aware of local guidelines and legislation and know where to find more detailed information. Indicators: • See Action 3. • Distribute Good Practice in Research document (Q1 2022 and update regularly) ([https://www.vr.se/download/18.5639980c162791bbfe697882/1555334908942/Good-Research-Practice\\_VR\\_2017.pdf](https://www.vr.se/download/18.5639980c162791bbfe697882/1555334908942/Good-Research-Practice_VR_2017.pdf)) • Updated and translated internal document "Good scientific practice – an overview with recommendations". • Information included in manual for incoming researchers.

**Current Status**

EXTENDED

**Remarks**

Information is available in the research portal. Still needs to be updated once Action 11 is complete.

**Proposed ACTIONS**

**Action 13**

Improve information flow regarding procedures, possible support and good practices from supporting units to researchers and vice versa. Broaden scope of accessible training activities.

<b>GAP Principle(s)</b>	<b>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</b>	<b>Responsible Unit</b>	<b>Indicator(s) / Target(s)</b>
(+/-) 7. Good practice in research			
(++) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results			
(+/-) 9. Public engagement	Q4 2024	AFSI, AMK, University library	Target: • Researchers know where to find relevant information and make use of existing support resources. Indicators: • Researcher portal up and running (Q3 2022). • All webpages in Researcher portal translated to English or machine translatable (Q1 2023). • At least 100 participants in various training activities for researchers (during 2024).
(+/-) 23. Research environment			
(++) 24. Working conditions			

<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
COMPLETED	Researcher Portal complete, Training activities are planned and scheduled for 2023.

**Proposed ACTIONS**

**Action 14**

Increase researchers' public engagement.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 9. Public engagement	Q4 2024	Heads of Schools, AFSI, Heads of research environments	Targets: • Change in attitude and internal regulations to increase recognition of and make time available for researchers' public engagement activities. • More systematic support for public engagement activities. Indicators: • Include public engagement as a merit for salary discussions (Q4 2024). • Information about public engagement published on Researcher portal (Q1 2023). • Regular training activities (Q3 2023 and ongoing).
Current Status	Remarks		
IN PROGRESS	The Office for Marketing and Communication (AMK) is currently working on a "media training" education for researchers (and other employees who feel the need for it). The plan is to launch it before the end of 2023.		

## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 15

Oversee and disseminate knowledge about regulations and practices for short-term contracts, teaching load and supervisory duties.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 23. Research environment			
(++) 25. Stability and permanence of employment			
(+/-) 33. Teaching	Q4 2023	HR	Targets: • Increased knowledge among researchers. • Establish structures to follow up on the supervisory load for senior researchers to ensure that they have sufficient time for each student. Indicators: • Updated Guide for doctoral students, <a href="https://www.his.se/en/research/phd-programmes/regulations-forms-and-templates/">https://www.his.se/en/research/phd-programmes/regulations-forms-and-templates/</a> • Results of investigation of the training of supervisors to ensure that it is sufficient. • Further development of training programmes, as necessary.
(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties			
(++) 40. Supervision			
Current Status	Remarks		
COMPLETED	Supervisory duties is regulated through the governing document Supervision and study follow-up in doctoral studies see <a href="https://www.his.se/globalassets/styrdokument/utbildning-forskarniva/eng-guidelines-supervision-doctoral-studies.pdf">https://www.his.se/globalassets/styrdokument/utbildning-forskarniva/eng-guidelines-supervision-doctoral-studies.pdf</a> . Short-term contracts and taching load is regulated with in our appointment procedure see <a href="https://www.his.se/globalassets/styrdokument/anstallning/appointment-procedure.pdf">https://www.his.se/globalassets/styrdokument/anstallning/appointment-procedure.pdf</a> .		



## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 16

Investigate and if possible, develop and implement a career advisory service considering both academic and non-academic paths.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(-/+ ) 28. Career development	Q4 2025	HR, AFSI, (Heads of Schools)	Targets: • Improve information on career paths and available support for career guidance. • Provide support for career planning for doctoral students, postdocs and junior researchers. • Offer specific support for R2/R3 researchers to help them establish and remain at HS. • Build up in-house competence (or establish collaboration with external partners) to provide good and relevant career advice at all stages. Indicators: • Collected information on career guidance available on Researcher portal (Q1 2023). • Career mentor programme for all levels, including mentors from different sectors (academia, industry, public sector) developed (Q2 2023) and implemented (Q4 2023) • Benchmarking of mentorship with other universities (Q4 2022), e.g. <a href="https://www.oru.se/english/collaboration/alumni-and-friends/offer-support/be-a-volunteer/mentor-match/">https://www.oru.se/english/collaboration/alumni-and-friends/offer-support/be-a-volunteer/mentor-match/</a> . • At least three courses per year offered for R1-R2 researchers providing generic skills in project management, leadership and career planning (Q1 2024 and ongoing). • Set up a local branch of National Junior Faculty of Sweden together with University of Borås and University West (Q4 2025) ( <a href="http://www.nationaljf.se">http://www.nationaljf.se</a> ) • Set up collaboration with Young Academy of Sweden (Q4 2025) ( <a href="https://www.sverigesungaakademi.se/en-GB/11.html">https://www.sverigesungaakademi.se/en-GB/11.html</a> )
(-- ) 30. Access to career advice			
(++ ) 38. Continuing Professional Development			
(+/- ) 39. Access to research training and continuous development			
<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Remarks</b>		
IN PROGRESS	Coupled to new action on aligning career support activities		

**Proposed ACTIONS**

**Action 17**

Oversee and improve the employee interview/performance review template.

<b>GAP Principle(s)</b>	<b>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</b>	<b>Responsible Unit</b>	<b>Indicator(s) / Target(s)</b>
(+/-) 11. Evaluation/appraisal systems			
(-/+ ) 28. Career development	Q2 2023	HR	Targets: • More user friendly. • Improve points on career development and on research activity. Indicators: • Draft of a new template available for review. (Q4 2022) • Template distributed and published online.
(-- ) 30. Access to career advice			

<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
COMPLETED	A new employee performance review template has been published on the HS internal website. Also, a new document with salary guidelines has been updated. <a href="https://www.his.se/globalassets/styrdokument/anstallning/riktlinjer-for-lonesattning.pdf">https://www.his.se/globalassets/styrdokument/anstallning/riktlinjer-for-lonesattning.pdf</a>

**Proposed ACTIONS**

**Action 18**

Improve incoming and outgoing mobility.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 29. Value of mobility  (-- ) 30. Access to career advice	Q1 2024	Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Internationalisation, HR, AFSI	Targets: • Compile information on incoming and outgoing mobility, which also describes the possibilities of working elsewhere for a period. Indicators: • Information on existing support with housing, language, migration issues etc. updated in Researcher portal (Q1 2023) in Swedish and English. • Course on incoming and outgoing mobility held regularly (Q3 2022) • Dedicated website about funding possibilities available (Q3 2023), regular training activities for competitive funding opportunities (MSCA IF, MSCA ITN, strategic mobility grants from national funding bodies) are held (Q2 2023 and ongoing). • Summary of national and local regulations about sabbaticals available online (Q4 2023).
Current Status	Remarks		
IN PROGRESS	Information on Researcher Portal will be updated when process for research support is updated (new action).		

**Proposed ACTIONS**

**Action 19**

Develop a Guide for Complaints/Appeals.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+) 34. Complains/ appeals	Q2 2024	Director of Studies, HR	Targets: • Better and more effective procedures, published online and in English. • More information on this subject in a Guide for doctoral students. • Clarify for researchers that there will be no reprisals against them if they complain. • Improve transparency in complaint follow-up. Indicators: • Complaints/appeals procedure published online (also in English). • Information included in Guide for doctoral students. • Discussions with unions etc. regarding how lack of reprisals can be disseminated among staff.

Current Status	Remarks
COMPLETED	See link <a href="https://www.his.se/en/research/doktorandhandbok/complaints/">https://www.his.se/en/research/doktorandhandbok/complaints/</a>

**Proposed ACTIONS**

**Action 20**

Integrate employment policy with HRS4R and OTM-R

<b>GAP Principle(s)</b>	<b>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</b>	<b>Responsible Unit</b>	<b>Indicator(s) / Target(s)</b>
(+/-) 13. Recruitment (Code)			
(++) 15. Transparency (Code)			
(+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code)			
(++) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code)	2024 Q3	HR	New employment policy is published in both English and Swedish on HS website Fully integrated with Euraxess OTM-R Checklist Fully integrated with The code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers
(+/-) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)			
(++) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code)			
<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Remarks</b>		
NEW			

**Proposed ACTIONS**

**Action 21**

Implement international advertising in the recruitment process

<b>GAP Principle(s)</b>	<b>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</b>	<b>Responsible Unit</b>	<b>Indicator(s) / Target(s)</b>
(+/-) 13. Recruitment (Code)			
(++) 15. Transparency (Code)	2025 Q1	HR	All recruitments without a requirement for swedish language proficiency are published on the EuroAxess jobportal Implement Euraxess advertisiment in HS recruitment tool Reachmee Changed attitude towards posting job advertisements internationally at the university
(++) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code)			
<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Remarks</b>		
NEW			

**Proposed ACTIONS**

**Action 22**

Structure research support

<b>GAP Principle(s)</b>	<b>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</b>	<b>Responsible Unit</b>	<b>Indicator(s) / Target(s)</b>
(++) 4. Professional attitude			
(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations			
(++) 6. Accountability	Q4 2025	AFSI	A clear process for pre- and post-award support. Good knowledge about the process amongst researchers. Cross-cutting support groups for different phases (pre- and post-award) are formed and have established routines. (Q1 2024) Checklists are updated and published in Swedish and English. (Q3 2024) An internal CRIS is established. (Q3 2025)
(+/-) 7. Good practice in research			

**Current Status      Remarks**

NEW

**Proposed ACTIONS**

**Action 23**

Improve Researcher Portal

<b>GAP Principle(s)</b>	<b>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</b>	<b>Responsible Unit</b>	<b>Indicator(s) / Target(s)</b>
(+/-) 7. Good practice in research			
(++) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results			Clear and relevant information regarding different aspects of research support can be easily found online. All webpages on the Researcher Portal are reviewed and if necessary updated so that information is more to the point. (Q4 2024) All updated webpages are translated to English (Q2 2025)
(+/-) 9. Public engagement	Q1 2026	AFSI	
(+/-) 23. Research environment			
(++) 24. Working conditions			
<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Remarks</b>		
NEW			



## Proposed ACTIONS

### Action 24

Prepare the University for the transition to Open Science

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
(+/-) 5. Contractual and legal obligations			
(+/-) 7. Good practice in research			Set up conditions to align the University with the national guidelines for Open Science Mapping the current state of how far the University has come in the transition to Open Science. (Q2 2024) Researchers at all Schools have received information about Open Science in different formats (seminar, meetings in smaller groups etc). (Q4 2025) A policy for Open Science is developed. (Q2 2026)
(++) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results	Q2 2026	University Library	
(+/-) 23. Research environment			
(++) 32. Co-authorship			
<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Remarks</b>		

NEW

### Unselected principles:

(++)1. Research freedom    (++)20. Seniority (Code)    (++)22. Recognition of the profession    (++)26. Funding and salaries

(++)35. Participation in decision-making bodies    (++)36. Relation with supervisors

**The extended version of the reviewed HR Strategy for your organisation for the next 3 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 \*:

**URL \*:**

<https://www.his.se/en/research/hr-strategy-for-researchers/> (<https://www.his.se/en/research/hr-strategy-for-researchers/>)

If your organisation has already filled in the OTM-R checklist in the Initial Phase, please also indicate how your organisation is working towards / has developed an Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Policy. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above in the action plan (as emerged from the Gap Analysis), please provide a short commentary demonstrating the progress of the implementation versus the initial phase.

**Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles (Initial Phase)**

To set the scene for this section, Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) at the University of Skövde (HS) is further discussed below. Much has already been stated in the Gap Analysis and the OTM-R Checklist and references are made thereto.

**Open**

Swedish legislation governs many aspects of recruitment in the public sector, including universities. HS publishes job advertisements according to these requirements using all channels deemed relevant. Advertisements are not routinely published through international channels even though they might be distributed through social media. Since HS has stated in its development plan for 2017-2022 (HS 2015/1011) that international collaboration within research needs to increase, job advertising through international channels will need to be considered for each post. This includes advertising through Euraxess, which will be implemented, where relevant.

**Transparent**

Legislation on transparency in the public sector is strong including the right to access of official documents. Furthermore, there is national legislation on the right to appeal against decisions made by public sector employees and an internal document describing how appeals can be made (HS 2020/220). The use of a web-based recruitment tool at HS (<https://reachmee.com/en/> (<https://reachmee.com/en/>)) helps to increase transparency, standardise recruitment processes and streamline staff appointment.

**Merit-based recruitment**

Swedish legislation states that recruitment decisions should be made based on the merits and skills of the applicant where skills are the more important. At HS, “competence-based recruitment” (or competency-based recruitment, CBR) is the expression used and is similar or identical in content to merit-based recruitment. In this respect, HS can be considered as following this requirement of the HRS4R process. A new project, due to start in 2021, will develop updated routines and templates to refine CBR at HS.

Considering the OTM-R process described in the *Report of the Working Group of the Steering Group of Human Resources Management under the European Research Area* (July 2015), a toolkit of three phases has been identified: Advertising and application phase, Evaluation and selection phase, and Appointment phase as discussed in the OTM-R Checklist table.

**Advertising and application phase**

While HS is broadly compliant with the steps in this phase, there are a few improvements that can be made. For example, the basic steering documents at HS, Appointments Procedure (HS 2019/486) and Admission Regulations (HS 2018/796) for doctoral students, need to be reviewed and possibly updated and then made available online together with English versions. When updating these documents, HRS4R and OTM-R aspects will be incorporated. Advertising will use

more international channels, where applicable, and Euraxess will routinely be used to advertise positions. Standardised template and texts will be more widely used. There is a need to increase the understanding of recruitment requirements in those research leaders who are involved in recruitment activities. Even though this is already part of the management training, more specific training may be necessary.

Specific actions are listed under the following point in the Action Plan: 9.

#### **Evaluation and selection phase**

Applications are handled by a selection committee consisting of at least the Head of Division, a member of the HR Office, and another researcher with competence in the area. The constitution of the selection committee is stated in the HS Appointments Procedure. Members of the selection committee will have received training in the recruitment process. The process of consulting references given by the applicant is streamlined but also needs to be adapted to the requirements of the positions and the individual. The process of using external specialists is often time-consuming and has been improved but is still a bit slow and can be further improved. Not only does this need to be explained to applicants but also the process must be speeded up.

#### **Appointment phase**

The use of the web-based *ReachMee* system simplifies reporting to applicants on how the appointment is proceeding. Feedback on applications is usually given by telephone, when requested. This process could be improved although a process for meaningful individual feedback to many tens of applicants requires a great deal of thought so as not to burden the manager involved with the recruitment.

Appeals against appointment decisions are governed by national legislation and internal guidelines. There is a national Higher Education Appeals Board (<https://www.onh.se/in-english.html> (<https://www.onh.se/in-english.html>)). However, the appeals process needs to be made clearer to international applicants who might not understand the system.

### **Comments on the implementation of the OTM-R principles (Internal Review for Interim Assessment)**

The University of Skövde has an employment policy that aligns with HRS4R and OTM-R, see Appointment Procedure at the University of Skövde (<https://www.his.se/globalassets/styrdokument/anstallning/appointment-procedure.pdf>), but there are still some criteria remaining to adopt. A new employment policy is currently being developed and will be implemented in 2024. In the development of the new employment policy, these criteria will be taken into consideration and incorporated into the new policy. To achieve this in a more structured manner, this work will be integrated into a new action.

**Ideally, the extended version of the reviewed OTM-R policy and actions should be published on your organisation's website.**

Please provide the web link to the OTM-R dedicated webpage(s) if it is different than the one where the reviewed HR Strategy is located.

#### **URL:**

<https://www.his.se/globalassets/styrdokument/anstallning/appointment-procedure.pdf> (<https://www.his.se/globalassets/styrdokument/anstallning/appointment-procedure.pdf>)

## 4. Implementation

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

The starting date for HRS4R activities at HS was January 2020.

The activities have been coordinated by an Implementation Group (IG) and monitored by a Steering Committee (SC). A Reference Group (RG), as described in the section below, provided feedback from the university's researchers.

During the year prior to each new budget year, the IG has presented the upcoming year's HRS4R activities to the SC, which has ensured that the activities are integrated into the university's coming annual operations plan and budget. As far as is possible, HRS4R activities have been integrated into the university's normal operations. At the end of each year, the IG has provided an annual summary on HRS4R activities to the SC, which determined what to include in the University's Annual Report.

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 have you prepared the internal review?\*



**Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)**

HS has actively prepared for the Internal Review by taking a number of measures. A central component of this preparatory work was to carry out a survey aimed at all researchers in the organisation. The survey results were promising, with around 25% of the researchers responding to questions about their work situation. Multiple respondents highlighted good leadership and a willingness to personal development as key qualities, while a significant portion expressed the challenge of limited time to undertake tasks beyond their primary responsibilities. Additionally, it was evident that our IT infrastructure needs improvement. This initiative gives a comprehensive understanding of how the HRS4R work affects and is perceived by researchers at the university.

To ensure continuous and effective communication, the number of Steering Committee meetings and Implementation Group meetings has significantly increased during the preparatory phase. By increasing the frequency of meetings, a platform has been established for ongoing discussions and management of various aspects of the work. In addition, consultation rounds have been conducted to gather input and feedback on the reports from the Steering Committee and Implementation Group, contributing to a diverse and well-founded final product.

Management meetings between the principal, vice principal, university director and the prefects of the school have also been used for information sharing. By keeping management informed about the progress of the work, the university has created a dialogue and opportunity for management to address any challenges or contribute insights. This helps keep the management informed and engaged in all aspects of the work.

The extensive preparation for the Internal Review reflects a proactive approach from HS. By including researchers in the process through the survey and by increasing communication and meeting activities, the university has laid a solid foundation for producing a comprehensive and well-founded report of the HRS4R activities. This strategy for information sharing and dialogue is likely to contribute to the further successful implementation of the activities and enhance the university's overall ability to handle changes and development initiatives.

How have you involved the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?\*



**Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)**

The Reference Group (RG) provides a key means of getting feedback from researchers and allowing dissemination of information. The RG consists, at the very least, of one member of each researcher group R1 to R4. Ideally, these members represent further bodies at the university, such as the Section for Doctoral Students, etc., to be able to more easily gather and disseminate relevant information. The RG also has the assistance of the local HR consultants at each School who assist in disseminating and gathering information. Members of the RG are expected to obtain feedback from their colleagues on various aspects of ongoing implementation and further activities required in the future. However, we are also very aware that the administrative burden on researchers should be kept to a minimum, in line with university policy.

The IG also regularly visits the respective Schools at the university to obtain feedback and to determine how the implementation activities are proceeding.

Part of the work to involve the research community involved a recent survey, which has been described previously.

We also involved various research groups depending on activity to receive feedback through referrals.

Do you have an implementation committee and/or steering group regularly overseeing progress?\*



**Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)**

These groups working with the process have been mentioned in the introductory overview.

Steering Committee (SC) – the SC was appointed by the former Vice-Chancellor. The SC for the implementation phase is broadly similar to that of the application phase in terms of functions involved although certain persons have been exchanged due to the major changes in management in 2022. The SC consists of the University Director (Chair), the Dean (HS only has one dean), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Internationalisation, the Deputy Head of the HR Office, and one Professor. The SC holds primary responsibility for HRS4R activities and implementation within the university.

Implementation Group (IG) – this group is headed by a member of the HR Department, along with a member of The Office of Research Administration, Collaboration and Innovation a member of the Marketing & Communications Office (AMK), and a member of the Office for Service, IT and Security (SITS). The specific persons working in the IG change as peoples' roles change. However, the operational roles of each person will remain. The IG is the operative arm of the work, ensuring that the Action Plan is implemented and for producing reports (to be approved by the SC), and for producing reviews for the European Commission (EC). The IG will host on-site visits from the EC and will organise the logistics of such visits.

Reference Group (RG) – there is a reference group, appointed by the SC, with representatives from each of the researcher groups R1 to R4, with one persons from each researcher group level.

Is there any alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? For example, is the HRS4R recognized in the organisation's research strategy, overarching HR policy

\*



**Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)**

Even though the university is *de facto* compliant with most of the HRS4R procedures, there is little or no mention of the word "HRS4R" or "OTM-R" in our organisational policies.

During the course of the implementation process, it has been necessary to modify a number of the university's basic governing documents and at the same time translate them to English. However, modification of such documents only occurs when they need to be otherwise updated. The terminology "HRS4R" or "OTM-R" is introduced at this stage where relevant.

Alignment with HRS4R on the university's websites (internal and external) has occurred successively since January 2022 onwards. Since the Implementation Group is based at the HR office, the head of the group will ensure the alignment of HR policies with HRS4R and OTM-R.

The HR Excellence in Research logo is visible on relevant parts of our website, see his.se/en/ (<https://www.his.se/en/>) and About us (<https://www.his.se/en/about-us/>)

How has your organisation ensured that the proposed actions would be also implemented?\*



**Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)**

By engaging in referral rounds and gathering feedback, we can ensure the need for new actions. The idea is that this naturally becomes part of the regular development work within the concerned unit. To then be integrated into the university's annual operational plans, which are subsequently approved by the head of each institution. Every year, each school and administrative office at the university submits an operational plan for the upcoming year. HRS4R activities are included in these plans as part of regular development work to avoid parallel activities. Each year, the university management reviews the previous year's operational plan. Any activities related to HRS4R are also regularly monitored by the Implementation Group at each meeting, which occurs approximately once a month



How are you monitoring progress (timeline)?\*



**Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)**

Monitoring of progress is carried out once a month by the Implementation Group (IG), which then reports to the Steering Committee (SC). Meeting intervals may vary slightly depending on the project's developments over time. Deviations to the timeline are assessed, discussed and resolved in the IG and SC.

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



**Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)**

As the Implementation Group (IG) is hosted by the HR office, the work of the IG is included in the HR Office's annual operations' plan and will thus be followed up on an annual basis. At each meeting of the IG, there is a follow-up, where relevant, of the indicators set in the HRS4R Action Plan. Any deviations, and their significance, is discussed. Compliance with indicators is reported to the Steering Committee (SC) following each IG meeting. Prior to any forthcoming review by the European Commission, the SC will appoint an independent internal person to carry out a review of the progress with respect to plan. This reviewer will be given full instructions of what the Interim review should cover. The results of the review will be analysed by the SC, which will take any necessary further actions.

Where possible, Actions are reported in a quantifiable form to measure progress and to determine completion.

How do you expect to prepare for the external review?\*



**Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)**

The Implementation Group (IG) will be responsible for the External Review and Site Visit and will call on any other staff members deemed necessary (e.g. Dept for Marketing & Communications). Preparation work will begin 9-12 months prior to the due dates.

All the Actions will be assessed for compliance with the Action Plan and a new Action Plan will be drawn up based on the results of the existing Action Plan and subsequent researcher dialogues. All necessary documents will be identified and gathered together for use during the Site Visit.

Best practice for hosting site visits will be obtained from other universities that have already hosted site visits.

Discussions with the SC will be carried out to determine the role of the SC during the site visit.

Plans will be made for the logistics of hosting those carrying out the site visit (office space etc.) to ensure that the process goes as smoothly as possible. Practical advice regarding travel and accommodation will be provided as required.

Members of the IG will always be on hand during the site visit to answer questions and handle administrative tasks.

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

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