

courage

collaboration

responsibility

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Aalto-yliopisto
Aalto-universitetet
Aalto University

Promoting a sustainable and attractive working environment for research and art

**Aalto HRS4R Strategy
and Action Plan for
2022-2024**



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Merger of three leading Finnish universities



Towards a better world

A societally embedded and innovative research university for a better world.

A national mission to strengthen Finland's innovative capacity through first-class research, art and education.



Six dynamic schools

School of Arts, Design and Architecture
architecture, art and media, design, film

School of Business
accounting, economics, finance, management studies, marketing, information and service management

School of Chemical Engineering
bioproducts and biosystems, chemistry and materials science, chemical and metallurgical engineering

School of Electrical Engineering
electronics and nanoengineering, electrical engineering and automation, information and communications engineering

School of Engineering
built environment, civil engineering, mechanical engineering

School of Science
applied physics, computer science, industrial engineering and management, mathematics and systems analysis, neuroscience and biomedical engineering

Our purpose: Shaping a sustainable future

Aalto University is founded on high-quality research, education, impact as well as shared values of responsibility, courage and collaboration.

We solve global challenges by bringing talent together across science, art, technology, and business.





12 600

full-time equivalent
degree students

A staff of more than **4 000**,
of which nearly **400** are
professors. Share of
international academic
faculty is **47%**.

Our community in numbers

Each year our students earn about

200 doctoral degrees,

1 800 master's degrees,

1 500 bachelor's degrees and

300 MBA and EMBA certificates.

Attractive career paths

We are on the lookout for people who want to change the world. Our tenure track system for professors is an internationally recognised academic career system with clear steps, in which more junior researchers can also compete.



300

tenure track
recruitments since 2010

70%

of applicants are from
outside Finland

HRS4R – HR Strategy for Researchers

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](#).



HRS4R-process at Aalto

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

1. Gap analysis and action plan in 2012.
2. Interim assessment in 2015.
3. Award renewal with site visit in 2019.

In 2022/2023, it is time for award renewal without site visit.



HRS4R strategy

This strategy document describes our strengths and weaknesses of the HRS4R thematic areas, as well as the most significant changes and development measures since the previous assessment report.



Strengths and weaknesses of our current practices

Ethical and professional aspects - *strengths*

- The principles and bodies guiding ethical and professional aspects are well-established and developed according to our PDCA-cycle.
- 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.
- Aalto University's open science and research policy mandates or recommends practices regarding open access publishing, research data management, and open data and code. The policies for open educational resources and open infrastructure will be published in 2023.
- 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. Code of conduct was updated during 2020-2021. For further information, see the remarks.
- Furthermore, we have a process for handling harassment or inappropriate conduct.

Ethical and professional aspects - weaknesses

- 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.
- The collaboration between Research Integrity advisors and HR in cases of mixed research integrity violations and harassment or inappropriate conduct needs strengthening.

Ethical and professional aspects - *remarks*

- Aalto has contributed to the update on the Research Integrity by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity to be launched in 2023.
- Aalto is also engaged in the discussion on adding research ethics guidelines for natural sciences managed by Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity.
- The policies for open educational resources and open infrastructure will be published in 2023.
- During the years 2020-2021 - in consultation with the Aalto University community – our Code of Conduct was updated to correspond our reformulated values and the changes that have reshaped our operating environment. The new Code of Conduct is organized into the five pillars that are:
 - Our responsibility for people (new topics: inclusion & diversity, wellbeing)
 - Our responsibility for sustainability (new topic: our commitment to SDGs, more firm commitments in line with our shaping a sustainable future strategy)
 - Our responsibility to act ethically (new topics: principle of academic freedom as a separate topic, offering and accepting gifts and hospitality as a separate topic)
 - Our responsibility for assets (new topics: responsible use of public funds and responsible investing goals)
 - Our responsibility for information and data (new topic: open science and open access to research outputs, more focus to this topic)
- Each “pillar” will include a living “tips and more” section which is regularly updated at [Code of Conduct -web page](#). “Tips and more” gives examples of correct behavior, guides right choices and includes links for more information.
- In April 2022, Aalto University's Code of Conduct online course was published in Workday Learning. Every employee at Aalto University is required to complete this course. In addition to our values, the online course covers the five pillars of Code of Conduct with numerous examples and tasks. They address our responsibilities for people, sustainability, assets, information and data, and responsibility to act ethically. The course also includes the introduction of Code of Conduct into everyday life and instructions for dealing with problem situations.

Recruitment and selection - *strengths*

- 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. All our career policies (see the corresponding web pages, link above) have been updated since the previous renewal review. The updates are based on user experiences, feedback and the need to respond to changes in our operating environment (PDCA-cycle).
- All the processes and criteria are available in corresponding websites.
- Persons participating in academic recruitments have been trained to support equality and to tackle unconscious biases. We have updated the training material as well as our marketing and communication material.
- We have published a **Handbook on quality and diversity in recruitments** as well as **Recruitment at Aalto** eLearning and **Understanding Unconscious Bias in Higher Education** eLearning.
- 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.
- We have developed our internal headhunting concept, Aalto Talent Search, further. It 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.

Recruitment and selection - *weaknesses*

- 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.

Recruitment and selection - *remarks*

- All our career policies (Tenure track, Lecturer career system, Other Academic Positions) have been updated since the previous renewal review.
- One of the biggest and significant changes at Other Academic Positions –guidelines was that the opportunities for fixed-term employment and the chaining of fixed-term employment were significantly reduced.
- The new career system for lecturers were introduced in Aalto University's Schools in 2020. The new career system introduced a new career step for our most qualified lecturers, Principal University Lecturer. New career system for lecturers was welcomed and Aalto community has been mainly satisfied with the reform.
- We are currently piloting a new career system for the teachers in the Aalto Language Centre. The new career system includes clearer and more transparent criteria and processes for recruitments and advancements to ensure equality and fairness.
- We have invested heavily in strengthening support for dual careers to increase academic talent attraction. The following actions have been taken since the previous review:
 - Interview promise to spouses within Aalto and other HEI Life -institutions in the area: if the spouse apply for any job suitable to their background/CV in these organisations, an interview discussion or a general career coaching session is offered. Specific academic discussion available for academic positions.
 - CV clinics and support to spouses to identify local career/job hunting channels.
 - Individual career coaching and mentoring for spouses of tenure track recruits.
 - New HR experts have been trained to do Talent Search (our internal headhunting tool) processes.

Working conditions - *strengths*

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

Working conditions - *weaknesses*

- Foreign faculty and their spouses need more support to adapt to Finnish society.
- There have been many changes in the operating environment (Covid-19 followed by the war in Ukraine), which has also affected the fact that guidelines and procedures have had to be updated several times during the last years. It may have been demanding for faculty to keep up with the changes in guidelines.

Working conditions - *remarks*

- The past few years (Covid-19, followed with the War in Ukraine) were very challenging to all of us, and thus Aalto has paid special attention to the well-being of our employees during the past few years. Some of the highlights are mentioned below:
- Wellbeing desk opened in 2020: wellbeing desk is a low-threshold meeting point where staff and faculty have the opportunity to get support for their own well-being. In particular, the teaching staff is supported in reflecting their teaching and supervising. Teachers have been offered e.g. job guidance that supports the transition to classroom teaching.
- Special effort has been made to manage teachers' workload: e.g. with open discussion and transparency about work plans. This is supported by organizing discussion sessions where good practices can be shared. Teachers' workload is monitored together with our occupational health services' provider.
- Our remote working practices have been reviewed and updated to correspond the changes in working life.
- Doctoral Students title are changed to Doctoral Researchers. The idea behind this change was to show appreciation to ECRs.
- Part-time (minimum 10%) employment contract offered to all affiliated grant researchers (doctoral researchers and post docs) to help them better integrate in the university community.
- All the professors in tenure track were offered a 6-months extension to their tenure clock due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Training and development - *strengths*

- 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. Wellbeing, development, and goals are being discussed in the annual My Dialogues conversations between supervisor and employee.
- The competence development at Aalto is based on the 70/20/10 model: 70% of learning takes place on the job, for instance, gaining more responsibility, handling projects or job rotation; 20% is learning from others, for example through feedback, mentoring, coaching and teamwork; and 10% is learning in formal settings, such as on courses, seminars or using self-study materials. The number of digital courses has raised during the last couple of years. Courses for researchers are gathered under the "supporting for research" topic in our learning management system.
- Managerial and leadership duties increase with career advancement. For example, professors are expected to act as a supervisors and lead the project team as their career progresses. Furthermore, acting as a mentor and participating in leadership training are considered as merits in career advancement.
- We provide an "Aalto Academic Leader Programme" to our Assistant and Associate professors. The programme modules are 1) strategic leadership at Aalto, 2) leading teams and networks successfully, 3) engaging and empowering people, 4) impact with media & communications, 5) leading yourself.
- New Head of Departments and Vice Deans will be invited to join their own onboarding program. This consists of 4 modules: 1) leadership in the university setting, 2) financial decisions to support your academic goals, 3) innovations, corporate relations and fundraising, 4) people and team leadership. They will also have a 360-degree feedback.
- Furthermore, we provide training for Doctoral Dissertation Supervisors.
- In addition to training opportunities, we provide mentor and coaching services for our researchers. Doctoral researchers can take part in career coaching. Solution-focused coaching is available for all Aalto employees. Our new Assistant Professors are encouraged to take part in mentoring program after the onboarding phase. Pilot mentoring groups for female Assistant Professors were organized in 2021-2022 and will continue in 2023.
- For academic leaders we also organize leadership events such as Assistant Professors' Lunch and Professors' Summit.

Training and development - *weaknesses*

- 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.

Participation in external seminars, conferences and courses as central part of professional competence development for researchers might also affect on how much researchers join the internal staff training opportunities.

Training and development - *remarks*

- Since the previous evaluation, we have implemented a new Workday Learning –solution. It facilitates us to better manage and also to increase our staff training offerings.
- The number of online courses have increased due the Covid-19 and its restrictions.

Action plan for 2022-2024



Aalto-yliopisto

Actions	Targets	Timing	Responsible	Current Status	Remarks
Attracting talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilising Talent Search more broadly for talent attraction (Talent Search 2.0.), - Strengthen support for dual careers, - Identifying new ways to attract female professors by utilising HR analytics. 	2022-2024	Provost, ACMT	NEW	
Fostering Talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing our mentoring offering, - Identifying new ways to support international families to better integrate to Finland, - Strengthen the offering of Finnish language courses, - Strengthening the support for tenure track 	2022-2024	Provost, ACMT	NEW	

Actions	Targets	Timing	Responsible	Current Status	Remarks
Clarification of the principles and criteria for academic recruitments	Aalto Tenure Track, Aalto Lecturer Career System, and Aalto Other Academic Policies established and up to date.	During academic years 2012-2013 2013-2014 2014–2015 2015-2016	Provost, HR, Career systems task force	COMPLETED	Career policies for all our academic positions (Tenure track, Lecturer career system, Other Academic Positions) are now updated/established and implemented in our schools.
Development of the Aalto academic career systems and recruitment criteria for different academic positions	Aalto Tenure Track, Aalto Lecturer Career System, and Aalto Other Academic Policies established and up to date.	During academic years 2012-2013 2013-2014 2014–2015 2015-2016	Provost, HR, Career systems task force	COMPLETED	Career policies for all our academic positions (Tenure track, Lecturer career system, Other Academic Positions) are now updated/established and implemented in our schools.
Improve the attractiveness of Aalto for foreign and female faculty	Candidate sourcing methods improved. Candidate evaluation tools and practices to support equality and to tackle unconscious biases developed. Position marketing, candidate communications and employer branding activities improved. Awareness of unconscious biases in recruitment situations improved.	4/2020	Provost, HRS, EQU Committee, Academic Careers Management Team	COMPLETED	In a state of continuous development based on our quality work.
Support the career development of young faculty, with special attention to foreign and female faculty	New onboarding model for PhD students developed. New onboarding model for professors developed (all new tt recruits participate in the onboarding process and have an onboarding buddy). Individual mentoring for all new assistant professors offered after onboarding. Group mentoring for women assistant professors offered.	4/2020	Provost, HRS, RIS, LES, EQU Committee, Academic Careers Management Team	COMPLETED	In a state of continuous development based on our quality work.

Shaping a sustainable future.



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