

TEMPLATE 4: ACTION PLAN

Case number: 2020SE526196

Name Organisation under review: University of Skövde

Organisation's contact details: Höskolevägen, Skövde, Västra Götaland, SE - 541 28

SUBMISSION DATE: 12/05/2021

1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

Please provide a limited number of key figures for your organisation. Figures marked * are compulsory.

STAFF & STUDENTS	FTE
Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research	261
Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)	60
Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)	75
Of whom are women	110
Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.	28
Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level	23
Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level	32
Total number of students (if relevant)	3944
Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)	472
RESEARCH FUNDING (figures for most recent fiscal year)	€
Total annual organisational budget	13407280
Annual organisational direct government funding (designated for research)	5655950
Annual competitive government-sourced funding (designated for research, obtained in competition with other organisations – including EU funding)	2910713
Annual funding from private, non-government sources, designated for research	4902626
ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)	
<p>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 Behavioral Studies. In 2020, the university had 9200 students in 32 undergraduate and 27 graduate programs. 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.</p>	

2. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE CURRENT PRACTICE:

Please provide an overview of the organisation in terms of the current strengths and weaknesses of the current practice under the four thematic headings of the Charter and Code at your organization.

Ethical and professional aspects

Swedish legislation covering ethical and professional aspects is generally strong but 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

National ethical legislation regarding ethics in research is very stringent with a recently reorganised national authority being responsible for overseeing human research ethics. 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 following up, at regular intervals, how universities live up to standards of education and research while 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 very far-reaching concept and is to a large extent covered by Swedish legislation that HS is bound to follow. However, there are some areas that need improvement as stated in the Action Plan.

The 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 wide ranging, not just covering publishing in journals but also 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 and 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 and very much left to the individual universities to handle. 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.

Recruitment and selection

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.

Working conditions

Working conditions and social security in Sweden are very strictly governed by national legislation.

These include generous mandatory holiday allowances, long parental leave, sick leave, and pension payments by employers. As a state university, HS follows these regulations, often offering even more generous conditions such as longer holidays. 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 works actively to promote the role of researchers in the local

community.

Research environment; Working conditions

The research environment and working conditions, including those at HS, are strictly governed in Sweden. There is considerable legislation covering safety at work. During the Gap Analysis consultations, researchers at HS regarded working conditions as good and regular assessments are used to ensure that this remains the case. In terms of the research environment, a number of weaknesses were identified in terms of equipment utilisation, research support, new routines and processes etc. These often small but significant weaknesses are taken up in the Action Plan.

Stability and permanence of employment; Funding and salaries

There is a significant amount of Swedish legislation covering temporary and permanent employment. As a state-funded university, HS is required to follow all this legislation. HS also has its own regulations, but they are not sufficiently clear to R1 researchers, which needs to be resolved. The research world, particularly at the R2 level, is often characterised by short-term employments. 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. Salary negotiations are usually carried out at the beginning of the employment and then on an annual basis. Sweden offers generous parental leave and sick leave at all levels. Pension provisions are made starting at the R1 level. Although HS, as other Swedish universities, cannot compete with commercial salaries, the salary levels at HS were regarded as acceptable by researchers in the focus group analysis.

Gender balance

Gender balance is governed by national legislation and HS, considered as a whole, has an acceptable gender balance. However, one area where the gender balance is not acceptable is at the R4 level where only 28% of professors are female. This is a nationally addressed problem that is generally improving with time and HS will strive to make its own improvements.

Career development; Access to career advice; Value of mobility

Career development and career advice are two closely related topics.

Career development is not nationally legislated and is very much dependent on the size of the university. Many universities do not have the capacity to keep all their doctoral students after dissertation and internally recruited doctoral students should anyhow be persuaded to do, if possible, a post-doc at another university, ideally abroad. In Sweden, there are very few positions that are purely research – most positions require a greater or lesser extent of teaching. HS does not have any particularly clear processes for career development, which is an area that needs to be addressed.

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

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

Mobility can be a two-edged sword – on the one hand, mobility is encouraged in the research world and is viewed as attractive in job applicants and is promoted by EU-funded programmes; on the other hand, mobility can be contrary to supporting the private lives of researchers, who may for family reasons, not be able to be career-mobile. Mobility should be viewed as positive, but lack of mobility must be viewed, taking into account the individual's prerequisites. HS will improve information on mobility, as well as interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility, as part of career advice.

Intellectual Property Rights

In Sweden, individual researchers normally own the rights to their research results, except when the research is funded by industry where there may be restrictions. Increasingly, research results are aimed at being utilised and it is important that researchers understand IPR matters. While there is some national legislation governing IPR, HS needs to develop an internal IPR policy and offer more structured seminars and courses to explain the complex subject of IPR to researchers.

Co-authorship

There is no national legislation about co-authorship 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 in Sweden are normally expected to teach a maximum of 20% of their time. Thereafter, for R2-R4 researchers, the amount of teaching is variable but is very seldom less than 20%. However, R2 researchers at HS usually have less than 5% teaching. It is unusual, particularly in small universities, that a researcher is able to devote all their time to research. This is nothing that can be changed by HS. However, it is important, particularly for R1 researchers, that teaching does not become too burdensome. In addition, it is problematic for incoming international researchers who are unable to speak Swedish since they will only be able to teach those courses held in English. HS needs to have better regulation of the actual amount of teaching that researchers are expected to carry out. Furthermore, more widely available courses in pedagogics are necessary.

Complaints/appeals

There are a number of national legislations covering complaints and appeals processes, from appealing job decisions and onwards. It became apparent during the Gap Analysis discussions that the complaints/appeals processes at HS are not optimal. 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. However, becoming involved can be a problem for non-Swedish speakers. While this is not considered 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, and that researchers know where to find such information. This is not always the case at present and needs to be rectified.

Training and development

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.

3. ACTIONS

The Action Plan and HRS4R strategy must be published on an easily accessible location of the organisation’s website.

Please provide the web link to the organisation's HR Strategy dedicated webpage(s):

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

Please fill in a sum up list of all individual actions to be undertaken in your organisation's HRS4R to address the weaknesses or strengths identified in the Gap-Analysis:

<i>Proposed Actions</i>	Ref to gap principle (s)	Time (when complete)	Responsible unit(s)	Indicators/Targets
1. Identify and improve webpages in English, make sure all content is machine-readable.	3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 34, 34, 37, 38, 39	Q4 2022	AMK (Marketing & Communication Office), SITS (IT Services and Security Office)	<p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater availability of English webpages or content that can be machine-translated. <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 (https://help.blackboard.com/Ally/Ally_for_Websites)
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.	3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 34, 34, 37,	Q1 2023	Faculty Board, AMK, HR, Vice-Chancellor’s Office	<p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To translate all relevant documents into English. <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of the prioritised documents are translated by Q1 2022.

<i>Proposed Actions</i>	Ref to gap principle (s)	Time (when complete)	Responsible unit(s)	Indicators/Targets
	38, 39			
<p>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.</p> <p>Inform incoming researchers about relevant external documents and guidelines. Reference will be made to the CODEX website for Ethics rules and guidelines for research.</p>	2, 3, 5, 7, 23, 32	Q4 2023	AFSI (Office for Research Support, Collaboration & Innovation), Research Ethics Council, SITS, University library	<p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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). <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) • 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.
4. Improve outreach of the Research Ethics Council	2	Q4 2022	Research Ethics Council	<p>Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased visibility of Research Ethics Council. • Increased knowledge among researchers about the activities of the Research Ethics Council. <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Research Ethics Council webpage published. • Questionnaire to researchers to measure visibility and activities of Research Ethics Council.

Proposed Actions	Ref to gap principle (s)	Time (when complete)	Responsible unit(s)	Indicators/Targets
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.	3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 24, 25, 27	Q4 2022	HR	<p>Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Management and Staff policy for HS. <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working group formed. • Draft of the policy available for review. • Policy distributed and published online.
6. Update checklist for new projects with external funding.	5, 23	Q4 2022	Finance office, AFSI	<p>Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise and update the current document. <p>Indicator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New document available (Q3 2022), translated to English and available online (Q4 2022).
7. Develop an IPR policy with structured support regarding IPR issues and improve information flow towards researchers.	31	Q2 2022	AFSI	<p>Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an IPR policy for HS. <p>Indicator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy written and approved ed by Vice-chancellor (Q1 2022). • Information available online in English (Q2 2022).
8. Discuss, with other universities in Sweden and Europe, whether an individual researcher appraisal system is possible.	11,	Q4 2024	HR, AFSI	<p>Target:</p> <p>To see whether an individual researcher appraisal system is possible and appropriate.</p>

<i>Proposed Actions</i>	Ref to gap principle (s)	Time (when complete)	Responsible unit(s)	Indicators/Targets
				Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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).
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).	12, 13, 14, 27, 16, 19	Q4 2022	HR	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated recruitment process with information about the recruitment process more accessible. Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project group formed. • Recruitment process updated. • Updated process published on HS web in Swedish and English.
10. Ensure that sufficient administrative training is given to those to whom responsibility is delegated, e. g Research group leaders.	3	Q2 2022	Heads of Schools, research group leaders.	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routines developed. Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information seminars/web course held once a year for the coming years. • Information material available on internal webpages.
11. Adaptations and update of IT infrastructure to meet requirements for	7, 23	Q3 2023	SITS	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDPR-compliant platform for data storage and sharing available.

Proposed Actions	Ref to gap principle (s)	Time (when complete)	Responsible unit(s)	Indicators/Targets
data management.				Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of GDPR-compliant platform for data storage and sharing. • Information sent to staff. • Widespread use of platform for data storage and sharing available.
12. Inform (re-inform) researchers about GDPR, research data management and related national legislation.	3, 7	Q2 2023	SITS, AFSI, University library	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All researchers are aware of local guidelines and legislation and know where to find more detailed information. Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) • Updated and translated internal document “Good scientific practice – an overview with recommendations”. • Information included in manual for incoming researchers.
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.	7, 8, 9, 23, 24	Q4 2024	AFSI, AMK, University library	Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researchers know where to find relevant information and make use of existing support resources. Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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).

Proposed Actions	Ref to gap principle (s)	Time (when complete)	Responsible unit(s)	Indicators/Targets
14. Increase researchers' public engagement.	9	Q4 2024	Heads of Schools, AFSI, Heads of research environments	<p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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).
15. Oversee and disseminate knowledge about regulations and practices for short-term contracts, teaching load and supervisory duties.	23, 25, 33, 37, 40	Q4 2023	HR	<p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Guide for doctoral students. https://www.his.se/en/research/phd-programmes/regulations-forms-and-templates/ • Results of investigation of the training of supervisors to ensure that it is sufficient. • Further development of training programmes, as necessary.
16. Investigate and if possible, develop and implement a career advisory service considering both academic and non-academic paths.	28, 30, 38, 39	Q4 2025	HR, AFSI, (Heads of Schools)	<p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

<i>Proposed Actions</i>	Ref to gap principle (s)	Time (when complete)	Responsible unit(s)	Indicators/Targets
				<p>partners) to provide good and relevant career advice at all stages.</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. https://www.oru.se/english/collaboration/alumni-and-friends/offer-support/be-a-volunteer/mentor-match/. • 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) (http://www.nationaljf.se) • Set up collaboration with Young Academy of Sweden (Q4 2025) (https://www.sverigesungaakademi.se/en-GB/11.html)
17. Oversee and improve the employee interview/performance review template.	28, 30, 11	Q2 2023	HR	<p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More user friendly. • Improve points on career development and on research activity. <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft of a new template available for review. (Q4 2022) • Template distributed and published online.
18. Improve incoming and outgoing mobility.	29, 30	Q1 2024	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Internationalisation,	<p>Targets:</p> <p>Compile information on incoming and outgoing mobility, which also describes the possibilities of work elsewhere for a period.</p>

<i>Proposed Actions</i>	Ref to gap principle (s)	Time (when complete)	Responsible unit(s)	Indicators/Targets
			HR, AFSI	Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on existing support with housing, language, migration issues etc. updated in Researcher portal (Q1 2023) in Swedish and English. • Course for incoming and outgoing mobility held regularly (Q2 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).
19. Develop a Guide for Complaints/appeals.	34	Q2 2024	Director of Studies, HR	Targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints/appeals procedure published online (also in English). • Information includes in Doctoral student manual. • Discussions with unions etc. regarding how lack of reprisals can be disseminated among staff.

The establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HRS4R strategy. Please also indicate how your organisation will use the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Toolkit and how you intend to implement/are implementing the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above, please provide a short commentary demonstrating this implementation. If the case, please make the link between the OTM-R checklist and the overall action plan.

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/>) 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>). However, the appeals process needs to be made clearer to international applicants who might not understand the system.

If your organisation already has a recruitment strategy which implements the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment, please provide the web link where this strategy can be found on your organisation's website:

URL:<https://www.his.se/globalassets/tillfalliga-dokument/styrdokument/anstallning/anstallningsordning-vid-hogskolan-i-skovde.pdf>

4. IMPLEMENTATION

General overview of the expected implementation process:

The expected start date for new HRS4R activities at HS will be January 2022. If the start date deviates sufficiently from this date, the dates, targets and indicators in the Action Plan may also need to be altered. The Project Group for the HRS4R application will end its activities as soon as the application is sent in, i.e., at the latest May 2021. It will be replaced by an Implementation Group (IG) whose members will be recommended by the Steering Committee and then approved by the Vice-Chancellor. Furthermore, a Reference Group will be appointed.

Steering Committee (SC) – the SC will be appointed by the Vice-Chancellor. It is expected that the SC

for the application will remain essentially the same for the implementation phase. However, changes in the actual persons involved can be expected since peoples' roles may change, particularly in the academic field. In principle, the SC will consist of the University Director (Chair), the Dean (HS only has one dean), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Internationalisation, the Head of the HR Office, the Head of the Office for Research, Innovation and External Relations (AFSI), and one Professor or Head of School. The SC will meet at least once per semester. Minutes will be taken at all meetings.

Implementation Group (IG) – this group will be headed by the former head of the Project Group who belongs to the HR office, along with a member of AFSI, a member of the Marketing & Communications Office (AMK), and a member of the IT Services and Security Office (SITS). The specific persons working in the IG will doubtless change as peoples' roles change. However, the operational roles of each person will remain. The IG will meet at least four times per year while any subgroups that may have been formed will meet more frequently as necessary. All meetings will be documented and reported to the SC.

The IG is responsible for ensuring that the Action Plan is implemented and for producing reports (to be approved by the SC), for reviews by the European Commission (EC). The IG will host any on-site visits from the EC and will organise the logistics of any such visits.

Reference Group (RG) – there will also be a reference group, appointed by the SC, with representatives from each of the researcher groups R1 to R4.

During the year prior to each new calendar (budget) year, the IG will present the upcoming year's HRS4R activities to the SC, which will be responsible for ensuring that the activities are integrated into the university's coming annual operations plan and budget. As far as is possible, HRS4R activities will be integrated with the university's normal operations but some actions will undoubtedly require specific activities and budgets. At the end of each year, the IG will send an annual report on the current year's HRS4R activities to the SC, which will determine what to include in the University's Annual Report.

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

Checklist	*Detailed description and duly justification
How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?	<p>These groups have been described in the general overview text.</p> <p>There will be a Steering Committee that has overall responsibility for HRS4R at the university and which will report to the Vice-Chancellor, as necessary. The SC will be chaired by the University Director, who also sits on the University's executive management team.</p> <p>There is also an Implementation Group that will plan,</p>

Checklist	*Detailed description and duly justification
	<p>oversee and where necessary delegate HRS4R activities. This group is answerable to the Steering Committee.</p> <p>There will be a Reference Group consisting of R1-R4 researchers, which will have an advisory role and will help to gather and disseminate information.</p>
<p>How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?</p>	<p>The Reference Group (RG) will, at the very least, consist of one member of each researcher group R1 to R4. Ideally, these members will 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 will also have the assistance of the local HR consultants at each School who will assist in disseminating and gathering information. Members of the RG will be 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.</p> <p>The IG will also regularly visit the respective Schools at the university to obtain feedback and to determine how the implementation activities are proceeding.</p>
<p>How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? Make sure the HRS4R is recognized in the organisation's research strategy, as the overarching HR policy.</p>	<p>Even though the university is <i>de facto</i> compliant with most of the HRS4R procedures, there is little or no mention of the word "HRS4R" in our organisational policies. During the course of the implementation process, it will be necessary to modify a number of the university's basic steering documents (and at the same time translate them to English). It will be at this time when the actual expression "HRS4R" can be introduced where relevant. Alignment with HRS4R on the university's websites (internal and external) will occur successively from 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. HRS4R will be mentioned and the HRS4R logo will be used in job advertisements where relevant.</p>
<p>How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?</p>	<p>The HRS4R Action Plan will be incorporated in the university's annual operations plan, which is approved by the Vice-Chancellor. Each year, every School and</p>

Checklist	*Detailed description and duly justification
	<p>administrative office in the university submits an operations plan for the coming year. HRS4R activities will be included in these plans where possible. Every year, the operations plan from the previous year is followed up by the university management.</p>
<p>How will you monitor progress (timeline)?</p>	<p>Monitoring of progress will be carried out by the Implementation Group (IG), which then reports to the Steering Committee (SC) and thereby to the Vice-Chancellor. The process of monitoring progress will be part of the annual follow-up of the operations plans for each School and administrative office. Deviations to the timeline will be assessed, discussed and resolved in the IG and SC.</p>
<p>How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?</p>	<p>As the Implementation Group (IG) will be hosted by the HR office, the work of the IG will be 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 will be a follow up, where relevant, of the indicators set in the HRS4R Action Plan. Any deviations, and their significance, will be discussed. Compliance with indicators will be 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, based on the templates on Euraxess, of what the review should cover. The results of the review will be analysed by the SC, which will take any necessary further actions. The review documents will become part of the official HRS4R records at the university.</p> <p>In good time before a forthcoming external review by the European Commission, the IG will assess the templates used for the external assessment to determine whether the university is compliant with all the questions.</p>

Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process:

(free text, 1000 words maximum)