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HR Excellence in Research

HRS4R

Self-Assessment of HRS4R Action Plan

Lappeenranta University of Technology

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Contents

1	Abstract.....	2
2	Introduction	3
3	Monitoring and documentation of the process	3
4	Assessment actions	5
4.1	Recruitment.....	5
4.2	Orientation (initiation)	6
4.3	Complaints and appeals.....	8
4.4	Summarizing table	9
5	Next steps - Action plan until 2017.....	11
5.1	Dissemination, exploitation of results	11
5.2	Evaluation / appraisal systems.....	12
5.3	Supervision and managerial duties	13
5.4	Teaching	14
5.5	Summarizing table of Action plan 2016-2017.....	15
6	Conclusions	17

1 Abstract

The self-assessment of HRS4R Action plan was conducted at Lappeenranta University of Technology during May-August 2015. Based on the self-assessment and the ongoing strategy process at LUT, new actions for the updated Action plan were identified. The updated Action plan is now ready and it will be sent to the Commission for review and approval. It will be published on the website of LUT in October-November 2015.

The self-assessment process at LUT was embedded within the framework of existing strategy process and internal quality assurance mechanism at LUT. The process was under the guidance of the steering committee of quality and environmental management system. The HRS4R working group was widely taking care of the implementation and communication of this process inside the university.

LUT is currently facing some major organizational changes. While identifying the new development areas and actions for the new Action Plan, the main idea was to ensure that these actions are embedded in the framework of existing strategy. This will assure the ongoing organizational changes will not affect the HRS4R process and the identified actions. Based on that and the self-assessment, the new development areas are ***dissemination and exploitation of results, evaluation / appraisal systems, supervision and managerial duties*** and ***teaching***.

The progress on these areas will be followed every two years to assess the changes in processes and to analyze received feedback to see whether desired outcomes have been reached. In addition, the HRS4R working group will monitor the progress regularly.

This document describes what kind of development has taken place and what measures have been done in the identified gaps since receiving the acknowledgement from the Commission. The document also explains the planned actions to improve LUT's HR processes and procedures in next two years before the external assessment.

2 Introduction

Lappeenranta University of Technology (LUT) applied and received the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) Label in the 4th cohort in 2013. The label was granted on the 6th of November 2013.

Although, LUT HR policy has been in accordance with the Charter and Code in many respects, and similarly, the Finnish national legislation and collective agreement set high criteria to employers, following the HR strategy for Researchers has highlighted some aspects of researchers' employment relationship to take better into account at LUT.

Since receiving the label, developing human resource issues at LUT have become more important at the university level. The development work is on-going process, and it is not limited only to the work done within the HRS4R, but in general, improving the performance and well-being of all employees. The four-stage researcher's career model has been used already for some years at LUT, but implementing of tenure track career system has given a solid and visible backbone for a researcher's career. One other remarkable step in regards to researcher's career is the international mobility. The university supports the almost-compulsory internationalization phase of doctoral students and mobility of post-docs by offering substantial financial support and other supporting services to ease the researchers' exchange periods abroad.

3 Monitoring and documentation of the process

Monitoring of implementation of the HRS4R Action plan of LUT has been the duty of two actors: the steering committee of quality and environmental management system and the HRS4R working group.

The steering committee has been nominated by the provost of the university, and is headed by the vice rector. Members of the committee represent different units and schools as well as groups of staff; faculty members, students, support service personnel. The steering committee is responsible for the quality management system of the university which covers all the university functions; scientific research, academic

education, societal interaction as well as support services. Thus, the quality management system covers also the HR processes and services. In its meetings, the steering committee has dealt with the implementation of HRS4R Action plan and assessed the actions executed. The steering committee also has approved this revised action plan. All the meetings of the steering committee are documented systematically in memos, which are publicly available for personnel and students in the university's intranet.

The HRS4R working group consists of three members, who are responsible for the HRS4R process and documentation at the university. They also collect information needed in the process. The group meets regularly to collect information about measures taken in regard to the LUT HRS4R Action plan and Charter and Code. The memos are kept at every group meetings, and they are stored in a group work intrasite. The three members of the working group have written also this document.

LUT strategy and strategy process itself play an important role in defining the actions needed to reach the university's goals. The university strategy defines the strengths of the university and the focus areas of its activity and development. The purpose of the strategy is to guide decisions and choices made in the university to follow the shared values of the university. The strategy is reviewed and amended every few years.

During the autumn 2014 a strategy process was executed at LUT to focus the university's operation and development targets until the year 2020. The new strategy has been published in December 2014. In the strategy process the university's staff, students and external stakeholders were engaged via questionnaires, workshops and interviews which also encouraged staff and students to commit to shared targets and values. Concrete measures to be implemented were documented in separate action plans, to which the university's experts contributed in different working groups. LUT Strategy 2020 is publicly available in the university's webpages and intranet. The action plans are available for the personnel and students in the university's intranet too.

The strategy process and strategic action plans have been the main measures to identify the actions needed in years to come at LUT. The process and the documents were also

utilized in the HRS4R process and in assessing the actions needed in accordance with the Charter and Code. These are further discussed in chapter 5.

4 Assessment actions

4.1 Recruitment

Although the recruitment policies of LUT have been in accordance with the Charter and Code regarding the transparency, criteria for assessment of the candidates and the selection process, the largest gaps found in the gap analysis were in recruiting. For example, good and accessible instructions were lacking and progress of recruitment process was not communicated properly with applicants.

Since the first gap analysis, internal instructions of recruiting have been made and published in LUT intranet in 2014. Also, a new guidebook for supervisors includes not only advices on recruiting, but e.g. on rewarding, motivating and developing of personnel too. The Guide was published in the beginning of 2015 and is available in intranet as well.

One of the major reforms concerning research and teaching staff has been the decision of implementing the tenure track system in careers of teaching and research staff from the year 2015. As the concept of tenure track was not familiar with LUT research and teaching staff, the acceptance of the concept took a while and required extensive informing and discussions among staff. The rector of LUT nominated the committee of Tenure Track, whose task is to follow, guide and monitor the proper use of tenure track career system at LUT. The committee published explicit and transparent instructions on how and what kind of criteria are used in recruiting and in evaluating of advancement in the tenure track career. The policy of LUT is that all new calls for full professorships, assistant and associate professorships will be tenure track positions and published in international forums. Calls for the doctoral student positions are recommended to publish internationally too. In addition, LUT updated and published the guidelines of teaching portfolios, including assessment criteria of portfolios, in June 2015, to help applicants for teaching positions to prepare their applications.

In June 2015 LUT started to use a new electronic tool, an online recruiting system, which will systemize and help recruiting supervisors and support staff in managing recruiting process and applications. Communication with applicants will improve, as they will be better informed on the progress of the recruitment with the help of systematized management of applications.

LUT tries to achieve increase in the number of international staff. This requires better communication not only on open positions, but communication on LUT as an employer and working place. Since the first gap analysis, LUT has strained communication of open positions. The open positions are published in LUT external and internal internet, in certain national forums, and what is more important, in selected international forums. In addition to these forums, each recruiting unit or supervisor is encouraged to use his/her own networks, links and forums to distribute information and attract international applicants.

The employer branding is also taking first steps. So far, LUT internet pages have contained very little information about LUT as an employer. In September 2015 new pages were published, both in Finnish and in English. In addition, potential international staff members are taken better into account, as the website contains practical information on moving to Finland and Lappeenranta.

4.2 Orientation (initiation)

Orientation of new employees was one clear development target area for LUT identified in the first gap analysis. LUT has had orientation routines for a long time, even well before the HRS4R, but those routines were not sufficient to serve the successful start of one's employment. After the first gap analysis LUT decided to concentrate on developing orientation routines as a whole. Especially LUT decided to pay special attention to international employees.

Orientation at LUT is divided in two different areas: orientation to one's own tasks and orientation to the work community. Supervisors are responsible for introducing the tasks of new employees. LUT has put effort on helping supervisors to take better care of

orientation by publishing different kind of material, e.g. Supervisor's guidebook and Checklist for orientation. LUT has been organizing Leadership Excellence training for supervisors, and orientation as one of the supervisor's tasks is now better included in the training than before. LUT has started organizing Supervisor info -events to help supervisors to get topical information about things they should know. Topics of these events vary and one of them deals with orientation.

The orientation to LUT work community gives new employees a good overall picture of LUT as a work place, services and benefits. Welcome to LUT -events have been organized since 2011. During the past years, some changes have been made to the schedule and the structure. For example, today one representative of LUT's top management participates in the events welcoming new employees, which makes them feel important and welcome. The events are structured better today and the main focus is on giving employees all the necessary information they need, but especially pay attention to their wellbeing at work and sense of community, which were noticed to be main development targets. Invitations to Welcome to LUT -events are sent by email and by calendar appointment to all the new employees once a month.

In addition, all the academic units have at least one contact person who is responsible for providing orientation to the work community at the academic unit. LUT starts organizing trainings and regular meetings also for the contact persons of orientation later this year.

After the previous Action Plan, LUT started organizing Campus tours for new employees 2-3 times / semester and both in Finnish and in English. Campus tours will help new employees to get to know places, facilities and people of university and the whole campus area. Information about Welcome to LUT -events and Campus tours is published also in LUT's intranet pages. Feedback on these events and tours is important to collect to make sure the orientation routines serve the right purpose.

During the years 2014-2015 LUT has published new material about/related to orientation. The material is delivered to new employees at Welcome to LUT -events and some material even before the events. LUT's Personnel Guide was updated and Checklist for

a New Employee was published. All material is available on LUT's intranet too, in Finnish and in English. An online course in orientation is under development at the moment and will be published later this year. A special orientation material for doctoral students is coming soon too.

4.3 Complaints and appeals

Developing more comprehensive feedback channels for the researchers was one development area for LUT identified in the first gap analysis. As it turned out that especially doctoral students, which are considered as young researchers, did not know the feedback channels they could use. In addition, the role of the work place trustees was unclear to many staff members and the development discussions between the staff members and their supervisors were not executed in a comprehensive manner. Alarming, some researchers reported that they have not had any development discussions with supervisors, although they are supposed to hold annually.

Since the gap analysis, a new feedback channel has been built and published in September 2014 in the university's new intranet. One important feature in the new intranet is social media and the possibility to everybody to publish a message or question which everybody can see and react on. This feature is called LUT stream and it has made it possible to give feedback and inform about any kind of shortcomings in a rather informal way.

It is also important that the staff and students can give open feedback anonymously. The new intranet includes also open feedback channel in which anyone can give feedback or proposals, also anonymously. This open feedback channel has been used actively since September 2014. Every month the received feedback is compiled and the people responsible for the issues brought out give some kind of answer or response to every message. The quality system manager is responsible for compiling the answers and publishing the responses in LUT intranet both in Finnish and in English. The open feedback channel has been used actively and the procedure has been effective since several things have been developed according to the given feedback. For example, the

material and contents in intranet have been delivered more often in two languages due to the active feedback concerning that issue.

At LUT a new electronic tool has been introduced during autumn 2015 for managing and monitoring development discussions between staff and their supervisors. The new tool makes sure that everyone has had the development discussion with his/her supervisor. The development discussion is an important channel to staff members to give and receive feedback. Trainings for supervisors will be organized and instructions on the procedure and the tool have been published in intranet in order to ensure the proper use of development discussions. Also, the role of the work place trustees has been clarified and described clearly in the new intranet.

4.4 Summarizing table

Action	Responsible parties	Schedule	Indicators	Actions done
Recruitment:				
Internal instructions	HR, Quality System Manager	Spring semester 2014	New instructions for recruitment published and delivered to units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions for recruitment published in intranet 2014 • Tenure Track implementation since Jan 2015 • Renewed guidelines for teaching portfolios Jun 2015
Recruitment criteria	Tenure Track Committee, Quality System Manager	Autumn semester 2014	New criteria published in internal instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenure Track recruitment and advancement criteria published Feb 2015
Recruitment process and communications	HR	Autumn semester 2013	Recruitment communications renewed and implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher & teaching positions are published internationally (i.e. in Euraxess) • Electronic recruitment system in use (Laura) May 2015 • Renewal of LUT www-site 'Open jobs' Aug 2015
Orientation:				
Orientation (initiation /	HR	Starting from	New orientation routines and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes made to Welcome to LUT –events

induction) of new employees		autumn semester 2013	schedules implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus tours • More material available • New Personnel Guide published • Supervisor's guidebook published • Orientation involved in LUT's Leadership Excellence training • Checklist for orientation published • Supervisor info -events (orientation is one event) • Special orientation material for doctoral students coming • Training for orientation contact persons
Feedback mechanisms:				
Development discussions	HR Development Director	Year 2014-2015	Increase in the amount of development discussions and constructive feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions for development discussions Aug 2015 • Electronic tool for documentation of discussions Aug 2015 • Leadership Excellence training developed 2014 • Trainings for development discussions starting Aug 2015
Work safety trustee	HR, Work Safety Trustee, Quality System Manager, Intra Team	Autumn semester 2014	Information available in intranet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherent information collected and published in intranet Sep 2014
Feedback channel	HR, Quality System Manager, Intra Team	Autumn semester 2014	A working feedback channel available in intranet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open feedback channel and process in use from Sep 2014

5 Next steps - Action plan until 2017

5.1 Dissemination, exploitation of results

LUT has set the target of being the first university in Finland, which meets the criteria of OECD for entrepreneurial university. To achieve this position it requires innovations, strong support for commercialization of research results from the management and administration of the university, concrete start-up training for researchers and, also, good connections and close cooperation with stakeholders and the surrounding society. LUT is fully engaged in its co-operation with its private and public partners and will create societal impact through this co-operation. LUT will act in close collaboration with Green Campus Innovations Ltd to support the commercialization of innovations.

In the Action plan for entrepreneurship LUT lists the actions required to achieve the above-mentioned target by 2020. LUT will, for example, implement the EU's HEInnovative tool, which describes the characters of entrepreneurial university, and which can be used to assess the success of the university as the entrepreneurial university. Structural reforms will be implemented, like restructuring Innovations and enterprising support service unit to contribute to this target. In addition, to encourage to commercialize research results, special courses for researchers will be arranged on entrepreneurship.

In the Action plan for research LUT has set a target that each researcher will publish at least three scientific articles yearly. LUT researchers are strongly encouraged to make joint articles in an international cooperation. Active authors are remunerated according to common LUT rules.

In addition, LUT will commit to open science (results, data and publication), to cover possible open access channels and will budget open access costs in new project applications. LUT strongly recommends that parallel online versions of all published articles, other publications and dissertations will be published in the LUTPub Repository. Visibility of research results will be increased, in addition to LUT research portal, in targeted social media (e.g. LinkedIn, Researchgate, Google scholar).

5.2 Evaluation / appraisal systems

LUT utilizes evaluation/appraisal system that assesses researchers' professional performance on a regular basis. It is already largely in accordance with The European Charter for Researchers. All LUT researchers have evaluation discussions with their supervisors normally every two years where professional performance (performance appraisal) is always evaluated and demand level (job evaluation, requirement levels) of one's position is evaluated if necessary. Finally demand levels of the positions are evaluated by LUT's Evaluation panel if some changes to the levels are proposed by supervisors. The Evaluation panel is an internal independent committee who e.g. compares the evaluations with other tasks within the same evaluation system and they can ask for additional information and hear experts if needed.

This evaluation/appraisal system is transparent, and all researchers have the same appraisal system, same rules and instructions. At LUT evaluation discussions are documented which makes the system more credible. The same evaluation/appraisal system is used in all Finnish universities which makes it also more widely transparent. In addition to evaluation/appraisal system, employees have development discussions with their supervisors once a year where the above-mentioned themes are also discussed but the salary aspect is not included.

LUT's evaluation/appraisal system takes into consideration researchers' creativity and results, especially those mentioned in the Charter and Code (publications, patents, management of research, teaching/lecturing, supervision, mentoring, national or international collaboration, administrative duties, public awareness activities and mobility). Pedagogical merit, research merit and university community and social merit are the main criteria in the personal performance evaluation model for teaching and research staff and those include all the aspects above. However the evaluation model has been criticized e.g. for ignoring the common student supervising duties (others than thesis supervising) and being too much open to interpretations. In order to build up more comprehensive and explicit evaluation model for teaching duties LUT has created an

evaluation matrix which will be applied in evaluation of teaching and research staff from 2015.

An intensive external evaluation, the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) was executed first time at LUT in 2012. It consisted of monitoring of scientific publishing and other scientific activity of research staff, self-assessment of academic units, bibliometric analysis of LUT scientific publishing and an external assessment by three independent, international committees with highly esteemed experts. The bibliometric analysis was conducted by an external expert and it was based on the data collected from the ISI Web of Science. Thus, RAE played an important role in evaluating the efficiency and impact of LUT research activities and personnel in a transparent and systematic manner. It revealed the status of LUT research activities in comparison with international standards and procedures as well as applicability of research methodology used. The RAE revealed the strengths as well as development targets of LUT's research activities and gave recommendations for future actions. If not exactly the RAE exercise, but similar kinds of research assessment exercises have planned to be conducted in 2017-2020.

Furthermore, from 2015 LUT used an international panel to evaluate internal research funding applications and the competencies of the researchers involved in the applications. Similarly, the external funding program evaluators, like EU Commission and Academy of Finland, give feedback on the applications as well as the competencies of the researcher(s) involved. LUT will start utilizing this feedback more systematically in order to improve the competencies of the researcher(s), but also the quality of the funding applications.

5.3 Supervision and managerial duties

After renewing the university's strategy and consequently the Action Plan for leadership and wellbeing at work, LUT has set the target of being the best university workplace in Finland by 2020 in the ranking of Great Place to Work survey. To achieve this position, LUT has to put special effort on supporting managerial and leadership skills of supervisors during the next few years. In addition to Supervisors' Guidebook published in 2014, more

personal support is needed. New supervisors will be offered induction and training for supervisor's role, obligations and duties. A special mentoring program will be also organized for supervisors. Furthermore, more attention will be paid on the motivation and capability when selecting and appointing new supervisors.

Developing supervisors' leadership skills is important. The supervisor cannot reflect his/her managerial skills nor develop them without a proper feedback system. Therefore, structured and regular feedback will be collected from subordinates, colleagues and from supervisors' own supervisors, by special questionnaires, but also with the help of annual development discussions. The feedback the supervisor receives from subordinates in the development discussions is discussed together with his/her own supervisor, and if needed, a development and training plan or other required measures are defined.

The work plan, the form, which the teaching and research staff has filled annually, has been just a formal administrative routine without a real meaning. The annual work plan will be renewed to serve the real purpose, to help the supervisors to lead his/her team to sought-after results. It will be a part of annual development discussions between researcher and his/her supervisors.

Senior researchers, who work as supervisors for doctoral students, have received little, if any, training on guidance skills, although doctoral students quite often point out insufficient supervising in their feedback. The LUT Doctoral School, Research Funding and Policy -unit and HR together will plan and start new special training to improve the quality and dimensions of doctoral students' guidance.

5.4 Teaching

According to LUT procedures all faculty members have teaching as well as researching duties. Certain stressing can be applied according to one's motivation, competencies and financial resources. Quite often teaching duties are not seen as rewarding and respected as research duties, and often teaching staff has no previous pedagogical training when they start teaching at the university. LUT provides pedagogical training for teaching personnel. Participating in this training is highly recommended, but completing the whole

course (25 ECTS credits) has often been regarded as too intensive and time consuming. According to the new strategy 2020 and action plan of education, the teaching and assessment methods should be more diverse and vary according to the subject, also entrepreneurial pedagogy should be applied on the courses. These objectives require development of the teaching skills of teaching staff, and new kind of courses will be delivered to them. In addition, the workload of common pedagogical training has been evaluated and from the autumn 2015 the smaller pedagogical courses will be delivered and the flexibility of the pedagogical training will be developed. Also, on-the-job-learning will be recognized.

Supervisors are responsible for assuring that teaching workload of researchers is reasonable. This will be taken into account in the trainings of supervisors mentioned in the previous chapter. Also, the ongoing development project of product management of degree programs at LUT aims to optimize teaching workload of researchers.

5.5 Summarizing table of Action plan 2016-2017

Action	Responsible parties	Schedule	Indicators
Dissemination, exploitation of results:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to Open Science 	Performance Guidance and Information Services, researchers	Spring semester 2016	Open access to research results, data and publications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visibility of research results in social media 	Communication, researchers	Autumn semester 2015 →	Increased visibility in e.g. LinkedIn, ResearchGate, Google Scholar

Action	Responsible parties	Schedule	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remuneration of active publishers 	LUT Management	Spring semester 2016 →	Consistent remuneration policy of LUT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for innovations and commercialization; 	Innovations and Enterprising, LUT Doctoral School	Spring semester 2016 →	Innovations and Enterprising Support Service unit exists, Implementation of EU's HEInnovative tool, criteria of OECD met, courses/training on entrepreneurship arranged
Evaluation / appraisal systems:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applying new evaluation matrix in assessment of teaching personnel performance and development 	Heads of academic units, supervisors of academic staff	Autumn semester 2015	Feedback on development discussions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of LUT research activities 	Vice president of research	Autumn semester 2017	Research assessment exercise reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systematized utilization of the feedback on external funding applications 	Research Funding and Policy	Spring semester 2016 →	Feedback reports

Action	Responsible parties	Schedule	Indicators
Supervision and managerial duties:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving managerial and leadership skills; induction, mentoring 	HR	Spring semester 2016	Structured feedback processes, reports of Great Place to Work - surveys
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewal of Leadership Excellence training 	HR	Autumn semester 2016	Good feedback on the training program for supervisors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance training for doctoral students' supervisors 	LUT Doctoral School, Research Funding and Policy, HR	Autumn semester 2016	Improved feedback from doctoral students on guidance
Teaching:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewal of university pedagogy training 	Vice president of education, student services	Autumn semester 2015	Feedback on the training program for teachers Number of participants on new modules
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing product management to all degree programs 	Vice president of education	Spring semester 2016 →	Product management in use

6 Conclusions

The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers give an excellent framework for evaluating the HR measures and processes

related to researchers' careers and working conditions. The HRS4R process has been strengthening and positive exercise to the university. LUT is proud to have the right to use the logo, which has been beneficial in LUT's webpages and in job advertisements. It gives a good impression of LUT as a workplace for all the new employees who are interested in applying for a job at LUT.

In conclusion, identified gaps discovered in the gap analysis in 2013 have been acknowledged and planned actions of the first Action plan has been accomplished during these years. LUT has put a lot of effort on recruitment, orientation and complaints and appeals system. Some actions were delayed compared to original schedule of the first Action Plan, but are now implemented. Naturally, developing the process continues still.

When reflecting the process, from identifying the gaps to implementing actions, everything has been going quite smoothly and there really have not been any serious obstacles. If something to mention, documentation of the process could have been done better right from the beginning. Many people were working on with the actions, but some of the improvements were not documented properly. This caused some extra work afterwards.

The administration of LUT has supported the process and it is obvious that LUT wants to be involved in HRS4R in future too. The process requires time and dedication, but LUT is committed to continue with new strategically important actions.