HR Excellence in Research – Action Plan

Lappeenranta University of Technology

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Abstract

HR Excellence in Research is a logo, a proof of acknowledgement, awarded by the European Commission to research institutions that are committed to carry out the principals of the European Charter for Researchers (from here on "Charter") and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (from here on "Code"). The research institute has to be committed to undergo an HR Strategy for Researchers – strategy process, after which the logo can be awarded. It can be used by the research institute e.g. on its website, and it is a proof of excellent HR procedures for researchers.

To get the acknowledgement, the research institute needs to undergo an internal audit, a gap analysis process, in which the institution compares its current state to the requirements presented in the Charter and Code. Then the institution develops an action plan, which states the actions that will be taken to fill in the gaps discovered. By sending the action plan for the commission to review and approve, the acknowledgement can be attained.

In the gap analysis conducted at LUT some issues were discovered, that were not yet being covered by the university's other development plans. Feedback from the teaching- and research staff was collected and analyzed in order to identify the key problems of a researcher's career at LUT, and based on the analysis, three areas on which to operate were found. Action plan to improve LUT's operations on these areas was formed. The development areas are ***recruitment processes, initiation of new employees and feedback mechanisms.***

The progress on these areas will be followed on annual basis by assessing the operations again to see whether changes have been made, and also by analyzing feedback from the staff to see whether desired outcomes have been reached.

This action plan describes the gap analysis and the actions in more detail, as well as the follow-up and communicating plan for the process.

1   Purpose of the Document

This document is created to describe the Action Plan of Lappeenranta University of Technology (from here on "LUT") to answer to the shortcomings of LUT's processes in reference to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers of the EU commission. In this document we will describe in detail the gap analysis process conducted at LUT and the results based on which the Action Plan has been formed.

2   Lappeenranta University of Technology (LUT)

Lappeenranta University of Technology is a Finnish university doing research and giving education in technology, industrial management and business. LUT has been combining business with technology for over 30 years. LUT employs over 900 people, whereof academic staff more than 500 and support- and administrative personnel almost 400. LUT has approximately 4500 undergraduate students and almost 400 PhD students. In 2012 32,8% of new students were international. Number of international faculty is approximately 13%. (2012)

Our geographical location on the east border of Finland puts us in a great place to expertise in Russian business and have strategic co-operation with Russian universities. LUT's strategic research areas are green energy and technology, sustainable value creation, and international hub of Russian relations.

3   HR Strategy for Researchers in LUT

LUT has been operating according to the Charter and Code in most of the fields for a long time. Similarly, the Finnish national legislation is in accordance with everything the implementation of the Charter and Code requires, therefore presenting no restraints or obstacles for implementing the Charter and Code in the Finnish Universities.

LUT decided to take part in the fourth cohort of the HR Strategies for Researchers – project in autumn 2012. The desire to participate was expressed by the quality

operations unit, and approved by the steering committee of the University and Rector, Ilkka Pöyhönen. After the decision of participation had been made, LUT's Quality Systems Manager attended the first mutual learning seminar in Brussels. After this the first, large-scale survey to obtain information from LUT researchers was conducted.

To have managerial support and decision-making power for the project, a steering group was nominated. As the project is targeted for the well-being of researchers, it was decided that the already existing organ in charge of LUT's strategy's action plan for research is suitable. It consists of researchers, and is led by the vice rector for research. This too was to ensure that throughout the project we would have strong support from the teaching and research staff, and that all the activities that were to take place in the name of this project, were approved by researchers. The decision to name this organ as our steering group proved to be a good one, since the group has been providing many valuable insights to the ideas presented to them as well as given a strong researcher – point of view to the project.

3.1 Gap Analysis process at LUT

3.1.1 Internal policies and existing documentations audit

When LUT decided to participate in the 4th cohort in order to attain the HR Excellence in Research certificate, it was decided that we would try to conduct this process with as little extra workload for the researchers as possible so as to let them concentrate on their research. We started the internal gap analysis process as a desk job by getting acquainted with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. We then went through all the principles one by one and checked whether our internal policies and guidelines match the requirements of the Charter and Code. It was pleasing to see that LUT has already managed to develop its policies to what the Commission would like to see in the university field.

The different internal guidelines used included e.g. our quality manual, our vision and strategy, the operating plans for implementing the strategy, function-specific guidebooks (e.g. the personnel guide), guidelines of the recently founded LUT Doctoral School and

our university regulations. One of the most important sources to describe the present state at LUT was a lately conducted external and international evaluation of LUT's research activities, RAE (Research Assessment Exercise) that assessed the results in research, the facilities and resources. Carefully going through the results of this assessment gave the chance to see what was the state of LUT's research and in what ways we could improve the scientific work in our university by developing and implementing the principles of the Charter and the Code. We also thoroughly combed through the universities' salary structure to see how well the career proceeding and salary raise criteria matches the Charter and Code's principles. We also assessed the evaluation criteria of personal performance (which has impact on the employee's salary) to see to which extent e.g. mobility is acknowledged.

LUT Quality Manual is a university-level guide that describes the policies and operation modes regarding all LUT's operations, including human resources, finances, scientific research and interaction with the surrounding environment. The quality manual also describes the general quality demands and targets, and every support service has their own, more detailed manual also. From the quality manual one can also find LUT's management practices and guidelines how to monitor, measure and develop the level of internal quality. It also describes the internal audits that are conducted systematically to make sure all units pursue and reach the quality targets. In addition to the internal audits, also external ones are conducted according to Finnish legislation every sixth year. The external audits are also conducted on degree programs by accreditation organizations.

At LUT a new vision, values and strategy have been defined in a very co-operative and stakeholder-involving manner in year 2012. Especially the research personnel of the University were committed to the strategy process. The new strategy is being implemented until 2015, and it is called "Together". LUT has managed to further streamline its central targets and areas of expertise. Regarding the HR Excellence in Research –project, the newly formed strategy proved to be valuable: it was relatively easy to check if we're going to the right direction according to the Charter and Code,

since we could go through the operating plans and see which ones of the 40 principles are already being taken care of by the strategy process.

The key development area that we were able to identify from the internal policies was clearly recruitment, which was chosen one of the areas on which we would make improvements. Recruitment is also strategically important for LUT, since we wish to increase the number of international recruits strongly. For this to happen, the recruitment process has to work.

3.1.2 Consulting the teaching and research staff/personnel

At LUT, the 40 principles in Charter and Code were re-organized to fit the logic that the university would use elsewhere in internal development work. We collected the principles in three main categories: increasing the scientific value of research and its impact, recruitment, and working conditions, leadership and career development. After having these factors ready, we turned to our teaching and research staff to see how they feel about these matters.

We had access to feedback and opinions of the teaching and research staff through an online survey and through other feedback that has been collected from e.g. PhD students and feedback questionnaires about our support services (HR, innovation services, communications and so on). We also asked to get notes from meetings that a self-organized and voluntarily based group of PhD students are holding to discuss the challenges of a researcher career, and we could see that the themes they were discussing were very much level with what we could see were the problems from other sources. Also another online survey with only a couple of open questions, kind of an open feedback post regarding the researcher career, gave similar results to the prior sources.

Meetings and discussions with the steering committee of the HRS4R –project at LUT, headed by vice rector of research, have been providing many valuable insights to the ideas presented to them as well as given a strong researcher –point of view to the

project. All members of the steering committee are researchers and represent different faculties and disciplines.

3.1.3 Analysis of the results

In the before mentioned categories (increasing the scientific value of research and its impact, recruitment, and working conditions, leadership and career development), we then picked the principles that were hand in hand with the strategic goals, i.e. we analyzed the principles and LUT's new strategy side by side. We then had 34 principles to work with. These were the ones that we wanted to have opinions from the teaching and research staff for, and we got them as well. Many of the areas that were described in the Charter and Code and that the researchers found problematic, were, however, such that they had already been taken into the strategic operating plans and were therefore already "under construction", e.g. developing our internal communication: 30% of employees were of the opinion that the communication practices in their unit do not serve the purpose of efficient dissemination of information, and 26% felt that internal communication is not on a good level. Also communication on matters that are related to the working conditions of the researchers e.g. the possibilities for flexible working when needed seemed to be lacking, as well as information on decision making, where only 34% of the personnel strongly disagreed that the decision making is transparent and open, and 38% thought that they as personnel can't have any effect on the decision making (13% saying they strongly think they can have an effect).

As a part of the solution that LUT is providing for the problems of internal communication is the complete renewal of the intranet. It will be designed to ensure that communication efficiently reaches the target groups. Another improvement, related to the openness of decision making, that has already been introduced is the opportunity to follow the meetings of the university's executive board – either physically at the meeting or through live broadcast.

Another large-scale development process already in progress is implementing a tenure-track –system to LUT. At the moment there is a four-step researcher career model that is being used, but it is not completely equivalent to the international tenure-track.

Launching the recognized tenure-track system is to make LUT more competitive against other international research universities when top researchers are deciding on where to head next on their careers.

Also the processes and support services to promote LUT's internationalization were already mentioned in the strategic operating plans. The inter-sectorial mobility is mentioned too: LUT will motivate the post-doc researchers to work within industry or as docents in other universities.

We wanted to pick only a few, true and new development targets in our university, and were finally able to extract them from all the development initiatives that were already going on: in addition to recruitment practices, the initiation of new employees and the complaints/appeals mechanisms were discovered to be left without attention in the current, ongoing development programs.

The biggest development needs were indeed in the areas of communication and leadership: supervision needed more attention and especially visible this was in the bad evaluations of the initiation routines by the teaching and research staff – they didn't feel that they were taken care of to almost any extent at the beginning of their employment. Only 23% felt that initiation was well taken care of in our university.

Also when asked about the supervisor making sure that the employee knows the targets and goals of their work, the result was that one out of five wasn't any satisfied, and one out of four were somewhat satisfied. 25% of the teaching and research staff said that they are not getting enough constructive feedback from their supervisor. Regarding complaints and appeals, 34% of staff felt that there are no working mechanisms to bring up difficult issues at work, and 23% said they don't know. When we then looked into the existing ways of giving feedback or bringing up difficult issues, we realized that there truly isn't any easily accessible channel for giving (anonymous) feedback on general or personal issues unless you wanted to turn to the work safety trustee, which is usually only used in more severe cases. The employees have no way of being heard on a university-wide level on challenges they face in their work.

Systematic career advice was also missing (discussions about this have been going on with other smaller Finnish universities to maybe build something together), but this is not as critical as the three development areas that were mentioned before. We decided to work with the career advice on side with our three main development areas in the focus.

We decided to take advantage of the HR Excellence in Research –project and bring these things to the management's attention since they were not given any attention in the operating plans, and they were, actually, also the biggest problems to the researchers. This way we could legitimately include the missing operations to LUT's future developing schemes.

3.2   Action plan

Having found out the main development areas, we have now defined the steps that are necessary to take in order to make improvements in these areas. We have also decided to continue consulting the teaching and research staff in the implementation stage: we will ask the employees' opinions on the best ways to make the changes happen. We can't see there being any point in creating improvement actions from the top down and then hoping our actions will work, and if they won't, then discarding them and maybe trying again later. We believe that when the stakeholders, who are the target group of the improvements, are involved in figuring out the best practices to make the improvements, we will get both more lasting results and also the commitment of the employees to the new practices. We have been considering using a segmented workshop method in this consulting process: we will invite those faculty members that are the best informants to participate, e.g. to plan new ways of initiation we will ask for assistance from people recruited to LUT recently, and to improve recruiting instructions we'll consult the recruiting supervisors.

3.2.1   Recruitment

The largest gap was found in recruiting, in which we at LUT seemed to lack good and accessible instructions. In practice the recruitment policies are in line with the Charter

and Code regarding the transparency, criteria for assessment of the candidates and the selection process. The gap therefore is in the existence of explicit instructions, with which the constancy of the policies now applied when the people in the organization change could be guaranteed As is demanded by law, the recruitment process for professor positions is very clearly described and regulated, but we believe there are a need for as explicit a criteria and instructions for recruitments to all positions – regardless of the phase of the researcher career.

The sub-areas of recruitment that we need to develop are

     a. Internal instructions on recruitment

     b. Recruitment criteria in other than professor positions

     c. Recruitment process from the applicants' point of view

a. Internal instructions on recruitment

It came to our knowledge during the process, that LUT has had more explicit guidelines on recruitment in the past, but at the moment there are only very general instructions for recruiting that are available for the supervisors in the intranet. Especially challenging are the international recruitment situations, to which the instructions are almost non-existent. This is very worrying especially in the light of LUT's strong interest to recruit the best possible staff from the global market. Intranet will be used as the information channel, and a recruitment manual will provided to departments. In the instructions both the assessment criteria and methods to be used in recruitments will be emphasized. Also the administrative process related to a new employee will be explicitly described. This is extremely important in the process of recruiting new faculty from abroad: to be able to make the administrative process as easy and timely as possible for both the recruiting supervisor and the new employee, there has to be certain level of knowledge of all issues related to new hires in the supervisor side, too.

The responsible party for updating the internal instructions will be a group of people in the HR department lead by the HR Development Director. HR Coordinator of International Affairs and Recruitment Secretary will develop the new instructions, and HR Communications manager will be in charge of communicating the new instructions throughout the University. The Quality System Manager will also be a part of the process in a supervising role to ensure that the requirements of the charter and code are embedded in the instructions. The new instructions on recruitment will be drafted during spring (January-May) 2014, and applied from there on.

b. Recruitment criteria in other than professor positions

As mentioned, LUT has explicit guidelines available for the recruitment of professors. There is a certain procedure as well as well-defined eligibility criteria for these positions. The procedure includes an assessment process by objective, qualified professionals who give their statements on the eligibility of the candidate. For other positions, however, there are no other recruitment and assessment criteria than the general eligibility requirements, i.e. a post-doctoral researcher has to have a PhD degree and ability to conduct independent scientific work and the teaching skills necessary to be able to perform the job. We would like to see, that in future there would be more explicit guidelines available for the recruiting supervisors to be able to assess the applicants in a wide range of qualities, including all those mentioned in the Code of Conduct for Recruitment of Researchers. Particularly important for LUT strategically are the criteria related to the applicants mobility experience: since LUT is looking for best candidates internationally and is willing to grow the number of the international faculty, this needs to be actively taken into account in the assessment of the candidates. Also the creativity and level of independence are areas that could be explicitly expressed to have impact in the choice.

Reassessment of the recruitment criteria for other than professor positions is mainly the responsibility of the steering group of HR Excellence in research –project, since this group is also the responsible organ for example for the development of LUT's tenure track and other actions related to research in the action plans of LUT's strategy. Once

defined, the updated recruitment criteria should be published in the new LUT regulations and the next version of LUT quality manual. This work is scheduled for year 2014 during which the tenure track system should have proceeded as well.

c. Recruitment process from the applicant's point of view (communications)

At the moment LUT is not in the league of superior recruiters when it comes to the employer image that is delivered through the recruitment process. LUT has many little things that can easily be fixed and by doing this the recruitment process can be made a natural part of marketing communication. Here information can also be received from the employees that have recently been recruited by asking how they felt about the process and what did they feel was missing. As a start, advertisements can be improved by adding more information about the university and the working conditions there, as well as adding links to see pictures and more information on the local area. Second step that can be improved a lot is the acceptance of the application. As it is now, the applicant gets a simple notification that their application has been received. To this a reminder will be added of the date until which the recruitment is open for applications and also a deadline by which we will contact the applicants, e.g. two weeks after closing the last day to leave applications. Once the selection has been made, the message that is sent out to the applicants not selected will also be more informative: it will have information on the selected candidate and the selection criteria (e.g. the undeniable excellence of the publications portfolio and its fit to our strategic goals). Here also contact information will be given to candidates who wish to know about the selection criteria in more detail, or about the strengths and weaknesses of their own application. The enquiries are to be made within a certain time limit, e.g. one month after receiving the letter, to prevent excessive amount of work to our administration. By planning this communication carefully and keeping it in line with our other external marketing communication, LUT will be able to further develop its employer image and make it more attractive for future applicants. Acquiring an electronic recruitment tool has also been under discussion. All the actions discussed above can be accomplished easily and efficiently through the tool.

The responsible party for enhancing the recruitment process is a team in the HR department. HR Coordinator of International Affairs and Recruitment Secretary will make the suggestions for the content of the advertisements, the acceptance of the application -message, and the post-selection communication. Quality System Manager will have a supervising role to ensure that the improvements are in line with the Code and Conduct. The HR Development Director will execute the implementation. Personnel in the records services will also be involved in the implementation in the practical level, so they shall also have stake in the planning of the new process. The new features will be drafted before January 2014, and implemented from there on.

3.2.2 Initiation

It is a largely recognized fact that initiation routines at LUT have not been sufficient to serve the successful start of one's employment and also to assist commitment to the university, which is preferable when we think about the university level targets and e.g. co-operation in research across disciplines. Despite the highly independent nature of research work, we believe that a university is a workplace like any other, and that same rules of e.g. socialization to work environment apply. Since LUT wants to be a great place to work (www.greatplacetowork.com), both externally recognized and of internal interest, LUT has decided to start putting more emphasis and resources in the initiation of new faculty and staff members. Here too paying special attention to our international faculty members, who will be joining LUT from abroad and moving to a new environment, is considered.

Initiation routines can be divided in two different areas: initiation to work tasks and initiation to the work community. Initiation to tasks is not the largest issue, though it is also hoped that the receiving faculty members and supervisors would provide more support in teaching how certain internal systems work and what are the "house rules". For the need of better initiation to work tasks, LUT has already started to write a new manual for researchers to provide assistance and information on issues relates to research projects, funding, IPR and such. The bigger part of initiation is anyhow the cultural and social aspect. At the moment LUT doesn't really have any kind of university

level, social initiation schemes for the new employees. There is discussion about the university's values and strategy in the initiation process, but a chance to actually get to socialize with one's colleagues is absent – in particular outside the unit level.

There are reasons for pursuing a more social-oriented initiation, and especially one on a university-wide level, across the faculty and unit borders. One of the biggest things that would be enhanced through an updated initiation process is the interdisciplinary co-operation for which LUT has a great starting point as a university that consists of research and education in the fields of technology and business. We believe that by bringing together the new employees from different research disciplines already in the beginning of their career at LUT, bonds for possible future joint research initiatives could be built. It is a lot easier to discuss your work with people you know, even if they represent a totally different field of study. By building bridges between employees the university gives them a chance to discuss and share ideas and get new viewpoints to their work and maybe even create completely new openings through co-operation. Being able to see the world in an interdisciplinary way is one of the key ideas in LUT's strategy "Together".

Another advantage that we can see is derivable from a general, university-level and social orientation process is that it gives the new employees a chance to get to know a wider range of different people than being acquainted with the people in one's own unit only. This leads to a better chance to make friends, since the pool of people one gets to know is bigger. This is crucially important for people coming to work in the smaller units of LUT, where there might be only a few people. There is a chance that the new employee doesn't find anyone to make friends with from their own unit, and crossing the unit borders by oneself can require a lot of effort. Therefore the opportunity to get to know as many different people as possible could be provided by the university as a part of the initiation process. This, too, is one part of commitment to the organization as well as part of general well-being at work.

The way to make this happen in practice is not hard; it requires only some re-organizing of the existing initiation routines. This means mainly that instead of organizing initiation

to one or few people at the time, the initiation will be held once a month or every two months for all the new employees who have started after the last initiation. Also something new can be added: if the focus of the common initiation is in the socialization and commitment, the methods used could be renewed to consist of group activities and discussions, both more formal and informal. Also some sort of a start party can be considered to celebrate and welcome the new science community members. The initiation may also last longer than just one day, maybe even an entire week so that the new employees would really get to know each other and work with LUT's values. At least an initiation lunch every day with the same group during the initiation week should be compulsory. We believe that we will get great new ideas from the faculty members and that way learn which will be the best initiation practices for LUT.

Initiation is being developed by the HR Communication Manager and the Personnel Coordinator. HR Coordinator of International Affairs will be contributing to the initiation of the international staff. The same group is also responsible for gathering and analyzing feedback from the new employees about initiation. The renewed initiation routines are already being tested, starting from October 2nd 2013, and they will be further developed based on feedback from the employees during 2014.

3.2.3 Complaints and appeals

Another important theme that we noticed coming up was the absence of easily accessible channels for the employees' complaints and appeals. Ways and possibilities of bringing up difficult issues and communicating them with the supervisor were found insufficient. We have now identified the ways that exist that can be improved and also started to discuss building completely new channels for employees' complaints and appeals. We believe that in the severe cases the existing channels and procedures for complaints are well functioning, but when it comes to issues that are bothering, but not considered big enough to be taken into the formal process of investigation that will follow if the work safety trustee is involved, there is no channel available. The existing procedures also prevent the possibility of anonymous feedback on e.g. supervisor's unacceptable behavior. In future, when an employee is giving feedback, regardless of the topic, a relevant party will make known that the feedback has been received and

taken into account or somehow reply to the feedback so that the employees know someone is actually listening to them and that their suggestions can have an effect.

The existing channels are:

a. Yearly development discussions with supervisor and evaluation discussions on two year intervals

b. Work safety trustee

And the suggested new channel would be:

c. Anonymous, virtual feedback channel

a. Yearly development discussions with supervisor and evaluation discussions on two year intervals

At the moment LUT doesn't have current data on how well the development discussion format works: e.g. we don't know if all supervisors have these yearly discussions to give and receive feedback. What we do know is that quite a lot of PhD students disagree to some extent with the claim "I have had an annual performance and development discussion with my supervisor(s)". It might be so, that since the salary raise related evaluation discussions are undergone every two years and in these discussions the supervisor actually evaluates the employee's performance, the annual development discussions have fallen out of practice. We would like to actively re-introduce the development discussions as a more informal and easy way to keep up with what's going on at the workplace and also to give a chance to discuss possible negative things with one's supervisor on a regular basis.

HR Development Director will be able to supervise how often development discussions are held in different units. There is a new feature in the university's electronic HR system, which both helps supervisors to have development discussions with their

subordinates and enables the HR Development Director to see whether they are having them or not. This procedure is scheduled to be applied in 2014 – 2015.

b. Work safety trustee

The role of the work safety trustee is such that in cases of e.g. harassment or bullying, there is a safe and reliable way of getting heard and solving these problems. At the moment, though, for example the information about the work safety trustee isn't well promoted, and in our opinion this means of issues solving could be made better known to the employees so that they could easily find access to and approach the work safety trustee when they feel there is a case of harassment at hand. To enhance awareness of the services of the work safety trustee, new and relevant content will be created to the new intranet. The content will be planned by the work safety trustee, the HR Coordinator of International Affairs and the Quality System Manager, and will be delivered to the intranet by the intra development team. The updated information will be available already in the old version of the intranet in spring 2014, and the new intranet is scheduled to be launched autumn of 2014.

c. Anonymous, virtual feedback channel

The problem with the two before mentioned feedback channels is that they don't provide anonymity if needed. There can be situations where it is the supervisor's behavior that is causing the unease to the employee, and it might not be easy to take this up with the supervisor him- or herself. Also it can be that talking to one's own supervisor's supervisor is not the way: the supervisors might have a stronger social bound between each other since they are working on a same level, and therefore the stand to the employee's appeals might be biased. Also there might be future consequences: the supervisor's attitude towards the employee might change and become even negative if the employee complains about the supervisor's behavior. Building anonymous channels for sensitive feedback gives the employee a chance to be heard, but without negative consequences. A party from the HR unit could take surveillance actions based on these complaints and find out what the situation in the unit or group really is, and then forward

the feedback to the supervisor without any certain employee being identified as the one making the original appeal. The solution that we have been discussing is to build a channel to our new intranet that should be launched in 2014. In the existing intranet we have an open discussion forum, but there you cannot stay anonymous, so we wish to change this. This channel will also be used to obtain initiatives and great ideas from the staff members. People are always free to make the initiatives or complaints with their own name in case they wish to be recognized, but the chance for anonymity should exist.

Also the chance for interaction, giving feedback for feedback, will be built to the new channel. We have been thinking about a tick box to express the willingness to get counter-feedback so as to be able to save resources in replying to the feedback we receive. We believe that we will be able to get some great development initiatives from the staff through this channel, but the main purpose of this channel is to make sure that the teaching- and research staff know they are heard in the university management and decision making bodies. Therefor the counter-feedback mechanism is of a big relevance.

Also this channel will be designed by the HR Coordinator of International Affairs and the Quality System Manager, and technically carried out by the intra development team. It is planned that all feedback shall first go to Quality System Manager who will then forward it to the right people for counter-feedback. This action will be completed in accordance with the release of the new intranet in autumn 2014, after which it will be tested and developed based on feedback.

3.2.4 Summarizing table, action plan

Action	Responsible parties	Schedule	Indicators
Recruitment: instructions	HR, Quality System Manager	Spring 2014	New instructions for recruitment published and delivered to units
Recruitment: criteria	Steering group for research, Quality System Manager	Year 2014	New criteria published in internal instructions
Recruitment: communications	HR, Quality System Manager, Records Services	Autumn 2013	Recruitment communications renewed and implemented
Initiation	HR	Autumn 2013	New initiation routines and schedules implemented
Complaints and appeals: development discussions	HR Development Director	Year 2014-2015	Increase in the amount of development discussions and constructive feedback (derived from survey answers)
Complaints and appeals: work safety trustee	HR, Work Safety Trustee, Quality System Manager, Intra Team	Spring 2014	Information available in intranet
Complaints and appeals: feedback channel	HR, Quality System Manager, Intra Team	Year 2014	A working feedback channel available in intranet

3.3 Next steps

3.3.1 Committing the stakeholders

After completing the gap analysis process and designing the action plan, we will proceed to defining the responsibilities and facilitators and committing them to the development process.

We need to commit the people responsible for the recruiting process in all levels: the recruiting supervisors, people responsible for our HR policies, and also the people making the recruitments ads, receiving the applications and replying to them. At the moment we don't yet have and electronic recruitment portal in which we could build the new features, so this part actually means some changes to people's work.

In the field of complaints and appeals the most crucial people to commit are the managers: department managers, deans of the three faculties and the university top

management. These are the people who the complaints and appeals need to reach, and they need to be willing to answer to people's questions as well as offer reasoning for things our faculty members don't understand and that cause confusion. Of course there will be a mid-member in the process who is responsible for finding the right person to target the complaints and appeals to, so that every issue finds the right person to be able to provide answers and help. Just by letting the staff know that the correct person has received information about their complaints is already a lot better than the feeling that no-one ever even hears, let alone listens, to what the faculty members have to say.

3.3.2 Communication strategy

To be able to commit the people needed to implement the HR Strategy for Researchers, we will need strong support for the action plan from the top management. Informing the staff and the stakeholders is to be done by the management.

We have decided to use a name of our own invention to promote and communicate about the HR Strategies for Researchers. We will call it "Mind Your Researchers" which is in line with our general marketing language (e.g. "Open Your Mind", "Open Your Drawer", "Green Your Mind", "Mind Your Green", "Open Your Eyes") and will therefore blend in as a part of our everyday actions, not something that seems "outsourced" and alien.

We will also make a plan for follow-up communication activities, which will include a newsletter –style, brief notes about what actions are taking place in accordance with the "Mind Your Researchers" –initiatives. We have a skilled marketing and communications department, and will be using their expertise in promoting the HR Strategy for Researchers.

Once we know we have the commitment needed, we will start consulting our teaching and research staff on how to bring the ideas to practice, probably through the workshop method discussed before. We already have named the person responsible for renewing the initiation, and the new methods will be designed in co-operation with her. We also have a committee designing our new intranet as one large part of enhancing the internal

communication, and the complaints and appeals –mechanisms will be developed with them so that there is a feedback channel built in to the intranet.

3.3.3 Schedule

Timeframe for implementing the action plan is one year from the commission's approval, during which we should be able to make the development ideas into existing practices and establish them. This means that in year 2015, which is our strategy check point, we would also be able to assess the success of the HR Strategies for Researchers at LUT, and if needed, make the adjustments and/or start the next development projects if new needs appear or new strategically critical areas bring some other issues to focus.

The first thing to fix is the initiation. Recruitment activities require somewhat smaller amount of work than the initiation, and therefore we wish to hold the initiation as our highest priority. LUT's recruitment activities are already relatively well established and only need some adjustments, so they should be in order in a relatively fast schedule, starting from two to four months for the application process to be in order to approximately six months to have the assessment criteria clarified throughout the university. Initiation will take a few months also to start running in the new format. The complaints and appeals –channel will be established at the same time with the new intranet, which is in the beginning of year 2014. To make it known, however, may take some time and active promoting.

3.4 Follow up –plan

To ensure that the HR Strategy for Researchers will be realized in LUT and that the actions will be held up, there will be a follow-up plan. The commissions suggested schedule for follow-up is at least every two years, but at LUT there is an intention to have regular, annual follow-ups. This will be done by calling the steering group together and assessing the operations of the time to see whether the actions in the action plan have been implemented and also whether these changes in our operations have had an

effect that could be seen in the surveys and questionnaires conducted among the teaching- and research staff.

If no desired changes are happening, LUT has a chance to make corrective actions on a faster schedule. Similarly, if new issues in the researcher career are rising, they can be attended timely.