

HRS4R - Human Resources Strategy for Research
Self-assessment report to the European Commission
November 2015

1 UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ: STRATEGIC APPROACH AND FACTS

1.1 Mission and vision

The mission of the University of Jyväskylä (JYU) is to conduct significant, world-class research in its core fields and to train competent, motivated experts who possess lifelong learning skills in various fields. JYU interacts with society in an active and responsible manner in regional, national and international contexts. JYU's vision for 2030 is to be an internationally renowned multidisciplinary research university and one of the world's leading universities in the fields of learning and teaching.

1.2 Profile and core fields

JYU combines high-level competence in education, natural sciences, humanities and social sciences, sport and health sciences, and economics and business administration into a multidisciplinary entity. This profile is strengthened through the following core fields:

- learning, teaching, and the learning and growth environments that support development
- basic natural phenomena and mathematical thinking
- languages, culture and communities in global change processes
- physical activity, health and wellbeing
- information technology and the human in the knowledge society.

1.3 Research objectives

JYU features world-class research groups in its core fields. Research is typically problem-based, an approach that removes boundaries between disciplines, enables the study of multidisciplinary issues that are both societally and scientifically significant, and increases the impact of research.

Attractive research environments draw the best scientists in the core fields to Jyväskylä. The research infrastructure is internationally competitive and accounts for the needs of different disciplines. Researchers have good opportunities to work internationally and to further their careers. Doctoral students are closely integrated into research communities and receive multifaceted training.

1.4 JYU facts

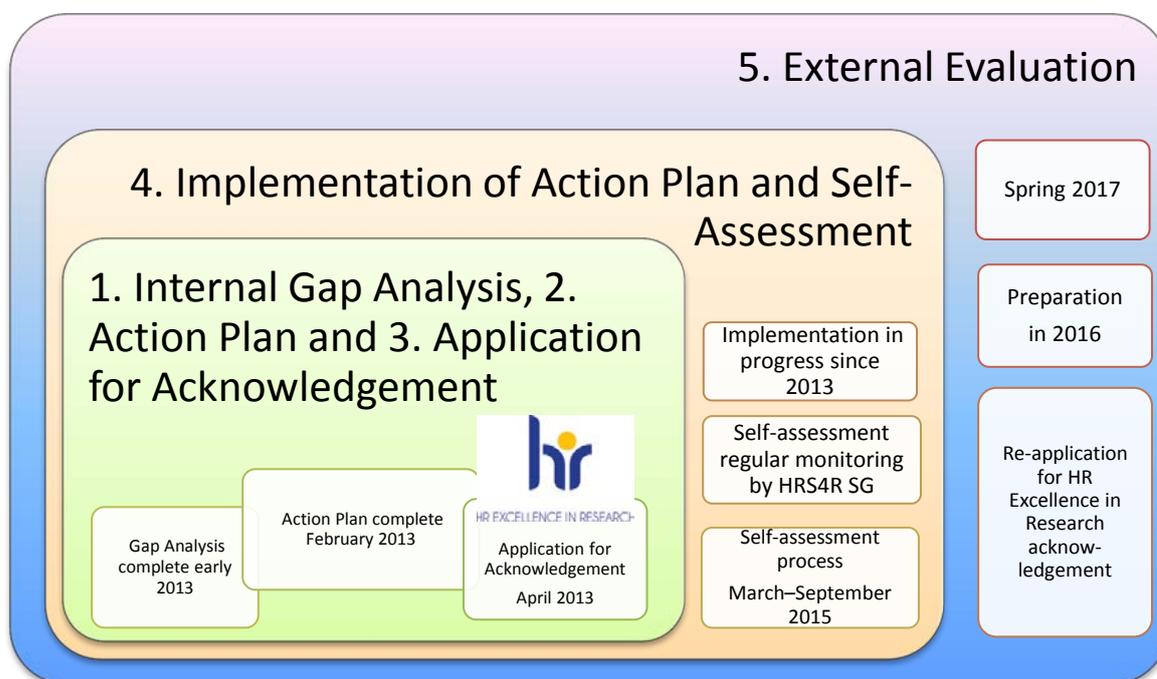
The University of Jyväskylä consists of seven faculties and seven independent institutes. It is a mid-sized Finnish university, with 14,500 students and a staff of 2,600. Researchers (research and teaching staff) comprise 56% of the staff. In 2014, JYU awarded 1,450 master's degrees, 1,200 bachelor's degrees and 160 doctoral degrees. JYU's annual budget is 208 million euros, of which 67 million is supplementary funding. JYU is ranked on the following ranking lists (with the rank in brackets re-

spectively): Academic Ranking of World Universities - Shanghai ranking (401–500), Times Higher Education World University Ranking (351–400), QS World University Rankings (319), CWTS Leiden Ranking (362) and U.S. News & World Report Best Global Universities Ranking (465). In 2014, JYU published 1,553 peer-reviewed international publications.

2 THE HRS4R BACKGROUND AT JYU

The University of Jyväskylä has been participating in the European Commission Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) process since 2012. In November 2012, it committed officially to the HRS4R process and to the principles laid out in two European documents: the European Charter for Researchers (Charter) and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Code). Collectively these are referred to as the C & C. The HRS4R Steering group (SG), nominated by the Rector in March 2012, guides and supervises the HRS4R process and its implementation at JYU. The HRS4R SG includes research (a professor, a university lecturer) and administrative (research support, HR and quality assurance) representatives and is chaired by the Vice-Rector.

Figure 1. Implementation of the HRS4R process (five steps) at JYU



3 SELF-ASSESSMENT AT JYU

At the University of Jyväskylä, self-assessment are performed according to an excellence evaluation model (EFQM), which is based on key performance indicators, as well as on results from customers, personnel and society. This framework provides an office, a department or an enterprise with the opportunity to assess the existence and significance of its enablers, including its strategy, leadership, people, stakeholder work, resources and operational processes.

The objectives of the self-assessment were

1. to produce a self-assessment for the European Commission as the fourth step of the HRS4R process,
2. to produce efficiency information about the HRS4R process for the external evaluation (step 5), and
3. to produce information for updating the Action Plan
4. to produce information for improving the professional and career development of researchers.

Three dimensions were taken into account when carrying out the self-assessment at JYU:

1. the actions in the HRS4R Action Plan drafted in 2013,
2. the contents of the documents *The European Charter for Researchers* and *The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*, and
3. the assessment model (EFQM).

First, the HRS4R steering group has evaluated and monitored the implementation of the Action Plan throughout the implementation process. The status report of the action plan has been regularly processed in the SG meetings since spring 2013. Second, in addition to the SG monitoring, an actual internal self-assessment was organised as a one-day self-assessment for researchers (held on 10 March 2015). This self-assessment day included a questionnaire, group discussions and conclusions. The assessment was mostly based on the perspectives of the participants regarding how they see the principles of the Charter & Code in practice at JYU.

In order to orientate themselves for the self-assessment – both the questionnaire and group discussions – the self-assessment participants received the following background information:

- the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for Recruitment
- the JYU HRS4R Action Plan, and
- the state of progress of the Action Plan, from December 2014. The state of progress document includes information on the status of each action.

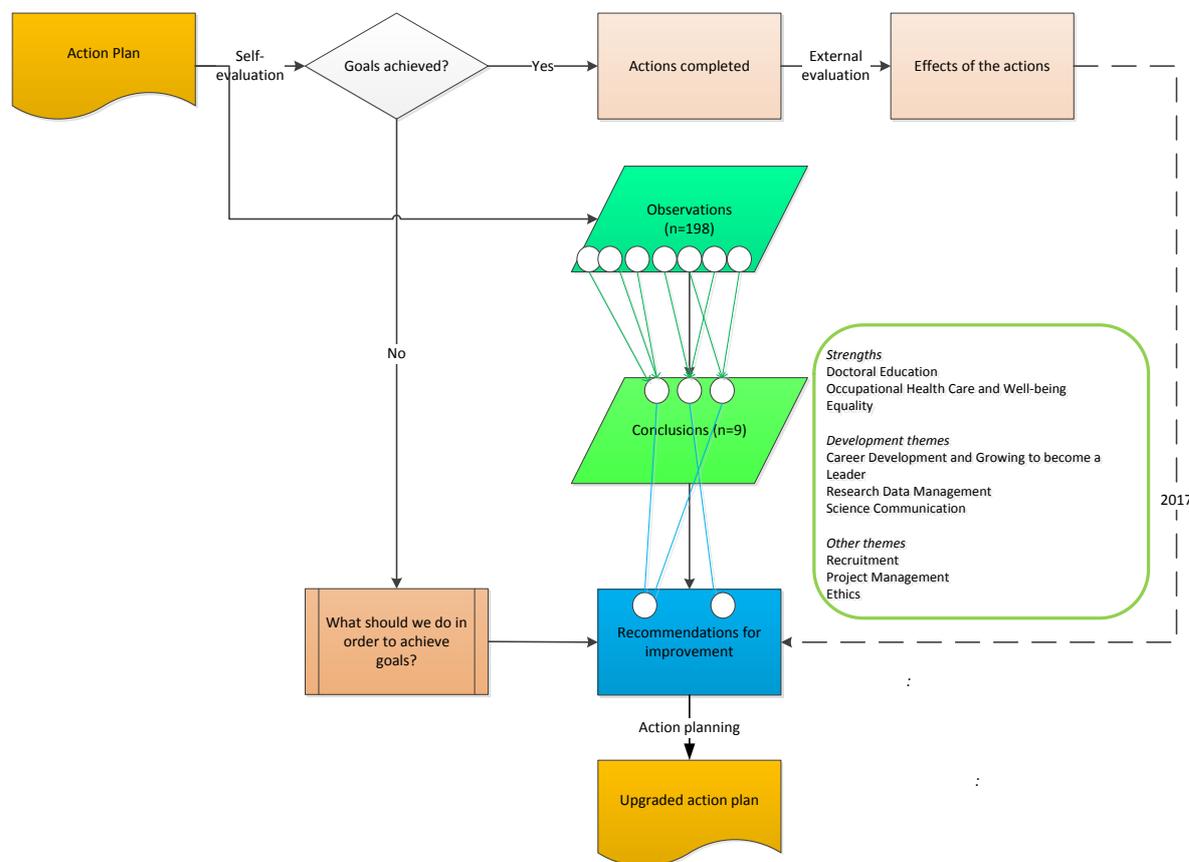
3.1 Process and participants

The process of the one-day self-assessment is described in Figure 2.

Four (4) researcher groups participated in the self-assessment day and discussed different themes arising from the HRS4R action plan of the University. The discussions provided strengths and improvement ideas for each theme. The self-assessment groups consisted of researchers from various research career levels, including professors, senior researchers, post-doctoral researchers and doctoral students as well as deans and heads of departments, members of the JYU Science Council or the JYU Graduate School steering board. In addition, representatives from faculty service centres participated in the discussions. Each discussion group was chaired by an HRS4R SG member and the secretaries representing University Services recorded the minutes. One of the groups included representatives of international employees. In order to promote successful discussions, questions on each theme were prepared and distributed beforehand.

There were 198 recorded opinions, called observations, under the categories ‘Strengths’ or ‘Improvement Areas’, emerging from the group discussions. The self-assessment participants grouped the observations into nine conclusions. Based on the conclusions, JYU will revise its HRS4R action plan.

Figure 2. The self-assessment process conducted for analysing the results



3.2 Self-assessment results and decisions on improvement actions

3.2.1 HRS4R Steering Group monitoring

A total of 32 actions were identified in the JYU HRS4R Action Plan, and they fall under two main categories: (1) Ethical and professional aspects, and (2) Employment and recruitment. According to the Action Plan timetable, 29 actions were to be commenced during 2013, two actions in 2014, and one action in 2015. In other words, most of the actions were scheduled to start in 2013. However, delays in the schedule have occurred, mainly due to limited resources. Out of 32 actions in total, 26 (81%) have been completed to date. Two actions not yet started will be included in the revised Action Plan. Even though the HRS4R Steering Group reports an action in general as completed, it emphasises that systematisation as well as training related to the actions are still needed.

3.2.2 Self-assessment questionnaire results

An online questionnaire was prepared for the self-assessment participants (n = 25) in order to examine the opinions of the informants on whether JYU had completed the actions planned for the HRS4R. The questionnaire, prepared both in Finnish and English, included 11 questions with 61 structured statements in total, and one open question. Altogether 15 (60%) participants completed the questionnaire. The major results show that JYU provides information and training on ethical principles for publishing as well as on general ethical principles, and training and orientation on principles regarding various researcher-related aspects, but only a few respondents had actually participated in the training. The majority of the respondents knew that JYU has a tenure track, a research period and a research mobility system as well as a Handbook for International Staff. In addition, procedures for complaints, appeals and conflicts and whom to contact in these cases were well known. The respondents also considered that JYU has provided sufficient information on health, safety and salary issues and has given opportunities to participate in decision-making bodies at the unit level. In addition, JYU has recently supported researchers' international mobility to a greater extent than it has earlier. But the respondents considered that the evaluation principles of the tenure track and the understanding of CV variations need to be communicated better.

3.2.3 Observations from group discussions

The self-assessment groups identified altogether 198 observations, which were grouped into nine conclusions, as seen in Figure 3. Each of these themes includes development actions which form JYU's revised Action Plan, as of October 2015.

Figure 3. Strengths, development themes and other themes identified in the self-assessment



Developing a Research Career and Position

Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)

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Actions to be completed from the original action plan

Action	Schedule	Revised schedule	Phase
To define the roles and responsibilities in managing disputes and conflicts	2013-2014	2015-2016	In progress, has to be systematised
Recognising new possibilities in enhancing researchers' skills in project management	2013	2015-2016	In progress, more possibilities to be proposed
Information to be provided on existing rules, procedures and standards on the recognition of qualifications	2014	2015-2016	To be completed
To assess the training actions in terms of accessibility, participation and effectiveness	2014	2015-2017	In progress, to be completed according to the revised schedule
Systematic career guidance possibilities to be sorted out	2015-2016	2016-2017	Included in new actions in more detail (see action 12)

New development actions

	Action	Schedule	Responsible
Doctoral Education	1. JYU will determine whether the study data system can be developed to meet the needs of doctoral student supervision and monitoring or be replaced with another system. In the short term, the observed technical problems of the supervision document will be solved in cooperation with IT Services. JYU must ensure that the supervision document is used at every faculty.	2016-2018	IT Services, Strategic Planning and Development, Graduate School Steering Board
	2. JYU will offer systematic and carefully planned training for supervisors, which begins already in the early stages of the researcher career and allows and encourages researchers to grow into the role of a supervisor. Good practices will be informed and delivered. See action 9.	2016	HR Services, Strategic Planning and Development
	3. JYU will determine how the connections to surrounding society, industry and research networks as well as the opportunities to connect with different stakeholders could be improved and further developed together with the faculties. The best practices will be shared.	2016-2020	Graduate School Steering Board

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New development actions				
		Action	Schedule	Responsible
Occupational Health Care and Well-being	4.	JYU continues to keep its facilities at state-of-the-art levels and develop them in order to ensure the best possible workplace safety, according to the Facility Programme.	2015–2017	Facility Services
	5.	Intercultural and multicultural issues and viewpoints are taken into account in the orientation of new international staff members to increase their knowledge and understanding of Finnish working life. Similarly, the intercultural and multicultural awareness of the Finnish staff will be increased through systematic staff training.	2016–2017	HR Services
Equality	6.	Equality in communication: International staff members are encouraged to learn Finnish (depending on the type and length of their employment, and in accordance with JYU's Language Policy) and their Finnish language studies are supported by their supervisors and departmental colleagues in order to improve their integration into the departmental community. In department-level communication and at meetings, it will be ensured that all participants have an equal opportunity to participate and understand even if they do not speak Finnish.	2016	HR Services, departments and independent institutes
	7.	The availability of certain employment-related benefits (e.g. staff training, sports, health care) and other services (e.g. travel grants) to university community members with different statuses are decided on and clearly communicated.	2016	HR Services
Career Development and Growing to Become a Leader	8.	JYU has to offer opportunities to develop leadership competences on all levels of researcher careers.	2016-2018	HR Services
	9.	The various needs and alternatives for the realisation of the development of supervisory skills with different approaches (e.g. learning by doing, training and strengthening pedagogical ways of thinking) will be described. The basic studies in university pedagogy (YPE 10 + 15 ECTS) will be developed to ensure that training for supervisors (e.g. student counselling, the personal study plan, supervision of academic theses and career guidance) is easily available to everyone acting in a supervisory role.	2016	HR Services
	10.	The development of researchers' professional identity, especially at stages 1 and 2 of the research career, will be supported by offering diverse opportunities for developing skills and gaining merit (e.g. developing pedagogical, administrative or supervisory skills or engaging in development or quality assurance duties as part of doctoral training or the departmental activities).	2018	HR Services
	11.	JYU will aim at developing a more efficient working environment by ensuring that researchers have time reserved for research in their working plans, also taking into account education responsibilities (e.g. research period systems, changing research as the first entry in the working plan form). Additionally, the university-level meetings and events will be scheduled systematically for certain days of the week so that it is possible to reserve uninterrupted	According to the Strategy Action Plan	According to the Strategy Action Plan

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New development actions				
		Action	Schedule	Responsible
		time for research during the working week.		
	12.	Systematic career guidance possibilities will be organised and made visible. Career guidance will be established as part of doctoral student supervision and the operation of follow-up groups.	2016-2017	HR, Graduate School Steering Board
	13.	The guidance plan of JYU has to be taken into account in the HRS4R development. See actions 2 & 9.	2016-	HR Services
Research Data Management	14.	The archiving of research data and materials will be developed by describing the archiving process in accordance with the Principles of Research Data Management at the University of Jyväskylä. In addition, there is need for archiving guidelines for the JYU community. Data and materials that have already been moved to archives must be organised to ensure that the researchers can use them when necessary.	2016	Science Council, Digitalisation Project Steering Group
	15.	Technical issues related to working from home will be surveyed in cooperation with IT Services to ensure the best possible procedures for telecommuting and training opportunities to develop teleworking skills according to the remote work guidelines.	2016	IT Services
	16.	Continuous training on research data management will be offered through the cooperation of IT Services (data maintenance, information security), the University Library (open science and research) and Research and Innovation Services (requirements set by the funding bodies and Personal Data Act, intellectual property rights).	2016-2017	HR Services
	17.	The University's processes and procedures will be prepared for the development of open science, taking into account the needs of different disciplines.	2016	Science Council
Science Communication	18.	The definition of the science communication process needs to be further clarified.	2016-2017	Science Council, Communication Services
	19.	Indicators will be developed to measure the volume and impact of science communication.	2016-2017	Science Council
Recruitment	20.	Information (i.e. information about Finnish society, Jyväskylä and the benefits of working for JYU) to motivate prospective applicants to submit an application for an open position will be added to the position announcements (open recruitment being the primary recruitment method at JYU). In addition, a link to the international staff guide will be added to the position announcements, and other ways to make the international staff guide more visible need to be	2016	HR Services

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New development actions				
		Action	Schedule	Responsible
		established in order to improve the orientation of new employees and to fully utilise the guide's value as a motivator to apply for a position.		
	21.	Tenure track including titles and the research career system will be described and communicated in a more transparent way, taking into account the possibilities for interuniversity mobility within the research career model.	2016	HR Services
Project Management	22.	JYU ensures the project management competences of researchers. In project management, a distinction will be made between the management of research resources and the management of research project practices. The latter will be part of the supervision of doctoral students, as the writing of a research plan.	2016-2017	TIP, HR Services
Ethics	23.	The University of Jyväskylä Ethical Committee will support the research community, for example, by communicating and highlighting useful practical examples and case studies. In addition, the distribution of work between different ethical committees (University of Jyväskylä Ethical Committee, Ethics Committee of the Central Finland Health Care District, Kuopio University Hospital Committee on Research Ethics) will be clarified. The researchers must maintain their skills and understanding about current ethical issues and be prepared to tackle new ethical issues that may emerge in the near future.	2017-2018	Ethical Committee, HR Services
	24.	There is a need for orientation regarding the opportunities for training in ethical issues that will be continuously available for beginning researchers and supported by more senior researchers.	2016-2018	Graduate School Steering Board, Strat. Planning and Development