

Recommendations from workshop with reference group

28. November 2018, Campus Drammen

In October 2018 the University of South-Eastern Norway (USN) endorsed the Charter & Code principles and commenced the HRS4R process in order to qualify for the HR Excellence in Research certification.

*A project organisation was established consisting of a **steering committee** with members from top level research and HR management and a **working group** with senior advisors from HR and R&D Dept. as well as a researchers.*

*In order to ensure the quality and relevance of the process, researchers from all four of USN's faculties, with a variation in gender, nationality and career-stage (R1-R4), were involved in the process as a **reference group**.*

The following recommendations were the outcome of a full-day workshop with the reference group. The workshop was hosted by the USN Rector, Professor Petter Aasen, and had guest lecturers from The Research Council of Norway, The Academy for Young Academics and Universities Norway.

The workshop commenced with guest lectures focusing on the conditions for researchers' careers within and outside academia, opportunities and challenges of mobility and the employers' responsibility to put in place arrangements, which supports both career development and mobility. Thereafter the topics were elaborated on in smaller groups and plenary discussions.

The aggregated recommendations were the following

1. The USN should to a larger extent operationalize strategic goals concerning researchers' mobility, especially internationally.

Recommended measures:

- a. Establishment of a "**Mobility – team**" providing technical and practical support and advice for both in-coming and out-going researchers (ex. Travel and accommodation expenses, related to visas, insurance, work permits, tax, housing, social services etc.)

- b. Establishment of an **intranet/Internet portal** with relevant information, links forms, and support for both foreign researchers coming to USN and for resident researchers considering international mobility (ex. general information, where to get support, whom to contact, planning advice etc.)
 - c. Establishment of a **“Mobility-handbook”**
 - d. Establish arrangements for **systematic staff exchange** (both long and short-term) with universities abroad with whom the USN has a strategic partnership
 - e. Consider various **incentives** for international mobility in order to recognise the value of mobility. Mobility should be rewarded and reflected in remuneration, as well as in time and resource allocation for R&D activities.
 - f. Systematically advocate for **mobility-planning** at all stages of researchers’ careers, and especially for early-stage researchers, by highlighting USN’s strategic international ambitions and expectations during recruitment, appraisal-meetings and work-planning
 - g. **Mobility experience**, both internationally and inter-sectorial, should be explicitly listed as valued qualification in job announcements
 - h. **Gender equality and life-phase** issues should be duly taken into account in mobility- and career planning
 - i. Systems to safeguard the **quality and outcome** of international research mobility should accompany the expected increase in numbers of staff on exchange
 - j. The USN should seek to cooperate more closely with relevant partners within **industry and the commercial sector** concerning mobility and staff exchange
 - k. **Credits** should be automatically given for longer periods abroad in the doctoral program without having to apply for this
2. The USN should to a larger extent put in place systems, procedures and practical support for holistic, long-term career planning for researchers

Recommended measures:

- a. Establishment of **career counselling** for research employees, especially early-stage researchers
- b. Enhance the focus on **career planning as a topic in appraisal-meetings** and work-planning

- c. USN should consider implementing **career-planning tools** (i.e. Vitae)
 - d. USN should take special care of **PhD students' working environments** since this period in a research career may be especially vulnerable as professional hardship, temporary employment and establishment of family often conjures. It should be clarified whether PhD students should be treated as employees or students for instance in terms of psychosocial support, career advice, social events etc.
3. Ensure availability of **language courses** both in English (for out-going researchers) and in Norwegian (for in-coming researchers).
 4. **English language versions** of all webpages, regulations and policies both on Internet and intranet
 5. Establishment of **on-boarding / introduction programs**, which includes social networking and practical issues for all, and especially foreign researchers, coming to USN
 6. **Sabbatical – arrangements** should be systematized through a clearer internal policy
 7. Establishment of **mentor-arrangements** facilitating exchange of knowledge between experienced and early-stage researchers as well as including foreign researchers professionally and socially
 8. The role and responsibility of **research teams** should be clarified and enhanced as a professional and social network for in-coming researchers to USN
 9. Practical issues such as **office facilities** and **housing** should be made readily available for in-coming researchers
 10. All job announcements should as a rule be published on the **EURAXESS website**
 11. USN should establish **website listing all research activities** and enhance its **research profiling** activities on the Internet
 12. Early-stage researchers should to a larger extent be prioritized in terms of **time and resources** dedicated to research activities as opposed to teaching activities
 13. As researchers' attendance at **conferences** is crucial for international networking and research collaboration, more funds should be allocated for this purpose internally at USN