

Recommendations from workshop II with reference group

23. August 2019, Campus Drammen

Based on the recommendations from the first workshop in November 2018, the working group developed a preliminary rough draft for GAP analysis as well as suggestions for measures to the Action Plan.

This first outline was presented at the annual 2-day USN Research and Internationalisation Seminar in January 2019, which summons all heads of department and research managers as well as PhD Program Coordinators. The following discussions provided valuable input, which enabled the working group to further develop the drafts for the GAP analysis and Action Plan during spring 2019.

This part of the process was carried out through smaller workshops in the Department for Personnel and Organisation, The Department for Research, Innovation and Internationalisation, and in continuous collaboration with researchers from the reference group.

After the steering group had endorsed a second draft for GAP analysis and Action Plan the reference group was gathered for a second full-day workshop in August 2019. Here the main findings of the GAP analysis and the suggested measures for the Action Plan was presented and discussed during group work and plenary sessions.

The following recommendations for further revision of the measures in the Action Plan where the outcome of the workshop with the reference group of researchers on the 23rd August 2019.

1. With reference to the suggested action to improve the **recruitment procedures** at USN:
 - a. The lengthy recruitment process for academic positions is both a blessing and a curse as it ensures thorough, transparent and merit baser assessment of all candidates, while risk losing good candidates in the process. Measures should be taken by Department for Personnel and Organisation to **maintain the interest** of all candidates during the process
 - b. The planned e-learning training program in recruitment for managers should be accompanied by seminars and include training in online interviews using **Skype**

- c. The Department for Personnel and Organisation should, through assistance and guidance, ensure that the departments announce positions on the **EURAXESS portal**

2. With reference to the suggested action to improve the USN system for **career development**:
 - a. The new individual career development plans, which will accompany the appraisal interview template, should have a **long-term perspective**, for instance 3, 5 and 10-years

3. With reference to the suggested action to evaluate the system for **time and resource allocation for R&D activities** for USN researchers:
 - a. Variations in practises for time allocation for research activities at the different faculties at USN should be standardised in a transparent and institutionally **uniform** system
 - b. The USN should **distinguish between research positions and lecturing positions** at all stages from recruitment to appraisal interviews and career plans, while equally valuing and rewarding **both career paths**
 - c. In order for the resources allocated for research activities to reflect USN's strategic ambitions, the level **of time and resource allocation for research** activities should be increased and structured on a more long-term basis (for instance 40 % for 3 years). Rather than **researchers having to apply** annually for time allocation to conduct research, this should hence be a fixed, predictable portion of research positions, and accompanied by an institutional **transparent system** for measuring how the given time allocation for research activities is utilized
 - d. Either an individual **per annum** or an **institutional financing arrangement** should be established **for seminar attendance**
 - e. Usage of **master students as research assistants** should be increased and in line with an institutional uniform standard

4. With reference to the suggested actions to improve the acknowledging and valuing of **mobility** at USN:

- a. USN should establish uniform practice for **financing of research mobility at an institutional level**, ensuring predictability and equal opportunities for all researchers
 - b. Departments should improve practices concerning valuing and disseminating the experience and knowledge acquired by **researchers returning** from international, inter-sectorial or inter-disciplinary mobility
 - c. The USN Staff Mobility Team should also provide **practical assistance** in terms of housing etc. in addition to information and formal administrative services

5. With reference to the suggested action to avoid exclusion and discrimination concerning **language** barriers:
 - a. Availability of language courses, not only in Norwegian for researchers from abroad, but also in **academic English** for those not sufficiently fluent in English
 - b. USN Communication Department should make more resources available for **copyediting and proofreading** of English texts

6. With reference to the suggested action to revise the templates and guidelines for **appraisal interviews**:
 - a. The templates for appraisal interviews should ensure that not only the formal line manager, but also the **leader of the respective researchers' research group** should be included in the appraisal process

7. With reference to the suggested action to strengthen the functioning the **research groups** at USN:
 - a. Acknowledging that the research groups ideally should function as a professional "home" for researchers, especially for those early in their career, as well as a social network for newly appointed researchers, especially from abroad, these groups should have **clear mandates** and structures
 - b. USN should ensure procedures in place for ensuring that all researchers, especially those early in their careers, has access to a senior researcher as **mentor**

8. With reference to the suggested action to improve **dissemination** of research results and activities:
 - a. Research groups leaders should get training in online publication and be authorised to **publicise directly** on their respective webpages
 - b. **Training for researchers** in research dissemination should be improves through frequent courses
 - c. Department for Communication should establish an **online research magazine** publishing news about USN research results and activities