Improved Action Plan HR Excellence in Research 2025

New actions

Below you will find the new actions that will be added to the improved action plan in the HR Excellence in Research process. The action plan also contains the actions from the current action plans that have yet to be completed and those that have been completed. The previous actions are at the end of this document.

The actions have been developed using input and feedback from, workshops, subject and departmental meetings, a survey, conversations with researchers and administrative support functions, and meetings with the university management.

The input has been collected over the course of this year. We have ensured that researchers at all stages of their careers R1 to R4 and research administrative staff have been involved in this process. This approach provided a wide perspective of opinions and help defined and shape the needs addressed in the actions.

The Charter & Code principles are available at http://www.kau.se/hrexcellence, which may help to clarify the basis for the actions.

New actions from 2025 improved action plan		
Action 26 - Clarify and strengthen the assessment of collaboration merits in recruitment and promotion	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Conduct a review of current recruitment and promotion procedures to analyze how collaboration merits are communicated, interpreted, and applied by applicants, reviewers, and committees. Based on the findings, we will clarify and or revise existing indicators, instructions, and templates. Expected outcome: Improved transparency and consistency in the assessment of collaboration merits, and increased awareness among applicants and reviewers of how such merits are valued in academic evaluations. This action combines HR Award process, SUHF framework and CoARA.	12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 14. Selection (Code) 15. Transparency (Code) 16. Judging merit (Code) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)	26.1 Q3 2026 26.2 Q2 2027 26.3 Q4 2027 26.4 Q1 2029
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	Pro-vice chancellor for research, supporting units GIO, HR	26.1 Collect and evaluate current policy document, processes and supporting documents. 26.2 Evaluate current practice in regards to collaboration merits. 26.3 Report results 26.4 Implement revisions to policy documents and processes as needed.
Action 27 - establish a virtual EU support office as an integrated One-Stop-Shop	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Develop and implement a Virtual EU Support Office (V-EUSO) as an integrated, cross-departmental one-stop-shop that provides coordinated support for the entire EU research and innovation project lifecycle. The V-EUSO will unite the expertise of HR, Grants and Innovation Office (GIO), Legal, Library, Finance, Communication, IT, Campus Services, and Procurement. Expected outcome: IT solution for case management. Improved coordination and communication between administrative units. Reduced duplication and faster response times for researchers. Enhanced quality and compliance of proposals, contracts, and project management. Strengthened institutional capability and visibility in EU programmes.	2. Ethical principles 5. Contractual and legal obligations 6. Accountability 23. Research environment 28. Career development 38. Continuing Professional development 39 Access to research training and continuous development	27.1 Q2 2026 27.2 Q4 2026 27.3 Q4 2027 27.4 Q4 2028
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	Pro-vice chancellor, coordinated by GIO, engagement from all other central administration units.	27.1 Define governance, membership, and workflow model for the Virtual EU Support Office.

		27.2 Pilot integrated operations and launch one-stop
This action will also connect with the Research Inventory & Hub and the Cross-Disciplinary Forums.		27.3 Fully implement
		27.4 Evaluate institutional and researcher satisfaction.

Action 28 - Strengthen visibility of gender mainstreaming	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Increase visibility of achievements in gender mainstreaming. Summarize, documents, and communicate results and progress achieved regarding the four development goals of Karlstad University's Gender Mainstreaming Plan**.**	10. Non-Discrimination 24. Working conditions 27. Gender Balance	28.1 Q4 2026 28.2 Q4 2028
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
Expected outcome: Increased visibility of progress and achievements in Karlstad University's Gender Mainstreaming Plan. Greater awareness among staff and researchers of gender-related goals, achievements, and available support structures.	HR	28.1 Summarize and document the achieved progress. 28.2 Communicate the progress

Action 29 – Audit and increase awareness of research infrastructures	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Increase awareness and coordinated use of Karlstad University's research infrastructures by mapping existing laboratories, digital tools, and shared services. Make this information openly available to support collaboration and resource efficiency.	23. Research Environment 24. Working conditions 38. Continuing Professional Development	29.1 Q2 2026 29.2 Q2 2027 29.3 Q4 2028
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
Expected Outcomes: Comprehensive and accessible overview of existing research infrastructures. Increased internal visibility and shared use of resources. Improved coordination and efficiency in research support and planning.	FASG, Deans, Infrastructure Coordinators	29.1 Complete inventory of labs, digital tools and shared services. 29.2 Publish the Infrastructure overview in a accessible format 29.3 Evaluate infrastructure use and identify opportunities for increased sharing and collaboration.

Action 30 - Clarify language expectations and support researcher integration and mobility	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Conduct a review of current language expectations in recruitment and employment processes to clarify language expectations to better support research collaboration, teaching, and researcher mobility.	12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 14. Selection (Code) 15. Transparency (Code) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)	30.1 (Q1 2026) 30.2 (Q4 2026) 30.3 (Q2 2027) 30.4 (Q4 2028)
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
Expected Outcomes: Clearer communication of language expectations linked to research and teaching duties. Improved mobility and integration of international and Swedish researchers. Stronger participation of international researchers in academic, social, and administrative contexts.	Deans, HR, Pro-vice chancellors.	30.1 Evaluate current practice in regards to language expectations. 30.2 Revise if needed 30.3 Implement changes.

Action 31 - Explore the potential of AI tools for research and research support	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Explore the potential use of AI tools to enhance research and research support processes at Karlstad University. The focus will be on identifying areas where AI can provide value while ensuring ethical use, data protection, and institutional readiness. Expected Outcomes: Improved understanding of where AI can strengthen research and administrative workflows. Identification of ethical, legal, and technical requirements for AI implementation. Increased institutional awareness and competence regarding responsible AI use. Informed decision-making on future investments in AI-based research support.	7. Good practice in research 23. Research environment 24 Working conditions 38. Continuing professional development 39. Access to research training and continuous development.	31.1 Q2 2026 31.2 Q2 2027 31.3 Q1 2028 31.4 Q4 2028
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	FASG, GIO	31.1 Conduct exploratory study and stakeholder consultations on AI applications for research and support 31.2 Map ethical, legal and data management considerations. 31.3 Identify potential pilot areas and resource implications. 31.4 Present recommendations for future AI adoption or pilot initiatives.

Action 32 - Strengthen networks and community-building for doctoral and early-career researchers	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Reintroduce common doctoral course as means to enhancing social meeting places and networks for doctoral students and early-career researchers to promote inclusion, idea exchange, and community-building. This action also includes mapping existing initiatives, evaluating, and piloting innovative approaches that foster informal and cross-disciplinary dialogue. Expected outcome: Increased interaction and sense of community among doctoral and early-career researchers. Improved wellbeing and reduced isolation through peer support mechanisms. Strengthened interdisciplinary understanding and collaboration readiness. Enhanced awareness of internal resources and career development opportunities.	23 Research environment 24. Working conditions 28. Career development	32.1 Q2 2026 32.2 Q3 2026 32.3 Q1 2027 32.4 Q3 2027 32.5 Q4 2028 32.6 Q4 2029
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	Deans, supporting units HR, GIO	32.1 Collect current Meeting places. 32.2 Evaluate current practices 32:3 Reintroduce common doctoral course 32.4 Pilot innovative approaches and spaces for exchange 32.5 Institutionalize those that show evidence of success. 32.6 Evaluate

Action 33 - Strengthen cross-disciplinary collaboration and forums	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Initiate a coordinated process to identify, map, and better utilise internal and external forums and dialogues that connect researchers across faculties and with external partners. The aim is to build a shared understanding of available forums and how these can be strategically leveraged to enable collaboration, innovation, and joint funding opportunities. This action also seeks to develop structured interaction spaces (both physical and virtual) that promote knowledge exchange, interdisciplinary problem-solving, and partnerships with industry, public sector, and civil society. Expected Outcome: A comprehensive overview of forums. Improved collaboration pathways linking to new research and funding opportunities. Sustained cross-disciplinary dialogue and co-creation forums that foster innovation and career development.	9. Public engagement 23. Research Environment, 28. Career Development, 32. Accountability 38. Continuing Professional development 39. Access to research training and continuous development	33.1 (Q2 2026) 33.2 (Q4 2027) 33.3 (Q2 2028) 33.4 (Q4 2029) 33:5 (Q4 2030)
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	Deans, supporting units GIO,	33.1 Initiate process mapping internal and external networks, and collaboration spaces. 33.2 Conduct analysis of utilisation gaps, access barriers, and opportunities for integration. 33.3 Pilot infrastructure based collaboration forums and thematic dialogues. 33.4 If needed develop strategic framework and guidelines for shared communication, and coordination. Institutionalise new practices across departments 33.5 Institutionalise successful models

Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Ethical and professional aspects
2019 version
KAU considers ethical and professional elements of research highly important: this is the foundation on which all research activities are built. Research is not an isolated activity; it provides value for society and therefore society must be able to trust research. Research conducted at KAU must comply with the highest ethical standards, and this also ensures that the investment made in research by the government or other funders is used accountably and beneficially. Structures and procedures to support research are continually under development. Some activities are already underway, but are also included as activities in the action plan. One example is the continuous development of Open Publishing and Open Data routines and support. The support and structure for aspects related to research ethics had recently been reviewed and changes have been made to enhance the support offered to researchers. The pre-award structure within KAU functions well and is strengthened by good interoffice relations to support research. The focus for the next development is on the post-award structure.
2022 version
KAU considers ethical, research integrity and professional elements of research highly important: this is the foundation on which all research activities are built. Research is not an isolated activity; it provides value for society and therefore society must be able to trust research. Here is where research integrity and the demonstration of its importance within research institutions is vital. Research conducted at KAU must comply with the highest ethical and research integrity standards, this ensures accountability and beneficial utilisation regarding the research investments made by the government or other funders. Structures and procedures to support research are continually under development. An example of this is the initiation of the qualification process connected to research collaboration. Some activities in the current action plan are prioritised and already underway. One example is the continuous development of Open Publishing and Open Data procedures and support: as these areas have been widened, it is now considered in the Open Science context. The pre-award structure within KAU functions well and is strengthened by good interoffice relations to support research. A quality council at KAU was initiated and has developed and adapted a Quality Assurance model for research. A focus for the past three years and is the coming 2 years will be the development of the post-award structure and pulling the many strands together creating a one-stop-shop perspective for the researchers in relation to research support. We have further strengthened our support tools and guidance around gender mainstreaming and a new gender policy has also been developed.
2025 version
KAU considers ethical, research integrity and professional elements of research highly important: this is the foundation on which all research activities are built. Research is not an isolated activity; it provides value for society and therefore society must be able to trust research. Here is where research integrity and the demonstration of its importance within research institutions is vital. Research conducted at KAU must comply with the highest ethical and research integrity standards, this ensures accountability and beneficial utilisation regarding the research investments made by the government or other funders. Structures and procedures to support research are continually under development.   Since the last assessment, KAU has made strong progress on previous actions, including strengthening ethical support structures, and developing procedures for Open Publishing and Open Data within an Open Science context. The Quality Council now leads a continuous programme of research quality reviews, promoting a robust quality culture across all disciplines.   Current and future actions focus on formalising the post-award structure, integrating EU Open Science policy into the research support framework, and advancing digital tools, visibility, and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Each faculty now benefits from dedicated ethical advisors, while the Ethical Committee, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, ensures coherence and accountability.   KAU's clear procedures for managing ethical and professional issues, together with recognition by the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ), confirm its strong alignment with national and European standards for responsible, high-quality research.   In the next phase actions will contribute to further improvements for ethical and professional aspects.   Virtual EU-support office, strengthening visibility of gender mainstream, finding potential new tools for research support and strengthening cross disciplinary collaboration.

Recruitment and selection *
2019 version
The recruitment process is a well-functioning area. The university's Regulations for the Appointment and Promotion of Teaching Staff include clear qualification requirements and assessment criteria. These are supplemented with the Procedures for the Appointment and Promotion of Teaching Staff, which give clear instructions on the different parts of the process, including expert review and the other preparatory elements. In recent years, work has been done to further clarify and improve the recruitment process. A strategy and action plan for the recruitment of teachers and researchers was drawn up under the leadership of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, with three strategic goals: 1) Competence, 2) The Recruitment Process and 3) Attractiveness. The action plan includes activities that have gradually been addressed and led to the current well-functioning process. For example, training in the area of OTM-R recruitment, including interviews, is now offered on a regular basis with the aim to reach all staff engaged in the recruitment process. The Strategy and Action Plan is valid through 2019, and will need to be either updated or be adapted into a Recruitment Policy without a specific timeframe for implementation. During the process of identifying and analysing gaps in the OTM-R checklist it, was discovered that some areas still need further attention, as discussed in the OTM-R section below.
2022 version
The recruitment process is functioning well and has improved due to the adjustments made in the last year. The University's Appointment procedures for the Recruitment and Appointment of Academic Staff include clear qualification requirements and assessment criteria. These are complemented with the Supplementary procedures for the Recruitment and Appointment of Academic Staff, which give clear instructions on the different parts of the process, including expert review and other preparatory elements. In the last 2 years, there have been efforts to further clarify and improve the recruitment process and to align the procedures with the Charter & Code and other relevant policies. A strategy and action plan for the recruitment of teachers and researchers was drawn up under the leadership of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, with three strategic goals: 1) Competence, 2) The Recruitment Process and 3) Attractiveness. The action plan includes activities that have gradually been addressed and led to the current well-functioning process. For example, training in the area of OTM-R recruitment, including interviews, is now offered on a regular basis with the aim to reach all staff engaged in the recruitment process. The development of a digital recruitment course is also underway to make sure everyone who's in a selection committee has the adequate training for the defined role. The University Strategy and Action Plan has been updated and is valid through 2023. Some examples of goals in the updated strategy is to expand the number of doctoral students, attract more international researchers and work actively on attracting researchers of underrepresented genders across the research subjects / areas. For the next phase of development, the board and management will revisit these efforts and explore the possibility of expanding the strategy to cover the wider perspective of the full talent management process—recruit, develop, manage and retain. A doctoral student steering document has been developed alongside templates for advertising doctoral student positions, in order to standardise and enhance the quality.
2025 version
Karlstad University maintains transparent, fair, and merit-based recruitment and appointment procedures that ensure the highest standards of quality and integrity. Clear qualification requirements and assessment criteria are defined in the University's Appointment Procedures and complemented by detailed Supplementary Procedures covering all parts of the process, including expert review and evaluation. Since the last assessment, KAU has further strengthened its recruitment framework and introduced a new Policy and Action Plan for Skills Supply 2025–2027, which replaces the previous recruitment strategy. This new approach takes a long-term and holistic view of competence management, encompassing the full cycle of attracting, recruiting, onboarding, developing, retaining, and restructuring staff. Future actions will focus on clarifying and strengthening the assessment of collaboration merits in recruitment and promotion (Action 26) and clarifying language expectations to better support researcher integration and mobility (Action 30). All developments are aligned with the CoARA principles and the SUHF framework, ensuring coherence with national and European standards for responsible and inclusive recruitment.

Working conditions *
2019 version
Swedish legislation ensures working conditions and social security of a high standard, and state employees enjoy additional benefits. Karlstad University understands that good conditions are vital to attract and retain competent staff. Therefore, KAU has been implementing new recruitment procedures centred on employment stability. This has created a cultural shift in moving away from renewing multiple short-term contracts as a standard practice, towards a higher percentage of permanent contracts, resulting in the lowest percentage of non-permanent contracts for academic staff among Swedish universities. Doctoral students have good conditions with contracts and relatively high salaries, when compared internationally. Karlstad University, like the other state higher education institutions in Sweden, was tasked by the government with gender mainstreaming its operations. The purpose of gender mainstreaming is to contribute to meeting the government's gender equality objectives. Research was considered one of the focus areas. The plan is now in its final stage and the evaluation to date suggests that the plan has had a positive impact throughout the organisation. The norm-critical recruitment improvements can for instance also be seen in the OTM-R context. The gender perspective is now also considered in applications for internal and external research funding. To continue the positive impact, a new plan will be developed to build upon these substantial benefits and the awareness that resulted from the current plan. This process has its own strategy and action plan and will not be included in the HRS4R actions. A key area for development is the agreed process of implementing a structure for internal peer review and for encouraging a cultural move towards greater constructive collegial criticism of research ideas and research in general. This issue will also be addressed as part of the ongoing Research and Education QA process. There are many opportunities for career development within KAU, and good support is provided for external development opportunities also. However, it has been discovered that the information on professional development is not easily accessible to researchers. A website will be developed to enhance accessibility. Career advice service for students has been available at Karlstad University for many years. However, for doctoral students as well as other researchers this service should be more embedded in the traditional research environments through collegial support and supervision. This might not be the experience of all researchers, depending on both different subject traditions as well as individual situations. The current programme to provide collegial support to newly employed academic staff will therefore be extended to include all academic staff. The programme must also consider openness and transparency. Co-authorship is considered important, but KAU does not provide clear guidance on this issue. The traditions vary between different subject areas and at the moment co-authorship is only reflected in bibliometric scores and is not considered in a wider perspective. The University Library will, in cooperation with the faculties, develop guidelines on co-authorship.
2022 version
Swedish legislation ensures working conditions and social security of a high standard, and state employees enjoy additional benefits. Karlstad University understands that good conditions are vital to attract and retain competent staff. Therefore, KAU has been implementing new recruitment procedures centred on employment stability. This has created a cultural shift in moving away from renewing multiple short-term contracts as a standard practice, towards a higher percentage of permanent contracts, resulting in the lowest percentage of non-permanent contracts for academic staff among Swedish universities. Doctoral students have good conditions with contracts and relatively high salaries, when compared internationally. Karlstad University, like all public higher education institutions in Sweden, was tasked by the government with gender mainstreaming its operations. The purpose of gender mainstreaming is to contribute to the fulfilment of the government's gender equality objectives. Research was considered one of the focus areas. The gender mainstreaming action plan has now been completed and the evaluation to date suggests that the plan has had a positive impact throughout the organisation. The Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming is now implemented and incorporated with the University Strategic Plan. We are currently working continuously with sustained focus areas that are reviewed annually. At the moment, these are: difference in career possibilities for men and women, education and gender, decision processes and gender budgeting.

The gender perspective is now also considered in applications for internal and external research funding. This process has its own strategy and is incorporated with the University Strategic plan and will not be included in the HRS4R actions. We have also developed a Gender Policy, in effect from January 2022.

A key area for development is the agreed process of implementing a structure for internal peer review and for encouraging a cultural move towards greater, constructive collegial criticism of research ideas and research in general. This work is ongoing and some small-scale models have been tested. It is important to note that these efforts are for supporting individuals and groups, and as such lack regulatory demands. As stated, it is about building a culture of peer review.

There are many opportunities for career development within KAU, and good support is provided for external development opportunities also. However, it was discovered that the information on professional development was not easily accessible to researchers. A website has been developed to enhance accessibility, but further improvements are planned. These efforts are university-wide, since much training and many of the courses associated with professional development spread across departments and faculties. One issue that needs to be considered is the trainings and courses for R1 researchers, these need a higher degree of consolidation, approach being considered and unified where possible across the faculties.

Career advice service for students has been available at Karlstad University for many years. It was identified that for doctoral students as well as other researchers this service should be more embedded in the traditional research environments through collegial support and supervision. The current programme to provide collegial support to newly employed academic staff has been extended to include all academic staff and has been implemented throughout the university. Since the writing of the initial phase we have redefined the career advice understanding through engagement with external partners that are also going through the HRS4R process. The focus is currently on ensuring that there are clear guidelines regarding promotion and advancement, as well as on ensuring researchers understand the wider dynamics of their career.
Co-authorship is considered important, but KAU does not provide clear guidance on this issue. The traditions vary between different subject areas, and at the moment co-authorship is only reflected in bibliometric scores and is not considered in a wider perspective. The University Library has, in cooperation with researchers and the faculties, started and advanced the work with developing guidelines on co-authorship and its value.

2025 version

Swedish legislation ensures high standards of working conditions and social security, and state employees enjoy additional benefits. Karlstad University continues to recognise that good conditions are essential to attract and retain competent staff. Employment stability remains a core priority, with one of the lowest shares of fixed-term contracts among Swedish universities. Doctoral students also benefit from favourable contracts and internationally competitive salaries.

Building on the achievements of the previous Gender Mainstreaming Plan and the Gender Policy introduced in 2022, KAU continues to work in line with national gender equality objectives, the Swedish Higher Education Act (Chapter 1, Section 5), and the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5. The current national mandate (2023–2025) focuses on consolidating previous results and highlighting completed activities, with evaluation planned for 2026.

The cultural shift toward open and constructive collegial peer review continues. Small-scale models have been tested, and Action 18 now anchors this process within the quality assurance model. Seminars such as *Open Peer Review: Benefits,* Challenges*, and Best Practices* have helped strengthen awareness and practice.

Career development opportunities have expanded. The professional development website is fully implemented, templates for appraisal talks have been improved for both teaching staff and doctoral students, and questions related to career progression have been strengthened. Research leadership training has been introduced, and further consolidation of R1-level training across faculties remains a priority. Updated promotion and advancement guidelines now provide clearer pathways for researchers at all stages.

Guidelines for co-authorship have been developed and implemented, and the ongoing review of the research evaluation process confirms that co-authorship and researcher mobility are positively recognised in expert assessments.

Several new actions such as establishing a virtual EU Support Office as a one-stop shop, strengthening visibility of gender mainstreaming, mapping research infrastructures, exploring AI tools for research support, and promoting cross-disciplinary collaboration will further enhance the working environment and ensure that KAU remains an inclusive, supportive, and forward-looking research institution.

Training and development *
2019 version
The area of Training and Development is in need of further attention, since 4 out of 5 principles are considered not completely fulfilled. During doctoral education, there is a clear supervision structure. However, after obtaining a PhD, the structure disappears and early stage researchers are expected to develop into independent researchers all by themselves. Depending on the research environment in which a researcher is involved, opportunities for guidance and access to research training may not be clear to individual researchers and are therefore not used to a desirable extent. Some managers may not have efficient tools for following up on performed activities in appraisal talks. There is a wide variety of research training and professional development opportunities available. However, the information about these opportunities is neither easily accessed by researchers, nor recorded to facilitate follow-up. KAU has a number of actions that will not only be helpful to early career researchers, but to all researchers employed by KAU.
2022 version
Training and development is an area that has been improved significantly through actions as well as addressing the culture of research training and professional development when introducing HRS4R to research groups, departments, university leadership and administrative units. We also have a more proactive approach working with the faculty and individual researchers in regards of research training and professional development. Doctoral student supervision training has been developed to incorporate a more informal approach that allows supervisors to engage and exchange knowledge beyond the formal qualification. Peer review has been partially addressed through the Quality Assurance Model, as well as the through internal work with co-authorship addressed in a separate action. However, more work needs to be done in this area. We have introduced frameworks that highlight the importance of professional development, particularly since the paradigm of having a wider perspective is important to external funders and for engagement with wider society. Keeping records of research training activities and development in the current HR system was not possible due to technical and data stewardship issues. Consequently, we are currently looking for other possibilities and/or another platform to register participation in research training activities. However, some training activities are recorded in the HR system, specifically the qualifications required for certain positions and promotions. However, we want to be able to register a wider range of training activities. Internal reviews of offerings from research perspectives have been made at all levels. We have also engaged directly with the R4 researchers to ensure their training and development are considered and either current training, extended to incorporate advanced element and new training opportunities for this target group developed. We have also nurtured the culture that promotes training and development and how that is directly related to career advancement and future employability as well as research mobility. The mentoring side of supervision is still in need of development; this is in its initial stages and will be developed over the coming 2 years both within training and structurally. KAU has a number of actions that will not only be helpful to early career researchers, but to all researchers employed by KAU along with research support staff.
2025 version
Training and development at Karlstad University (KAU) have continued to evolve, building on earlier HRS4R actions and the strong cultural shift initiated since 2022. The new Policy and Action Plan for Skills Supply 2025–2027. This new approach takes a long-term and holistic view of competence management, and

strengthen retaining, developing and restructuring across career stages and ensure alignment with institutional goals for research excellence, innovation, and impact.

A key advancement is the Leadership for Researchers programme, now delivered at three levels: an introductory stage, an institutional and governance-focused level, and an advanced programme on strategic research leadership. The latter two levels are offered in collaboration with other Swedish universities, encouraging institutional learning and cross-sectoral exchange.

In parallel, the CTRIVE (Competence Training for Research, Innovation, and Valorisation Excellence) programme is under full review and will be relaunched in 2026 with updated content reflecting emerging needs such as open science, responsible AI, and knowledge valorisation. Targeted initiatives have also been introduced, including mental-health and wellbeing workshops for PhD candidates and university-wide AI training tailored to researchers and educators.

Initial work on mentoring has begun, supported by Action 18, but further development is required to embed it within a broader culture that values mentoring as essential to research quality, career progression, and community building. Strengthening incentive structures for training participation and recognition remains a priority, ensuring that engagement in competence development is visibly valued and rewarded.

Although some training activities are now recorded in the HR system, a dedicated digital platform for tracking participation has not yet been realised and will be addressed in the coming period.

New Actions 27, 29, 31, and 33 will further advance this agenda by enhancing access to EU-related training and support, expanding digital and AI competence, and promoting cross-disciplinary collaboration—all contributing to a richer, more connected, and future-oriented research and professional development environment at KAU.

Previous Actions, completed and with extended time

Actions from 2019 action plan		
Action 1	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Formalise the Post-award Structure and Procedures and embed them within the Research support structure The post-award structure and procedures need to be formalised and embedded into the overall research award support structure. This will engage several support offices at the University. The Research Administration Steering Group (Sw: FASG group), which has just completed a review of the pre-award support structure, will continue the development of the post-award structure. The Post-award Structure with support notes and outlining rules and regulations for the management of projects will be incorporated within the Research Handbook and the overall research support structure.	4. Professional attitude	1.1 Q1 2020 1.2 Q3 2020
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	Grants and Innovation Office through the FASG group (FASG: research adm steering group)	1.1 Development and decision of new post-award structure 1.2 Implementation of new structure
Action 2	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Create a Quality Assurance Model for Education and Research Researchers at Karlstad University follow good practice concerning accountability (6) towards the University as an employer, as well as to the interests of funders and tax-payers in using their money well. Methods of data collection and analysis are open to internal and external scrutiny. Research is evaluated through designating strong or excellent research groups and appraisal talks on an individual level (11). Researchers have access to a research environment (23) with specialised equipment, labs, databases, internal and external professional opportunities, language training, office spaces, up-to-date IT facilities, etc. The multifaceted roles of senior researchers (37) are demonstrated within the research collegiate and the doctoral supervision collegiate. However, the gaps in all four of these principles show that although there is research collegiality in relation to internal peer review, seminars, research discussion groups, and idea reflecting forums that function very well in some research areas, this is not standard practice throughout the University. Currently, the University is working on its Research Quality Assurance Process, as required by the Swedish Higher Education Authority (Sw: Universitetskanslerämbetet, UKÄ). Broadening and structuring the peer-review process will be an important component of these efforts. A proposal has been distributed for a round of internal consultations, which will end on the 30th of September 2019. The QA model for education and research is to be decided, and academic departments need to be informed and implement the Quality Assurance model. Implementation is considered fulfilled when the first evaluation using the QA model is completed.	6. Accountability 11. Evaluation/appraisal systems 23. Research environment 37. Supervision and managerial duties	2.1 Q4 2019 2.2 Q4 2019 2.3 Q4 2020
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	Vice-Chancellor for decision, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for information about decision, Deans for implementation	2.1 Decision 2.2 Information about decision 2.3 First evaluation of research unit/group using the QA model completed
Action 3	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Update the Recruitment Strategy	12. Recruitment	3.1 Q4 2019 3.2 Q2 2020

		3.3 Q3 2020
The Strategy and Action Plan for the Recruitment of Academic Staff needs to be updated with actions in line with the HR Excellence in Research Charter & Code	**Responsible unit**	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	HR Office	3.1 Review of current Strategy completed 3.2 Proposal of new Strategy/Policy 3.3 Decision and implementation

Action 4	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Consolidate information about training and professional development opportunities through a web page There is a wide variety of research training and professional development opportunities available. However, the information about these opportunities is neither easily accessed by researchers, nor recorded to facilitate follow-up.	28. Career development 38. Continuing professional development 39. Access to research training and continuous development	4.1 Q4 2019
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
An external website with information on opportunities for professional development is under construction. The Research Handbook needs to be updated with the relevant information.	HR Office responsible for external website. Each unit responsible for relevant information through links.	4.1 Website completed and launched

Action 5	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Register of participation in research training activities There is a wide variety of career development opportunities available. However, the information about these opportunities is neither easily accessed by researchers, nor recorded to facilitate follow-up.	28. Career development 38. Continuing professional development 39. Access to research training and continuous development	5.1 Q4 2019 5.2 Q1 2020
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
Development activities as well as qualifications can be recorded in the employee system, of which some already are. Research training activities that need to be recorded must be identified and recorded continually. This action will focus on Grants and Innovation Office research training activities.	HR Office and Grants and Innovation Office	5.1 Platform/Structure in HR system completed 5.2 First research training session recorded

Action 6	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Implementation of collegial support for researchers Increase the awareness of and implement the programme for collegial support for newly employed researchers (dnr C2017/650) at all Departments and evaluate impact on the researchers**.**	30. Access to career advice 40. Supervision	6.1 Q1 2020 6.2 Q1 2020 6.3 Q1 2021
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	HR Office is responsible for expanding and communicating the programme to Heads of Departments at the faculties. Heads of Departments at the faculties are responsible for communicating and implementing the programme among senior and early stage researchers.	6.1 Expanded programme decided 6.2 Roll-out/Information about decision to faculties 6.3 Evaluation of the programme

Action 7	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Embed aspects of career advice/professional development for researchers in the appraisal talk	28. Career development 30. Access to career advice 38. Continuing professional development	7.1 Q1 2020 7.2 Q2 2020

	40. Supervision	
Gaps that have been identified include the lack of structured career advice and how professional development opportunities are utilised, recorded and evaluated. Other actions have focused on the accessibility and registration of completed research training activities. Aspects of career advice and professional development opportunities for researchers must also be naturally embedded in the appraisal talks and followed up. The support, in terms of the guidelines and template for documentation in preparing and conducting the appraisals, does not include career advice and is not customised for specific staff categories, such as researchers. Therefore the guidelines on employee performance appraisal interviews as well as the template for documentation will be updated to include these issues	**Responsible unit**	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	HR Office	7.1 Guidelines and template updated 7.2 Information to Heads of Departments

Action 8	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Embed the career advice and information structures within the HR Office and External Relations Office to reflect career advancement and wider employability Evaluate the transnational skills programme to enhance the employability of researchers (Transpeer). Transpeer promotes the wider employability of researchers and research supervisors alongside their skills development. This ensures that researchers receive career advice to allow their advancement within the research structures at Karlstad University. Relevant elements of this project will be embedded in KAU to address wider employability through career advice. Relevant information on Career advice is also available on our New Staff webpage.	30. Access to career advice	8.1 Q1 2021 8.2 Q2 2021
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	External Relations	8.1 Review impact of Transpeer 8.2 Consider the possibility of developing a proposal

Action 9	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Develop guidelines for co-authorship There is a variation in praxis between different disciplines across Karlstad University. Clear guidelines for co-authorship will be developed in liaison with the faculty boards and the ethics committee, taking national and international praxis into consideration. Implementation will include imbedding co-authorship guidelines into the doctoral student course, the doctoral student supervision course and the Research Handbook.	32. Co-authorship	9.1 Q1 2020 9.2 Q3 2020 9.3 Q1 2021 9.4 Q2 2021
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	University Library	9.1 Internal analysis and national and international comparisons presented to faculty boards and the ethics committee 9.2 Internal consultation on co-authorship guidelines 9.3 Decision on guideline for co-authorship 9.4 Information and implementation of new guidelines

Action 10	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Implement continual development opportunities for doctoral student supervisors Attendance of the doctoral supervision course is mandatory to become a docent (reader or associate professor). However, the gap analysis shows that researchers who supervise doctoral students experience a	37. Supervision and managerial duties	10.1 Q1 2020 10.2 Q2 2020 10.3 Q4 2020
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	Faculty boards	10.1 Proposal discussed in faculty boards

need for continuous development opportunities so that they can share and take part of other's experiences and learn from them.

Formalise a structure where doctoral supervision is an ongoing process where practice and skills can be shared.

| 10.2 | Decision on implementation |
| 10.3 | Roll-out /first event implemented |

Action 11	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Establish the impact of the doctoral supervision course on doctoral students	37. Supervision and managerial duties	11.1 Q1 2023 11.2 Q2 2023
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
The Graduate Student Association (GSA) has pointed out that the impact of the doctoral supervision course on doctoral students has not been established. The Centre for Teaching and Learning that is responsible for the course needs to connect with the Graduate Student Association and discuss how the impact should be assessed. Once the impact has been assessed, it also needs to be communicated to participants in the course, those currently supervising doctoral students, and the GSA.	The Pedagogical Development Unit (Sw: *Universitetspedagogiska enheten*, UPE)	11.1 Impact established 11.2 Established impact communicated to involved parties

Action 12	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Ensure that KAUs Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming is implemented and meet HRS4R requirements	10. Non discrimination 11. Evaluation/appraisal systems 27. Gender balance	12.1 Q1 2020 12.2 Q4 2021
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
The university has a Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan that complements the gender actions in the HRS4R process. We will ensure that the requirements within the HRS4R process are met, if not exceeded. Find the Action plan at our HRS4R page: kau.se/en/work-us/karlstad-university-employer/human-resources-strategy-researchers-hrs4r The Action plan itself is between the years 2017-2019 but is during 2020 to be reviewed and incorporated with the University Strategic plan. There is a formal decision by the vice-chancellor that it will continue to be in use until the updated Strategic plan is completed.	Vice-Chancellors Office	12.1 Ensure that the KAU Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming meets the requirements of HRS4R 12.2 Ensure implementation and incorporate with the University strategic plan

Action 13	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Develop a doctoral student steering document	12. Recruitment 24. Working conditions	13.1 Q2 2020 13.2 Q3 2020
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
A working group has been appointed to include the doctoral students in the strategies and develop a doctoral student steering document to ensure that R1-R4 are given equal information. OTM-R Questions no 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11	HR Office, External Relations, Faculty office	13.1 Proposal completed 13.2 Decision and information

Action 14	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Develop templates for advertising doctoral studentships	12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code)	14.1 Q3 2020 14.2 Q1 2021
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
Templates for advertising doctoral studentships will be developed and implemented. OTM-R Questions no 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11	HR Office	14.1 Developed templates 14.2 Templates fully implemented in all recruitments

Action 15	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Develop regulations regarding appointment and composition of recruitment groups	14. Selection (Code)	15.1 Q4 2020 15.2 Q1 2021

		15.3 Q1 2022
Clear regulations regarding the appointment and the composition of recruitment groups will be developed. OTM-R Question no 16, 17	**Responsible unit**	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	HR Office	15.1 Developed regulations 15.2 Decision on regulations 15.3 Implemented

New actions from 2022 revised action plan		
Action 16	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Develop a system and timeframes for bi-annual publication of submitted research proposal statistics When using the Raindance Module, all research proposal applications are compiled into a short statistical report for heads of departments and deans. This provides a needed overview to external proposal development and submission of research proposals.	4. Professional attitude 7. Good practice in Research	16.1 Q4 2022 16.2 Q1 2023 16.3 Q3 2023
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	Financial department and Grants and Innovation Office	16.1 Identify data available from Raindance 16.2 Develop a template for presenting for presenting the data 16.3 Produce first report
Action 18	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Review the research evaluation process of the quality assurance model after all units have been evaluated. The research evaluation process element of The Quality Assurance Model that was implemented through our HRS4R process, action 2, needs to be evaluated and revisited after all departments, research centres and research groups have undergone the evaluation process.	6. Accountability 7. Evaluation/appraisal systems 23. Research environment 37. Supervision and managerial duties	18.1 Q1 2027 18.2 Q2 2023- Q4 2027 18.3 Q1 2028
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	Quality Council	18.1 Conduct a review of the research evaluation process within the Quality Assurances Model 18.2 Evaluate the impact of the Quality assurance model on the research environments 18.3 Implement any recommendations that may come from the review of the evaluation process.
Action 20	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Incorporate EU Open science policy into the research support framework and/or frameworks Open science has been developing over recent years as a policy nationally and within the EU. At Karlstad University we have been engaging and supporting researchers in relation to important areas of open science. It is now time to widen the open science agenda and to develop a	1. Research freedom 2. Ethical principles 3. Professional responsibility	20.1 Q2 2022 20.2 Q4 2023 20.3 Q1 2024
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	Coordinated by the Grants and Innovation Office	20.1 Identify the ambitions within

structure that embeds this as a more formalised and settled process. This work cuts across many departments and requires a coordinated and systemic approach. EU Open Science policy: **https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/open-science_en**		the EU Open Science policy that will be addressed. 20.2 Provide clear guidelines for researchers in each of these areas 20.3 Incorporate into pre and post award processes as well as expanding the Research Handbook to incorporate open science

Action 21	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Create and implement a digital recruitment course for managers and other staff working with recruitment of staff to Karlstad University. In accordance with principle 14 of the Charter and Code regulating selection committees, members of selection panels should be adequately trained. All recruitment processes have an assigned HR Specialist with the right training and all managers receive training. However, a need for training staff other than managers and HR Specialists has been identified. To reach a larger audience and to provide more accessible training at all times, a digital recruitment course is being developed	14. Selection (Code)	21.1 Q1 2021 21.2 Q3 2021 21.3 Q1 2022 21.4 Q3 2022 21.5 Q3 2022 21.6 Q1 2023 21.7 Q2 2023 21.8 Q1 2025
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	HR Office	21.1 Anchor the decision to implement a digital course for recruitment within the university management 21.2 Identify what platform to use 21.3 Develop and identify content for the digital course 21.4 Build an interactive course with text material, video and interactive tasks 21.5 Launch the course on a small scale and evaluate 21.6 Review if needed 21.7 Launch the course to the whole organisation 21.8 Evaluate the course

Action 22	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Update instructions to experts to indicate that we are positive to and value co-authorship and mobility, including virtual mobility The instructions to experts do not specifically include that Karlstad University value of co-authorship and mobility as positive merits and it needs to be included to make sure they give a fair evaluation/assessment of this element when recruiting or promoting staff	18. Recognition of mobility experience 19. Recognition of qualifications 29. Value of mobility 32. Co-authorship	22.1 Q3 2022 22.2 Q4 2022
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	HR Office together with faculty management	22.1 Update the instructions 22.2 Decision and implementation

Action 23	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Investigate possibilities, needs and structure for career advice, career planning and the development of both in the formal and informal context What is it that researchers need? What does the University want? How does this impact the policy and contact points? We need to do a complete investigation on what course the University wants to take and further on develop the results into a several actions	11. Evaluation/appraisal systems 30. Access to career advice 38. Continuing Professional Development 39. Access to research training and continual development	23.1 Q4 2023 23.2 Q4 2024 23.3 Q3 2025 23.4 Q4 2025 23.5 Q4 2026
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	HR Office and Grants and Innovation Office	23.1 Identify Departments with responsibility and audit their current contribution to these areas 23.2 Coordinate and settle on joint approach on how we want to move forward 23.3 Make a GAP analysis and action plan 23.4 Consultation on GAP and action plan 23.5 Implementation of actions

Action 24	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Work together with the Deans at faculty level to develop research leadership training. This training should be progressive to include training at an introduction level to advanced level. GIO and HR are working on this issue and are engaging with internal and external partners to maximise the content and impact of research leadership alongside other competence development programmes such as CTRIVE®.	1. Research freedom 23. Research environment 28. Career development 37. Supervision and managerial duties 38. Continuing Professional Development 39. Access to research training and continual development	24.1 Q1 2022 24.2 Q1 2022 24.3 Q2 2023 24.4 Q2 2023 24.5 Q4 2023 24.6 Q2 2024
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	Grants and Innovation office for coordination	24.1 Finalising the curriculum for the leadership courses. 24.2 Engaging the faculties and deans in identifying and selecting participants 24.3 Run the pilot 24.4 Internally develop an introduction to the research leadership course 24.5 Review the program 24.6 Develop an advanced version of the leadership program REAL 23.5 Implementation of actions

Action 25	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Investigate whether we have effective and clear strategies and processes to maintain and develop the quality of collaboration with the wider society, business, national and regional authorities. Report and implement a structure that will evaluate at an individual and collective level collaboration within Karlstad University. This will allow for indicators towards awarding merit in relation to collaboration to be developed and tested.		25.1 Q4 2023 25.2 Q4 2023 25.3 Q1 2024
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	Research administrative steering group (FASG)	25.1 Investigate and evaluate current processes and strategies 25.2 Report results from the investigation 25.3 Implement the structure and merit process

New actions from 2022 revised action plan that are already completed		
Action 17	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Update the Appointment Procedures and Supplementary Procedures for the Recruitment and Promotion of Academic staff These steering documents needs to be updated to align better with the Charter for researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.	12. Recruitment 13. Recruitment (Code) 16. Judging merit (Code) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code)	17.1 Q3 2020 17.2 Q4 2020
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	HR Office	17.1 Steering documents revised 17.2 Decided and implemented
Action 17	**GAP Principle(s)**	**Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)**
Create a toolbox for gender perspectives within recruitment processes A toolbox for managers will be developed to support them in how to apply a gender perspective to the recruitment processes. The toolbox will be included in an HR guide for managers.	10. Non-discrimination 27. Gender balance	19.1 Q4 2020 19.2 Q1 2021
	Responsible unit	**Indicator(s)/Target(s)**
	HR Office	19.1 Developing toolbox 19.2 Implemented in the organisation

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