Founded in 1918, ÅAU is one of the oldest universities in Finland. ÅAU is an internationally acknowledged research. The activities cover research and education in most disciplines from the humanities, pedagogics and theology to social sciences, natural sciences and technology. ÅAU has a recognized position at the forefront of research in such areas as biosciences, computer science, democracy, human rights, material sciences, process chemistry and psychology.

ÅAU is the only Swedish-language multi-faculty university in Finland, with campuses in Åbo, Vasa and Jakobstad. ÅAU also has activities in Helsinki and on the Åland Islands.
ÅAU in a nutshell

Key Characteristics

5,500 undergraduate students
950 postgraduate students
A total of 1,300 employees, 700 working in education and research
Overall annual budget ca 115 million euros,
40 million external funding
1,500 scientific publications annually
Overall management structure and organisation

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- The University Act and associated regulations are starting points for the university’s management structure.
- ÅAU is governed by a Rector who has an overall responsibility for all activities. The Rector answers to the University Board.
- The University Council appoints the external members of the University Board and determines the election of the other members of the board.
- To support his leadership, the Rector has a Management Group whose members are the Deans, both Vice-Rectors, the Head of Administration and the Rector for ÅAU in Vasa. In addition to these, external experts can also be separately invited.
- ÅAU has two Vice-Rectors of which one is responsible for Undergraduate Studies and the other is responsible for Research and Doctoral Studies.
- To support their leadership, each Vice-Rector has a board for which each Vice-Rector serves as chairman.
- The Board for Research and Doctoral Studies and the Board for Undergraduate Studies are advisory and preparatory agencies for the University Board, the Rector and the Faculty Boards.
  - The Head of Research and Education services is responsible for preparation of matters for the boards
- The service and support functions are administered and developed centrally by University services, Which is subordinate to the Head of Administration.
Mission: ÅAU has an overall responsibility for providing higher education in Swedish in Finland and to conduct research at a high international level. The University’s educational responsibility requires that the University actively maintains and develops a wide network of contacts with society.

ÅAU also bears responsibility for the Finland-Swedish cultural heritage and culture. The cultural responsibility means preserving and strengthening the disciplines that are connected with the Swedish language and the Swedish culture in Finland, as well as to the library activities and the archives, collections and museums for cultural history.

Vision: ÅAU’s goal is to be one of the top three research universities in the country on the whole and to meet its key targets for the period up to 2020. In natural sciences and technology ÅAU will maintain its position as the leading research university.

ÅAU shall be an internationally outstanding research and formation university with a broad Swedish language responsibility in Finland. Education at all levels must have the highest labor market relevance in Finland.

Values: Equality, good leadership, friendly atmosphere and personnel development are some of the key values of the university.
### Key Objectives for 2020

- to get at least two new Centres of Excellence appointed by the Academy of Finland
- to appoint at least one unit of excellence in teaching
- to be the leading Finnish University at co-operation with the other Nordic countries
- to increase the annual throughput of students from 52 % to 70 %
- to shorten the study period by one year

Graduates from ÅAU shall have the highest employment rate compared to graduates from other Finnish universities.

ÅAU shall be recognized as an attractive research, study and work place with responsible and competent employers.

Increased throughput and shorter study time is achieved by an additional investment of 0.5 million euros in the student guidance counseling services.
Current State of HRM
why ÅAU has undertaken the HR Strategy for Researchers

- The strategy for ÅAU sets us a goal to be a Prosperous University. Prosperous meaning that the University promotes health and development, an environment where all are treated equally, where all should be given a chance of involvement in decision making processes and where education, critical thinking, independence, activity and responsibility is encouraged.

- Employee rights and obligations are regulated by national legislation and by the Collective Agreement for Universities. These regulations form a solid ground for a fair and equal treatment of all academic staff, researchers included, at the ÅAU. Naturally, ÅAU has extensive instructions and processes regarding HR issues to further guarantee a smooth and fair dealing with personnel related matters.

- One of the three main pillars in ÅAU’s strategy comprises of research on a high international level the other two pillars being high-quality university education in Swedish and responsibility of a cultural heritage. Thus, the researchers as an employee group are important for ÅAU.

- In order to further enhance and secure the role of researchers, ÅAU will develop a specific HR strategy for researchers (HRS4R). This will be linked to the new HR strategy that will be developed after the main strategy update for ÅAU during the spring 2015.
The HRS4R process at ÅAU

- The Letter of Endorsement and the Declaration of Commitment to the Principles of the European Commission’s European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers was signed in September 2012.
- In the late autumn of 2012, ÅAU was selected by the European Commission and thus given an opportunity to participate in the fourth and final cohort of the Commission’s HR Strategy project.
- An internal Management Group under Vice-Rector Mika Hupa’s guidance was appointed for the HRS4R process at ÅAU.

Members of the Management Group:

- Mikko Hupa, Vice-Rector, Professor in Inorganic Chemistry (Chairman until 4.1.2015)
- Christina Nygren-Landgärds, Rector of ÅAU in Vasa, Professor in Sloyd Education (Chairman from 5.1.2015)
- Urpo Nikanne, Professor, Finnish language
- Annika Meinander, Academy of Finland Research Fellow, Cellbiology
- Marie Nordström, Postdoctoral Researcher, Environmental and Marine Biology
- Tomas Eklund, Senior Lecturer, Information Systems
- Henrik Serup Christensen, Postdoctoral Researcher, The Social Science Research Institute
- Linda Sjöholm, Human Resources, HRM Manager (Secretary)
- Malin Siimes, Human Resources, HRD Manager (Secretary)
The HRS4R process at ÅAU

Step 1: Internal Gap Analysis

- The Internal Gap Analysis was carried out during January-April 2014.

- The analysis as done through gathering and preparing background information on national legislation, regulations, decisions and agreements that regulate every day work at the university and by involving interest groups.

- The analysis was done is three smaller working groups consisting of the members from the Management Group. The members of the working groups were asked to involve colleges at their own workplaces.

- The HRS4R project, the results of the Gap Analysis and a proposal for Action Plan was communicated to researchers at all levels throughout the university. There were meetings with Forskarföreningen vid Åbo Akademi r.f. (a Union for researchers and teachers at ÅAU), Turku early research career union, The Board of the Graduate School, The Research Ethics Board and with representatives in the administration of ÅAU.

Step 2: Creating the Action Plan

- After the internal discussion and commenting session the Action Plan was compiled and created.
The HRS4R process at ÅAU
Step 1: Key Outcomes of the Gap Analysis

On an overall level the 40 principles of the Charter and Code are relatively well taken into account at ÅAU. Employee rights and obligations are regulated by national legislation and by the Collective Agreement for Universities. These regulations form a solid foundation for a fair and equal treatment of all academic staff, researchers included.

ÅAU is committed to providing an excellent working environment for its entire staff. Equality, good leadership, a friendly atmosphere and personnel development are some of the key values of the university. Therefore, a focus on strategic human resource development plays a key role in helping the university and its employees succeed.

The following summary of the analysis illustrates the priority areas for improvement.

Ethical and professional aspects:
• Development of models for dissemination of recognized ethical principles to the entire scientific community on all levels.

Recruitment:
• To revise existing recruitment communications, practices, including communication before, during and after recruitment.
• Good recruitment practices that guarantee an open and validated process need to be further developed and disseminated.
• Rules and standards for recognition of qualifications.

Working conditions and social security:
• Introduction to Workplace Safety, Laboratory Safety and Information Security for new staff at all levels
• Development of solutions and support for combining family and work
• Development of career paths
• More support for mobility and active encouragement towards seeking international experience
• More career advice for doctoral students
• Clarification of procedures for complaints and appeals
• Clarification to staff about how to take part in decision-making
The HRS4R process at ÅAU
Step 2: Creating the Action Plan

- Based on the results of the gap analysis, and on input from the internal discussion and commenting session, an action plan was created.
- The action plan, which contains priority areas for development and an introduction to ÅAU and to the university’s strategic objectives, was additionally processed by the Management Group for the HRS4R project.
- The action plan was sent to the Rector for approval in March 2015.
- The action plan was published on ÅAU’s website in March 2015.
HRS4R ACTION PLAN
## Actions: Ethical and Professional Aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Related gap analysis result</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional responsibility and good practices in research</td>
<td>There is a need to develop models for dissemination of recognized ethical principles. The Research Ethics Board gives advice and takes a position when necessary. The Board also provides information, but there is no comprehensive system to ensure that we reach the entire scientific community at all levels.</td>
<td>Dissemination of good research practices</td>
<td>Vice – Rector responsible for Research and Doctoral Studies and the Director for Åbo Akademi University's Research and Education Services</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Actions: Recruitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruitment</strong></td>
<td>ÅAU needs to revise the recruitment communications procedures, including communication before, during and after recruitment</td>
<td>Development of principles and criteria for academic recruitments as well as recruitment related communications</td>
<td>Head of Human Resources</td>
<td>By the end of November 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selection</strong></td>
<td>Good recruitment practices that guarantees an open and validated process need to be developed and disseminated.</td>
<td>Development and dissemination of good recruitment practices. Standing evaluation panels at each faculty with a mandate of a few years at a time. Mandatory training for the panel members</td>
<td>Head of Human Resources</td>
<td>By the end of November 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recognition of qualifications</strong></td>
<td>How to give weight to other qualifications than publications in the screening process for applicants</td>
<td>Development of rules and standards for recognition of qualifications</td>
<td>Vice rektorerna för utbildning och forskning</td>
<td>By the end of 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Actions: Working Conditions and Social Security

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research environment</td>
<td>How to ensure a good and safe learning and working environment for</td>
<td>Introduction to Workplace Safety, Laboratory Safety and Information Security, as well as to the core values of the university. All researchers, including non–employed researchers, should get the same information concerning safety and workplace standards and regulations. Insurance coverage for non–employed researchers at ÅAU</td>
<td>Head of Human Resources</td>
<td>By the end of May 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working conditions</td>
<td>Better possibilities for balancing career &amp; family</td>
<td>Regulations on the extension of fixed-term employment at the researcher’s request, to take into account periods of parental leave for researchers at all levels. For all types of family forms.</td>
<td>Head of Human Resources</td>
<td>By the end of 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding and salaries</td>
<td></td>
<td>Newsletters about scholarships and other funding possibilities for researchers at all levels</td>
<td></td>
<td>During the spring 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Actions: Working Conditions and Social Security

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career development</td>
<td>Development of career paths</td>
<td>A model for Tenure Track at ÅAU will be created</td>
<td>Head of Human Resources</td>
<td>By the end of februari 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of mobility</td>
<td>More support for mobility and encouragement to seek international experience</td>
<td>In connection with the discussion on performance and professional development.</td>
<td>Head of Human Resources and the Director for Åbo Akademi University's Research and Education Services</td>
<td>By the end of 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to career advice</td>
<td>More career advice for doctoral students</td>
<td>Development of a model for follow-up group support for doctoral students. Support and advice should also be part of the discussion on performance and professional development.</td>
<td>Head of Human Resources and the Director for Åbo Akademi University's Research and Education Services</td>
<td>By the end of 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaints/appeals</td>
<td>Clarification on where to submit different cases. Procedures for complaints and appeals, and conflicts and disputes at the workplace.</td>
<td>Providing of information about existing processes and instructions on rights and obligations of the employer and employee.</td>
<td>Head of Human Resources</td>
<td>By the end of December 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in decision-making bodies</td>
<td>Clarification to staff about how to take part in decision-making. (Anything less collegial body. More influencing through unit meetings, boss, etc.) intro o chefsutbildningar</td>
<td>Communicating power structures and influence in everyday life at the University.</td>
<td>Rector</td>
<td>By the end of 2016</td>
</tr>
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Next steps of the HRS4R process

Step 3 – Acknowledgement by the European Commission
ÅAU’s Human Resources Strategy for Researchers will be published on the University’s website for the European Commission’s acknowledgement.

Step 4 – Implementation of the HR Strategy for Researchers and self-assessment
ÅAU will implement this HR Strategy and Action Plan and conduct the first self-assessment in 2017 at the latest. In the future, the University will undergo regular self-assessments at least every second year.

Step 5 - External evaluation
At least every 4 years, ÅAU will report on the progress made towards the objectives of the HR Strategy for Researchers and its compliance with the principles of the Charter & Code.