

Action Plan for Academic Staff 2010-2012

(Adopted by the University Board on 27th April 2010, Meeting No. 03/2010, Decision No. 4)

Strategy 2020 - the strategic plan for the University of Oslo - affirms that the personnel policy of the University will be further developed through two-year action plans, providing sound, coherent frameworks and instruments for following-up staff. In Strategy 2020 the overriding personnel policy objective is that: "The University shall establish and implement a comprehensive policy that provides for employees of both genders, at different stages of life and with diverse backgrounds, to develop their potential and contribute to the common goal whether they are involved in research, teaching, dissemination or administrative and support services." In addition to this primary strategic goal, the University has agreed to adopt the European guidelines for personnel policy and recruitment of researchers - Charter and Code principles (*Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*).

This action plan is a concrete follow-up of the overriding goals outlined in Strategy 2020 and the Charter and Code. In the period 2010-2012 the University personnel policies for academic staff will concentrate on the following four points: **Recruitment**, follow-up of **academic staff on fixed-term contracts**, **professional development** for academic staff and **protected research time**. A number of measures in this action plan will also help to realise the goals of equality formulated in a separate Action Plan for Gender Equality at the University.

Recruitment

The primary strategic goal of the University is to strengthen its international position as a leading research university towards the year 2020. A key prerequisite for achieving this goal is quality in recruitment. This requires a broad recruitment base with an international focus and a clear gender equality profile.

Goal: In order for the University in 2012 to engage in more strategic, coherent and active recruitment, the process of recruitment must be professionalised and recruitment skills improved at all levels.

1. Professionalisation of the Recruitment Process

- a. The University will improve its recruitment procedures, so that potential candidates are reached and applicants given clear information about the qualifications required, e.g. teaching experience, international experience, amount of research, etc. together with the relevant criteria, procedures and the expected length of the process. By 2012, the University will have met the key requirements set out in the Code with regard to recruitment, including open advertising, quality assessment and clear criteria for academic employments.
- b. Recruitment procedures must encourage female and international applicants. Search committees will be used actively to recruit women, particularly to senior positions.

- c. An electronic recruitment tool to simplify and standardise the recruitment processes will be introduced. An important objective is to reduce the duration of the recruitment processes.

2. Recruitment Skills

- a. Long-term needs analysis for recruitment must be based on academic priorities.
- b. Reception and introduction of new staff (including temporary staff) will be strengthened.
- c. Competence building in all steps of the recruitment process.
- d. The University will increase its expertise in recruitment to leading positions and actively seek out more female applicants for top academic and research positions.

Professional Development

A primary goal in Strategy 2020 is that the University of Oslo personnel policy will protect the interests of all categories of employees and offer good opportunities for personal and professional development. Strategy 2020 focuses on quality; an increased focus on quality requires better leadership at all levels of the University of Oslo.

Goals: In 2012 the University will have good leadership at all levels. A recognizable leadership culture will be established. All academic staff should be given the opportunity for personal and professional development. The goals are to be achieved through active leadership development and competence development.

1. Leadership Development

- a. Academic and administrative managers will be connected through various leadership development initiatives.
- b. A special programme to prepare future leaders is to be developed.
- c. Research leaders will be offered training in project management and administration – as an additional module to the research leader programme.
- d. During this period, a pilot course in an education programme is to be introduced (starting in 2011).
- e. A competence module for board members at faculty and department level is to be developed.

2. Professional Development

- a. The introduction programme for new employees will be expanded and strengthened.
- b. There should be good online information about the University, its organisation and decision-making processes.
- c. The need for professional development will be systematically mapped through performance assessment interviews. Training will be offered to strengthen teaching skills, communication skills and other relevant competencies.
- d. Increased competence in project work is a priority.

Academic Staff on Fixed-term Contracts

One goal of Strategy 2020 is to ensure the satisfactory follow-up of academic employees on fixed-term contracts through career advice and skills development. A further objective is to strengthen and develop research training to make it more attractive internationally.

Goal: In 2012 the University will have an active policy for staff on fixed-term contracts to ensure good follow-up and increased predictability.

1. Long-term Planning and Predictability

- a. All units must establish long-term employment plans
- b. The University will communicate efficiently regarding the criteria for employment and career opportunities within and outside the University. The use and content of post-doctoral and research positions should be clarified and clearly presented.
- c. The University will abolish the misuse of fixed-term contracts and define clearly the correct use of such contracts.
- d. The University will explore the possibility of, and criteria for, externally funded tenured positions.

2. Skills Development Geared to Mobility

- a. Academic staff on fixed-term contracts must be followed up more closely by their superiors, through career advice and individual professional development plans.
- b. The University is to increase the use of mentors to ensure a broad recruitment base for top positions.
- c. The research education programme will be further developed according to the guidelines in Strategy 2020.
- d. The University will emphasise systematic professional development to provide skills and competencies which can only be acquired at a research university as well as those which encourage mobility.

Protected Research Time

One objective of Strategy 2020 is to ensure that the University academic staff achieve a proper balance between research, teaching and other activities. The University's ambition is to improve research quality, and this can only be achieved by securing more protected research time.

Goal: In 2012 the University academic staff will have more protected research time. This will be achieved through more concentrated teaching schedules and stronger education management.

1. More Concentrated Teaching Schedules

- a. Individual long-term teaching plans are to be prepared to ensure more protected research time.
- b. Good working conditions for researchers include protected research time in addition to infrastructure and support services. Such protected time should be a basic right of the individual employee and the task of the responsible education manager is to ensure this.
- c. The course planning tools will be evaluated as to whether they can be designed to simplify planning with a view to providing protected research time.

2. Strengthening Expertise in Education Management and Administration

- a. During the period, a pilot course in education management is to be introduced (starting in 2011).
- b. Newly appointed education managers will be offered training. Support services will be professionalised.
- c. Best practices are to be identified and exchanged in order to ensure protected research time.

Implementation of the Action Plan

The Action Plan is for two years and will be evaluated before a new action plan for the following two years is developed. In accordance with the guidelines laid down in the "Human Resources Strategy for Researchers" mechanism, an external evaluation must be carried out at the end of the second planning period in 2014.

The responsibility for implementing the measures in this action plan lies with the University Director and will mainly be fulfilled by the departments of the central administration, the faculties and museums. The specific distribution of tasks will take place annually through the University's normal procedures for annual plans and budget decisions.