

AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OULU

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2.4 The HEI's examples of successful enhancement activities

- Högskolans självvärdering

Researcher support

Research funding support for researchers at the UO is organised by the Research and Project Services with a dedicated research funding specialist for each faculty and special unit. A central unit of the services organises targeted support for researchers applying for ERC grants and coordinating consortium proposals for EU funding. These activities have contributed to an increase in competitive research funding at the UO.

Impact Helper and Planner

Describing potential impacts of research projects has become increasingly important for funding applications. This has led to the development of the [Impact Helper](#), an online guide created by research funding specialists at the University of Oulu. This resource aims to educate researchers on the concept of impact, providing guidance on how to identify impact pathways, potential stakeholders, and ways to maximise and measure impact. The guide also covers various approaches to sustainability as this is an essential part of research impact. With the guide comes an [Impact Planner](#), which can be used to make an impact plan for an individual research project.

EU Advocacy

EU advocacy enhances the university's role as a significant and well-known actor at the EU level. The UO goal is to be a sought-after partner in EU funded research projects and an active participant in EU level networks. Researchers and experts from the UO actively participate in the preparation processes of the EU's research and innovation policies and funding programmes, particularly Horizon Europe, in respective EU and national expert groups and networks. Concrete actions supporting the UO advocacy include: stakeholder cooperation and EU advocacy in networks; preparing national and EU level position papers and consultations; increasing visibility and participation in EU events; as well as support services, training and communication on EU funding and advocacy.

Fundraising impact: A Career Counsellor

Donations to the University of Oulu make new initiatives possible in both research and education. One important benefit from the donations is that the university can establish new positions. As a result of the university's 60th anniversary fund-raising campaign 'For the Next Generation', especially a contribution from LähiTapiola Pohjoinen, a [Career Counsellor was appointed](#) to support career paths and develop the employability of international students.

Every year there are more than a thousand international students studying on master's programmes at the University of Oulu. The hope is that these talented, budding professionals will remain permanently in Oulu. The Career Counsellor was appointed so that the university can provide guidance to our international students. Now, many efforts are being made to lower the threshold for employing foreigners through collaboration with regional companies.

The Career Centre

The Career Centre acts as a facilitator between university units and faculties, and potential employers. In addition to organising recruitment events and fairs, the Career Centre offers facilities for individual companies for their recruitment efforts. The services of the Career Centre include recruitment help, enhancing employer branding, and the finding of placements and interns.

Key activities of the Career Centre are giving student counselling, consulting, and offering courses and workshops on employability and career path development. It has developed a 2-credit Employability and Working life Skills course which is now part of the curriculum for doctoral students and part of the cross-institutional studies of the Finnish Universities network. A popular workshop series 'Ready for Work' is held throughout the academic, practical tools and hands-on services which increase the employability of the students and their transition to working life.

Key Account Managers (KAMs)

KAM activities have strengthened the company collaboration. University has now a more comprehensive picture of different collaborations going on, new actions are based on strategy and the actions are systematic, frequent, and organised. The results are monitored at the university and faculty level. Strategic partnerships and focused stakeholder collaboration are coordinated by the UIC.

KAM activities support business cooperation in faculties and degree programmes. For example, faculty specific KAMs report their activities to their faculty managers. KAMs also take care of business ecosystems. Contact persons have been appointed for each leading Business Finland company, and partnership funding calls and the activities of leading companies are closely followed.

Communication, Marketing, and Community Relations Unit

In recent years, the UO has invested in the development of communication and marketing as well as social relations. The reorganised and resourced Communication, Marketing and Community Relations Unit supports the university in achieving its goals through the strategic planning of communications, high-quality content and channels that reach people. The unit has played an important role in increasing the recognition of the UO and in developing an attractive brand. This has increased the attractiveness of the University of Oulu [among applicants](#) and stakeholders, increased engagement and opened new opportunities for [cooperation and donations](#).

Researcher's Night

[Researchers' Night](#) is a multidisciplinary event for the whole family to highlight scientists and their work, as well as the importance of science in our everyday life and society. The diverse programme has attracted around 3,000 participants of all ages annually.