

AUDIT OF HANKEN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

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3.2 Supporting the competence development and well-being of the staff

- Korkeakoulun itsearviointi

Competence development

All staff members have a development discussion with their manager at least once a year. Competence development is one of the topics in the form used to support the discussions and one of the topics on which the discussion may lead to concrete measures. HR supports the managers to act on competence development issues. Every department has a budget for conferences and trainings and there is also a Hanken-level budget for competence development.

Opportunities for pedagogical training are announced on the website and in the Teaching Lab newsletter. Hanken arranges some courses and sessions and has access to shared courses in university pedagogy with other Finnish universities. There are other courses for the staff and faculty as well, for example regarding different tools available. In the autumn of 2018, Hanken launched an [Award and incentive pyramid for high-quality teaching](#) designed to encourage, reward, and publicly acknowledge sustained excellence in teaching. It includes support for pedagogical training, mentoring, technical support (including workshops, training), funding for development of teaching and awarding development efforts. In 2022, Hanken launched a Teacher Mentor Program for systematically sharing knowledge, experiences, and practices between junior and senior staff. Increasing the number of educators with pedagogical training is one of the targets of the revised Digital Learning Policy, and pedagogical training is expected within

TenureTrack.

Coaching has been introduced as a competence development element. In 2021, online group coaching was offered to employees, and in 2022 a unique coaching pilot programme “Metaskills for work life flow 2022” was launched. The feedback from the participants (18 members of faculty and staff) in the pilot has been positive.

Hanken has received the European Commission’s recognition ‘HR Excellence in Research’ that identifies institutions and organisations as providers and supporters of a stimulating and favourable working environment. Recruitment decisions are primarily based on the plans agreed upon during the annual dialogues with the rector. New positions are announced openly. All candidates get information during the recruitment process. Hanken has a tenure track system, which is currently being evaluated and developed. Before any recruitment process or promotion in tenure track can start, the rector gives permission to start the process. First assessment of a candidate (open recruitment) or faculty member up for promotion within the tenure track is made by an internal recruitment group appointed and chaired by the head of department, normally consisting of the professors (depending on the position and subject) from the department. In promotion to associate professor or full professor level in the tenure track system, the tenure track committee makes the next evaluation of merits and recommends that the process can go forward. In recruitments and promotion to professor, the Research Council appoints the external experts for the assessment, and after the assessment makes a proposal to the rector. In open recruitments the recruitment group evaluates the candidates, including their pedagogical competence based on their teaching portfolio and on a trial lecture and/or a research presentation open to the public. The department council makes the final proposal to the rector when the position is including in the personnel plan.

Well-being

Hanken’s aim is to be a responsible, secure, and effective organisation with HR routines and practises that are based on equal opportunities and overall well-being. The principle of security implies that staff should be able to work in an environment that does not endanger physical or mental health, and in a comfortable work environment that continuously strives to prevent and handle work-place-related conflicts. Hanken’s faculty and staff are expected to act in a collegial manner with respect to colleagues and students. To support and maintain a healthy and safe work and study environment, Hanken has a [Code of Conduct](#), policies for [gender equality and equal treatment](#), [occupational safety](#), and for avoiding and dealing with alleged misconducts, such as workplace harassment and academic dishonesty. The Occupational Safety Committee, the Occupation Safety Director and the Occupational Safety Ombudsman take actions to increase occupational safety and react if there are signs of harassment.

All managers get information and support for their role on the website. Leadership training is organised regularly, next time during spring 2023. All managers and units are required to have

regular meetings to guarantee that the staff gets information about what is happening at Hanken. There is also a weekly information newsletter sent to every employee. The Rector of Hanken has initiated information sessions to all personnel once a month during which strategic developments are shared and discussed.

Hanken conducts a wellbeing survey every other year, as almost all the universities in Finland. A pension insurance company is coordinating the survey and universities can compare the main results with each other. The results are processed in all units, and the actions to develop the well-being are supported. The development discussions are another way to get feedback on well-being. Hanken values a balanced work life and offers its employees flexibility in adjusting their work time and hybrid working solutions. Digital assistants and support are offered from the Teaching Lab in order to cope with rapidly changing (digital) challenges in teaching.

Strengths

A small university with low thresholds and agile way of working

A diverse range of pedagogical training and support offered

Enhancement areas

Improve integration and inclusion of people of different nationalities and backgrounds

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Individual needs of well-being support and staff development should be better identified

As outlined in their quality handbook, Hanken is aware of the importance of attracting and maintaining qualified and motivated faculty and staff. Due to the institution's small size, this gains even more weight, as there are few redundancies, which makes absences and fluctuation a challenge. A sub-strategy for human resources lays out the priorities and describes the key instruments and initiatives. It is notable in this regard, that Hanken has recently gained recognition from the European Commission regarding its 'HR Excellence in Research', a type of award that identifies institutions and organisations as providers and supporters of a stimulating and favourable working environment.

Hanken's human resources policies also foresee that all staff members have an annual meeting with their line manager, discussing the previous year as well as potential development areas. The audit team saw some indications that this policy was not effectively implemented across the entire organisation, especially among doctoral researchers with employment contracts.

Based on the audit interviews, Hanken is actively encouraging the competence development of its staff, and professional learning activities are followed up. Efforts are made to involve everyone in pedagogical training, and several teachers who participated in the audit workshop had been encouraged to develop their pedagogical skills. For faculty who do decide they want to further develop their approaches and teaching style, Hanken offers a quite generous range of options, from basic pedagogical trainings (partly offered by other institutions) to high profile international programmes. The audit team wants to particularly commend the university for the work of its Teaching Lab, which offers a broad range of services, well grounded in the Lab staff's own teaching experience and willingness to experiment. The Teaching Lab and its support and responsiveness to teachers' needs was also highly appreciated by the teachers who attended the audit workshop.

Despite institutional efforts, it remains somehow unclear to which extent the development of didactical competencies is equally important to all teachers, as the pedagogical training is not compulsory. Placing greater emphasis on didactical competences as part of the continuing professional development of all faculty members could therefore enhance the overall quality of education. In addition, the development of digitally enhanced teaching should be considered evenly among staff, in a form that leads to digital transformation and not mere digitalisation of infrastructures and activities, or highly motivated individuals engaging in to some extent isolated innovative practice.

A human resources unit supports managers and staff alike, also investing considerable time and effort to maintaining a basic staff well-being programme. Regular surveys are employed to monitor overall staff satisfaction and to detect potential shortcomings on a broader level. There are also plenty of opportunities for staff development, albeit rather generic ones. Individualised staff developments appear to be an underdeveloped area, at least based on the data available to the audit team. As is the case in many higher education institutions, the approach to staff development seems to be one of "pull rather than push", meaning that participation in staff development offers is very much a matter of individual choice and preference. In combination with the much-invoked "autonomy of the individual teacher", this raises the question of how the institution ensures that everyone is enabled to contribute to the larger strategic objectives, and what mechanisms are in place to overcome individual levels of reluctance to update their knowledge and skills.

Hanken has clear procedures in place for recruitment and support

Hanken has clear procedures for recruiting faculty and staff, as well as for promotion and career

progression which seem to be in line with international standards in this field. For such a small organisation, the audit team found quite considerable differences across the university, e.g., regarding the salary structure or how doctoral researchers are on-boarded and kept up to date. There is a clear need for transparent minimum standards in both cases. At least with regard to the salary issue, the university seems to be well aware and already working on it.

Based on the self-assessment and other information provided to the audit team, work is ongoing at Hanken to strengthen the role of teaching and societal engagement and impact in the faculty employee value proposition and tenure track criteria. This is responding to the improvement needs also highlighted in annual discussions with the rector, both in terms of recruitment of new faculty but in general also further increasing the value of teaching and societal engagement at the university. This will be a change in the right direction. The tenure track system has so far had an emphasis on research and publications, and as mentioned by some faculty members discouraged focus on teaching and teachers' own pedagogical development. Although teaching awards and bonuses are available, some faculty thought that teaching merits and development are not sufficiently appreciated. It was also noted by some faculty members during the visit that societal engagement has been lacking clear incentives.

Hanken has a Code of Conduct which among other things states equality to be one of the values of Hanken and underlines a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of discrimination, abuse and harassment at Hanken. Based on the audit documentation, a process description for dealing with behaviour which is not in line with the Code of Conduct is yet to be confirmed. At the time of the audit visit, the Hanken Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Policy was also being updated. On the other hand, structures are in place to monitor gender equality and equal treatment. Any signs of discrimination and harassment can be reported to Hanken's Equal Treatment Representative.

Regarding equality, the university leadership referred to the existing policy documents and recent successes, in particular at the level of full professors. There is a perceivable risk, however, that gender equality is treated as one of many external requirements to be taken into account, rather than a high priority societal objective as well as an important foundation for achieving the university's larger strategic goals which would be severely impacted by staff shortages. A decrease of Swedish-speaking doctoral candidates is already a current issue, for example.

In this regard, various interviewees pointed out the need to take a broader approach to diversity and inclusion beyond the gender dimension, while at the same time admitting that there is still considerable work to be done in this area. Now would be a good opportunity for Hanken to look at the respective action plans and make them more daring.

Summing up, the audit team wants to particularly commend the university for the creation of its Teaching Lab and for the impressive achievements of the lab in just a short period of time. The lab in many ways functions as a "one-stop-shop" for teachers' support. The exchange with BI learning lab (see also Chapter 5 on benchlearning) is providing inspiration for the lab's further development.

On the other hand, the audit team also sees a need to find a way of identifying and supporting individual needs to well-being support and staff development, and then to find a way of addressing them without succumbing to particularism and intensifying inequalities.