

## CoARA Action Plan of Turku UAS 2023–2027

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# 1. Commitments of CoARA

The Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment: [The Agreement full text - CoARA](#)

1. Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research.
2. Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators.
3. Abandon inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication-based metrics, in particular inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index.
4. Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment.
5. Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to.
6. Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools and processes.
7. Raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use.
8. Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition.
9. Communicate progress made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments.
10. Evaluate practices, criteria and tools based on solid evidence and the state-of-the-art in research on research and make data openly available for evidence gathering and research.

## 2. Objectives

Reforming research and researcher assessment is an opportunity for Turku UAS to be profiled more clearly as a responsible, high-quality actor in the field of applied research and become known and valued for this by our project partners, funding programmes and our stakeholders. Turku UAS wants to be an employer that values diverse research careers, enables various career paths, supports career progress of researchers and promotes openness.

Turku UAS has three objectives:

- 1) We connect everyday tools and processes to research and researcher assessment criteria and maintain excellent quality with continuous and systematic development work, and after the pilots with internal evaluation (WP1 and WP4)**
- 2) The research and researcher assessment are piloted in agile and innovative Turku UAS community in order to find the most responsible and diverse ways of assessment (WP2)**
- 3) By networking, collaborating and sharing results within Turku UAS, among the CoARA signatories and beyond, we reach better and wider impact (WP3)**

Universities of applied sciences in Finland have adopted responsible research and researcher assessment as a common goal, Turku UAS as one of them.

At Turku UAS, we aim to integrate compliance with the CoARA commitments into everyday work with research and researchers at Turku UAS in order to foster a transparent, responsible research climate and to reach impact as is written in the Code of Conduct.

The CoARA Action Plan of Turku UAS 2023–2027 is a living document that will be updated when necessary, during the 5-year period of validity.

### 3. Current situation

There are over 30 research groups at Turku UAS. Research groups are situated in four faculties: 1) Engineering and Business, 2) Health and Well-being, 3) Arts Academy and 4) Corporate Services.

#### 3.1. Current situation: Responsible research assessment

The research assessment at Turku UAS is mainly conducted in and connected to following process: biennial research groups' evaluation practice which includes self-evaluation questionnaire, development discussion of research group and internal Research Groups' Activity Report.

In addition to biennial research groups' evaluation practice, Turku UAS also has RDI project lifecycle evaluation practice. It is conducted only to implemented projects. The lifecycle evaluation of a project has yearly, final and post evaluation parts which focus strongly on results, impact and collaboration.

External auditing is a legal obligation to all Finnish HEIs by Finnish Education Evaluation Centre ([FINEEC](#)), and audit is active every sixth year. Turku UAS has received a quality label which is valid until 2028.

#### 3.2. Current situation: Responsible researcher assessment

At Turku UAS, researcher assessment takes place primarily in the contexts of recruitment, performance reviews and career development. The responsibility for assessing individual researchers in terms of their performance lies with their line manager.

The recruitment practices comply with the national legislation on non-discrimination and gender equality. In recruitment, narrative CVs are already welcome, and competence and experience acquired outside of the traditional academic sphere is both recognized and valued. Performance reviews emphasize qualitative assessment.

Turku UAS employees belong to two different collective agreements by our employer association. These staff categories vary from one another in terms of the conditions of their employment and career path options due to belonging to the spheres of different collective agreements. Employees with job titles such as Researcher or Senior Researcher belong to non-teaching staff. However, teaching staff also participates in RDI projects. Thus, researchers are assessed according to the same processes as other employees.

The career path level and related salary for each position are determined according to the actual demand level of the position, in line with applicable collective agreements.

## 4. Work packages

The Action Plan is drafted during 2023–2024. The final CoARA Action Plan of Turku UAS will be uploaded to Zenodo: <https://zenodo.org/>.

### WP 1. CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT OF RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH AND RESEARCHER ASSESSMENT CRITERIA, TOOLS AND PROCESSES

In this chapter we are defining and elaborating on how the CoARA's principles for assessment, [quality](#), [impact](#), [diversity](#), [inclusiveness](#) and [collaboration](#), are guiding the assessment criteria of research and researcher assessment at Turku UAS.

All CoARA signatories have agreed to develop and implement the responsible research and researcher assessment in their organisation. At Turku UAS the assessment is connected to the continuing development quality cycle, PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act) as a part of quality processes at Turku UAS.

#### Responsible Research Assessment: criteria, tools and processes

In table 1 we are introducing how the CoARA principles show in responsible research assessment criteria and outputs at Turku UAS. The assessment is applied to RDI activities.

Table 1. Responsible research assessment criteria and desired outputs at Turku UAS, in line with the CoARA principles.

<b>RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AT TURKU UAS</b>	<b>DESIRED OUTPUTS (IN ORGANISATIONAL, UNIT AND INDIVIDUAL LEVEL)</b>
<b>1.Openness of activity</b>	Transparency of the research process. Open access, articles, open metadata, open research data.
<b>2.Societal impact</b>	Communicating the research results benefitting the community.
<b>3.Versatility of activity</b>	Narrative case studies, podcasts, videos, hackathons, seminars, performances, articles, applications, and all other forms.
<b>4.Diversity in Research Groups and Research topics (GEP views)</b>	Action plans, documents, the compilation of research groups, and the compilation of research topics.
<b>5.Networking</b>	Active partnerships or memberships in networks, working groups, executive boards, and coalitions.

Tools for achieving responsible research assessment criteria at Turku UAS: Expert (science) communications; Data catalog for metadata; Research.fi portal; Opin.fi; Aoe.fi; Crowdhelix.com; EU advocacy / influencing together with three other local HEIs; TEPPPO project portfolio and information system; ASKO CRM-system; PM<sup>2</sup> - Project Management methodology; Citizen science; Research infrastructures.

Responsible research assessment is connected to many processes from biennial research group evaluation to ethical review statement process, publication process and opening research (meta)data. In addition, we are introducing new practices such as competence area assessment, which is piloted during CoARA's Action Plan by 2027. Competence area assessment is considered as peer review according to CoARA's definition.

### **Responsible Researcher Assessment: criteria, tools and processes**

In table 2 we are introducing how the CoARA principles show in responsible researcher assessment criteria and outputs at Turku UAS. The responsible researcher assessment covers all staff members who work with RDI, providing that the assessment criteria are suitable for their job description and content. In the context of Turku UAS, this rules out only the administrative personnel.

Table 2. Responsible researcher assessment criteria and desired outputs at Turku UAS, in line with the CoARA principles.

<b>RESPONSIBLE RESEARCHER ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AT TURKU UAS</b>	<b>DESIRED OUTPUTS (IN ORGANISATIONAL, UNIT AND INDIVIDUAL LEVEL)</b>
<b>1.Openness of activity</b>	a) Openness in organisational processes, such as recruitment and career development; b) Emphasis on open science in researchers' own work.
<b>2.Societal impact</b>	Expert (science) communications: communicating the research results benefitting the community.
<b>3.Versatility of activity</b>	A more diverse range of activities and outputs, such as narrative case studies, teaching, mentoring, podcasts, videos, hackathons, seminars, performances, articles, applications, etc. The versatile outputs also spread the up-to-date knowledge and research to students through teaching, thesis supervision and tutoring.
<b>4.Networking</b>	Active partnerships or memberships in networks, working groups, executive boards, and coalitions; participation in international researcher exchange activities.



Tools for implementing the above principles and responsible researcher assessment at Turku UAS: recruitment communications; narrative CV; internal communications; trainings; encouraging researchers to use [Research.fi portal](#); equality and diversity plan; instructions for performance appraisals and development discussions.

The processes to which researcher assessment has the strongest connection at Turku UAS include recruitment and onboarding; career path model and salary system; personal development discussions and performance appraisal with supervisor; competence development; publication process, especially supporting open access publications; opening research outputs.

Actions concerning continuous development of research and researcher assessment criteria, tools and processes (WP1):

#### **Action 1. CoARA Action Plan of Turku UAS and assessment criteria**

CoARA Action Plan of Turku UAS and the responsible research assessment criteria are published in Zenodo, Turku UAS intranet Messi and Turku UAS website.

#### **Action 2. Developing criteria, tools and processes**

All the criteria, tools and processes documents are updated yearly. Familiarise with and review the suitability of the SCOPE model, OS-CAM, HRS4R and national RDIO assessment matrix to Turku UAS quality system and tools already in use.

## **WP 2. PILOTING RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH AND RESEARCHER ASSESSMENT**

Piloting of both responsible research and researcher assessment at Turku UAS. The piloting phase lasts from March 2024 to September 2026 (31 months).

#### **Action 3. Renewing research groups' evaluation practice**

Renewing research groups' self-evaluation practice: questionnaire and RGs' development discussions in Spring 2024 according to the new research assessment criteria and the principles of CoARA.

#### **Action 4. Planning and piloting competence area assessment**

Defining and planning competence area assessment (\*peer review in CoARA's definition) with continuous development methods for selected research groups during 2025–2026. Internal application process on piloting.

#### **Action 5. Developing researcher assessment and recruitment**

Updating internal instructions at Turku UAS for carrying out performance appraisal and development discussions so all parties in the process are aware of CoARA criteria and how to consider them in reviewing the job description and assessment



of employee's performance and outcomes in the role.

Updating Turku UAS job ads for research-related positions to communicate compliance with the CoARA principles and integrating the criteria into the job description and the list of skills, approaches and activities expected from a successful candidate in terms of CoARA. Recruited employees are thus aware of the CoARA-derived criteria against which they are reviewed and the CoARA principles which they are expected to follow in their work.

### **WP 3. COMMUNICATIONS, NETWORKING AND TRAINING**

The work package 3 concentrates on communicating CoARA commitments and principles internally and externally.

#### **Action 6. Internal communications and dialogue on CoARA commitments**

Internal communications and facilitated dialogue concerning responsible research and researcher assessment, CoARA commitments and open organisational culture. Producing internal communications plan including info and dialogue events. Monitoring through a survey how the knowledge of responsible assessment, CoARA commitments and their connection to normal day-to-day work has grown.

#### **Action 7. Support for networking and external communication**

Includes active participation in different working groups and networks. Writing an article about CoARA and reforming research assessment at Turku UAS (2025).

#### **Action 8. Trainings on CoARA topics**

Providing trainings on certain topics, e.g. open science and responsible researcher assessment.

### **WP 4. EVALUATION OF THE RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH AND RESEARCHER ASSESSMENT**

Review of the assessment criteria, tools, processes and piloting actions during August 2026–December 2027.

#### **Action 9. Evaluation of responsible research assessment**

Evaluating the responsible research assessment criteria, tools and processes. Method of evaluation in responsible research assessment: Group interview with research group leaders, researchers, Heads of Education and Research and other relevant participants.

#### **Action 10. Evaluation of responsible researcher assessment**

Methods of evaluation in responsible researcher assessment: internal theme evaluation. Evaluating the researcher assessment criteria, tools and processes in internal theme evaluation by Turku UAS quality group.

## Appendix

### WPs and schedule

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
<b>WP 1. CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT OF RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH AND RESEARCHER ASSESSMENT CRITERIA, TOOLS AND PROCESSES</b>					
Action 1. CoARA Action Plan and assessment criteria of Turku UAS					
Action 2. Developing criteria, tools and processes					
<b>WP 2. PILOTING RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH AND RESEARCHER ASSESSMENT</b>					
Action 3. Renewing research groups' evaluation procedure					
Action 4. Planning and piloting competence area assessment					
Action 5. Developing responsible researcher assessment and recruitment					
<b>WP 3. COMMUNICATIONS, NETWORKING AND TRAINING</b>					
Action 6. Internal communications and dialogue on CoARA commitments					
Action 7. Support networking and external communications					
Action 8. Trainings on CoARA's topics					
<b>WP 4. EVALUATION OF RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH AND RESEARCHER ASSESSMENT</b>					
Action 9. Evaluation of Turku UAS responsible research assessment					
Action 10. Evaluation of Turku UAS responsible researcher assessment					