

Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)

Jamk University of Applied Sciences, Finland

Action plan 2024–2027

1.1 Authors and Approval

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1.2 Role of Universities of Applied Sciences and their RDI Activities in Finland

Jamk University of Applied Sciences (Jamk) is one of the 24 universities of applied sciences in Finland. Universities of applied sciences provide practice-oriented education answering to the needs of working life and industries. Their research, development, and innovation (RDI) focus is on applied research and development work. Scientific universities, on the other hand, emphasize scientific research and teaching based on it. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2024 Higher Education Institutions and Research Institutions - Ministry of Education and Culture.)

In *development work and projects* conducted by universities of applied sciences, emphasis is placed on regional development and the needs of working life. Typical sources of funding include EU structural funds. Funding sources for *applied research* at universities of applied sciences include foundations and EU funding, among other sources. The goal is to produce new knowledge aimed at practical solutions, which promote and renew working life and regional development. The emphasis is on solving practical problems and finding new solutions. In the development work and projects of universities of applied sciences, the role of RDI experts is emphasized, while applied research is conducted under the leadership of researchers. Teaching staff are also closely involved in RDI activities, but their role varies between universities of applied sciences.

In the context of universities of applied sciences, it is reasonable to involve the entire RDI personnel to the CoARA development work. Because various personnel groups participate in the activities, different approaches and monitoring models are needed to develop responsible evaluation. These should take into account different tasks, career paths, and assessment criteria.

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1.3 Jamk University of Applied Sciences

Jamk is located in Central Finland. Jamk has more than 9,500 students. The number of personnel is approximately 900. The research, development, and innovation (RDI) activities at Jamk University of Applied Sciences have significantly grown in recent years. The total volume was approximately 22 million euros in 2023, and in 2023, Jamk was the second-largest university of applied sciences in Finland by RDI activity volume. RDI activities play a significant role within Jamk, and the majority of Jamk staff are involved in RDI activities: in terms of person-work-years, RDI activities accounted for approximately 250 person-years. Jamk's RDI activities are clearly focused on development work, but applied research activities in certain strategic focus areas are increasing. Innovation is a characteristic feature of Jamk's operations.

In its new 2025–2035 strategy Jamk is placing at the center of its operations the construction of a new generation university (University 2.0) and focusing its activities on designated strengths. The strategic focus areas are Cybersecurity, Physical Activity and Well-being, and Multidisciplinary Rehabilitation. Emerging areas include Sustainable Bioeconomy and Energy Solutions as well as Future Industry. There is significant educational activity and focused RDI activities in these strategic focus areas, including professional service business operations.

RDI activities at Jamk have been developed according to the principle of continuous improvement. Processes, instructions, and practices are regularly updated. Evaluations have utilized external assessments in addition to self-assessments and peer learning. In addition, internal audits at Jamk have focused on RDI activities. Jamk has comprehensive RDI guidelines managed by RDI Services. Jamk has five schools, which all set their internal goals annually. Overall responsibility for RDI activities lies with the Vice Rector for Research. Progress toward goals is monitored monthly, with summaries discussed in the RDI Management Team every three months.

1.4 CoARA Objectives and Core Commitments

The purpose of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) is to set a shared direction for changes in research, researcher, and research organization assessment practices. Its goal is to maximize the quality and impact of research. The reform aims to recognize the diversity of research and researchers' careers and shift towards qualitative assessment rather than quantitative assessment. As a university of applied sciences, Jamk applies these objectives and commitments to its entire RDI activities.

The Core Commitments of CoARA define four basic commitments:

1. Recognize 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 organizations in research assessment

These core commitments are supported by six complementary commitments that relate to implementing the core commitments. These highlight the necessary resources, criteria, tools, good practices, active co-development, and communication.

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

1.5 CoARA Action Plan at Jamk

Jamk University of Applied Sciences CoARA Action Plan is divided into three areas. Each area is developed through the core commitments of CoARA and examined to see how they can be integrated into the university's activities.

The goal for Jamk is to reform the assessment of RDI activities to discover more diverse and transparent methods and assessment criteria. The objective is to foster an assessment culture and practices that encourage an open review of operations and results. This also aligns with the national declaration on promoting an open research culture as part of open science and research, to which Jamk is committed. Developing assessment will help in identifying challenges and risks. Overall, the development of assessment aims to better quality and impact of RDI activities and projects.

Regarding researchers and RDI experts, the aim of CoARA is to enable the recruitment and transparency of career paths for researchers and RDI experts, along with the development of supporting tools. The goal is to be an appealing work community that values competence with high employee commitment. The objective is to enable the staff to demonstrate and have their diverse skills and competences recognized.

1. Development of Research and Development Evaluation

- CoARA commitments are taken into account in the evaluation of RDI activities conducted four times a year by Jamk's RDI Management Team.
- Utilization of peer learning between higher education institutions in the development of responsible evaluation
- Participation in national cooperation: Membership in the National Chapter of CoARA, cooperation between higher education institutions in CoARA implementation, participation in the development and implementation of nation-wide responsible researcher evaluation recommendations.

2. Development of Project Evaluation

- Review and piloting of evaluation criteria
- Redesigning of project evaluation in different phases of the project cycle, taking into account developed evaluation criteria
- Development and piloting of the assessment so that it is implemented by theme and across unit/school boundaries (e.g., Jamk's research groups, research themes, project portfolios, strategic focus areas). In the assessment, self-assessment and peer review are used.

3. Development of Researcher and RDI Expert Evaluation

- Development of researcher career models:
 - Unified CV model for recruitment and career advancement
 - Identification and recognition of diverse researcher career paths
- Development of RDI expert career models:
 - Developing portfolio model for recruitment and supporting career development
 - Identification and recognition of diverse RDI expert competences and tasks
- Consideration of the international perspective, especially in the researcher career model
- Development of procedures utilizing co-development, pilot testing, peer review, and self-assessment
- Information sharing, engagement, and training of supervisors

1.6 Implementation and Monitoring of the Plan

Actors at Jamk

- Coordination: RDI Services
- Other responsible university services: HR Services, experts in open science and responsible evaluation, library, communication services, quality management
- Participating personnel groups: Researchers and research teams, personnel working in RDI specialist positions, RDI managers at the schools, supervisors.

Action plan schedule and monitoring

- A more detailed action plan is made yearly, as well as an yearly interim evaluation of how the plan is progressing and how it will be updated (autumn)

	2024	2025		2026		2027	
	Autumn	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn
Development of Research and Development Evaluation							
CoARA commitments part of internal evaluation on RDI activities (quarterly)							
Inter-organizational peer learning							
National co-operation							
Development of Project Evaluation							
Review and piloting of evaluation criteria							
Including CoARA commitments and criteria into different phases of the project cycle							
Developing assessment based on themes, utilizing self-assessment and peer review							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and implementing piloting • Evaluation of the pilots and implementation of the selected methods 							
Development of Researcher and RDI Expert Evaluation							
Development of researcher career models							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of diverse researcher career paths 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and testing of a unified CV model 							
Development of RDI expert career models							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and recognition of diverse RDI expert competences and tasks 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and piloting portfolio model 							
Coaching of supervisors in utilization of career path models, unified CVs and experts' portfolio model.							

Peer learning with another UAS

Other national commitments that are taken into account in Jamk's CoARA development work:

- National research integrity guidelines: [The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland](#) and other guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK)
- Declaration for Open Science and Research in Finland and its guidelines and recommendations:
 - [Declaration for Open Science and Research 2020–2025](#) (or its latest version)
 - In CoARA action plan, Jamk takes into account national [Good practice in researcher evaluation - Recommendation for the responsible evaluation of a researcher in Finland](#), which guides how to promote open and responsible culture of open science and research.

The commitment of the Research Evaluation Renewal Consortium | Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA):

- [Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment \(CoARA\): Agreement in Reforming Research Assessment \(2022\)](#)