

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences  
Commitment to implementing the CoARA Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment

## Action Plan 2024–2027

Organisation	Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences
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### Preamble

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (Haaga-Helia) promotes Responsible Research Assessment (RRA) both nationally and internationally. This document clarifies its commitment to fair and comprehensive RRA.

Haaga-Helia is committed to the following national and international principles and guidelines related to research assessment.

1. The Finnish [Declaration for Open Science and Research 2020–2025](#) (2020) and related policies. This declaration states that open science and research should be integrated into researchers' everyday work and support the effectiveness of research outputs and the quality of research. The policies and recommendations related to the declaration include, for example, the [Recommendation for the Responsible Evaluation of a Researcher in Finland](#) (2020), the forthcoming Finnish Career Assessment Matrix (FIN-CAM), the [Policy for Open Scholarship](#) (2022), the [National Recommendation for the Responsible Use of Publication Metrics](#) (2020, in Finnish), and the [User Guide for the Publication Forum Classification](#) 2019 (2020).
2. The various guidelines for [Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (RCR) published by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK). These guidelines focus on research integrity issues, covering ethically responsible and proper courses of action in research and identifying and preventing fraud and dishonesty in all research. The guidelines include, among others, the [Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland](#) (2023), [Agreeing on Authorship: Recommendation for Research Publications](#) (2019), and [Researcher's Curriculum Vitae Template](#) (2000).

In addition to these, Haaga-Helia has been a member of the Coalition on Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) since November 2022. By joining CoARA, Haaga-Helia has committed to reforming its research and researcher assessment criteria, tools, and processes to recognise the diverse activities and contributions that advance knowledge and maximise research quality and impact. To this end, Haaga-Helia has agreed to base its own

actions relating to research assessment on the principles set out in CoARA's [Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment](#) (2022). This includes:

- Using criteria and processes that emphasise quality, impact, diversity, inclusiveness, and collaboration.
- Complying with ethics and integrity rules and practices and ensuring that ethics and integrity are the highest priority, never compromised by any counter-incentives.
- Safeguarding freedom of research by not limiting researchers in the questions they ask, in their research implementation, or in the methods or theories they use.
- Ensuring the independence and transparency of the data, infrastructure, and criteria necessary for research assessment and for determining research impacts.

Following the Agreement, Haaga-Helia's four core commitments related to RRA are the following:

1. Recognise the diversity of contributions to and careers in research.
2. Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation, supported by the responsible use of quantitative metrics.
3. Avoid inappropriate use of journal and publication-based metrics.
4. Avoid the use of rankings.

These core commitments are supported by the following six practical commitments that enable and advance the implementation of RRA and the Agreement within and beyond Haaga-Helia:

5. Provide resources needed to achieve necessary organisational changes in Haaga-Helia.
6. Review and develop criteria, tools, and processes related to research assessment in Haaga-Helia.
7. Raise awareness and provide transparent communication, guidance and training on the research assessment criteria, tools, and processes in Haaga-Helia.
8. Exchange practices and experiences with other organisations.
9. Communicate progress made in implementing these commitments.
10. Evaluate practices, criteria, and tools based on solid evidence.

In its effort to fulfil the commitments outlined above, Haaga-Helia has developed the following Action Plan to guide its forthcoming activities related to RRA. Haaga-Helia's RDI Management Group approved this Action Plan on 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2024. The implementation of the Action Plan begins in 2024 and will be evaluated and updated annually by the CoARA Steering Group. The progress is reported to the RDI Management Group.

## 1. Scope

Haaga-Helia is an internationally recognised University of Applied Sciences (UAS) located in Helsinki, Finland. Finnish legislation defines conducting applied research, development and innovation, and artistic activities as a core part of the UAS functions. Finnish law thus positions UAS as key players in the national innovation system, emphasising their role in conducting applied research, development, and innovation (RDI) activities that support their educational activities and contribute to working life, regional development, and the renewal of regional economic structures.

Haaga-Helia is actively involved in impactful RDI activities that closely align with its educational selection and the needs of local innovation ecosystems. Haaga-Helia distinguishes itself with a focus on practical applications, commitment to innovation, and strong links to businesses and working life. This focus is also visible in its educational activities, aligned with its mission of opening doors to future careers. Accordingly, we can distinguish three traits that characterise the nature of the research conducted at Haaga-Helia in relation to the CoARA commitments:

1. Focus on themes that are topical and relevant to businesses and local innovation ecosystems.
2. Focus on integrating RDI with teaching and learning activities.
3. Focus on active collaboration with society and the societal impact of RDI activities.

## 2. Current situation and vision for the reform

Haaga-Helia's RDI activities are located under four core Research Areas: Entrepreneurship and Business Development, Service Business Development and Design, Sales Development and Digitalisation, and Engaging Vocational Pedagogy.

Haaga-Helia wants to ensure that the same responsible research assessment criteria are applied to all persons participating in RDI activities to encourage all to aim towards high-quality and societally impactful RDI. In Haaga-Helia, the personnel participating in RDI can work in a researcher, project, or teaching role.

- Researcher roles include Researcher, Senior Researcher, and Principal Researcher. Organisationally, these roles are located under our Research Areas. Senior Researchers and Principal Researchers are required to have a doctoral degree.
- Project roles are located under our Research Areas and include titles such as Project Assistant, Project Coordinator, Project Specialist, and Project Manager.
- Teaching roles include Teacher, Senior Lecturer, and Principal Lecturer, of which Principal Lecturers are required to have a doctoral degree under the current recruitment guidelines. Teachers are involved with RDI activities to varying degrees. Principal Lecturers are typically more closely tied to RDI, as their target profile consists of 50 % of RDI. Principal Lecturers are typically located under our Research Areas, whereas other teachers are located under our Competence Areas.

In order to ensure alignment with its commitments related to responsible RRA, it is crucial for Haaga-Helia to review and possibly refine existing policies, internal processes, and related guidelines. In Haaga-Helia, these relate to assessing RDI activities on an organisational, Research Area, or RDI project level, and assessing RDI personnel related to recruitment or performance and development discussions. In addition, there are two ongoing internal projects where alignment with the CoARA commitments needs to be assured:

1. Quality and development work related to the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R).
2. Development of an Impact vision for Haaga-Helia RDI activities in 2024.

To support these activities, Haaga-Helia actively participates in the ongoing policy work and discussions related to RRA in Finland and internationally. Haaga-Helia is currently engaged in the following communities and groups:

- Member of CoARA National Chapter Finland NC11.
- Member of the CoARA Working Group *Towards transformations: Transdisciplinarity, applied/practice-based research, and impacts*.
- Member of the Steering Group of Responsible Assessment in Finland.
- Member of Finn-ARMA Working Group on Research Evaluation.
- Member of Finn-ARMA Working Group on Publication Metrics.

In addition, Haaga-Helia will actively collaborate on issues related to RRA with partners from its higher education alliances: the [3AMK alliance](#) between Haaga-Helia, Laurea University of Applied Sciences, and Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, and the [European University Alliance Ulysseus](#).

### 3. Action Plan 2024–2027

Haaga-Helia's Responsible Research Assessment (RRA) reform includes the following measures for the 2024-2027 operating period.

#### 1. Promotion of RRA within Haaga-Helia

Action	Steps / Milestones	Timeframe	Responsibility
1.1. Implement RRA reform in Haaga-Helia		2024–2027	CoARA Steering Group
	Commit resources for the Action Plan 2024–2027	2024	CoARA Steering Group
	Establish a multidisciplinary RRA Working Group	2024	CoARA Steering Group
	Identify key challenges to address	2025	RRA Working Group
	Evaluate the progress of the RRA reform, review and refine necessary Actions, and commit resources for the Actions	Annually	CoARA Steering Group
	Prepare CoARA Action Plan 2028–2032	2027	CoARA Steering Group
1.2. Establish a policy for RRA in Haaga-Helia		2024–2025	CoARA Steering Group
	Develop a policy for RRA in Haaga-Helia	2024	RRA Working Group
	Conduct a comprehensive review and benchmark existing criteria, tools, and processes to use in RRA	2024	RRA Working Group
	Involve the community in discussing the criteria, tools and processes to be used in RRA in Haaga-Helia	2025	CoARA Steering group
	Develop the criteria, tools and processes used in RRA in Haaga-Helia	2025	RRA Working Group

1.3. Raise awareness of RRA in Haaga-Helia		2025–2027	CoARA Steering Group
	Communicate on the RRA reform, its meaning and progression in Haaga-Helia	2025–2027	CoARA Steering Group
	Determine the needs related to guidance and training	Annually	CoARA Steering Group
	Provide necessary guidance and training	Annually	RRA Working Group

## 2. RRA reform in Haaga-Helia

Action	Steps / Milestones	Timeframe	Responsibility
2.1. Implement RRA criteria, tools, and processes in existing organisational policies and guidelines		2025–2027	CoARA Steering Group
	<a href="#">Open Access Publishing Policy</a> from 2022 and related guidelines	2025	
	Internal research integrity guidelines	2025	
	Internal Research Data Policy from 2022 and related guidelines	2025	
	<a href="#">Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan 2024–2026</a> and related guidelines	2026	
	Internal recruiting and rewarding guidelines	2026	
2.2. Implement RRA criteria, tools, and processes in organisational performance evaluation processes		2025–2027	RRA Working Group together with RDI Management and Quality Management
	Annual evaluation of RDI activities in relation to internal steering processes	2025	
	Annual evaluation of publication activities	2025	
	Annual impact survey of RDI projects	2025	
	EFMD Accreditation and related self-evaluations	2024–2025	
	KARVI Quality Audit and related self-evaluations	2027	
2.3. Implement competence assessment matrix and RRA criteria, tools, and processes in existing career path models and related guidelines		2026	RRA Working Group together with HR
	Career path models	2026	
	Guidelines for recruitment	2026	
	Guidelines for evaluators used in recruitment processes	2026	
2.4. Implement competence assessment matrix and RRA criteria, tools, and processes in annual		2026	RRA Working Group together with HR

performance and development discussions and other performance evaluation situations			
	Annual performance and development discussions	2026	
	Guidelines for supervisors	2026	
	Guidelines for performance evaluation	2026	

### 3. Promotion of responsible RRA outside of Haaga-Helia

Action	Steps / Milestones	Timeframe	Responsibility
3.1. Exchange good practices with others		2024–2027	CoARA Steering Group
	Participate to the CoARA National Chapter and appropriate CoARA Working Groups to support systemic RRA reform, share good practices and monitor global progress	2024–2027	
	Collaborate and benchmark with Ulysseus	2025–2027	
	Collaborate with other Finnish UAS, especially 3AMK	2025–2027	
3.2. Communicate progress		2024–2027	CoARA Steering Group
	Publish the Action Plan	2024	
	Communicate progress to relevant stakeholders	2024–2027	
	Report progress to CoARA	2027	