



TALLINNA TEHNIKAKÕRJKOOL
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

EDUPROF Network Experts Meeting

Tallinn University of Applied Sciences

November 26-27, 2009

General remarks and conclusions

1st workshop led by **Timo Luopajarvi**, Secretary General of the Finnish Rectors' Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences, focused on the system of human resources policy concerning applied research on the national level.

During the introductory presentation of the Finnish research, development and innovation system several statistical numbers about funding and research staff have been mentioned in order to provide some starting points for further discussion.

After exchange of opinions experts from various countries (Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania and Switzerland) noticed that in general the biggest problem is, naturally, the limitation of financial resources (e.g. no basic national funding for research, development and innovation activities at an university of applied sciences or inflexibility of funding schemes), which is determined by common attitude about university-based research. Alongside with the funding issue one of the major challenges remains an absence of the common comprehension and deep understanding of own research, development and innovation agenda. It might be also caused by qualification level of academic and research staff, approximately 10% of which are PhD degree holders. Another specific aspect of human resource dimension is retiring and challenges in re-staffing with highly skilled workforce. Experts agreed that the following actions have to be taken in order to solve the abovementioned problems: (1) to prioritise applied research themes; (2) to create relevant centres of excellence in several areas of competences; (3) to improve human resource strategy for capacity development; (4) to embed research, development and innovation activities into under- and post-graduate studies and programmes; (5) to compose research training strategy for the academic staff; (6) to launch joint research projects with academic universities on the national and international level; (7) to establish clear regulations concerning work time distribution between teaching and research activities; (8) to stimulate circulation of brains between academic universities, university of applied sciences and business area. Since research, development and innovation activities are considered as quality assurance in higher education area, the shift of paradigm is essential for taking further steps – starting with a greater appreciation of research-related activities and outcomes of applied research (including consultancy with business and public sector). Moreover, strong regional dimension and social efficiency of a university of applied sciences have to be also taken into account because it requires more effective co-operation on the national level, not competition between the institutions.

Later discussion on differences between requirements for researcher (e.g. publications and patents) and teachers (e.g. pedagogical diploma and experiences in didactics) qualifications have led to other interesting questions: what are the results of applied research and how to implement them in a university of applied sciences? Should organisation of applied research activities be centralised on higher management level or decentralised on the faculty level? How to train and motivate teachers to do applied research?

2nd workshop led by **Giedrė Adomavičienė**, Head of the Applied Research Centre of the Kaunas University of Applied Sciences, and **Dr. Esmeralda Štyps**, the Head of Research Organisation Department of the Kaunas Technical College, focused on various aspects of human resource development strategy on administrative and faculty level.

Introduction was made with a quick overview on the Lithuanian legislation and current situation as well as with the presentation about research and development management by vision and framework, done by **Jouni Koski**, the Vice-President of the Laurea University of Applied Sciences (Vantaa Regional Unit). Followed discussion was aimed on mapping barriers and obstacles in introducing applied research activities on administrative and faculty level. Experts expressed the opinion, that attitude about applied research depends on management and teaching level (“*Not all teachers want to do research*”), because often there is a contradiction between different missions of universities of applied sciences – hard to be excellent on the same level in teaching, regional development and applied research on the same time. One of the reported problems is the intensity of teaching hours, which doesn’t allow focusing on qualitative applied research. It is important to acknowledge that academic staff in a university of applied sciences performs rather interdisciplinary development than pure research. Other questions raised during the exchange of views addressed the following issues: qualification of academic staff, ways of changing profile of teaching staff; fixing of research/development topics; integration of funders’ requirements etc. Experts have concluded that it is crucial to distinguish applied research from required research. Nevertheless, quality assurance system with clear and appropriate criteria (e.g. big impact to regional development, acknowledgment by peers, feedback end-user prospective etc) must be implemented. As this issue depends on the operational environment, administration of a university of applied sciences has to communicate its coherent vision and development capabilities to the faculty level. Pro-active success- and industry-driven approach is a key element in developing applied research themes which should be based not only on the existing study-programmes, but also on phenomena and challenges faced by regional and national community.

3rd workshop led by Dmitri Teperik, National Bologna Expert and Head of the Board of the Estonian Academy of Young Scientists, focused on implementing principles of Career Portfolio Development of a young professional within an UAS.

During the workshop experts have discussed the question about personal motivation and factors, which drives young professionals to pursue their careers in universities of applied sciences. Although high salaries have been named as the main method for attracting of young professionals, there is also a softer approach – an ability to choose right person – which might be implemented in institutions with limited budgets. As it was pointed out the techniques – how to find, to keep and to motivate right people – depend largely on managers. Therefore, they should have comprehensive leadership skills. Moreover, a university of applied sciences needs some people acting as a bridge between different topics and areas. Experts have shared the opinion that recruitment of young specialists is often in interconnection with waves of business growth or downfall. Thus, sharing human and applied research competences between different units and partners must become a common practice for a modern university of applied sciences. Additionally, possibilities to involve young professionals via specific applied research projects will give them a change to realise their potential not only on regional, but also on national and international level.

During the **conclusive session** common interests have been identified in the following objectives to be addressed in the next meetings of EDUPROF network:

- to map best practices in organising and staffing applied research in all EDUPROF network countries in order to be able to advocate reforms;
- to define a bigger picture where the network (and its members) wishes to be in 15 years;
- to elaborate and disseminate a new research practise by closer partnership between various stakeholders;
- to discuss differences between research, applied research, analysis/consultancy and other research-related activity conducted by an university of applied sciences;
- to share the experiences in doing projects more visible and having a real impact on national and international level.