

Evaluation of the University of Tampere Institute for Advanced Social Research

Terms of Reference

I General guidelines for the evaluation

Introduction

The Institute for Advanced Social Research, IASR, is the research collegium of the University of Tampere. It conducts advanced research focusing on society, provides a productive research environment and facilities for researchers, and promotes excellence, multidisciplinary research and international interaction. The institute awards annually fixed-term one- or two-year fellowships to academics and scholars from both abroad and the University of Tampere.

The University of Tampere (UTA) is a higher education institution with the social mission of educating visionaries who understand the world and change it. With its six faculties and some 15,000 degree students, UTA is one of the largest and most popular universities in Finland. In the University's research and teaching, the focus areas are the study of health and society.

UTA and Tampere University of Technology (TUT) will merge on 1 January 2019 to form a new university. Together with Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK), they will form a unique higher education community (Tampere3) with its sights set on high-quality, high-impact research. The new university will provide a unique hub for the interdisciplinary research on technology, health and society.

Background of the Evaluation

IASR was founded in 2002 under the name University of Tampere Centre for Advanced Studies and the first group of six Fellows started its term in August 2003. The name of the institute was changed into the Institute for Advanced Social Research in the process of an extensive reform of the administrative structure of the university in 2010. At the same time, the Institute, which had been open only for the faculty members, was opened to international call for applications. The Institute now hosts 20 Fellows annually and currently one third of them come from abroad.

In 2017 the Tampere3 Research Preparation Group decided that the prospects for creating research collegiums also on the other two campuses of the new university (more focused on technology and health) will be investigated. The Group also decided that this investigation can be used to launch a pilot for a new operating model. A shared collegium system to coordinate all three collegiums will be created, and criteria prepared for monitoring the effectiveness of the collegiums.

Objectives and utilization of the Evaluation

The operations and organization of the Institute for Advanced Social Research are evaluated in order to find out if the institute has been successful in achieving its mission. The institute's mission is to serve the scientific community and the University of Tampere by engaging in advanced research focused on society, by enhancing research proficiency and facilities in the University, and by promoting multidisciplinary and international interaction.

The main objective of the evaluation is, however, to get ideas and suggestions on how to best continue the institution's operations as a multidisciplinary collegium serving the new university. The evaluation report will be used as a starting point for creating a new multidisciplinary collegium.

Working arrangements

The evaluation panel consisting of three members will evaluate the operations and organization of the IASR taking into account all the material available to them, including all the assessment documents, site visit and interviews. The panel is expected to finish the final draft of the assessment report including the recommendations during their site visit in Tampere. A chair is appointed to direct the assessment panel's work. It is the chair's responsibility to ensure that the panel produces its report on time.

The evaluation and its organization are funded by the Tampere3, which will pay expert fees to the panel members as well as reimburse all the travel and accommodation expenses relating to the site visit week.

Desk work and site visit week

Panel members base their assessment on desk work at their home institutions prior to the site visit and on interviews and discussions during the site visit in Finland.

Desk work is carried out prior to the site visit and is based on

- details concerning the institute from the entire time period of its existence
- information on the past and present Fellows of the institute (i.e. questionnaire and interviews), including the years 2010-2017
- details concerning the research output and other merits of the past and present Fellows of the institute (2010-2017)
- background information about UTA and the Finnish higher education and research system

All the material, including a time table for the site visit, will be provided to the panel members three weeks before coming to Tampere.

Confidentiality

The panel members agree to refrain from making use and/or divulging to third parties any non-public material, facts, information, documents or other matters brought to the attention of panel members during the evaluation. The materials included in the evaluation report as well as all the ratings are strictly confidential until the publication of the final report that summarizes all the results. The final report is the main instrument for communicating the results of the evaluation.

Organization of the Evaluation

The evaluation process is managed by the Tampere3 Research Preparation Group:

Vice Rector Seppo Parkkila, University of Tampere (Chair)

Vice President Jarmo Takala, Tampere University of Technology

Vice President Marja Sutela, Tampere University of Applied Sciences

Head of Research Development Markku Ihonen, University of Tampere

Research Development Manager Anu Juslin, Tampere University of Technology

Director of Research Services Floora Ruokonen, Tampere3

Project manager: Laura Himanen (laura.himanen@tut.fi, +358 40 198 1834)

II Evaluation criteria and rating scale

The panel is asked to present a written statement of IASR's scientific quality and impact, its level of internationality and the quality of its research environment. The criteria are explained in more details below. Please also give a numerical rating of all three criteria, where 5 stands for outstanding, 4 for excellence, 3 for good, 2 for satisfactory and 1 for unsatisfactory.

1. Scientific quality and impact

For this criterion, the panel evaluates to what extent IASR provides its Fellows opportunities to conduct high-quality research, and if IASR enhances research proficiency in UTA. The panel should also consider the institute's quality assurance in terms of Fellow recruitment process and organization.

2. Internationality

For this criterion the panel evaluates if IASR promotes international interaction. More specifically the panel should consider if the development towards a more international collegium has been sufficient, if internationality is taken into consideration in the recruitment, if IASR provides opportunities for its Fellows to create and/or maintain international connections, and if IASR is international in terms of networking and collaboration.

3. Research environment

For this criterion the panel evaluates the extent to which IASR provides an adequate environment for conducting advanced research focused on society. More specifically the panel should consider if IASR promotes multidisciplinary and creates an inspiring setting that generates new stimuli, co-operation patterns and innovative research networks, and if the work spaces and other facilities, support services and financial resources are adequate.

III Suggestions for the future

The panel is asked to give ideas and suggestions on how to best continue IASR's operations. Should it continue as it is now? Could it be transformed into a multidisciplinary collegium serving all research areas in the new university? And how could it be done? How could IASR better foster cutting-edge research on society? What kind of organizational structure would be most beneficial? What kind of support functions would best enhance the quality of multidisciplinary research?