



Local Action Plan Report (approx. 10 pages)

1. **Institution name:** University of Jyväskylä
2. **Period covered by action plan:** January - December 2021
3. **Brief description of department or section involved, including numbers of persons covered by the plan.**

This Local Action Plan (LAP) focuses on the Faculty of Education and Psychology at the University of Jyväskylä. This Faculty comprises the Department of Education, the Department of Teacher Education and the Department of Psychology. Each department includes over 100 staff with professors and assistant or associate professors, post-doctoral and senior researchers, lecturers and senior lecturers, university teachers and project researchers and planners, as well as number of salaried doctoral students and research assistants and a significant number of self-financed doctoral students. All three departments provide under- and post-graduate studies leading to a range of professional qualifications.

In 2020 with the introduction of a new university wide research strategy, departments have been working together to develop a Faculty-wide research strategy and departmental strategies. Whereas the previous research strategy included six key areas (internationalization, research collaboration & leadership, the position of young academics, support for external funding, open science and an increase in publishing efficiency), the new strategy highlights the generation of internationally leading research, comprehensive and future-building expertise and a courageous operational culture that promotes societal impact. Moreover, all members of staff are expected to engage in research.

The university-wide activities to develop a comprehensive research strategy create an important environment for the realization of the RECITE project and in particular the development of a LAP that can be integrated into the wider university strategy. The university-wide activities, however, create an additional challenge as the circulation of research in teacher education is not explicitly prioritized in the university strategy. This means that RECITE can significantly contribute to the university strategy, if it is deemed to fit with the priorities already outlined. The aim of this LAP is to propose strategic actions for increasing the circulation of research in teacher education with concrete suggestions for operationalizing strategic actions.

4. **Timeline of proposed actions:**

The overall timeline for this LAP is from January-December 2021. The months for individual actions are included in the tables below.

Month	Action	Progress to date
January 2021	Collate insights from projects	Complete
February 2021	Proposals for strategic development to Faculty Research Council Findings from research-based development projects shared with head of project on the development of research-based teacher education	Complete Complete
March 2021	ReCiTe findings shared with leadership teams of departments, research and pedagogical working groups Discuss with Faculty webpage developer	Requests for meetings sent
April 2021	Discuss modifying staff workplans with departmental heads Discuss publication channels Propose establishing regular internships to support the circulation of research	
May 2021	Guest visit – sharing examples of strengthening relationships with stakeholders Develop plans to involve students in different phases and types of research Mapping Faculty expertise for webpage	
June 2021	Identify publication channels	
July 2021	-	
August 2021	Publishing new features on webpages Published list of publication channels Adding a new channel for receiving comments & questions from stakeholders on website	
September 2021	Share insights from stakeholder engagement Plan show-casing events for a wider range of audiences	
October 2021	Establish a group for overseeing stakeholder engagement Workshops on writing for different stakeholders	
November 2021	Use knowledge market model as a basis for extending collaboration with field schools	
December 2021	Reviewing and reporting progress to Faculty leadership	

5. Description of each of the planned activities, including target audience if relevant, expected results and whether the activity is expected to change the direction or topics of research at your institution in any way.

Based on mapping activities as part of the ReCiTe project, the milestones for the JYU Local Action Plan include: 1. raising the profile regarding the circulation of research as part of the Faculty research strategy; 2. developing good practices regarding the circulation of research; 3. raising the profile of engagement with stakeholders and including educational stakeholders in designing and developing areas for collaboration and facilitating the circulation of research; and 4. strengthening the provision of research-based teacher education at JYU. This LAP aims to improve the circulation of research (interests, expertise, activities) by encouraging a research culture that recognises the need to promote public engagement as well as academic production, that conceives of research as a shared

endeavour carried out with educational stakeholders and no longer relies on individual, but rather community, relationships and connections. The actions and timetables for each milestones are addressed in the following sections.

ACTION PLAN 1. Including the circulation of research as part of the Faculty research strategy.

As part of the development of the university-wide research strategy, internal evaluations are scheduled to take place in each department and Faculty during spring 2021. One of the strategic aims for the Faculty of Education and Psychology is to strengthen research cooperation, impact and significance at national and international levels. This aim complements the RECITE project, moreover the priority of RECITE to strengthen channels of communication with educational stakeholders at local and regional levels provides an important foundation for research cooperation, impact and significance at national and international levels. Action plan 1 outlines strategic actions to bring together the priorities and interests of the Faculty strategy and the RECITE project.

NEED	ACTION	TARGET	DATE OF ACTION	ANTICIPATED FOLLOW-ON
share findings from RECITE with the Faculty research council & departmental research working groups	PRESENTATION of findings and LAP voicing need for and proposing concrete actions for strengthening the circulation of research	Faculty research council	February 2021	Presentations to departmental research working groups (March 2021) Faculty presentation (Sept 2021)
to recognise engagement with local and regional stakeholders as fundamental activity in educational science.	PROPOSE including activities with stakeholders as a clear part of working hours (not just public service)	Faculty research council	February 2021	Discuss changes in work plan infrastructure with departmental heads (April 2021) Raise the profile of staff-educational stakeholder relationships
to develop involvement of doctoral students in Faculty development	INVITE guest to share examples of strengthening relationships with stakeholders through doctoral studies	Doctoral supervisors	May 2021	Develop policy document on involvement of doctoral students
to strengthen complementarity between educational research and practice, rather than exacerbating the gap	INVOLVE students in different phases of research by sharing 'research in progress'	Faculty research council & pedagogical working group (May 2021)	ongoing activities, e.g. Ruusupuisto keskuste and research briefs	develop approaches to sharing research via the alumni network (Nov 2021)

Table 1: Needs, actions and dates for including the circulation of research in the Faculty research strategy

ACTION PLAN 2. Developing good practices regarding the circulation of research

With the introduction of new national curricula in Finland in 2016, successive governments have released a significant amount of funds for developing initiatives and innovative approaches in Finnish education. These projects, premised on research, create opportunities for the development of extensive networks across Finland between providers of teacher education and educational practitioners. Project activities have brought new responsibilities, actors and networks into teacher education expanding opportunities and channels for increasing the circulation of research. A number of faculty at JYU are coordinating and working on projects that have received funding from the Ministry. Through these projects, teacher educators and educational researchers have trialled a diverse approaches for engaging educational practitioners in research.

To work towards the JYU milestone of developing good practices regarding the circulation of research, a questionnaire was sent to project managers and coordinators asking them to share how research has been part of their project. The seven responses include a wide range of experiences and insights from different projects. It is hoped that by sharing these insights, there will be a better understanding of the skills and abilities staff need to circulate research, greater awareness of the different approaches that can be used to circulate research and concrete starting points that complement the existing culture and practices of JYU, while also pointing to appropriate areas for development. Planned activities and concrete actions are outlined following the key characteristics of research-based development projects and the skills and resources required to more effectively circulate research.

Key characteristics of research-based development projects:

The most recent **research-based development projects** developed and coordinated by the Department of Teacher Education have:

1. been *founded on extensive understanding of existing research and the ability of academic educators to translate academic content into 'raw material' for pedagogical and professional discussions;*
2. benefited from *investment in community-based relationships*, either building on earlier research-based collaborations or having the time to establish working relationships with practitioners in the field and educational stakeholders;
3. offered *a range of roles for educational practitioners* from informants to collaborative developers and joint decision-makers, as well as critical sources for the formation and realization of educational innovations and research-based development (essential partnership);
4. *implicitly and explicitly integrated research into the project by using research to design the project* as well as *integrating research into project activities* whether formal training days and seminars for teachers, rectors and administrators or informal pedagogical cafés and collegial hubs, interventions and explorations;
5. *shared research with educational stakeholders through a variety of formal and informal channels* at different stages of the life of a project from the initial planning phase on through feedback meetings, letters to parents, being available to respond to questions, sharing

observations and writing summaries of findings for participants, offering to visit schools to tell more, publishing articles, blogs, videos and holding discussions.

These characterising features of research-based development projects point to the extensive expertise individual and teams of teacher educators need in order to be able to invest in the circulation of research in teacher education. Teacher educators have to:

- i. be in-touch with the field in order to be able translate between the academy and the field;
- ii. have the time and opportunity to build working relationships with educational stakeholders;
- iii. be flexible and sensitive to the expertise that exists in the field in order to collaborate with practitioners;
- iv. be able to organize different kinds of activities and to draw on different project designs to maximize the resources brought together and generated through the project; and,
- v. have the ability to participate but to also step back from the project, to see the bigger picture in order to be able to report it and to share findings with different stakeholders.

Externally funded projects also provide resources that obligate and enable teacher educators to engage with stakeholders. With financial support, for example, webpages and different digital tools can be developed that support communication with stakeholders. Moreover, project funding buys time for teacher educators to prepare materials and ways of working, to invest in relationship and build channel of communication to share interests, negotiate ways of working, agree on priorities and to flexibly alter schedules to align with the timetable of educational stakeholders. The obligations that come with project funding requires and resources the more effective circulation of research for the duration of the project. An important area for development, however, is to integrate the circulation of research into the everyday practices and culture of teacher education and to build on the resources, experiences and ways of working that are currently part of teacher education due to recent project activity.

The circulation of research depends on the skills and abilities of individual teacher educators, and the resources and responsibilities of providers of teacher education. The mapping exercises indicate that currently staff experience a disjuncture between the expectation to engage in research and societal activities, and the resources and infrastructure. The gaps between the insights of the research-based development projects and the responses of regular faculty bring into focus the nature of these disjunctures that disable, rather than enable, successful circulation of research. In order to bring about change, strategic actions that can be taken include:

NEED	ACTION	TARGET	DATE OF ACTION	ANTICIPATED FOLLOW-ON
to raise awareness of tangible and intangible requirements to facilitate the circulation research	AWARENESS RAISING share findings from RECITE mapping (formal & written presentations) to	Leadership teams and working groups of the Faculties and departments	March 2021	Permission granted to initiate further discussion on strategic actions

	inform and facilitate further discussion			
to enhance the sharing of skills, interests, profiles & experiences of colleagues to facilitate collaboration between colleagues and with educational stakeholders	CONTRIBUTE to the redevelopment of the Faculty webpages to display profiles and interests PLAN show-casing events for a wider range of audiences	Webpage developer Faculty	March 2021 September 2021	Mapping of faculty expertise (April/May 2021) Publishing on webpages (August/September 2021)
to develop infrastructure that values collaboration between different educational stakeholders as part of official duties	REQUEST - official work plans redesigned to include and acknowledge different forms of engagement with stakeholders MAP & SHARE – what has been learnt from researcher’s night, KEOS, participation on school boards & interest groups, working with field schools DISCUSSS options for engaging with stakeholders with the goal to establish channels of communication, e.g. annual invitations to stakeholders to share research findings and interests, experiences, concerns and areas for development	Leadership teams Faculty collegial discussions Departmental research working groups & collegial discussions	March 2021 September 2021 April 2021	Pursue request Decide who or which group is responsible for overseeing these activities → action (October 2021) Decide who or which group is responsible for overseeing these activities → invitation (Sept 2021)
to practice ‘translating’ academic understanding into the language of practitioners and stakeholders	PROPOSE workshops and discuss who could be responsible for organizing workshops	Departmental research working groups	March 2021	OFFER workshops on popularizing academic content in speech and writing (August 2021)

Table 2: Needs, actions and dates for developing good practices regarding the circulation of research

ACTION PLAN 3: Increasing engagement with educational stakeholders

In order to increase engagement with stakeholders and include educational stakeholders in designing and developing areas for collaboration and facilitating the circulation of research, a number of concrete steps are needed to establish a network and two-way channels for communicating with stakeholders. The *Ruusupuisto kärkiuutiset* ('Rose garden spearhead news') is published five times a year and provides an outlet for publishing 1000 word, popularised articles on research activities, initiatives and findings. In Finland, channels also exist for popularising and sharing research work and activities, such as the publication of the Siirtolaisuusinstituutti (Migration Institute of Finland) and Kieli, koulutus ja yhteiskunta (Language, Education and Society). These publication channels target educational stakeholders, but are not part of the funding mechanism for the university arguably compromising engagement with stakeholders through these channels. Moreover, no information is readily available on these different publication channels or shared with faculty.

Publication channels, however, are often one-way. There is a need to enable educational stakeholders to have channels for sharing their interests, questions and concerns with teacher educators and educational researchers. It should also be recognised that educational stakeholders have different relationships with research. Even educational stakeholders with academic backgrounds cannot be assumed to keep up-to-date with the latest research findings and not all educational stakeholders have academic backgrounds. In other words, it would be unreasonable to expect educational stakeholders to have the same grasp of the theories, methodologies and previous research that form the basis for research-based educational development. This means that teacher educators and educational researchers need to create the space for educational stakeholders to give their input as well as the ability to translate concerns and interests from the field into research-based action. The responses from the questionnaire suggest that educational stakeholders rarely comment on or are invited to comment on the research component of developmental projects.

NEED	ACTION	TARGET	DATE OF ACTION	ANTICIPATED FOLLOW-ON
information on publishing options & channels for sharing research with governmental bodies and policy makers	IDENTIFY, SHARE & ADD TO existing channels for sharing research with stakeholders inc. governmental bodies, policy-makers & educators	Departmental research working groups & webpage developer, departmental staff	May 2021	Ask the media officer to compile and share a list of possible outputs →list August 2021
to include a 'Find an expert' function and ensure that contact information is readily available on Faculty / Departmental webpages	PROPOSE and discuss with the person responsible for re-developing the out-dated webpages to include a 'Find an expert' function	Faculty/ Departmental leaders & webpage developer	February & April 2021	Gather info from staff August/September 2021 →published Oct 2021

regular surveys of teacher forums where teachers express interests/concerns	PROPOSE establishing regular internships with specific foci to keep teacher educators /educational researchers up-to-date stakeholder discussions in teacher forums and to communicate with local educational stakeholders	Faculty/ Departmental leaders	March & April 2021	Decide who or which group is responsible for overseeing these activities →advertise internship (August 2021)
Re-establishing 'knowledge markets' with the practice school (temporarily halted due to Covid) and to reconsider staff obligations (previously obligatory for practice school staff, voluntary for staff from the Department of Teacher Education)	DISCUSS options with colleague responsible for 'Knowledge markets' PROPOSE a minimum number of OKL staff attend each knowledge markets and discuss how OKL can strengthen collaboration with school-based colleagues	Person/s responsible for Knowledge Markets, Departmental research working groups /Departmental leadership	April 2021 May 2021	Use Knowledge Market as a model for building/extending relationships with field schools (November 2021)

Table 3: Needs, actions and dates for increasing engagement with educational stakeholders

ACTION PLAN 4: Strengthening the provision of research-based teacher education

The mapping exercises highlight the need to further develop and extend research-based teacher education at JYU. This section addresses these needs and points to the way in which the further development of research-based teacher education should ultimately improve the circulation of research in pre- and in-service teacher education.

Responses from student teachers indicate a wide range of understanding with regard to the nature of educational research and the relationship between theory and practice. This is an important area to address both as part of academic study, but also as the foundation for their future career as educators – if it is to continue to be research-based. A third of students (9/29) described educational research as the investigation of practice, of what works and doesn't work. A sixth of students (5/29) described educational research as providing new knowledge and three of 29 described educational research as the recognized need to develop education in response to changing times. It is important to note that few of the responses had a critical grasp of the relationship between theory and practice. Although this is understandably a demanding relationship to conceptualise, it is a critical if not foundational aspect of pedagogical and educational expertise. A critical question for further discussion is how to ensure that research-based teacher education prepares teachers for educational practice, rather than educating them away from the classroom. The actions included in the table below address this critical relationship.

Responses from doctoral students point to their hope and motivation to improve education on the basis of their research. The work and research interests or areas of doctoral students, however, are rarely known beyond the small circle of supervisors. If doctoral students do not hold funded positions, their research is even less likely to be known by Faculty or Departmental staff, yet many of these doctoral students are also working as teachers and provide important links with the field. This area is addressed in the table below.

Whereas the responses from student teachers highlight the need to explicitly address how research is part of education, the responses from research-based development project staff indicate how research can be used to inform the design, practices and activities of teacher education. The notion of reflective practitioners is a well-established notion within the teacher education community, however, research on the community has not been widely circulated within the community itself. With the emphasis on research-based teacher education coming from the Rector's office, this provides greater incentive for developing a systematic or community-wide approach to research-based teacher education. Through these activities within the TE community, hopefully pre-service teachers can be educated as critical researchers providing a foundation for them to continue engaging with research throughout their career. For teacher educators to be able to model this approach and sharing the research-basis for educational development the gap between theory and practice will hopefully be reduced.

NEED	ACTION	TARGET	DATE OF ACTION	ANTICIPATED FOLLOW-ON
to raise awareness of student teachers' understanding of educational research	PROPOSE include an explicit session/module on the theory and practice of education	Departmental leadership → Pedagogical toimikunta	April 2021	identify a suitable space in the TE curriculum for addressing theory of science (May 2021)
to raise awareness & increase community conversations in order to widen methods & goals of research-based teaching – developing & examining content, structures, models and practices	PROPOSE staff discussion on what research-based teacher education means at JYU and different ways this can be realised and how to critically examine through research	Riitta-Leena Metsäpelto Departmental leadership	February 2021 March 2021	staff discussion on research-based teacher education → clearer strategy (May 2021)
review & extend how teacher education at JYU has been studied to date and can be studied in the future	DISCUSS whether to coordinate and how to share research on teacher education at JYU PROPOSE to map & share current research projects on teacher education at JYU	Head of project to develop research-based teacher education Departmental research working groups	February 2021 March 2021	Pooling of resources to develop research on TE → May 2021
to raise awareness & increase community conversations to develop connection between development projects and teacher	SHARE findings from Recite in order to further develop connections, e.g. practical examples, proposals	Departmental leadership Departmental research working groups & Pedagogical working group	March 2021 March 2021	Policy on how to strengthen collaboration between projects and TE (December 2021)

education in everyday practice				
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Table 4: Needs, actions and dates for strengthening the provision of research-based teacher education