

Appendix A: Terms of References (ToR)

The board of The faculty of Health Sciences, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, mandates the evaluation committee appointed by the Research Council of Norway (RCN) to assess The Department of Psychology based on the following Terms of Reference.

Assessment

You are asked to assess the organisation, quality and diversity of research conducted by The Department of Psychology as well as its relevance to institutional and sectoral purposes, and to society at large. You should do so by judging the unit's performance based on the following five assessment criteria (a. to e.). Be sure to take current international trends and developments in science and society into account in your analysis.

- a) Strategy, resources and organisation
- b) Research production, quality and integrity
- c) Diversity and equality
- d) Relevance to institutional and sectoral purposes
- e) Relevance to society

For a description of these criteria, see Chapter 2 of the life sciences evaluation protocol. Please provide a written assessment for each of the five criteria. Please also provide recommendations for improvement. We ask you to pay special attention to the following four aspects in your assessment:

Interdisciplinary research to address societal challenges

In order to address major societal challenges, UiT's strategy suggests promoting interdisciplinarity, co-creation and innovation. Only by drawing on the expertise and relative strengths of diverse disciplines will we be able to make a meaningful contribution to solving humanities' biggest challenges. The department of psychology (IPS) conducts basic and applied research across a broad range of topics ranging from the study of basic neuroscientific principles in animals and humans over mental health and clinical conditions to social dynamics and applications in the workplace, education and recreational activities. This broadly distributed set of research topics and expertise at IPS implies an opportunity to study important topics from an interdisciplinary perspective even within our department. The department has in previous years attempted to foster scientific exchange between research groups.

We kindly ask the committee to evaluate to what degree IPS has been successful in promoting interdisciplinary research both within our department and with other institutions. We also welcome suggestions for further opportunities to deploy the institutes strengths towards addressing major societal challenges.

International collaboration and strengthening of our capacity

Solving major societal challenges also requires pooling national and international resources and expertise to establish (distributed) research groups that possess expertise at the forefront of science across different research fields. At the same time, UiT has a special

mandate to research societal challenges and health challenges with particular emphasis on arctic regions and indigenous people. In the past ten years, IPS has recruited several international researchers with strong research profiles who have established collaborations with international leading teams in their respective fields. However, recruitment of high-level researchers remains challenging due to our special geographic location. We have also attempted, with limited success, to attract external funding from international (e.g., ERC), national (e.g., RCN) and regional sources (e.g., regional health authorities). We kindly ask the committee to evaluate the strength of our (international) networks and evaluate them in relation to our chances of attracting external funding from competitive source. We also welcome suggestions how our attempts to acquire external funding can be improved to increase our likelihood of success.

Clinical research and collaboration with mental-health institutions

Ongoing research at IPS is situated within and constrained by national and regional requirements to educate clinical psychologists that possess relevant skills to address challenges related to mental health in the population in (Northern) Norway. Recruiting clinical specialists who possess both clinical and research expertise is challenging due to the length of the respective educations and the scarcity of suitable candidates who wish to stay in academia. In addition, establishing clinical research studies within clinical institutions focusing on mental health is challenging due to the high workload and constraints at these institutions. IPS has attempted to recruit clinical specialists with research competence to establish functioning research collaborations with regional hospitals and other institutions. We have also initiated educational initiatives to strengthen the pool of qualified potential applicants (e.g., combining PhD and clinical specialization in the "dobbelkompetanse" program and the student research program "forskerlinje" to enable shortened PhD durations). We kindly ask the committee to evaluate to what degree these attempts have been successful and where room for improvement is available. We would also appreciate comments and suggestions on how the described challenges can be overcome to establish research programs with direct benefits for mental-health patients.

Open Science and rigorous research practices

The university's strategy emphasizes the need for improved practices of open science. The impact of scientific findings (as published in articles and books) can be strongly increased by providing open-access copies of the articles, preprints, sharing scientific data, materials, protocols, analysis methods and other research-related methods and outcomes as well as using improved methodological approaches such as pre-registration of confirmatory studies. In addition, access to these research outputs beyond scientific publications allows for a realistic assessment of its rigor, reliability and likely applicability to new problems. At IPS, we have over the last years taken initiatives to increase open-science practices and sharing of data and other outputs in all studies in which it is possible due to the absence of ethical restrictions. We have also augmented our undergraduate courses to include segments on Open Science in order to increase the awareness of these issues in the next generation of researchers. We invite the committee to comment on the degree to which this endeavour has been successful and give advice on how to further improve within this field.

In addition, we would like your report to provide a qualitative assessment of The Department of Psychology as a whole in relation to its strategic targets. The committee

assesses the strategy that the administrative unit intends to pursue in the years ahead and the extent to which it will be capable of meeting its targets for research and society during this period based on available resources and competence. The committee is also invited to make recommendations concerning these two subjects.

Documentation

The necessary documentation will be made available by the life sciences secretariat at Technopolis Group.

The documents will include the following:

- a report on research personnel and publications within life sciences commissioned by RCN
- a self-assessment based on a template provided by the life sciences secretariat

Interviews with representatives from the evaluated units

Interviews with the The Department of Psychology will be organised by the evaluation secretariat. Such interviews can be organised as a site visit, in another specified location in Norway or as a video conference.

Statement on impartiality and confidence

The assessment should be carried out in accordance with the *Regulations on Impartiality and Confidence in the Research Council of Norway*. A statement on the impartiality of the committee members has been recorded by the RCN as a part of the appointment process. The impartiality and confidence of committee and panel members should be confirmed when evaluation data from The Department of Psychology are made available to the committee and the panels, and before any assessments are made based on these data. The RCN should be notified if questions concerning impartiality and confidence are raised by committee members during the evaluation process.

Assessment report

We ask you to report your findings in an assessment report drawn up in accordance with a format specified by the life sciences secretariat. The committee may suggest adjustments to this format at its first meeting. A draft report should be sent to the The Department of Psychology and RCN. The The Department of Psychology should be allowed to check the report for factual inaccuracies; if such inaccuracies are found, they should be reported to the life sciences secretariat within the deadline given by the secretariat. After the committee has made the amendments judged necessary, a corrected version of the assessment report should be sent to the board of The faculty of Health Sciences, UiT The Arctic University of Norway and the RCN after all feedback on inaccuracies has been received from The Department of Psychology