

Action Plan for Research

Department of Business and Management Science

15.02.2026

Process overview

The department received the report from the evaluation committee on January 9th, 2026, with a deadline for delivery of this action plan on February 15th. This did not give enough time for a thorough process in the department, nor consideration by the Department board as is mandated for such a document. We therefore consider this a preliminary plan, which we aim to develop further and either adopt by the department board or incorporate into the departmental action plan that will follow after the NHH Board has decided on the new NHH strategy in March. This will be the department's fifth action plan since 2010.

The report from the evaluation committee was discussed by the department management team on January 13th and presented to the full department by the head of department on January 22nd. The research groups were then asked to provide input into the plan by January 30th. This input was discussed by the management team on February 3rd. The draft action plan below is written by head of department and briefly circulated in the management team for feedback before the deadline.

Summary of status quo and the external report

The report from the evaluation committee concludes that the department has been much more ambitious and successful in acquiring competitive research funding since the previous evaluation in 2019, noting that external funding from the Research Council of Norway and EU agencies has increased significantly – from NOK 43 million in the previous period to NOK 157 million since 2020. This growth confirms the department's research excellence and has expanded resources for PhD students, postdocs and data. The committee notes, however, a growing mismatch between the scale of externally funded research activity and the available administrative capacity at the departmental level.

The committee finds that the department has a governance structure that is broadly appropriate for a research-intensive academic unit with a head of department that is professional, experienced, and enjoys great trust among employees at all levels.

The department's integration of economics, management science, and analytics provides a distinctive competence in data-driven decision-making and evidence-based policy analysis. Strong contributions in areas such as energy, taxation, risk management, sustainability, and shipping reinforce the role of NHH in supporting industry.

Outreach at the department has increased in the evaluation period. Several research groups report that many research questions are formed in dialogue with society, and especially with industrial actors.

The department has had a clear focus on improving the gender balance, and the share of female professors has increased from 6 % in 2021 to 22 % in 2025. The department comprises about 50 % international staff, and over the last decade, non-Scandinavians have accounted for 62 % of all

new hires. Diversity is a strength that can ensure that research retains an international dimension, but the committee finds it important to monitor this balance such that the capacity for activities requiring a Scandinavian language is sufficient.

The committee notes that the department has increased publication points per FTE, reaching NHH's goal of one level-2 publication point per FTE in 2024. The percentage of employees at the department delivering less than one publication point during the last five years is 20 %, well below the NHH average. PhD candidates contributed 18 % of the publication points at the department in 2024. The department has as many finished PhD candidates in 2023 and 2024 as the Department of Economics and has a very high completion rate. A main challenge for the department is attracting suitable, high-quality candidates to the PhD program.

Output is "in general very good," but the committee notes substantial variation between groups. The committee showcases the CSL Centre for Shipping and Logistics as "by far the most prolific" research group at the department. The Managerial Economics and Business Strategy group is also credited for publishing "extensively and at an excellent level." The committee stresses that the five research groups are heterogeneous in dimensions such as publications, external funding, outreach, and international collaboration. It recommends that each group should aim to be excellent in at least one dimension and very good in all others.

Overall, the committee sees clear evidence of progress, excellence in several groups, and a significant rise in external funding while at the same time identifying several areas where strategic adjustments would help the department realize its long-term ambitions. These concern governance and role clarity, sharpening of the research profile, performance variation, further strengthening of a culture of excellence, the development of a more coherent approach to external funding and human resources, long-term planning for recruitment and succession, a more systematic approach to outreach and impact with sustainability as a guiding principle, and the scaling of administrative support in line with activity and complexity.

The evaluation committee recommends giving research group leaders an even more prominent position in the organization of research, both individually and collectively in the Research Committee.

Measures, KPIs and identified barriers

For each of the seven specified areas, give a clear action plan.

1. Publication quality and relevance

Purpose: Increase academic impact in internationally leading journals.

Measures

The department will keep a clear emphasis on top-level publications in day-to-day research work. Specific measures include:

- 1.1. Giving group leaders a mandate that includes active mentoring to improve journal-fit awareness and publication in top-level outlets.
- 1.2. Implementing a new annum scheme that places more weight on top publications and strengthens incentives for international and cross-institutional research collaboration.

- 1.3. Using internal seminars with discussants to increase research quality and steer manuscripts toward top journals.
- 1.4. Making expectations about excellence more explicit in job announcements, recruitment processes, and appraisal dialogue meetings with existing faculty members.
- 1.5. Distributing information about external rankings of NHH faculty members, such as RePeC, in order supplement publication points and the ABS-list as metrics of success.

KPIs

- 1.1. Continue to reach the NHH target for NPI level 2 publications points per faculty.
- 1.2. Increase the number of publications in ABS4 and ABS4* journals.

Identified barriers

- 1.1. Having a lexicographic preference for top publication potential in recruitment processes may jeopardize the department's capacity for delivering high quality teaching in all areas that the department has responsibility for.
- 1.2. There can be a trade-off between targeting top journals and producing the agreed deliveries in externally funded applied research projects.
- 1.3. Putting too much emphasis on top research can discourage faculty members that produce a steady flow of good research in second-tier journals. This can in turn create tensions between faculty members and research groups with different publication profiles.

2. Research strategy and priority areas

Purpose: Strengthen the department's strategic research profile and focus on priority topics.

Measures

The department is in the process of strengthening its focus on research strategy and research administration. An important element in this is to empower the research group leaders by giving them a clearer and more formalized role as first line managers. This includes redefining the role of the department's Research Committee (formerly called the Academic Committee). Specific measures include:

- 2.1. Giving group leaders and the Research Committee formal mandates.
- 2.2. Giving group leaders responsibility for following up the newly introduced individual research plans for faculty members in their groups.
- 2.3. Giving group leaders responsibility for organizing internal seminars that support the department's publication strategy.
- 2.4. Setting up the Research Committee as an advisory body for the department's responsible for research. New research applications, progress reports for PhD-students, PhD course offerings, recruitment, impact case proposals, routines for research related activities in the department and feedback on cases on the agenda of the NHH Research Committee are possible items on the agenda of the department's Research Committee. There will be at least one meeting in the Research Committee each term.

The department will enhance research collaboration within and across groups to leverage their different strengths. Specific measures include:

- 2.5. Transforming the Asset Management and Risk Analysis group into a Borch Centre for Risk and Insurance in line with the evaluation committee's recommendation. This action is contingent on the Office of Research Administration soliciting such an initiative.

KPIs

- 2.1. Having formal mandates for group leaders and the Research Committee approved by the department board by the end of 2026.
- 2.2. Having at least one meeting in the Research Committee each term.
- 2.3. Establishing a new Borch Centre for Risk and Insurance by the end of 2027 if asked to do so.

Identified barriers

- 2.1. Group leaders may be reluctant to take on more responsibility than today.
- 2.2. The research group Asset Management and Risk Analysis is reluctant to become an NHH center, even though they qualify for this status, as they worry about increased administrative burden and see few benefits.

3. External Funding

Purpose: Increase the scope of externally funded research projects.

Measures

The department aims to grow by securing more external funding in line with the NHH strategy. The department will develop a more selective and strategic approach by prioritizing projects with a strong research component and publication potential. Specific measures include:

- 3.1. Encourage EU applications to better align the department's strategy with the NHH strategy.
- 3.2. Making it clear that new proposals are to be discussed internally in the research groups and thereafter with the head of department at an early stage. Group leaders shall in turn bring new project proposals forward to the responsible for research and the Research Committee.
- 3.3. Allowing a time budget for research administration and writing grant applications for faculty members that actively work to secure external funding for the department.
- 3.4. Demanding that all new projects allocate sufficient resources to pay for the extra administrative resources needed to coordinate and serve the project.
- 3.5. Approaching current industry partners and contacts to solicit candidates for the industry and public sector PhD financing scheme.
- 3.6. Approaching current industry partners and contacts to explore the possibility for professorship endowments, e.g. in insurance, energy, climate, shipping or logistics.

KPIs

- 3.1. Each research group should submit at least one prestigious grant application in the current strategy period.
- 3.2. The department will have more administrative capacity to support externally funded research projects at the end of the strategy period than today.
- 3.3. The department will have at least two industry or public sector PhDs at the end of the strategy period.
- 3.4. The department will receive at least one endowed professorship by the end of the strategy period.

Identified barriers

- 3.1. Not all groups have a strong motivation to apply for funding.
- 3.2. It is difficult to define quantifiable time allocation rules for writing grant applications.
- 3.3. Binding time allocation rules for research administration and writing grant applications may interfere with the department's ability to deliver all courses that are demanded by the various study programs that the department serves. Time allocation must therefore be done discretionary and with moderation. This may weaken the effect.
- 3.4. The department lacks administrative capacity to serve more external projects even though the potential to win more external funding is present.

4. Research environment, collaboration, and internationalization

Purpose: Strengthen the research environment, enhance collaboration, and build international networks.

Measures

The department will foster a stronger culture of research. Specific measures include:

- 4.1. Clarifying participation expectations for faculty seminars, brownbag seminars, trial lectures, PhD defenses, the Borch lecture etc.
- 4.2. Mandating the research group leaders to organize regular group meetings.
- 4.3. Increasing the number of faculty members that supervise PhD students and have senior and junior faculty members co-supervise.
- 4.4. Reviewing the distribution of administrative duties to make sure that young associate professors are given sufficient time for research.

The department will raise its ambitions for international collaboration. Specific measures include:

- 4.5. Mandating the Research Committee to monitor the share of the department's research scholars who have a co-advisor from the department's international network.
- 4.6. Mandating the Research Committee to monitor the share of the department's research scholars that have a research stay abroad as part of their PhD-study.

The department will improve utilization of the Småforsk-scheme. Specific measures include

- 4.7. Making the grant awarding process more transparent.
- 4.8. Prioritizing young faculty members and collaborative projects.

KPIs

- 4.1. The department will reach the NHH target for total NPI publications points per faculty member per year at the end of the strategy period. (The target is 1.8 and the current department average was 1.7 in 2024 and 1.4 over the five-year period 2020-2024.)
- 4.2. All faculty members will attend at least one seminar or similar event every two weeks.
- 4.3. All research groups will have at least two group meetings per term to discuss progress and events.
- 4.4. There will be more faculty members involved in PhD supervision at the end of the strategy period than today.
- 4.5. There will be a higher share of PhD graduates that have international experience at the end of the strategy period than today.

4.6. Awarded Småforsk-grants will be published every term.

Identified barriers

- 4.1. Monitoring research group meetings, seminar participation etc. may reduce work environment satisfaction.
- 4.2. Organizing research stays for the PhD-students is costly and can reduce the rate of timely completion.
- 4.3. Spending more time on seminars and similar events takes time away from writing and revising papers.

5. Recruitment and talent development: Early-career researchers

Purpose: Ensure high-quality supervision, career development, and recruitment of young researchers.

Measures

There is scope for making research potential at the top level more explicit and more consistently communicated in recruitment processes. The department also aims to increase faculty involvement in recruitment processes. Specific measures include:

- 5.1. Organizing post-seminar discussions after job market talks where all faculty members can give structured feedback.
- 5.2. Using the Research Committee as a forum where research group leaders can give recommendations to the department's recruitment plan.

The department will aim to attract more high-quality PhD applicants and improve the match between the department and the profile of the applicants. Specific measures include:

- 5.3. Exploring the use of research group and project specific PhD research scholar job announcements, informal calls, or a modified joint announcement, to communicate more precisely what candidates the department aims to recruit and to make it easier to sort and assess the candidates.

Further measures

- 5.4. The department will allocate a start-up annuum to new faculty members.
- 5.5. All junior faculty members are to write a career development plan (CDP) in collaboration with their PhD-supervisor or group leader. The CDPs of PhD scholars shall be approved by the responsible for research and the CDPs of post-doctoral candidates shall be approved by the head of department.
- 5.6. All faculty without graduated PhD candidates are to take the course in PhD supervision offered by NHH.

KPIs

- 5.1. Revising the department's PhD research scholar job announcements by May 2026
- 5.2. Have a new annuum scheme approved in the department board by the end of 2026.

Identified barriers

- 5.1. HR and the Office of Research Administration have previously not acknowledged that the current NHH governance structure implies that the departments have decision-making authority over the research scholar job announcements.
- 5.2. Competition for candidates between research groups can create tensions and also create some practical challenges in cases where the same candidate are interesting to several groups.

6. FAA – Administrative resources

Purpose: Improve the quality, capacity, and predictability of administrative support for researchers and research groups.

Measures

The department needs to strengthen its permanent administrative capacity as the activity level both with respect to teaching and research has outgrown the size of the current staffing. This hampers productivity and jeopardizes the work environment. The department also needs to develop a recruitment policy for flexible administrative capacity in order to scale support with the change in activity level generated by external projects. Specific measures include:

- 6.1. Improving the department's internal budget process to clarify the room for hiring increased administrative capacity using the overhead that the current project portfolio will generate in the coming years.
- 6.2. Continuing to communicate the needs of the department in the annual budget process, asking the NHH management team to justify the current allocation and inquiring about the status of the workgroup for right-sizing the administrative staff noted in the minutes from the FLG meeting on 07.10.2024 (item 2).

The department needs to strengthen data manager services and remove this responsibility from head of department. A dedicated data manager is critical as research groups seek to scale their research impact and capabilities. A data manager is responsible for secure handling, documentation, compliance, access protocols, and long-term maintenance of datasets, especially for sensitive datasets. Specific measures include:

- 6.3. Following up the initiative from the vice rector for research to provide a common data manager resource available for all departments that do not already have their own data manager.
- 6.4. Demanding that all new project applications for projects that need data manager services allocate money to co-finance a data manager if the call allows such expenses.

KPIs

- 6.1. The ratio of administrative staff members to faculty members shall increase by the end of the strategy period.
- 6.2. The ratio of administrative staff members to courses offered by the department shall increase by the end of the strategy period (in order to free up capacity to support research).
- 6.3. Research groups with empirical projects shall receive support for data management by the end of the strategy period.

Identified barriers

- 6.1. It is unclear whether anyone in the NHH central management team assumes responsibility for determining the staffing levels of the department administrations.
- 6.2. The allocation of administrative support to external projects from the Office of Research Administration is done discretionary and outside of the annual budget processes.

7. Other relevant aspects

Purpose: Improve other aspects of research than those explicitly mentioned above.

Measures

The department wants to improve its outreach activities, and external appearance. Relevant measures include:

- 7.1. Making more deliberate use of master's students as a resource in research and dissemination, in collaboration with industry partners.
- 7.2. Developing better routines for updating the department's webpages.
- 7.3. Informing all faculty members regularly that they are expected to have profiles on Google Scholar, RePeC and SSRN.

Conclusion

A prioritized list of key measures and an overview of resources needed to implement them.

1. Foster group leader responsibility for faculty support and research production within the groups.
2. Develop the Research Committee as a useful resource for improving and monitoring research output and research quality in the department.
3. Improve the recruitment process and strengthen faculty involvement.
4. Strengthen the seminar culture at the department and make internal seminars a tool to steer manuscripts successfully towards top journals.
5. Approach current industry partners and contacts to solicit candidates for the industry and public sector PhD financing scheme.
6. Approach current industry partners and contacts to explore the possibility for professorship endowments.
7. Revise the joint department PhD research scholar job announcements to allow for more research group specific content.
8. Secure data management service to support empirical research at the department
9. Strengthen administrative support for research activities.

The department has overstretched its resources and the NHH board must choose between allocating more resources to the department or scaling down the activity level in business and management science at NHH. The department also faces a non-trivial trade-off between research and teaching. Incentives for research have been developed over a number of years both at the school and at the department level. Further growth in research output and quality requires a review of how time is allocated within and between departments.