Staff Satisfaction Survey

Results 2024

Introduction

The EKA academic and scientific staff satisfaction survey was organised to assess overall satisfaction with various aspects of research activities and the research environment. The survey took place in November 2024. It was sent to 44 EKA staff members holding elected positions, and 22 completed, valid questionnaires were received, representing 50% of those invited. The survey was anonymous, and the results were analysed in aggregate form. As the number of respondents is small and does not cover all academic and scientific staff, the results are interpreted as indications of trends in EKA researchers' satisfaction.

The survey consisted of seven question blocks, each containing 2–5 questions. The aspects assessed were: mission, vision and strategy; research governance and structure; research areas and priorities; scientific staff management and communication; ethics and research integrity; dissemination of research findings; support for researchers; and monitoring of research work.

Respondents rated each item using the following scale: 1 — Strongly disagree, 2 — Disagree, 3 — Neutral, 4 — Agree, 5 — Strongly agree, or 0 — Do not know / No answer.

The survey included two open-ended questions, allowing researchers to suggest improvements to the research environment and ways to increase researchers' motivation.

Main trends

The main trends indicated by the survey are that EKA researchers are moderately satisfied with various aspects of research activities (scale scores range from 3.52 to 4.16). Researchers are familiar with EKA's research mission, vision and strategic priorities and agree that these priorities largely align with their personal interests. Researchers report moderate satisfaction with EKA's research governance and structure, particularly highlighting the freedom to choose their research areas and priorities.

However, attention should be paid to strengthening collaboration between researchers and research group coordinators. Researchers are reasonably satisfied with scientific staff management and communication, including communication with the Scientific Institution's management, consultations and communication support. The current frequency of general meetings of researchers should be reviewed. The "Ethics and research integrity" scale was rated positively. Researchers are familiar with EKA's ethics and integrity standards and are satisfied with opportunities to seek advice on ethical issues.

Researchers are reasonably satisfied with the circulation of information about research-related events. Although respondents are generally reasonably satisfied with the support provided by EKA and understand the principles of financial support, research career opportunities and other aspects, financial support for conference participation received the lowest rating.

Researchers understand the research assessment process, and most consider it objective. However, a stronger link is needed between research assessment outcomes and the quality of researchers' work, encouraging greater participation in training and competence development activities. A larger number of academic and scientific staff should be involved to obtain a fuller picture of EKA researchers' satisfaction.

Aspects requiring attention

The following aspects require attention: (1) Strengthen collaboration between researchers and research group coordinators. (2) Review the current frequency of general meetings of researchers. (3) To improve satisfaction with financial support for conferences, consider reviewing the eligibility criteria and/or funding amounts, if the overall research budget permits.

Respondents also suggested improvements to EKA's research environment and activities. The main proposals were to introduce training on the latest digital tools and opportunities to use AI; improve the research assessment form; improve research group activities and collaboration with the coordinator or leader; and introduce assessments of researchers' needs regarding software, conferences, journals and similar resources.

Respondents proposed factors that could increase researchers' motivation. Most suggestions concerned increasing existing financial support or introducing new financial incentives, such as greater funding, including advance payments to groups; remuneration for research group coordinators; and financial support for publications. Additional suggestions included qualitative indicators in research assessment, a balance between teaching and research, support for activities with societal or industry impact, and clearer decision-making processes.

A detailed presentation and analysis of the survey results is provided below.

Table 1. Length of service of EKA academic and scientific staff

Length of service	Count	% of total	Cumulative %
2 to 5 years	6	27.3 %	27.3 %
6 to 10 years	11	50.0 %	77.3 %
Less than 1 year	1	4.5 %	81.8 %
More than 11 years	4	18.2 %	100.0 %

Of the respondents, 50% (n=11) had held an elected position at EKA for 6–10 years, 27% (n=6) for 2–5 years, 18% (n=4) for more than 11 years, and 5% (n=1) for less than 1 year.

Table 2. Mission, vision and strategy

Statement	N	NA	Mean	Med	SD	Min	Max
I know EKA's research mission and vision.	22	0	3.77	4.00	1.270	0	5
EKA's research mission and vision align with my personal goals.	22	0	3.64	4.00	1.049	0	5
I am familiar with EKA's research strategy.	22	0	3.77	4.00	0.685	2	5
EKA's strategic research objectives align with my research interests.	22	0	3.68	4.00	0.839	2	5

Respondents rated their knowledge of EKA's mission and strategy above the midpoint. Familiarity with EKA's research mission and vision (3.77) and familiarity with its strategy (3.77) received equally high ratings. The lowest rating concerned the alignment of EKA's research mission with personal goals (3.64). Differences between the statement ratings are small and fall within 0.5 points.

Table 3. Research governance and structure

Statement	N	NA	Mean	Med	SD	Min	Max
I am satisfied with the frequency of communication with my research group coordinator.	22	0	3.41	4.00	1.68	0	5
I am satisfied with communication with other researchers within my research group or groups.	22	0	3.55	4.00	1.26	0	5
I consider collaboration with my research group coordinator to be positive and supportive.	22	0	3.32	4.00	1.62	0	5
I am free to choose my research areas and priorities.	22	0	4.18	4.00	1.01	1	5
I feel involved in decision-making processes concerning research activities at EKA.	22	0	3.82	4.00	1.01	2	5
I am satisfied with the frequency and quality of training activities aimed at strengthening research competences.	21	1	3.57	4	1.16	1	5

Satisfaction with research governance and structure is above the midpoint (3.68). The freedom to choose research areas and priorities received the highest rating (4.18). Researchers also feel sufficiently involved in decision-making (3.82). Collaboration with the research group coordinator received the lowest rating (3.32), indicating that it is not always positive and supportive.

Table 4. Research areas and priorities; scientific staff management and communication

Statement	N	NA	Mean	Med	SD	Min	Max
If I am dissatisfied with any aspect of my work, I can openly express my views.	22	0	3.77	4.00	1.15	0	5
I consider the Vice-Rector for Science and the Scientific Institution’s administration to be available for consultation and discussion.	22	0	4.18	4.00	1.05	0	5
I am satisfied with the frequency of general meetings of researchers.	22	0	3.27	4.00	1.86	0	5
If I have questions about my research work, I always know where to seek advice.	22	0	4.09	4.00	1.06	0	5
I am satisfied with the existing communication support at EKA.	22	0	3.82	4.00	1.30	0	5

The scale covering research areas and priorities, scientific staff management and communication was rated above the midpoint (scale mean 3.82). Researchers are satisfied with communication support. The highest ratings concerned the availability of the Scientific Institution’s management for discussion and consultation (4.18) and knowing where to seek advice about research work (4.09). Satisfaction with the frequency of general meetings of researchers received the lowest rating (3.27), indicating a need to review how often these meetings take place.

Table 5. Ethics and research integrity

Statement	N	Mean	Med	SD	Min	Max
I know which ethics and integrity standards are established at EKA.	22	4.14	4.00	0.889	2	5
If I have questions about research ethics and integrity, I know where to seek support.	22	4.18	4.00	0.853	1	5

The "Ethics and research integrity" scale was rated positively. Researchers are familiar with EKA's ethics and integrity standards (4.14) and are satisfied with opportunities to seek advice on ethical matters (4.18).

Table 6. Dissemination of research findings

Statement	N	Mean	Med	SD	Min	Max
I am satisfied with the circulation of information about upcoming research activities (conferences, seminars, publication opportunities, etc.).	22	3.95	4.00	1.05	0	5

Researchers are reasonably satisfied with the circulation of information about various research-related events (3.95).

Table 7. Support for researchers

Statement	N	Mean	Med	SD	Min	Max
I am satisfied with the technical support EKA provides for researchers.	22	3.36	4.00	1.43	0	5
The principles of financial support at EKA are clear and understandable to me.	22	3.68	4.00	1.04	1	5
EKA provides sufficient financial support for publishing research.	21	3.48	4	1.44	0	5
EKA provides sufficient financial support to attend conferences and present my research findings.	22	3.18	4.00	1.47	0	5
I am satisfied with the opportunities to develop my research career at EKA.	22	3.59	4.00	1.30	0	5

The results show that satisfaction with EKA's support ranges from 3.18 to 3.68, indicating moderate satisfaction. Researchers state that the principles of financial support are clear (3.68) and are reasonably satisfied with opportunities to develop their research careers at the university (3.59). Satisfaction with financial support for publishing (3.48) and technical support (3.36) is moderate. Researchers are least satisfied with financial support for participating in scientific conferences to present their findings (3.18).

Table 8. Monitoring of research work

Statement	N	Mean	Med	SD	Min	Max
I understand how and how regularly research work is assessed at EKA.	22	4.00	4.00	1.07	0	5

Statement	N	Mean	Med	SD	Min	Max
I feel that EKA's current research assessment process helps improve the quality of my research.	22	3.14	3.00	1.25	0	5
I consider the assessment system at EKA to be objective.	22	3.64	4.00	1.09	0	5
I consider that EKA management assesses and supports scientific staff objectively and fairly.	22	3.55	4.00	1.53	0	5

The "Monitoring of research work" scale scores are above the midpoint. Researchers agree that they understand how and how often research work is assessed (4.00). Most respondents consider EKA's assessment system objective (3.64) and believe that staff are assessed fairly (3.55). The lowest-rated statement was "EKA's current research assessment process helps improve the quality of my research" (3.14). This may suggest that the assessment process is formal in nature and that a stronger link is needed between assessment outcomes and goals for the next period, including encouraging researchers to participate in training that develops research competences.

Respondents' suggestions

Researchers also suggested ways to improve the research environment and increase motivation. Two open-ended questions were included for this purpose.

What improvements would you suggest for EKA's research environment?

Respondent's suggestion	Aspect of the research environment or activities
Training sessions or seminars on the use of artificial intelligence and other new digital tools.	Training needs (digital tools and AI)
The researcher assessment form, because I cannot enter all my activities in it, and it does not provide an objective assessment of my work.	Improving research assessment (the form)
Actual involvement by the research group leader. I do not know what research the group members are working on or whether there are opportunities for joint work. I feel that the research group exists only on paper.	Improving research group activities
Regular surveys of researchers about exactly what training they need, what software to purchase, which conferences to attend, etc. I would like more individual advice on journals and conferences for each research group.	Introducing regular assessments of researchers' needs
My research area is not covered by EKA's designated research directions, so it is difficult to make suggestions.	-
Continue the current practice.	
Everything is fine.	

What suggestions would you make to improve the existing research motivation system?

Respondent's suggestion	Aspect of the research environment or activities
Financial support is the strongest motivator: for research and publications. Form research groups and immediately provide a kind of advance payment once a plan or outline for a specific topic, study or publication has been prepared.	Financial support (greater financial incentives)
Include qualitative indicators in the researcher assessment questionnaire as well.	Assessment system (add qualitative indicators)
This is more a comment on the opportunities to carry out research. Some lecturers are theorists, while others are practitioners with professional experience who also teach. In the latter case, there is simply no time for research, because lectures, work with students, consultations and supervision already represent a very heavy workload while also working in the industry.	Balance between teaching and research
Do not assess researchers' performance solely on the basis of publications and conferences. Various forms of support should also be available for other activities, such as disseminating findings to the public, science communication, etc.	Support for activities with societal or industry impact
I would like to understand whether and when research group coordinators will receive any remuneration, because for the past 2 years there has only been work and reporting.	Providing remuneration for group coordinators
The system's criteria are clear, but the decision-making process is not known.	Clarity of the decision-making process
Continue the current practice.	-
Receive remuneration for scientific publications.	Financial support for publications