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**Action plan for improvement of the psychosocial work environment**

**Sustainable Production Copenhagen, Department of Materials and Production**

**(Building on the template from the general action plan)**

Prepared by Peter Hasle and Lazaros Nalpantidis and approved at the section staff meeting 7. June 2017.

**1. Research**Research comprises a significant part of the work undertaken by academic staff members at the University. However, many academic staff members find that it can be difficult to find the necessary time for their research activities.

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| We will focus on ensuring more uninterrupted time for research. We will ensure a reasonable balance between research and teaching activities, so as to enable our staff members to continue to supply research-based teaching at the highest level. | Individual academic staff members find that there is a reasonable balance between their research, teaching activities and other core tasks, and that there is enough uninterrupted time for research. | 1. Coordinated planning of teaching and research activities at the section and in the research groups. | Head of section, Peter Hasle | Start: January 2017  Continuing  End: December 2017 | The three research groups are meeting regularly. Coordination carried out by coordination group and staff meetings on a monthly basis.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. (at the section’s yearly whole day workshop by the end of the year, similar for most evaluations) |
|  |  | 1. Transparency of resource allocation for research, teaching and other tasks (focus on hidden tasks). The spreadsheet with resource allocation algorithms developed. A simple IT-based solution for reporting is being considered. Important to avoid too detailed hour allocations. | Working group: Maia, Anders, Lazaros | 1 April 2017  First staff discussion ultimo April  Continued updating  End: December 2017 | Excel sheet with overview of resources prepared by April. Used for planning Autumn semester and budget for 2018. However, this solution will not continue in the future, as the department prepares centrally a less complicated and even more transparent solution.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
|  |  | 1. More research focussed teaching (student projects on research relevant topics and teach inside research focus, including development of a portfolio of companies interested in both student projects and research collaboration). | Peter | Discussed at staff meeting Autumn 2017  End: December 2017 | Discussion in research groups and discussion opened at August staff meeting. Discussed during a longer staff meeting in the Autumn. Company project portfolio developed for educations.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |

**2. Planning of teaching activities**

The planning and coordination of teaching activities appears to be the single factor with the greatest impact on perceptions of wellbeing.

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| The planning of teaching activities is perceived by most academic staff as disorganised, and ultimately this lack of systematic planning takes time from research.  With this initiative, we will work to reduce the amount of time that academic staff members spend on planning through a systematic approach, and in doing so free up more time and energy for research. | Planning teaching activities well in order to minimise the amount of time that the individual academic staff member spends on planning while providing a good overview of forthcoming teaching requirements for the individual members of academic staff. | 1. Development of an annual planning cycle for teaching (two drafts available). We make one version which includes both TAP and VIP tasks, also to secure coordination across educations. | Charlotte responsible, together with Trine, Maia, Anders, Lazaros | First draft ultimo June 2017  Revision and completion October 2017  End: December 2017 | First draft developed and now further expanded.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
|  |  | 1. Simplify selection of censors (create a pool of predefined censors). | Study secretaries and education programme coordinators | October 2017  End: December 2017 | Names of past censors are gathered together with expertise keywords for each one.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
|  |  | 1. Development of new teaching methods such as study circles, it-applications and combining lectures to increase quality, require less preparation and secure flexibility for teachers. | Peter | Discuss at staff meeting Autumn 2017  End: December 2017 | Discussion opened at staff meeting in August. Discussed during a longer discussion at meeting later in the Autumn.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
|  |  | 1. Taxation of teaching hours for hidden teaching coordination tasks (3%) which gives 60 hours for each semester for the programme coordinators and in addition 60 hours per semester for overall teaching coordination at section level. | Programme and overall teaching coordinators (Anders, Jan, Lazaros, Atanu, Volker) | 1 September  End: December 2017 | Partially implemented in the planning of Fall 2017. This solution will not further explored, as a solution and a new way of assigning and monitoring tasks is prepared centrally from the department.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
|  |  | 1. Hiring additional staff to compensate for deficit of resources for teaching. Two replacement faculty members in assessment committee, two new assistant professor in preparation, additional needs assessed. | Peter in collaboration with Kjeld and research coordinators | First two positions by 1 September 2016  Two additional positions by mid-Autumn 2017  Assessment of further needs by mid-Autumn  End: December 2017 | Two replacement staff hired. The two new positions have been announced. One of them is re-announced in lack of good matching applicants. The second position is currently in its final stage.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |

**General workload (in particular academic staff)**

Academic staff members have informed CRECEA that they work 37 to 80 hours per week including weekends and holidays. Even though many academic staff members are highly committed, working so many hours does not allow much time for them to recharge their batteries, which in turn has a negative impact on their physical wellbeing and social relations. Some academic staff members feel that they are ‘drowning’ in too many teaching activities (takes all their time and energy and makes it difficult to perform all the other tasks which they are expected to do). In most departments, academic staff members find that ‘invisible’ tasks are not included when planning how the work should be organised.

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| We want to create rhythms in the working lives of academic staff members that make it possible to group together fast-paced activities (such as responding to emails) and slow-paced activities (such as research). We aim to ensure that academic staff members will have uninterrupted periods during which they can concentrate on their core tasks, and will be allowed time to rest and recover from their work. | Individual academic staff members find they have a reasonable amount of time to perform their core tasks, that there is a reasonable balance between their core tasks and other relevant tasks, and that they have a reasonable work/life balance. | 1. Balancing the researchers works tasks in order to secure time for core activities (priorities and coordination at research group level). Giving priority to fewer activities of higher quality and success (teaching, applications, research, dissemination of research results). Group development conversations (GRUS) to develop shared expectations and strengthen group collaboration. | Volker, Niels, Jan (research groups discussions)  Peter (GRUS) | Starting June 2017  End: December 2017 | Group meetings used to prioritize activities.  GRUS discussion in all groups completed.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
|  |  | 1. Balancing the individual researchers work tasks, expectations, priorities and success criteria in order to secure time for core activities and a reasonable work/life balance (section level and MUS). | Peter | MUS carried out April-June 2017  End: December 2017 | MUS completed.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |

**Performance measurements – academic staff**

Academic staff members find that they are being measured according to key performance indicators (BFI points, teaching hours and external funding) in connection with career development, redundancies, pay negotiations etc., and academic staff members find that these KPIs do not fully reflect the work which they are performing. Quote: “As an academic, you have to embrace everything, yet you are measured according to very narrow parameters. In other words – we are not measured on what we actually do.” Secondly, many academic staff members feel that it is a significant stress factor that they are expected to perform at the highest level on all the KPIs, even though they might, for example, ‘only’ be a master at gaining BFI points and teaching, but might not excel in acquiring external funding.

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| We want to highlight and acknowledge the efforts of academic staff members based on their core tasks of research, teaching and knowledge dissemination.  We want to ensure that the ability of academic staff members to acquire external research funding is acknowledged on par with other tasks. | Individual academic staff members must feel that it is not just the BFI points that matter, but that everything associated with their core tasks is recognised; not just their research publications.  Greater success rate for acquiring external research funding | 1. Develop shared research group expectations for performance (among others on research, publication, teaching and society service), including support to group members on fulfilling expectations. The groups make self-evaluation of performance. | Volker, Niels, Jan | June 2017 at GRUS, continuing during Autumn 2017  End: December 2017 | Group meetings used to discuss and clarify performance expectations, as well as support members.  GRUS discussions performed (see above).  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
|  |  | 1. Individual matching of expectations (MUS, see 10 above). | Peter | MUS carried out April-June 2017  End: December 2017 | MUS completed.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
|  |  | 1. Fewer, more focussed high quality applications for external funding through shared research group planning and peer review of draft applications. | Peter in collaboration with group coordinators (Volker, Niels, Jan) | Start June 2017  continuing during Autumn 2017  End: December 2017 | Group meetings, MUS and GRUS have taken place to coordinate and focus research applications. Section head requires collaboration with colleagues to approve applications. Writing courses for section employees scheduled for 2018.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |

**Particularly for fixed-term academic staff members, junior researchers and new international colleagues**

Junior staff members are far less able to prioritise their work than their more experienced colleagues. They must, for example, make informed decisions on whether to participate in assignments etc., but are often on their own in making such decisions. Having to deliver high-quality research projects, write articles for international journals, spend many hours teaching and acquire external funding may seem overwhelming.

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| Secure integration of new staff including young, foreign and temporary employed researchers | Good integration | 1. A welcome package for new staff including introduction campus, section staff, administrative and teaching procedures. Also clarify what the international office offers for international staff and what we should add. | Peter in collaboration with TAP group, based on the general welcome package developed at department level | August 2017 (before new staff starts)  End: December 2017 | Welcome package tested with the two newly hired employees and found very helpful. The welcome package is further improved centrally by the department.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
|  |  | 1. Appointment of a mentors for new staff. It should be on peer level and for at least one year. |  |  | Mentors appointed for the two newly hired employees, which was found to be very helpful. |
|  |  | 1. Career development of young, foreign and temporary employed researchers (MUS with section head, mentors and dialogue with research group coordinators). | Peter in collaboration with research group coordinators (Volker, Niels, Jan) | Started with MUS Spring 2017  End: December 2017 | MUS completed. Research group meetings taking place. Across campus arrangements for foreign staff.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |

**Staff management**

Indirectly, academic staff members indicate that there is a lack of qualified and accessible management (in some areas, not all); for example, they are often not aware that the management can and is obliged to help them prioritise their work tasks.

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| We focus on qualified and attentive staff management. The management must assist academic staff members in prioritising their work, providing insights into the administrative aspects of AAU, and solving problems associated with their employment and work planning, etc. | It must be ensured that all staff members have a single point of contact based on the same campus as the staff member, and that staff members know how their managers may assist them. Managers must be available on a daily basis, and they must have the necessary time to fulfil their managerial responsibilities. | 1. Section head for the merged department in Cph appointed. Sufficient authority to take decisions allocated. Necessary to clarify division of responsibility between section head and research groups. | Peter | 1 January 2017  End: December 2017 | Division of responsibility established between section head and research group coordinators. Research group coordinators responsibilities and role clarified at department level.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
|  |  | 1. Coordination group consisting of section head, research coordinators, teaching coordinators and AC-TAP established. | Peter | 1 January 2017  End: December 2017 | Coordination group meeting regularly.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
|  |  | 1. Staff meetings organised on a monthly basis with information and discussion of shared section issues. | Peter | 1 January 2017  End: December 2017 | Staff meetings organised on a monthly basis.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
|  |  | 1. Three research groups and a TAP groups organised with regular meetings. Groups need to organise themselves and clarify procedures and role. | Research coordinators and TAP | 1 January 2017  End: December 2017 | The four groups are organised and meet regularly.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |

**Administration**

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| The psychosocial work environment of TAP staff | Improved work environment with proper work load and division of work | 1. Dialogue between TAP group, TAP management and section management with preparation of a plan for necessary improvements. | Jette and Peter | Meeting 23.6.17  End: December 2017 | Tasks allocated among the TAP group. Monthly meetings with TAP and section management.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
| Financial transparency | VIP and TAP have full insight in the finances of the section and the department | 1. Resource allocation spreadsheet (see item 2)   Information about section and department finances at the monthly staff meeting. | Peter and Maia | Started 1 January 2017  End: December 2017 | Excel sheet with overview of resources prepared by April. Used for planning Autumn semester and budget for 2018. However, the solution will not continue in the future, as the department prepares centrally a less complicated and even more transparent solution.  Information about section and department finances are provided at the monthly staff meetings.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
| Rooms and offices with too little space or other insufficiencies | Rooms and offices conducive to a good work environment | 1. Preparation of possible reallocation of space, rebuilding and renovation of rooms. | Peter and Maia in collaboration with concerned staff | Plans developed in June 2017.  End: December 2017 | Relocation and rebuilding finalised.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
| E-mail culture | Develop a culture avoiding the need to be online 24-7 | 1. Discuss the need for and content of an email culture at staff meeting, including efforts to avoid unnecessary mails. | Peter | Start: 7.6.2017  End: December 2017 | Topic discussed at staff meeting. Less emails circulated by management and secretariat. Mailing lists established for targeting specific sections/groups within the department.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |
| Communication with Aalborg | Efficient and effective communication with the management and TAP resources in Aalborg | 1. Further clarify responsibilities of personnel and make them transparent to all staff, also develop better communication through use of intranet. | Jette | Start: Meeting 23.6.17  End: December 2017 | Clear division of responsibilities initiated.  Significant information is now published in intranet.  Feedback gathered from all employees of the section during the annual section seminar in January 2018. |