Leadership guidelines

at Karolinska Institutet

Reference number 2948/09-200

Karolinska Institutet

200 Years
1810 – 2010

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15 June 2009

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1. Objective and target group

These guidelines have been drawn up to ensure that the whole organisation has the same basic view of the values and tasks that are linked to leadership. Leaders and other employees need to know the expectations that are placed on leaders and what support we have in place to develop and carry out leadership duties. These guidelines are a compilation of how Karolinska Institutet (KI) views leadership, the role of leaders, leadership support and leadership development.

2. Leadership philosophy

Leaders in an academic environment work in an ever-changing and complex world, where there often seems to be conflicting requirements and where they have to balance different interests. It is strategically important for leaders at KI to develop a form of leadership that enables them to deal with changes and development, manage successful teams, create alliances, communicate and maintain good relationships. Good leadership can provide the impetus needed in the organisation to handle current and future challenges.

Our leadership philosophy is based on KI's overall strategy. The basic premise of the Karolinska Institutet is to be a study and work environment that is characterised by good leadership, commitment, openness, equality and diversity, as well as care for the environment and sustainable development.

Every leader has to work hard to achieve the results and level of quality that correspond to KI's overall values and guidelines that have been set by the management. This promotes a holistic approach and focuses on the ability to develop people, activities and structures. Leaders at all levels have the important job of creating an organisation where overall targets and guidelines permeate all activities and where the employees feel an affinity with the university. Inspiring and motivating employees and making the most of their initiatives and ideas are important features of leadership.

Leadership has to be seen as an important and attractive function if KI is going to be able to meet current and future challenges. Leaders have to place even more focus on collaborating internationally with parties from trade and industry, etc., and they have to attract skilled employees and build effective teams.

If our leadership concept is going to have the impact in our daily work and influence the development of our activities, it must be a clear feature of both central and local management work at KI. Heads of department, administrative managers and public administration managers have a special responsibility for disseminating the leadership guidelines and ensuring that they are applied, and for ensuring that the leadership support programme is carried out at a local level.

Every leader needs to be given the opportunity to develop. A person's leadership will therefore be continually followed up to ensure that they are given the opportunity to receive the support they need to develop as a leader.

3. Roles and positions within the Karolinska Institutet

The following compilation describes the management roles/positions at KI, based on how our activities are organised, see table 1.

Table 1. Positions and leadership roles at KI.

‘Leading a university’
• University management (President, Vice President, University Director, Vice-President) • Dean and Pro Dean • Chair • Heads of Department within University Administration
‘Leading a department’
• Chair and Vice Chair • Heads of Department, Section Managers, Unit Managers and similar positions • Administrative Managers within the departments
’Leading a research group, centre or project’
• Research group leader • Centre leader • Leader within training • Project manager (management of large projects as well as smaller administrative projects). • Group leader

4. Competence requirements for different leadership roles

The competence requirements for the different positions vary depending on the work and responsibilities involved. One key fundamental requirement for leaders in our core activities of research and education is solid academic credentials.

Leadership has to be continually adapted based on changes to activities and the general situation. Competence requirements therefore have to be continually reviewed and changed. It is ultimately about the leaders’ ability to use the right knowledge and approach on the right occasions in order to achieve good results.

Everyone at KI who are in management/leadership roles have to see themselves as leaders and show good leadership skills.

The general competence requirements are based on the concept of the three fields of knowledge for leaders that are set out below. The following pages describe the content of each area, see figure 1.

Figure 1. Leaders´ field of knowledge

4.1 Strategic leadership

Strategic leadership involves setting overall targets for the activities and providing the resources to allow these targets to be reached. This role also includes understanding the surrounding society and the impact that it has on our activities.

Leaders (see table 1) whose roles involve 'leading a university' must have the ability to take overall responsibility, always thinking about what is best for the institute as a whole, and ensure that overall visions, targets, values and decisions permeate the activities. 'Leading an institution' means that it is the chair's job and responsibility to focus on the strategic management of our core activities, which are research and education. They need to create competitive environments for research and education, and attract competent researchers and administrative/technical staff.

4.2 Operational leadership

In order to take on the responsibilities and authorities of a leader, leaders must have basic knowledge in a number of formal areas, including acts and ordinances, the law, finance, HR and internal regulations/procedures. It is the leader's responsibility to ensure that there is an organisation, resources and working methods that make it possible to carry out work in a successful and legally sound way. They must understand the activities, both as an academy and a public authority. This includes knowing about how to design and manage activities, and how to act as a client for groups and projects. Any leader who is in charge of staff needs to possess knowledge that corresponds to the KI's course in 'operational management/leadership'. Leaders working in administration need more specialist competence in many parts of 'operational' leadership.

4.3 Personal leadership

The basis of good personal leadership is good self-awareness. Good self-awareness is developed through continual feedback, reflection and personal development. Openness, commitment and trust are important factors needed to produce a good working climate. Every leader must have a genuine **willingness** to achieve results together with and through other people. An important ability as a leader is to identify and make the most of people's talents. The ability to find the best talents requires a strategic view of recruitment and competence development, as well as an openness to look beyond differences (cultures, gender, personalities, ages, competences, etc.). Personal leadership also involves the ability to **balance clarity with a good ability to inspire and motivate** people to work well. You also need to have a lot of courage, be able to set limits and handle conflicts at an early stage.

4.4 Communication – the red thread throughout leadership

Communication, i.e. the ability to influence and be influenced, is a red thread that runs throughout leadership and has many dimensions. Internal and external information and communication have to be coherent in order to be reliable. Internal communication involves making relevant information available, promoting dialogue between people, communicating within and between groups, communicating targets, etc. External communication with society and financial backers involves reaching out via the media, partners, lobbying, knowledge dissemination, marketing, etc.

When it comes to international activities, leaders have to understand the importance of culture in order to reach out to colleagues from different parts of the world. Leaders at an **overall level** have to focus more on external communication and leading by setting targets through **other leaders**. However, **direct leadership** (for example, a research leader to research groups) requires the ability to work with employees to create **participation and motivation in order to achieve set targets and results**.

Table 2. The following table shows a summary of the competencies that have been described above.

Personal leadership	**Operational leadership**	**Strategic leadership**
Self-awareness	Have knowledge of acts and ordinances	Market analysis
Relationship with their group	Financial control	Overall goals, values and visions
Create a good work climate/environment	KI's administrative procedures	Development of activities
Inspire and motivate	Guidelines	Create stimulating and competitive environments for e.g. research and education
Communication – the key element in gaining influence in leadership		

5. Strategic leadership support

Leadership support is a **development process** which helps to gradually develop various sections of our activities. One issue that has not been touched on this document is the organisational aspects. The way in which activities are organised is an extremely important feature of leadership. KI has around 600 people that are considered to be managers or leaders with different responsibilities and authorities.

In order to **recruit and retain good leaders** it is important that leadership is seen as an attractive role to apply for. In order to do this, we need to develop the content of the work, have incentives in place and provide opportunities for career changes.

5.1 Leadership inventory

Leadership support must form part of the **strategic activity plan** for KI. The objective is to **systematically** gain a collective idea of the need for and interest in leadership development for the whole of KI, which will also make leadership issues more **visible**.

Here is a proposal for a working method:

- A regular dialogue is held with all departmental managements (chairs and heads of departments, etc.) and the public administration management. A dialogue is initiated and carried out by the person responsible for KI leadership development.

- These dialogues will lead to an **analysis of the needs of managers/leaders** (for example, based on retirement, new activities and known organisational changes) in the short and slightly longer term. The analysis **needs to identify any known managerial posts becoming vacant, the need for increasing competence, career changes and potential leaders**.

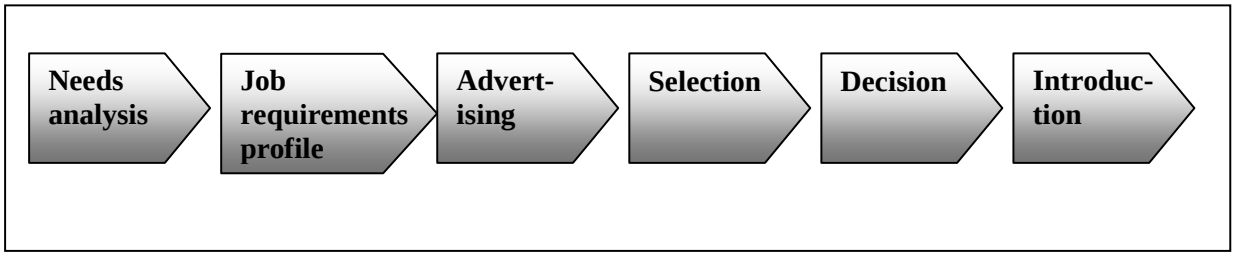
- The analysis should also **identify candidates for different leadership programmes.** The nomination of candidates must be based on the management's experiences, follow-ups and development discussions. KI's leadership criteria must be used as the standard for this. The candidates must have shown interest and success in leadership.

- A summary of the results from these dialogues and analysis is drawn up and **presented to KI's management** regularly.

5.2 Recruitment and appointment of managers/leaders

All recruitments/appointments of managers and leaders have to be preceded by an assessment of the suitability of their leadership skills. The recruitment process for chairs and deans are set out in special documents.

The following recruitment process is primarily aimed at managers/leaders in administrative and technical activities. Some elements are, of course, also suitable for academic leaders.



Recruitment and appointment process for managers and leaders at KI

Leaders in the academy (for example research group leaders or project managers) are recruited using different conditions. It is also important for the departmental management to take into consideration/evaluate the candidates' **leadership abilities**. As well as the person in question being an excellent researcher with substantial financial support, it is also essential for them to have the ability to manage teams and create the right conditions for groups and individuals. The criteria for managers/leaders must also be used as a basis for this assessment.

When a new manager is going to be recruited, a **needs analysis** has to be carried out first, which will help to set out the current situation and any needs for change. **The job requirements profile** is drawn up based on the skills and abilities that are important for the position. The general competence requirements are used as a support. Vacant managerial posts have to be **advertised** internally and externally where necessary. The relevant leader decides on the **selection process**. Representatives from the employees, the line manager, etc., should be involved to ensure that the various aspects of the

selection process are followed. When necessary, either **internal or external selection competencies** can be hired for more in-depth interviews, etc. Getting references is an important part of the selection process and must be carried out in a competent and systematic way. Management appointments are negotiated with the trade union organisations. **Decisions** on the employment, conditions, etc., follow the delegation system and established procedures.

Induction and development programmes are customised based on each new management appointment, e.g. managers such as heads of departments. Leaders who have a delegated responsibility for staff have to take part in KI's operational management and leadership programme, and should be offered training in personal management in the future. Newly appointed chairs and heads of departments at this level should always be offered individual leadership coaching.

5.3 Leadership development

As high requirements are placed on leaders, support has to be in place to develop and carry out leadership duties. Leadership development must:

- be closely integrated with KI's activities and focus on achieving the results and quality in the core activities and effectiveness in services/administration. The basic provision that is offered internally has to meet this need.

- be tailored for unique situations and needs in the activities and be individually adapted within the framework of what is financially viable.

- where learning is involved, make the best use of the academy, both internally in KI and in collaboration with other universities. We also need to be inspired by experiences from other sectors/industries.

- be permeated by KI's values.

For more detailed information, refer to the separate document on ***leadership development***.

5.4 Career and changes in work

A managerial role is not a position that a person has for life, and this is particularly true in the academic world. Many leadership positions are time-specific, and appointments are made through selection procedures. It is therefore important to allow people to carve out a creditable managerial career. KI needs to develop further guidelines for this.

6. Follow-up and ‘quality assurance’ of leadership

It is essential to continually follow up leadership in the organisation. This is done partly through regular employee surveys in which employees are given the opportunity to answer a number of questions about leadership. An important way of following up leadership is to hold regular development discussions with a line manager. Following these development discussions and follow-ups, individual actions plans are produced for the long-term development of leadership. All leadership investments have to be followed up and evaluated.

7. Summary

It is strategically important to have good leadership as this strengthens the university’s ability to face current and future challenges. Leadership at KI plays an important role in ensuring that the overall values, strategies and decisions are communicated and have the necessary impact in activities.

Being a leader must be regarded as being a strategically important function at KI. The different leadership roles require different competences. Competence can broadly be divided into three different parts: strategic, personal and operational leadership. Leaders at an overall level, such as university management and departmental management, need to have more focus on strategic and overall issues. Leaders who manage, for example, a research group, teaching group or project group need to focus more on inspiring and motivating employees and colleagues in their daily work. It is of course important to have knowledge in all competence areas, but the focus needs to be on slightly different areas. Effective communication is important, irrespective of the management post/level.

If KI is going to develop and retain successful leaders, it is important to work strategically with the whole leadership support process. Leadership support needs to be an important part of KI’s activity planning and include recruitment, development and changes in career/work. The first step is to systematically identify current leaders and potential leaders of the future. This will then lead to the need to recruit or appoint new leaders. Every recruitment/appointment needs to be preceded by an assessment of their suitability for leadership based on a recruitment and appointment process.

Leaders need to be given the opportunity to develop their leadership through training and support from Leadership Development at KI. Leadership will be followed up to ensure that the leadership investments can be adapted to meet the needs at KI.

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