



## RESEARCH EVALUATION FOR DEVELOPMENT 2019 EXPERT PANEL REPORT

### Institute of Health and Care Sciences

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## Introductory Remarks

Discussions over the telephone with panel members in early February.

Questions from panel members were ready in the beginning of March and sent to the department.

The site visit took place over the 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> of April 2019. All panellists were introduced to the RED19 project on the first day. On the second and third day we visited the department (IHCS) to conduct the planned interviews with the Head of Department, representatives of the staff and PhD students. Each day we discussed different issues that arose and added these to our protocol. On Thursday and Friday, all panel chairs met the faculty and University Management.

During April we have discussed and worked on the final report.

## Report: Observations and Analysis

### Section A – Background and Research Standing

#### A1. Background

The University of Gothenburg's (UGOT) faculty of health sciences, Sahlgrenska Academy, comprises six departments (institutes), including the Institute of Health and Care Sciences (IHCS).

While we initially found some aspects of the IHCS self-evaluation report to be difficult to follow, it became clear that this was primarily related to the ongoing and comprehensive process of change in leadership and organisation going on in parallel to the RED19 evaluation. Karin Ahlberg, the new Head of Department, has been in this position less than one year. We found the staff and students at IHCS to be very reflective, self-critical and open, and keen to engage with the evaluation process. We were shown an organisational chart, delineating the ongoing and planned changes, which were adequately motivated for us and in line with moving towards a more complete academic environment with better integration of research and education.

The tensions between radically increased demands on undergraduate education since RED10 and the desire at all levels of IHCS to produce high-quality research and develop an environment conducive for this was clear in all discussions.

The relationship between the successful research centre 'University of Gothenburg Centre for Person-Centred Care' (GPCC) and the department remains unclear, as GPCC seems to have both a financially unique position and a strong influence on the research profile of the department. Information about the infrastructure and sustainability of GPCC was not included in the self-evaluation report, although it seems important to the future of the department's research.

## A2. Research standing

The research at IHCS covers the following research areas:

- Healthcare environment
- Childbirth research
- Healthcare transitions
- Care pedagogics and leadership
- Person-centred care in long-term conditions
- Acute and critical care
- Palliative care

The GPCC research centre is also located in IHCS. This is the major research group in relation to funding in the department. Researchers can belong to more than one research milieu.

*Comment on:*

*Research, research profiles, strategies and plans – are they relevant and convincing?*

*The quality of the department's research from an international perspective within its field. Please elaborate on the standing of the department's research. Is it clearly above average, or below average?*

*The current aspirations for new research initiatives (major new projects etc– are they relevant and realistic?) The department's aspirations and vision for the medium-term (5-10 years) future – are they relevant and convincing?*

### Comments

- Research profiles and plans are relevant and convincing. They address important societal and healthcare issues, and in interviews with IHCS leadership, some consideration was given to the implications of potential upcoming changes in prioritisation in the Swedish healthcare system for the department's future research strategies.
- Without having access to appropriate and representative samples of research outputs, it is difficult for us to make a clear judgement on the standard of existing research. The bibliometric data provided are, by their nature, poor indicators of relative research quality. Members of the evaluation group have looked at publication lists from the website which suggest significant numbers of peer-reviewed papers published in high-quality international journals, along with presentations at reputable international conferences.
- The aspirations of IHCS are both relevant and convincing, provided that it proves possible to address the conflicts between delivering quality education to large numbers of students and conducting quality research.

## Section B – Leadership

### B1. Leadership

### *B1.1 Department leadership*

Karin Ahlberg had only been head of IHCS for nine months at the time of the interview. Our impression is that she has ambitious plans for considering how to best work strategically to further develop research and a complete academic environment at IHCS. It may be that no organisational plan for IHCS was included in our materials due to the ongoing reorganisation; however, better initial understanding of the organisational structures would have been helpful.

#### **Strengths**

- The Head of Department and the section managers are said to be responsible for supporting new researchers in finding potential scientific leaders.
- The department has actively nominated four researchers to the university-wide *research leader initiative* programme, a course for future scientific leaders.
- IHCS has an advisory committee for research.
- There is an expressed active interest in increasing interaction between IHCS and GPCC, to avoid an ‘us versus ‘them’ polarisation.

#### **Weaknesses (potential and existing)**

- There is a plan to further integrate research group leaders into everyday governance and decision-making to achieve a complete academic environment. One reflection is if, in a situation already marked by many forces described as detracting from research focus, this may also serve to further take time and effort from research.
- While not a weakness, one potential challenge is also the change in leadership of GPCC from 1 April 2019. It is important that GPCC continue to have stable financing from the university to allow the new leadership to become established, without jeopardising GPCC’s continued positive trajectory.

#### **Recommendations**

- Given the relatively recent shift in leadership at both IHCS and GPCC, and a focus on supporting junior staff, it may be important to develop support structures and mentorship for the departmental leadership.
- Many of the issues confronting them are not specific to IHCS, but seem to be shared by other, similar departments at large academic centres in Sweden and, to some extent, internationally.

### *B1.2 Faculty/University level leadership*

#### **Strengths**

- There appears to be a good amount of interaction among different departments/institutes within Sahlgrenska Academy, which is described in positive terms.
- Even faculty-level contact persons, e.g. for doctoral studies, are spoken of positively.
- The senior faculty and IHCS leadership describe increased recognition of the importance of the contribution of nursing and healthcare science research in multidisciplinary collaboration, across departments, since RED10.

## Weaknesses

- Funding structures and other means for prioritisation appear based on comparisons with other disciplines/departments in the faculty, which seriously disfavours IHCS.
- Another problem may be that university-level decision-makers assume that IHCS, as part of a strong research-based faculty with access to many resources, also has good access to these resources and receives adequate support from the faculty. This does not always appear to be the case.
- The support from both faculty- and university-level leadership is described as not particularly proactive, with little focus on strengthening healthcare science research on its own terms.

## Recommendations

- Consider the extent to which the algorithms (e.g. ‘activity funding’, bibliometrics) used for financial rewards related to research performance are equitable across departments within Sahlgrenska Academy.
- Ensure that barriers to inter-and transdisciplinary collaboration across organisational units are minimised.
- Ensure that there are accessible systems and means for early access to the input needed to develop competitive grant applications. This should be seen as an investment rather than a cost.
- Systematic mentorship programmes across departments and faculties should be widely available at all levels.

## B2. Recruitment

### Strengths

- IHCS has invested in several strategic visiting professors, in addition to those collaborating with GPCC. This strategy also dramatically strengthens international collaboration, including a unique possibility for a double doctoral degree at both KU Leuven and UGOT for some doctoral students.
- A virtual meeting is planned for all guest and affiliated foreign senior faculty, aimed at maximising their active involvement in IHCS and supporting building a critical mass of competence.
- IHCS also recruits doctoral students, as well as junior and senior faculty, from a variety of disciplines, something which is not always the case in other comparable national and international departments. These seem to be constructive recruitment strategies.

### Weaknesses

- Again, the tensions between research and undergraduate education seem to be of major importance to overcome, in order to recruit competent researchers. There is, however, a limited pool of competent senior researchers who can be recruited within Sweden, which is also evidenced in the limited numbers of qualified applicants for vacant positions.
- The department’s urgent need to recruit teaching faculty has succeeded in bringing a relatively large number of new staff without doctoral degrees to permanent positions at IHCS. While

IHCS has been very successful compared to other Swedish departments with similar needs, this also risks obstructing the possibility to recruit talented researchers.

### Recommendations

- It is important to find ways for promising staff, recruited predominately for education, to be able to shift into positions with increased research focus.
- Is it possible to consider collaboration with GPCC to establish joint research-teaching positions, allowing increased time and focus on research than is generally the case?

## B3. Career structure

### Strengths

- IHCS faculty and leadership show awareness of the need for more systematic work in this area, and plan to better support career development.
- The internationally-recruited senior researchers contribute new competencies and perspectives, which complement permanent faculty.
- IHCS has begun supporting junior faculty development by instituting associate lectureships (*bitr. lektorat*), i.e. positions with increased research focus for several years, in a tenure-track position.
- Some research groups appear to have more focus on career development than others, and GPCC representatives specifically mention support for younger researchers' grant applications.

### Weaknesses

- At present, there seem to be few organised career development structures across research groups.
- Difficulty in finding applicants for faculty positions with research backgrounds.
- All researchers are required to take part in undergraduate education.
- IHCS needs to work on systematic career planning and research skills for junior staff.

### Recommendations

- Structured, systematic and regularly occurring career planning and development is needed to build staff competency.
- An external mentorship programme for all staff, from doctoral students to senior faculty, might be supportive and help open horizons.
- Continue to invite visiting professors for high-quality research.

## B4. Funding

### Strengths

- IHCS researchers seem to have been successful in receiving grants from major national government funding agencies and from NGOs, although the extent to which this success is spread across groups and individuals is not clear.
- There is notable interest and engagement in research endeavours with other universities and departments in the faculty, e.g. via the new Centre for Perinatal Medicine and Health. This is also raised as one possibility for generating increased funding. Even joint academic/clinical positions are mentioned as a means of securing increased time for research, with the additional benefit of assuring relevance for healthcare.
- GPCC has had stable and significant funding in the period since RED10, which has been important for its success. This financial stability has also provided a base, meaning that additional research funding has been able to be successfully generated from a variety of sources, including EU.

### **Weaknesses**

- As teaching demands are so high, there is a risk that faculty with research funding are unable to take the time to use it, as a minimum 30% teaching time is expected for all faculty. This is a concern, as it may inhibit meeting research obligations in a timely fashion, which may hinder individual research careers. There is also a risk that it is more difficult to obtain new funding if it is not possible to demonstrate adequate and timely outputs and quality use of acquired funding. This seems most crucial to address, as obtaining more research funding will not solve the tensions between undergraduate teaching demands and protected research time.
- There is a present lack of organisational support for grant applications beyond peer review and support in individual research groups; however, this is unfortunately common in many university settings in Sweden today, although it is positive that IHCS recognises the challenges this involves.
- There also seems to be a lack of clarity concerning the algorithms and mechanisms for internal faculty and university funding based on research outputs, as IHCS seems to be increasing and improving research outputs while funding is said to remain relatively consistent despite this.

### **Recommendations**

- The algorithms (e.g. ‘activity funding’, bibliometrics) used for financial rewards related to research performance should be reviewed to assure that they are equitable across departments within Sahlgrenska Academy.
- It is crucial to ensure continued stable base funding for GPCC, as GPCC is a key to the future success of IHCS in recruiting and maintaining a sophisticated critical mass of researchers.

## **B5. Feedback and evaluation**

### **Strengths**

- Several research groups seem to apply a variety of approaches for research follow-up, although they appear relatively irregular and not entirely systematic. This is one of the points IHCS intends to address through its comprehensive reorganisation, although specific plans are not yet clear.

- GPCC has frequent, systematic evaluations of projects they finance, based on feedback from researchers.
- GPCC has undergone a recent external evaluation (report dated March 2019), which confirmed its internal SWOT analysis.

### **Weaknesses**

- Feedback and evaluation about research achievements seem to be relatively ad hoc, on research group and project level. It is not clear the extent to which individual researchers receive support, feedback or are evaluated.
- As IHCS is presently undergoing reorganisation and a concerted development effort, we did not receive specifically formulated goals or criteria for evaluation.
- GPCC representatives express a need for improved outcome measures for research and are self-critical to the limited patient/public involvement in the determination of outcome measures.

### **Recommendations**

- Increased clarity and clearly-formulated criteria for evaluation as well as goals could facilitate the development of systematic feedback processes.
- IHCS would benefit from more collaboration with GPCC in all research areas.
- Follow the recommendations for GPCC, to conduct more research on person-centred care, especially in primary care, larger randomised controlled studies, and using outcome measures that facilitate comparison with other research.

## **Section C – Complete Academic Environment**

### **C1. Collaboration**

#### *C1.1 Collaboration and networks within the University of Gothenburg, with other Swedish universities, and internationally*

### **Strengths**

- Staff describe strong linkages with other groups within the university, particularly but not exclusively, within Medicine. It appears that these links are stronger for some research groups, including those with a strong clinical focus, than for others. The GPCC has particularly strong links across multiple disciplines.
- The “VIS collaboration” with six regional universities working in healthcare research sounds promising, with staff talking about joint workshops and joint research. It wasn’t clear the extent to which this collaboration had moved from aspiration to impact.



- The visiting professor programme is clearly beneficial, having attracted some highly-regarded academics who demonstrate considerable commitment to the host department. This has clear benefits for research quality and the research environment.

### **Weaknesses**

- It was not clear the extent to which all members of staff were benefiting from these collaborations, with some of the junior staff having little awareness of these opportunities. There is a scepticism towards patient-related outcome data as a base for scientific evidence in relation to experimental and pure medical research.
- IHCS leaders note that some groups (e.g. diagnostic radiology nursing) lack clear links with relevant disciplines (e.g. radiology and medical physics) and say that they are working to build such links.

### **Recommendations**

- An emphasis on the further development of existing and potential links with other departments within UGOT would help to ensure that research is not conducted within disciplinary silos, bringing benefit to other faculties as well as GPCC.
- The focus on person-centred care is of particularly high standard and highly relevant across the practice of healthcare. We note the existence of a course in person-centredness open to participation across faculties. Promoting access to this perspective across Sahlgrenska Academy would offer benefits to research and teaching across departments.

## *C1.2 Collaboration with external stakeholders*

### **Strengths**

- The extensive provision of shared clinical / academic positions offers the potential to ensure that research is well rooted in clinical needs and to increase the impact of research on practice. The accounts of this given during interviews were uniformly positive.
- Public involvement is strong in some groups (especially GPCC) but less clear in others. The involvement of members of the public (including representatives of patient interest organisations) in governance is strong in some areas. We were impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of the PPI representative we interviewed.

### **Weaknesses**

- The extensive clinical collaborations are heavily weighted towards hospital care, although connections with community-based services are now being discussed.
- IHCS note in their background material that there is a relative lack of managerial-level joint clinical/academic positions within Sahlgrenska University Hospital. This is potentially problematic as research in health and care sciences may fall behind, and could be at risk of marginalisation.

### **Recommendations**

- Continue to develop contacts with community-based service organisations to seek joint positions similar to those currently placed with hospital services.
- In order to develop more managerial joint clinical/academic positions, consider whether exploring alternative funding models for joint clinical/academic posts might offer similar benefits for research and teaching while preserving departmental funding.
- Build on the enthusiastic support offered by current PPI members to spread the approach across all research areas and seek PPI involvement through all stages of the research process from selection and design of projects to conducting and spreading them.

## **C2. Relevance and impact on society**

### *C2.1 Management and support*

#### **Strengths**

- There is an awareness of the potential, and some existing examples (such as in the field of patient safety) of using researcher/research expertise within clinical environments to improve care. This is supported by the joint clinical/academic positions.
- The department demonstrates clear awareness of a need to further develop collaboration with care settings apart from acute care hospitals and are in the process of building such links.

#### **Weaknesses**

- Despite a clear commitment to achieving impact, there is a lack of a strategic plan to facilitate this. In particular, it was expressed that there was little incentive for researchers to devote substantial effort to achieving service improvement based on research.

#### **Recommendations**

- It is important for IHCS to assist stakeholders with research results when the physical healthcare environment is being planned with the aim of high quality.
- More effort is needed to develop a strategic plan for service improvement based on research.

### *C2.2 Research relevance and impact on society*

#### **Strengths**

- There is a clear recognition amongst staff and management of the potential role of research in driving improvement in health and in services.
- The GPCC programme for research on implementation of PCC, and the national “VIPER” network they have developed for implementation, has led to an impressive programme of strategically developed knowledge and dissemination.
- The development of “GPCC Implement AB” was extremely innovative and should be recognised. It is unfortunate that this activity has proven difficult to support in the long term.

#### **Weaknesses**

- There is a relative lack of expertise in implementation science in IHCC. In particular, there is a need to move beyond a “dissemination” focus to wider approaches to changing practice. It was unclear the extent to which this expertise is available in the wider university and whether such expertise could be made available with IHCS.
- Failure to attract researchers to participate in and develop a sustainable financial model for GPCC Implement AB, which has not been active since July 2018.
- Some professions (such as medical students and doctors) and agencies (dental care, primary care, private actors) have shown less interest in PCC research.

### **Recommendations**

- If the university is committed to increasing research impact on society, there is a need to ensure the availability of skills in implementation science.
- Researchers may consider whether more extensive involvement of the public in research may help to drive the impact of results

## **C3. Research-teaching linkages**

### *C3.1 Undergraduate and master's education*

#### **Strengths**

- Undergraduate students are writing theses based on clinical research and quality improvement projects.
- Master's students are invited to participate in research projects, with theses in the form of a scientific article.
- Research amanuensis positions have been developed, which raise interest in research at early stages.
- Elective undergraduate course for research practicum are very innovative.
- PhD students are involved in relevant undergraduate and master's level education.

#### **Weaknesses**

- The extensive involvement of academics (and PhD students) in teaching may reduce their ability to focus on high-quality research.
- Only few positions for research amanuensis. Small number of students choose the research practicum. Can undergraduates be more stimulated to participate in these options?
- Diagnostic radiology nursing is the least-developed research area, related to a limited critical mass of academic teachers/researchers.

#### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that excellence in teaching is highly valued and recognised by the institution.
- Investigate other funding/organisational models to ensure that academics have sufficient protected research time.

- Seek to employ researchers with competence in diagnostic radiology nursing. Or make efforts to develop research competency among existing faculty.

### *C3.2 Doctoral education*

#### **Strengths**

- The joint doctoral programme with the University of Leuven is unique.
- The opportunity to conduct projects developed by senior researchers offers the chance for students to work on high-quality studies.
- The developing system to locate all PhD students clearly within research groups run by active researchers.
- The impressive programme of seminars by PhD students.
- A network amongst PhD students that includes more advanced PhD students unofficially mentoring newer students.

#### **Weaknesses**

- Some students suggested that, although the situation has improved over time, not all students feel adequately supervised.
- Not all PhD students are affiliated with a research group, and some students feel relatively unconnected with their research groups and have limited interaction with the programme within other research groups.
- Some students were unsure of where and how to get access to wider methodological expertise.

#### **Recommendations**

- All PhD students should be affiliated with a research group. Further encouragement of all students to become more closely connected to their own research groups and more aware of the opportunities to learn from other research groups and visiting professors is needed.
- Ensure the availability of a full range of methodological support to students.
- A network amongst PhD students is needed, including more advanced PhD students unofficially mentoring newer students.

## **Section D – Academic Culture**

### *D1. Academic culture*

#### **Strengths**

- There was a general description of traditional academic activities for a university department.
- Research seminars are held for reviewing manuscripts and proposals as well as discussing research publications in progress.

- The transition research group appears to have strong collaborations, including PhD education with KU Leuven.

### **Weaknesses**

- Not all PhD students belong to a research group, and some rely only on their supervisors.
- Tensions between education and research need to be dealt with to develop a more academic culture.
- Creative processes are dominating according to the self-evaluation; this needs to be explained further. There seems to be a perceived lack of “seminar culture” within the department.

### **Recommendations**

- All PhD students should belong to a research group.
- Balance and integration of research and education should be discussed and organised on all levels of leadership.
- Continue developing creative processes.
- Organise planned seminars at the department and in each research group.

## **D2. Publication**

### *D2.1 Publication strategy*

#### **Strengths**

- Mention of authorship in relation to importance. Within IHCS, the strategy is to have predefined written author agreement.
- Co-author publications are encouraged and discussed in relation to researchers’ career plans.

#### **Weaknesses**

- The criteria used for co-authorship at IHCS are unclear.
- Even if open access is the gold standard, according to the self-evaluation there is a minority of publications with open access. This is also costly—no mention of how this is financed.

#### **Recommendations**

- Authorship should be carefully discussed, as it is of importance for researchers’ career plans and as a model for the future for junior staff and PhD students.
- There needs to be more clarity about which open access journals are reputable and which are predatory. It is also important to find out who and how this is going to be financed.

### *D2.2 Analysis of bibliometric data*

#### **Strengths**

- During 2013-2016 there was an increase in publication rates according to the bibliometric analysis for RED19.
- Cooperation with other departments in the faculty has developed, both in education and in research, as the number of PhD students has grown. This cooperation has been beneficial for the department and for GPCC.
- Cross-departmental cooperation was discussed as beneficial for healthcare science when applying for funding.
- Four members from IHCS have joined the Centre for Perinatal Medicine and Health, established in June 2018.

### **Weaknesses**

- There was a decline in publication rates in 2017; this was explained as being due to increased teaching assignments for all staff.
- Lecturing and supervising students is taking time from research and thereby leading to fewer publications.
- GPCC is a centre for the whole university, therefore some information about publications has been from researchers belonging to other departments.

### **Recommendations**

- More faculty-level support is needed to enable teachers/researchers to apply for research funding and to have more time for research and publication.
- Improve documentation of publications including the department from which they derive, both at the department and at GPCC.

## **D3. Facilities and research infrastructure**

### **Strengths**

- There is good awareness of the importance of building up stronger research environments.
- ‘Complete academic environment’ seems to be an important strategy for the future and plans for how education and research allocations can be distributed. A review and reorganisation of the department is ongoing.
- IHCS is aiming at high-quality research in larger quantity and promoting research activity. National and international collaboration is one of many ways to achieve this and the department seems to be aware of the fact that the infrastructure needs to be well organised.
- The department is planning to centralise some basic costs and allocate financing for different research activities.

### **Weaknesses**

- Unclear how financing will be reallocated to allow for the research infrastructure.
- CAE seems to be an important strategy for the future, however what it means and what it specifically involves, or what the principles are, remains unclear.
- Skilled administrative staff for research is needed.
- There is limited access to necessary statistical support.

- Researchers have difficulty freeing time to fully use their external funding.
- There is no follow-up of the output of the 10% time for research which lecturers have.
- University- and department-level administrative resources for research support seem to be underused.

### **Recommendations**

- There should be ready access to necessary statistical support at IHCS.
- Efforts should be made to make better use of available faculty and university resources in the future.

## **D4. Transverse perspectives**

### *D4.1 Equal opportunities and gender equality*

#### **Strengths**

- Plans for both gender equality and equity do exist, but this is in accordance with Swedish law.
- The plan of action focuses on students and of all categories of staff.

#### **Weaknesses**

- When looking at the staff data, it becomes clear that the vast majority of individuals in the department are women, however there is an equal ratio of women:men professors that is not in line with the gender distribution on any other levels. This is not commented anywhere, nor is the interaction between discipline and gender, which often influences university-level decision-making as well.
- According to the staff data, men are highly prioritised for research funding. The reasons for this—or even the fact that this is the case—have not been mentioned.

#### **Recommendations**

- Develop educational examples and discuss and comment on the interaction between discipline and gender.
- It is recommended that IHCS leadership further analyse and develop an action plan to address possible gender and other inequalities at the department.

### *D4.2 Internationalisation*

#### **Strengths**

- Very positive recruitment of international professors to strengthen the department.
- Very positive double PhDs in the health transition group in collaboration with KU Leuven.
- International exchange and participation on doctoral level, both to and from Sweden.
- International summer schools for PhD students.

#### **Weaknesses**

- An important point is the self-reflection during the interview (which should be credited) that much internationalisation seems to occur despite the lack of a clear plan and framework across the department, suggesting that this is related to individual researchers' initiatives. This may jeopardise sustainability.
- There was also self-reflection during the interviews about a lack of follow-up of internationalisation, although documentation of publications and research funding is carried out. It remains unclear what type of follow-up is suggested.
- Postdoc positions abroad are few.

### **Recommendations**

- IHCS leadership reflects that more and stronger international collaborations are needed to build up the academic quality of the department; we support this strategy.
- The department should continue investigating what other strategic partnerships could be developed.
- Encourage and support young researchers to apply for international postdoc positions

## Section E – Support

### **E1. Internal research support**

#### **Strengths**

- The head of the administrative division at the department has a continuous dialogue with the scientific leaders as well as the research administrators to maintain and develop internal administrative research support, which is an important part of the core infrastructure of research.

#### **Weaknesses**

- Solely focusing on PhD students might hinder newly-graduated PhDs and junior researchers in their career development.
- There is room for improvement regarding administration as the research administrators also have other types of administrative work.
- When writing grant applications, researchers need infrastructure support regarding writing, finances and copy-editing. Such infrastructure is presently not available for all researchers.
- The scientific leaders raised concern about the lack of a budget for each research group to facilitate their work considerably regarding activities and planning.

#### **Recommendations**

- Extending the number of postdoc positions financed by the department should be taken into consideration, as it is of utmost importance to secure qualified and competitive researchers in



the future. The possibility to apply for PhD positions financed by the department and determined through an external review process, is very important.

- Researchers need support regarding writing grant applications, finances and copy-editing.

## E2. Faculty and University-wide support

### Strengths

- The university's Grants and Innovation Office (FIK) staff express a willingness to extend the assistance they offer in preparing applications for external grant support to IHCS researchers.
- A meeting is planned for FIK and IHCS leadership to investigate ways to improve support.

### Weaknesses

- Although IHCS has some internal support to offer, this is limited and does not match the range of methodological support needed for high-quality research studies. University-wide support (for instance for statistics and health economics) also appears relatively limited, especially at the stage of grant development before funding is available and appears to be more commonly in the form of consultancy rather than research partnership.
- Junior staff appear unsure about the extent to which support from the research office and wider methodological expertise is available to them.
- It is unclear whether the model used at a university level to provide central support for research endeavours appropriately reflects and matches the level and type of activity within IHCS.

### Recommendations

- Ensure the availability of a broad range of high-level methodological support, which is needed to develop and deliver research grants and programmes to researchers at all levels.
- Ensure that researchers at all levels have access to, and know how to access, support from the SA and UGOT levels, e.g. from FIK and methodological experts.
- Ensure that researchers are encouraged to work across disciplines and faculties in the preparation and delivery of research and that internal economic and "credit" models do not act as barriers to "team science".

## Section F – Other Matters

### F1. RED10 evaluation

- IHCS has worked systematically, and for the most part, very successfully in line with the recommendations from RED10. Still a little more to do.

- IHCS has developed national and international collaboration. Five international guest professors have been invited to work for five years at the department. This is experienced as very positive among staff and PhD students. International researchers are affiliated. GPCC has recruited researchers both nationally and internationally.
- The research groups have been rearranged to some extent, and some have new scientific leaders. However, reorganisation is still ongoing.
- At IHCS there is ongoing work to increase the number of senior lecturers/professors with shared clinical placements, which is of importance for the interaction with society and for research.
- Visiting professors and double degree PhDs are strengthening the department's own funding capabilities and success in obtaining funding.

### **Weaknesses**

- Even if the department's action plan, business plan and strategy for the research groups have focused on external funding, research funding still needs to be increased.
- Research time is sometimes consumed by undergraduate teaching.
- Existing central support for grant applications seems to be underused.

### **F2. Other matters**

- Report readiness for the VULF agreement.
- Systematic and national discrimination in relation to the focus of IHCS's research is noted here

## **Concluding Recommendations**

### **Positive Features**

IHCS has a number of notably positive features:

- There are a significant number of strong research outputs in the forms of peer-reviewed, international publications and externally-financed, highly competitive grants from EU and national funding agencies.
- The GPCC is a highly competitive nationally- and internationally-recognised centre for the advancement of research and knowledge on person-centred care.
- IHCS has worked systematically, and for the most part, very successfully in line with the recommendations from RED10.

- The visiting professor programme has attracted a number of internationally-recognised researchers who have strengthened the department in a variety of manners, including the internationalisation of doctoral studies with a unique possibility to receive a double doctoral degree from UGOT and KU Leuven.
- Both IHCS and GPCC are developing programmes for public and patient involvement. The development of a new vice-dept head position about two years ago is an important platform for legitimising and further advancing this.
- There is also a systematic and concerted effort to increase interaction between clinical practice and care needs and research and education, as evidenced by the approximately 30% of faculty with joint hospital/IHCS positions.
- Some research groups have strong links with researchers from other disciplines or groups; this should continue to be encouraged.
- There is impressive drive by PhD students to organise themselves and further develop systematic educational possibilities.
- Given the recent change in leadership and an ongoing reorganisation process, the evaluators were impressed by the constructive, enthusiastic and reflective attitude of nearly all those interviewed towards criticism and future possibilities.

### **Challenges for the Future**

- The single most important challenge for continued quality and quantity of research conducted is the tension between the heavy demands of undergraduate education—necessary for the nursing workforce of the future— and the ability of staff to deliver on the research agenda. This tension permeated most discussions, and is to a large extent beyond the direct control of the IHCS, but also relates to decisions made on faculty and university levels.
- There is a relative lack of research infrastructure specifically tailored to meet the particular needs of IHCS. This includes the wide variety of methodological expertise needed, as well as relevant, accessible and specific support from existing university-wide offices.
- The increased teaching burden since RED10 has meant that even when external research funding is successfully procured, it is difficult to free protected time to deliver the research.
- There is a lack of systematic career development found at all levels.
- Limitations on protected research time for postdocs, lecturers, and senior lecturers makes it difficult to have the time needed to prepare large-scale competitive grant applications.

- There is a need to ensure that faculty-and university indicators for research quality are relevant for the research conducted at IHCS.
- There is also a need to ensure that collaboration and interaction between IHCS and GPCC continues to develop on all levels—from doctoral students to senior faculty.

### **Recommendations for the Department**

- There is a need to provide more comprehensive and systematic career development from the doctoral level to the senior research level, including leadership development. It is important to ensure that line management and career development are separated, and that there is input from beyond the individual's own research group.
- Develop systems to ensure early access to methodological input needed for the development of high-quality research.
- Develop systems for quality feedback during the process of developing, conducting and delivering research.
- Ensure that the necessary and comprehensive organisational changes already under development are inclusive processes, which can lead to continuing future development. This should include ensuring that all researchers have a clear home, and that when formulated as research groups, they are viable with a critical mass.

### **Recommendations for the Faculty and University**

- Given the excellent national and international scientific reputation of GPCC, as well as its function as a driver for research at IHCS, it is crucial that its funding be stable in the future, rather than diverted to other activities.
- Consider the extent to which the algorithms (e.g. 'activity funding', bibliometrics) used for financial rewards related to research performance are equitable across departments within Sahlgrenska Academy.
- Ensure that barriers to inter-and transdisciplinary collaboration across organisational units are minimised.
- Ensure that there are accessible systems and means for early access to input needed to develop competitive grant applications. This should be seen as an investment rather than cost.
- Systematic mentorship programmes across departments and faculties should be widely available at all levels