

# Surgical Division Research Strategy 2024-2026

The division's vision for research is that it should be an integral part of patient care, enabling the implementation of research findings in the healthcare services we provide to our patients. Both the focus areas and ongoing development efforts align with Ahus' Development Plan for 2035 and the Regional Strategy for Research in the South-East Health Region.

## Strategic Focus Areas

For the period 2024-2026, there will be a specific emphasis on initiatives within the areas of recruiting and retaining researchers, research support and monitoring, and technology and infrastructure. The Surgical Research Department is responsible for the strategic work towards achieving goals at the division level, but each department within the division is committed to contributing to the realization of the strategy's objectives.

### Recruiting and Retaining Researchers

To make research an integral part of patient care, it is crucial to both recruit new researchers and ensure that those with research expertise continue their research activities. This involves:

- Enabling researchers to dedicate a significant portion of their time to research, for example, 20% or more in a limited period. This could be included as part of the employee's job description.
- Establishing closer connections between master's studies and ongoing research in the department, facilitating the conversion of master's theses into articles, and ensuring that one of the supervisors is internal to Ahus.
- Encouraging those who have completed a master's degree to pursue a Ph.D.
- Urging staff in specialization or recently certified specialists to participate in research.
- Developing career paths for researchers after completing a master's/Ph.D. for both physicians and nurses.

### Research Support and Monitoring

To maximize the benefits of time allocated to research, having sufficient capacity in research support is crucial. The Surgical Division will therefore work towards:

- Increasing the number of research nurses, ideally having a research nurse associated with all the division's research groups.
- Strengthening the offerings in research support, including study design, statistics, and grant writing, both from the Research and Innovation Division and through complementary internal offerings in the Surgical Division.
- Monitoring as many clinical treatment studies as possible, possibly through simplified internal controls.

### Technology and Infrastructure

Research in today's healthcare system requires seamless technological integration between various systems and platforms, as well as modern infrastructure. Focus should be on:

- Providing all researchers with access to secure and free or affordable storage and database systems.
- Ensuring all Ahus researchers equal access to Services for Sensitive Data and similar programs, regardless of university affiliation.
- Enhancing the services at the 3D lab and exploring potential applications of 3D technology for the division's departments.
- Facilitating the use of services at EpiGen for division researchers by hiring a bioengineer in a 20% position.
- Having technology and infrastructure that support innovation projects.

## Continuous Development Work

In addition to the strategic focus areas, certain areas need continuous attention to achieve the vision of making research an integral part of patient care. Among these, Ahus' role as a university hospital and the guidance expertise and capacity are crucial.

### Ahus as a University Hospital

The status as a university hospital entails commitments that require resources and effort to fulfill. Continuous efforts are therefore needed to:

- Maintain a sufficient number of academic positions, preferably at least one position in each of the division's specialty departments.
- Facilitate arrangements from the department's side so that even those without academic positions can allocate time for research.
- Ensure adequate resources to fulfill the division's teaching responsibilities.
- Increase the number of clinical treatment studies to meet the goal of a 15% increase compared to the previous year.
- Achieve an annual increase in the number of publications.
- Incorporate user involvement and the patient perspective concretely and in the early stages of research.
- Strengthen research activities across departments and disciplines.

### Supervisor Expertise and Capacity

To educate individuals in master's and Ph.D. programs, sufficient guidance expertise and capacity are central. This requires:

- Departmental oversight of competent mentors with specific targets for the number of mentors needed in the department for the relevant educational programs.
- Internal mentorship courses for masters/practical guidance to avoid dependence on external course providers.
- Establishing routines and allocating time for those with completed Ph.D. to, as a general rule, share their expertise by mentoring others.