

Report on Project Session
Northern Research Forum
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Higher Education in the North, Russia and the University of the Arctic

This session dealt with both general questions of higher education in the Russian North, and specific questions of circumpolar cooperation through the University of the Arctic network. Rather than summarizing the various presentations in the session, this summary provides a short list of the main outcomes and recommendations.

1. There is much to learn on both sides- in Russia and outside it, to develop joint approaches to common problems, and to learn from different approaches taken in each region. Those in the western half of the circumpolar North need to learn more about Russian systems of education in order to bridge the gap. Overall, the session was an important step in opening up the dialogue between Russian and non-Russian higher education institutions.
2. It is clear that Russian institutions have much to offer, both in terms of general knowledge and experience, but also facilities and infrastructure. Nordic and North American institutions, and the University of the Arctic network, need the strong cooperation and participation of Russian institutions to succeed in developing a circumpolar approach to education.
3. For institutions in northern Russia, funding is not necessarily the main obstacle for developing higher education, but rather the lack of experience and competencies in key areas, and the time, training and resources to develop them.
4. One possible solution to this problem may be mobility programs to bring Russian scholars for training in concrete areas (seminars in developing EU funding proposals, for example), as well as participation in program development and teaching.
5. Language is a fundamental obstacle to greater international cooperation in education with Russia. This applies to both the development of English competency in Russia, but also more Russian language competency among other international scholars. The University of the Arctic should develop its curriculum and information materials in both English and Russian. The availability of current information materials about UArctic in Russian online is preferable to developing separate coordination capacity in Russia.
6. The state continues to be the primary source of funding in Russia (including the federal and regional levels), but other private sources do exist. International partners are an important factor in the ability of Russian institutions to secure funding from various sources.