



AARHUS UNIVERSITET

PROBLEM ANALYSIS FOLLOW-UP: DECISIONS

The Senior Management Team
Aarhus University



On 13 November 2013, the board approved the senior management team's plan to initiate a process to follow up on the academic development process. The objective of the process was to identify and address the most significant problems facing the university in the wake of this major reorganisation.

In this document, the senior management team presents the decisions that have been reached to deal with the problems that have been identified at Aarhus University.

An internal consultation regarding the senior management team's proposed decisions took place from 15 August until 19 September 2014. As the large number of consultation responses attests, the university's staff and students have demonstrated a high level of engagement in the process. 168 consultation responses (approximately 600 pages) were submitted. Responses were submitted by the university's official advisory and governing bodies, as well as by research groups, trade unions, student organisations, groups of employees and individuals. The senior management team wishes to acknowledge employees' and students' many constructive contributions and their active participation in the process of identifying solutions. All of the consultation responses received have been considered in connection with the deliberation process that has resulted in the final decisions contained in this document.

Along with respect for the university's diversity and need for flexibility, the desire to create the best possible conditions for ensuring academic excellence and high quality in the university's core activities is fundamental to the decisions outlined in this document. All of the university's employees - academic as well as technical-administrative - contribute to supporting the university's core activities. For this reason, Aarhus University must be an inspiring framework for employees and students with a good work and study environment, inclusion of employees and students in decisions and processes and an accessible, visionary management.

The decisions outlined in this document include concrete changes with regard to the delegation of authority and the accessibility of management, inclusion, communication, the organisation of the faculties and administrative support. The decisions will not affect the university's overall structure consisting of four faculties and a unified administration, as the senior management team holds that this organisation ensures the university's resilience in the face of increasing external demands. This resilience, along with academic excellence, is decisive for the university's continued ability to retain and improve its current position as an internationally recognised research-intensive university.

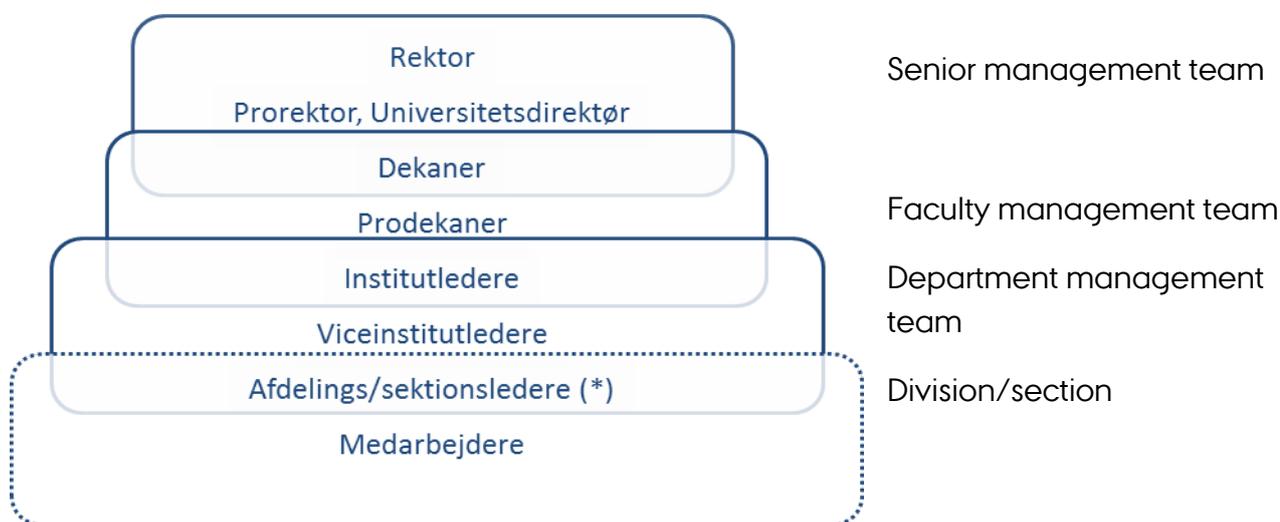
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I. DELEGATION OF MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

There is a need for a genuine inclusion of staff and students in central decision-making processes. This inclusion must take place within the framework of the University Act and Aarhus University's by-laws, both of which place final responsibility and decision-making authority with management. An inclusive management practice requires, among other things, a coherent management structure based on a clear division of roles and responsibilities. It is therefore proposed that management teams be established at all levels of the organisation to which clear authority and decision-making powers are assigned. As can be seen from the figure below, the idea is that managers also participate in the management of the level just above. The intention is to involve the individual managers in decisions that affect their unit, while at the same time ensuring that decisions are made on the most informed basis possible. This also includes administrative support for the implementation of the decisions. This will promote coherence across the organisation as well as ensuring increased inclusion of a wider group.

Outline of management levels at Aarhus University showing the different management teams:



(*) Not all departments have a need for divisions/sections, so flexibility is required in relation to internal organisation. This should be decided at departmental level with the involvement of the employees. In addition, Aarhus University has numerous units (major centres, national centres and schools) of a department-like nature. In the above figures, these units are treated as departments.

- The senior management team consists of the rector, the pro-rector, the university director and the four deans. The senior management team determines the university's overall objectives and prepares the budget, which are approved by the Aarhus University Board. The senior management team approves the faculties' and the administration's budgets and sets their performance targets. Moreover, the senior management team considers issues that affect the entire university.
- A faculty management team consists of the dean, the vice-deans, the department heads, an administration centre manager and in some cases a chief adviser. The faculty management team determines the faculty's overall objectives and prepares its budget, approves the departmental budgets and sets the departments' performance targets. The faculty management team determines the budget for the faculty's administration centre. Moreover, issues are considered that affect the faculty as a whole.
- A department management team consists of the department head, the deputy department heads, any division/section managers and the head of the department secretariat. With input from relevant staff members, the department management team prepares the department's budget and sets performance

targets where necessary. The department management team approves the budgets of any divisions/sections with financial responsibility and agrees their performance targets. Moreover, issues are considered that affect the department as a whole.

An important prerequisite for genuine inclusion is a higher degree of delegation of decision-making power to the local management level, thereby ensuring sufficient local managerial freedom. Finally, the management's presence and visibility is all-important. This means that the large departments and other units must be organised into a suitable number of divisions/sections so as to ensure the accessibility of the management and the genuine inclusion of staff and students. All managers must be visible and accessible in the academic or administrative environments for which they are responsible. The members of the senior management team must be more visible and accessible at the faculties and in the administrative units, and through dialogue they must contribute to the exchange of ideas, arguments and views and ensure timely inclusion of staff in decisions and processes.

ON THESE GROUNDS, THE FOLLOWING DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE:

- The deans must delegate responsibility to vice-deans and department heads. The deans will identify which areas of responsibility are relevant to delegate in cooperation with the vice-deans and department heads. The aim is to strengthen the department heads' managerial freedom and thereby strengthen their scope for including staff. (In the case of departments with large divisions/sections, the department heads and the division/section managers must identify the areas in which responsibilities can be delegated to the division/section managers). Delegation is particularly important with regard to finances, appointments and dismissals, as these areas are central to the departments' and the academic units' day-to-day operations. Described in further detail in the next two sections.
- The senior management team, in particular the deans, must, together with the vice-deans, identify areas in which further responsibilities may be delegated to the vice-deans in connection with their duties in the core activity committees and forums, thereby enhancing their decision-making power in academic matters. On this basis, the senior management team will decide on the role and responsibilities of the vice-deans with responsibility for the core activity committees.
- The deans and their faculty secretariats (formerly the deans' offices) are to move out of building 1430/1431 (Ndr. Ringgade 1, 8000 Aarhus C) and relocate to offices in their respective academic environments, in cases in which this relocation makes sense. The deans will retain a few offices in building 1430/1431 to facilitate their attendance at senior management team meetings.

A. FINANCE AND BUDGET

The need to involve the department heads in the faculty management is closely associated with Aarhus University's financial model, according to which the departments are the main financial units. The department heads must have regular access to clear and complete financial reports. The department's share of appropriations under the Danish Finance Act and other external revenue must be clearly presented and specified so as to allow the department to monitor income closely and influence it through its activities. The same applies to costs, including not least the administrative costs for the administration centre and for the central administration as well as contributions towards the senior management team's pool and other shared costs. It is crucial for the departments to have a complete overview of and control over their finances. Consequently, full transparency must be ensured in this area.

The delegation of financial responsibility must therefore be based on the following key principles:

- a. Full transparency in respect of the faculty's and the departments' revenue and expenses.
- b. Scope for supporting the development of high academic standards and increasing revenue through the department's own activities.
- c. The faculty must function as a financial unit based on solidarity.

In addition, it is important that the departments, faculties and the university as a whole can engage in long-term financial planning.

IT HAS THEREFORE BEEN DECIDED THAT THE DELEGATION OF FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY WILL BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- All financial units are to operate with four-year budgets.
- The departments' overall budgets and their performance targets are to be determined by the faculty management team.
- The faculty management team is to decide on the distribution of funding earmarked for the objectives of the faculty as a whole, for example compensating for any financial imbalances between the departments due to the fundamentally different conditions under which they operate. Financial room for manoeuvre for strategic initiatives, including faculty-wide initiatives and risk coverage, is to be ensured at faculty level.
- The faculty management team is to decide what proportion of the departments' revenue (e.g. FTE revenue, completion bonuses, basic funds and contract funding) should be channelled directly to the departments and according to what principles. This will make it possible for the departments to increase their income and develop high quality in their core activities.
- The financial model for the individual faculty must ensure full transparency as regards all the faculty's and the departments' revenues and expenses.

B. RECRUITMENT

An important precondition for inclusion is that the departments be given significant influence on the appointment process, which is central to academic development and quality. It is crucial that the department management team include members of academic staff in appointments to academic career-track positions (such as assistant professor, researcher and tenure track positions) as well as in the appointment of associate professors, senior researchers/senior scientists, senior advisers and professors. In addition, the department management team must include relevant employees in connection with the appointment of technical/administrative staff.

ON THESE GROUNDS, THE FOLLOWING DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE:

General procedures:

- The faculty management team must ensure effective employment procedures that clearly describe the division of responsibilities, quality targets and employment criteria. The academic councils and departmental forums must be included in discussions about these procedures, which must respect the points outlined below.

TAP and temporary positions:

- Within the framework of the department's approved budget, the department management team is responsible for the employment of all technical/administrative staff members at the department.
- Within the framework of the department's approved budget, the department management team is responsible for appointments of academic staff members in fixed-term positions at the department with the exception of career-track positions such as assistant professor, researcher and tenure-track positions.

Permanent academic positions, including career-track positions:

- Within the framework of the department's approved budget and in accordance with the department's strategy, the department management team may initiate advertisement of new positions as assistant professors, researchers, tenure-track positions, associate professors, senior advisers, senior researchers and professors. Prior to advertising such positions, the department management team is obliged to consult with the department's associate professors, senior researchers and professors – or a representative subgroup of these – regarding the position(s) to be advertised.
- The department management team is to appoint an assessment committee in accordance with the faculty's guidelines. Before the committee is appointed, the department management team is to consult a group of peers among the department's permanent academic staff.
- The department management team is to decide on the selection of candidates for job interviews and is to conduct job interviews once the assessments have been received. The dean or a vice-dean may participate in the interviews.
- Before a recommendation regarding appointment is sent to the dean, the department management team is to consult with a relevant group of peers among the department's permanent academic staff.
- The dean must ensure that the assessment of the suitability of the candidates for the advertised position(s) takes place in accordance with the applicable rules and quality targets and decides whether the recommendation for appointment may be accepted.

II. INCLUDING STAFF AND STUDENTS

Better use must be made of the existing framework for including staff and students in decisions and processes. Staff and students must be included in decision-making processes as early as possible, thereby increasing their access to expressing their opinions before decisions are made. It has been decided that a small number of new formal bodies is to be established for the purpose of including the students in matters relating to their studies, the degree programmes and the study environment. A main focus point will be the provision of greater scope for genuine inclusion, for example of the academic councils and departmental forums, thereby allowing them to play a more prominent role as idea generators.

ON THESE GROUNDS, THE FOLLOWING DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE:

- The dean, in consultation with the chairman of the academic council, must decide how the academic council may be involved to a greater extent in planning, holding and following up on the academic council meetings, and how it may be ensured that the academic council has a chance to discuss important future decisions prior to such decisions being made. Furthermore, it must be decided how good ideas and input from the councils can be conveyed onwards to the senior management team. The decisions made for the four faculties will be reported at the seminar for the academic councils to be held in November 2014.
- In consultation with staff, students and the elected liaison committees at department level, the department head is to decide how the department's elected forums may be involved to a greater extent. The decisions will reflect local needs and local differences, but focus must be on timely involvement and on improving the employees' knowledge base.
- The department heads are responsible for holding staff meetings (at least two annually) and must inform staff of the department's quarterly forecasts and budget.
- Two new core activity committees are to be established: the Education Committee and the Research and External Cooperation Committee (including public sector consultancy). In the course of their formation, the two new core activity committees must present proposals on how staff and students may be guaranteed insight into and inclusion in their work.
- The future of the four existing core activity forums must be clarified.
- The senior management team will meet with the student councils and discuss how to involve students and PhD students more in the decision-making processes that are important for them. One option would be to establish one or two organs in with members of student councils and members of the senior management team, as a supplement to the dialogue with students and PhD students that takes place on the boards of studies and PhD committees. In addition, the deans are to meet with students and PhD students on a regular basis at faculty level.

Any changes to the liaison committees and the occupational health and safety committees will await an upcoming evaluation and have therefore not been included here.

III. THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE FACULTIES

On the background of the expert group's report, the analysis panel's recommendations and the consultation responses, it is clear that there are grounds for a closer examination of the structure of the departments and the internal organisation of the departments. In this regard, it is important to avoid drawing hasty conclusions, and that changes be discussed in the context of an inclusive process.

ON THESE GROUNDS, IT HAS BEEN DECIDED THAT:

- A review of the structure of the departments at all faculties must be carried out in order to ensure that the organisation of the departments provides appropriate support for the academic disciplines and for cooperation. The structure of the boards of studies should be included in this review, for instance with a view to strengthening the students' influence. The deans are responsible for the structural reviews at their respective faculties.

The review process must ensure motivation and co-determination with regard to the organisation of the departments/departmental structure and must:

- a) Be broadly inclusive
- b) Be given the necessary time
- c) Take place with due consideration for other ongoing processes, for example follow-up on the WPA, research and teaching responsibilities and the financial situation.

IN ADDITION, IT IS DECIDED THAT:

- To the extent that the review results in a proposal to change the structure of the departments or the internal organisation of departments, a schedule and process plan must be developed with input from staff detailing how the change may be implemented.

FINALLY, IT HAS BEEN DECIDED THAT:

- **The deans of AR, ST and BSS must have a particular focus on the following issues in connection with the review:**
 - a) AR: In their comments on the expert group's report, employees at the Department of Education have argued in favour of a more flexible internal organisation, in part on the grounds that visibility in relation to external partners is particularly important at this department. The potential for providing support for the Department of Education's special academic and organisational needs within the faculty framework and for strengthening the department's external sub-brand must be identified, and these needs must be met as far as possible.
 - b) ST: The faculty's engineering activities have a particular need for a clear structure and visibility in relation to industry and potential applicants. Needs with regard to a clear and distinct sub-brand must be elucidated and met to the greatest possible extent.
 - c) BSS: The faculty's business activities have a particular need for visibility in relation to industry and potential applicants. In addition, a significant group of employees at the Department of Economics and Business has expressed concern that the business degree programmes are not sufficiently visible. The review must therefore assess the extent to which structural changes are necessary out of consideration for the business degree programmes and whether they are being branded effectively.

IV. COMMUNICATION

The expert group's report, the analysis panel's recommendations and the consultation responses indicate that there is a particular need to improve management's communication with staff, so that it becomes based on dialogue and contributes to the exchange of ideas, arguments and viewpoints as well as ensuring that employees are included in due time. At the moment, the senior management team's communication is often perceived as unreasoned or as out of context in relation to employees' daily working lives. At the same time, department heads have difficulty in assuming ownership of the management's decisions at times, because they either do not feel that they have been included in the decision-making process or because they do not receive replies to the many consultation responses the departments submit. For these reasons, a concerted effort to adopt an inclusive approach to managerial communication must be made at all levels of management, and the communications departments in the administration centres and the central administration must be more closely coordinated. The faculties, departments and disciplines must have opportunities for increased visibility, and there must be greater respect for the scientific or scholarly content of the messages that are communicated. The communications departments at the administration centres must have the possibility of acting independently and directly to meet the local communication and branding needs of their faculty's academic organisation.

ON THESE GROUNDS, THE FOLLOWING DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE:

- Communication practice and strategy must be revised, so that internal communication is based on dialogue and the exchange of ideas and arguments to a higher degree. External communication must have a clearer scientific and scholarly focus. Employees and students must be included in the process of revising communication practice and strategy.
- The university's website must be revised in order to increase usability for both internal and external users.
- The branding strategy must be revised. The current practice of de-emphasising local units must be altered, so that a free choice may be made to emphasise university, faculty, department or centre level with regard to brand messaging. Employees and students must be included in the process of revising communication practice and strategy.
- Employees with responsibility for communication teams must have closer physical proximity to academic staff and local management teams.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

It is necessary to simplify the organisation of the administration, which is perceived as complex and inflexible in relation to the local needs of the academic organisation. In particular, there is a desire for an increased focus on proximity to users and prioritisation of administrative services. The opportunities for cooperation across the administration must be improved, and there must be strong cohesion in the administration across the university, to be ensured by the retention of the unified administration in combination with a significant degree of flexibility with regard to the local needs of the academic organisation. Administrative support must be based on a broad definition of quality that includes professional competence, a high degree of knowledge of local conditions, quick reaction times and coherent administration. In addition, it is necessary to create greater understanding of the administrative needs of the individual faculty as well as of the university as a whole. Finally, the administrative financial model must be made completely transparent, so that the balance between payment and services rendered may be adjusted appropriately. Changes made to the administrative structure must take place in collaboration with the liaison committee structure and in dialogue with the employees affected by them.

ON THESE GROUNDS, THE FOLLOWING DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE:

- The administration centre managers must have managerial responsibility for the administration centres (currently front offices), including personnel responsibility, so that the balance between payment and services rendered may be adjusted more appropriately. The administration centre managers are to report both to the university director and to the relevant dean, and must maintain a close running dialogue with deans and department heads regarding the concrete services provided. The reporting relationship to the dean will ensure both that local conditions are taken into due account and that the faculty retains control over the costs for the administration centre. The reporting relationship to the university director will ensure strong cohesiveness across the university. The administration centre managers are to be part of the university director's management team along with the deputy directors.
- The concrete decisions regarding what services the administration centres provide to the departments and the relationship between the administration centre and the department secretariats must be agreed between department heads, the administration centre manager and the dean. The decision regarding the optimal place of work for the individual employee in the administration centre is to be taken by the department management team, the dean and the administration centre manager with input from the division managers and the individual employee with due regard for efficiency, professional specialisation and finances.
- The faculty management teams are to determine the level of administrative support to be provided to the departments in collaboration with the administration centre managers, thus ensuring a minimum quality standard. If department heads would like additional administrative support, the departments must bear the expense and have the dean's approval.

The organisation of the administration centres must be flexible, and with the change in reporting relationships, it is no longer necessary for the administration centre's organisation to precisely reflect the organisation of the central administration. This makes it possible to allow the administration centre's organisation to more closely reflect the differences in the faculties' portfolios of tasks and responsibilities and their need for administrative services.

Reporting relationships in the administration centres According to this model, the number of employees in the administrative divisions is considerably reduced, as are the tasks and responsibilities of the administrative divisions. This indicates that the number of administrative divisions should be significantly

reduced, which would in turn reduce the need for internal coordination in the administration. Another strength of this decision is that the university director's management team will become smaller and will reflect a better balance between the activities of the central administration and the four administration centres.

ON THESE GROUNDS, THE FOLLOWING DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE:

- Mergers between the administrative divisions will take place, so that their number is reduced from nine to five:

Finance and Facilities Management through a merger of AU Finance and AU Planning

HR through the retention of the current AU HR

IT through the retention of the current AU IT

Education through the merger of the current AU Studies Administration and AU Alumni, AU Career, Further and Continuing Education, as well as AU Library from AU Knowledge Exchange and the International Centre from AU Research and Talent

Research and Business Collaboration through a merger of parts of AU Knowledge Exchange, AU Research and Talent and the Technology Transfer Office

While numerous consultation responses commented on where communications should be placed, there was no clear consensus. For this reason, more time and employee input are necessary in order to identify the right organisational locus for communications in the central administration. The pro-rector will be responsible for this process and will head the area in the interim.

- The Rector's Office is currently an independent administrative division. The Rector's Office will be reorganised as the senior management team secretariat. The Senior Management Team Secretariat will report directly to the rector and handle support functions for the senior management team.
- To ensure professional, effective portfolio management, the university director will be tasked with establishing a small project and portfolio management unit that reports to the university director.
- 'Back office' will be renamed 'the central administration'.
- Any minor adjustments to the internal structure of the central administration and between the central administration and the administration centres will be determined subsequently.

The central administration's primary functions will be operations and shared infrastructure with significant economies of scale and specialist functions, when locating these at the administration centres is not appropriate or not cost-effective, as well as functions in relation to the university's external environment which require Aarhus University's collective strength.

In collaboration with the deputy directors and the administration centre managers, the university director is responsible for ensuring coherence and quality in administrative services within the given financial framework. Within their respective areas, the deputy directors are responsible for ensuring coordination and knowledge-sharing among the administration centres. In addition, the deputy directors are responsible for developing and updating procedures, instruments and policies in collaboration with the administration centre managers that apply to the university as a whole on the basis of the senior management team's decisions and applicable legislation.

The central administration advises and provides administrative support to the senior management team as well as to committees and liaison committees at university level, as well as ensuring that management has access to the necessary information. The central administration also collects data and statistics in cases in which the university is required to report to national and international authorities and foundations.