

Rules for advisers

Part 1: Purpose and regulatory basis

Section 1.-(1) Aarhus University appoints a number of advisers who can provide confidential advice on responsible conduct of research and frameworks for freedom of research to anyone affiliated with Aarhus University.

(2) The advisers are independent of the university's executive management.

(3) The function of the adviser is a position of trust. Advisers are protected from negative employment consequences and retaliation in the exercise of their function.

(4) Advisers have a duty of confidentiality in relation to the information they have received in connection with their advice, and may not disclose information to the management or other parties, unless the person who has requested advice requests assistance to do so from the adviser. In exceptional cases, after informing the person who has requested advice, the adviser must report the case to the Committee for Responsible Conduct of Research and Freedom of Research (the Research Practice Committee), cf. section 7(4).

2.-(1) The advice offered covers all matters relating to research conducted at Aarhus University, or research conducted by an employee at Aarhus University, regardless of where the research was conducted.

3.-(1) The assessment of whether a specific practice is in accordance with responsible conduct of research and respects the framework for freedom of research must be carried out on the basis of the Policy for research integrity, freedom of research and responsible conduct of research at Aarhus University, the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and the international recommendations on which these are based, the Act on research misconduct, and the provisions of the University Act regarding the right to freedom of research. In addition, there are rules specific to the individual disciplines, which are covered in faculty guidelines.

Part 2: Appointment and organization

Section 4.-(1) The academic councils at each faculty appoints two advisers to the advisory group for responsible conduct of research and freedom of research.

(2) Associate professors, senior researchers, professors and emeriti at Aarhus University may be appointed as advisers. Advisers may not occupy a managerial function at the university while serving as advisers, and they may not be appointed as members of the Committee for Responsible Conduct of Research and Freedom of Research (the Research Practice Committee). Advisers are to be appointed on the strengths of their qualifications as recognised, active researchers with extensive insight into the responsible conduct of research who have broad and extensive research experience, including experience with international research collaboration or collaboration with external stakeholders. Advisers must possess a high level of academic legitimacy and integrity. When appointing advisers, the academic councils must seek to diversify appointments to ensure insight into as many of the faculty's disciplines as possible.

(3) Advisers are to be appointed for a three-year term as of September 1st. Members are eligible for reappointment. If an adviser resigns in the middle of a term, a successor shall be appointed for the remainder of the term.

(4) Advisers must, to the required extent, have their workload reduced in order to be able to perform the function.

5.-(1) The advisers are organised in a network for which the rector ensures administrative support. The advisers are to meet in the network one or two times a year or as required.

(2) The advisers choose a spokesperson for the network. The spokesperson is to be elected for one year at a time.

Tasks

6.-(1) The tasks of the advisers are:

1) to be available to provide independent and confidential advice to anyone affiliated with Aarhus University, including research groups, who has questions about the applicable guidelines regarding responsible conduct of research and freedom of research or is in doubt as to whether the standards and guidelines regarding responsible conduct of research or freedom of research are being met.

2) to help promote an understanding of the special circumstances applicable to the different research disciplines and to be prepared to provide advice to researchers and research groups involved in interdisciplinary research collaborations.

3) to remain informed about the applicable standards and guidelines on research integrity, freedom of research and responsible conduct of research, and to contribute to ensuring that the university establishes and maintains the highest international standards for responsible conduct of research and that the right to freedom of research of the university and researchers is respected.

4) together with the Research Practice Committee, to take initiative to ensure that the guidelines for research integrity, freedom of research and responsible conduct of research at Aarhus University are regularly reviewed at Aarhus University.

5) to disseminate knowledge about, and contribute to training in, research integrity, freedom of research, responsible conduct of research and research ethics.

6) to contribute to the university's overall report on responsible conduct of research and freedom of research by reporting, in anonymised form, on the nature of enquiries once a year. The report is to be submitted to the academic councils, the faculties' liaison committees, the Committee for Research and External Cooperation, the senior management team and the university board.

Part 3: The provision of advice

7.-(1) Advice is to be provided on the basis of the information available. Advisers do not initiate the formal investigation of cases on the basis of enquiries.

(2) If, in connection with their function, advisers receive information regarding pressure on freedom of research, advisers may recommend that the person in question refer the case to the person or institution responsible for such pressure. The adviser may assist the person in question in the referral. If the person in question does not consider that the case has been satisfactorily resolved with the assistance of the adviser, the person in question may refer the case to the Research Practice Committee.

(3) If, in connection with their function, advisers receive information which provides grounds to suspect research misconduct or questionable research practices, advisers must recommend that the person in question:

1. present the case to the person under suspicion, or
2. present the case to the head of department, or
3. present the case to the Research Practice Committee.

(4) If there is a suspicion of breach of responsible conduct of research of a particularly serious nature due to the manner of its performance, or which has been committed repeatedly or by more than one party in concert, the adviser must, if necessary and on the basis of information from the person who brought the case to the attention of the adviser, refer the case to the Research Practice Committee.

Entry into force

8.-(1) These rules were last amended April 15th 2021.