

Key principles for commercialisation – Aarhus University



AARHUS UNIVERSITY



Table of contents

- 3 Key principles for commercialisation
- 4 Impact – benefiting society
- 5 Differentiated commercialisation approach – one size does not fit all
- 6 Limited use of co-ownership in spinout companies
- 7 Focus on entrepreneurship as a learning journey
- 8 Increased interaction with other research and innovation initiatives
- 9 More scouting and greater visibility of commercialisation initiatives
- 10 Strengthened innovation ecosystem
- 11 Increased diversity in innovation activities

Key principles for commercialisation

Aarhus University (AU) has a long tradition of contributing knowledge and solutions to society's challenges, large and small. In recent years, AU has created a new platform for the commercialisation of ideas, technologies and inventions through its business initiative. This has resulted in the transfer of a variety of innovative solutions from AU to industry, the public sector and civil society.

With the aim of charting a course for commercialisation activities at AU as a whole – and to help realise AU's ambition of delivering more value to society – we present here eight new key principles for commercialisation.

The key principles apply across the university, encompassing faculties, departments/schools and administrative function. The successful implementation of the key principles will require collaboration with AU's partners in private and public companies, organisations, institutions and the innovation ecosystem.

Many people inside and outside of AU have thus provided input to these pages – thank you all.

Impact – benefiting society

Danish universities have untapped potential for the commercialisation of research, and AU - as one of the country's leading knowledge and research institutions - has a major role to play.

The many ideas from researchers and students from all parts of AU must be helped out into the world to make a positive difference - and in many cases, the commercialisation of a given solution can have a greater impact than if the solution remains within the research environment.

The goal of AU's innovation and commercialisation activities is thus to create the greatest possible impact, with due consideration for other core tasks within education, research and collaboration. AU must make a greater impact on society through our commercialisation activities.



Key principle

AU works with innovation and commercialisation to create new solutions, products, technologies, treatments and jobs - for the benefit of society.

Differentiated commercialisation approach - one size does not fit all

AU is a research-intensive university that encompasses all subject areas, and where researchers within all disciplines generate new solutions that can lead to positive changes in society. AU thus works with the commercialization of ideas and solutions from all parts of the university.

However, this does not mean that the same approach to commercialisation should be taken across all subject areas.

In certain fields, researchers work with inventions where the application may be unknown and the market validation uncertain. In these cases, AU must prioritise resources to cover patent expenses at an early stage and take on a high level of risk while working on the development of the inventions in question, for example financed by Proof-of-Concept funding.

On the other hand, there are also fields where inventions are closer to the market, which is why there is a need to prioritise work on licensing agreements with industry.

In addition, in some fields patent protection is not a relevant consideration, but there is a need for other forms of business support. The commercialisation initiative encompasses all of these approaches.



Key principle

AU takes a differentiated approach whereby the commercial potential of new inventions, business ideas and solutions is actively and continuously assessed in order to support new solutions from the entire university, taking into account funding and risk profile.

Limited use of co-ownership in spinout companies

As a general rule, AU does not take co-ownership in spinout companies based on inventions created at the university. This is due to the fact that co-ownership does not generally contribute to impact, which is the main purpose of the university's commercialisation initiative.

At the same time, it is not part of AU's core task to assume co-ownership of companies. However, AU may choose co-ownership in cases where this is appropriate - and where desired by researchers and/or investors. The university's ownership share will as a rule be quite limited.



Key principle

As a rule, Aarhus University does not assume co-ownership of spinout companies based on inventions created at the university

Focus on entrepreneurship as a learning journey

For researchers or students, transitioning to working with entrepreneurship or innovation is a journey, and the two worlds can seem very far apart. Researchers and students are not at AU with the primary purpose of becoming entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, AU's ambition is for both researchers and students to view entrepreneurship as an opportunity and an integral part of an education or career.

To this end, AU will place additional focus on opportunities for becoming an entrepreneur and . It is important that researchers and students acquire the skills and knowledge needed to translate research into new solutions.

AU will also provide guidance on commercialisation, innovation and entrepreneurship. At the same time, support of the existing network of entrepreneurs from the university will increase knowledge-sharing about entrepreneurship and commercial activities.



Key principle

AU will increase focus on entrepreneurship as a learning journey and motivate and engage researchers and students to work with concrete solutions.

Increased synergies with other research and innovation initiatives

As part of the innovation initiative at AU, there are activities - such as Open Innovation in Sciences and Open Science - that align with a fundamental desire to encourage openness and transparency in research.

These models complement the classic models of commercialisation. At the same time, geopolitical developments have led to a general need among Danish universities' to heighten focus on security and risk in international research and innovation collaboration (URIS).

Through the innovation and commercialisation initiative at AU, models will be developed that match the new approaches in Open Science and Open Innovation in Sciences. The models will be developed with respect for both commercial and geopolitical considerations.



Key principle

As part of the commercialisation initiative, at AU, new models and approaches will be developed that match other research and innovation initiatives.

More scouting and greater visibility of commercialisation initiatives

To realise the commercialisation potential of AU research, it is necessary for business developers to work closely with the departments and centres. Business developers must be accessible and visible presence in the research teams that need their assistance, serving as a bridge to the market.

At the same time, there is a need for awareness of the commercialisation opportunities within a given field at the individual faculties and departments/schools, including in relation to funding and knowledge-sharing with relevant networks and investor groups.



Key principle

AU will prioritise scouting of potential commercialisation cases and increase the visibility of commercialisation activities for researchers.

Strengthened innovation ecosystem

AU's innovation initiative is dependent on the existing of a strong innovation ecosystem in the surrounding society. The realisation of a wide variety of inventions, solutions and technologies becomes more difficult in the absence of a thriving ecosystem supporting the path from university to market.

AU will thus actively contribute to strengthening the innovation ecosystem. This will be done through events, match-making and by involving the ecosystem's players in innovation programmes at AU.



Key principle

AU will work to strengthen the innovation ecosystem in eastern Jutland.

Increased diversity in innovation activities

Innovative solutions to problems and societal challenges can come from all fields and disciplines at Aarhus University.

However, a lack of diversity presents a challenge across a range of innovation activities at AU, as in society in general.

Even more solutions and inventions will be created in the future if a more diverse environment is fostered. It is thus our ambition to strengthen the diversity of the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem at Aarhus University.



Key principle

AU will increase the diversity of the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem at Aarhus University.

