



## Research Evaluation at Aarhus University – one pager

### *Aim*

The aim of the 2024-2025 research evaluation is to contribute to continuous cultivation of research quality at Aarhus University. The intention is to establish a forward-looking, constructive process with a focus on collective learning. Combining self-assessment and external review, the evaluation will enable each department to take stock of current research activities and assess the viability of research priorities. Focusing not on individual researchers, but on collective efforts, accomplishments, and potentials for improvement, the evaluation process shall support reflection about research quality and conducive research environments.

### *Framing*

The overall framing is informed by discussions among the university's academic councils, captured under the heading of 'meaningful research evaluation'. A core feature is the flexible tailoring of the research evaluation to the strategic goals at local levels. Beyond the common commitment to self-assessment and external panel assessment, no uniform evaluation model is prescribed. Instead, each of the university's five faculties is charged with crafting an evaluation approach fitted to its needs. Inclusion of academic staff throughout the planning and implementation phases is intended to ensure that the process and results of the research evaluation remain meaningful in the context of specific research environments.

The framing is also inspired by the cross-European 'agreement on reforming research assessment', which Aarhus University has signed. In particular, the evaluation is intentionally designed to avoid internal horse races. Only a summary report will be relayed from each of the five faculties to the university senior management team, and only an overall university summary report will be relayed to the university board. Instead, emphasis is on learning in the respective research environments. For example, evaluation themes as well as composition of external review panels are explicitly chosen to optimise the potential for development and for receiving useful advice, not to make departments shine.

The evaluation unit is the collective research environment, and unreflective use of metrics to measure individual researchers' performance is avoided. Focus is on supporting the collective capacity for high quality research environments. While the 'agreement on reforming research assessment' takes a somewhat critical stand towards quantitative approaches, Aarhus University insists, however, that robust evidence, including quantitative data, provides an important platform for reflection and for asking the right questions. Hence, when used responsibly, i.e. particularly on aggregate levels and always in combination with qualitative assessment, quantitative data can make a valuable contribution to the research evaluation process.

### *Expected outcome*

The 2024-2025 research evaluation results will support departments in making strategic decisions about future research priorities and organisational mechanisms promoting research excellence. It is the intention that the research evaluation process will be repeated regularly; e.g. with six years interval.

