

# ACTION PLAN FOR **DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION 2030**

## APPENDIX B **LOCAL INITIATIVES**



## CONTENTS

<b>ARTS: LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION IN A DIVERSE FACULTY .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ARTS: DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOM.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>AARHUS BSS: INTERNATIONALISATION, LANGUAGE AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>HEALTH: A MORE PROFESSIONAL APPROACH TO INTERVIEWING APPLICANTS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>HEALTH: DIVERSITY AMONG ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>NAT: PROMOTING AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE AND THE WELL-BEING OF OUR INTERNATIONAL COLLEAGUES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TECH: MENTORING PROGRAMME .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>AU ADMINISTRATION: RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION IN THE ADMINISTRATION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>ENTERPRISE AND INNOVATION: MORE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS .....</b>	<b>11</b>

## Arts: Leadership and collaboration in a diverse faculty

### Background

To leverage the potential of diversity, it is important that heads of department have the competencies required to bring different perspectives into play. This is why the faculty leadership team at the Faculty of Arts will work to enhance leadership and collaboration across the diverse staff teams at the faculty.

Diversity is understood broadly and includes factors such as language, ethnicity, sexuality, neurodiversity and age.

Heads of department should help ensure that individual employees can thrive and work optimally within the framework provided by the faculty. But they should also balance the needs of individual employees with the cohesion and functionality of the department as a whole.

### Goals

Long-term

Leverage the potential of a well-functioning, collaborative and diverse workforce

- Gain an understanding of the dynamics within a diverse workforce
- Minimise conflicts and misunderstandings by fostering a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of diversity
- Advance research and teaching by enabling all employees to perform at their best (without barriers such as exclusion or discrimination).

### Goals

Short-term

Develop a competency development programme which heads of department at Arts complete. The programme will focus on how to get the best out of the diversity at the Faculty of Arts.

### Activities

Develop and offer a competency development programme.

Key topics: Linguistic diversity, neurodiversity, ethnic diversity, inclusive language, generational differences and collegiality.

Apply new competencies in day-to-day leadership (may be included in leadership development interviews)

### Responsibility

Arts faculty leadership team

Support: Arts Dean's Office, Arts HR, AU HR

### Timeline

In 2026: Frame the challenge and map the area -> Design the competency development programme.

In 2027: Heads of department at Arts take the competency development programme

### Focus areas

Recruitment – Career development – **Leadership** – **Workplace culture**

## Arts: Diversity in the classroom

**Background** At Arts, the number of students who receive special educational support is rising sharply, which means that teachers are having to manage an increasing level of didactic diversity in the classroom. This development can make it difficult for teachers to establish the student-teacher dialogue about the subject matter that is essential for delivering high-quality teaching. It is important that we improve our understanding of this issue and help teachers develop teaching strategies to address the challenge of didactic diversity in the classroom. In 2026, the faculty will therefore focus on this issue by organising a seminar for teachers and degree programme directors.

**Goals**  
Long-term Teachers and degree programme directors are better equipped to tackle the challenge of diversity in the classroom.

**Goals**  
Short-term Hold a seminar on diversity in the classroom.

**Activities** Seminar

**Responsibility** Arts faculty leadership team  
Support: Arts Dean's Office, vice-dean for education with input from CED.

**Timeline** In 2026: Plan and hold the seminar.

**Focus areas** Recruitment – **Career development** – Leadership – **Workplace culture**

## Aarhus BSS: Internationalisation, language and inclusive workplace culture

**Background** Recruiting internationally boosts our capacity to deliver research and education of the highest quality, to maintain our international competitiveness, and to ensure a sufficient talent pool across most of the faculty's disciplines. Aarhus BSS aims to move towards a more nuanced approach to internationalisation. This involves seeking to maximise the benefits of the increasingly international work environment that several departments have built up over the years, while also addressing the challenges that arise as a result of increased internationalisation.

To ensure that Aarhus BSS is best positioned to fulfil its mission as an internationally oriented faculty rooted in a Danish context, we need to consider how to achieve the right balance and foster an inclusive, diverse workplace culture where all employees can participate on an equal footing with their Danish colleagues in management roles, governing bodies, positions of trust and social activities.

**Goals**  
Long-term Promote the inclusion of international employees earlier in their employment in both professional and social contexts, also with the aim of increasing the retention of international employees.

Reduce language barriers for Danish and international employees so that all employees can participate in discussions at meetings – e.g. on councils, boards and committees – and all employees can contribute to the tasks that go beyond research and teaching.

**Goals**  
Short-term Identify specific measures that can help overcome language barriers between Danish and international employees.

Require that permanent international employees learn to *read/understand* Danish at an earlier stage of their employment, so that they can participate more quickly in all relevant academic and administrative processes at department, faculty and university level.

**Activities** Introduce flexible parallel language use that contributes to an inclusive and diverse workplace culture and which builds on the language and intercultural courses that will be developed as part of AU's third university-wide initiative: A well-defined framework for language and intercultural communication

**Responsibility** Faculty leadership team

**Timeline** The activity is expected to be completed in 2026/2027.

**Focus areas** Recruitment – Career development – Leadership – Workplace culture

## Health: A more professional approach to interviewing applicants

**Background** A job interview is an essential step in the recruitment process, and it is well documented that we all – as members of an appointment committee – have unconscious biases. In order to promote diversity and inclusion, it is therefore important to ensure we conduct professional and unbiased job interviews. In recent years, we have worked on tackling unconscious bias at university level. At Health, we want to continue this work by focusing our efforts on the job interview.

**Goals**  
Long-term Promote professionalism among hiring managers to ensure equal opportunities for job applicants in interviews conducted across the faculty.

**Goals**  
Short-term Develop a shared understanding of current interview practices and identify opportunities for development. This process will be facilitated by IS IT A BIRD – a strategic innovation agency. IS IT A BIRD will facilitate the exchange of perspectives and experiences, help us develop a shared understanding of what constitutes a professional and unbiased interview process, and define how we aim to improve our current practices.

**Activities** In 2026, we will observe what happens during, between and in the evaluation stage of job interviews. Based on this, we will develop a set of guiding principles for job interviews at Health. This activity will include:

- Start-up meeting with IS IT A BIRD.
- Collection of material.
- Observation of up to 10 job interviews at the five departments.
- Analysis of the job advertisement, faculty webpages, communication, etc.
- Workshop with the wider leadership team (faculty leadership team, department leadership team and division managers in the Health administrative centre).
- Development of guiding principles for job interviews at Health.
- Summary of the main points from the workshop and data collection.
- Evaluation and decision on next steps.

**Responsibility** Faculty leadership team at Health in collaboration with Health HR and IS IT A BIRD.

**Timeline** The initiative will be divided into four phases throughout 2026:

**PHASE 1: Kick-off and onboarding**

Start-up meeting with IS IT A BIRD and collection of material.

**PHASE 2: Data collection and analysis**

Observation of up to 10 job interviews at the five departments as well as an analysis of the job advertisement, faculty webpage, communication, etc.

**PHASE 3: Workshop with the wider leadership team**

Discussion of cases and insights from Phases 1 and 2 and development of guiding principles for job interview processes at Health.

**PHASE 4: Summary and evaluation**

Summary of the main points from the workshop and data collection.  
Evaluation and decision on next steps.

**Focus areas** Recruitment – Career development – Leadership – Workplace culture

## Health: Diversity among administrative staff

<b>Background</b>	Guided by the action plan's broad focus on diversity, equality and inclusion for all staff at AU, with this initiative, Health aims to focus on the diversity of its administrative staff.
<b>Goals</b> Long-term	Gain a better understanding of the diversity among administrative staff at Health – not only in terms of gender but also other parameters, such as age, citizenship, educational background and other professional experience.
<b>Goals</b> Short-term	Develop a shared understanding of the value of working with diversity, equality and inclusion in the workplace. Compile a reflection catalogue summarising insights into the workplace's strengths, challenges and potential regarding diversity, inclusion and retention, and submit this catalogue to the faculty leadership team.
<b>Activities</b>	<p>This initiative will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start-up meeting with consultant Maria Mortensen and the working group.</li> <li>• Collection of material.</li> <li>• Workshop with 30-40 members of administrative staff from different departments and secretariats at Health.</li> <li>• Summary of workshop and key points to note.</li> <li>• Reflection catalogue submitted to the faculty leadership team.</li> <li>• Evaluation and decision on next steps.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibility</b>	Working group under the Committee for Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunities at Health.
<b>Timeline</b>	<p><b>December 2025 to January 2026</b> Kick-off and onboarding: Start-up meeting with Maria Mortensen and collection of material. Setup of diversity survey.</p> <p><b>February 2026</b> Online diversity survey. Three-hour workshop with 30-40 administrative representatives from Health.</p> <p><b>March to April 2026</b> Summary of workshop and key points from the data collection. Evaluation and decision on next steps.</p>
<b>Focus areas</b>	Recruitment – Career development – Leadership – <b>Workplace culture</b>

## NAT: Promoting an inclusive workplace culture and the well-being of our international colleagues

<b>Background</b>	NAT is a diverse faculty, and many different nationalities are represented among its staff. As an international workplace, we must be able to integrate and include all members of staff while understanding that cultural differences can give rise to misunderstandings and challenges. Our goal is inclusion – that is, respect for each employee’s unique background, which contributes constructively to AU’s work environment – rather than assimilation or differentiation (the formation of sub-cultures). The main focus of this initiative is to promote the well-being and inclusion of academic staff with an international background, with a particular focus on permanent academic staff (tenure track assistant professors and above), who are expected to have a long-term connection with and an interest in Danish workplace culture and society.
<b>Goals</b> Long-term	A greater degree of psychological safety and sense of belonging among international members of academic staff (measured by a higher WPA score for psychological safety and inclusion in 2028). A more holistic and nuanced understanding of academic excellence, i.e. that academic advancement is not only based on the H-index but also on parameters such as leadership skills, teaching contributions, academic citizenship and interdisciplinary collaboration.
<b>Goals</b> Short-term	Raise awareness of the purpose of this initiative and encourage employees to participate in workshops to ensure outreach and motivation.
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated workshops/sessions for management and international academic staff to identify and highlight challenges and problems – potentially with input from AU HR.</li> <li>• Local dialogue and initiatives via local liaison committees, research committees and/or DEI committees at the departments.</li> <li>• Experiences and results from the local initiatives form the basis to develop concrete initiatives at faculty level.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibility</b>	Department leadership teams, section coordinators (levels 4 and 5) and faculty leadership team/the Dean’s Office. NAT’s Diversity and Gender Equality Committee will provide input and feedback throughout the process.
<b>Timeline</b>	A facilitated workshop at every department in 2026. A joint, faculty-wide NAT workshop will be planned and held before the next WPA in 2028.
<b>Focus areas</b>	Recruitment – Career development – <b>Leadership</b> – <b>Workplace culture</b>

## TECH: Mentoring programme

**Background** Mentoring programmes are effective tools for supporting well-being, career development and inclusion – especially for early-career researchers, postdocs and new employees. This mentoring programme will help operationalise the faculty's ambitions while serving as a concrete activity in AU's DEI action plan.

**Goals**  
Long-term

- All departments have access to a mentoring programme, either locally or at faculty level.
- The programme contributes to psychological safety, networking and career development.
- The programme supports inclusion and diversity in practice.

**Goals**  
Short-term

- Development of a faculty-wide model for the mentoring programme.
- Pilot projects at selected departments.
- Competency development for mentors.

**Activities**

- Design the mentoring programme (structure, target groups, matching, support).
- Recruit and train mentors.
- Develop pilot programmes and collect feedback.
- Integrate into onboarding and other DEI initiatives.

**Responsibility**

- Faculty leadership team and the faculty's DEI committee are responsible for designing and coordinating the mentoring programme.
- Department leadership teams are responsible for implementing the programme locally.
- HR may be able to provide training and process facilitation.

**Timeline**

- 2026: Development of model and launch of pilot programmes.
- 2027: Rollout to more departments; competency development for mentors.
- 2028: Evaluation and consolidation; integration with onboarding and cultural initiatives.

**Focus areas** Recruitment – **Career development** – Leadership – **Workplace culture**

## AU Administration: **Respectful communication in the administration**

**Background** WPA 2025 shows that the proportion of staff in the administration who have experienced abusive, offensive or derogatory communication rose from 10 per cent in 2022 to 13 per cent in 2025. Communicating in a disrespectful or harsh manner can negatively impact employees' psychological and physical health as well as their social relationships. Reducing the proportion of employees who experience disrespectful communication will promote an inclusive workplace culture, including improving the psychological work environment and the psychological safety of our staff. This initiative will run parallel with AU's university-wide initiative 'Respectful communication and behaviour at AU', and it is expected to have a positive impact both within and outside the administration.

**Goals**  
Long-term Promote a culture in which managers and staff communicate and act respectfully towards each other in all situations – both in writing and verbally – so that everyone feels safe and valued in the workplace. As an indicator of the positive impact of the activity, the proportion of employees who report having experienced disrespectful communication will have decreased in the next WPA.

**Goals**  
Short-term In 2026:

- The initiative is specified by a working group/advisory group and approved by the administration's leadership team.
- Posters are produced and displayed.
- The topic of respectful communication is on the agenda at various levels within the administration.
- Staff and managers are more aware of the importance of respectful communication and, not least, the difference their own contribution makes.

**Activities** The initiative will be launched with a campaign comprising posters, discussion briefs and proposals for specific initiatives (e.g. the use of observers in meetings). Three to five different posters will be produced, which will use humour to illustrate disrespectful/respectful communication and the effect it has. A number of posters will be distributed to each administrative centre and administrative division, where they will be displayed in the individual units. The posters should a) encourage dialogue, b) ask staff to reflect on their own style of communication, and c) show ways to report and call out disrespectful communication – both for those subjected to it and those who witness it. In connection with the posters, discussion briefs will be prepared based on existing or new materials and input regarding respectful workplace communication. The posters and discussion briefs will form the basis for local discussions with a view to making decisions, launching initiatives, and increasing awareness of respectful behaviour.

**Responsibility** The initiative will be anchored in the administration's leadership team, which will allocate the necessary staff and funds and approve the overall initiative and budget before it launched. A working group will be set up consisting of one member of the Administration's Liaison Committee (AMU), one member of the Administration's Occupational Health and Safety Committee (AAMU) and two employees from AU HR. The working group will draw up a concrete and detailed proposal for the campaign, including an estimate of costs, and it will be responsible for implementing the activities in the initiative. The working group will involve communication teams in the Rector's Office in the design of the materials.

The administration's leadership team will appoint an advisory group consisting of 3-5 managers/employees from the administration. The advisory group will discuss and provide feedback on the working group's proposals for initiatives to promote respectful communication.

**Timeline**

- January to March 2026: A working group and advisory group are set up. Terms of reference and a budget framework are presented to and approved by the administration's leadership team.
- April to June 2026: The working group contracts a supplier and develops a concrete proposal for the campaign content, which is submitted to the administration's leadership team for approval.
- August 2026: Campaign content is finalised.

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- September to October 2026: The campaign is launched and rolled out in the individual units of the administration.
  - May 2027: Reflections and insights. If relevant, a WPA interim assessment may be conducted within the administration to determine the preliminary impact of the initiative.
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**Focus areas** Recruitment – Career development – Leadership – **Workplace culture**

## Enterprise and Innovation: **More women entrepreneurs**

### Background

Only one in three entrepreneurs at AU is a woman. In order to exploit the potential of the talent pool at the university, more women must have better opportunities for becoming entrepreneurs. There is a need for special initiatives that support this both in the short and long term. At Enterprise and Innovation, we will contribute by providing strong communities, new knowledge and showcasing role models.

### Goals

Long-term

Structures and processes (formal and informal) support equal opportunities for entrepreneurship for all employees and students – regardless of gender, nationality, age, etc. – and more women take advantage of this opportunity.

### Goals

Short-term

More women participate in programmes at the Kitchen and AU's other innovation hubs (Data source: gender distribution among students and researchers participating in programmes at the Kitchen and other innovation hubs).

### Activities

#### Strong communities

Build strong communities through workshops at the Kitchen aimed at female students and researchers, and through the Female Founder network based on sustainable business ideas as part of the Pan-European University collaboration Circle U.

#### New knowledge and education initiatives

Gain new knowledge through the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) project, conducted by Distinguished Senior Innovator Helle Neergaard. The project focuses on developing alternative financing and education initiatives in collaboration with other players in the field. The goal is to strengthen the role of women in Danish entrepreneurship, as they are currently significantly under-represented.

#### External funding to support initiatives

Identify and secure external funding to support new projects that advance the initiative.

### Responsibility

Enterprise and Innovation is responsible for implementing all the activities.

### Timeline

All activities are expected to be multi-year initiatives with ongoing evaluation.

### Focus areas

Attracting talent and shaping entrepreneurial culture