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## Vision and strategy for Educational IT at the Faculty of Arts, 2013-2020

Arts, Dean's Office

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### **Vision**

In the "Education" section of its strategy for 2013-20, the Faculty of Arts focuses on developing the quality of its degree programmes, including the development of new forms of teaching and learning with a view to promoting academic learning in students. The faculty regards the use of digital media as an essential feature of this development.

The vision for Educational IT can be summarised in the following points:

- Strengthening and increasing the academic learning, study competences and academic *digital literacy* of the students
- Supporting the educational/didactic development of new forms of teaching and learning
- Supporting open and inclusive degree programmes in cooperation with national and international partner universities
- Strengthening the faculty's chances of attracting the best students and teachers by leading the field with regard to the use of Educational IT
- Supporting the students in their efforts to complete their degree programmes on time

### **Background**

AU drew up a policy for Educational IT in 2011. The strategy for Educational IT should be viewed in connection with that policy as well as AU's general strategy for 2013-20. The strategy for Educational IT is designed to support the educational strategies of the faculty's departments.

The faculty management team is responsible for the strategy, and the Centre for Teaching Development and Digital Media (CUDiM) is the project manager responsible for putting it into practice in cooperation with:

- The students, who will be using digital media as an element in their knowledge acquisition and communication with other students, teachers and any other parties involved
- The teachers, who will be developing new forms of teaching and using digital media to promote student learning processes – thereby achieving the faculty's objectives in this area
- Directors of studies and boards of studies, who are responsible for supporting and facilitating the development of new forms of teaching
- AU-IT and Arts IT, who play a central role in implementing the digital tools which must be made available to teachers and students
- The steering committee for EDU-IT at AU level, who will be passing the most important decisions on to the Education Committee with a view to adopting joint AU measures relating to the use of digital media in degree programmes and teaching
- AUL (Aarhus University Library), who will be offering students competences in terms of searching for information as well as contributing to the development and storage of digital learning materials and (not least) their accessibility
- DIGHUMLAB, who work with digital infrastructures designed to support research and education, and who develop and refine tools for accessing them
- The educational centres at the three other AU faculties, with a view to cooperating and supporting each other's efforts

The technological background is that three different learning management systems (LMSs) are currently being used at the Faculty of Arts: First Class and AULA at many locations at Aarhus Campus, and an old version of Blackboard at Emdrup Campus and Trøjborg. This means that both the students and staff have some knowledge and experience of using LMSs in teaching.

However, the way in which this technology is used varies a good deal at the faculty. Some people use their LMS to support administrative aspects of the teaching such as distributing materials, corresponding with students by email, and/or submitting small-scale assignments during the course of the teaching. Others are currently experimenting with various forms of teaching and communication (including wikies, blogs, GoogleDoc, GoogleDrive, screencasts and chat forums) with a view to expanding and strengthening the teaching activities that take place outside the traditional/physical learning space.

The students also use digital media to a varying degree – from email correspondence with other students to Facebook groups for classes/year groups and more intensive use of GoogleDocs, project management tools, tools used for cooperation etc.

## **Strategy**

### **1. Forms of teaching and learning**

The Faculty of Arts is facing increasing demands to offer the students more teaching and new and better forms of teaching. The faculty regards the use of digital media as

a central way to develop new forms of teaching – combining study on campus with study off campus with the support of digital media, for instance.

*The EDU-IT strategy relates to the faculty's education strategy by:*

- *Helping to increase the students' study intensity and the ongoing development of the digital study environment*
- *Strengthening the action and innovation competences of existing and new degree programmes by cooperating with the subject environments involved*
- *Strengthening the development of digital and innovative spaces for learning*

In more specific terms, the faculty will

- *Develop new forms of learning that are supported by technology (on campus)*  
EDU-IT is designed to contribute to the development of new forms of teaching and course activities which exploit the forms of communication, presentation and production of digital media with a view to motivating and involving the students in new ways and giving them increased opportunities for active participation in their own learning activities.
- *Develop digital competences*  
The teachers must systematically and continuously acquire (new) academic digital competences so they can exploit the learning potentials of (new) digital media, tools and resources.
- *Personalise the use of digital media in the form of the "seamless" use of technology*  
Teachers must be able to use the digital media that AU makes available to them as well as combining them with digital media of their own choice – thereby creating learning environments that support cooperation and knowledge sharing.

## **2. Students and the interaction between teachers and students**

The handling of digital media and tools is becoming an increasingly critical competence on the labour market. The faculty's ambition is that from their first day at university the students should have the chance to develop/expand their digital competences so they become an integral feature of their academic competences. With a view to achieving this objective, the introduction of a new, joint LMS is regarded as a major resource and support for the EDU-IT strategy.

*The EDU-IT strategy relates to the faculty's education strategy by:*

- *Adapting our degree programmes and teaching to meet the needs of society on an ongoing basis*
- *Helping to equip the students to exploit the potential of digital media, for instance in the form of*
  - new (digital) forms of communication and presentation
  - the net as a resource for learning
  - the net as a resource for cooperation and knowledge sharing
  - navigation, research, the understanding of concepts and media competences
  - lifelong learning

In more specific terms, the faculty will

- *Develop digital competences*  
Students must be given the chance to acquire (new) academic digital competences that are relevant for the labour market, thereby equipping them to exploit the learning potentials of digital media, tools and resources. As far as possible, this must be done by working with the subject in question.
- *Create new opportunities for knowledge sharing and cooperation across our degree programmes and teaching activities*  
EDU-IT will give existing activities a higher profile with a view to strengthening the interaction between students and teachers/researchers across our degree programmes and teaching activities, thereby contributing to broader knowledge sharing.
- *Personalise the use of digital media in the form of the “seamless” use of technology*  
Students must be able to use the digital media that AU makes available to them as well as combining them with digital media of their own choice – thereby creating personal spaces for learning that support cooperation and knowledge sharing.
- *Develop inclusive forms of teaching and learning*  
EDU-IT will strengthen opportunities for developing forms of teaching and learning that use digital media to promote the inclusion of students with disabilities.

### 3. Internationalisation

Universities all over the world are increasingly entering into strategic partnerships to conduct joint degree programmes. In addition, major changes are currently being made in teaching activities on a global scale owing to the availability of new media. A lot of universities now use new technology to provide net-based teaching which students can use for autonomous study, for instance Open Educational Resources (OER). This means that a new competitive situation is arising on the global education market, and at the Faculty of Arts we need to prepare ourselves for this change and ensure that we gain the best possible position from which to meet the future. In particular, we need to find out how the degree programmes conducted by the faculty can be made more accessible to the world around us.

*The EDU-IT strategy relates to the faculty’s general and education strategy by:*

- *Strengthening the internationalisation of our degree programmes as well as incoming and outgoing student mobility*
- *Strengthening opportunities for international educational cooperation*

In more specific terms, the faculty will

- *Create open and accessible degree programmes*  
EDU-IT will help to make the faculty’s degree programmes more accessible to the world around us with a view to

- Attracting the best national and international students, including focusing on how teaching in inter-cultural learning environments can be developed
- Communicating and sharing knowledge, including interaction between teachers and students
- Entering into dialogue with the world around us, including employers
- *Develop our range of online degree programmes and courses*  
The faculty will develop models for learning-related degree programmes and courses which are accessible online (preferably in national and international partnerships). The development of models must be carried out with a view to ensuring that the faculty can offer international degree programmes and courses that are accessible online. This will contribute to the internationalisation of the faculty, preferably in cooperation with partner universities. The programmes and courses on offer will be based on subject considerations and educational policy.

### ***Implementing the strategy***

The strategy will be achieved by carrying out specific projects which the faculty will launch during the strategy period. Initially a plan of action will be drawn up for the introduction and implementation of *Blackboard* throughout AU – with the focus on how digital media can support student learning processes.

The strategy can only be achieved if resources are invested in developing the competences of all teachers and students. This will be included in the plans of action which are drawn up, carried out and evaluated on an ongoing basis. The first plan of action will cover the period 2014-2015.