AARHUS UNIVERSITET

THE CULTURE CHECK DIALOGUE TOOL

Welcome to Culture Check.
You can use this tool
when discussing the
workplace culture
in your unit.

Welcome to the Culture Check dialogue tool, which you can use in your conversations about workplace culture.

We create culture together every day in the workplace. Culture is understood as the shared norms, values and assumptions that have evolved in a unit and that are crucial to the way we think, feel and act when working together in our everyday professional lives. It can be both conscious and unconscious – and it has a lot to do with relationships and work communities. By working consciously to improve culture in relation to core tasks, it is possible to improve both results and well-being.

Culture Check aims to support units to start a dialogue about their current and their desired workplace culture. In this way, it cannot "stand alone" but can be used to initiate a conversation about the type of culture we already have and the type of culture we want to create – a culture that can support and motivate us to be the unit we want to be and to achieve our goals.

Enjoy!

Literature:
- Cameron & Freeman (1991) "Cultural Congruence, Strength and Type: Relationships to Effectiveness. Research in Organizational Change and Development 5, pp. 23-58.
- Lüscher, L. (2012) "Ledelse gennem paradokset". Dansk Psykologisk Forlag.
- Quinn, R. & Cameron, K. (1999) "Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture". Jossey Bass.

Please complete the questionnaire individually. Start by following these steps:

1 Divide 10 points between the options (yellow, green, blue and red) for each category based on your experience of the current workplace culture in your unit, so that you allocate the most points to the description you best recognise. It is, for example, possible to allocate 0 or 10 points to an individual option (colour).

2 Now consider what the ideal workplace culture in your unit would be like for you. Once again, divide 10 points between the options (yellow, green, blue and red) for each category based on your desired workplace culture. It is, for example, possible to allocate 0 or 10 points to an individual option.

Category 1: GENERAL	ALLOCATE 10 POINTS	
	Current culture	Desired culture
Our unit is characterised by good and close relationships. We support each other, and we also talk about private and personal issues.		
Our unit is characterised by structure and routines. What we do is generally governed by procedures and standards, and we know what is expected of us.		
Our unit is very results oriented. It is important that we reach our goals.		
Our unit is very development oriented and enterprising. We are interested in learning and innovation, and we are willing to take risks.		

Category 2: COHESION	ALLOCATE 10 POINTS	
	Current culture	Desired culture
Our unit is held together by mutual respect and decency. We are highly committed to the unit and trust one another.		
Our unit it held together by clear structures, work procedures and traditions. We know what each of us needs to contribute for the unit to function as a whole.		
Our unit is held together by the freedom to perform as individuals. We celebrate together when someone gets results and achieves specific goals.		
Our unit is held together by our focus on innovation, renewal and learning. We focus on being innovative and developing our approach to our tasks.		

Category 3: THE MANAGEMENT	ALLOCATE 10 POINTS	
	Current culture	Desired culture
The management in our unit supports team work, dialogue and involvement.		
The management in our unit supports reliable operations and predictability and focuses on co-ordination and documentation.		
The management in our unit promotes a results-oriented focus and competitive mentality.		
The management in our unit encourages us to work in a way that enables us to be innovative and learn, taking into account the differences and diversity among our colleagues.		

Category 4: SUCCESS CRITERIA	ALLOCATE 10 POINTS	
	Current culture	Desired culture
We feel we are successful as a unit if we focus on collaboration and the development of the individual.		
Our unit understands success as good planning and quality assurance. Our unit is successful when our operations are reliable, efficient and stable.		
In our unit, we always strive to lead the way in conducting and supporting research, education and collaboration at the highest international level.		
In our unit, we generally understand success as bringing the latest knowledge into play and being part of shaping the university and society of the future.		

Category 5: DEVELOPMENT FOCUS	ALLOCATE 10 POINTS	
	Current culture	Desired culture
We focus on collaboration and cohesion – and we prioritise having a high level of trust, openness and involvement.		
We emphasise reliable operations and compliance with procedures with a view to strengthening predictability and stability.		
We emphasise measuring and comparing our results and performance with a view to increasing productivity, becoming more competitive and raising our level.		
We focus on personal and professional development. We focus on acquiring new skills in order to innovate and develop the way we work.		

HOW TO ADD THE POINTS TOGETHER

3 First add together the points for each colour (yellow, green, blue and red respectively) for **the current culture** in your unit. Draw this culture on the diagram on the following page by plotting a total points score for each colour and drawing a line from yellow to green to blue to red and back to yellow, so that a shape emerges. This is illustrated by the purple line in the examples on the right.

4 Then add together the points for each colour (yellow, green, blue and red respectively) for **the desired culture** in your unit. Use a different colour to draw this culture on the same diagram by plotting a total points score for each colour and drawing a line from yellow to green to blue to red and back to yellow, so that a shape emerges. This is illustrated by the orange, dashed line in the examples on the right.
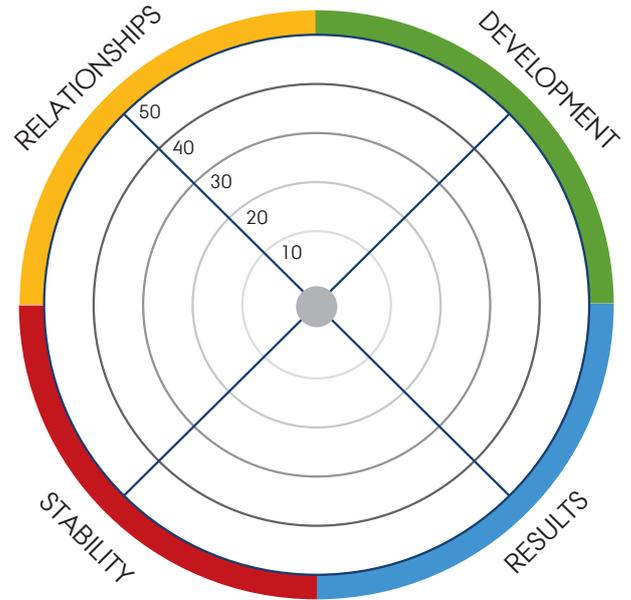
RELATIONSHIPS

Describes a culture that prioritises a collegial environment in which the focus is on participation, involvement, commitment, cohesion and close relationships.

STABILITET

Describes a culture that prioritises a stable and formal environment controlled by routines, standards and procedures in which the focus in on attention to detail and the accurate execution of tasks.
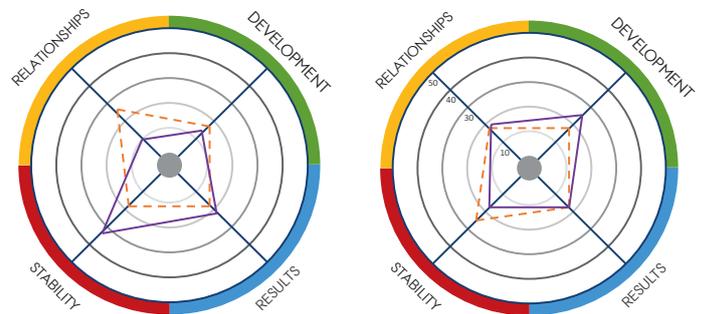
RESULTS

Describes a culture that prioritises a results-oriented and adaptive environment in which efforts are made to achieve ambitious goals. Reputation and success are valued highly.
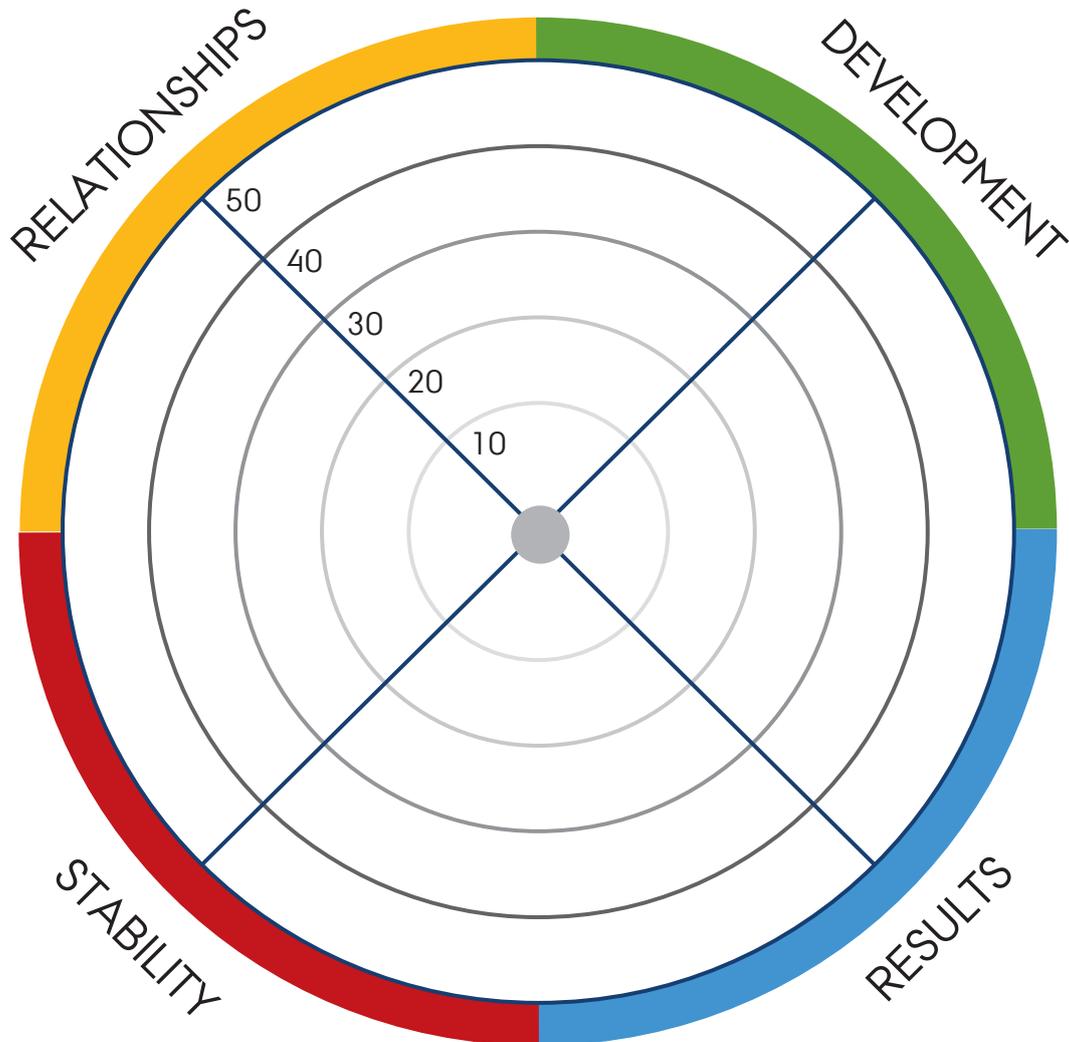
DEVELOPMENT

Describes a culture that prioritises an innovative and dynamic environment in which learning, innovation and development are top of the agenda and initiative and freedom are encouraged.

Two examples of what a completed wheel might look like

THE CULTURE CHECK WHEEL

Draw your results here

JOINT DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

After everyone in your unit has completed the questionnaire, you can use the following joint dialogue questions to discuss the overall team picture that has emerged and how you would like to work with it.

1. Where is there the most and the least difference in the distribution of scores? What do we think about our different ways of viewing and understanding our workplace culture?

2. What is the biggest difference between our current culture and our desired culture?

3. What is the most important (and first) cultural feature we need to work on in order to get closer to our desired culture? Does this involve reducing, increasing, maintaining, initiating or stopping a certain type of behaviour?

4. How should we work on this in practice, and what can managers and employees do individually? How can we follow up on and hold each other to our agreements?