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1. Introduction

This guide is for managers at Aarhus University who are responsible for following up on the WPA 2025.

The guide gives you an overview of your responsibilities as well as advice on how to complete processes before, during and after the WPA survey.

Here are the most important dates for WPA 2025 at AU.

- **The WPA survey will be conducted between 25 February and 12 March 2025.**
- **On 2 April, managers at levels 3 and 4 will receive an email with a link to reports for their own unit.**
- **On 7 April, the reports will be made available to staff on [AU's WPA webpages](#)**

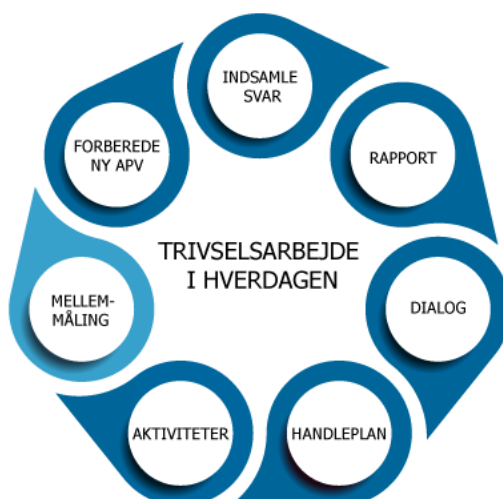
On the WPA webpages you can also read more about the survey and find tools, inspiration and other tips for how to conduct the subsequent dialogue process.

2. The overall framework for WPA 2025

- The physical and the psychological workplace assessments will be conducted simultaneously in one single survey. **Responses to the psychological part of the questionnaire are anonymous.**
- WPA 2025 is based on the same concept and almost the same questionnaire as WPA 2022 – though a few questions have been added, and the sub-questions for offensive behaviour have been expanded.
- An inclusion index has been added to the WPA reports, and the job categories are further divided in the tables in the appendices.
- As in WPA 2022, Rambøll is responsible for collecting responses and making the WPA reports.
- Nobody at AU has access to individual employees' responses, as all the data is stored by Rambøll.
- The anonymity limit is set at five responses for general questions and at 40 responses for questions that relate to offensive behaviour and discrimination. See more at [AU's WPA webpages](#).
- Action plans must be prepared at least at department/school level and documented in the associated action plan system. It is mandatory to put the action plans in the system – for both the physical and the psychological work environment.
- Units that wish to carry out interim assessments can use Rambøll's system PeopleXact. These interim assessments must be paid for in accordance with the price model agreed between AU and Rambøll. You can read more about interim assessments [here](#).

Common to all WPAs conducted at AU:

- As a manager, you have the overall responsibility for ensuring that a WPA is conducted and that the results are followed up on. You are required to involve the occupational health and safety and liaison committee organisation in this work.
- WPAs are conducted as part of an ongoing process, which is illustrated in the diagram below:



3. Overview of your/your management team's responsibilities in promoting a good work environment

Here is an overview of your/your management team's responsibilities in relation to focusing on the work environment. As a manager, this is one of your ongoing tasks, but it takes place in collaboration with the liaison committees and the occupational health and safety committees. Note that your tasks vary depending on your management level.

DECEMBER 2024 – MARCH 2025:

- Discuss and agree on the following with the liaison committee and the occupational health and safety organisation BEFORE the WPA survey:**
 - ✓ How will you collaborate? For example, who will do what? This gives you a good joint point of departure to conduct WPA 2025.
 - ✓ How will you ensure a high response rate in your unit?
 - ✓ How will you follow up on the survey results to create value? For example, when and in what form?
 - ✓ How many initiatives will you prioritise so that you can conduct the process properly and manageably (be aware of prioritising too many)?
- Discuss and agree on the following with your own manager and your management team:**
 - ✓ How will you coordinate interfaces and collaborate based on your individual functions?
What agreements do you need now, and how can you continue to coordinate?
 - ✓ What actions and communication from you as managers (jointly and individually) will contribute to a good outcome from WPA 2025?

For example, activities that help employees feel that the WPA process is actually useful.

❑ Motivate and inform your own unit/team:

- ✓ What does the WPA process look like? Schedule and anticipated structure of dialogue meetings, follow-up work, action plan, etc.
Explain the objective and the effect you'd like the WPA to have.
- ✓ Review and discuss the questionnaire with your employees to answer any queries about how the questions should be interpreted, for example questions about your 'day-to-day management' and 'your unit'.
- ✓ If necessary, send special information material about the WPA to new and international employees (Danish version / English version) and remember to introduce international employees to the purpose of the WPA, which may be new to them depending on their home country. On the WPA webpage, there are slides in both Danish and English that explain what a WPA is.

❑ Invite employees to dialogue meetings and other follow-up activities

- ✓ Remember to book rooms that are suitable for dialogue meetings and to order catering, etc.

❑ Consider joining AU HR's workshop on your role as a manager in the WPA process.

- ✓ Look for dates at [AU's WPA webpages](#).

APRIL 2025:

❑ Set aside time to read the relevant reports that you will be given access to from 2 April (please note that your employees only get access to the WPA results on 7 April)

- ✓ There are different ways to read the report. The best and most sustainable solutions are not only derived from the 'classical' reading method, which would see the worst report results targeted first. See more [here](#):

❑ Discuss your own reports in the relevant management circles

- ✓ Discuss the immediate picture that emerges and whether there is anything that you as managers should be particularly aware of in subsequent dialogue and follow-up processes across the units in question. Get input from each other with regard to how to read your own reports.
- ✓ Discuss the working environment for you in the management team as employees. Are there any areas where it would make sense to put initiatives in place to improve the work environment for you as employees?
It may be a good idea for these initiatives to be put on the agenda and planned by the head of the management team.
- ✓ Review the plan you made between December 2024 and March 2025 and see if you still agree on the plan or whether the figures call for adjustments.

❑ Present your own report for the staff group in question

- ✓ Create a good dialogue about the figures and what they may reflect. Be careful not to call on your own preconceptions. Listen to what your staff have to say.
- ✓ Use this dialogue to understand the different views on what the figures mean, and determine what initiatives are most important in dealing with the physical and the psychological work environment.

MAY – OCTOBER 2025

Develop action plans incorporating the prioritised initiatives

- ✓ Plan and organise the follow-up work so that everyone feels motivated by and invested in it:
Should the entire unit be involved in the specific tasks or should a smaller working group be set up based on your joint dialogue?
- ✓ Use the action plan system to document the initiatives – this is compulsory. If you have decided to work on several different focus areas, you can make it easier for yourself by creating separate action plans in the system.
- ✓ When deciding what to focus on in the action plan, choose initiatives that have broad support in the unit and a realistic scope: It's better to have lots of small goals that you can achieve than one big, diffuse goal that is difficult to reach.

Coordinate and follow up regularly with the occupational health and safety committee.

OCTOBER 2025 – NEW ASSESSMENT IN 2028

Implement the initiatives

- ✓ Try to engage as many people as possible or those who are most passionate about the initiative in question. Follow up regularly, share the status/results with your staff, and adjust the initiative as you go if necessary.
- ✓ Create a framework for ongoing follow-up, reflection and learning – e.g. in unit meetings and/or 1:1 meetings.

Continue the good work of ensuring a positive work environment – both physically and psychologically.

- ✓ As a manager, you should maintain a focus on the physical and psychological work environment, e.g. by putting it on the agenda, referring to it, asking about it and working to improve it – together with your staff, liaison committees and occupational health and safety committees.
- ✓ Share experiences with your management team, so you can inspire across units, and build on good experiences from other units so that successes can be noted and celebrated.

4. Managing the psychological and physical aspects of the WPA

WPA 2025 asks questions about the physical and the psychological work environment in one single survey. This makes it possible to assess the work environment as a whole, rather than as separate areas.

The employees' comments on the physical work environment will be shown in separate comments reports to which managers and the occupational health and safety organisation (AMO) will be given access. The comments reports make it possible to follow up in relation to individual employees who have reported problems in the physical work environment.

Please note that different approaches may be required to handle any problems reported. When following up on the physical work environment, the topics that score lowest should often be dealt with first. The same may apply when following up on the psychological work environment, although poor figures in one area may be a symptom of something else. This means that it is not necessarily always best to begin by targeting the worst figures. You can read more about this in ['The three reading strategies'](#).

5. How can you prepare your unit for the WPA?

In order to achieve a high response rate, which helps to paint an accurate picture of the unit and to ensure good follow-up work, it's vital that you introduce and frame the WPA process. Before doing so, it may be useful to consider how many new colleagues have joined since the last WPA in 2022, and how much they know about the WPA. Do your new employees know about WPAs? Are they international employees who may *not* know about WPAs? It would be a good idea to take this into account when defining the framework. [You may wish to use these slides.](#)

When framing the WPA, you may wish to address the following questions:

- Why do we conduct WPAs at AU?
(it is compulsory and a way to improve well-being and promote a healthy work environment)
- What issues featured in the WPA in 2022?
What was the department's response rate in 2022, which topics were particularly significant, and what did we find most relevant and important to work on? How did we work with action plans subsequently? What has the effect been?
- How will we work on WPA 2025, and what do we hope this will give us as a unit?

A high response rate in the unit is important to get the best data for the subsequent dialogue. It may be a good idea to mention this in the preparatory dialogue.

It may be a good idea to ask your employees if they find some of the questions difficult to understand and, if they do, try to find a common understanding in the unit.

It may be necessary to clarify that “your day-to-day management” refers to the overall management staff experience in their daily professional lives (i.e. people management and/or subject-related management).

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- The questionnaire contains separate questions regarding the faculty and administration leadership teams.
- “your unit” refers to the colleagues that your staff work with most in their daily professional lives.

6. Inspiration for starting a dialogue, making priorities and planning initiatives

Once the WPA results have been published, you are in charge of starting a dialogue about these results within your unit. After this, as a unit, you must prioritise which focus areas you wish to work on – and decide how to do so.

Here you will be collaborating with your local liaison committee and occupational health and safety committee. Below are specific suggestions for how you can approach this task. If you need input or help, you're welcome to [contact AU HR](#).

A. Dialogue about the results

The first step is to organise a meeting to discuss the results and to have the dialogue. How should you interpret the figures? What do you need to do something about? The meeting format and method depend on the purpose, number of employees and the situation in the unit.

Find more inspiration in “[Five ways to have an inclusive dialogue about the physical work environment](#)” or in the material on [inclusive work processes](#).

B. Prioritising and planning initiatives

Once the dialogue has provided you with an overview of what needs to be done within your unit to improve the work environment, you should prioritise a suitable number of initiatives to ensure that future work targets the most important issues. In connection with this prioritisation, think about what is most relevant for work at the unit right now, what could be low-hanging fruit, something you can address quickly and simply, and which initiatives you believe will have the greatest effect across the unit.

Find the right [method](#) for you to consider which type of initiative is required to improve the work environment.

C. WPA action plans

WPA action plans must be documented in AU's [action plan system](#). Action plans must be

prepared at least at department/school and deputy director level, but it is also a good idea to prepare action plans as locally as possible in order to ensure that the activities are meaningful to individual managers and employees.

Action plans should only be drawn up for the problems that cannot be solved immediately. If a problem can be solved immediately, it should be. For example, if you need to purchase new office chairs, you can do so straight away. There is no need to make an action plan for this.

If you decide to work on a more extensive topic, such as stress, you need to draw up an action plan in which you describe your initiatives and activities as specifically as possible so that it's easy to follow up on them regularly. You must also set a deadline for both carrying out and following up on an initiative, and you must specify the person responsible for making and following up on the action plan.

In order to succeed with your initiatives, it may be beneficial to involve additional organisational layers to ensure that all your efforts are coordinated and that you're all pulling in the same direction.

For example, what should the **management** (you) do to combat loneliness in the workplace? What can **the individual employee** do? What can you do at **group level**? And what activities can be adopted at **workplace level**?

7. Developing and implementing initiatives

Why regular follow-up?

The WPA process does *not* end with the action plan.

Systematic follow-up is crucial to ensure that dialogue and action plans have an impact.

Follow-up is a management task, and it is important this has priority. Share relevant results with your staff and reflect on adjustments to the initiatives. There is often a need to monitor the initiatives that have been launched and to regularly consider whether anything needs to be adjusted. Very few initiatives hit the mark the first time, especially if the issues are complicated. So it's often necessary to adjust the initiative along the way to achieve the desired effect.

Update the action plan in the action plan system to reflect your adjustments.

Create a framework for ongoing follow-up, reflection and learning – for yourself and for your unit

A prerequisite for action is good reflection. It may be a good idea to reflect on:

- *What was the purpose/intention of the initiative?*
- *What did we hope would happen?*
- *What do I/we see happening?*
- *What can I/we learn from it?*

These reflections can usefully be done individually and as part of your own management practice once a month, although joint reflection in the unit should be less frequent.

At unit level, it may be a good idea to include follow-up work in a fixed timetable, e.g. as a point at unit meetings once a quarter, as an element in staff development dialogues or group development dialogues, at local liaison committee meetings, in 1:1 meetings, or at other

relevant meetings in a fixed cycle. In the first year after the WPA survey, a more frequent cycle would be relevant, while there may be longer intervals between follow-up sessions later. It is important to find a rhythm and cycle that is meaningful and works in the local context.

A fixed structure for follow-up, like in the four questions above, may be useful. It is important that, as a manager, you facilitate a good dialogue and create conditions in which people feel confident about sharing experiences, observations and ideas.

On [the webpages about workplace culture](#), you can find tools about [constructive communication](#), [psychological safety](#), [collaboration](#) and [handling change](#).

As a manager, you should also regularly make sure that your action plan is still relevant: Is the focus area still important to the unit, or has something changed? Has an improvement taken place, or has another issue related to the work environment become more relevant? A lot can change over three years, and it is important to ensure that you focus on the most relevant issues.

If you need to assess your priority initiatives before the next WPA in three years' time, you can conduct an interim assessment. We recommend that you spend time actively working with your initiatives before conducting any interim assessment, e.g. that you wait for at least one year. You can read more about [interim assessments here](#).

The senior management team and the Main Liaison Committee (HSU) also follow up on WPA work regularly.