PRINCIPLES FOR COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AT AAU

Introduction

All managers and staff at AAU must have the opportunity to maintain and develop their professional, personal and social skills, with due consideration of the needs of the workplace and the general trends in the labour market. Competence development must contribute to AAU being perceived as a desirable workplace able to attract, develop and affiliate qualified employees. This requires a proper framework for individual and organizational learning, and that employees' resources are used in their daily work.

Principles for competence development

1. Competence development at AAU is the development of **research, pedagogical, administrative and managerial competencies** and takes place at the individual, group and organizational level with different content and perspectives.

2. Competence development is defined as the **"development of knowledge and skills"** in relation to work-related challenges and the ability to act competently in specific situations.

3. Competence development is **a shared concern** where management and staff ensure that both AAU's needs and employees' needs for professional, personal and social development are met.

4. Competence development is **decided, planned and financed locally by the individual unit** with a focus on prioritizing time and resources for competence development.

5. Competence development is **discussed annually in the local consultation committees** both retrospectively and in a forward-looking manner.

What is competence development?

Competence development is all the activities that challenge, develop, train, update and maintain the individual employee's knowledge and skills in relation to current and upcoming tasks.

What motivates one individual may not motivate another, and what may constitute an efficient learning process for one individual may not be effective for another. Learning taking place internally in the workplace is often a quick and efficient method of implementing competence development, while more extensive, formalized learning processes may support larger organizational

change processes and competence development.

Competence development happens not only with the individual but also throughout the organization in the way we work together and share our knowledge. Competence development is more than participation in formal courses and educational programmes, and can take place at an individual level, in groups and as cross-disciplinary organizational learning.

Strategic and systematic competence development at AAU

Competence development at AAU must be strategic in that initiatives are based on the goals and tasks of the local unit, and thus interact with both AAU's overall strategy and the local strategy and action plans.

Systematic competence development at AAU includes the annual staff and management performance and development reviews and regular follow-up on these, such as individual conversations, group performance and development reviews, and compiling this information in the local consultation committees. Working systematically on competence development ensures that development processes and activities are planned, implemented and followed up on a regular basis so as to create impact and results locally.

Staff members and managers must be flexible in terms of finances, time and competence development activities. Competence development is not an activity that only takes place once a year. It must be possible to implement competence development flexibly when the need arises.

Effective competence development

Competence development is about learning something new and being able to apply it to be better at your job. Competence development helps staff members to:

- strengthen the professional, personal and social competence and quality of their task completion
- adapt to changes in existing tasks and adapt to new tasks
- understand how the different areas of work and organizational units interact

The manager and staff member together must ensure that the staff member's competence development is relevant and align their expectations of the goal of the competence development activity, subsequently following up on the learning. Finally, they must ensure that the staff member has the opportunity to use the competencies in completing their tasks. This can be done, for example, in the following ways:

- The manager and staff member together must clarify and align their expectations for the competence development in terms of need, form of activity (peer training, courses, etc.), expectation of benefit and time frame, subsequent knowledge sharing with colleagues, etc. This clarification will often be made in the staff/management/group performance and development review

- The manager must ensure that the staff member has the necessary time to take part in the competence development activity, and that there is time for preparation as well as time to try out and apply the new knowledge

- The manager and the staff member should follow-up no later than one month after the staff member has completed the activity. What was the benefit? How does the staff member expect to make use of the new knowledge? When, and how can the staff member share knowledge with colleagues? Etc.
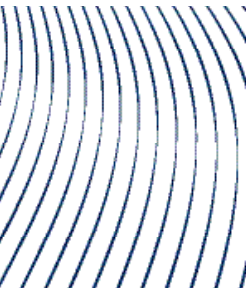
Roles of consultation committees and university management

On the basis of the mission, vision and strategy of AAU, the Executive Management and the Main Joint Consultation Committee are responsible for determining the overall strategic competence areas of AAU. The Main Joint Consultation Committee discusses and evaluates the strategic competence areas once each year.

While taking Aalborg University's overall strategy into consideration, the main areas and consultation committees identify and

discuss their own competence development focus areas on a regular basis.

In collaboration with units and departments, the local consultation committees determine the specific objectives of the competence development of each unit/department based on their existing strategies and future objectives and tasks. These may be identified and determined through dialogues on the unit's objectives and tasks, which may be discussed during local theme days. Subsequently, group performance and development reviews may be part of this process.
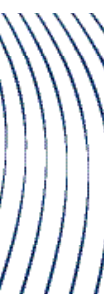
Annual cycle for competence development

At least once a year, it is essential that staff members and managers explicitly address existing and future objectives and tasks and discuss whether the competences necessary for achieving and solving these are present in the workplace.

The group performance and development review is relevant as a prelude to the staff performance and development review as it provides an overview of the group's shared competence needs and overlap. The group performance and development review may also be used as a follow-up to the staff performance and development review where group members share their development areas and plan the future work procedures of the group.
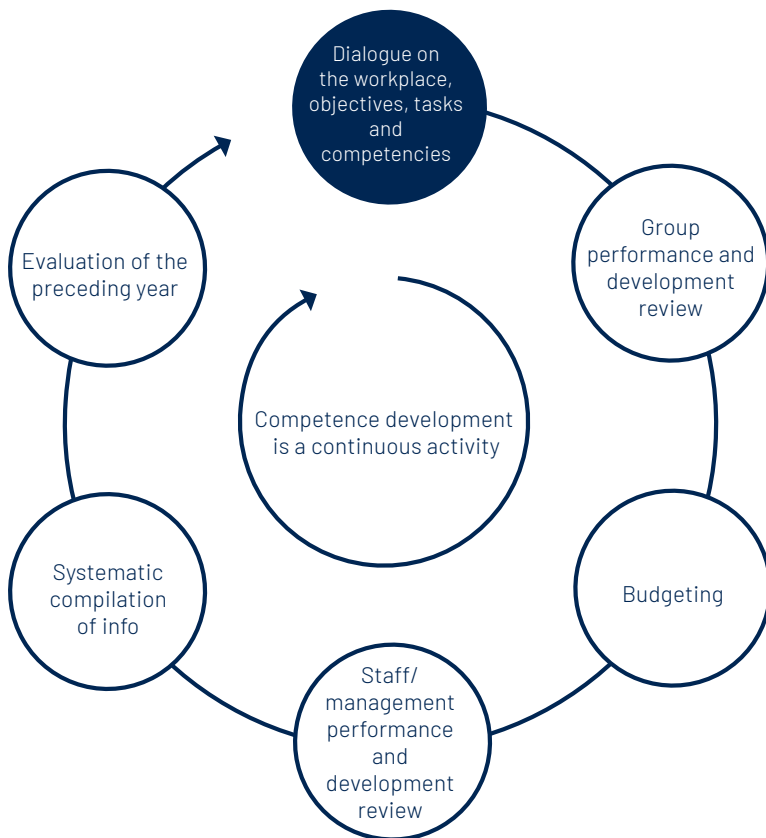
In the staff/management performance and development review, managers and staff members clarify and align expectations for individual competence development, form of activity, expectation of benefit and time frame, subsequent knowledge sharing with colleagues, etc. See also the **AAU Handbook** that describes relevant conditions for holding staff/management/group performance and development reviews at AAU.

Subsequently, the management compiles and evaluates the information from the staff performance and development reviews to get an overview of the overall competence development requirements of the unit/department. This overview may also enable the unit/department to prioritize the overall financial framework. Following the management discussions, the prioritization and its background may be communicated to all staff members at a staff meeting.

Dialogue on the workplace, objectives, tasks and competencies

Group performance and development review

Evaluation of the preceding year

Competence development is a continuous activity

Budgeting

Systematic compilation of info

Staff/ management performance and development review

EXAMPLE OF COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL CYCLE