CODE OF GOVERNANCE FOR AALBORG UNIVERSITY

Preface

Good governance is essential to Aalborg University. In a changing world, we must achieve our ambitions while striving to ensure consistency between the University's overall strategy, *Knowledge for the World*, our various activities and the individual staff members.

With our Strategy 2016-2021, we have aimed high, but we are confident that the implementation of our overall strategy will help us realise this vision. Part of this vision is good governance of the University.

Good governance enhances staff members' ability to make things happen. Clear frameworks and clear decisions reduce uncertainty in a complex and ever-changing work life. Good governance is therefore essential for a dynamic organisation. Through good governance, we create the necessary basis for unleashing the full potential of the organisation and for boldly and efficiently steering the University forward.

The code of governance serves as a guide for navigating the complexity of management – a shared language for ensuring that we make a difference and create added value as managers. At the same time, the code of governance indicates the expectations of managers at AAU.

The code of governance is intended as a guide for all managers at AAU, but it is also a guideline and frame of reference for anyone who exerts influence in the University's decision-making processes, operation and change processes.

The code of governance must be used in the following contexts:

- as a basis for the recruitment of new managers
- as a basis for preparing job descriptions for managers
- as a tool for matching tasks and success criteria
- as a basis for determining the level of ambition and the contents of management development
- as a frame of reference for talking about expectations of managers at AAU
- as a frame of reference for the matching of expectations and evaluation of managers
- as a basis for matching expectations to roles and responsibilities in cross-organisational projects and collaborative processes.

SHARED FRAME OF REFERENCE AND REFERENCE POINTS

In this code of governance, we will introduce our shared frame of reference and five reference points for good governance at AAU.

The reference points further explain the elements of good governance at AAU. The basis for talking about good governance is a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of managers. In this way, we will come better equipped to strengthen and develop the unique features of AAU: the interlinks between problem orientation, cooperation, commitment and change.

With this code of governance we wish to put management and leadership on the agenda. We hope that you will use it as a frame of reference for individual discussions of good governance, management and leadership at AAU.

Kind regards,
The Executive Management

Content

A shared frame of reference

As managers we work at different levels of the organi-sation, with different staff groups from different profes-sional backgrounds, at different locations and some of us are also affiliated with various campuses. Regardless of our roles, functions or geographic locations, our jobs as managers fundamentally consists of creating results through others. Through governance, we chart the course, inspire meaning and purpose for individual staff members and the organisation and contribute to creating results. Thus, good governance contributes to realising the University's strategic objectives.

The manager's four areas of responsibility
The following four themes represent the overall respons-ibility of managers:

1. people and culture
2. activities and processes
3. innovation and change
4. interpersonal relations

All themes are important, and by focusing on all four, we will ensure added value for the individual and for the University as a whole. We expect all managers at AAU, regardless of their roles and functions, to commit them-selves and take responsibility for including these themes in their work as managers.

Leadership and management
In this code of governance, we consider governance to comprise two strands: *leadership and management.* Both concepts have various implications, but by thinking of governance as an umbrella term covering both management and leadership tasks, we can better unfold the meaning of our roles and responsibilities. Leadership comprises the "softer" approach of *motivating and leading,*

while management comprises *controlling, planning and managing.* We believe that good governance comprises both approaches.

1. PEOPLE AND CULTURE

Governing people and culture comprises developing individuals as well as teams and creating a collaborative working environment that support the University's identity and culture. Part of this area of responsibility is also assessing which skills and competences are required of the individual and the unit in reaching their strategic targets. This area of responsibility focuses on *leadership,* but also includes elements of *management.*

Your main tasks:

- developing a competence strategy for your area
- setting targets for individuals and teams while ensuring that both individual and organisational considerations are included and to give feedback
- identifying and develop prospective managers
- leading the way by example, to propel the development of the desired AAU culture within your own area and to contribute to the development of a shared culture.

Success criteria:

- engaging in an ongoing dialogue on staff development and focusing on the implementation of staff development plans
- ensuring a clear and meaningful relationship between individual staff members, their area of expertise and the organisation as a whole
- ensuring staff wellbeing and staff commitment
- promoting a healthy and positive collaborative environ-ment both in your unit and across the organisation.

2.
ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

This area of responsibility comprises safeguarding the University's activities both in terms of setting targets and direction and in terms of preparing, implementing and following up on plans. These both include our core activities (teaching, research and knowledge collaboration) and the administrative support functions. This area of responsibility mainly comprises *management*, but requires *leadership* to be successful.

Your main tasks:

- setting targets and direction (strategy) for your area and taking responsibility for these being in line with the University's overall strategy
- preparing and implementing plans and strategies
- monitoring, following up on and adjusting activities and processes in order to reach your targets.

Success criteria:

- preparing ambitions and quality standards for all areas
- reaching your targets
- ensuring that acknowledged and effective decision-making and implementation processes are used
- implementing effective work processes as well as managing and following up on activities.

3.
INNOVATION AND CHANGE

New value-generating initiatives are important to AAU. Therefore, this area of responsibility comprises seizing the opportunities for innovation, such as innovating degree programmes and entering into new research projects and external collaboration projects. At the same time, part of the area of responsibility is to develop the work processes of your individual unit as well as organisational processes to benefit everyone. As managers, we should focus on releasing energy and steering the implementation in all phases of the change process; we should ensure relevance and significance; develop solutions; prepare for the change process; ensure an effective and long-lasting approach; and not least, reap the benefits.

Your main tasks:

- accommodating the needs of the University and society for value creation by preparing a good strategy and ensuring its implementation
- developing and implementing change initiatives within your own area, but also contributing to the governance of change in cross-organisational initiatives.

Success criteria:

- leading the way in the development of relevant initiatives for students and the University's constituency
- taking a proactive approach to change and innovation requirements
- ensuring the effective implementation of change and innovation.

4.
INTERPERSONAL
RELATIONS

Active involvement is a prerequisite for collaboration. The focus of this area of responsibility is on motivating yourself and your staff members to engage in collaboration with internal as well as external collaboration partners and stakeholders. Another focus is seeking to identify and gaining an insight into any conditions and relations that may impact the opportunities for cooperation. Your role consists of exercising *leadership* by motivating your staff members and of exercising *management* by steering them towards realising opportunities and ambitions of the unit.

Your main tasks:

- paving the way for the establishment of professional and interpersonal relations with internal and external collaboration partners and stakeholders
- being at the forefront of the development within areas of relevance to external and internal collaboration partners and stakeholders.

Success criteria:

- for collaboration partners and stakeholders to feel involved in initiatives when appropriate
- ensuring that your staff members have a clear idea of how AAU creates added value for internal and external collaboration partners and stakeholders.

Balanced governance is key to continued success
As a knowledge organisation it is crucial that we succeed in linking the University's objectives and framework conditions with talent development and excellence throughout the organisation. Balanced governance thus includes *leadership* and *management*; and the key to continued success is in balancing the two approaches.

How to do this in practice and how to live up to the success criteria will depend on your role and function as a manager. However, we expect that this code of governance will be reflected in job descriptions and position advertisements throughout the organisation.

No manager works alone
Your job as a manager is not excluded to the relationship between you and your staff. In addition to contributing to the support and development of AAU's identity and culture in terms of local, cross-organisational and external efforts, you are part of a management team. Thus, part of your responsibilities is to contribute to and engage in various forums for managers. An important element of the shared understanding of our responsibilities as managers is that no manager works alone.

Five reference points for good governance at AAU

Knowledge for the World sets out objectives for how we wish for AAU to perform as an organisation. These include:

- AAU is a learning, competent and efficient organisation which is capable of creating the best results in positive collaborations across scientific and administrative functions.

- AAU wishes to be recognised as an attractive university that promotes development and learning. We aim to provide the best possible conditions for all staff as regards talent development, career development and competence development supported by motivation and with an eye for potentials.

- AAU wishes to continue to attract staff who contribute to and are motivated by AAU's distinctive features.[1] Our organisation must therefore ensure embedded and efficient work processes characterised by respected roles and responsibility. Everyone must know how success is defined within their own roles.

The above objectives require competent, visible and inclusive governance at all organisational levels. Our strategy requires transparency in management roles and responsibilities; that the management is able to prioritise and implement decisions in an efficient manner and in cooperation with committed staff.

As a university we must be able to operate within politically defined regulations and procedures; the governance culture of AAU, however, should not be characterised by control-orientation and strict rules. The governance culture of AAU is characterised by a shared

frame of reference and acceptance of the direction, conditions and distinctive features of the University. The governance culture reflects, supports and unfolds our distinctive features.

In many ways, communication is an essential part of governance. This applies to interpersonal, cross-organisational and external interactions. Mastering both written and oral communication and understanding when various channels and forms of communication are most appropriate and effective are essential skills for ensuring good governance at AAU. Above all, communication skills are essential to all of the following reference points:
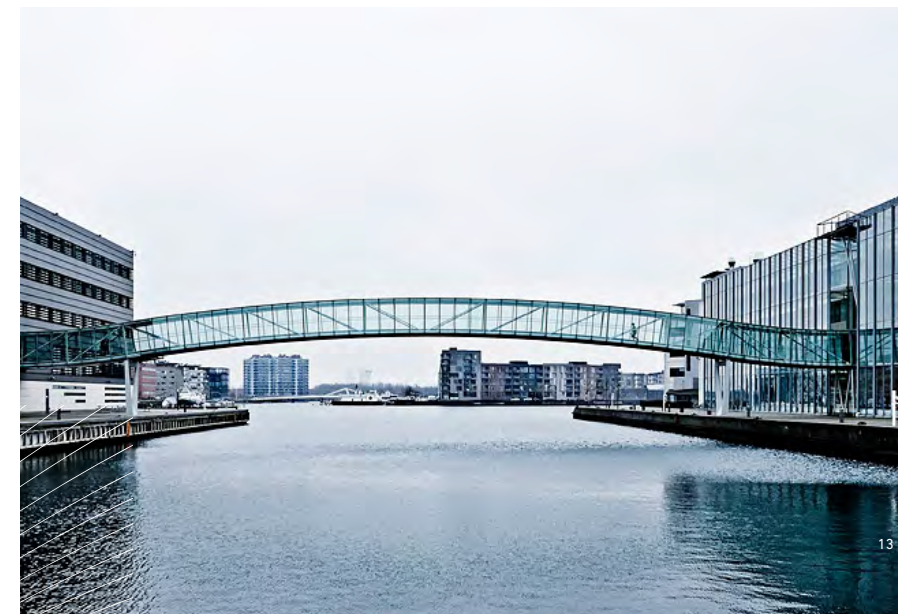
 # 1. Managers have ambitions for their areas and ensure result-oriented followership

 # 2. For the benefit of individual staff members and the organisation as a whole, managers aim to release the potential and energy in all their staff members

 # 3. Managers act on behalf of the entire organisation, assume co-responsibility and implement decisions effectively

 # 4. Managers encourage interaction between staff across the University and seek to bring out the best in their staff members

 # 5. Managers have an eye for innovation and for seizing opportunities

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[1] **More information about AAU's distinctive features:**
http://www.en.aau.dk/about-aau/strategy-vision-mission/

REFERENCE POINT #1.
MANAGERS HAVE AMBITIONS
FOR THEIR AREAS AND
ENSURE RESULT–ORIENTED
FOLLOWERSHIP

Good governance at AAU means to chart the course and obtain the followership needed for meeting targets and achieving results:

- Within the framework of the overall decisions relating to the development of the University, managers have ambitions for their own areas, chart a clear course and involve relevant staff members and stakeholders.
- Managers ensure followership in order to promote motivation, commitment and wellbeing.
- Managers use their personal authority when navigating situations of conflict.

The following qualities and skills are deemed essential:

- strategic thinking
- personal integrity
- the ability to deal with problems and conflicts

REFERENCE POINT #2.
FOR THE BENEFIT OF
INDIVIDUAL STAFF MEMBERS
AND THE ORGANISATION AS
A WHOLE, MANAGERS AIM
TO RELEASE THE POTENTIAL
AND ENERGY OF THEIR STAFF
MEMBERS

Unfolding talent throughout the organisation is at the core of good university governance:

- Managers provide the framework that enables individual staff members to best unfold their potential.
- Managers are visibly committed to the competence and career development of their staff members.
- Managers create added value for individual staff members.

The following qualities and skills are deemed essential:

- empathy
- the ability to create a dialogue
- focus on talent development

REFERENCE POINT #3.
MANAGERS ACT ON BEHALF
OF THE ENTIRE ORGANISATION,
ASSUME CO-RESPONSIBILITY
AND IMPLEMENT DECISIONS
EFFECTIVELY

Governance requires perseverance and far-sighted thinking; it is thus essential for managers to understand the importance of making and implementing long-lasting, holistic decisions:

- Managers assume co-responsibility for the development of the University.
- Managers act from an understanding of the bigger picture, commit themselves to their co-responsibility for joint decisions and ensure that these decisions are implemented in their own area.
- Managers are the driving forces of decision making within their own area and are responsible for ensuring that decisions are implemented effectively.

The following qualities and skills are deemed essential:

- decisiveness
- robustness
- flexibility

REFERENCE POINT #4.
MANAGERS ENCOURAGE
INTERACTION BETWEEN STAFF
ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY AND
SEEK TO BRING OUT THE BEST
IN THEIR STAFF MEMBERS

Collaboration across organisational units and disciplines becomes increasingly important; thus, all managers must be actively involved in various management fora and teams:

- AAU managers actively seek out cross-organisational collaboration and support others to follow their lead.
- AAU managers base their work on the notion that staff members act on good intentions and are able to make significant contributions to the workplace. Good governance means supporting a shared culture across the University.

- Managers acknowledge all constructive contributions – regardless of whether these contributions have originated in their own area or in other parts of the University. Good governance entails seeking to bring out the best in all staff members.

The following qualities and skills are deemed essential:

- team orientation
- holistic approach
- inclusiveness

REFERENCE POINT #5.
MANAGERS HAVE AN EYE FOR
INNOVATION AND FOR SEIZING
OPPORTUNITIES

It is essential for managers to have a constant eye on in-novation and thus on preparing us to respond to external influences and opportunities. Tapping into this potential for innovation and progress may call for immediate action to be taken:

- AAU managers understand how to act with self-confidence in a changing world and ensure that necessary decisions are made.
- Managers take a clear solution-oriented approach and are able to find new paths around potential obstacles.
- Managers are willing to take risks and have the courage to fail.
- Managers are willing to show that they are able to learn from their own mistakes.

The following qualities and skills are deemed essential:

- opportunity orientation
- solution orientation
- focus on change management