

Akademisk Råd (Akademisk Råd)

19-06-2025 14:00 - 16:00

Kollokvierum Vest, Victor Albeck bygningen

Indhold

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Referat

Punkt 1: Meeting information

Absent: Ugne Stukas, Rikke Nielsen, Christoffer Laustsen, Inger Merethe Paulsen, Birgitte Mønster Christensen, Tina Wang Vedelø, Malene Risager Lykke, Signe Lyrum Klauber

Punkt 2: For discussion: Financing (gap) of research year and PhD scholarships by chair Søren Dinesen Østergaard (14.00-14.20)

The Academic Council discussed the financial conditions related to the research year and PhD scholarships. The Council explored possibilities to create more equal and fair financial conditions for the research year students, regardless of their affiliation. It was noted that some foundations provide a monthly salary of 10,000 DKK, while others offer 12,000 DKK. A proposal was made for the faculty to compensate the difference so that all students receive the same amount (12,000 DKK). Anne-Mette will investigate the feasibility of this solution.

Furthermore, the Council addressed that by law, the research year is exclusively available to medical and dental students. This results in students from other programs, such as Public Health, being at a disadvantage when applying for PhD positions, as they have had fewer research opportunities during their studies. Anne-Mette acknowledged this unintended consequence, which has led to an adjustment in the weighting of criteria for PhD applicants to ensure a fairer assessment.

The Council then discussed PhD scholarships, focusing particularly on the financial disparities between PhD students employed by Aarhus University and those employed by the hospitals in the Central Denmark Region. It was proposed that a policy addressing this issue should be developed, potentially under the guidance of the clinical chairs.

It was decided that the subject will be revisited in the following year.

Punkt 3: For discussion: Appointment/reappointment of an adviser for responsible conduct of research and freedom of research at AU by chair Søren Dinesen Østergaard (14.20-14.25)

The Academic Council unanimously recommended Steffen Thiel for reappointment.

Punkt 4: News from chair Søren Dinesen Østergaard (14.25-14.35)

Søren informed the Council about the University Management meeting held on May 28th, during which the Academic Council's annual report was discussed. This report will also be reviewed at the upcoming Board meeting next week.

Søren briefly presented information about the forthcoming Sandbjerg seminar in August and encouraged all council members to participate. The program and registration link are expected to be distributed soon. The seminar's theme is "AU in a changing world – challenges for freedom and integrity of research."

Søren also urged the Council to nominate qualified candidates for the honorary doctorates and to help disseminate this information within their local communities. The deadline for nominations is August 1st. The Council will select one female and one male candidate at the August meeting at Sandbjerg.

The Council discussed the possibility of awarding honorary doctorates every two years instead of annually. Based on the experiences from the 2025 nomination process, Søren may raise this suggestion again with the Chairmanship.

Punkt 5: News from Dean Anne-Mette Hvas (14.35-14.50)

Anne-Mette provided the Council with an update on the work related to the “Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity,” which is currently under consultation, and expected to be finalized during the Summer. Søren Dinesen Østergaard and Christoffer Laustsen have been providing feedback on behalf of the Council during the process.

Anne-Mette informed the Council about the upcoming autumn workshops on the Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, including topics on authorship, emphasizing the importance of participation from both early-career and senior researchers. One workshop will be conducted in English (September 30, at AIAS) and the other in Danish (November 3, at Aarhus University Hospital). Council members were encouraged to attend.

Additionally, courses on the use of generative AI for academic writing will be offered in the autumn, with further sessions available as needed for all interested academic staff at Health. Pilot courses are scheduled to take place before the summer.

Punkt 7: Active feedback from the Academic Council to the departments – how to do this the best way? By chair Søren Dinesen Østergaard (15.00-15.15)

The Council discussed the various ways in which individual members can provide feedback to their local environments they represent regarding the work of the Council. It was suggested that agenda items could be color-coded to improve the overview and highlight relevant topics more clearly. Further details on this will be addressed at the Sandbjerg-meeting.

Anne-Mette proposed addressing it in her column and suggested mentioning it to the heads of departments, encouraging them to allocate time on relevant departmental meeting agendas.

Punkt 8: Research evaluation – a status by Head of Department Christian Lindholm (15.15-15.35)

Christian provided an update on the research evaluation process, which is now nearing completion. Overall, the process has successfully fostered local ownership and generated useful output.

Each department has now completed a report consisting of three main components:

1. A self-evaluation report
2. A panel report
3. An action plan

The faculty report includes a summary of the major points and key learnings. A high level of involvement from both academic and technical/administrative staff has been particularly valuable to the process and its outcomes.

The next steps are as follows:

- Implementation of action plans at the department level
- Follow-up by the faculty management
- Submission of the faculty report in August/September
- Final university-wide report expected by the end of 2025

In the coming year, department heads will take turns visiting the Academic Council to discuss their action plans and key takeaways.

In conclusion, the Council discussed potential areas for improvement in future processes, particularly regarding the preparation of assessment committees. Among the suggestions was the inclusion of a dedicated consultant (the same for all departments) to ensure greater consistency and alignment in the work of the evaluation panels. It was also proposed that focus group interviews (ideally preceding the site visit by the panel) be used more extensively in place of individual interviews, where appropriate.

Punkt 9: USA – a status by Vice-Dean for Research Per Brøndsted Höllsberg (15.35-15.55)

Per provided the Council with an overview of the financial implications for research resulting from the current U.S. policy landscape. While the exact total amount remains uncertain, the current loss total DKK 5 million, in addition to outstanding unreimbursed amounts. The AU Management is currently exploring whether financial assistance can be offered to mitigate the impact.

There is a real risk that some research projects may be discontinued due to lack of funding.

The Council also inquired about AU's position on actively recruiting American researchers, which was confirmed not to be a current strategy. If they are interested, they might be invited for an introductory visit and they are welcome to apply for open positions on an equal footing with other applicants.

Regarding work-related travel to the U.S., it was stated that the decision rests with the individual researcher ([the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' travel recommendations](#) are useful in this regard). For those who wish, a clean (dedicated) computer and cellphone can be provided by Health IT for travel purposes.

Punkt 10: AOB (15.55-16.00)

It was proposed that the faculty should cover representation expenses (typically a dinner) related to PhD defenses. Anne-Mette will take the matter further and clarify the possibilities.