5.1.1 PRINCIPLES FOR RESEARCH BASE AND KNOWLEDGE BASE

AAU Quality System

Procedure

26-09-2024

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1. OVERALL FRAMEWORK

This document is part of Aalborg University's (AAU) quality system within the field of education. The quality work described in the document is anchored in quality area 5. 'Research-based and pedagogical competencies' in the quality system.

Figure 1 shows the document's position in AAU's quality system. For further description of the structure of the quality system, please refer to "Quality policy".

Figure 1. The structure of the AAU quality system in relation to quality area 5. 'Research-based and pedagogical competencies'
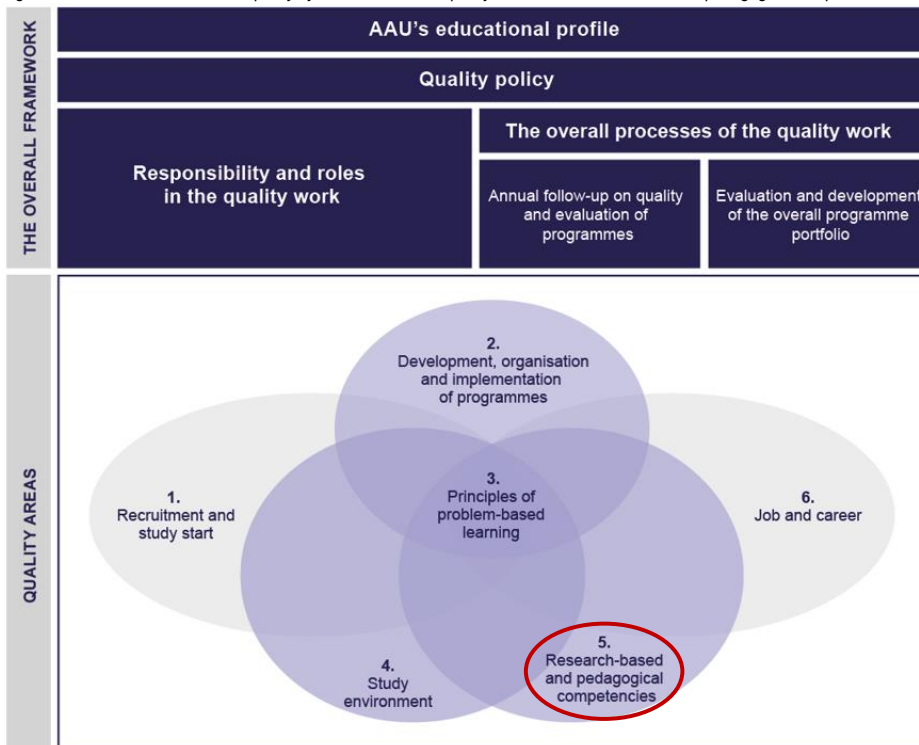
The framework for quality work under quality area 5 is described in the document '5. Framework for research-based and pedagogical competencies', which establishes standards, indicators and procedures for the objectives of this quality area.

This procedure encompasses the principles of research base and knowledge base.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

AAU's Principles for research base and knowledge base must ensure a relevant and academically qualified staffing of the university's programmes at the individual semesters.

In relation to the University Act, AAU is thus responsible for 'conducting research and providing research-based study programmes up to the highest international level in its disciplines' as well as cooperation with the surrounding community and contributing to the development of international cooperation.

It is the university's duty to ensure quality on all these parameters. This means, among other things, that the university must educate its graduates to the highest level and that students must have access to the latest and most up-to-date knowledge. The students must thus meet the best and most qualified researchers directly in teaching and problem-oriented project work. Likewise, students must receive up-to-date and modern teaching linked to research and knowledge base at the highest level throughout their studies.

Principles for research base and knowledge base must be implemented through the processes described in the section 'Process description'.

In addition, follow-up on research base and knowledge base on each programme is done through quality reporting and programme evaluation, which is part of the 'Procedure for annual quality follow-up and programme evaluation'. The specific staffing scheduling as well as quality reporting and programme evaluation therefore contribute overall to the implementation of the principles for research base and knowledge base.

The principles for research base and knowledge base include all programmes offered at AAU's three campuses in Aalborg, Copenhagen and Esbjerg. They thus apply to the university's higher bachelor's, professional bachelor's and master's programmes, as well as to its diploma and professional master's programmes.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The overall division of responsibilities and roles is established in the AAU quality system in the document 'Responsibilities and roles in the quality work'.

In the following, the overall division of responsibilities and roles is translated into concrete responsibility for the relevant management levels concerning principles for research base and knowledge base as well as the related process. Task responsibility, cooperation, division of labour and specific requirements are described in more detail in section '5. Process description'.

DEAN'S OFFICE
The Dean has the overall responsibility for ensuring and developing the quality and relevance of the programmes for the faculty in question. The Pro-dean for Education has been appointed by the Dean to oversee the programme management, and regarding research and knowledge base the Pro-dean is responsible for:

- following up on the research base or knowledge base of each programme in connection with quality reporting and programme evaluation.

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
- The Head of Department is responsible for ensuring research base and relevant knowledge base for all programmes in the department concerned.
- The Head of Department is responsible for ensuring research base and relevant knowledge base in the study activities of programmes of other departments that the department in question staffs.

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- The Head of Department, in collaboration with the Head of Studies and the Chair of the Study Board, must ensure that the principles of research base and knowledge base as well as the process description for staffing are complied with in the staffing planning.
- The Head of Department is responsible for ensuring compliance with agreements about staffing of study activities across departments and faculties.

HEAD OF STUDIES
- To request relevant teaching and, in cooperation with the Chair of the Study Board, to carry out the practical planning and organisation of teaching and examinations/tests. The Head of Studies cooperates with the Head of Department and the Chair of the Study Board on staffing to ensure coherence between staffing capacity (hours and academic competencies) and staffing needs (hours and academic competencies).

CHAIR OF THE STUDYBOARD
- The Chair of the Study Board's task is to ensure the organisation, operation and development of programmes and training, including helping to ensure coherence between staffing capacity and staffing needs in collaboration with the Head of Department and Head of Studies.

4. PRINCIPLES

AAU's Principles for research base and knowledge base are described below. The principles are divided into three groups, the first group being common principles applicable to all types of programmes. As there are different requirements for ensuring the knowledge base for the research-based programmes and the professional bachelor's as well as higher education programmes, the principles are subsequently divided into two groups.

Principles for research base and knowledge base must be implemented in the specific staffing planning of each programme, which is described in the section 'Process description' below. Follow-up to the staffing situation of each programme is also done through quality reporting and programme evaluation, which is part of the 'Procedure for annual quality follow-up and programme evaluation'. Thus, the concrete staffing planning as well as quality reporting and programme evaluation all contribute to the implementation of the principles for research base. The departments' presentation of strategic approaches to the use of academic staff and part-time academic staff respectively is part of quality reporting and programme evaluation.

4.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR ALLE PROGRAMMES

In the document the terms academic staff and part-time academic staff are used. See definitions in the section 'Definition of concepts'.

- **All academic staff contribute to the knowledge base of the programmes**
  Employment as academic staff basically includes both research and teaching/supervision. This also applies to researchers who acquire significant external funding.

- **The staffing of study activities is always carried out to the highest academic standards**
  The students meet highly qualified researchers in connection with the study activities throughout the entire programme.
  Part-time academic staff is carefully selected in relation to the subject matter of the programme; professional orientation and the overall organisation, herein included particular focus on linking research and the latest knowledge with current practice on the labour market[1].

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[1] Departments' presentation of strategic approaches to the use of academic staff and part-time academic staff is part of quality reporting and programme evaluation.

- **All students have ample opportunities to get in contact with research/academic environments**
  Students have ample opportunities to get in contact with academic staff through the study activities and, as a rule, they receive supervision from academic staff. The main supervisors of bachelor's projects, professional bachelor's projects and of master theses must be academic staff associated with relevant research environments and/or professional environments, unless there are compelling academic reasons for a different practice[2]. In addition, the main supervisors of bachelor's projects, professional bachelor's projects and of master theses must as a minimum have obtained an academic degree, that is at a level higher than the one they supervise[3], as well as being experienced in supervision of academic projects and having relevant professional knowledge within the subject matter of the project/thesis.

- **Ensure appropriate staffing of study activities across departments and faculties**
  In case of interdisciplinary study activities, there must be a clear framework for the cooperation and a clear alignment of expectations between supplier and requisitioner. Staffing across departments and faculties is carried out with a focus on the academic competence of the programme in question. It is basically the requesting environment that defines form and content.

- **Specifically for the technical-scientific main area: The job structure for Civil Engineering programmes and the job structure for Bachelor of Engineering programmes is used.**
  Employees on the job structure for Bachelor of Engineering programmes are not allowed to teach/supervise in Bachelor of Science in Engineering and Master of Science in Engineering programmes. Employees on the civil engineering job structure are allowed to teach/supervise in Bachelor of Engineering programmes to a limited extent.

4.2 PRINCIPLES FOR RESEARCH BASE OF BACHELOR'S, MASTER'S AND EXECUTIVE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMMES

- **There is a connection between the subject elements of the programmes and the research work of the academic staff**
  Students are offered relevant research-based teaching/supervision. Teaching/supervision can always be obtained at the department where the academic competence of the teaching has its research connection.

  Regarding the organisation of the study activities: At a minimum, the constituent subject elements of the programmes (modules/courses) must be organised by academic staff, who is active in research within the academic area of the module. In that way it is ensured that the core content of the programme is of high quality and based on the latest research in this field.

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[2] Academic staff who are on leave as well as honorary associate professors and affiliate professors can neither be responsible for handling teaching, supervision nor examinations. Honorary associate professors and affiliate professors can, however, conduct guest lectures.
[3] This principle can be waived in specific cases, where there are compelling academic reasons for a different practice and the academic staff member, who supervises, has corresponding qualifications. In such cases the deviation from the principle must be substantiated and documented in minutes or notes from meetings on staffing planning.

5.1.1 PRINCIPLES FOR RESEARCH BASE AND KNOWLEDGE BASE

Regarding the teaching: The teaching on all modules must basically be carried out by academic staff, who is associated with relevant research environments that conduct research within the content of the module.

- **In interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programmes, the contribution of each research environment to the teaching is appropriately balanced in relation to the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary profile of the programme**
  For interdisciplinary programmes, the Heads of Department and the Heads of Studies must pay particular attention to ensuring that the distribution of teaching tasks among relevant research environments corresponds to the distribution of the subject elements of the programmes, cf. the programme curriculum.

- **Part-time academic staff is offered association to one or more active research environments**
  The Heads of Department must ensure that it is possible for part-time academic staff to be part of relevant research environments and that they have participated in (or have been offered participation in) relevant activities in relation to the teaching task that they are scheduled to undertake.

- **Regarding research-based programmes, the students work with academic methods and approaches in their programmes**
  Among other things, the students acquire skills in critical reflection in relation to theory, method and practice as well as in relation to solving complex issues.

4.3 PRINCIPLES OF THE KNOWLEDGE BASE FOR PROFESSIONAL BACHELOR'S AND DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES[4]

- **There is a clear connection between the core subject elements of the programmes and the academic staff's knowledge of practices, developments and research within the relevant field**
  The programmes must be staffed by academic staff, who have a knowledge base that allows them to ensure this connection and thus communicate relevant knowledge, practices, as well as research to the students. This can be done, for example, by the academic staff including relevant current literature and cases in teaching as well as in other study activities.

- **The students attending professional and vocational programmes are in constant contact with the knowledge base through their programme**
  Practical proximity and professional activities must be ensured through the entire programme, e.g., through internships and business collaborations in students' projects, through relevant company visits, external teaching staff, e.g., employers and the like.

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[4] Bachelor's degree programmes include the Bachelor of Engineering programmes and the Bachelor Programme of Social Work. Diploma programmes are VEU programmes (part-time) and include the Graduate Diploma in Business Administration (HD) programmes. Professional Bachelor's Degree and Bachelor of Engineering programmes constitute the professional and vocational programmes offered at AAU.

5. PROCESS DESCRIPTION

The department ensures the research base and knowledge base of the programmes by implementing the above principles through:

- Staffing planning for each semester by preparing staffing overviews showing the lecturers' associated research/professional environments (applies to all programmes).
- Staffing overview of module coordinators every 2nd year, which shows the module coordinators/course responsible lecturers who develop and organise the programme as well as their associated research environments (applicable to the research-based programmes (BA KA and MA)).
- Plan for ensuring the knowledge base every 2nd year, which describes the academic competence of the associated professional environments, and continuous updating of new knowledge within the core subject elements of the programmes (applies to PBA and DI).

5.1 STAFFING PLANNING (ALL PROGRAMMES)

The following describes in more detail the staffing planning process of each semester.

- **By mid-May/mid-November at the latest:** The Head of Department ensures the requisitioning and staffing of entered requisitions in RES for the coming semester. Staffing must be done on all activities for which the department provides staffing resources - at its own department as well as at others.

  The Head of Department ensures that staffing takes place at individual level via RES and that these people carry out the activities in question[5]. Agreements on teaching/supervision across departments and faculties must be respected in the staffing planning.

  The most recently established indicators for research base (academic staff/part-time academic staff (VIP/DVIP in Danish) and students/academic staff (STUD/VIP in Danish)) in connection with staffing of programmes for the coming semester must be taken as a starting point.

- **No later than the end of May/November:** The Head of the Department ensures that a staffing overview for the coming semester is prepared for all programmes. This can either be prepared using the relevant staffing table in Qlikview ("Bemanding – enkel tabel") or be prepared manually (see the guidelines here: Guide to the preparation of staffing overviews with data from the RES (only in Danish)). The overview must show alle the modules, teachers and supervisors of the programmes, as well as their connection to relevant research environments (for research-based programmes) or relevant professional environments (for programmes, that are not research-based). The staffing overview includes all modules to which the department provides staff - at its own department as well as at others.

- **No later than early June/December:** Staffing planning for the coming semester will be discussed at a meeting between the Head of Department, the Head of Studies and the Chair of the Study

| Kommenterede [SMJ1]: Link opdateres |

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[5] Teaching cannot be sub-delegated. However, in exceptional cases, such as in the case of illness, the teaching may be conducted by another lecturer. In such cases, the Head of Department and the Head of Studies at the department with which the programme is affiliated must be informed.

Board. The Head of Department ensures that a meeting is convened, that it is held and that there is documentation of the conclusions from the meeting.

Using the staffing overviews the Head of Department, the Head of Studies and the Chair of the Study Board must as a minimum relate their discussion to the following for each programme for the coming semester:

- o Have any current issues concerning staffing been identified in the annual follow-up on quality and evaluation of programmes, including discussions of indicators for research base (VIP/DVIP and STUD/VIP), that need to be addressed?
- o Are teachers and supervisors (academic staff and part-time academic staff) associated with relevant research environments (for research-based programmes) or relevant professional environments (for programmes, that are not research-based)?
- o Do the students have ample opportunities to get in contact with research environments or professional environments, e.g. via the supervisors of semester projects, bachelor's projects and master's theses?
- o Which considerations should be made in relation to part time academic staff, who are employed and scheduled to undertake teaching and supervision?
- o For interdisciplinary programmes: Is it ensured that the distribution of teaching tasks among relevant research environments/professional environments corresponds to the distribution of the subject elements of the programmes?
- o Are there any expected future changes that will have consequences for the staffing plan, e.g. changes among the staff, changes in research groups, changes in the student population?

If any unresolved issues are identified through the discussion of the above bullet points, solutions must be decided regarding the coming semester.

The conclusions from the meeting, including solutions to any issues, must be documented in the form of minutes or notes from the meeting. A conclusion on one of the above points can apply to more than one programme, in which case it must be clearly stated which programmes the conclusions cover. Topics related to staffing across departments and faculties that require special attention are handled through the line management.

5.2 STAFFING OVERVIEW OF MODULE COORDINATORS (BA, KA AND MA)

Every 2nd year, in connection with evaluations of study programmes and quality reports, a staffing overview of module coordinators is prepared. As a minimum the constituent subject elements of the programmes (modules/courses), the module coordinators, who are responsible for the organisation of the constituent subject elements and the primary research group, they are associated with, must be included in the overview.

Based on the staffing overview of module coordinators, programme evaluation reports and quality reports a statement is made, which contains an assessment of the organisation of the programme in relation to research based requirements. The overview can either be prepared using the relevant staffing table in Qlikview ("Bemanding – enkel tabel") or be prepared manually (see the guidelines here: Guide to the preparation of staffing overviews with data from the RES (only in Danish)).

Kommenterede [SMJ2]: Opdateres til Kvalitetsportalen

5.1.1 PRINCIPLES FOR RESEARCH BASE AND KNOWLEDGE BASE

5.3 KNOWLEDGE BASE ASSURANCE PLAN (PBA AND DI)

Every 2nd year in connection with evaluations of study programmes and quality reports, the department's plan for ensuring the knowledge base is drawn up or adjusted, which describes the academic competence of the associated academic environments and continuous updating of new knowledge within core subject elements. Based on the plan, programme evaluation reports and quality reports make a statement containing an assessment of the academic competence of the associated academic environments and continuous updating of new knowledge within core subject elements.

Please refer to: 'Guide to drawing up a plan for knowledge base'.

6. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

6.1 Academic staff (in Danish often abbreviated VIP)[6]

The VIP category contains the following job categories: Professor with Special Responsibilities, Professor with Special Responsibility, Professor, Research Professor, Research Professor with Special Responsibilities, Visiting Professor, Clinical Professor, Senior Associate Professor, Lecturer, Research Associate Professor (including Substitute Associate Professor), Guest Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Research Assistant Professor, Senior Advisor, Teaching Associate Professor, Teaching Assistant Professor, Temporary Lecturer, Research Assistant, Visiting Associate Professor (usually time-limited), Teaching Lecturer, Researcher, Senior Researcher, Project Researcher, Research Assistant, Clinical Assistant, Postgraduate Fellowships, Research Scholarships (former Senior Scholarships), PhD Fellow, Postdoc, Clinical Associate Professor, Postgraduate Fellow in Psychology, Teacher in Social Theory and Methods (special category for the Bachelor Programme of Social Work at AAU), Teacher at Bachelor of Engineering programmes. The positions of Head of Studies, Chair of the Study Board and Programme Coordinator are included as VIP.

6.2 Part-time academic staff (in Danish often abbreviated DVIP)

The DVIP category contains the following job categories: Clinical Instructor (in hospital specialist areas, General Medical Practice, Chiropractor Practice or Dental Surgery), Senior Clinical Instructor of Dentistry, Part-time Lecturer, Teaching Assistant, Co-examiner, Guest Lecturer (fee), Clinical Associate Professor. The category includes Student Teachers/Student Instructors/Teaching Assistants (students with teaching tasks).

7. ORIGIN, BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Date	Change	Cause	Executing (Initials)
15-03-2021	Commencement	New procedure	Smj
01-11-2021	The process description has been adjusted. Appendix has been removed	The work on staffing overviews has provided clarity on the processes,	Lhl

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[6] The categories VIP and DVIP follow the sector definition indicated in the Statistical Preparedness of Universities Denmark.

	Specification of tools Sections 5.2 and 5.3 have been added to give the full picture of the quality work to ensure the knowledge base	which is why they have been adjusted and updated	
11-01-2023	Clarification regarding the possibility to prepare staffing overviews manually. Clarification regarding the documentation of conclusions from the meeting on staff planning. Clarification regarding supervision of bachelor's projects, professional bachelor's projects and master theses, i.e. that the supervisor must be academic staff associated with relevant research groups and/or professional environments, unless there are compelling academic reasons for a different practice	Process of evaluation and development of the quality system at AAU.	Smj
28-04-2023	Clarification regarding minimum requirements for discussions at the staff planning meetings.	Process of evaluation and development of the quality system at AAU.	Smj
18-09-2023	Further clarification regarding which types of academic staff, that can supervise bachelor's projects, professional bachelor's projects and master theses.	Process of evaluation and development of the quality system at AAU.	Smj
23-09-24	Clarification regarding job structure: The job structure for Civil Engineering programmes and the job structure for Bachelor of Engineering programmes is used.	Letter from UFS 24-06-24.	Smj

8. CONTACT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Principles for research base are evaluated and revised by the Council for Quality Assurance and Development. Study Service is responsible for keeping the document up to date and available on AAU's quality website: www.kvalitet.aau.dk.

Questions concerning the principles may be addressed at Quality and Analysis can be contacted via kvalitet@adm.aau.dk.

9. QUALITY TOOLS

All tools are available at AAU's kvalitetsplatform