

Date	Forum	Time	Place	Meeting #
25 June 2025	Academic Council	16:00-18:30	1525-626	03-2025

Participants	<p>Eskild Holm Nielsen (Dean), Frants Havmand Jensen (ECOS), Hanne Lakkenborg Kristensen (FOOD), Karen Thodberg (ANIVET), Anne Jensen (ENVS), Thomas Lykke-Møller Sørensen (BCE), Charles Møller (MPE), Søren Wandahl (CAE), Björn Andresen (ECE)</p> <p>Litte Dalsgaard (TAP, ECE), Ahmad Madary (TAP, MPE), Louise Fischer Koue (TAP, QGG),</p> <p>Anna Elisabeth Kristoffersen (PhD),</p> <p>Lærke Dueholm Jensen (student), Kira Gottlieb Køpping (student), Adrián Borbolla Muñoz (non-employed PhD student)</p> <p>Zakaria Hamdi (postdoc), Zahra Esfahani (postdoc)</p>
Apologies for absence	<p>Gertrud Lindberg Tefre (deputy head of administration), Brian Vinter (vice dean)</p> <p>Mie Lundgaard (chief advisor)</p> <p>Emre Karaman (QGG), Sabine Ravnskov (AGRO), Muhammad Mohsin Nawaz (PhD), Kim Kusk Mortensen</p>
Guests	<p>Louise Møller Haase (item 3)</p> <p>Michelle Williams (item 4)</p> <p>Peder Damgaard (item 5)</p>
Minutes	Ida Marie Gerdes

Item #	Time	Item and appendices	Owner
1	16:00-16:05	Approval of agenda (5 min.) (Appendix)	Anne Jensen
<p>Some members were absent, Frants participated online. It is Adrián's last meeting as he moves his PhD to another university.</p> <p>The agenda was approved.</p>			
2	16:05-16:10	Approval of minutes (5 min.) (Appendix)	Anne Jensen
The minutes were approved			
3	16:10-16:30	Welcome to new Vice Dean for Education Louise Haase Møller (20 min.)	Eskild Holm Nielsen Louise Haase Møller
<p>Louise Møller Haase was warmly welcomed as the new Vice-Dean for Education at the Faculty of Technical Sciences (TECH), having taken up the role on April 1, 2025. She introduced herself with a brief overview of her background, including her previous position at Aalborg University and her academic expertise in engineering and circular economy.</p>			

In her presentation, Louise outlined the development of TECH over the past decade, highlighting key milestones such as the 2012 merger with the School of Engineering, the creation of TECH as a faculty in 2020, and the launch of AU Viborg in 2024. These changes have led to significant growth in student applications and admissions, particularly at the bachelor's and master's levels. She also addressed the ongoing national reform of master's programmes, which includes reduced bachelor-level admissions and the introduction of new profession-oriented master's degrees (EKA). These are expected to launch from 2026–2027. Louise emphasized the importance of targeting high-performing students and ensuring strong collaboration with industry.

During the discussion, council members raised questions about terminology, student interest, and branding. The Dean noted that the English term for the new programmes is still undecided. Louise acknowledged that while there is student interest in EKA, it remains to be seen whether all places will be filled. She also stressed the need for a unified faculty brand and clear communication. Concerns were raised about student involvement, retention, and support for students with special needs. Louise agreed these are priorities and mentioned that planning is ongoing. She also noted the importance of understanding the impact of AI on exams, though no clear solutions have been established yet.

Louise presented a new organizational structure with themed subcommittees focused on recruitment, retention, and internationalization. These forums aim to improve coordination and ensure a better student experience. The meeting concluded with encouragement from Anne Jensen for continued dialogue and collaboration with Louise in her new role.

4	16:30-16:55	Annual discussion about PhD area (25 min.)	Michelle Williams
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Vice-Dean and Head of PhD school Michelle Williams presented an update on the PhD area at TECH. As of mid-year, the faculty has 306 enrolled PhD students, with 52 new enrolments and 33 completions so far. The average effective study time remains at 3.1 years. Gender distribution is relatively balanced, with 140 women and 166 men.

Michelle highlighted several developments in the PhD programmes. Course offerings are being revised in collaboration with the Centre for Educational Development (CED), including new courses in scientific writing, AI, and PhD project management. There is also increased support for shorter research stays in other environments. Regarding AI, PhD students must follow the same rules as other AU students, including submitting a declaration if AI tools are used in dissertations or progress reports.

A key strategic initiative is the joint PhD programme with Wageningen University. A letter of intent has been signed, and a formal agreement is in progress. Michelle emphasized that this collaboration can be used strategically in funding applications and supports the awarding of joint degrees. There is also increased focus on industrial PhDs and a new programme for diploma engineer teachers.

DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) remains a priority, with initiatives aimed at ensuring all researchers can thrive regardless of background or life situation.

The Council also discussed the discontinuation of AUFF funding for the 4+4 PhD model. The Dean confirmed that this funding will end, prompting questions from members.

Karen asked about the DKK 200,000 bonus associated with PhD completions. Michelle clarified that this amount is paid directly to the department head two years later and is not tied to the individual project nor only the 4+4 model. It is intended to support departmental strategy and planning.

Karen expressed concern about the financial challenges of supervising PhD students, noting that it is often easier to fund postdocs. Michelle acknowledged this but stressed that supervision is essential for academic promotion and a core responsibility of the university. The Dean added that the bonus should help departments plan strategically and support long-term goals.

Michelle also noted that the value of the 4+4 model will be reviewed, including how much funding it has attracted and whether it remains a priority. Heads of department will be involved in assessing its future relevance.

Hanne Lakkenborg asked about the Wageningen agreement. Michelle explained that all AU faculties are working together to align under a single agreement, which can be referenced in funding applications and supports double degrees between the two universities.

Finally, Charles asked whether global events have influenced PhD intake. Michelle noted a slight increase in students from Bangladesh but said no detailed data analysis has been done yet. She added that the impact of global conditions varies by research area, and in some cases, extra caution may be needed.

5	16:55-17:20	Economy ØR1 and process for ØR2 (25 min.) (Appendix)	Peder Damgaard Eskild Holm Nielsen
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Peder Damgaard presented the ØR1 financial update and introduced the new ØR2 process. The faculty's income has increased, particularly from external grants, and ØR1 now forecasts a DKK 20 million surplus. Half of this will go to the operating reserve, now above the 1% target, and the other half to a new savings fund for Campus 3.0. Additionally, TECH will increase its internal bank deposits by DKK 69 million.

Most departments are financially balanced, though BCE, CAE, and MPE have revised their expectations downward due to lower external funding. Long-term plans are being made to bring them into balance.

A new AU-wide ØR2 process will involve departments more directly. It's a selective update of ØR1, not a full rebudgeting. The Dean noted timing challenges due to the summer break.

Looking ahead, TECH is performing well in securing external funding and managing fixed costs. However, uncertainties remain—especially around future budget grants, the graduate reform, and EU research funding. The Dean expressed concern about potential cuts at the EU level and emphasized the importance of international collaboration in science-based policy, particularly in climate and environmental research.

During the discussion, Hanne raised concerns about fairness in funding strategies and asked for updates on the competitive funding model. The Dean explained that decisions are expected in December and that the faculty must prioritize its efforts. Charles and Anne also raised questions about rent models and cross-faculty coordination.

	17:20-17:30	Break (10 min.)	
6	17:30-17:50	Consultation: “The Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity” (20 min.) (Appendix)	Anne Jensen

The Academic Council discussed AU's response to the Ministry's draft revision of the national Code of Conduct for Responsible Research Practice. Anne Mette Hvas (Dean, Health) represented AU in the national working group, with support from Hanne Lakkenborg and TECH representatives, who provided input from a TECH perspective. Anne Jensen prepared a draft response, which was reviewed and discussed by the Council.

Key topics addressed in the draft and discussion included:

- **Freedom of Research:** Strong support for its inclusion, with a recommendation to require institutions to develop clear and fair guidelines, especially to protect junior researchers.

- **Data Ownership:** Support for clearer responsibilities and a call for institutions to define policies on data ownership, access, and transfer.
- **AI and Generative AI:** Approval of its inclusion, with suggestions for regular updates to institutional guidelines and mandatory training.
- **Authorship:** Endorsed as a critical issue. The Council recommends national and institutional guidelines, regular training, and onboarding practices that support transparency and inclusion.
- **Research Collaborations:** Support for clearer institutional guidelines on collaboration practices, including legal support and differentiated screening procedures to avoid burdening smaller projects.

Council members were invited to submit additional comments of general or significant nature by Friday, either as tracked changes or in a separate document.

7	17:50-18:00	Appointment of Advisors on Responsible Research Practice and Academic Freedom Nomination of a Member to the Practice Committee (10 min.) (Appendix)	Anne Jensen
<p>The Council reviewed nominations for roles related to responsible research practice:</p> <p>Closed discussion</p>			
8	18:00-18:05	Honorary Doctorates (5 min.) (Appendix)	Anne Jensen
<p>The Council briefly discussed the status of honorary doctorate nominations across departments. Members were asked how the process is progressing, whether there is engagement and interest, and how they are involved in the selection.</p> <p>The deadline for nominations is August 25, and members were reminded not to forget the process over the summer.</p> <p>Karen expressed some concern about the competitive nature of the process.</p> <p>Anne clarified that while candidates are evaluated within their disciplines, the final selection considers balance across fields to avoid overrepresentation from any one area.</p> <p>Thomas mentioned that potential nominees may be found among those that have been partaking in the recent research evaluations.</p> <p>Anne mentioned that in ENVS the topic had been discussed at both the department meeting and in the research committee.</p>			
9	18:05-18:10	Sandbjerg seminar 2025 (5 min.) (Appendix)	Anne Jensen
<p>The programme for the upcoming Sandbjerg seminar is finalized. An interpreter will be available if presentations are held in Danish. Participants were encouraged to register via the link shared by Ida during the meeting.</p> <p>It was proposed that the Council stay a few hours after the seminar to reflect on how the discussed topics can be brought into the Council's work. Additionally, time will be set aside to discuss future agenda items and how Council members communicate Council activities within their departments. The aim is to inspire each other on how to structure feedback both to and from the Council.</p>			

10	18:10-18:15	PhD degrees since last meeting (5 min.) (Appendix)	Anne Jensen
14 new degrees. Congratulations to all new PhD graduates. The Council had no further comments.			
11	18:15-18:20	Any other business (5 min.)	Anne Jensen
No comments			