

Date	Forum	Time	Place	Meeting #
10 September 2025	Academic Council	15:00-17:30	1525-626	04-2025

Participants	<p>Brian Vinter (vice dean), Hanne Lakkenborg Kristensen (FOOD), Karen Thodberg (ANIVET), Anne Jensen (ENVS), Thomas Lykke-Møller Sørensen (BCE), Søren Wandahl (CAE), Björn Andresen (ECE), Sabine Ravnskov (AGRO)</p> <p>Emre Karaman (QGG) (online)</p> <p>Ahmad Madary (TAP, MPE),</p> <p>Anna Elisabeth Kristoffersen (PhD),</p> <p>Lærke Dueholm Jensen (student), Kira Gottlieb Køpping (student)</p> <p>Zakaria Hamdi (postdoc), Zahra Esfahani (postdoc)</p>
Apologies for absence	<p>Eskild Holm Nielsen (Dean), Louise Fischer Koue (TAP, QGG), Gertrud Lindberg Tefre (deputy head of administration, participates if invited) Litte Dalsgaard (TAP, ECE), Charles Møller (MPE) Frants Havmand Jensen (ECOS), Mie Lundgaard (chief advisor)</p> <p>Muhammad Mohsin Nawaz (PhD) no longer employed as PhD student as of August 31st</p>
Guests	-
Minutes	Ida Marie Gerdes

Item #	Time	Item and appendices	Owner
1	15:00-15:05	Approval of agenda (5 min.) (Appendix)	Anne Jensen
The agenda was approved.			
2	15:05-15:10	Approval of minutes (5 min.) (Appendix)	Anne Jensen
Minutes was approved			
3	15:10-15:25	Sandbjerg follow up (15 min.) (Appendix)	Anne Jensen
<p>Anne thanked the members of the Council for participating and gave a summary of the seminar (also attached in first agenda). Main items were:</p> <p>The seminar opened with Rector Brian Bech Nielsen presenting AU's financial status and strategic direction. The University is financially doing well, with a surplus last year and continued positive expectations. Strategic priorities toward 2030 include research, innovation, sustainability,</p>			

digitalization, and attractive degree programmes. Initiatives like AU Cetera and the Delphinus Fund were highlighted as strategic achievements.

In his presentation, Professor Andreas Roepstorff spoke about the University's – as institution – societal role, calling for a new social contract between universities and society, where researchers engage proactively in public dialogue, and also exercise diplomacy in advocating for research based knowledge on both problem-driven challenges and long term, basic research topics.

In the panel debate, Professor Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, and Editor-in-Chief Rune Lykkeberg, Information, each presented their personal experiences with and main topics in political and public pressure on research. They engaged in discussions on the topics with the audience and emphasized the increasing role of social media, the challenges for true knowledge, the risks of representing contested topics – however research based – in social and/or public media especially for younger and female researchers, and a need for stronger and more open ties between universities and public media, media training and support.

Vice Dean for Research Brian Vinter, TECH, addressed the geopolitical challenges of research, stressing the importance of balancing academic freedom with responsibility in international collaborations. Especially the challenges of dual use research, including the grey zones, recruitment of PhD talents, and international collaborations featured in the discussions with the audience.

Closing reflections made by Prof. Rikke Meyer, chair of NAT Academic Council, underlined AU's broader responsibility—not just to produce knowledge, but to actively engage with and contribute to society, recognizing the special responsibilities of universities as well as the dilemmas and challenges raised during the seminar.

The theme of the seminar was very well received across the Council, however some missed the group work.

In the Tech Council, a new format was tested with an on-site follow-up during Friday morning, which was well received, and we will repeat this next year – make it into a tradition, as was mentioned by a member. The next seminar will take place on 27–28 August 2026 – book your calendars now, please.

At the follow up meeting, the Council reflected on experiences and insights from the seminar; discussed different ways to enhance the links between the Council and the individual TECH departments and agreed to have a common generic Academic Council presentation (Anne and Ida volunteered to draft and circulate this); and discussed different items for future meetings were, to which Karen added that the council should discuss the role of being a researcher within applied research, with many different stakeholders.

Thomas mentioned that BCE is establishing an institute forum - congratulations.

4	15:25-16:05	Confidential item See first agenda for material (40 min.) (Appendix)	Anne Jensen
This item was confidential and thoroughly discussed during the meeting. All members were given the opportunity to contribute, and the discussion reflected a high level of engagement and responsibility. Following careful deliberation, a clear decision was reached, with broad support from the group. The matter will be followed up as agreed.			
16:05-16:15			
Break with sandwich			
5	16:15-16:45	Research evaluation (20 min.) (Appendix)	Brian Vinter
Brian presented the findings from the research evaluations which have been conducted across TECH over the past year.			

Eight departments at Tech have completed their research evaluations. The remaining two submitted their self-evaluation reports before the summer break and contributed their main conclusions to the overall report.

Key findings:

- Shared strengths include strong leadership, modern research infrastructure, and effective stakeholder engagement.
- Challenges identified include the need to increase international visibility, promote inclusive leadership, and improve support for early-career researchers.

Development initiatives proposed:

- Strengthen international collaboration through strategic partnerships and data-driven engagement.
- Promote equity and **inclusiveness** by embedding DEI principles in recruitment, mentoring, and governance.
- Support early-career researchers with targeted funding, mentorship, and training in grant writing and project management.
- Increase societal impact and visibility through strategic communication, open science, and co-ownership with industry.

Brian Vinter stressed the CoARA principles and how the principles challenge the traditional metrics by promoting a more nuanced and responsible approach and how this forces us to a new language about impact.

(CoARA (Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment) is an international initiative uniting more than 600 organizations with a shared goal: to transform how research and researchers are assessed. Rather than relying on narrow metrics such as journal impact factors or h-indexes, CoARA advocates for a more holistic, balanced and meaningful approach. This includes placing greater emphasis on qualitative assessment, particularly through peer review, and using quantitative indicators in a supportive—not decisive—role. The coalition also encourages recognition of a broader spectrum of scholarly contributions, including open science practices, teaching, public engagement, and interdisciplinary work. The overarching aim is to promote a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of research excellence, one that supports a healthier research culture and better reflects the diversity of academic work. By signing the CoARA agreement, institutions commit to gradually aligning their internal evaluation processes with these principles.)

During the discussion, it was emphasized that maintaining focus on the outcomes of the research evaluations is essential, and that the insights gained should continue to inform future efforts. It was clarified that the term “*data-driven engagement*” refers to open science practices.

The Council agreed that a new or different approach to communication is needed in order to more clearly articulate the University’s societal impact — an issue highlighted both at the Sandbjerg Seminar and in the research evaluation process.

Concerns were also raised about the future of research in areas where researchers currently spend a significant amount of time writing grant applications. It was noted that this burden may discourage early-career researchers from pursuing academic careers.

Equally, concern was raised about the disproportionate amount of funding for senior salaries that needs to be included in grant applications from most of TECH’s departments, and which both limit the options for PhDs and younger researchers and also for longer-term research environment building.

Also, the Council stressed a how a need for basic research for TECH’s activities – including mission driven research, public consultancy, innovation and teaching – must be acknowledged and retain a role which was highlighted during several of the evaluations.

Finally, it was proposed that the CoARA principles will be discussed in greater depth at a coming Council meeting, enabling the Council to provide more informed and aligned advice based on these values.

		(15 min.)	
<p>The Tech 2030 Ambition is currently being finalised and is structured around four revised focal points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising and developing new partnerships and collaborations • Promoting recognised research, talent development, and science-based policy advice • Meeting students where they are • Delivering societal impact through shared responsibility and a collaborative culture built on trust and respect <p>These focal points have been updated based on input from focus groups involving researchers from across the Faculty, and feedback on the wording has been taken into account at this stage.</p> <p>The Faculty leadership is in the process of drafting a new introduction to the document formerly known as the Strategy, with the full Tech 2030 document expected to be finalised within the month. A hearing version will be circulated in October, with the Academic Council among the stakeholders to be consulted. The final version is scheduled for decision and release before the end of the year.</p> <p>Discussions on implementation are already underway. For 2026, it is expected that one to two concrete actions will be defined for each focal point. Some of these actions have already been proposed by the focus groups and will be considered in the implementation planning.</p> <p>Lærke asked about the guiding principle concerning students, and Brian Vinter explained that there will be a particular focus on the dropout rate, creating attractive student environments, and reviewing the curriculum in relation to interdisciplinary collaboration.</p> <p>Anne raised concerns about the inclusion of researchers and other staff in the drafting of the document formerly known as the Strategy, including in the formulation of the TECH narrative (fortælling), which is to unite and guide actions and research foci across departments and levels at TECH and to which the Heads of Departments had been granted the opportunity to provide input. Brian responded that the management had included staff through the focus groups and working groups.</p>			
7	17:00-17:15	Update from Advisory Board (15 min.) (Appendix)	Brian Vinter
<p>Brian presented a short summary of some of the items discussed:</p> <p>The Advisory Board discussed several key topics during the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master’s Degree Reform & Professional Students: The board reviewed the implementation of the Master’s degree reform at TECH as well as issues related to students working as professional. They expressed strong support and appreciation for how the Faculty has managed these challenges. • PFAS Contamination: PFAS was highlighted as a major concern requiring significant attention. The board noted that they can play a strategic role in advancing political efforts, given their better access to policymakers compared to most researchers. • External Research Funding: Some concern was raised about the high proportion of external research funding (currently at 70%), which inter alia makes TECH more vulnerable as seen from the perspective of the Board. However, the Dean’s Office does not share this concern. • Engagement with Heads of Department: The Board had meetings with three Heads of Department and responded very positively. They were impressed by the level of ownership these leaders are taking in the strategic development of the faculty, incl. the key issues of the TECH Strategy. 			
8	17:15-17:20	Substitute for the Practice committee	Anne Jensen

		(Appendix)	
<p>We need to appoint a new substitute member for the Practice Committee. Peter Langen from ENVS has recently become a section manager and is therefore no longer eligible to serve as an alternate member. The other current substitute member is Niels Bohse Hendriksen, also from ENVS.</p> <p>The deadline for appointing a new substitute is October 1st, so we need the Council members to reach out to colleagues to identify anyone interested in taking on the role.</p> <p>Please do so and send candidates to Ida and Anne asap. The Council will deliberate via email and appoint the substitute accordingly.</p>			
9	17:20-17:25	PhD degrees since last meeting (5 min.) (Appendix)	Anne Jensen
Fifteen degrees have been awarded since last meeting. Congratulations to the new PhDs.			
10	17:25-17:30	Any other business (5 min.)	Anne Jensen
<p>Thomas is in the AU Election Committee (Valgudvalget) and mentioned that more attention should be paid to the elections, all should encourage students and PhD students to run for election. Both the students and the PhD students applauded this and suggested that lectures notify classes about the option for running for Academic Council – raise the awareness about the Council.</p> <p>Anne asked for experiences with AU Cetera. Please send these to her at soonest possibility, or call her to convey them.</p> <p>Brian Vinter mentioned that the annual follow up on responsible conduct of research has started.</p>			