

Process for phasing out iNANO as a department-like centre

This process document is a working paper written solely for the purpose of coordinating and managing the process of phasing out iNANO as a department-like centre. For the sake of transparency, the document is made available to employees, who, when reading the document, should bear in mind that it describes and illustrates the overall process design principles, the details of which will evolve along the way. Relevant updates will be communicated via the [staff portal page about the process](#), not through updates to the process document.

On 26 September 2025, the Faculty Management Team made the decision to phase out iNANO as a department-like centre. Following the phase-out of iNANO as a department-like centre, all nanoscience research and educational activities will, in the future, be organisationally affiliated to the faculty's departments.

The following description of the process for phasing out iNANO as a department-like centre is based on the draft submitted for consultation at the Faculty during the period from 14 May to 11 June 2025, see the [staff portal page about the process](#). The consultation parties were the local liaison committees at iNANO and iNANO's stakeholder departments (CHEM, MBG, PHYS) as well as the Faculty Liaison Committee and Academic Council at the Faculty of Natural Sciences. Points from the consultation responses have been implemented in this final process description.

The time frame for the entire process described below is one year and three months: The phase-out will be completed by 31 December 2026. However, several steps will be completed sooner – this applies in particular to clarification of the future organisational placement of employees who are currently employed at iNANO.

The process is divided into eight sub-processes. Seven task forces chaired by members of the Dean's Office are responsible for seven of these sub-processes, and all task forces involve staff/students as relevant. Responsibility for sub-process no. 8 (onboarding at departments) lies with the Faculty Management Team. A steering committee chaired by the Dean coordinates the sub-processes.

Strategic funds are allocated by the Faculty to support the organisational transition of staff and students to departments. In Q1 2027, i.e. within three months of the process being completed, a 'mini-WPA' will be carried out by the departments who will be receiving the former iNANO employees.

1. Sub-process: Changing employment conditions for iNANO employees

The organisational placement of staff currently employed at iNANO will change. The vast majority of iNANO employees will be organisationally transferred to one of the Faculty's seven departments, while a small number of administrative staff will be offered employment in a new faculty unit that is expected to be established to support knowledge sharing and cross-disciplinary elements (see below under Administrative staff). For scientific and technical staff members who are to be organisationally transferred to a department, their work tasks and the physical location of laboratories etc. will as a rule remain unchanged. Administrative staff may experience changes to their individual task portfolios and the physical location of their offices.

Responsibility for the sub-process related to changes in employment conditions lies with **task force HR (chair: Ole Bækgaard Nielsen, Vice-Dean for Career Development and Innovation)**. Top priority will be given to clarification of the employees' new organisational placement, which is expected to be finalised by the end of Q4 2025 (for scientific staff) and Q1 2026 (for technical and administrative staff). Decisions will be made as quickly as possible and, if possible, simultaneously for all members of the same staff group (e.g. senior scientific staff, junior scientific staff, technical staff, administrative staff). However, greater importance is attached to making decisions for individual employees as soon as possible than to ensuring simultaneity for the individual staff groups: This means that decisions for the majority of employees will not be delayed until a decision can be made for the entire group in situations where decisions about a small number of members of

a staff group will require significantly more time than for the rest of the group. The process begins with clarification for senior scientific staff (i.e. professors, associate professors, senior researchers, tenure-track assistant professors and assistant professors), as the departmental affiliation of senior scientific staff must be known before meaningful decisions can be made about the departmental affiliation of junior scientific staff (postdocs, PhD students, research assistants etc.) as well as technical and administrative staff.

All affected employees will organisationally transfer to their new affiliation per 1 August 2026. The transfer of tasks from iNANO to the departments will take place at the same time as the transfer of employees. There will be a strong focus on the social and professional, psychological and physical working environment in building 1590-1593, see section 5 'sub-process: iHouse'. Among other things, strategic funding will be allocated by the Faculty to create a good working and study environment, see section 7 'sub-process: onboarding at departments'.

Scientific staff

Senior scientific staff at iNANO will be asked to clarify their wishes regarding their new departmental affiliation in consultation with the Dean or Vice-Dean for Career Development and Innovation and, in cases of doubt, also with the relevant head(s) of department. Consultation meetings will be held at the beginning of Q4 2025. The Dean makes the final decision on the employees' new places of employment. The decision will be made and communicated by the end of November 2025.

Junior VIPs will, as a rule, transfer to the department where their immediate manager (supervisor) is already employed or will be employed in the future. The decision will be made and communicated immediately after decisions have been made about the senior VIPs and no later than December 2025.

The VIPs' research and teaching portfolios will as a general rule not change as a result of their new departmental affiliation, but through interacting with colleagues and management at their new department, opportunities will arise for developing their job content on equal terms with the department's other employees. The 'alignment of expectations' for tenure-track assistant professors, i.e. the formal agreement between the tenure-track assistant professors and the head of iNANO, will be taken over as it is by the head of their new departments.

After 26 September 2025, all job adverts for senior scientific staff positions must specify a department as the place of employment (no senior VIPs will be employed with iNANO as their place of employment following the decision to phase out iNANO as a department-like centre). Until 26 July 2026, other appointments may still be made with iNANO as the place of employment, but with a note in the letter of appointment regarding the impending change of place of employment.

Technical staff

Technical staff employed at iNANO will, as a rule, transfer to the department that will be taking over the laboratory/equipment/infrastructure that the employee mainly supports and operates. This will be clarified as part of the above-mentioned process for senior scientific staff and the infrastructure sub-process (see section 2 below). Before the final decision by the Dean, technical staff members will be invited to an individual meeting with the Vice-Dean for Career Development and Innovation and, if relevant, with the head of iNANO and new department head. The decision will be made by the Dean and is expected to be communicated by the end of February 2026.

Administrative staff

Most administrative staff members who are permanently employed at the iNANO secretariat will transfer to a department and become part of a department secretariat, while a few will transfer to the new faculty unit mentioned above. For example, employees whose tasks relate primarily to HR processes, fundraising, or the nano-science study and PhD programmes will transfer to a department secretariat. The 'iHouse' sub-process (see section 5 below) will determine the specific physical location, the aim being to maintain a basic secretarial

function in the building, to be agreed by the departments whose employees will be based in the building in the future.

As a general rule, fixed-term administrative staff members will be transferred to the same departments as the scientific staff member who hold the grants financing their employment.

Clarification for both groups of administrative staff will take place through dialogue between the employees and the Vice-Dean for Career Development and Innovation in collaboration with the head of iNANO, the head of the iNANO secretariat and the respective department heads where relevant, expectedly in January 2026. The Dean makes the final decision. A decision is expected to be made and communicated by the end of January 2026.

Special functions

iNANO employees who, in a personal capacity, are members of committees or forums at department, faculty or university level will, as a rule, remain so after the phase-out of iNANO as department-like centre. This applies, for example, to membership of the nanoscience educational committee, which will have a new organisational affiliation (see section 3 below), but which will as a general rule see no changes to its composition.

On the other hand, iNANO employees who perform centre or faculty functions as iNANO representatives will, as a rule, step down from their functions when their employment is transferred to a department on 1 August 2026. The management of the department that will be the future place of employment for an employee with such a function on behalf of iNANO is obliged to investigate whether the employee can be considered for a similar or related function at the department or Faculty. However, the nanoscience PhD programme committee will remain in place for a period of three months after the last PhD student has transferred to a departmental programme (see section 4 'Sub-process: PhD') as the programme committee cannot change in the middle of an exam. Similarly, iNANO's local occupational health and safety committee (in Danish: LAMU, see section 5 'Sub-process: iHouse') and local liaison committee (in Danish: LSU) will remain in place until 31 December 2026. Following the transfer of employees from iNANO to the departments on 1 August 2026, the heads of department will, in consultation with the deputy chairs of the local liaison committees at the departments concerned, assess whether there is a need to adjust the composition of the respective local liaison committee.

2. Sub-process: Research infrastructure

Research infrastructure located in building 1590-1593 will not, as a rule, be physically relocated, but will be organisationally affiliated to a department. As a rule, affiliation of infrastructure will follow the scientific staff member who has secured funding for the infrastructure. Some of the infrastructure in the basement beneath the building is already affiliated with a department through scientific staff members, who are employed by departments but physically located in the building – this infrastructure will remain affiliated with the existing department unless transition to a core facility entails a transfer to another department: **Task force infrastructure (chair: Poul Nissen, Vice-Dean for research)** is responsible for determining which of the large pieces of equipment used by a larger user group can be organised into a 'core facility'. The process will involve relevant scientific staff and heads of departments, and there will be a special focus on electron microscopes and clean room, which are used by many different users affiliated with different departments. Decisions as to which equipment will transition to core facilities, and affiliated with which department, will be made by the end of Q4 2025. Decisions concerning the future organisational affiliation of infrastructure that will not transition to core facilities will be made by mid-February 2026. The actual organisational transition of relevant infrastructure to operating as a core facility must be completed by the end of 2026.

3. Sub-process: Degree programmes

Responsibility for Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes in nanoscience will be transferred to the Department of Chemistry, without the transfer resulting in any changes to the composition of the programmes'

educational committee. This also applies to members of the Educational Committee who may transfer to a department other than the Department of Chemistry. As regards other interdisciplinary degree programmes, the necessary agreements will be made between the Department of Chemistry and other departments regarding the operation, development and financing of such degree programmes. The Faculty's efforts to profile the nanoscience programmes and recruit students to these programmes will continue with the same intensity as before.

The date for the formal transition from iNANO to the Department of Chemistry is 1 August 2026. Responsibility for the sub-process related to the transition of degree programmes to the Department of Chemistry lies with **task force education (chair: Kristine Kilså, Vice-Dean for education)**. Task force education will include a student representative.

4. Sub-process: PhD programme

The PhD programme in nanoscience will be discontinued on 1 August 2026, and iNANO's PhD students will be affiliated with the programme offered by the department where their supervisor is or will be employed. Decisions/agreements made while the PhD students were affiliated with the nanoscience programme will not be changed retroactively. After transitioning to the new programme, it will still be possible for PhD students who are already enrolled on the PhD programme in Nanoscience to receive a certificate for a 'PhD degree in nanoscience'. The nanoscience PhD programme will be phased out and the programme committee members will be transferred to the departments' PhD programme committees in step with students being transferred and admitted. During this transition phase, the programme committee members will serve both the nanoscience PhD committee that is being phased out and the departmental PhD programme committee to which they are being transferred, see above regarding 'special functions'.

The admission of PhD students to the nanoscience programme may continue up until and including the GSNS admission round with application deadline 1 February 2026. PhD students admitted during this round will be informed about their upcoming transfer to another programme. From the admission round with application deadline 1 May 2026, all new PhD students will be admitted to one of the programmes offered by the seven departments, depending on the supervisors' future departmental affiliation to take effect on 1 August 2026, which is the earliest start date for this group of new PhD students.

Relevant special initiatives that are characteristic of the nanoscience PhD programme and, for example, facilitating mutual inspiration and interdisciplinary exchange of ideas among PhD students will be developed and implemented under the auspices of either GSNS or the new cross-disciplinary unit, ensuring the initiatives can benefit all PhD students at the Faculty of Natural Sciences. In addition, policies will be developed covering cross-disciplinary elements in the PhD programmes, ensuring effective management both when special conditions are necessary for interdisciplinary PhD projects and due to the students' academic backgrounds.

Task force PhD (chair: Ole Bækgaard, Vice-Dean for career development and innovation) is responsible for this sub-process. Two PhD students are included as members of task force PhD.

5. Sub-process: iHouse

Laboratories and offices in building 1590-1593 (here referred to as iHouse) will be transferred to the department that will be the new place of employment for the senior scientific staff and their research group who are the primary users of a given area. The Department of Chemistry will take over responsibility for the safety organisation in iHouse, as well as areas used by departments at faculties other than Natural Sciences.

Task force iHouse (chair: Aske Dahl Sløk, head of the Dean's secretariat) is responsible for the sub-process relating to the agreements concerning building 1590-1593. The agreements will be concluded between the Department of Chemistry and other units with activities in iHouse. The agreements must, among other things, ensure the servicing of iHouse with regard to purchasing, secretarial functions, mail/goods delivery and the sufficiently dynamic allocation of office and laboratory space. Basic secretarial services will be physically present in the building. On a more general level, the agreements will provide a basis for a good social,

professional, psychological and physical working environment in the building (see section 8 ‘sub-process: onboarding at departments’). The agreements must be in place by the end of Q2 2026.

6. Sub-process: Finances

The adjustment to the employees’ organisational placement and building space are, in principle, bottom line-neutral for the departments as the full funding relating to a given activity will be transferred from iNANO to the receiving department. Some departments will grow as the iNANO activities are transferred to them, but it will only be possible to quantify these effects in the course of the actual phase-out process. In particular, the departmental affiliation of senior scientific staff must be determined before the departments’ future financial situation can be mapped out and factored into the budgets. Therefore, the financial implementation will take place as from the 2027 budget, and all elements must be decided by the beginning of Q3 2026, when the 2027 budget is presented to the departments. The actual financial implementation will be handled by **task force finances (chair: Birgit Schiøtt, Dean)**.

7. Sub-process: Visibility and collaboration

The continued support for interdisciplinary collaboration within the field of nanoscience, and not least the visibility of AU’s nanoscience research activities will be ensured through the use of mechanisms established at the Faculty. The Faculty Management Team has expressed support for the establishment of either an Interdisciplinary Research Network (see <https://nat.medarbejdere.au.dk/forskerstoette/opslag-og-strategiske-initiativer/interdisciplinary-research-networks-irn>) or a nanoscience cluster (<https://nat.medarbejdere.au.dk/en/research-support/open-calls-and-strategic-initiatives-staff-portal-natural-sciences-aarhus-university/interdisciplinary-clusters>) driven by the nanoscience research environment. **Task force visibility (chair: Poul Nissen, Vice-Dean for research)** advises the Faculty Management Team and nanoscience research environments on the selection of the appropriate mechanism, in accordance with the guidelines for the two instruments and depending on the organisational and strategic adjustments of the departments following the transfer of iNANO’s employees (see section 8 below).

8. Sub-process: onboarding at departments

Part of the Faculty’s strategic funds for 2026 will be earmarked to support the departments’ social and professional onboarding of new employees (including organisational, team or individual competence development), and to safeguard and develop the study environment for nanoscience students.

Departments set to welcome employees from iNANO must draw up an action plan for their onboarding. The action plan must, as a minimum, cover:

- How the departments plan to integrate the new research fields, including infrastructure, in their strategy (including e.g. recruitment plans), organisation and support structures.
- Reporting relationships for new employees, so that everyone knows who their immediate manager is and who is responsible for their staff development dialogue (in Danish: MUS).
- Onboarding in relation to the local organisation, departmental policies and traditions, infrastructure and facilities, relevant forums, PhD programme etc.
- The functions and committee positions of the new employees
- Possible adaptation of the department’s organisation (committees, organisational structure, safety organisation etc.) to accommodate new staff and students, new premises and research facilities.
- Plans for use of funds from the Faculty’s strategic funds, see above.

The Faculty Management Team is responsible for the sub-process concerning the onboarding of iNANO employees into the departments. The action plans must be drawn up by the departments and discussed by the Faculty Management Team in the beginning of Q1 2026 before being presented in their final form at the end of Q1 2026.