

Research Evaluation at
Faculty of Natural Sciences,
Aarhus University

**PROTOCOL FOR THE
EVALUATION PROCES**

1/5 2024

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The purpose of this protocol is to gather all information about the evaluation process in one document to make sure that the process is as transparent as possible for all parties involved: the employees, the management teams and the external panels.

The protocol serves as a manual for the planning, the organisation and the follow-up of the evaluation.

1. OVERALL PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES FOR THE EVALUATION

Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation process is to develop the research quality and the research environments at the departments

The primary goal is to get ideas and advise for development of the research at the departments; both collectively at the departments through the self-evaluation process and through the advice to the department leadership from the external panels.

It is not the purpose to

- Make comparisons across departments – eg. the departments are not being rated or compared
- Allocate or redistribute funding based on the self-evaluation report or the advisory panel report

The process is not a backward looking status exercise. The self-evaluation report is partly a vision towards 2030, including concrete ideas for development to realize the vision. The vision in the self-evaluation report is based on the third part of the report, which is an analysis of the quality and the viability of the research environment at the department and how it can improve (SWOT approach).

See the next chapter for more information about the assessment process.

Principles

The main principles for the evaluation process are

- All the preparatory materials from the process will be made available to all employees at the department.
- The external panels are independent international peers and should have arms length to the current activities at the departments
- The process is based on the principles laid out in the [Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment](#). (AoRRA).
 - o This means eg. that we recognise the diversity of roles, careers and contributions to the research process and that impact of research results can be of a scientific, technological, economic and/or societal nature that may develop in the short, medium or long term
 - o We apply a broad definition/understanding of impact
 - o The process is primarily based on qualitative peer review, supported by quantitative data; the quantitative data are used as a supplement to the qualitative descriptions and analysis in the self-evaluation report
- The evaluation process at the departments follow the same overall templates; but there is a room for flexibility so that the departments can adjust the documents to their own needs and contexts.

Background

The former Faculty of Science and Technology (which the Faculty of Natural Sciences was a part of) conducted an evaluation process in 2018-19. Based on the experiences from this,

the University Management has decided, that all faculties/departments at the university shall conduct research evaluations in 2024-25.

At the faculties, the faculty managements (the dean, the vice deans and the department heads) lay down the framework for the process at the local level.

The content of this evaluation protocol has been adopted by the Faculty Management at the Faculty of Natural Sciences on the 21th December 2023 after advice from a working group¹ and after consultation with the Academic Council, the Faculty Committee for Diversity and Equality and the Faculty Research Committee.

¹ The members of the working group were Karl Anker Jørgensen (CHEM), Hans Brix (BIOL), Katrine Juul Andresen (GEOS), Anders Møller (CS), Rikke Louise Meyer (iNANO), Annette Møller (MATH). The working group was supported by Søren Klit Lindegaard and Astrid Rosalie Kligen from the Dean's Office.

2. THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Elements in the evaluation process

The assessment process has two main elements plus a follow up dialogue between the department management team and the Dean's Office.

The process is roughly described below:

1. The self-evaluation report

- The report is prepared on the basis of an inclusive process at the departments, which involves all scientific staff.
- The preparation of the report is a central part of the process, because the entire scientific staff has the opportunity to discuss the current status, how the department positions itself in relation to the current scientific and technological developments and megatrends and what is needed so that the department can develop in the desired direction.
- The departments are provided with a template for the self-evaluation report; including an appendix with relevant quantitative data. There will be some room for flexibility, eg. the department can add an extra theme in the analysis of the department's viability and it will also be possible to add (but not exclude) data to the standard dataset
- The maximum length of the report is 20 pages; excl. appendices.
- The target group for the self-evaluation report is exclusively the external panel. Therefore, the report must honestly reflect the department's challenges and opportunities, so that the panel is prepared to advise the department's management on the future development.

2. The panel visit and the report from the external panel

- One month before the visit, the panel receives the self-evaluation report and the program for the visit
- During the visit, the panel is presented for the main elements from the self-evaluation report and has the chance to ask probing questions to the department leadership and the employees
- At the end of the panel visit, the panel hands over a final draft for panel report with advice for the department to the dean and the head of department (10 pages). The head of department checks the report for factual inaccuracies and reports back to the panel chair, who finalizes the report and sends this to the Dean
- This report gives advice to the departments in developing the research capabilities at the departments (viability through scientific and societal impact).

The assessment process will be administratively supported in different ways

The overall framework and templates	Self-evaluation report	Panel visit
The faculty management has decided on the terms of reference, the template for the self-evaluation report and other background documents after advice from the working group	<p>The report is produced at department level and the process and working division is determined by the department leadership team</p> <p>The dean's office has compiled quantitative data for the appendix to the</p>	<p>The department secretariat will take care of the practical conduct of the panel visit</p> <p>The external panels will be supported by external consultants during the visit. The consultants will take notes</p>

	self-evaluation report for all departments	<p>from meetings and draft the panel report in collaboration with the panel</p> <p>The Dean's office will contact the panel members on the basis of proposals from departments</p>
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Follow up after the panel visit and the panel report is handed in

Before departure, the panel chair communicates the assessment and the advise to the head of department and the dean in two separate meetings.

When the final report is handed in, the head of department informs the employees at the department about the recommendations in the report and shares the document with all tenured staff at eh department.

The department management team initiates an internal reflection process, where the assessment results and advise are discussed. After this, the department management team makes a report to the Dean, where they comment on all the recommendations from the board. If they are not to follow some of the recommendations, they argue for it in this report.

Every year at the strategy meeting, the Dean's Office and the department leadership team has a dialogue about the progress in implementing the relevant recommendations from the panel.

In the Faculty Management Team, the heads of department share experiences and recommendations. The relevant recommendations are brought into play in the future faculty and university strategies. A faculty conclusion will also be sent to the university Senior Management Team.

See the timeline for the evaluation process in the appendix.

Arms length between department and panels

A core principle in the process is arms length. To keep the evaluation process as independent as possible, we follow arms length principles in these phases of the process:

Appointment of members to the external advisory panels

The departments come up with suggestions for members of the panels and send them to the Dean's Office. When the departments make a list of potential panel members, they are asked to follow these criteria:

- Only top researchers primarily from high ranking institutions
- Only international candidates (or Danes employed abroad)
- Candidates that complement each other so that they cover all research areas at the department
- A diverse field of candidates (gender, age, geography etc)
- Potential future partners for collaboration

- Preferably candidates with experience with evaluation of research units
- At least twice as many candidates as the panel size

When looking for potential panel members, the departments are urged to follow these “disqualification rules” to secure arms length in the assessment process

- Members of external panels may not have prepared, submitted or published any publications with researchers at the department within the past 5 years. Neither may they have any manuscripts under preparation/submitted
- Members of external panels may not have participated in common research projects with researchers at the department within the past 5 years. Neither may they have any projects under present preparation
- Members of external panels must comply with general administrative practice concerning impartiality, for instance they may not have a personal or financial interest in the outcome of the evaluation.

Furthermore, all potential panel members will be asked to indicate possible conflicts of interest.

Contact with the panel members

The Dean contacts the panel members after securing that the disqualification rules are followed. The Dean also takes diversity considerations into account (gender, age, geography etc) when composing the panel.

During the visit

To secure arms length between the Dean’s Office and the department as well as the panel and the department, the panels are supported by external consultants during the site visit at the university. The external consultants help taking notes during the visit and help drafting the panel report so that there is a final draft before the panel leave the university.

3. INFORMATION FOR THE DEPARTMENTS

Contact person at the department

Each department names a contact person, who is the coordinator at the department and who is the contact point at the department for the Dean's Office and the panel members regarding the travel, accommodation and the stay.

Writing the self-evaluation report

The template for the self evaluation report contains ideas and instructions for the content in the different sections in the report.

The departments are recommended to write section 2 and 3 first (the analysis) and after this write the first section of the report (the vision and the ideas for development).

There will be some room for flexibility, eg. the department can add an extra theme in the analysis of the department's viability and it will also be possible to add (but not exclude) data to the standard dataset.

The panel report from the evaluation in 2019 should be added as an appendix to the self evaluation report.

The composition of the panel

Each department groups its research activities into a certain number of "research areas". Once defined, these research areas structure the presentation of the department both in written form (self-evaluation report) and oral form (on-site visit). The number of "research areas" should correspond with the number of members of the panel.

The size of the panel is decided by the size of the department. The defined rule of thumb is

- 1-200 staff= 4 members of panel;
- 200-300 staff=4-5 panel members;
- 300+ staff=5-6 panel members

As outlined above, the department sends suggestions for panel members to the Dean's Office. The suggestions are checked up against the "disqualification rules" and the researchers are contacted by the Dean's Office.

Division of labour between the Dean's Office and the departments

Below is outlined the division of labor between the Dean's Office and the departments.

The Dean's Office is very responsible for the preparation of the process (terms of reference, templates, planning) and the closer we get to the panel visit, the departments take over the responsibility.

Task	Dean's Office	Department
Preparation of the process (templates, terms of reference, protocol etc)	X	
Suggestions for panel members		X
Initial inquiry to panel members	X	

Appointing panel chairperson	X	(X)
Developing generic program template for panel visit	X	
Filling out the program template		X
Sending the draft program to the panel chair	X	
Writing the self evaluation report		X
Mini tender for external consultants and contract with company for the task for all departments	X	
The practical planning of the panel visit (booking internal presenters during the visit, booking of hotel, travels, catering during visit, booking of rooms at the university, booking of restaurant, transport from hotel to university etc)		X
Print in hard copy all materials and presentations before the panel visit		X
Follow up at the department after the panel report is handed in		X
Follow up on faculty level	X	

4. INFORMATION FOR THE ADVISORY PANELS

Panel report will be made available for the tenured staff at the department

The panel advisory report will be made available to read for the tenured staff at the department after the visit. The report will not be made publicly available; eg. it will not be published on the university website. The purpose of the report is to give the heads of department a tool for developing the department and the research.

Panel chair

Before the panel visit, the Dean appoints a panel chair who leads the discussions in the panel's closed sessions and is overall responsible for finalizing the panel report. The panel chair is also responsible for the division of labor within the panel before the visit; eg. specific panel members can have responsibility for specific themes or parts of the panel report during the visit.

Support during the visit

The panel will be assisted by an external consultant during the visit; eg. for taking notes during meetings and to draft the panel report. This is intended to secure arms length between the panel and the department in writing the report and during the panel's closed sessions.

Information for the panels before the visit

Approx one month before the panel visit receives the self-evaluation report. The report is max. 20 pages plus appendices (CV's, quantitative data etc.).

In addition to this, the panel receives a 15-page background document about the faculty, the university and the "academic landscape" and framework conditions in Denmark. This also includes a description of the administrative structure at Aarhus University.

Remuneration for panel members

Aarhus University will bear the expenses for travel and accommodation for the panel members. In addition to this, the panel members will receive a remuneration for their effort; 3000 EUR for panel members and 4000 EUR for panel chairs

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ADVISORY PANELS

In 2024/2025, Aarhus University conducts a Research Evaluation at departmental level, aiming to support the continued development of local research environments. The starting point for the process is a self-evaluation and viability analysis performed by the department, resulting in a description of the department's research vision. Both elements feed into a review of the department's research environment, and advice to the department leadership, by an external panel.

Aarhus University has signed the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment, and the evaluation process has been designed in line with the core principles of the agreement (cf. evaluation protocol).

The self-evaluation report contains three chapters: "I. The department towards 2030", "II. The department today", "III. Analysis of the department's viability – reflections and perspectives". Chapter I builds on the analyses in chapter III.

Terms of reference for the external panel

1. To review, and provide advice on, the department's research vision towards 2030 (chapter I.A).
2. To review the department's translation of its vision, into ideas for development (chapter I.B), and provide advice, prioritization or rephrasing of the ideas.
3. To critically assess the viability analyses in chapter III, pointing out unexplored opportunities or imbalances in the analysis:
 - a. Scientific impact
 - b. Societal impact
 - c. Prerequisites for impact - the department's research staff and culture
 - d. OTHERS – chosen by department, delete if not relevant.
4. Other important observations and recommendations from the panel

5. APPENDICES

Time schedule for the process

The departments at the faculty are after agreement with the Rector being evaluated in 2024 and 2025. Two departments will have panel visits in November 2024 (Computer Science and Mathematics) and six departments will have visits in May/June 2025 (Biology, Physics and Astronomy, Geoscience, Chemistry, Molecular Biology & Genetics and iNANO)

More than one year before the panel visit

The Faculty Management approves Terms of Reference, the template for the self-evaluation report and the protocol for the process.

10-11 months before the panel visit

The departments sends suggestions for panel members. The Dean's Office checks for disqualification rules and starts sending out invitations to panel members.

Dear professor XX

On behalf of the Faculty of Natural Sciences at Aarhus University (Denmark), I am approaching you with a sincere request. At the faculty, we are currently initiating a research evaluation at all our departments. The evaluation consists of an analysis of research quality and viability and a 2030-vision for the department; including ideas for development.

We would be delighted if you could serve as one of five distinguished international experts evaluating and advising the Department of XX

The evaluation is based on a short self-evaluation report provided by the department and includes a panel visit. The panel visit is planned to be held from XX (arrival late afternoon) to XX (departure after lunch time).

The terms of references are attached to this e-mail, and we will circulate further preparatory material at the latest four weeks before the meeting. I also attach the rules defining potential conflicts of interest (we have however not identified recent collaboration between you and the department). We will ensure secretarial support throughout the visit.

You will be reimbursed for all your travel expenses and receive a general allowance of 3.000 Euro for your effort. As dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences I would be grateful if you were willing and able to support our work by sharing your expertise with us.

Natural Sciences is one of five faculties at Aarhus University, comprising 7 departments and the iNANO center. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me!

*Yours sincerely
xxxx*

Approx four months before the panel visit

The dean sends an email to the panel chair with a draft program for comment. The sends feedback.

Approx three months before the panel visit

The Dean's Office sends an email to the panel containing:

- Preliminary program for the panel visit
- Statement of confidentiality is sent to the panel (to be returned signed)
- Practical information for panel members.

- Information about the contact person at the department regarding booking of travel and hotel

Approx 1 month before the panel visit

The Dean's Office sends an email to the panel containing:

- The self-evaluation report
- The final program for the visit
- Background document about Aarhus University and the Danish research and education landscape.
- Template for the panel report

Approx 1 month before the panel visit

Mail to the panel chairman with contact information for the external consultant who will support the panel.

At least one week before the panel visit

The panel chair and the consultant have a virtual meeting where they align expectations about the support during the visit and plan the panel visit. In the evaluation process in 2019, several panels had good experience in distributing the tasks between the panel members before the visit to secure effective preparation and execution.

Protocol for research evaluation at Faculty of Natural Sciences, Aarhus University

Template for the self evaluation report

The template can be found on this page: <https://nat.medarbejdere.au.dk/en/policies-and-strategies>

The individual departments can make adjustments to the template

Format of advisory panel report

The template can be found on this page: <https://nat.medarbejdere.au.dk/en/policies-and-strategies>

SWOT – how to

This is a supplement to the template for the departments' self-evaluation reports

The template for the department's self-evaluation report includes a number of SWOT analyses. Generally speaking, a SWOT analysis consists of two parts. One part focuses on the department's own strengths and weaknesses, and the other on the external opportunities and threats. A SWOT analysis thus involves four elements: two internal (strengths and weaknesses) and two external (opportunities and threats). The bullet list below provides some inspiration concerning potential results of a SWOT analysis – naturally, the specific results will depend on which dimension / activity is being assessed (scientific impact, societal impact and viability).

The SWOT analyses are intended primarily as a tool for reflecting on the department's position in the respective field and opportunities for development in the near future. It can represent a form of benchmarking by looking at the performance of comparable units elsewhere, and a basis for accounting for e.g. the national and international policy context when developing the department's vision.

The department decides on the aggregate level of the SWOT, **which is to be presented as prose**. The SWOT analysis should be supported by specific evidence (of quantitative and/or qualitative nature). **Make sure to be concise and to avoid redundancies between the four elements.**

Potential results of a SWOT analysis

Strengths

Good staff quality and diversity / innovative results / strong impact / major awards, attraction of external funds / powerful infrastructure, contributions to shared infrastructure / adequate governance and management / adequate administrative and technical support / sound economy / strong network due to appeal to external parties (collaborators, stakeholders, students) / ...

Weaknesses

Sub-optimal staff quality and diversity, recruiting difficulties / weak impact / sub-optimal governance or management / sub-optimal innovation potential / financial deficits / inadequate infrastructure / inadequate administrative or technical support / weak network / ...

Opportunities

Important advances in research, technology or the economy / changes in government or other policy / changes socio-cultural patterns (e.g. demographics, health, lifestyle, ethics) / ...

Threats

Uncertainties related to technological developments / major institutional changes / new legislation (including EU) and other policy uncertainties / changes in funding landscape, strong "competitors" / ...

Generic program for panel visit

Each department groups its research activities into a certain number of “research areas”. Once defined, these research areas structure the presentation of the department both in written form (self-evaluation report) and oral form (on-site visit).

When an department develops its specific program proposal based on the generic program below, only the elements marked in green can be altered regarding duration, location, or content. Particularly, the panel's closed sessions must not be modified.

The departments program proposal should, to the greatest extent possible, include a detailed tentative schedule for every plenary session (with topic, speaker, from-to timeslot for presentation, from-to timeslot for questions). The schedule should closely align with the recommended time allocation between presentations and question/answer (Q&A) sessions.

The departments program proposal is to be submitted to the Dean´s Office, which will then obtain the panel chair's approval or preferences for changes.

Day 1		
05:30 – 06:15 p.m.	Dean welcomes panel chair Panel chair, dean, head of department, panel's secretary (?)	Dean's office or hotel (t.b.c.)
06:15 – 06:30 p.m.	Change of location for panel chair and head of department	n.a.
06:30 – 08:30 p.m.	Department representatives welcome panel – joint dinner Panel, max two department representatives, if possible a vice dean, panel's secretary (?)	t.b.d.

Day 2		
09:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Reviewers' closed session (incl. coffee) Panel plus support staff <i>Panel establishes a common understanding of the terms of reference, review procedure and criteria. Panelists exchange their preliminary assessment of the written material, incl. major open questions. Panel agrees on “division of labour” with respect to the ToR and the programme for the day.</i>	t.b.d.
10:00 – 11:30 a.m.	Plenary session: overview of the department and its vision towards 2030 (ToR 1) Panel, department representatives (t.b.d.) <i>Content: Chapter II.A and I.A from selfevaluation report.</i> Max 60' presentations, min 30' reviewers' Q&A	t.b.d.
11:30 – 12:15 p.m.	Lunch Panel, department representatives (t.b.d.)	t.b.d.

12:15 – 01:45 p.m.	Plenary session: presentation of research areas – part 1 Panel, department representatives (t.b.d.) <i>Content: Chapter II.B from selfevaluation report.</i> Max 60' presentations, min 30' reviewers' Q&A	t.b.d.
01:45 – 02:15 p.m.	Coffee break	t.b.d.
02:15 – 03:45 p.m.	Plenary session: presentation of research areas – part 2 Panel, department representatives (t.b.d.) <i>Content: Chapter II.B from selfevaluation report.</i> Max 60' presentations, min 30' reviewers' Q&A	t.b.d.
03:45 – 04:15 p.m.	Reviewers closed session Panel plus panel's secretary <i>Panel touches bases and – if necessary – adjusts division of labour for poster session</i>	t.b.d.
04:15 – 05:45 p.m.	Poster session: the departments viability - cases Panel, department representatives (t.b.d.) <i>Content: Cases from chapter III – to prepare presentation of the viability analysis in all dimensions the next morning.</i>	t.b.d.
05:45 – 6:45 p.m.	Break and pit stop at hotel	hotel
06:45 – 08:30 p.m.	Dinner Panel only (?)	t.b.d.

Day 3		
09:00 – 10:30 a.m.	Plenary session: The department's research staff and culture (viability analysis, part C) Panel, department representatives (t.b.d.) <i>Content: Chapter III.C in selfevaluation report. Refer to postersession from day 1 for cases illustrating "what is it we want"</i> Max 55' presentations, min 35' reviewers' Q&A	t.b.d.
10:30 – 11:00 a.m.	Coffee break	
11:00 – noon	Plenary session: The department's scientific impact (viability analysis, part A) Panel, department representatives (t.b.d.) <i>Content: Chapter III.A in selfevaluation report. Refer to postersession from day 1 for cases illustrating "what is it we want"</i> Max 40' presentations, min 20' reviewers' Q&A	
noon – 01:00 p.m.	Lunch² Panel, department representatives (t.b.d.) <i>Potentially with e.g. early career scientists or other staff representatives</i>	t.b.d.

² If you have a chapter III.D in your selfevaluation report (viability analysis dimension X: department's own choice), you need to cut lunch to 30 min (noon-12:30 and for panel only). The you use the slot 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. to talk both about societal impact and your "extra dimension" (III.D)

01:00 – 02:00 p.m.	<p>Plenary session: The department’s societal impact (viability analysis, part B)</p> <p>Panel, department representatives (t.b.d.)</p> <p><i>Content: Chapter III.B in selfevaluation report. Refer to postersession from day 1 for cases illustrating “what is it we want”</i></p> <p>Max 40’ presentations, min 20’ reviewers’ Q&A</p>	t.b.d.
02:00 – 04:00 p.m.	<p>Reviewers’ closed session (incl. coffee)</p> <p>Panel plus panel’s secretary</p> <p><i>Panel wraps up on ToR and drafts report, incl. open questions to be addressed in the following plenary session.</i></p>	t.b.d.
04:00 – 06:00 p.m.	<p>Plenary session: Recap of the department’s vision, and ideas for development</p> <p>Panel, department representatives (t.b.d.)</p> <p><i>Content: Chapter III.E (if not omitted), I.A and I.B. Based on the viability analyses presented earlier the same day, motivate the vision and discuss the ideas for development for the department</i></p> <p>Max. 75’ presentations, min. 45’ reviewers’ Q&A</p>	t.b.d.
06:15 – 07:00 p.m.	Break and pit stop at hotel	hotel
07:00 – 09:00 p.m.	<p>Reviewers’ closed session incl. working dinner</p> <p>Panel plus panel’s secretary</p> <p><i>Panel reviews and amends its own conclusions concerning ToR 3 from earlier same day. Panel wraps up on ToR 1&2 and drafts remaining parts of report, incl. open questions to be addressed next morning.</i></p>	Hotel seminar room (not restaurant)

Day 4		
09:00 – 10:00 a.m.	<p>Plenary session: reviewers’ remaining questions</p> <p>Panel, department representatives (t.b.d.)</p>	t.b.d.
10:00 – 12:00 a.m.	<p>Reviewers’ closed session</p> <p>Panel plus panel’s secretary</p> <p><i>Panel finalizes report. Panel wraps up on overall review process and collects feedback to the dean. Thank you, farewell and safe trip home (brown bag on the way)</i></p>	t.b.d.
12:00 – 12:30 p.m.	<p>Panel chair informs head of department about key results</p> <p>Panel chair, head of department plus max one additional department representative, panel’s secretary (upon request by panel chair?)</p>	t.b.d.
12:30 – 12:45 p.m.	Change of location for panel chair	n.a.
12:45 – 01:30 p.m.	<p>Panel chair has lunch with the dean</p> <p>Panel chair, dean</p>	Dean’s office or hotel (t.b.d.)

Statement of impartiality and confidentiality

All panel members will sign a statement of confidentiality and impartiality before embarking on the site visit. The template for the statement is inserted below

The Faculty of Natural Sciences at Aarhus University aims to ensure a transparent and independent assessment process of its departments' research activities. Consequently, all panel members have been asked to reflect on affiliations or relationships that could lead to a biased assessment, based on the following criteria defining potential conflicts of interest:

- *Members of external panels may not have prepared, submitted or published any SUBSTANTIAL publications with researchers at the department in question within the past 5 years. Neither may they have any publications under present preparation.*
- *Members of external panels may not have participated in common research projects with researchers at the department in question within the past 5 years. Neither may they have any projects under present preparation*
- *Members of external panels must comply with general administrative practice concerning impartiality, for instance they may not have a personal or financial interest in the outcome of the evaluation.*

What is essential is for the reviewers to feel that they will be able to conduct an independent and impartial review. All panel members will be asked to sign a statement with regard to impartiality and confidentiality, as included below.

Reviewer's name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Reviewer's affiliation: Click or tap here to enter text.

Participating in the assessment of the Department of XXX at Aarhus University

- I have read and understand the rules with regard to impartiality as explained above;
- I declare that I will not use or divulge any information furnished to me during the assessment process for the benefit of myself or others;
- I declare that I fully understand the confidential nature of the assessment process and that I will not disclose or discuss the materials associated with the assessment, my own review, or the assessment meeting with any other individual, either during the evaluation process or thereafter;
- I declare that to the best of my knowledge I have no affiliation or relationship to the department that could lead to a biased assessment;
- I declare that I have no conflict of interest regarding the department. If a conflict of interest arises either before or during the site visit, I will declare this and inform my contact person at Faculty of Natural Sciences, Aarhus University.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Place and date

Signature

Research Evaluation at Aarhus University – one pager describing overall purpose

The Senior Management Team at Aarhus University has adopted this description of the purpose of research assessments across the five faculties.



Notat

Inge Liengaard

Dato: 27. november 2023

Side 1/1

Research Evaluation at Aarhus University – one pager

Aim

The aim of the 2024-2025 research evaluation is to contribute to continuous cultivation of research quality at Aarhus University. The intention is to establish a forward-looking, constructive process with a focus on collective learning. Combining self-assessment and external review, the evaluation will enable each department to take stock of current research activities and assess the viability of research priorities. Focusing not on individual researchers, but on collective efforts, accomplishments, and potentials for improvement, the evaluation process shall support reflection about research quality and conducive research environments.

Framing

The overall framing is informed by discussions among the university's academic councils, captured under the heading of 'meaningful research evaluation'. A core feature is the flexible tailoring of the research evaluation to the strategic goals at local levels. Beyond the common commitment to self-assessment and external panel assessment, no uniform evaluation model is prescribed. Instead, each of the university's five faculties is charged with crafting an evaluation approach fitted to its needs. Inclusion of academic staff throughout the planning and implementation phases is intended to ensure that the process and results of the research evaluation remain meaningful in the context of specific research environments.

The framing is also inspired by the cross-European 'agreement on reforming research assessment', which Aarhus University has signed. In particular, the evaluation is intentionally designed to avoid internal horse races. Only a summary report will be relayed from each of the five faculties to the university senior management team, and only an overall university summary report will be relayed to the university board. Instead, emphasis is on learning in the respective research environments. For example, evaluation themes as well as composition of external review panels are explicitly chosen to optimise the potential for development and for receiving useful advice, not to make departments shine.

The evaluation unit is the collective research environment, and unreflective use of metrics to measure individual researchers' performance is avoided. Focus is on supporting the collective capacity for high quality research environments. While the 'agreement on reforming research assessment' takes a somewhat critical stand towards quantitative approaches, Aarhus University insists, however, that robust evidence, including quantitative data, provides an important platform for reflection and for asking the right questions. Hence, when used responsibly, i.e. particularly on aggregate levels and always in combination with qualitative assessment, quantitative data can make a valuable contribution to the research evaluation process.

Expected outcome

The 2024-2025 research evaluation results will support departments in making strategic decisions about future research priorities and organisational mechanisms promoting research excellence. It is the intention that the research evaluation process will be repeated regularly; e.g. with six years interval.



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