Target Areas for Competence Development 2016
Faculty of Engineering and Science

The contents of this document cover all staff at the Faculty of Engineering and Science.

Goals for competence development initiatives

Aalborg University (AAU) and thus the Faculty of Engineering and Science have three overarching values: collaboration, creativity and openness. Moreover, the university aims to develop its international profile and strives for an international culture and atmosphere. The faculty also wants to foster a motivating and engaging work environment where employees in all functions thrive and have the opportunity to develop to as high a level as their ability and drive can take them.

The aim of these target areas for competence development is to support the strategy and goals of the university and the faculty as well as to commit management and staff to giving priority to ongoing competence development, including continuing education. Ongoing competence development must ensure the needs of the faculty as well as the individual and professional development of its staff members.

Qualifications are the sum of the knowledge, skills and resources that each person possesses. Competence, on the other hand, is the ability to solve problems in practice in collaboration with others and to further develop competence in the professional domain. Thus competence expresses the need for qualifications other than those directly related to a specific profession.

Competencies to be developed

In order to achieve the strategic goals it is important that staff members develop their professional and personal competencies so that they can keep pace with increasing and changing demands. Therefore, the faculty's consultation committee (FSU) has decided to focus on the following areas:

- International competencies, such as language and intercultural understanding
- Competency to manage and deal with change processes (e.g. project management)
- Technical competencies that can support innovation and creativity in research
- Competencies that enable an optimally functioning learning environment
- Competencies that ensure optimal service to students, staff and society at large
- Personal competencies that promote a good working environment
- PBL
- Management

Methods to be used

There are many types of activities that can be used for realizing the competence development goals. Activities must therefore be harmonized with workplace and individual employee needs, which are clarified and planned in the staff performance review (*MUS*). Competence development can include:

- participation in internal and external courses
- participation in development projects
- on the job training, project organized work, knowledge sharing in networks, participation in

conferences and the like
- job swapping and job rotation
- temporary placement in posts vacant due to leave or the like in other parts of the organization
- participation in international collaboration and programs
- stays at relevant institutions
- international mobility programs.

It is important to keep in mind that competence development really only succeeds when what is learned is actually used in day-to-day work. It is only when new skills are actually used in work that competence development is achieved.

Implementation

The departments must allocate funds for staff competence development. Funds can also be applied for from the Competence Development Fund (see details below).

Staff performance review (*MUS*)

The staff performance review is an important tool for supporting competence development. The staff performance review takes place once a year. The staff performance review is used to:

- ensure the professional and personal development of the employee
- discuss to what extent the employee handles work assignments in accordance with their own expectations and those of the workplace
- identify whether the employee has development needs in relation to current and future assignments
- ensure that the manager has a comprehensive overview of the unit's competence preparedness and needs in relation to developing work assignments and overall goals.

At a minimum the review should ensure that:

- focus is on a development perspective
- pedagogical competences for the individual employee are discussed
- various working conditions among the individual employee groups are taken into account
- the review addresses the individual's circumstances (needs, problems and wishes for professional development) and discusses organizational issues in the unit, including social conventions, development plans and any problems with collaboration.

Financing competence development

There are different options for financing staff competence development.

- The department's reserve funds for competence development
- Employer-paid time off
- External funding: employees are encouraged to be aware of the opportunities to apply for external funding for competence development such as the Agency for Competence Development in the State Sector, Denmark (http://www.kompetenceudvikling.dk/). Additionally, in many external projects, it is possible to apply for competence development funding.

- The university's vacant place system: Making use of the university's vacant place system can offer many good options. See more at: http://evu.aau.dk/Tompladsordning
- Resources from the Competence Development Fund: The faculty administers the Competence Development Fund. There are four application cycles per year with the following deadlines: February 1, May 1, August 15, and November 1. See Appendix 2 for more on the application procedure.

Principles for Implementing Competence Development Funds

The Faculty Consultation Committee (FSU) will prioritize activities that correspond to the areas described in the section "Competencies to be developed." The following principles for granting funding will apply (in particular if the amounts in the applications received exceed the funds available):

- Technical-administrative staff (TAP) will normally be given priority over academic staff (VIP) since technical-administrative staff typically have the most difficulty obtaining funding for continuing education.
- Applicants who have not received funding from the Competence Development Fund within the current collective agreement period will be given priority.
- Applicants who are in the beginning of the job structure will be given priority over applicants later in the job structure.
- Applicants for long-term and costly activities such as a Graduate Certificate/Diploma in Business Administration (HD) cannot expect full funding through the Competence Development Fund. Applicants for such activities are encouraged to include a plan for financing with the application. If the plan for cofinancing can be documented, these applicants will be weighted higher.
- The funding will go primarily to employees who do not have management responsibility.

In the event of the cancellation of courses/activities that have already been granted funding, this funding normally cannot be used for other activities; the funding must therefore be repaid to the Competence Development Fund. This also applies to activities that turn out to be less expensive than the amount applied for and granted.

If the applicant has found a corresponding relevant course/activity to replace a canceled one, the Competence Development Fund Committee can modify the funding granted to apply to the alternative course, bypassing the regular application deadlines and based on a specific email from the applicant. If a scheduled activity is moved to a new time within the agreement period, the Competence Development Fund Committee, based on a specific email from the candidate, can typically approve that the funding granted is maintained.

The actual granting of funds from the Competence Development Fund is based on the plans that have been agreed on in the individual staff performance review (*MUS*).

Evaluation of competence development initiatives

The competence development initiatives apply to 2016 and will be evaluated by the two new FSUs in 2017.

See the link for documents regarding FSU TEKNAT and the Competence Development Fund

Appendix 1. Guidance on competence development

1. Decide on:

a) What you want to develop competence in
b) Why you want to develop competence
c) How you envision competence development being provided (read the section on Methods)
d) When it will take place

And consider:

e) Funding options (read the section on *Financing*)

2. Talk with your manager; this is for your benefit as well as that of the employer. It might be a good idea to bring the issue up in the staff performance review since the review result often can or must be used as documentation for such financing. Agree with the manager on:

a) Your development plan in both the short and long term
b) Action plan in relation to the specific competence development
c) Financing

Appendix 2: Procedure for applying for funding from the Competence Development Fund

a) Clarify for yourself the type of competence development you desire. On the Competence Development Fund's website (http://www.kompetenceudvikling.dk/content/kompetencefonden), see whether what you want falls within the scope of the options for receiving support.
b) Then go to your manager and ask him/her to recommend your application. If you have not had a staff performance review (*MUS)*, ask your manager about having one because there must be a development plan in order to receive funding.
c) Fill in the application form that is located on the FSU's website. [Application form](#) .
d) Send the application accompanied by your individual development plan and description of/documentation for the competence development activity you are seeking support for by email to the Faculty Consultation Committee, Attn: Lone Ørnsholt, llr@adm.aau.dk)
e) There are four application deadlines for the Competence Development Fund per year: February 1, May 1, August 15, and November 1. A reply will be sent out approximately two weeks after the application deadline as to whether you have been granted funding. The Faculty Competence Development Fund Committee, which consists of one member each from the TEKNAT FSU and the SUND FSU with secretarial service from the faculty, reviews the applications and prioritizes them based on this competence strategy. New applicants will be given high priority.
f) If you are granted support, please be aware that you are obligated to participate in the electronic evaluation of your competence development activity. The Agency for Competence Development in the State Sector, Denmark will send you an email about this. Otherwise, the ministry can require that the amount of the support be repaid.