



# Aarhus University's policy for quality assurance in education

## *Purpose of quality assurance*

The purpose of the quality assurance policy is to establish a common set of core values for quality assurance within the field of education for the entire university and across the different levels and main academic areas.

The quality assurance policy contains both the university's overall vision for education and learning, including principles for quality assurance, as well as a number of objectives for this work. The quality assurance policy must support Aarhus University's strategy in the field of education and also contribute to quality assure and further develop the degree programmes at Aarhus University.

The quality assurance system must provide documentation for Aarhus University's educational activities. It must also contribute towards enabling the study programme directors and the boards of studies make decisions based on a sound basis with a view to further developing the quality of the university's degree programmes.

Quality assurance is defined as the total of all activities and methods aimed at systematically and purposefully developing and documenting the quality of the university's efforts in the field of education.

## *Vision for education and learning at Aarhus University*

Aarhus University offers research-based degree programmes that are characterised by their strong academic professionalism. The good study environment is constantly in focus as an important element in student learning.

Teaching practices and forms are constantly developed to maximise student learning outcomes, involvement and motivation.

The university's graduates are innovative and capable of transforming knowledge and ideas into action in the national and international labour market of the future.

The university's graduates are active alumni who view their education as a foundation for life-long learning.

## *Principles for quality assurance*

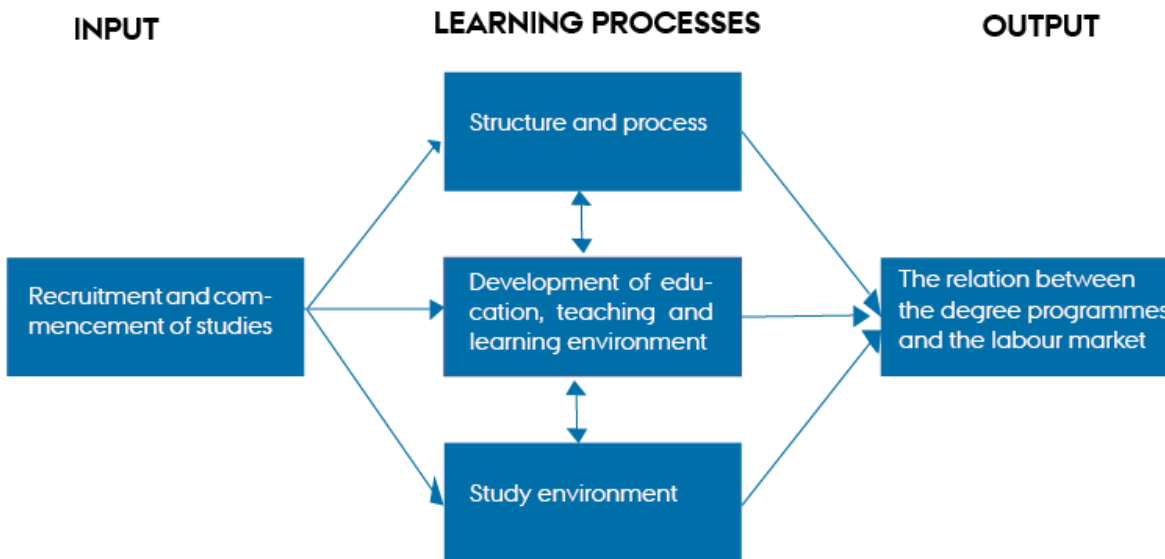
Quality assurance at Aarhus University is based on Aarhus University's vision for education and learning, and is supported by the following principles:

- Overall responsibility for quality assurance and its documentation lies with the study programme director, and is carried out in collaboration between the management, board of studies, staff and students.
- Quality assurance starts with the meeting between the students and the academic staff, who are the primary participants in the quality assurance and the development of the degree programmes. The university is characterised by having highly qualified staff, for whom quality assurance is an integrated part of the activities of the university.
- Going forward, quality assurance is founded on professionalism, dialogue and knowledge sharing. Quality assurance supports a systematic and sustained development of quality within the entire field of education and it also contains sufficient retrospective focus to meet the legislative requirements regarding documentation.
- External stakeholders are involved on an ongoing basis as part of the evaluation and development of quality assurance.
- The prerequisite for successful systematic quality assurance is that the specific objectives contained in related sub-policies are interpreted, clarified and carried out by the involved parties at all levels of the organisation on the basis of a clear division of responsibilities.



- The relevant management level must ensure that the necessary resources are available in relation to execution and evaluation of quality assurance.
- The ENQA standards are used as the starting point of quality assurance, and are characterised by co-determination, openness and transparency.

Quality assurance in the field of education is divided into five sub-sections: 1) Recruitment and admission, 2) Structure and process, 3) Development of education, teaching and learning environment, 4) Study environment and 5) The relation between the degree programmes and the labour market. A range of objectives specifying common values for quality assurance have been formulated for each sub-section.



Sub-sections and objectives are the focal point in the university's overall quality assurance system. The objectives of the quality assurance system are both quantitatively and qualitatively measurable.

Illustration of the policy's correlation with the associated quality assurance system in the field of education

Politik for kvalitetsarbejde			Politik for kvalitetsarbejde	
Delområde	Målsætninger	→	Indikatorer/dokumentation, procedurer og opfølgning	
Rekruttering og studie-start	1.1 Såvel danske som internationale... 1.2 Universitetets uddannelser...		Indikator 1a: Førsteårsfrafald BA Indikator 1b: Frafald efter nomeret tid + 1 år	
Struktur og forløb		→		
Udvikling af uddannelse, undervisning og læringsmiljø				
Studiemiljø				
Uddannelsens relation til arbejdsmarkedet	5.1 De studerendes indsigt i og... 5.2 De studerende tilbydes...	→		



## ***Sub-policies***

### **1 Recruitment and commencement of studies**

Aarhus University's objective is to attract well-qualified, talented Danish and international students. Aarhus University wishes to promote a conscious and qualified choice of degree programme and give the new students a good transition to life as a student at the university. The systematic efforts to continue to work with recruitment and admission mean that:

- 1.1 Both Danish and international students are given the opportunity to make a conscious choice of degree programme based on a well-informed and impartial foundation, achieved by providing them with knowledge of the contents and requirements of the degree programmes as well as life as a student.
- 1.2 The university's degree programmes are communicated to potential students with consideration of the university's strategic objectives and the needs of society.
- 1.3 The students are offered a start to their studies, which promotes academic integration, an introduction to academic skills and supports a good study environment.
- 1.4 The international students are provided with knowledge of the linguistic, cultural and educational conditions upon which the teaching at Aarhus University is based.
- 1.5 Both Danish and international students have the opportunity to make a conscious choice of Master's degree programme based on a well-informed and impartial foundation with a particular focus on job opportunities.

### **2 Structure and process**

Aarhus University objective is to offer degree programmes with academic progression and study activity equivalent to the ECTS prescribed for the overall study programme. The degree programmes are structured so that the students have the opportunity for flexibility and mobility and thus can influence their own education with a view to strengthening learning and motivation, as well as increasing the number of students who complete programmes. The systematic efforts to continue to work with the structure of the degree programmes, the courses offered and the courses themselves entail that:

- 2.1 The degree programmes are organised in such a way that there is an academic progression during the programme as a whole, while also being research-based with focus on meeting the specific educational objectives as well as the development of general academic competences.
- 2.2 The structure, content and context of the degree programmes are communicated to the students, such that the students have a well-informed and supervised basis on which to form an overview of relevant degree programmes and courses, and in this way, be able to make qualified decisions during the course of the study programme.
- 2.3 The teaching offered and requirements for study activity for the degree programmes are equivalent to the ECTS prescribed for the degree programmes.
- 2.4 There is a transparent and flexible practice for merit in relation to descriptions of objectives with a view to ensuring academic excellence and strengthening the mobility of students both nationally and internationally.



### 3 Development of education, teaching and learning environment

Aarhus University aims to offer and develop attractive research-based and attractive vocational degree programmes based on solid academic competences, affiliated with an active research environment, so that the students may be educated to the highest level while allowing them to unfold their talents. The university's learning environments must be motivational for the students and supportive of the university's degree programmes, with room for in-depth academic concentration and development. The systematic efforts to constantly develop degree programmes, teaching and learning environments at Aarhus University entails that:

- 3.1 Aarhus University's educational profile is developed on the basis of the university's strategic objectives while taking into account society's needs.
- 3.2 The study programme directors and the boards of studies, together with the academic environments, develop the academic profile and the educational objectives for the degree programmes in collaboration with the students, graduates, co-examiners, and employers through, among other things, systematic assessment of all or parts of a given degree programme.
- 3.3 The research-based degree programmes are organised to the greatest possible extent by active researchers based on the most relevant and latest research within the subject area, just as the students receive the opportunity to acquire and practice scientific working methods over the course of the degree programme.
- 3.4 The physical surroundings are developed so that they contribute to stimulate learning, and the lecturers make use of both the physical surroundings and the digital learning environments to create attractive study and learning environments for the students.
- 3.5 Digital learning environments will be developed with a view to supporting learning in its various phases.
- 3.6 The selected method of teaching provides an opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and competences that are included in the educational objectives, and which are tested at the exam. There is a balance between the clearly formulated and communicated educational objectives and the evaluation criteria that are announced in relation to the exam.
- 3.7 The method of evaluation used is developed on an ongoing basis and is valid, transparent and relevant, as well as motivational and part of the learning process. The students are assessed based on recognised and accessible national and international criteria, regulations and procedures, which are consistently applied in collaboration with the organisation of co-examiners.
- 3.8 The students' assessment of the teaching and course are included in the development of these through systematic evaluation based on learning and evaluation theory.
- 3.9 Good teaching and teaching development is recognised, credited, rendered visible and supported by a clear salary and incentive structure for staff with educational responsibilities.
- 3.10 Lecturers' didactic academic skills will be shaped, maintained and advanced for student teachers, PhD students, part-time staff, assistant professors, associate professors, and professors alike, and there is focus on teaching-related skills when appointments are made.
- 3.11 The part-time teaching staff are assigned to permanent academic staff and environments. The part-time teaching staff must have access to the university's activities and resources for promoting quality in the areas of teaching and education.



#### **4 Study environments**

Aarhus University's objective is to provide an attractive study environment, which contributes to attracting and retaining Danish and international students. A good study environment entails academic and social integration, involvement, wellbeing and supports learning. The systematic efforts to continuously develop the study environment at Aarhus University entail that:

- 4.1 The attractive study environment is based on academic integration, which is created through dialogue between study program leadership, academic environments and the students.
- 4.2 The study environment is supported by a stimulating learning environment in which teaching staff and students interact.
- 4.3 Both Danish and international students participate in the academic community, just as support is provided to initiatives aimed at academic and social integration of the students.
- 4.4 The students are offered individual or collective student guidance and feedback on their academic performance with a view to increasing learning.
- 4.5 The students are offered student guidance throughout their studies, and students with special needs are also offered consultancy on resources and conditions.
- 4.6 The physical, social, aesthetic and digital facilities are developed, so that they support the study environment.

#### **5 The relation between the degree programmes and the labour market**

Aarhus University's objective is that degree programmes completed at the university will educate graduates for the regional, national and international labour market and provide the opportunity for attractive jobs and careers. The students must experience coherence between the content of the degree programmes and the requirements of the labour market - nationally and internationally. Graduates from AU can contribute with the most up-to-date knowledge, skills and interdisciplinary competences, all of which create value for society. The graduates must have an opportunity for a continued professional development in continuation of, or as a supplement to, their education. The systematic efforts to continue to work with the relation between the degree programmes and the labour market entail that:

- 5.1 The students' insight into and contact with a future labour market is enhanced, partly through the possibility of including a project-orientated course, and partly through the opportunity to carry out project-based assignments in collaboration with Danish and/or foreign private and/or public-sector enterprises as part of their degree programme.
- 5.2 The students are offered strong academic study programmes that provide the opportunity of entrepreneurial and interdisciplinary education and modules.
- 5.3 The path from education to job is facilitated by continuous offers of information and career guidance regarding completion of the study programme, and career options including information on the international labour market.
- 5.4 The relevance of the degree programmes in relation to the requirements of the labour market are developed on an informed basis through ongoing, published studies of the employment situation of graduates and through strengthened dialogue with students, alumni and employers respectively.
- 5.5 The range of continuing and further education courses offered is developed in such a way that graduates will be given the opportunity to continue their academic development in continuation of their previous degree programme or as a supplement to this.

The quality assurance policy is drawn up by the Education Committee in cooperation with the academic environments and the students.

The policy is approved by the senior management team as of 17 June, 2013 and is applicable from 1 August, 2013.