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**Terms of reference for the steering committee for the establishment of a faculty of social sciences and humanities and the
integration of SSH and STEM in the programmes**

## ***Background***

AAU has an ambition to be a university with a unique and clear profile. *Knowledge for the World* is about creating high quality in all activities where research and education in partnership with the larger society provide solutions to the major global challenges and thus contribute to a more sustainable future.

At the same time, Aalborg University's way of doing research and providing education is increasingly needed in society as the problems facing the world are becoming more complex every day. It has long been recognised that solving the major global challenges requires collaboration across disciplines, environments and areas of expertise[[1]](#footnote-1). Good examples of this are climate change and – quite topically – the coronavirus epidemic.

AAU has an important role to play in this complex world. Our problem- and project-based approach to education and research, combined with our many years of experience partnering with the world around us, mean that we have special opportunities to contribute to the solutions, insights and realizations that will ensure a sustainable future – economically, socially and environmentally.

If we want to help change the wider world, we must be prepared to change our own world first. Hundreds of years of research traditions and cultures have created the university world we now operate in. However, the old traditions and cultures do not take sufficient account of the complex global challenges we face today and the demands that society at large places on universities to respond to these challenges.

The recent reputational analysis confirms that AAU must differentiate itself from the other Danish universities – we need to have a more distinct profile, and we must make clear that we are responsive to the demands and expectations that the society has of us.

Aalborg University is currently working on defining the content and shape of a new strategy – *Knowledge for the World 2* – that will be ready in January 2022. It is already clear in the discussions at present that in the new strategy period AAU must continue to develop its learning model, focus on creating maneuverability and take its distinctive form of collaboration to even greater heights. Interdisciplinarity must be strengthened and cooperation between research, education and knowledge collaboration must be increased.

The University Board and the Executive Management wish to deliver on the demands of society and to continue the strategic work to ensure AAU a unique profile and high quality in all activities. At the same time, they want to ensure a new strategy period where we make every effort in terms of content and where the necessary organisational structures that will define and implement the content of the new strategy are in place.

Therefore, on 6 January 2021, on the recommendation of the Rector, the University Board decided to restructure parts of AAU's organisation and the structure and academic content of the study programmes:

The changes decided are:[[2]](#footnote-2)

* Merging the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Social Sciences into a new strong faculty named: Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)
* Integration of SSH and STEM competences in the programmes

On this basis, the Rector is setting up a steering committee with responsibility for preparing a proposal for the Executive Management on the specific implementation of the actions decided. To this end, the steering committee may set up one or more working groups.

## ***Purpose***

The aim of the project is to establish a more robust SSH organisation with better opportunities for developing the research areas and programmes of the future, and that will match the STEM faculties in terms of research and finances. The SSH faculty must have a unique profile and potential to contribute to agenda-setting research and solutions to global challenges to an even greater degree.

It is also the aim to develop and implement a framework for the structure and academic content of the programmes that promotes the T-shaped competences in the programmes where students achieve high academic competence within their own subject domain (the T’s vertical axis), as well as acquire the ability for holistic thinking across the main areas (the T’s horizontal axis).

*Tasks of the steering committee*

The overall responsibilities of the steering committee are:

* to draw up a detailed timetable and process plan for the project
* to ensure the involvement of staff, councils and collegiate bodies during the process
* to ensure a high level of communication to staff members on the changes during the process
* to set up a number of working groups that, depending on the working group’s focus, will manage the investigation and clarification of the project’s various elements and make recommendations for the decisions of the steering committee
* to identify and investigate SSH activities throughout the university
* to prepare an overall profile description of the SSH faculty's academic activities
* to outline the programme and research portfolios of the SSH Faculty
* to outline the organisation of the SSH faculty's programmes, research, research training and administration
* to identify and analyse the already existing integration of SSH and STEM competences in the university's ordinary programmes
* to develop a framework for future integration of SSH and STEM competences in the programmes
* to develop and initiate an implementation plan for the integration of SSH and STEM competences in the programmes
* to ensure qualification of the elements of the project content
* to prepare and implement effective administrative implementation of the actions decided, particularly with regard to finances, study administration, HR, IT and buildings
* to identify the project's implications, including legal, financial and personnel matters, etc.
* to ensure follow-up of the project's results

The steering committee reports to the Executive Management. Based on the steering committee's discussions and the working groups' activities, the steering committee prepares a recommendation for the Executive Management on the profile, programme and research portfolios of the SSH faculty, as well as a framework and implementation plan for the integration of SSH and STEM competences in the programmes.

The work of the steering committee is supported administratively by Project Manager Vibeke Pedersbæk, Rector's Office.

*Scope*

The steering committee is not responsible for materials for the University Board. This responsibility lies with the Rector.

*Composition of the steering committee*

The steering committee is composed to reflect overall knowledge of all educational and research activities at AAU as well as in-depth knowledge of the academic activities at the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The chair of the steering committee has overall responsibility for the project's progress and results.

The members of the steering committee are:

* Per Michael Johansen, Rector (Chair)
* Jeppe Emmersen, Acting Pro-rector for Education
* Søren Lund Christiansen, University Director
* Rasmus Antoft, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences
* Henrik Halkier, Dean, Faculty of Humanities
* Mogens Rysholt Poulsen, Dean, Faculty of Engineering and Science

*Timetable*

The establishment of an SSH faculty takes effect as of 1 January 2022. The work on the development of a framework for the integration of SSH and STEM competences is awaiting the appointment of a pro-rector and is expected to begin in late summer 2021. The steering committee will draw up a detailed timetable for the project.

1. See e.g.: Lamy, Pascal et al., Lab-FAB-APP Investing in the European Future We Want. Report of the Independent High Level Group on Maximising the Impact of EU Research & Innovation Programmes. (European Commission, July 2017, p. 16).

See e.g.: Beyond the Horizon: LERU’s views on the 9th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. <https://www.leru.org/files/LERUs-Views-on-the-9th-Framework-Programme-for-Research-and-Innovation.pdf>, LERU, June 2017.

See e.g.: CESAER and UNICA, Open letter with recommendations on effective funding for inter- and transdisciplinary research, November 2020. <https://www.cesaer.org/content/5-operations/2020/20201130-open-letter-effective-for-fund-inter-and-transdisciplinary-research.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In addition to the two changes mentioned above, the Executive Management established a special research and teaching unit for PBL, the Institute of Advanced Studies in PBL. A separate steering committee is responsible for establishing the PBL unit and therefore this is not part of the responsibility of the SSH steering committee. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)