

# KNOWLEDGE FOR THE WORLD

AAU STRATEGY  
2026-2029



AALBORG  
UNIVERSITY

# OUR AMBITION

We are recognised as the problem-solving university.

As a leading player in our society, we create progress with cutting-edge, research-based knowledge in active collaboration with the outside world.



PER MICHAEL JOHANSEN  
RECTOR

## KNOWLEDGE FOR THE WORLD

At AAU, we bridge global and regional dimensions. We create knowledge for the world in close collaboration with private and public partners – and we translate international research into solutions.

Our strong foundation is research-based knowledge. The most reliable knowledge there is.

AAU's degree programmes stand on this solid foundation. And our internationally recognised learning method PBL (problem and project-based learning) is the guarantee that our highly qualified graduates have the skills and competences to make positive changes. They are used to working with real problems. They have learnt to think for themselves. And they have also learnt that you become smarter together.

For more than 50 years, AAU has been solving complex problems based on research and made an important difference to society. But our ambitions do not stop there.

We will be recognised as a problem-solving university and as a leading player in society that creates progress using cutting-edge knowledge in active collaboration with the outside world. We will play a key role in transforming the world into a better place to be.

With Knowledge for the World 2026–2029, the Executive Management has prepared a strategy for the next three years at AAU. The strategy is not an expression of everything we do and plan, but it highlights four key areas that we need to prioritise. At the same time, we will continue to develop AAU on an ongoing basis so that the University constantly adapts to new demands, expectations and needs in society – including the rapid development in AI, which will be of crucial importance during this strategy period.

The next pages will provide you with insight into the strategic direction that will equip AAU optimally to face the challenges of the future.

Per Michael Johansen  
Rector

# A STRENGTHENED AAU IN FOUR KEY AREAS WILL INCREASE OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SOCIETY

## OUR FOUR STRATEGIC THEMES

- ☐ ☐ We will strengthen our leading position in engineering programmes with top-quality international research and education of manpower that is in high demand.
- ☐ ☐ We will expand and develop our mission initiatives so that together we can meet major challenges faced by our society.
- ☐ ☐ We will promote innovation and growth that contribute to new solutions and to a positive development of our society.
- ☐ ☐ We will attract and develop research talent to ensure a future-proof AAU.





## WHAT WE DO

# WE STRENGTHEN OUR LEADING POSITION IN ENGINEERING

### We create the engineering programmes of the future

We will expand our position as a world leader in engineering programmes, where our engineering students are taught the technologies of tomorrow and where we integrate the latest teaching methods. We will ensure that our degree programme portfolio has a sharp profile and matches the technological, societal and business-related needs of the future.

### We invest in positions of strength and research infrastructure

To create a range of internationally leading research environments with business relevance, we will invest in our positions of strength and research

infrastructure. We are expanding our state-of-the-art laboratories and test environments that function as open platforms for collaboration and that are of great relevance to the business sector. The aim is to attract national and international partners and support cutting-edge research and transformational innovation.

### We promote technological development

We will promote collaboration between the engineering field and AAU's other research areas. We will organisationally and financially support innovative and cross-faculty projects of great research and innovation potential.



# 2029

## Where the brightest engineers of the future are hatched

In 2029, AAU will be the natural first choice in the engineering field. We educate engineers who create concrete changes and develop solutions that meet the needs of the future. They are in high demand because their education and training enable them to solve real problems in close interaction with businesses, public stakeholders and society in general.

AAU has a strong position as a leading university in engineering and technical sciences with world-class research environments, advanced infrastructure and a special ability to promote interdisciplinary collaboration across our academic fields.

Our national and international partnerships are mutually value-creating, and our research-based knowledge leads to groundbreaking innovation, new businesses and solutions that make a positive difference to the world.

- └ 20% increase in intake  
We have increased the intake on our engineering programmes by 20%.
- └ 30% increase in co-publications with the business sector  
We have increased the number of engineering co-publications with partners in the business sector by 30%.
- └ DKK 1 billion in engineering research funding  
We have raised DKK 1 billion in external engineering research funding.



## WHAT WE DO

# WE EXPAND AND DEVELOP OUR MISSION INITIATIVES

### We transform ideas into action

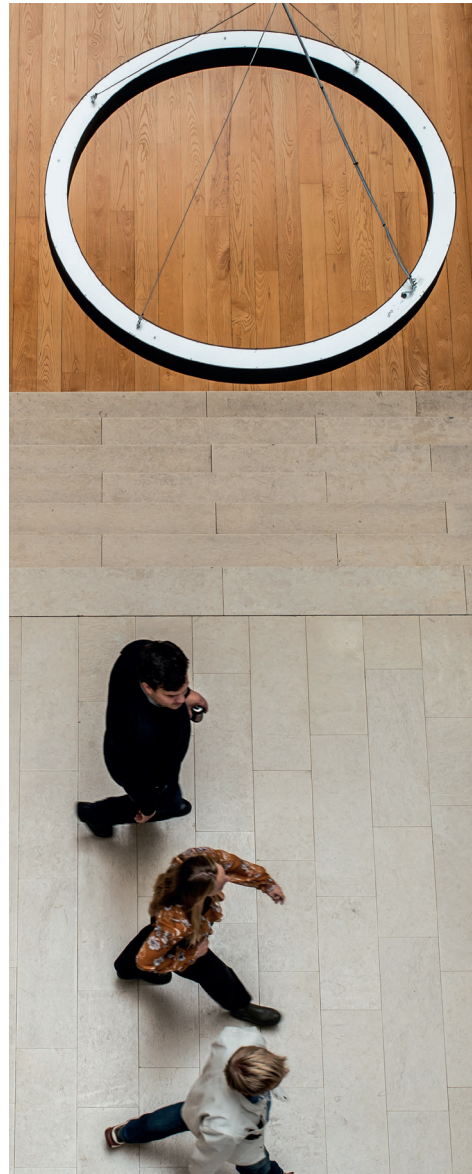
We will create a clear and structured method for generating projects in collaboration with external partners. Together, we will develop a project portfolio that will contribute to our joint missions at AAU. We will also ensure that there is funding for priority projects, and we will involve our students in the missions via their semester projects.

### We value mission-driven research

We will create a culture in which we value mission-driven research and recognise it for the significant and important results that it creates or makes possible. This will include the creation of a new mission award for recognition of a research group that is showing the way to significant societal effects. In addition, we will disseminate awareness of the missions through targeted communication both internally at AAU and externally.

### We create a clear structure and clarity

We will establish a clear joint framework for participation in the missions with broad organisational and managerial rooting. Mission concept and management are gathered and aligned to ensure that goals, time frames and deliverables are clear for all missions.



# 2029

## Where the foundation stones for the great breakthroughs are laid

In 2029, AAU's mission initiatives will have left a clear footprint in the work aimed at solving some of the biggest challenges faced by our society.

Through research, we have created new knowledge and new solutions that make it easier for society to act, prioritise and create lasting changes.

In AAU's joint missions, we work determinedly to achieve crucial 'tipping points' – i.e. the points at which an initiative moves from being promising to creating lasting and accelerating progress towards achievement of the mission goals. We do this in close and binding interaction between students, researchers, industry, authorities and civil society.

Together, we transform knowledge into action with a common goal: to contribute to solving the major challenges facing the world.

- ┌ 100% growth in external funding  
We have increased our landing of funding by 100% in our joint missions.
- ┌ 50 examples of effect on society  
We have described 50 qualitative examples of the effect on society from mission-oriented research.
- ┌ 50% of the missions reach a tipping point  
We have ensured that 50% of our joint missions have reached at least one tipping point.



## WHAT WE DO

# WE DRIVE INNOVATION AND GROWTH

### We strengthen our innovation activities

We will link AAU's strong research environments and activities with national and regional needs so that we establish fruitful collaborations between AAU and external partners that transform this knowledge into solutions. Innovation must have a clear place in the research environments, and AAU's innovation profile must be strengthened with compelling narratives about visible results. In addition, we will ensure that the next generation of innovation areas are identified and matured.

### We secure the funding chain for innovation

We will strengthen AAU's capacity to mature, prioritise and scale research-based innovation through coherent financial opportunities, including by supporting the early stages of the development of ideas and testing in

research and study environments.

In addition, we will develop partnership models to support projects with high innovation potential. And, finally, we will strengthen access to venture capital by engaging investors and funds in our innovation environments.

### We exploit new potential

The universities have been given new expanded framework conditions. We will use these as a driving force to engage researchers and students in transforming knowledge into socially relevant development. We will simplify administrative processes, make the framework clearer and provide good examples, so that researchers and students across AAU find it attractive and easy to work with innovation. Finally, a new innovation academy will strengthen innovation and entrepreneurship competences of both students and researchers.



# 2029

## Where innovation matures and becomes reality

In 2029, AAU will be characterised by a visionary and value-creating innovation environment where ideas are captured, developed and transformed into action.

Students, researchers, companies and public organisations work closely together, and new knowledge, academic curiosity and creative thinking become social, organisational, cultural and technological contributions that create value for businesses, society and the University. In this way, we ensure that our knowledge does not remain theoretical but is brought into play in the world.

Innovation at AAU is supported by a clear framework and clear incentives as well as a coherent funding chain from idea to testing, maturation and scaling. We prioritise early maturation, strong partnerships and venture capital, so that promising and socially relevant innovation projects have optimal conditions for growing.

- ┌ **30% more innovation projects**  
We have increased the number of innovation-oriented projects by 30%.
- ┌ **30% growth in number of start-ups**  
We have increased the total number of start-ups at AAU by 30%.
- ┌ **50% increase in innovation funding**  
We have achieved 50% growth in total funding for AAU start-ups and innovation projects.



## WHAT WE DO

# WE ATTRACT AND DEVELOP TALENTED RESEARCHERS

### We attract talented researchers

We will attract more Danish and international research talents both by increasing their knowledge of our strong research environments and by highlighting the attractive facilities we offer. AAU's excellent research environments must receive international attention to increase the attractiveness of the research environments. In addition, the opportunities that AAU offers to new research talents must be presented in an appealing manner.

### We develop excellent research talents

We will have clear managerial focus on the development of research talents and on creating a strong talent culture at AAU. Among other initiatives, this means that we prepare action plans for selected research areas with clear goals for how we find, support and

develop particularly talented researchers. We will also strengthen mobility throughout the individual researcher's career, including opportunities for studying abroad and participating in international research environments.

### We retain and include the international research talents

We will ensure that our international research talents are included and thrive at AAU: We will support them so that they experience being part of the community both academically and socially. This entails that we will further develop our procedure for how we introduce them to AAU, that we will expand the range of assistance that we offer, such as networks and guidance, and that we will offer help to the accompanying family.



# 2029

## Where talents truly thrive and develop

In 2029, AAU will be a workplace in high demand among talented researchers worldwide. They are attracted to AAU because we are known for strong research environments, attractive career opportunities and a culture in which talents can develop and make a name for themselves. At the same time, we are known for welcoming both researchers and their families and for making it easier to become part of our academic and social communities.

We work determinedly with talent initiatives and programmes aimed at strengthening the entire career path and creating a strong basis for stable talent recruitment.

We attract new researchers, develop those we have and offer a framework that makes highly qualified talents choose to stay and create their future at AAU.

- ┌ 25% more applicants for scientific positions  
We have increased the number of Danish and international researchers applying for employment at AAU.
- ┌ 25% increase in career grants  
We have developed several AAU research talents who are landing career grants.
- ┌ 20% increase in international researchers' recommendation of AAU as a workplace  
We have increased international researchers' well-being, sense of belonging and desire to stay.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

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