

Method paper: Dialogue in leadership teams on AAU's leadership principles

Purpose

To create shared reflection and dialogue in the leadership team on how AAU's leadership principles can be understood and put into practice in the local context. The aim is to strengthen shared understanding and inspire further work with the leadership principles.

Time frame:

- 60 minutes
- The process unfolds over several leadership meetings, with each meeting addressing different guiding principles

Target team:

- Leadership teams in the Shared Services departments
- Department leadership teams
- Secretariat leadership teams
- Possibly teams of research leaders/section leaders, if they are not part of the department leadership team

Tips for facilitation

- Be curious and open – there are no 'right' answers
- Use breaks and silence actively – reflection takes time
- Keep an eye on the time – use a timer if necessary
- Create a safe environment – all perspectives are welcome

Participants

- 5-12 leaders per leadership team
- The head of department/head of secretariat facilitates the process
- Optionally assign roles such as timekeeper and note-taker at the start of the process

Preparation (before the meeting)

- Select 1-2 of the five guiding principles that you want to work with in this process (the remaining guiding principles will be addressed at upcoming meetings, where the process will be repeated)
- Choose which of the two versions of process follow-up you want to use in the leadership team, and adjust the slide material accordingly (see step 4 below)
- Consider sending the leadership principles out digitally to the leadership team in preparation for the item
- Print the leadership principles or share them digitally
- Make sure to have a whiteboard, flipchart or digital notes ready for summarising

PROCESS:

1. Introduction (10 min)

- Frame the process as the implementation of 'Leading Together - Leadership Principles' in your leadership team
- The purpose is to gain a common understanding of what this means for us as a leadership team and how we can put it into practice
- Brief presentation of the purpose of the leadership principles and the five guiding principles, with emphasis on the 1-2 guidelines you will be working with in this process
- Brief presentation of the steps in the process:
 1. Individual reflection
 2. Dialogue in teams or with the entire leadership team (depending on the number of participants)
 3. Joint summary of actions

2. Individual reflection (5 min)

All participants read through the 1-2 selected guiding principles and reflect individually on the following questions:

- *What does this guiding principle mean to me as a leader?*
- *How do I already see it in our practice?*
- *Where do I see potential for development?*

Each participant writes down their reflections (on paper or digitally). The individual reflection can also be shared as a preparatory task ahead of the leadership meeting.

3. Dialogue in teams or with the entire leadership team (25 min)

- Divide the leadership team into smaller groups (3-5 people)
- Share your individual reflections and discuss:
 - *What common understandings do we have?*
 - *Where do we differ?*
 - *What does the guiding principle mean in our local context?*
- Divide the time equally if two guiding principles have been selected for this process

Questions for the group:

- *How are we already working with the guiding principle?*
- *How can we as a leadership team work with this guiding principle?*
- *What specific actions or measures can we take?*

4. Joint summary (15 min)*

Here you can choose between two different processes:

A: Action plan based on the discussion about the leadership principles

B: Formulation of the leadership team's understanding of the leadership principles

A: Action plan based on the discussion about the leadership principles

- Each team shares 1-2 points or suggestions for specific actions
- The leader facilitates a joint discussion to help select specific actions, which are noted in the action plan template (in PowerPoint or PDF) based on the following questions:
 - *What specifically will we work on?*
 - *Who is involved/responsible?*
 - *When should it happen?*
 - *How will we work on it?*
 - *Where should it happen in the organisation?*
 - *How and when will we follow up?*

B: Formulating the leadership team's understanding of the leadership principles

- Each group shares 1-2 points about their understanding of the guiding principle in your leadership context or suggestions for specific actions
- The leader summarises and notes the leadership team's understanding of the leadership principles in the template (in PowerPoint or PDF)
- The result of the process is that you have formulated the leadership team's own version of the leadership principles based on your discussions, understandings and actions.

*(*If there are 5 or fewer leaders in the leadership team and therefore only one team in step 3, let this summary be an extension of step 3, add 5 minutes to the time frame and summarise on a whiteboard/flipchart as you go along).*

5. Wrap-up (5 min)

This is the first step in translating the leadership principles into your practice. The leadership team will carry the dialogue forward and continue building on it in upcoming leadership meetings.

If you have any questions about the process and its facilitation, please contact your HR Partner or HR Wellbeing and Development trivselogudvikling@adm.aau.dk.