AALBORG UNIVERSITET

Aalborg University

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Date: 03-02-2026
Case number: 2026-000-01759

Committee meeting

A meeting of the Committee for Equality and Diversity is hereby convened

Wednesday 25 February 2026, 13.00-16.00

Fredrik Bajers Vej 7k, room 0.25

Agenda:

Points for approval

1. **Approval of agenda (13.00-13.05)**
   Appendix: Agenda for the Committee for Equality and Diversity meeting on 25 February 2026

2. **Approval of minutes (13.05-13.10)**
   Appendix: Minutes of the meeting of the Committee for Equality and Diversity on 18 November 2026

Points to be considered

3. **Offer of free hygiene products at AAU's three campuses (13.10-13.35)**
   Appendix: Case presentation

4. **Start of work on new strategic action plan (13.35-13.50)**
   Appendix: Case presentation
   Appendix 4.1: Memorandum (preliminary analysis for new strategic action plan)
   Appendix 4.2: Status of the current strategic action plan

   BREAK (13.50-14.00)

5. **Prioritisation of initiatives in the new strategic action plan (14.00-15.45)**
   Appendix: Case presentation

Points for orientation

6. **Announcements from the chairperson (15.45-15.50)**

7. **Committee announcements (15.50-15.55)**

8. **Any Other Business (15.55-16.00)**

Offer of free hygiene products available at AAU's three campuses

Recommendation

It is proposed that the Committee for Equality and Diversity discusses the possibility of offering free hygiene products in the toilets at AAU's three campuses, including the framework, scope and financial implications.

Appendix

No appendixes.

Case presentation

Background

In January 2025, the Committee for Equality and Diversity received an inquiry from Søren Lind and Anne Marie Kanstrup asking the Committee for Equality and Diversity to explore the possibility of offering free hygiene products to students and staff at Aalborg University. The inquiry included considerations of costs, supplier and administration.

The matter was discussed at a Committee for Equality and Diversity meeting on 25 February 2025, where there was a general consensus that such an initiative can contribute to increased security and well-being for a larger group of our students and staff at Aalborg University's three campuses. However, the committee requested further knowledge, including experience from similar initiatives as well as a more concrete overview of the financial costs associated with the initiative.

In the summer of 2025, the University of Copenhagen launched a pilot project with free hygiene products in selected restrooms on their campuses. According to the university's evaluation, the project has been a success. As a result, the project has been expanded from 32 to 40 dispensers distributed across the campuses. The initiative at the University of Copenhagen is only targeted at students. However, the original inquiry to the Committee for Equality and Diversity points out that any such offering at Aalborg University should include both students and staff.

Economy

The University of Copenhagen reports that the consumption of hygiene products varies between the campus areas. In total, the annual product consumption is estimated at approximately DKK 110,000 under the current model, which includes 40 dispensers. Added to this are the costs of managing ongoing refills, which are handled by the university’s cleaning service provider, as well as a startup cost of approximately 25,000 DKK for purchasing the dispensers.
Aalborg University has a total of 289 restroom areas spread across its three campuses. Based on the University of Copenhagen’s cost estimate, the following is projected:

- Annual operating cost per dispenser: approximately 2,750 DKK
- Start-up cost per dispenser: approximately 600 DKK

If Aalborg University opts for full coverage with dispensers in all 289 restroom areas, this corresponds to:

- Annual operating costs: approx. 794,750 DKK
- One-time setup cost: approx. 173,400 DKK

Campus Service has confirmed that the cleaning staff will be able to handle administration and refilling. The University of Copenhagen has opted for a model with 40 dispensers. Similarly, AAU can choose a model where the dispensers are placed strategically to ensure broad geographical coverage without setting up in all 289 restroom areas.

Supplier

The University of Copenhagen has used the Swedish supplier RedLocker, which is also able to deliver hygiene products and dispensers to Aalborg University. It will also be possible to use one of the suppliers that Campus Service already uses for the delivery of toiletries.

Case worker(s)

Kirstine Kjær Mathisen, Development Consultant, kkmat@adm.aau.dk, 10605, HR department
Dennis Jim Frederiksen, Development Consultant, dennisjf@adm.aau.dk, HR department

Start of strategy work for new strategic action plan

Recommendation

It is proposed that the committee take note of the preliminary analysis and discuss possible themes and priority areas for a new strategic action plan.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Memorandum on formal requirements for a new strategic action plan, already planned future initiatives in the Committee for Equality and Diversity area and preliminary recommendations for a new action plan.

Appendix 2: Status of initiatives in the current strategic action plan for equality and diversity

Case presentation

AAU's current strategic action plan for equality and diversity applies to the period 2022–2026 and thus expires this year. The Committee for Equality and Diversity is therefore involved in the process of formulating a proposal for a new strategic action plan, which is proposed to run in the period 2026–2029, so that it matches the period of AAU's overall strategy.

As part of a preliminary analysis, a memorandum has been prepared (Appendix 1) which reviews the formal requirements for a new action plan, including requirements from Danish legislation, AAU's bylaws and the European Commission's requirements in connection with the Horizon Europe programme. A status report on all initiatives in the current strategic action plan has also been prepared (Appendix 2). The purpose is to provide the members of the committee with a common knowledge base prior to the discussion of potential themes and focus areas in a new action plan.

At the same time, we want to include the committee members' own experiences and perspectives in the work of developing a new strategic action plan.

Prior to the committee meeting on 25 February, each committee member is asked to prepare for the following based on Appendix 1 and Appendix 2:

1) Based on your day-to-day placement and experience in the organisation, consider which equality, diversity and/or inclusion-related themes or challenges stand out as particularly relevant. The considerations do not have to be based on a formal survey, but can be based on observations, practical experiences and dialogues from everyday life. You must share your considerations at the committee meeting (maximum 3 minutes per person)

2) On the basis of the status overview (Appendix 2), please make initial considerations about which of the existing initiatives should possibly be continued in a new action plan.

At the committee meeting, Dennis Jim Frederiksen and Kirstine Kjær Mathisen facilitate a process in which the committee reviews the initiatives in the current strategic action plan with a view to assessing which initiatives are still relevant and want to be continued in a new plan.

After the review, the committee's input on current equality, diversity and inclusion challenges will be gathered along with the initiatives from the current action plan that the committee considers should be continued. This forms the basis for a joint prioritisation of the focus areas that the committee considers most important to continue working on at the strategy day on 24 March.

The purpose of the process is to create a common framework for the initial strategy work and ensure a qualified, focused and prioritised approach to the preparation of the new strategic action plan.

Involvement

AAU Communication and Public Affairs
AAU Education and Students
AAU HR
AAU International Staff Unit
AAU Funding and Projects

Case worker(s)

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Case number: 2026-000 01759

Memorandum to the Committee for Equality and Diversity

This memorandum contains background information on the formal requirements for strategic action plans for equality, diversity and inclusion, and at the same time reviews already planned activities in the area that are not included in the current strategic action plan (2022–2026), but which the committee may consider incorporating into the upcoming strategic action plan (2026–2029). Finally, the memo presents three recommendations for further work on the new strategic action plan:

1) Formal framework and purpose of the strategic action plan for equality and diversity

The Equality Act, AAU's bylaws, and the terms of reference for the Committee on Gender Equality and Diversity set out a framework for AAU's work on gender equality and diversity.

It is stated in the Equality Act that:

> "§ 2. No one shall subject another person to direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or gender characteristics. (…)
>
> *Subsection 2*. Direct discrimination occurs when a person, on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or gender characteristics, is treated less favorably than another person is, has been, or would be treated in a comparable situation.
>
> *Subsection 3*. indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, condition, or practice that is apparently neutral would place persons of one gender at a particular disadvantage compared to persons of the other gender, or if it would place persons at a particular disadvantage on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or gender characteristics compared to other persons."

It is stated in AAU's bylaws: §23, subsection 3 that:

> "Day-to-day management at all levels must contribute to ensuring the strategic and long-term development of, and efforts toward, gender equality and diversity at Aalborg University. "

Finally, it is stated in the Committee on Gender Equality and Diversity's terms of reference that one of the committee's tasks is:

> "Based on the strategy's ambitions, action plans for equality and diversity are put together at Aalborg University"

Taken together, the Equality Act and AAU's bylaws oblige the university and its management to work to prevent discrimination and promote equality and diversity at AAU, and the Committee for Equality and Diversity as a committee has the specific task of preparing action plans in the area that are based on AAU's overall strategy.

Action plan is also a formal requirement from Horizon Europe

In addition to the value that equality and inclusion can contribute to the organisation, an action plan is also a formal requirement for applying for and receiving EU funding under Horizon Europe. Since 1 January 2022, it has been a formal *eligibility criterion* for universities and research organisations, so that institutions without an action cannot participate in or receive funding from this key EU research program.

The action plan is called a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) and is, according to the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science: *"a strategy for how organisations plan to identify, measure and solve problems with gender inequality. Gender Equality Plans must contain concrete initiatives to be carried out, and they differ in this way from more general goals of equality."* Although it is called a Gender Equality Plan, the purpose is broader than equality between women and men alone. Horizon Europe writes: *"GEPs should not focus only on promoting career opportunities and equal access to resources for one gender; rather, they should be inclusive and target women and men in all their diversity."*

The following are the minimum requirements for a GEP (action plan)

1. **Public document**
   A GEP must be a publicly available document on the organization's website, signed by the top management, and it must be actively communicated throughout the organization.
2. **Dedicated resources**
   The GEP must include concrete descriptions of resources and relevant expertise dedicated to: implement the plan (e.g. in the form of full-time equivalents).
3. **Data collection and follow-up (monitoring)**
   The GEP must be based on the collection and analysis of data on at least the gender balance of employees and students. The organisation must follow up and report annually on the progress based on established indicators.
4. **Training and competency development**
   The GEP must include activities that increase knowledge and awareness of equality throughout the organisation, including training in unconscious gender bias for both employees and decision-makers.

In addition, Horizon recommends that the Gender Equality Plan addresses and sets concrete goals for:

- Work-life balance and organizational culture
- Gender balance in management and decision-making
- Equality in recruitment and career opportunities
- Gender mainstreaming in both research and teaching content
- Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

Strategic action plan for students

When the current strategic action plan (2022-2026) was crafted, a separate strategic action plan for students was also drawn up, which was anchored in AAU Education and Students (AUS,formerly Study Service). It is not explicitly stated in the requirements from the European Commission for a strategic action plan that there should be a separate plan for students, but that there must be "activities that increase awareness and awareness of equality *throughout the organisation*" (own marking).

Following a dialogue between management levels, the task of developing an action plan for students was assigned to AUS. AUS states that the plan was developed without the addition of separate resources and that it largely involved systematizing and documenting existing initiatives, structured in parallel with Committee for Equality and Diversity's action plan but adapted to a student context (e.g., a focus on study-life balance rather than work-life balance).
Responsibility for formulating a new action plan for students will thus remain with AUS and is therefore not part of Committee for Equality and Diversity's focus area.

2) Already planned initiatives in the Equality and Diversity area

In addition to existing initiatives in the current strategic action plan, which the committee must consider, there are a number of already planned initiatives in 2026:

Project on parallel language use

In May 2025, the Executive Management approved six new language principles. The project originates from the inclusion survey conducted at AAU in 2022 and aims to strengthen inclusion through a more systematic approach to language and communication.

The implementation of the new language principles will begin in 2026 and cover the following six areas:

1. Employees' English language skills
2. Non-Danish employees' Danish language skills
3. Involvement and meeting forms
4. Administrative services to support inclusion
5. International work culture
6. The management task

The first initiative to be launched is the development and rollout of Danish language courses for international assistant professors, associate professors and professors.

Diversity module for all level 4-5 managers

HR Well-being and Development (W&D) has developed a leadership development course aimed at all level 4-5 managers. One of the modules in the course is based on the benchmark '*Management of culture, sustainability and diversity'* from AAU's new management foundation. The first diversity module will be held in January 2026, while the other modules will be completed during 2026 and 2027. There are around 180 managers registered for the course.

The purpose of the module is to raise managers' awareness of their own biases and blind spots, to help them gain a broader perspective on the diversity of the team they lead, and to provide training on specific actions that can promote inclusion in their day-to-day work.

New inclusion survey in autumn 2026

Based on a recommendation from the Committee for Equality and Diversity, the Executive Management has decided that a new inclusion survey will be conducted among employees at AAU in the autumn of 2026.

The survey will be based on the same questionnaire as the inclusion survey from 2022 to ensure a basis for comparison that can highlight the development in the employees' experience of inclusion over time. After the completion of the survey, W&D, in collaboration with Connecting Cultures, will prepare a follow-up plan to ensure that all main areas at AAU work with the results.

Offering workshops on diversity, equality and inclusion

As part of the Horizon Europe requirements, the strategic action plan must include the offer of courses and workshops in diversity, equality and inclusion. At the same time, there is a requirement that financial resources be set aside for the implementation of the action plan. It is therefore important to ensure that sufficient funds are also allocated in the upcoming strategic action plan so that the Committee for Equality and Diversity can continue to offer relevant courses and workshops on the topics of diversity, equality and inclusion.

In the current strategic action plan, the Executive Management allocated DKK 1,150,000 for offering courses and workshops in diversity, equality and inclusion, as well as for the implementation of an inclusion survey. W&D is currently in the process of preparing a case presentation to the Executive Management to request additional funding for courses. The matter will be discussed at an Executive Management meeting on 29 April 2026.

3) Recommendations for the new strategic action plan

We propose from AAU HR that the following three recommendations be considered in the further work on the strategic action plan. The recommendations are based on the preliminary analysis of the existing action plan, on dialogues with a former employee in the Committee for Equality and Diversity area at AAU and on input from other Danish universities:

Clear division of responsibility for the efforts in the new strategic action plan

In connection with the preliminary analysis, an interview was conducted with Aarhus University, which is in the process of formulating its new strategic action plan. AU has established a clear governance structure for the implementation of the action plan, in which project managers and task groups are appointed for each initiative. The purpose is to ensure realistic implementation, avoid overload and clarify the allocation of responsibilities before the action plan is approved.

The previous action plan in the Equality and Diversity area has to a large extent been anchored in the Committee for Equality and Diversity and partly in HR which has limited the effectiveness of implementation. It is therefore recommended that a clear division of responsibilities be incorporated into the new strategic action plan.

A more focused and prioritized action plan

This recommendation is based on the presentation presented by Stine Faber at the committee meeting on 18 November. It was emphasised that previous action plans have been ambitious, but that follow-up and realisation of the goals have been challenging. In the presentation, it was suggested that the upcoming action plan should be more prioritised and realistic to ensure closer follow-up and better implementation.

At the same time, it was emphasised that, among other things, the continued focus on gender equality must not be downplayed, as significant inequalities and unresolved issues still exist in academia. It is therefore recommended that the new strategic action plan is more focused, without deprioritising existing problems.

Ongoing monitoring and follow-up on the initiatives

Horizon Europe requires that strategic action plans include systematic data collection and monitoring, including the collection of gender-disaggregated data and annual follow-up on the efforts.

It is therefore recommended that monitoring and follow-up be incorporated into the new strategic action plan, so that developments can be followed over time and the efforts can be adjusted on an ongoing basis.

Summary and status of the current strategic action plan (2022-2026)

Focus area/activities	Concrete actions	Responsible	Status of activity
Recruitment and career development			
Reducing bias in recruitment processes	New templates for job advertisements are being developed that appeal to a wider range of applicants.	HR departments	In November 2025, an AI assistant was developed for the design of job advertisements. It is trained to reduce bias by deleting certain words in the job advertisement based on the Committee for Equality and Diversity's recommendations. The AI assistant is fully developed and under testing, but not yet implemented. The HR partners have used and distributed video on reducing bias in the job interviews. In addition, blind recruitment has been tested but assessed as too administratively heavy. For academic staff positions, search committees are used in selected recruitment processes. The purpose of search committees is to support diversity in recruitment, including representation of more than one gender, and work prior to job advertisements to identify national and international candidates. The use of search committees is limited to specific job categories and is regulated through common guidelines, which also allow for dispensation and local adaptation in special cases. The concept applies to indefinite assistant professors (tenure track) as well as to employment as associate professor and professor with a duration of 3 years or more and an employment rate of 50 per cent or more. The scheme has been evaluated and shows a need for greater flexibility and a closer link to strategic recruitment.
	Models for inclusive hiring processes are developed that reduce unconscious bias.	Committee for Equality and Diversity	There is a professorship promotion programme aimed at associate professors, but there is a difference in how much the programme is used at the four faculties. ENG has 8 men admitted and one woman on the way, TECH has 4 women and 4 men admitted, SSH has one male intake on the way, and SUND has no admission to the programme.
	Workshops are offered that raise awareness of and provide tools to deal with unconscious bias in e.g. recruitment processes.	Committee for Equality and Diversity	A total of 33 DEI-related courses have been held throughout the strategy period, of which three workshops specifically addressed unconscious bias.
Reducing bias in promotion processes	Qualification requirements for all categories of posts shall be reviewed and, where appropriate, adjusted if they directly or indirectly promote discrimination or stereotypes.	Departments and departments	TECH has set qualification requirements for assistant professor, associate professor and professor positions. According to the information we have been able to obtain, the other faculties have not set qualification requirements.
	Systematic work is done on career planning to promote equality, e.g. in connection with the employee development interview.	HR departments	The SDD material does not explicitly focus on career planning, but instead focuses primarily on the individual employee's well-being, task solving, competence development and, for academic staff teaching and learning, competences. These can be seen as prerequisites for career development, but there are no questions about career planning in the material. It is also relevant to mention the professorship promotion programme.
	A mentoring scheme will be established for the academic and technical administrative staff for the purpose of sparring on career development.	Committee for Equality and Diversity	A mentoring programme was held in 2023, which aimed to bring employees together across AAU for conversations about career development. The program received good feedback, but there was limited support from mentors and mentees. It was decided that the program would not continue in 2024.
Competency development course for leadership talents	A competence development programme is being developed for potential managers in order to promote equality, among other things. The programmes are aimed at: • Heads of department/administrative managers • Heads of Secretariat/Head of Section/Area Managers	HR departments	AAU has established the talent programme *AAU Excellence,* which admits 8 talents annually on a 2-year course. The first class started in January 2025, and a new team has been established in January 2026. The programme is anchored in the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences but targeted at all faculties. Henrik Halkier, professor at the Department of Culture and Communication, is the programme director. No other courses for leadership talents have been identified.
Organizational Culture			
Inclusive language and communication	Awareness of stereotypes in text and images, e.g. through workshops on inclusive communication.	Committee for Equality and Diversity	A total of 33 DEI-related courses have been held throughout the strategy period, of which two workshops specifically addressed inclusive communication.
	Courses are offered in good written and oral communication, e.g. in good e-mail and meeting culture.	AAU Communication	A course in written communication has been offered with 33 participants.
	A review of the university's design guide is carried out in relation to including people with e.g. visual impairments.	AAU Communication	AAU Communication will review the university's design guide in relation to including people with e.g. visual impairments in the spring of 2026.
	Proposals are prepared for the inclusion of international employees in university committees.	Committee for Equality and Diversity	The the Committee for Equality and Diversity FTEs have worked on the initiative by continuously involving it in discussions in central management and collaboration forums about the composition of the university's bodies, including the board, academic councils and liaison committees. The work has focused on representation and diversity. New language principles have been adopted in relation to parallel language use that support participation in councils and committees through clear procedures for meeting language and employee involvement. The principles are expected to be implemented in 2026.
	Initiatives are being initiated to include non-binary people, e.g. in relation to forms and forms.	HR departments	Initiatives have been implemented to include non-binary persons in recruitment processes by using gender-neutral formulations such as "more than one gender" and "chairperson" in the rules for assessment and appointment committees. In addition, the Varbi recruitment system has introduced the possibility of specifying gender as male, female or other, while in other HR processes, information on gender is collected only to a limited extent.
Inclusive leadership	Workshops in inclusive leadership are offered.	Committee for Equality and Diversity	A total of 33 DEI-related courses have been held throughout the strategy period, of which three workshops specifically addressed inclusive leadership. One of the three Workshops were a masterclass for the Executive Management.
	Initiatives will be initiated at faculty, department and department level by, for example, making role models visible, selecting equality and diversity representatives or setting target figures for diversity in management and senior positions.	Faculties, departments and divisions	The majority of the departments and departments in FS have initiated local initiatives in 2022 based on the inclusion survey. An evaluation of these was carried out in 2024. Some departments/departments continue to work on the actions or have renewed them, others do to a lesser extent and some do not do at all.
	Inclusive leadership is worked on systematically, e.g. in leadership development interviews and "360-degree evaluations".	HR departments	AAU's new Leadership Development Dialogue material links the manager's development to AAU's management foundation *'Together for Management',* which explicitly emphasizes responsibility for inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities, and forms the basis for the conversation, which also sets specific development goals. It has not been possible to find a concept for 360 degree evaluations.

Inclusive conditions for people with special needs	A survey is made of the university's conditions in relation to: • Inclusion of people with physical, cognitive, mental and sensory impairments, e.g. through universal design.	HR Department, CAS and the Research Group for Universal Design	CAS has initiated several initiatives regarding accessibility, including: accessibility in seminar rooms and auditoriums, neurodiverse study workplaces, accessibility conditions for people with reduced mobility in all buildings, and clear signage on campus. For the employees, individual and customized solutions are made as needed.
	An inclusion survey is conducted at AAU.	HR department and external company	An inclusion survey was conducted in 2022, which aimed to map which employee groups experienced challenges with inclusion. Three employee groups in particular showed deviations from other groups in their responses, and these were international, women and younger employees. The results from the inclusion survey formed the basis for all departments and departments being tasked with initiating two actions, a diversity-promoting action and an inclusion-promoting action.
Work-life balance			
Proposals for life-stage policies	A mapping of best practice initiatives that take into account employees in all life stages is made, and a life phase policy is prepared.	Committee for Equality and Diversity	The topic was discussed in the HSU in 2022, and input from a workshop was to form the basis for the preparation of new concrete initiatives. It has not been possible to find material on a separate life-stage policy, but life-phases are included in AAU's main personnel policy: "For AAU, there is great value in being able to both attract and retain professionally, qualified employees, taking into account life-stage, health-related and social circumstances. Therefore, we organise working hours and tasks flexibly so that we can have a balanced working life, taking into account the performance of tasks."
Proposals for flexible working conditions	A mapping of best practice initiatives that contribute to increased flexibility will be made, and a policy/guidelines for flexible working will be made at AAU.	Committee for Equality and Diversity	AAU's policy for flexible working hours has been implemented for administrative staff and establishes common principles and frameworks for local agreements on flexibility. The policy states that flexible working hours are agreed locally and depend on work tasks and other local conditions. AAU does not set a common, central upper or lower limit for the extent of flexibility that can be given to the individual employee. There is no corresponding common policy for VIP.
Proposal for flexible models for stays abroad	Flexible models are made for stays abroad that take into account employees who, due to family life and other circumstances, find it difficult to complete a stay abroad.	Committee for Equality and Diversity	There are no formal models for flexible stays abroad. However, the PhD Office under Research Services informs that it is possible to make individual flexible solutions with regard to the PhD student's life situation. For example, it is possible to make changes to planned stays during the PhD programme, if, for example, children arrive during the course of the PhD study, if illness or other factors occur.