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Minutes from the meeting of the Committee on Equality and Diversity on November 18th 2025

Participants: Jesper Wengel (JW), Linda Ibsen (LI), Trine Schultz (TS), Mette Mechlenborg (MM), Anne Estrup Olesen (AEO), Christian Schilling (SC), Jakob Skovrup Stampe (JSS) and Kirstine Kjær Mathisen (KKM – minutes keeper).

Cancellations: Louise Pape-Haugaard (LPH) and Birgit Feldtmann (BF).

Other participants: Stine Tidemann Faber (STF) and Dennis Jim Frederiksen (DJF).

1. Approval of the agenda

Appendix: Agenda for the committee meeting on November 18th 2025

The agenda was approved.

2. Approval of minutes

Appendix: Minutes of the meeting of the Committee on Equality and Diversity on September 11th 2025

The minutes were approved.

The committee members introduced themselves, with several highlighting their backgrounds, experiences with gender equality and diversity, and the current challenges facing their units. There was a particular focus on gender balance, hierarchies, experiences of being in minority positions, and the need to strengthen inclusion efforts at AAU. It was noted that the committee has gained new members and that Jesper Wengel has taken over as chairperson.

3. Feedback on the case presentation to Executive management

Appendix: Case presentation

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee be informed of the feedback on case pesentation, which was discussed at the Executive management meeting on October 29th 2025.

JW began the agenda by announcing that the executive management has approved the appointment of a new chairperson and a new vice-dean representative. Jesper Wengel has taken over the position as chairperson, and Louise Haugaard-Pape has been appointed as the new vice-dean's representative.

The revision of the terms of reference was approved with the clarification that the committee's role remains to be advisory and that executive management is responsible for the implementation of the committee's recommendations. However, the committee is expected to continue to be proactive.

It was informed that Executive management approved that the committee's new strategic action plan should be a separate action plan and not an integrated part of AAU's overall strategy. The upcoming strategic action plan is expected to cover the period 2027–2029, as the current one runs until 2026. The need to make future strategies more focused and less comprehensive was highlighted. Whether the strategic action plan from 2030 onwards should be an integrated part of AAU's overall strategy will be decided at a later date.

Executive management has approved the implementation of a new inclusion survey in the autumn of 2026. HAMiU will decide whether inclusion related questions should be integrated into AAU's staff well-being barometer from 2027 onwards. Possible advantages and disadvantages of the integration of the questions into the staff well-being barometer were discussed, especially with regard to question frequency and less visibility. It was agreed to maintain the committee's previous recommendations that the questionnaire for the inclusion survey in 2026 should be similar to the version made in 2022 to create a basis for comparison. If the inclusion related questions are integrated into the staff well-being barometer from 2027 onwards, it will be possible to adjust the questionnaire in accordance with the new context.

It was noted that the Executive management approved the transfer of course funds so that they will be available in 2026.

4. Presentation by Stine Thidemann Faber –Process for a new strategy for gender equality and diversity

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Appendix: Case presentation

Recommendation: It is recommended that the committee discuss the process for developing a new strategy for equality and diversity and discuss topics related to the content of the strategy.

STF began her presentation with a brief presentation and a review of the committee's previous strategic action plans for the periods 2017-2021 and 2022-2026. It was emphasized that themes such as career development, women in management, organizational development, recruitment and work-life balance have been consistent in both plans and continue to be central, also in strategies at other Nordic universities. STF also noted that the previous action plans have been ambitious, but that follow-up and realization of the goals have been challenging.

The committee discussed the process for forming the upcoming strategic action plan. There was broad agreement that inclusion should be included more clearly in the strategy, and several highlighted the value of linking the concept of inclusion more closely to the existing work on equality and diversity. Inclusion was highlighted as a key factor in promoting a good work culture, increased well-being and better communities. In this connection, neurodiversity was also mentioned as an area of increasing relevance. It was added that the committee should be more outward-looking in the communication of the initiatives that are being worked on across different platforms.

At the same time, it was emphasized that the continued focus on gender equality must not be downplayed, as there are still unresolved issues and inequalities in academia. It was suggested that the strategy should be more prioritized and realistic in the future, so that the efforts can be followed more closely and so that implementation is ensured.

Challenges about the follow-up of previous action plans, especially at the department level, where action plans can collide with other processes and create unclear anchoring, were discussed. It was proposed that the faculties should play a greater role than the departments in the implementation in the future, as the challenges vary between the faculties and as the faculty management teams are placed in the executive management. It was also proposed that the activities be linked to the new management principles, where one of the benchmarks is management of sustainability, culture and diversity.

It was emphasized that there is a need for clearer advice to managers, more specific recommendations, prioritization of efforts and a stronger interaction with HR, as well as a greater visibility of the committee's initiatives in the organization.

The committee requested professional input and a facilitated workshop in connection with the strategy work. It was agreed that a proposal for further work will be prepared, including a process plan, which will be sent out before the next committee meeting. The upcoming meeting will be extended to three hours and will be a strategy meeting.

Follow-up:

STF, DJF and KKM will prepare a proposal for the further work on the preparation of the new strategic action plan, including a process plan and a preliminary analysis, which will be sent out before the next committee meeting. KKM will extend the upcoming committee meeting on 25 February 2026 to three hours, and it will primarily be a strategy meeting.

5. Information about and discussion of reporting to the University Board on December 17th 2025

Appendix: Case presentation

Recommendation: It is recommended that the committee be informed about and discuss the upcoming report to the board, which will take place on December 17th 2025.

The committee was informed of the upcoming report to the board. The figures for the development of gender balance at management level were reviewed. Progress has been achieved in several management layers, and some target figures have already been achieved. Some data sources must be double-checked, e.g. in the case of vice-dean positions.

It was noted that diversity data is presented as status and not development, and that the reason for this needs to be described more clearly in the report.

There was an awareness that "The Leaky Pipeline" may become a theme for the committee's further work.

The committee approved the proposed initiatives for 2025, including women in the media, maternity tools and the Power BI equality reports. It was suggested that the management principles can be included as a future focus area.

Follow-up:

KKM updates the following in the report:

- Verifying the figures for the gender distribution among the vice-deans
- Clarifies why diversity data is shown as a status and not as a development
- Adding the management principles as a future focus area

Note: After the meeting, KKM has confirmed that the change percentage (2%) for vice-deans is correct, and that the fact that the number of vice-deans from 2022 to 2025 has changed from 11 to 8 enables the low percentage change.

6. Status of the project on parallel language use at AAU

Appendix: Case presentation

Recommendation: It is recommended that the committee be informed about the status of the project regarding the six new language principles that will support the work on parallel language use at AAU.

The committee was informed about the project on the six language principles, which will be revisited and possibly adjusted by HR in 2026. Examples were given of challenges in practice and of the need for greater clarity and uniformity in the language work, especially in relation to English-speaking employees and the conduct of meetings.

It was emphasized that language work is important for inclusion and that some employees have a desire for better opportunities to learn Danish. Danish language training during working hours for employees was highlighted as a positive initiative. It was discussed that a more stringent framework for Danish language skills can strengthen inclusion.

7. Messages from the chairperson

No notifications.

8. Communications from the Committee

No notifications.

9. Any other Business

It was discussed whether the title of the strategic action plan should be "equality, diversity and inclusion" in the future, while retaining the committee's official name. It was noted that a strengthened emphasis on inclusion can increase relevance in the organisation and support cohesion and well-being, which will have a positive impact on the core tasks at AAU.