

What is the difference between a department council and a consultation committee at AAU?

At AAU, there are councils, committees, and boards that operate either across the entire university or at the faculty or department level.

At the department level, there are consultation committees, occupational health and safety organisation committees, and department councils. It can sometimes be difficult to distinguish their purposes and tasks in practice. The agendas of these bodies may overlap, as topics such as budget and strategy often need to be discussed from their different perspectives. Below is a brief outline of the purpose and tasks of the consultation committees and the department councils.

Consultation Committee

The consultation organisation exists at all three levels of the university: departments, faculties, and the main joint consultation committee, which sets the overall framework for working and staff conditions at AAU. The foundation for the work of the consultation committees is laid out in the Danish State Consultation Agreement.

The consultation committees are forums for dialogue and **collaboration between the management and employee representatives**. Their purpose is to strengthen mutual consultation and secure **good conditions for workplace development and employee well-being**.

The committees discuss matters that affect the **working environment, staff policies, and daily operations**. This includes topics such as **well-being, psychological work environment, and competence development**. The committee also addresses issues like strategy and budget — but with a particular focus on aspects related to **working and staff conditions**, such as payroll, competence development, and HR policies. The consultation committee does not have decision-making authority but is meant to qualify management decisions that affect the workplace.

Department Council

The department councils are advisory bodies focusing on **academic and strategic matters** at the department. They discuss topics relevant to the department's **research, education, knowledge dissemination, and general long-term strategic development**. This may include issues such as recruitment and career policies, quality assurance, physical facilities for education and laboratories, study environment, and thematic discussions relevant to strategic development.

The statutory task of the department council is to advise the department management on **strategic matters and budget**. Unlike the consultation committee, the department council is not limited to strategic and financial issues related to the working environment and staff matters. It is rather expected to advise more broadly

on the department's strategic development in the areas of education and research. Members of the department council must address topics presented by the department head but may also propose their own items relevant to the department's activities.

The department council also differs from other councils and committees at the department level by including one or more **student representatives**. It is therefore an important forum for student influence on the department's activities and direction. Like the consultation committee, the department council does not have decision-making authority.

Department councils are similar to the academic councils, which have comparable composition and function at the faculty level.

Read more about all AAU's councils, boards, and committees here:

<https://www.staff.aau.dk/organisation/committees>