

# Annual report for ACADEMIC COUNCIL

2024



UNIVERSITY OF  
COPENHAGEN

## Greetings from Dean Katrine Krogh Andersen

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Academic Council at the Faculty of Science for our excellent collaboration during my years as dean. A special thanks in particular to Martin Willemoës, who became the first elected academic staff member to chair the Academic Council, and who has filled the role admirably. I would also like to thank the executive committee, which has done an excellent job in helping to plan the various meetings and discussions.

## Recommendations for assessment committee

One of the core tasks of the Academic Council is to submit recommendations to the dean concerning the assessment committees appointed in connection with the filling of academic positions, including tenure-track, associate professor and professor positions.

The departments propose members for the assessment committees, which the Academic Council then assesses and approves. This year, the Academic Council has recommended 93 assessment committees, and in several cases asked the departments to reconsider the composition – typically because of a non-representative gender distribution, or because the reasons given for the committee's composition have been too general and not clearly represented the individual competence and research areas.

This year, the division of roles between HR and the Academic Council was determined so that matters of impartiality, including academic impartiality, lie with the dean. This has resulted in the Academic Council changing the procedure, so that the departments now submit brief but precise reasons for the choice of members for the assessment committees.

The academic staff members of the Academic Council also help to appoint academic staff representatives to the nomination committees for appointments to the positions of head of department, associate dean and dean. The Academic Council regards this as a very important task, as the work of the nomination committees has considerable influence on the future management of the departments and the faculty as a whole. Over the past three years, the Academic Council has appointed members to the nomination committees for 11 new heads of department, an associate dean for education, an associate dean for external relations as well as the new dean from 1 January 2025. The Academic Council cooperates with both the union representative strand and the new department faculty boards in connection with these processes.

## Special Educational Support

Many students who need special support during their studies find the Special Educational Support (SPS) system confusing and difficult to navigate. Several cases of rejected dispensations and a lack of responsiveness from lecturers have been reported to the Academic Council's student representatives, who therefore considered the issue to be relevant to take up in the Academic Council.

The topic has been discussed at several meetings, and there has been broad consensus that the biggest challenges concern the complexity of the SPS system and the fact that the allocation of SPS support is handled by an external supplier. In addition, the Academic Council proposes that dispensations and changes to examination forms should in future be handled centrally rather than by the lecturers.

The Academic Council has been informed of ongoing and future SPS initiatives at UCPH and the Faculty of Science, where the main focus is to centralise decision-making and create a more uniformly structured application process. The initiatives include special support initiatives at study start, mapping of a UCPH action plan for students with functional impairments and a new disability strategy, which is to run until 2030.

At the Faculty of Science, the focus is also on establishing an SPS knowledge network to do presentations and help build knowledge in the organisation, offer assistance to departments in how to handle complex cases, and ensure physical, social and pedagogical accessibility. The Faculty of Science is also working to implement the 2020 letter on educational institutions' administration of the disability area, including measures such as simplified application processes, dispensation packs and direct communication to course coordinators and directors.

When the administrative reform at UCPH takes effect, the overall SPS administration will be anchored in the group unit, and students will be able to obtain specific SPS guidance through their student counselling services in the administrative centres. The aim here is that students will be able to obtain all the help they need at one and the same place.

## Research IT

As part of the Academic Council's focus on ensuring the best possible framework conditions for research and teaching at the faculty, research IT has been on the Academic Council's agenda over the past year. There is widespread frustration about the lack of support and the opaque decision-making processes in the research IT area and about a committee structure that is unable to ensure that the available service matches current needs.

In this connection, the Academic Council has worked to ensure that research IT is recognised as research infrastructure rather than administrative infrastructure, and that it is supported to meet the needs of research, in particular with regard to flexibility. For example, the Academic Council has called for research IT to be separated out in connection with the administrative reform, and for local decision-making powers to be guaranteed. For the time being, the Academic Council is eagerly awaiting the outcome of its work in the new organisation.



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Academic Council in 2024

Ordinary meetings

5

Doctoral degrees

0

Assessment committees

93

Extraordinary meetings

0

PhD degrees

271

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