The AAU Practice Committee (PU AAU)

Procedures

OBJECTIVE AND DEFINITION

Procedures for investigating allegations submitted to the Practice Committee for Aalborg University

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CONTENT
1. Actors involved

The actors involved in the process are:

- **Complainant.** The complainant is the person who submits an allegation of research misconduct or questionable research practice against one or more respondents; this allegation must be submitted to the AAU Practice Committee. The complainant may be heard in the case; however, as a rule, the complainant is not a party to the case. In the event that allegations are issued by a unit, the allegation must be issued on behalf of Aalborg University by the manager of that unit.

- **Respondent.** The respondent is the person against whom the allegation has been made. When an allegation has been submitted to the AAU Practice Committee, the Committee must inform the respondent and allow the respondent to respond to the allegation.

- **The AAU Practice Committee.** The preliminary investigation of allegations of research misconduct will be dealt with by the AAU Practice Committee and subsequently submitted to the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct for further investigation. Furthermore, the AAU Practice Committee is responsible for investigating allegations of questionable research practice as stipulated in the regulations of the AAU Practice Committee, section 11(1). Upon investigating allegations of questionable research practice, the AAU Practice Committee must submit a reasoned statement to the Rector.

- **The executive committee of the AAU Practice Committee.** The executive committee comprises the chair of the AAU Practice Committee and the alternate member from the relevant faculty. The executive committee conducts preliminary assessments of all allegations made, and the chair may decide whether allegations should be dismissed as manifestly unfounded. In consultation with the relevant dean and head of department, the executive committee may request for materials to be secured and for placing restrictions on the respondent’s access to laboratories, materials, data, etc.

- **The Rector.** The Rector is responsible for determining the guidelines as to how allegations of misconduct or questionable research practice are processed at Aalborg University. The Rector must receive a statement of each allegation submitted to the AAU Practice Committee; moreover, the AAU Practice Committee must report to the Rector on an ongoing basis and submit annual reports to the Rector on allegations investigated by the AAU Practice Committee.

- **The Dean.** The relevant dean must be updated regularly when allegations involving staff members of their faculty are submitted to the AAU Practice Committee and the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct; moreover, each dean is responsible for following up on allegations having been investigated by the AAU Practice Committee and the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct.

- **The head of department.** The relevant head of department must be updated regularly when allegations involving staff members of their department are submitted to the AAU Practice Committee and the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct; moreover, each head of department is also responsible for following up on allegations having been investigated by the AAU Practice Committee and the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct.

- **The head of the doctoral school.** The relevant head of the doctoral school must be updated regularly when allegations involving the PhD students of their doctoral school are submitted to the AAU Practice Committee and the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct; moreover, each head of the doctoral school is also responsible for following up on allegations submitted to the AAU Practice Committee and the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct.

- **The PhD supervisor.** PhD supervisors must be updated regularly when allegations involving PhD students under their supervision are submitted to the AAU Practice Committee and the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct.
Committee on Research Misconduct; moreover, each PhD supervisor is also responsible for following up on allegations submitted to the AAU Practice Committee and the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct.

Administrative staff members of the Rector’s Office and of the faculty in which cases have originated will be jointly responsible for the administrative procedures of the AAU Practice Committee.

2. Procedures for investigation

Anyone who may have reasonable grounds for suspecting misconduct in research or questionable research practice may submit allegations against academic staff members conducting research at Aalborg University to the AAU Practice Committee.

An allegation must include information on the scientific product in question; the researcher(s) or academic staff member(s) against whom the allegation is made; the allegations of research misconduct or questionable research practice raised and the reasons for submitting the allegations.

Please use [this form](#) for submitting an allegation.

Upon receipt of an allegation, the AAU Practice Committee will inform the complainant of the administrative procedures of the AAU Practice Committee. In the event that the allegation does not contain the information required for initiating an investigation, the complainant must be informed that this may lead to the allegation being dismissed, cf. ‘Lov om videnskabelig uredelighed m.v.’ [act on research misconduct, etc.] section 11(3). The respondent, the relevant dean, the relevant head of department and in allegations involving PhD students, the PhD supervisor and the head of the doctoral school, must be informed that an allegation has been made and must be informed of the AAU Practice Committee’s administrative procedures. After this point, the complainant will no longer receive information pertaining to the allegation nor will the complainant be heard in the case unless they are considered a party to the case according to the Danish Public Administration Act.

The executive committee will subsequently receive the allegation and assess which procedures must be initiated. Depending on the scope and character of the allegation, the executive committee will consult with the relevant administrative staff members of the Rector’s Office and of the faculty to determine who will be responsible for individual investigation procedures (such as plagiarism detection and assessment, assessment of data and materials, etc.). Following a concrete assessment and in consultation with the relevant dean and head of department, the chair of the AAU Practice Committee may request for the head of department to secure any materials and place restrictions on the respondent’s access to laboratories, materials, data, etc.

Following the preliminary investigations, the chair of the AAU Practice Committee will determine whether the allegation should be dismissed as manifestly unfounded. In the event that an allegation is dismissed as manifestly unfounded, the respondent, the relevant dean, the relevant head of department and, if relevant, the PhD supervisor and the head of the doctoral school must receive information that the allegation has been subject to investigation and has subsequently been dismissed.

In the event that an allegation cannot be dismissed as manifestly unfounded, the executive committee must make preparations to review the allegation at the first meeting in the AAU Practice Committee. The respondent must be asked to submit any comments on the allegation and an assessment must be made as to whether further investigations must be carried out. The Rector, the relevant dean, the relevant head of department and, if relevant, the PhD supervisor and the head of the doctoral school must be informed.

The meeting presentation of the allegation must include information on whether the allegation is considered to meet the basic criteria for constituting a case of falsification, fabrication, plagiarism or questionable research practice, cf. the definitions provided in ‘Lov om videnskabelig uredelighed m.v.’ [the act on research misconduct], section 3. If there is any dispute as to the interpretation of the act, this must be discussed with the secretariat of the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct. Depending on the nature of the allegation, the chair of the AAU Practice Committee will be responsible for determining who will be
During the first review of the AAU Practice Committee, a decision must be made as to whether the allegation be:

- forwarded to the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct for further investigation
- processed by the AAU Practice Committee
- dismissed or be processed by other units or other parts of the line management at Aalborg University

If the AAU Practice Committee determines that the allegation must be forwarded to the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct, the AAU Practice Committee must prepare a report on the facts of the allegation, cf. ‘Lov om videnskabelig uredelighed m.v.’ [the act on research misconduct], section 11(2). Subsequently, the allegation must be forwarded to the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct. The Rector, the respondent, the relevant dean, the relevant head of department and, if relevant, the PhD supervisor and the head of the doctoral school must be informed of the decisions made by the AAU Practice Committee.

If the allegation must be processed by the AAU Practice Committee, the relevant dean must recommend an ad hoc member with relevant disciplinary expertise to participate in the investigation of the allegation in the AAU Practice Committee.

The respondent, the Rector, the relevant dean, the relevant head of department and, if relevant, the PhD supervisor and the head of the doctoral school must be informed that the allegation is to be processed by the AAU Practice Committee.

Subsequently, the executive committee and the ad hoc committee member are responsible for preparing the case for the second meeting in the AAU Practice Committee. If relevant, the respondent is consulted and further investigations are made before the presentation of the case is prepared for the meeting as determined by the chair.

Following the meeting, the AAU Practice Committee must prepare a statement of the case; the person responsible for preparing this statement must be appointed. Where the AAU Practice Committee cannot reach an agreement, a person responsible for preparing the note of dissent must also be appointed. The statement must be submitted to the Rector. The respondent, the relevant dean, the relevant head of department and, if relevant, the PhD supervisor and the head of the doctoral school must be informed.

If the AAU Practice Committee decides that the allegation should be dismissed or be processed by other units or other parts of the line management at Aalborg University, the allegation must be forwarded to these units and include the comments of the AAU Practice Committee. In such cases, the respondent, the relevant dean, the relevant head of department and, if relevant, the PhD supervisor and the head of the doctoral school must be informed.

**ORIGIN, BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

This procedure is prepared by a task force, composed of administrative employees from the Rector’s Office and from the faculties’ offices. The procedure is prepared according to “Scheme for reorganisation of The Practice Committee’s structure at AAU”, which is approved by the management May 24, 2017, and later approved by the academic councils.
## OVERALL FRAMEWORK

This procedure is connected with “Regulations for the Practice Committee (PU AAU)” and “Regulations of research misconduct” - [https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=188780](https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=188780)

## CONTACT/RESPONSIBILITY

*The Rector’s Office*

## DEFINITIONS

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## APPENDIX

*Form for reporting research misconduct or questionable research practice* [here](#)