

Guide to ensure good conditions for cooperation in and between liaison committees

Background and purpose

An evaluation of AU's liaison committee structure (2014/2015) clearly showed that we have a lot of experience at AU about how to ensure good conditions for the work in our liaison committees and for communication in the liaison committees as well as communication to colleagues outside the committees.

Based on this experience, the group which worked with the evaluation of the liaison committee structure prepared this 'Guide to ensure good conditions for cooperation in and between liaison committees'. The guide contains several suggestions for topics which may be discussed in each liaison committee to put focus on developing the cooperation in the liaison committee. We recommend that the liaison committees use this guide on a regular basis e.g. when evaluating the liaison committee's work or when establishing a new liaison committee to discuss and decide which topics it would be meaningful to work on. The goal is that the liaison committees thereby help to ensure relevant and timely information and involvement.

The guide is divided into the following sections:

- 1) Liaison committee tasks
- 2) Liaison committee members' roles and responsibilities
- 3) Liaison committee chairs' roles and responsibilities
- 4) Secretariat services
- 5) Annual cycle, plan for the year and planning of meetings
- 6) Agendas and minutes

1. Liaison committee tasks

The committees may discuss the following to ensure that it is clear what the liaison committee's tasks are compared to the tasks of other bodies:

- What are the committee's tasks, see the circular on cooperation and AU's cooperation agreement at [AU's liaison committees' website](#)?
- What are the committee's goals and vision? (What do we want to achieve during the two-year election period and how do we achieve these goals?)
- How can we ensure a fully informed basis for our discussions in the committee?

2. Liaison committee members' roles and responsibilities

The following topics may be discussed in the liaison committees to make committee members' responsibilities and tasks clear:

- What does it mean to be a member of a liaison committee?
- What is expected of the committee members and what is their responsibility?
- How do committee members prepare for the meetings?
- How do the liaison committee members contribute to interesting and relevant items on the agenda?
- How do the committee members want to communicate internally in the liaison committee including possible use of intranet?
- How to communicate to colleagues who are not members of the liaison committee?
- How to inform about relevant topics from other forums e.g. the occupational health and safety committees, departmental forums, the academic councils etc. (e.g. an information item on the agenda, links in the minutes etc.)?

Decisions on the topics above may be added to the committee's rules of procedure, if relevant.

3. Liaison committee chairs' roles and responsibilities

When establishing the liaison committee, the following may be discussed to make the role and responsibility of the liaison committee chair clear:

- How to communicate to employees who are not members of the committee?
- How to ensure timely, relevant and receiver-oriented communication?
- How to schedule meetings on an annual basis including preparatory meetings?
- How to schedule and coordinate the plan for the year and the annual cycle with other forums at the same level (e.g. FSU's coordination with FAMU and the academic council or LSU's coordination with LAMU and departmental forums)? This may take place at an annual coordination meeting between the committee chairs.
- How does the chair of the committee contribute with items for the agenda and how can colleagues, who are not members of the committee, become involved in this?
- Meeting format. The tool to create better meetings which can be found on the [AU Culture and Well-being website](#) may be used for inspiration.

Decisions on the topics above may be added to the committee's rules of procedure, if relevant.

4. Secretariat services

The liaison committee may discuss the following to ensure the best possible administrative support of the committee:

- What does the committee consider to be good secretariat services?
- The degree of proactivity in connection with acquiring items for the agenda from the chair of the committee.

- What does the committee consider to be good minutes of meetings?

After the discussion of these topics, the chair of the committee should balance expectations with the secretary concerning the committee's requests for secretariat services.

5. Annual cycle, plan for the year and planning of meetings

The annual cycle is an outline of tasks that should be discussed by the committee at regular intervals (e.g. once a year, once every six months etc).

The plan for the year is an outline of the current year's committee tasks, i.e. tasks which are part of the annual cycle as well as other tasks which the committee has decided to put on the agenda during the year as well as tasks which are sent to the committee from others outside the committee.

It may be an advantage for the liaison committee to prepare an annual cycle of events which occur on an annual basis as well as a plan for the year which outlines the committee's work for the current year/current election period including planning of meetings and meeting contents.

The following suggestions for discussions may be used:

- How to coordinate the plan for the year and the annual cycle with the other liaison committees at the faculty/in the administration as well as other forums which discuss the same topics as the liaison committee?
- How to make the plan for the year and the annual cycle available to colleagues who are not members of the liaison committee as well as to other liaison committees and other bodies?
- What should be the theme for any joint annual meeting with the occupational health and safety committee?
- How long before the meeting should meeting invitations be sent out and how to coordinate with meetings in other forums?

6. Agendas and minutes

In order to ensure optimum preparation for meetings, we recommend:

- That it is stated whether an item on the agenda is for information or for discussion.
- That the items on the agenda include a purpose/motivation.

In addition, the individual liaison committee may discuss the following:

- How agendas, documents and minutes become available to employees who are not members of a liaison committee.
- What should be the deadline for sending out agendas, documents and minutes?
- How to communicate to international members of staff?

- Whether it makes sense to use a basic agenda with fixed agenda items for all meetings. Current topics can then be added to the basic agenda.
- How often to put the following topics on the agenda:
 - ‘Item for information’/‘Item for discussion’ - the financial situation.
 - ‘Item for follow-up’ – Follow-up: What has happened since the last meeting?
 - ‘Item for information from HSU and FSU/ASU’ – relevant for LSU agendas.
 - ‘Item for information from HSU and LSU’ – relevant for FSU/ASU agendas.
- How should items for follow-up and the persons responsible be presented in the minutes?
- Specifically for HSU, we suggest that the plan for the year and the cooperation with committees at other levels in the organisation are reviewed every six months.

Decisions on the topics above may be added to the committee’s rules of procedure.