

UNIVERSITY PEDAGOGY FOR ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

Guidelines for supervisors

Content:

- 1. Allocation of responsibility and tasks _____ 3**
- 2. Supervision and advising during the course _____ 5**

PREFACE

These guidelines have been developed based on the experiences holding university pedagogy courses for assistant professors since 1997. The course is based on the agreement for conducting courses in university pedagogy for assistant professors, by management at Aalborg University. AAU Learning Lab at the Department for Learning and Philosophy is responsible for the running, evaluating, collecting and continuous course development.

The target groups for these guidelines are the department supervisors, the pedagogical supervisors and the participants attending the course.

The aims and learning intentions of the course can be found on Moodle. This includes learning goals of individual workshops and course activities.

AAU Learning Lab,
Department for Learning and Philosophy,

December 2016

Kathrin Otrell-Cass
Leader of Learning Lab

1. Allocation of responsibilities and tasks

There are a number of groups and individuals involved in the preparation and running of the course in University pedagogy for assistant professors. This first chapter gives an overview of the tasks, roles and responsibilities of the individuals involved.

AAU Learning Lab

AAU Learning Lab has the overall responsibility for the running of this course.

It includes the development and teaching of seminars and workshops in connection with the course, as well as the continuous development of the quality of content, methods, structure, supervision and advice concerning the course. This includes also the preparation of the Evaluation Statement and identifying qualified pedagogical supervisors. Furthermore the course leader and the secretary are responsible for providing information for supervisors and teachers updated with relevant information about the course program and possible changes.

Head of Departments

The Head of Departments are *formally* responsible for organizing the supervision of the assistant professors including the preparation of the Evaluation Statement. This responsibility includes:

- Appointment of the department supervisors
- Formal responsibility for ensuring that the department supervisors performs their duties
- Assigning appropriate teaching and supervision duties to the assistant professor during the course period
- Registration of work hours allocated to the assistant professor and the supervisors
- Control of formulation of the Evaluation Statement.

Department Supervisor

The department supervisor has the primary responsibility for providing supervision and advice to the assistant professor in and the formulation of the evaluation statement.

(Number of working hours allocated for for these tasks may vary by Faculty and Department agreement, but usually lies between 54 – 90 working hours).

The tasks and responsibilities include

- Supporting and challenging the assistant professor in his/her work with his/her learning report and related tasks designed by the course
- Being responsible for the focus on the subject specific didactics. This includes focusing on selected elements within specific subjects and professional areas, that shape teaching content in particular ways.
- Supporting the assistant professor in making sure that the assistant professor will have relevant teaching assignments and receives supervision during the course period.
- Discussing with the assistant professor the learning report, providing feedback and advice.
- Encouraging the assistant professor (for instance in a pleasant e- mail) to continue doing something in relation to the development of teaching competences
- Arranging for 6-7 supervision and observation meetings during the course period

- Primary responsible for writing the evaluation statement in collaboration with the pedagogic supervisor

Pedagogical Supervisor

The supervisor from AAU Learning Lab (the pedagogical supervisor) has co-responsibility for the support provided to the assistant professor (supervision, advice, and the formulation of the Pedagogic Evaluation Statement). The pedagogical supervisor receives 30 working hours).

The tasks and responsibilities include

- Supporting and challenging the assistant professor in his work with the learning report and related tasks designed by the course
- Meeting with the assistant professor about the learning report, feedback and advice
- Being the link between the assistant professor and the course leader and giving information about possible irregularities and questions during the course period
- Arranging for 4 supervision and observation meetings during the course period
- Supporting the assistant professor in integrating relevant theories into the teaching reflections.
- Encouraging the assistant professor (for instance in a pleasant e- mail) to continue doing something in relation to the development of teaching competences
- Contributing in writing the evaluation statement together with the department supervisor

The assistant professor/post doc

The assistant professors have the responsibility to qualify themselves within the course period (10 ECTS) by:

- Keeping in regular contact with the 2 supervisors about meetings and supervision
- Being a driving force in collaboration with the school leader to get relevant teaching and supervision tasks during the course period
- Keeping updated on Moodle about the course and possible changes
- Doing all the relevant tasks expected in relation to the course
- Participating in relevant workshops, offered by AAU Learning Lab.
- Preparing a reflective learning report
- Participating in a minimum of 3 workshops or 2 workshops plus a submitted article/conference proceedings that discuss and/or reflect on a teaching intervention or pedagogical approach.

AAU Learning Lab administration

Upon successful completion of the course (successful completion includes, attendance at workshops/seminars as specified, preparation of a teaching learning report, supervision/observation of teaching episodes as specified) the assistant professor will receive a Course Certificate, signed by the Head of Department and the Course Leader from AAU Learning Lab, together with the Pedagogical Evaluation Statement signed by the two supervisors.

The Pedagogical Evaluation Statement is prepared by the two supervisors. One signed copy should be delivered to the Learning Lab administration. The assistant professor will receive the original Pedagogical Evaluation Statement together with the course certificate. The AAU Learning Lab administration will forward a copy of the Pedagogical Evaluation Statement to the HR office to be kept on record of the assistant professor.

2. Theory and practical considerations relevant to supervision

The formal basis for supervision and advising of assistant professors was originally described in the circular on employment structure (Cirkulære om stillingsstruktur) for higher education institutions under the Danish Ministry of Education and the briefs on employment structure for the scientific personnel with research and teaching activities in the institutions of higher education, established 22 June 1993 and revised September 2001 by the Ministry of Research and Technology. Based on these publications, the following comes into effect:

"The institution must ensure that during the contracted employment term the assistant professor is given responsibility for teaching activities, and must provide teacher education supervision and advising to such an extent that a written evaluation of the assistant professor's teaching qualifications can be provided upon completion of employment term. This task is managed at the associate professor/professor level."

In this statement the concepts of supervision and advice in relation to the course are introduced.

Please note:

Firstly, we refer from heron to **supervisors** when talking about the department supervisor and the pedagogical supervisor. *Secondly*, the participants in the course (Adjunktpædagogikum) will be referred to as **participants** or **the supervised persons**, to include also post.doc employees, lecturers and individuals employed with other responsibilities.

Colleague supervision

The practice of supervision is an increasingly important method for qualifying teachers at universities. In order to define the concept and to develop the method, we have been inspired from fields in which supervision has been practised for a long time, such as in the fields of health and social services and from other educational institutions where supervision in relation to teacher qualification is being increasingly applied. Furthermore, we draw on international experiences with teacher qualifying within higher education and from the tradition of apprenticeship (Wenger, 1999²), the reflective practitioner (Schön, 1987³), peer advising (Lauvås et al., 2001⁴, (Race et al., 2009)⁵).

Because of its direct translation from Latin, the concept supervision is often wrongly perceived in the meaning 'surveillance' (Leth Andersen, 2007)⁶. In a learning context, however, supervision is more of a coaching form of dialogue between colleges. A peer supervision dialogue may be *indirect*, i.e. with no preceding observation of teaching or supervision practice. The supervision in this situation is based on a specific problem in the practice of the participant. However, in the course in University pedagogy (Adjunktpædagogikum) *direct supervision*, means that supervisors observe teaching and

¹ In the new statement from June 2007 it is still focused on demands of teaching qualifications, possessed by assistant professors in the career system at universities

² Wenger, E. (1999). *Communities of Practice*. Cambridge University Press.

³ Schön, D. (1987). *The Reflective Practitioner*. San Francisco; Jossey-Bass.

⁴ Lauvås P. and Rump C. (2001) *Vor fælles viden – kollegavejledning som metode til udvikling af undervisning ved højere læreanstalter*. København. Samfundslitteratur.

⁵ Race P. et al (2009). *Using peer observation to enhance teaching*. Leeds Metropolitan University

⁶ Leth Andersen, H. (2007). *Kollegial supervision på universitetet*. Aarhus Universitetsforlag

provide feedback based on the observed teaching or project supervision situation. *Reflection* is an essential aspect of supervision, where the supervised persons are encouraged to adopt a *helicopter perspective* on their personal teaching and project supervision practice.

In this course in University pedagogy supervision is performed by the two supervisors, who represent specialists within university teaching and learning. Furthermore, it is recommended that course participants also observe the department supervisor's teaching activities. Thus, the supervision becomes more similar to peer supervision. (Lauvås et al., 2001)

Method

Supervision is an apt frame for developing professional and personal competences in relation to teaching activities. The supervision has to be focused on the professional teaching practice and specifically at the course participant's role as a teacher, and his/her implementation of the teaching activities and tutoring, in terms of both subject matter and pedagogy. The objective of supervision is to create new insights and behavioural opportunities, primarily for the person to be supervised and secondly, for the supervisor. As a supervisor, one in fact gets the opportunity to learn a great deal from junior colleagues.

The overall objectives for the supervision are:

- To create new opportunities through the development of deeper insight into and understanding of his/her teaching and facilitation potential.
- To provide the opportunity to gain increased insight into potential "blind spots" in his/her ways of planning, directing, conducting and evaluating the teaching and project supervision.
- Eventually to create new insights and performance opportunities for the supervisor; in other words, the mutual nature of understanding, expressed in the following: *"I become wiser concerning the other's teaching through my observations; at the same time, I also become wiser concerning my own teaching."*

It is important to maintain that this is about supervision of the professional teaching practice. In other words, *focus should be on the teaching or project supervision/facilitation practice, not on the personality of the assistant professor.* It is important to clarify this condition from the start, as some especially younger teachers may be nervous at the thought of other teachers observing their teaching.

Another critical feature concerning the supervision is that it is *experience-oriented*. In other words, there is a focus on the extent to which the supervised and supervisor, respectively, *experience* the teaching or facilitation of students that has been conducted. The supervised and the supervisor separately form a mental picture on basis of the completed teaching activities.

Dialogue and feedback from the supervisors is given in a meeting subsequent to the observed teaching – or at least a few days later. In this meeting, it is important to strive for equality or principal symmetry (colleague/peer relationship) between the participants. None of the participants should be able to claim a "patent" on the "truth" related to the teaching activities under discussion.

A sense of equality is a prerequisite for the supervised being able to receive feedback and to develop and improve his/her teaching practice. From the basis of this sense of equality and through dialogue, both participants in the observation process are able to reach new insights and realise opportunities for further development and improvement of the teaching or facilitation practice.

In the following description there is a presentation on how colleague supervision might be practiced.

The practice of colleague supervision

The initial step in the supervision method entails a *meeting* between the supervisor and the supervised, concerning the planning of the teaching activity, which is to be observed. Then the teaching or supervision/facilitation of students is *observed* by the supervisor. Following the observation the supervised and the supervisor meet to *discuss* the completed teaching or project supervision/facilitation process. The basis for this meeting is the supervised person's personal acknowledgement of his/her personal and professional background and developmental needs (cf. wishes for development and the objective description in the pedagogic plan of action), along with the expressed experiences with the teaching activity.

Supervision implies *observation* of the teaching and project supervision/facilitation, done by the supervised teacher.

The prerequisites of supervision are interests, openness, loyalty, and ethics from all involved partners, because supervision is a personally involving teacher qualifying method.

Note: It is useful and helpful to keep a running record of thoughts and feedback (the format is open). This could be used to send to the supervised person in advance of a meeting but it can also help at the end of the supervision period when supervisors are asked to prepare the evaluation statement.

Recommendations on how to practice colleague supervision

What we should *not* do!

During random conversation we often as academics express our meanings, knowledge and personal experience. We debate, contradict and give good advice. The university teacher has been trained to quickly analyse, assess, argue, conclude and give advice. We should try to avoid doing so in supervision.

What we have to do!

The supervision dialogue includes listening and question technique (Leth Andersen, op. cit.). During the supervision dialogue it is, however, important to prioritise the person being supervised. The supervisor should listen actively, openly, kindly and with interests. The supervisor should state that his/her role is to listen and help elaborate and clarify the issues, which the supervised has a need to discuss. This gives the supervised a possibility *to think and reflect*. The dialogue may not turn into a discussion.

An important pre-condition for supervisors being able to solve the supervision task is that a meeting has been held where the course participant has had the possibility to discuss the first draft of the teachings learning report and pedagogic working plan with the supervisors before the observations are planned and take place.

In concrete terms, supervision encompasses 3 types of activities: 1) preliminary meeting, 2) teaching observations and 3) follow-up advising.

1. Preliminary meeting:

The supervisor converses with the supervised about his/her thoughts behind the planning of the teaching before the observation of the teaching or project supervision/facilitation situation takes place. The conversation may be concerned with questions such as:

1. What have been determining factors for the teaching plans, including the didactic considerations;
2. How does the supervised teacher intend to approach the teaching or supervision activity;
3. What are the intended learning outcomes for the students, and
4. What are the expectations from students behaviour
5. Which points does he/she wish the supervisor to focus on during the observation?

2. Teaching observations⁷

The supervisor observes the teaching or project/student supervision. The observations can be accomplished with respect to a variety of points of focus, for instance,

- The teacher's professionalism in relation the subject – the extent to which the conducted teaching is of a good professional quality (especially important for the department supervisor to focus on)
- The teacher's ability to organise the students' learning processes through the application of various teaching methods and techniques.
- The general interaction with the students or with groups of students, i.e., the relationship between students at different resource levels.

The teaching observation is at the same time a simple and a very complex process. The supervisors, who have completed teaching observations for the first time often remark that they find it difficult to find something to "look at". This comment corresponds to the fact that teaching observation normally requires education and training within the area.

3. Concluding meeting and advice

Advice given associated with the supervision and is practised as an extension to the observation of the teaching or supervision/facilitation situation.

⁷ An outline of the focusing points which may be used for support to the supervisor has been developed and may be obtained at the slides about supervision, which can be found in Moodle after the workshops about supervision in February 2015

A meeting should be held immediately after the conclusion of the teaching activity. The supervisor can make his/her own experience available for discussion, which gives a special character to the discussion. The supervisor may use his/her experience as a mirror for the supervised teacher, through which the latter can observe his/her own practices.

It is important that the supervisor providing advice does not dominate the dialogue with defined methods. The supervisor should instead be supportive and raise issues related to the teaching done by the supervised. In other words, in the dialogue the supervised should be met on his/her own terms in such a way as to *be supported, inspired and provoked by the supervisor, and still allow the supervisor to contribute with professional and pedagogical challenges.*

Examples on how to supervise

1. Subsequent to observation of teaching or project supervision, done by the supervised teacher, an experience phase starts, in which the supervised describes his/her experiences concerning the recently completed teaching or group supervision. The supervisor's role is to raise questions that guide the supervised in the direction of a more clear understanding of the situation in relation to the completed teaching. *Supervisor may for instance ask the following questions,*

- Tell me what you just experienced in the situation?
- What did you notice about you and about the students?
- What kind of feedback and reactions did you notice from the students?
- How do you think the situation was perceived from the students perspectives?
- In your opinion what did you do well/were you satisfied with? How do you know?
- What did not go so well/were you dissatisfied with? How do you know?

This phase is concluded by the supervisor summing up his/her understanding of what happened. The supervised person may correct and elaborate if desired. The supervisor incite the supervised to present his/her own reflections and thoughts about the consequences of what happened. For example using questions like,

- What do you think about this situation?
- What would you do differently next time – and why?
- What do you want to find out/learn more about?
- How can I or others help you?

It is important not to give concrete advices at this phase. By raising relevant questions and issues, the aim is to help the supervised to come to a greater self-awareness of his/her personal resources and needs for development of the teaching-related competencies.

2. Subsequently, the supervisor again steps in and summarizes his/her perception of the consequences for action the situation should lead to. The supervisor may proceed with providing assistance by describing his/her observations, experiences and personal professional and pedagogical knowledge.

3. The third phase is concerned with *solutions*. It is once again important that the supervisor do not provide solutions in advance, but allows the supervised to come to his/her own realisations through the use of guiding questions targeted at aiding the supervised in suggesting his/her own potential solutions for improving the teaching. Here, the supervisor has the possibility of pointing out alternatives and giving advice with reference to and in accordance with the issues raised by the supervised in the question of,
 - How do I perceive the course of actions and the consequences?
 - What is important in principle?
 - Which alternatives do I think exist?
 - What will I support or maybe problematic?
 - What specific advice should/can I give?
4. Finally, this phase concentrates on clarifications of the course of actions. Here the supervisor may ask the supervised the following question,
 - What was positive in this situation?
 - What were you dissatisfied with?⁸
 - What would you be aware of and do differently next time?

This phase is concluded by a summary done by the supervisor on what happened. The supervised may elaborate and correct as desired.

It can be difficult to practice the supervision method and difficult to raise the "right" questions, which will lead to a new awareness at the person, who is receiving the supervision. However, it is generally a good tool in order to develop a deeper awareness of one's own teaching and teaching-related competencies.

Supervision practiced indirectly

According to Leth Andersen⁹ and Handal and Lauvås¹⁰, supervision does not necessarily involve that the supervisor observes teaching. Instead, they argue that emphasis may be put on the perception of personal practice of the supervised, i.e. the personal experiences and problem analyses of own teaching- and supervision practice, i.e. the conscious and partly subconscious perceptions of teaching and learning. The supervision task will here take place as a one on one dialogue between the supervised and the supervisor (or if both supervisors are present at the same time as a one- to two dialogue).

The dialogue should be based on a specific problem from the teaching or project supervision practice of the supervised, which the supervised by feedback in the conversation is helped in investigating and relating to.

The supervision dialogue between the supervised and the supervisor(s) may also be based on a development project chosen by the participant to work on throughout the course in

⁸ The mentioned questions are inspired by a presentation by professor Per Lauvås, course on supervision, Jan. 2005

⁹ Leth Andersen H. (2007). *Kollegial supervision på universitetet*. Aarhus Universitetsforlag

¹⁰ Lauvås P. og G. Handal (1997). *Vejledning og praktisk fagteori*. Forlaget Klim.

University pedagogy (Adjunktpædagogikum). In this case, the turning point for the dialogue between the two (or three) parties will be the supervised's conception of the problems and possibilities for solutions of the development project.

The indirect method of supervision will be assigned to the same rules as the dialogue subsequent to a teaching observation, since this conversation will also be according to agreement and structured.

Suggestions to phases in the dialogue:¹¹

1. **Establishment of agreement.** (Content, objective, form, time frame)
2. **The supervised presents the experienced challenges/problems** with own teaching/supervision – alternatively points for work in development project. (Ensures that the supervisor(s) and the supervised gain a joint understanding of the problems that must be addressed and solved.)
3. **Problem analysis.** (When the supervisor asks elaborating questions the understanding of the supervised for the problem unfolds.)
4. **Problem solving.** (Questions from the supervisor guides the supervised towards finding independent solutions to the problems)
5. **Debate and choice of solutions.** (The supervised is supported in choosing the best solutions)
6. **Evaluation and reflection.** (The supervisor investigates if the supervised experiences a gain from the dialogue and has new angles and solution possibilities to the problems.

The equalitarian peer - colleague supervision

From the beginning of the pedagogic course, study groups, consisting of 2-8 participants are established. These peer groups are aimed at providing the course participants with the additional opportunity to explore co-operative relationships and discussions, wherein the members study the theories and provide on-going support and supervision to each other regarding the development of the teaching and project supervision/facilitation competencies. They also do this by attending and debating each other's teaching and project supervision. Peer colleague supervision provides an added bonus in that the course participants gain the experience of working together as a group and eventually the basis for forming a colleague network at the university.

Note: It is useful as a supervisor to ask the participant how the peer group work is coming along also to pick up on interesting aspects that may have been discussed.

3. Evaluation Statement

At the end of the course, the department's supervisor and the pedagogic supervisor formulate and sign a Pedagogic Evaluation Statement.

Types of evaluation statements

It is recommended to formulate the pedagogic evaluation statement in terms of characteristics, wherein a *horizontal perspective* is used to describe the actions done by the

¹¹ This structure is inspired by Humle A. (2004). *Dialog, der bygger bro*. Schultz.

assistant professor/post doc. For instance, "*John/Jane Doe has a thorough, detailed and extensive teaching plan.*" Writing it in that way involves a precise observation of what the person supervised did without qualifying whether it was good or bad.

Which teaching qualifications or pedagogical qualifications are sought, will vary greatly from one educational institution to another. Therefore a hierarchical form of evaluation will in reality be meaningless. To write that "John/Jane Doe is a very capable teacher" says nothing in itself. The statement may mean that John/Jane Doe is quite good at presenting the subject matter or that he/she is very good at building a dialogue with the students. Evaluating to what extent, for example, dialogue in teaching is a positive or a negative attribute depends on the educational environment and culture existing within the particular study program. Educational cultures vary greatly as they are determined by subject line, didactic framework and by cultural, historic, and institutional practices developed in the educational program. What signifies good teaching is similarly not an unambiguous concept, even though it can be quite clear-cut in relation to the students' desire to get the most possible out of the teaching.

If the description of the assistant professor's activities and developmental progression with the teaching is as precise as possible, it will then be much more suitable as a basis for evaluating the assistant professor's teaching qualifications in an employment application situation. Use of the pedagogical evaluation statement for this purpose requires the description to be as detailed and complete as possible.

It can be difficult to separate descriptive adjectives from evaluation, because there is a judgement behind every description. However, the examples that follow demonstrate that it is possible to describe pedagogic qualifications without ending up too far in the direction of the hierarchical evaluation form.

Content of the evaluation statement

Procedure

The pedagogic evaluation statement is prepared exclusively on the basis of the assistant professor's/post doc's engagement and participation in the course for assistant professors. The assistant professor's/post doc's personal considerations concerning the development of the teaching-related competencies during the course period, his/her teaching learning report and personal plan of action, form the basis of the statement. Before starting writing the evaluation statement it is recommended that a meeting takes place between the supervisors and the supervised, where experiences and evaluation of learning outcome are discussed. It may be expedient to let the person supervised provide the factual information on the employment facts and the teaching activities. The department supervisor then drafts the content of the statement, and the pedagogic supervisor gives comments and supplements it. (See writing template below)

The next section presents examples of statements. It is important to notice that not all dimensions or types of teaching activities need to be described, only activities which are characteristic to the teaching of the supervised person in question. Not all pedagogical aspects are mentioned in this guideline, why it is of course acceptable to describe other aspects.

The evaluation statement should contain the following points:

- An account of the time and place of employment, the course's term, names and titles of supervisors
- An account of teaching activities completed during the course term and methods of teaching applied in these activities.
- An account of the of the modules that were attended, and any additional activities that were included (for example preparation of an article)
- A evaluation of the assistant professor's pedagogical competences. This evaluation can address any of the following aspects (please select what is relevant in respect to the assistant professor's activities). Please highlight the assistant professor's particular and positive pedagogic qualifications:

- Course teaching (lectures)
- Project Supervision (facilitation)
- Other teaching methods
- Teaching related assignments such as development, coordination, evaluation, etc.
- Planning and structuring of the teaching activities, including:
 - Pedagogic considerations
 - Didactic considerations
 - Formulation of objectives
 - Progression
- Syllabus and choice of teacher book material and technical teaching aids
- Planning and structuring of the individual teaching activities, including:
 - Pedagogic considerations
 - Didactic considerations
 - Formulation of objectives
 - Progression
- Syllabus and choice of teacher book material and technical teaching aids
- Preparation of the teaching materials, including:
 - Writing of own material (notes)
 - Compilation of compendia
 - Preparation of activities
 - Completion of the teaching activity, including:
 - Introduction
 - Dialogue, communication with the students
 - Teacher's rhetoric and communication
 - Personal behaviours
 - Physical use of the classroom
 - Use of various technical teaching aids
 - Social learning environment
 - Engagement
 - Evaluation of the students' and of own pedagogic efforts, including:
 - Choice of evaluation methods
 - Evaluation of the students
 - Theoretical reflection, development and changes to the teaching, including
 - Self-evaluation

- Experiments and changes

- A short, comprehensive evaluation, to evaluate whether the assistant professor has completed the course on a *less-than-satisfactory, satisfactory, or very-satisfactory level*.

We recommend that the department supervisor drafts the statement, which is then completed in cooperation between the two supervisors. It is recommended to organize a meeting between the supervisors and course participant prior to writing the statement.

The Pedagogic Evaluation Statement should be dated and signed by both supervisors. The signed statement is to be forwarded to the AAU Learning Lab administration for further processing.

Note: The course participant will not receive course certificate until after we have received the statement. – A copy of the statement will be sent to the HR Department where it will be stored in personal file of the assistant professor.