



**AALBORG UNIVERSITET**

**Rector's Office / Research Services**

Document date: 10-07-2024

Contact: Rector's Office / Research Services (Grants & Contracts)

Next revision date: As necessary

Date of approval: 14-08-2024

Approved by: Rector's Office

Document No. 4204774

Case No.: 2024-052-01066

# Aalborg University Anti-Corruption Policy

*TARGET GROUP – all AAU staff members*

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Since Aalborg University (AAU) is a self-governing institution under public sector administration, the same fundamental values as the rest of the public sector apply. These values include openness, democracy, the rule of law, objectivity, integrity and impartiality as well as the requirement of lawful administration.

AAU strongly distances itself from corruption. Efforts to prevent corruption are essential because the university is an important institution that operates nationally and internationally in an environment where the above-mentioned fundamental values are central to the role the university plays in society.

The purpose of the policy is to summarize current legislation and a number of the university's internal rules and policies that (directly or indirectly) aim to prevent corruption. The purpose is also to protect the university's reputation and to protect managers, staff and our partners by having a clear, shared understanding of our ethical standards. The purpose is also to ensure that applicable legislation and internal rules and policies are complied with.

The policy is not exhaustive, but summarizes current legislation, rules and policies aimed at preventing all forms of corruption. In addition, the policy describes sanctions for violations and options for reporting matters that violate the policy.

All employees are covered by the policy and obliged to comply with it.

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Typical forms of corruption are described below, with reference to legislation and internal rules and policies governing these types of corruption.

### **Bribery**

Bribery is "*a payment, gift, or other benefit intended to induce someone to do or refrain from doing something that is illegal or contrary to their duties.*"

Bribery can be divided into two types: active bribery and passive bribery. Active bribery is when a person gives, offers or promises a bribe, and passive bribery is when a person demands or accepts such payment. For public sector employees, it may be a criminal offence to receive gifts at all, regardless of whether there is an expectation of a quid pro quo.

It is bribery, regardless of whether payment is made in the form of money, gifts, travel or other compensation that benefit the recipient or their loved ones personally.

Active bribery of public employees is punishable under § 122 of the Danish Criminal Code with up to six years' imprisonment. Passive bribery is punishable under § 144 with up to six years' imprisonment.

### **Grease payment**

A grease payment, also called a small facilitation payment, is a type of bribe, typically with a small amount of money or gifts, that is intended to secure or expedite an action to which the payer is already entitled.

As a general rule, public sector employees are not allowed to accept gifts or other benefits from citizens or businesses in connection with their work. For further details, see the [AAU rules for receiving gifts and other benefits](#) as well as (in Danish) [AAU's rules on entertainment, gifts and catering](#).

### **Embezzlement**

Embezzlement, also called cash register fraud and mandate fraud, is the theft of funds committed by people in positions of trust. That is, people entrusted with managing funds taking from the funds themselves. This can be directly where money is withdrawn from the cash register/bank account, or indirectly where the funds are used for personal consumption with false vouchers.

Embezzlement is punishable under § 278 of the Danish Criminal Code and mandate fraud under § 280 with up to eight years' imprisonment under particularly aggravated circumstances.

### **Fraud**

Fraud is financial crime that involves some form of swindle, deception or forgery. For example, it is fraud when an employee cheats customers or companies for their own gain.

Fraud is punishable under § 279 of the Danish Criminal Code with up to eight years' imprisonment under particularly aggravated circumstances.

### **Extortion**

Extortion occurs when a person obtains money or other benefits by threats of, for example, violence, damage or disclosure of sensitive information. Extortion is punishable under § 281 of the Danish Criminal Code.

### **Nepotism**

Nepotism is the favouring of family members, friends and acquaintances, for example, when positions are filled or other benefits given. Nepotism is a special form of abuse of power where powerful people give preferential treatment based on family ties and friendship rather than on relevant experience, education or skills.

Nepotism is not directly criminally sanctioned, but will be covered by the rules of the Public Administration Act on disqualification (see further details below), and is otherwise contrary to the obligations of public employees.

### **Conflict of interest (or "disqualification")**

A conflict of interest (or "disqualification") is a conflict between two or more interests. A conflict of interest often arises when a person has a personal interest while simultaneously safeguarding the public interest. When these two interests coexist, the person may find it difficult to be impartial when they have to choose between the interests.

A person who is in such a situation is often declared disqualified due to a conflict of interest. Within the public sector, this will mean that the person may not participate in processing a case where they may have extraneous interests in the outcome.

§ 3 of the Public Administration Act regulates disqualification and essentially stipulates that a person "*who works within the public administration is disqualified in relation to a specific case if they*":

- have a special personal or financial interest in the outcome of the case or is a representative for such a person,
- or if their spouse or other close relative has a special personal or financial interest in the outcome of the case,
- serve in the management of or is otherwise closely involved in an enterprise, an association or other private legal entity that has a particular interest in the outcome of the case.

The rule also applies if there are other circumstances that suitably raise doubt about the impartiality of the person concerned.

Of course, it is not wrong to have private interests, but it is important that the public interest and private interests are kept separate.

For more information on the management of conflicts of interest, see (in Danish) the [AAU policy for handling conflicts of interest](#).

### **Other rules**

As a supplement to the above, see the [AAU Code of Conduct](#) and [AAU Code of Conduct in Using University Resources](#).

### **Sanctioning**

The vast majority of corruption cases will be criminally sanctioned, (cf. provisions of the Danish

Criminal Code), as described above. In addition, violation of the rules may have personnel consequences that reflect the nature of the violation.

### **Reporting**

Suspicion of corruption or other criminal offences may always be reported to the immediate superior or their immediate superior.

In addition, the [AAU whistleblower scheme](#) can be used if the person reporting wishes anonymity. However, AAU always appeals to dialogue between the person reporting and their manager whenever possible.

### **ORIGIN, BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

The policy was prepared in June/July 2024 and approved by the rectorate at the meeting of the rectorate on 14 August 2024.

### **CONTACT / RESPONSIBILITY**

The policy was prepared in collaboration between Research Services (Grants & Contracts) and the Rector's Office, thus these two departments may be contacted if you have any questions about the policy.

Questions regarding AAU's internal rules and policies to which this policy refers must be directed to the responsible departments stated therein.

Contact Grants & Contracts at [kontrakt@adm.aau.dk](mailto:kontrakt@adm.aau.dk).

Contact the Rector's Office [rektorsekretariatet@adm.aau.dk](mailto:rektorsekretariatet@adm.aau.dk).