



Date: 7-12-2021

Journalnr.:
Ref.: EM/LEFO

Working Basis for VIA's Educational Committees 2022-2026

0. Objective of the present note

The working basis describes the formal framework and the ambition that the management of VIA University College (hereinafter referred to as VIA) has put up for the Educational Committees 2022-2026. The working basis frames the distribution of the responsibility and the tasks between the different levels of the organisation, including the chairman of the Committee and the programme management. The note also frames the dialogue, structure, and the transfer of information between the Educational Committees and VIA's Board of Directors and Executive Board.

All Educational Committees will be introduced to the working basis at the first meeting of the term. The working basis is also an instrument for dialogue and a starting-point for evaluations of the work of the Educational Committees.

The working basis will be communicated to the organisations eligible for appointing members, enabling them to make an informed choice when appointing members for the Educational Committees.

1. Ambition for the function of the Educational Committees at VIA

The Educational Committees are an important source of information on the development of the job market and the professions. The ambition is to create a systematic reflux of information from the Educational Committees to the programmes and VIA's management. This includes continuous considerations of the job market's competence requirements, the quality of the programmes, etc.

The ambition is to bring the Educational Committees into play as consulting collaborators for the management by involving them in the processes in due course where the Committees are able to influence the processes and decisions and not only be briefed on these.

When appointing members, appointing representatives who meet the task and the level of ambition, such as ensuring an alignment of expectations with the appointing party, is emphasised. In case of vacancies in the Educational Committees, an extraordinary effort to have them filled is expected. Generally, all seats in the Educational Committees are filled at all times.

2. The legal framework

The Educational Committees are appointed under the Act on University colleges of higher education. The tasks are described in VIA's Articles of Association, §16:

- 'The Board shall set up at least one educational committee per educational area as recommended by Rector. All fundamental educational programmes and connected further and continuing educational programmes that VIA University College is licensed to offer must be connected to an educational committee. The Board determines the number of members per educational committee.

- The educational committees advise the Board, Rector and the management of the applicable educational area on the quality and relevance of the educational programmes for society and on the regional educational coverage.
- The educational committee shall be involved in the development of new and existing educational programmes and in the development of new teaching and examination types.
- The educational committee can furthermore of its own volition advise on other questions relating to the educational area.
- The educational committees submit recommendations for approval by the Board or Rector ... concerning those parts of the study regulations within the areas of the committee specific to the institution'.

The Educational Committees are advisory and do not have any formal decision-making authority.

The Educational Committees' advisory role in relation to the individual programme can be exercised in different ways. For instance, it can be exercised by involving the Educational Committee in the dialogue about the strategic initiatives and by continuously giving input to how the programmes are developed in agreement with the qualifications and competences that are required in the professions.

It is a legal requirement that the updated information on the Educational Committees are available on VIA's website.

3. Points of attention concerning the composition

3.1. The composition of the Educational Committees in general

VIA's Articles of Association contain a single statement concerning the composition of the Educational Committees:

'16.2. The joint members of the educational committee shall have experience with and insight into the educational area and the employment sectors that the educational programmes provide access to. The educational committee shall be composed in such a manner that it reflects the accepting employment market and the regional requirements with respect to the educational area'.

There is a certain flexibility regarding the composition of the Educational Committees. It is possible to supplement the Committee with a few appointments where the local management (following a dialogue with the relevant external collaborators, e.g. the Local Government Regional Council, KKR) can appoint persons with particular knowledge on the subject. In order to create a valuable flow of knowledge for the programmes, it is essential that representatives who are knowledgeable about and have an interest in the field of education and who are able to tackle the task as collaborators for the management are appointed.

3.2. Concerning staff and student representatives

Two members of staff and at least two students must be appointed for each Educational Committee. The process takes place locally and is agreed by the management and the student and staff representatives, e.g. representatives of the local students' council (DSR) and local committees (LU). The programme is responsible for informing the students and staff about the opportunities for becoming a part of the Educational Committees. It is important that the students and staff are informed about what the task involves and that an alignment of expectations takes place.

3.3. Particulars concerning the students' involvement

The student representatives have an important voice in the Educational Committees as they possess unique knowledge about studying and a special insight into what works and what does not work at the programmes. It is expected that the students are committed and participate actively. In order to equip the student for managing this task, the programme management or the secretary of the Committee is responsible for ensuring that newly appointed students are introduced thoroughly to the work (e.g. by means of an introduction meeting) as well as continuously equipping them for participation at the meetings, e.g. by being available for reviewing the meeting material for the student before the meetings. Additionally, a shared paper focusing on the role of the students in the Educational Committees is made. In addition to local programme specific introductions, joint introductions for the students will be held once or twice a year, e.g. at a webinar.

3.4. Appointment of members

The Rector's Office (STP) coordinates the appointments with the external parties, who appoint several members for VIA's Educational Committees. These include: Local Government Regional Council Midtjylland,

Central Denmark Region, North Denmark Region, Aarhus University, and the upper secondary educational institutions. All other appointments are managed by the programmes.

4. Recommendations for a good organisation of work in the Educational Committees

4.1. A good organisation of work

As the Educational Committees typically have 2-4 meetings a year, it is essential that all meetings are organised and held based on the ambition of high-quality dialogue at the meetings.

In order to live up to VIA's ambitions for the Educational Committees, the following principles for a good way of working are put forward:

- All Educational Committees have rules of procedure that are locally adjusted from the standard rules of procedure passed by VIA's Board of Directors (cf. Appendix 1). In the procedure of agendas, the role distribution between the chairman and the programme management is described clearly.
- The relevance of the work of the Educational Committees and the involvement of external representatives are ensured by giving them the opportunity to have a strong influence on the agendas and structure of the meetings.
- On the first meeting of the term, plenty of time is allowed for an alignment of expectations with the individual member focusing on a high level of engagement.
- A mid-term evaluation (i.e. after two years), and an evaluation after 4 years are carried out
- The organisation of the work of the Educational Committees is based on an annual schedule, which each Committee draws up, giving the members a long-term overview of the topics that will be discussed in the Educational Committees both in a one-year and four-year (full term) perspective.

The arrangement of meetings is generally a collaboration between the chairman of the Committee and the responsible Dean and/or relevant Associate Deans. The Dean and/or one or more Associate Deans will participate in the meetings.

4.2. The role of the chairman

The chairman of the Educational Committee plays a crucial role in the cooperation with the Dean and the Associate Deans in order to ensure that the work of the Committees is valuable for the programmes and the professions. Therefore, it is essential that the Educational Committees appoint chairmen that have experience managing meetings and who are prepared for working in between the meetings. The chairman is also the face/mediator of the Educational Committee to VIA's management and Board of Directors.

4.3. High-priority topics for the work of the Educational Committees

The work of VIA's Educational Committees is based on the motto 'less briefing, more dialogue'. The dialogue takes place by means of in-depth thematic discussions based on this overview of topics (non-exhaustive list):



As the multidisciplinary Council of Continuing Education (EVU) was abolished in 2021, all Educational Committees have to ensure that the perspective of the EVU is integrated in the work of the Committee, e.g. by affiliate employees or managers from the EVU domain as members of the Committees or by planning systematic thematic EVU discussions.

5. Clear connection to strategy and quality related work

The Educational Committees are natural partners in the development and evaluation of the programmes' strategic development plans.

In the process standards for 'involvement of employers', 'evaluation of teaching', and 'involvement of graduates', it is encouraged that the programmes continuously involve the Educational Committee in an assessment of the obtained knowledge and discussion of the need for adjustment of the programme.

6. Dialogue between the Educational Committees and VIA's Board of Directors and Executive Board

The Educational Committees are appointed by VIA's Board of Directors. In order to strengthen the cooperation between the Board of Directors and the Educational Committees, the Board of Directors, the Executive Board, and representatives from the Educational Committees (usually the chairmen) hold meetings on a regular basis, usually once a year. The meetings concern relevant and strategic initiatives.

7. Rules of procedure

VIA's Board of Directors passes the standard rules of procedure (Appendix 1), which constitute the concrete framework of the work and meeting activities of the Educational Committees. The individual programme can add to these standard rules of procedure. The rules of procedure are updated continuously, including specification of the distribution of responsibilities and tasks between the chairman and the secretary, procedures for submission of meeting material, and publication of the minutes.

8. Opportunity for counsel by the Rector's Office

Several times a year, the Rector's Office (STP) composes packages of sources for thematic discussions in the Educational Committees. The themes are chosen by the Executive Team of Deans.

Furthermore, a webinar targeting the secretaries of the Educational Committees is offered in order to inform the secretaries about the appointment process, present examples of approaches to institutions that eligible for appointing members, and brief on the distributions of tasks between STP and the programmes.

In case of questions on the working basis, appointments, the rules of procedure or other things concerning

VIA's Educational Committees, please contact Lea Faurholt Olsen lefo@via.dk or Elvir Maleskic em@via.dk of the Rector's Office.

9. Salary/allowances for travelling expenses

Participation in the Educational Committees is unpaid work, and travel expenses are generally not reimbursed. However, VIA's Board of Directors have decided to cover travelling expenses in case the organisation eligible for appointing members is unable to do so.

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APPENDIX 1: Standard rules of procedure

The working basis is composed by a task group consisting of: Elvir Maleskic, Hanne Sandahl, Karen Frederiksen, and Lea Faurholt Olsen.

The working basis has been approved by the Executive Team of Deans on 7 December 2021.

APPENDIX 1: Standard rules of procedure of the Educational Committees (approval from the Board of Directors is expected in May 2022)

In accordance with §18 in the Act of University colleges of higher education and in pursuance of §16 in VIA's Articles of Association, the following rules of procedure of the Educational Committee of <insert the programme/domain concerned here> and affiliated Continuing Education programmes at VIA University College are hereby determined.

The members of the Educational Committee

§ 1. The Educational Committee is composed in the following way:

<insert number here> members are appointed by <organisation eligible for appointing members is inserted here>

<insert number here> members are appointed by <organisation eligible for appointing members is inserted here>

<Etc.>

2 members are appointed by and from among the members of staff in the Educational Committee's domain. The process takes place locally and is agreed by the management and the staff. Local committee (LU) representatives may be involved.

2 members are appointed by and from among the students in the Educational Committee's domain. The process takes place locally and is agreed by the management and the students. Representatives of the local students' council (DSR) may be involved. The students are allowed to have more than two representatives in the Educational Committees.

2. The term of the Educational Committees is four years and follows the election period of VIA's Board of Directors at staggered intervals of three months, term running from 1 August 2022 and ending by the end of July 2026.

3. VIA's programmes and the Rector's Office coordinate the appointment of members in connection with a new term.

4. If a member loses their right to be in the Committee or is absent due to prolonged illness, leave of absence, or other causes, the organisation eligible for appointing members is approached with a view to appointing a new member.

5. Updated information on the Educational Committees must be available on VIA's website, including the following information:

- number of members in each Committee
- who is eligible for appointing members for each Educational Committee
- the appointed members for each Educational Committee, including members appointed by the students and members of staff

§ 2. The Dean and/or relevant Associate Deans participate in meetings as secretaries for the Educational Committee.

2. One or more Associate Deans are appointed for the Educational Committee for the purpose of professional counsel. The number of appointed members and the election of these are determined by the responsible Dean.

The constitution of the Educational Committee

§ 3. At the first meeting, the Educational Committee elects a chairman from among the external members by simple majority amongst the present members. The term of the chairman is four years. The term of the chairman follows the term of the Committee.

Tasks

§ 4. In accordance with § 18 in the Act of University colleges for higher education, the Educational Committee has the task of advising the Board of Directors, the Rector, and the management of the relevant educational domain on the quality of the programmes and societal relevance as well as on the regional educational coverage.

2. The Educational Committee must be involved when developing new and existing programmes by development of new teaching and exam forms.

3. In addition to this, the Educational Committee may advise on other questions concerning the educational domain on its own initiative.

4. The Educational Committee makes recommendations for the approval from the Board of Directors or the Rector concerning the elements of the academic regulations specific to the institution within the educational domain.

Meeting activities

§ 5. The Educational Committee holds <insert amount here> ordinary meetings. [*Final number of meetings is determined by the individual Educational Committee. 2-4 ordinary meetings a year are expected.*]

2. It is possible to convene extraordinary meetings provided that the chairman or Dean or three members jointly wish to do so.

3. The chairman and the Dean and/or relevant Associate Deans compose a yearly meeting plan (an annual wheel) for the Educational Committee.

§ 6. The responsible Dean and/or relevant Associate Deans provide clerical assistance.

2. In cooperation with the Dean and/or relevant Associate Deans, the chairman composes the agenda for the meetings of the Educational Committees. The agenda is submitted at least a week before the meeting. Meetings are noticed at least two weeks beforehand.

3. Any member of the Educational Committee can enter items on the agenda. Items wanted on the agenda must be in the possession of the chairman at least two weeks before the meeting.

4. The chairman of the Educational Committee chairs the meetings. In the absence of the chairman, the secretary of the Committee chairs the meetings.

§ 7. Minutes of the meetings are kept. The chairman approves the minutes, and the minutes are sent to the members of the Committee electronically two weeks after the meeting at the latest. The members then have a week to approve the minutes.

§ 8. Minutes of the meetings and agendas not including appendices are published on VIA's website.

Approval of the rules of procedure

§ 9. The standard rules of procedure for VIA's Educational Committees are approved by VIA's Board of Directors at their meeting (approval is expected in May 2022)

§ 10. The individual Educational Committee can add to the standard rules of procedure. The rules of procedure of each Educational Committee are approved by the Educational Committee.