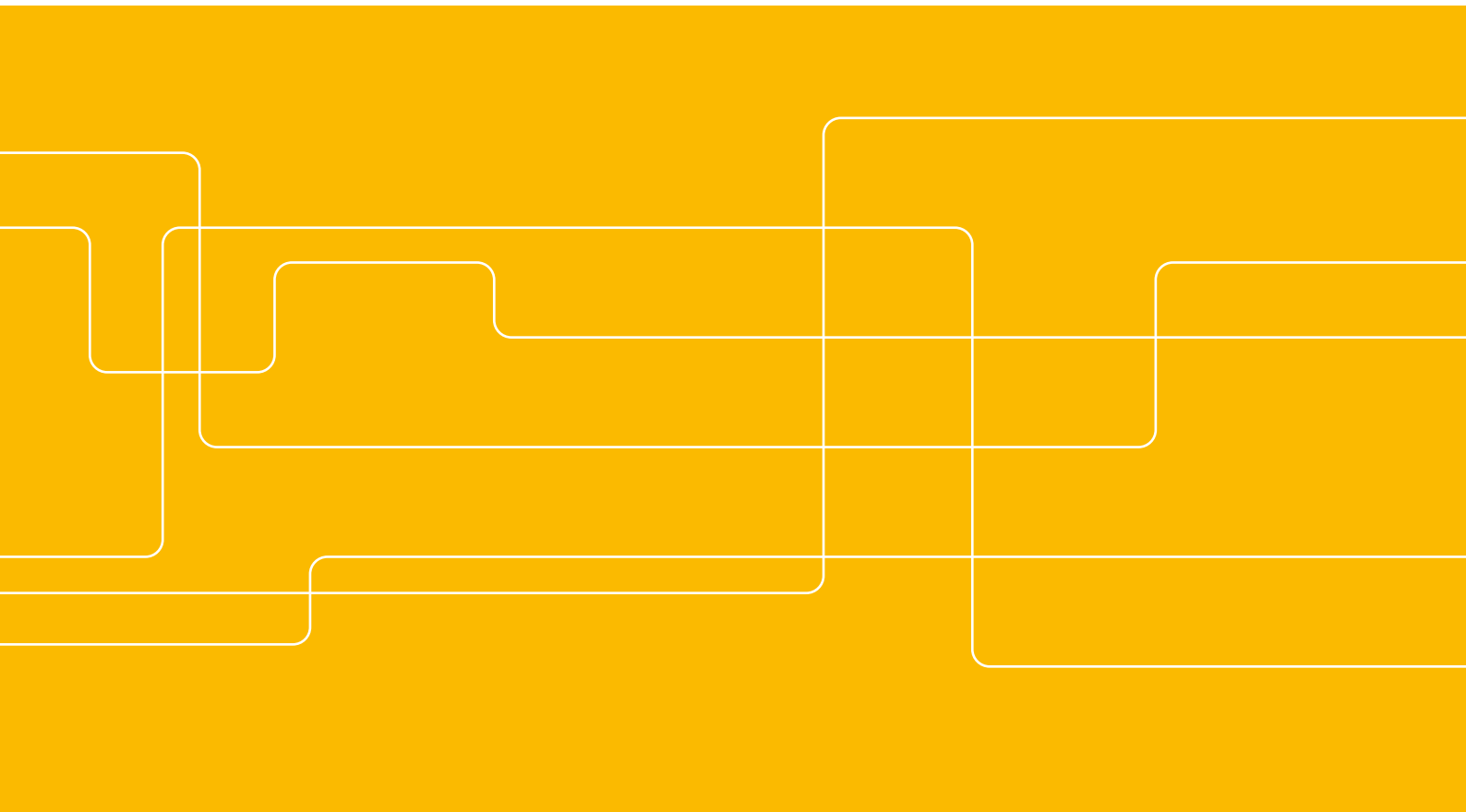
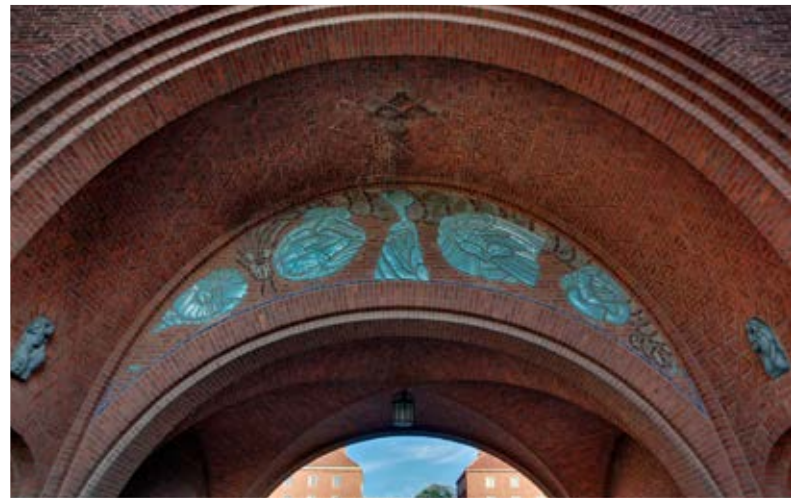




# Administrative Assessment Exercise (AAE) 2014

Evaluation of administrative processes at KTH





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# 1. Evaluating administrative processes: How and why?

## Background

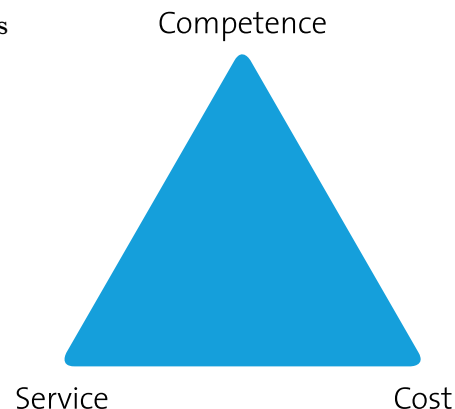
In its strategic plan for 2013–2016, KTH initiated an evaluation of its administration. This followed prior evaluations in the areas of research and education —namely, the Research Assessment Exercises (RAE) of 2008 and 2012 and the Education Assessment Exercise (EAE) of 2011. Given the format of these sister projects, naming this new initiative the Administrative Assessment Exercise (AAE) was logical.

The overall purpose of the AAE was to contribute to improving the KTH administration. The project was designed to build on the quality work that has been conducted within the administration in the last few years and to evaluate these efforts. This work has been directed towards improving administrative procedures and work processes, and the approach has been one of administrative operational development through experience exchange between administrators from different parts of KTH. Each year, several such strategic projects have been undertaken. Therefore, in a sense, the AAE formed a scaled-up continuation of this work.

The AAE was also expected to have a number of positive side effects. Amongst these was the administrative staff's increased knowledge about evaluations and quality work, including a greater understanding of the processes that teachers and researchers continuously undergo in, for instance, RAE and EAE. Through the AAE, administrative work would also become more visible throughout the organisation. This development, in turn, would facilitate better communication between administration, faculty, students, and other stakeholders.

## Methodology

In the AAE, the administration was assessed based on three aspects: competence, service, and cost, as illustrated by the “administrative triangle”:



It can also be described as an evaluation model that takes a holistic approach to quality. Conditions, processes, and results were assessed. This is, in fact, an unusual approach to the evaluation of administrative support. Generally, administrative processes are evaluated from a cost perspective only. However, since the AAE had an enhancement purpose, a comprehensive approach was required. It was important to ensure opportunities for reflection, new encounters, and learning. Therefore, the project was designed to involve a large number of employees rather than a small group of experts. The evaluation was carried out in manner similar to that applied in EAE and RAE—that is, in three steps: self-evaluation, external assessment (peer review), and follow-up.

The object of the evaluation was set as “administrative processes.” In all, 15 processes (described in more detail in chapter 3) were selected for review. Chosen on the basis of suggestions from the schools and university administration, after securing faculty support, the selected processes were identified as strategically important to the quality of education and research, as well as relevant and operationally significant.

### Self-evaluation

Each administrative process formed a sub-project within the AAE and was the subject of a self-evaluation. The self-evaluation work was based on a specific template covering issues related to competence, service, and cost. In the self-evaluation, the process was described in words and figures and scrutinised using external analysis, internal analysis, and stakeholder analysis. The self-evaluation process included identifying qualitative and quantitative data to support the analysis. Administrative work at all organisational levels was included in the self-evaluation.

In each sub-project, a project co-ordinator was responsible for the self-evaluation activities. In order to anchor the self-evaluation work within the university, an internal reference group was linked to each sub-project.

During the self-evaluation phase, the central project management created fora for answering questions about the project, including the self-evaluation template, and for discussing the evaluation methodology and quality work. This took place in seminars and through the web-based communication platform KTH Social.

## External assessment

An external assessment panel was linked to each self-evaluation group. This panel was made up of peers — expert colleagues from other universities and organisations with similar tasks. Assessment panel members were nominated by the self-evaluation groups and by faculty members.

All 15 assessment panels visited KTH on 3–5 June 2014 to interview administrative staff from the university administration and the school administrations, as well as representatives from management at different levels, faculty representatives, and students. The interviews served as a complement to the self-evaluation reports. Each assessment panel was led by a chair, responsible for distributing the work within the group and for delivering a report. In addition to the full-scale site visit, the panel chairs were given a special one-day opportunity in August to provide preliminary feedback to the self-evaluation groups and to KTH management.

The assessors summarised their impressions in a short report (one per self-evaluation group) based on the three aspects of competence, service, and cost, providing an assessment of each aspect, along with a justification. They also offered recommendations regarding further development. Some of these conclusions and recommendations can be found in chapters 2 and 3.

## Follow-up

The main conclusions from the project are summarised in the following section. This report and other project data, such as self-evaluation reports and panel reports, will be made readily available, and the AAE will be followed by a multitude of new development projects.

From the outset, it was envisioned that the AAE would identify a number of development needs. The bulk of this work will take place within the regular line-management structure, following the principle of continuous improvement. This is further discussed in chapter 4.









## 2. AAE findings: Recurring themes

In the AAE, a wealth of information was gathered. Some common themes stand out across the evaluated processes.

### **Growing pains in an expanding university**

In recent years, KTH has gone through an expansion phase. Financially, KTH has been particularly successful in securing new research funding. Strategic priorities have also become clearer. Overall, this has led to new investments in policy areas such as internationalisation, collaboration, innovation, and sustainability. The composition of the university administration has changed accordingly. While staff levels remain relatively constant within technical administration and within administrative areas linked to public authority tasks, there has been an increase in the administrative support to strategic areas. The newly established Legal Department, Research Office, KTH Business Liaison, and KTH Innovation are examples of the latter.

This rapid transformation is deliberate, and in the AAE it is seen as a largely positive development. The evaluation does, however, highlight certain drawbacks. This also relates to new requirements from external funding bodies, new policy initiatives and new legislation requiring more stringent administrative routines. In some instances, the conflict between risk taking, on one hand, and risk minimising, on the other, seems to have been accentuated. Contract negotiation, procurement processes and records management may be seen by some as obstacles to progress, by others as safe-guards and quality standards. This potentially creates tension in faculty-administration relations.

The speed of change is identified as a challenge in itself. The expression growing pains is used by more than one assessment panel. It appears that the faster the change, the more difficult it is to deliver high-quality administrative services. The process for recruiting and supporting international students is brought up as an illustrative example. In the AAE, this process is found to be unsystematic, characterised by unclear authority channels and randomised decision making, which in turn may affect individual students, educational quality, and KTH's reputation.

## **Highly qualified administrative staff not utilised to full potential**

When it comes to staff competence, the evaluation is predominantly positive; self-evaluations, stakeholder analyses, and panel reports all indicate that the KTH administration is highly qualified. KTH comes across as an attractive and competitive employer. In recent years and in line with the new strategic priorities, KTH has recruited many administrators with extensive prior experience from industry and public service, and with PhD qualifications.

At the same time, the AAE shows that this competence is not being utilised to its full potential, largely because the link between administration and the academy is too weak. This applies, for example, to the administrative support for external research funding, where there is a low level of awareness at the school level about services offered by the Research Office. Similarly, the process for following up education and research, while useful for central-management purposes, is not entirely designed to meet the needs of schools. This means that core activities do not benefit fully.

The evaluation also identifies some staff-development needs. Many administrators, it is argued, would benefit from a broader familiarity with KTH, including better insight into core functions and other organisational levels, and better networks.

## **The decentralisation/centralisation dilemma**

Since 2005, KTH has been divided into 10 schools. Within this organisational structure, schools have a relatively high level of autonomy, including the areas of education administration, human resources, finance, and infrastructure, where schools have opted for separate administrative systems.

One of the recurring themes in the AAE is the difficulty of finding the right balance between centralised and decentralised administrative services. Some panels recommend increased centralisation, while others call for decentralisation. More fundamentally, the rationales behind either centralisation or decentralisation are often found to be unclear. Therefore, the evaluation highlights a need to clarify which administrative services should be standardised, concentrated, and therefore centralised and which services need to be provided close to education and research delivery and therefore decentralised.



## Working together in new ways

It is an explicit ambition to make the KTH administration more process oriented. The AAE indicates variation in how well this has been implemented. Several examples of good practice are identified. One is the innovation-support process, which is found to be clearly defined, professionally staffed, and well equipped with toolboxes. Another is student administration, where an extensive process-mapping exercise has been undertaken. In other areas, processes are found to be more rudimentary. Generally, the AAE identifies a need to learn from one another and to work on broad, overarching processes for core services. An improved process orientation would also provide greater clarity with regard to roles and responsibilities.

Another recurring theme in the AAE is faculty-administration relations. In order to complete strategic undertakings, administrators and faculty need to co-operate closely. This in turn requires role awareness, trust, and communication. The AAE shows that some otherwise well-run administrative processes do not reach faculty at large. In other cases, faculty-administration relations are built into the process but could be more effective. This applies, for instance, to the process for faculty appointment, for which the assessment panel recommends better use of human resources expertise as a complement to academic competence in the selection process. A common challenge is to establish teams in which both academic and administrative competencies are used resourcefully.

Several panel reports also mention central management-administration relations. Direct steering is found to be relatively common. In other words, individual managers often turn directly to individual administrators, particularly in matters of urgency or when requesting highly specialised information. While this is a sign that the competence is sought after, it can also create transparency problems and disrupt other activities. In particular, it is a challenge to the planning and follow-up cycles at the administrative department level. The AAE suggests that the annual activity plans be strengthened. If missions and priorities were clarified, it is argued, unpredictable events and direct steering would be easier to handle.

The AAE also points to instances where co-operation across administrative departments would benefit from strengthening. Some processes that ought to be cross-cutting, such as contract negotiation, business liaison, internationalisation, and external research funding, are found to be too loosely coupled, and department aims are sometimes contradictory. This may lead to unnecessary tension within the administration. Again, a clearer process orientation including well-defined process ownership would facilitate better cross-departmental co-operation.

### **The need for strategies, guidelines, and coherent systems**

Another common theme in both self-evaluations and panel reports is the need for strategies, guidelines, and coherent systems. This raises further questions—for example, whether systems should be common to the whole university or purpose-built for each area. Standardisation is thought to favour communication across the university. Not least technical administration, such as budgeting and accounts, often requires standardised solutions that can bridge the gaps between schools. In other areas, more flexible solutions are found to be necessary. In general, the need for checklists and guidelines should diminish if processes are well mapped and implemented.

### **Communication**

Finally, communication is a theme that runs across all AAE projects. Efficient communication between the administration and its stakeholders, as well as within the administration, is found to be a key to quality service. At an international university like KTH, communicating in English as well as in Swedish is absolutely necessary. The AAE shows some shortcomings in these respects. Frequently, strategies and support documents are in place, but few stakeholders are aware of their existence. This suggests that strategies need to be clarified and that the internal dialogue needs to be improved.









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### 3. The evaluated processes

The main findings from each of the evaluated processes are summarised in the following paragraphs. More detail can be found in the self-evaluation reports and panel memos, which are available upon request.

#### The education process

As might be expected, the education process is the most voluminous of all the evaluated processes. For practical reasons, it was divided into three sub-processes: career and study counselling, study administration, and support to teachers. In addition, the IT support systems for the process were discussed.

The evaluation shows that while career and study counselling works well in many parts of KTH, it lacks common targets and standards. To a large extent, each counsellor defines his or her own work description. Service levels vary from one school to another. In effect, equality of service to all KTH students is not guaranteed. According to the assessment panel, there is a need to streamline career and study counselling (e.g., by introducing a common-issue tracking system) and to clarify its role within KTH. To this end, the panel proposes that career and study counselling be centralised.

With regard to study administration, the AAE shows that the current self-administration system works well. Students appreciate it and find that it saves time. More self-administration will give students a better overview of their study progression and clarify their responsibility for planning and follow-up. Currently, some study administration routines vary from one school to another, so another advantage is that the self-administration system provides all KTH students with the same information on rules and routines, thus assuring equality of service. The assessment panel recommends that KTH continue along the self-administration route and reduce the number of student offices.

In recent years, KTH has made substantial investments in pedagogical support. While this development is promising, the AAE indicates that these investments have not fully paid off yet. Therefore, a long-term perspective is necessary. In the stakeholder analysis, KTH teachers offer numerous suggestions for improvement. In particular, teachers call for efficient shared digital-support systems and more administrative backup in day-to-day teaching tasks. Many teachers feel overwhelmed by administrative duties and find this a threat to the quality of their teaching, to their work environment, and to overall cost efficiency. Course evaluation is one area marked for development. The assessment panel recommends that KTH set up a joint administrative-support system for course evaluations and course analyses.

Regarding IT support, the evaluation shows that many parallel systems are in place. The conclusion is that KTH lacks an overall strategy for this area,

leading to inefficiency and to communication problems. Teachers and students are often unclear about the purpose of the systems and their possible interplay. Therefore, it is necessary to involve stakeholders more in the development and implementation of IT systems.

#### **Provision of premises**

In the AAE, it is argued that the provision of premises is a core administrative process. Premises are important to student learning, staff working conditions, and by extension to the KTH brand. Cost-wise, premises account for approximately 17 percent of KTH turnover. Therefore, improvements in this area could produce significant gain.

The evaluation shows that the process is well guided by the aims and objectives set in the KTH strategic plan, campus-development plan, and annual planning documents. Further, there is an increased awareness at the central- and the school-management levels of the strategic importance of premises. The challenge is to find better ways to involve teachers, students, and other stakeholders at an early stage of the planning process to ensure that premises become fit for purpose. Better use could be made of the in-house academic expertise, notably from the School of Architecture and the Built Environment.

The assessment panel notes that KTH premises are built to a high standard at a relatively high cost. Increasing cost consciousness and sometimes lowering the standard could decrease costs. In addition, the panel recommends stricter financial control and risk management at all levels.

#### **Appointment of faculty**

For obvious reasons, the appointment of faculty is a strategic process that requires intense administration-academy interaction. Process orientation and teamwork are crucial.

In the AAE, the process was mapped and described as containing five broad stages: establishment of the post and its profile, the advertisement and application period, an external peer review, appointments committee review, and decision. Each stage involves a set of administrators and decision makers at the school and the central level. This broad participation is a way of negotiating and ensuring that appointments are supported by key stakeholders throughout KTH. However, it also means that the process can be slow and cumbersome at times.

The self-evaluation and the panel report both focus on ways in which the appointment process could be further improved. Suggestions include establishing (or improving) guidelines for search committees, external peers, and appointment committees. Undertaking a small evaluation after concluding a recruitment process would allow learning from experience. The assessment panel emphasises the need to professionalise the appointments process by making better use of human resources experts, particularly with regard to assessing leadership skills and other characteristics not strictly in the scientific-excellence domain. More personal communication with the applicant, including continuous updates on the process, is also recommended.

### **Complex personnel matters**

Complex personnel matters do not fit neatly into a process chart but are, rather, a set of special cases and need to be treated accordingly. If not dealt with properly, they will result in substantial costs to individuals, as well as to the university at large. In the AAE, one (authentic but anonymised) case was used as an example to illustrate the complexities involved. This case comprised four different stories mingled into one: a rehabilitation matter, a conflict over patents, a victimisation charge, and a psychosocial work-environment problem. The evaluation shows that a lack of co-ordination and the multiple leadership layers prolonged the problem in this case. The academic culture, consisting of these multiple leadership layers, constitutes a particular challenge in dealing with complex personnel matters. According to the AAE, the situation would have been helped by a closer partnership between human resources experts and academic managers.

### **International students**

KTH strives to be one of Europe's premier international technical universities, maintaining a high degree of attractiveness for international students. In the AAE, the following processes related to international students were addressed: recruitment and communication, study administration, and student support. These are all processes meant to serve as tools for increasing the number of international degree-seeking students to the level recorded before the introduction of tuition fees and for maintaining the high numbers of exchange students.

The evaluation shows a lack of common strategic documents with set priorities in this area. This leaves much of the interpretation and strategic realisation to the administrative staff at various levels. Individuals often shoulder areas of responsibility on a personal basis without backup. The self-evaluation argues that decision making is randomised and disparate. Furthermore,

the division of responsibility between departments within the university administration, like that between the university administration and the schools, is unclear. The assessment panel points to the role of the schools in particular, arguing that they have become too passive in these processes.

Some of these shortcomings are found to affect individual students negatively. For example, the accommodation service is identified as a weakness. Many international students claim to lack adequate support for integrating into university life and into the student community. In summary, the panel report concludes that the processes for recruitment, study administration, and support to international students are underdeveloped. Roles and responsibilities need to be defined, clarified, and synchronised. In addition, the assessment panel recommends that a cost-benefit analysis be conducted.

#### **The contract process**

The importance of legal contracts has increased in parallel with the expansion of KTH at large, and of external research funding in particular. Contracts are, as a general rule, complicated and require legal review. This applies, for instance, to co-operative agreements with multinational corporations in which intellectual property rights are at stake.

A dedicated Legal Department was established in 2010. In the AAE, this is found to be an appropriate structure, staffed with highly competent contract specialists. The contract-review and negotiation processes, however, are not yet fully developed. Difficulties include unnecessarily long lead times, conflicting aims and overlaps with the Research Office, and communication issues with KTH management and faculty. In effect, legal advice is often provided on an ad hoc basis rather than as part of an agreed process. Some contracts are signed outside of the delegated authority or without any legal review, which presents risk.

In all, the evaluation shows that the contract process needs to be strengthened, roles and responsibilities clarified. A clearer process orientation would improve cross-departmental co-operation as well as administration-faculty interaction.

#### **Support for external research funding**

The recent growth in external research funding at KTH has been substantial and remains a strategic priority. Within the university administration, the Research Office has developed and implemented a support process.

In the AAE, the process was described as having four stages: the idea phase, the application phase, the contract phase, and the project phase. The process



is found to be adequate, particularly from a value-for-money perspective. The number of cases handled on an annual basis is considerable relative to staff numbers. At the same time, this has created vulnerabilities. Owing to capacity shortages, there is a lower-than-optimal level of support in some respects, such as for non-mandatory aspects. The AAE also shows that there is limited awareness amongst faculty about the services offered by the Research Office. In addition, unclear responsibilities and vague division of labour between departments cause problems that sometimes result in bottlenecks.

The assessment panel argues that there is a need to strengthen the strategic mission of the Research Office and to prioritise amongst its activities. Focusing on fewer funding instruments could make contacts with faculty more efficient. The process would benefit from a clearly defined distribution of responsibilities between the university administration and the schools, as well as within the university administration.

### **Innovation support**

The innovation-support process offers researchers and students at KTH practical support in developing research results or ideas with commercial potential. It is composed of five phases, where the central three are defining the business idea in the idea phase, verifying its viability in the feasibility phase, and developing and commercialising the business concept in the project phase. Each phase contains tools, templates, checklists, and activities, and each case is assigned a business coach for support throughout the process.

In the AAE, this process is found to be well developed and implemented; in fact, other universities have been inspired by it. Its main strengths are professional and ambitious staff members, well-equipped toolboxes, expert coaching, and clearly defined process stages. The main weakness concerns a lack of visibility on campus. The assessment panel identifies a need for better integration of the innovation process into the research environment and for KTH Innovation to increase its collaboration with other parts of the university administration. Potentially, the innovation process could be a role model for other administrative processes at KTH. Furthermore, it is argued that the process would be served by a higher strategic profile at the top management level, making the links between innovation and excellence more visible.

### **Collaboration**

One of the strategic aims of KTH is to increase its collaboration with the surrounding society. In 2010, a structure was set up for strategic collaboration through, amongst other things, strategic partnerships. Such partnerships are entered into with large organisations, companies, and public sector bodies

at top management level. They involve individual exchanges, recruitment, research collaboration, and education collaboration. Within the university administration, KTH Business Liaison supports the strategic-partnership process.

The AAE shows that stakeholders have high expectations for these strategic partnerships. They are expected to facilitate cross-boundary teamwork in a number of ways. KTH's internal stakeholders emphasise research-collaboration opportunities, whereas external stakeholders emphasise education collaboration and student contact. Hence, the assessment panel identifies a need to manage different expectations and to concentrate on the undergraduate-education aspects.

The AAE also shows that this process is dependent on staff competence of a particular kind, combining familiarity with the university and business sectors with project-management skills. The so-called partner co-ordinators are key points in the external and internal communication of the process. One of the challenges is to align the partnership-collaboration process with other strategic endeavours at KTH, such as innovation, research platforms, and pedagogical development. As seen in the AAE, the process is still under development. From a long-term perspective, learning from experience and making use of the results of collaboration activities will be crucial.

## Records management

In the AAE, records management was seen as a strategic process from a core-business and from a public-authority perspective. Records management benefits the individual and the organisation by facilitating the smooth handling of important information. It also ensures that statutory requirements are fulfilled. Lost or corrupted information could constitute a significant risk to the university, both legally and regarding quality.

The evaluation shows that there is substantial records-management support available, both in terms of guidelines and in terms of expertise. At the university-administration level, staff competence is high. Each school also has a designated records co-ordinator. However, faculty awareness of this support structure is found to be low. The self-evaluation and the panel report both identify a need to improve the internal communication channels in order to increase knowledge about the risks and benefits of records management. The assessment panel proposes several options, ranging from improvements within the existing organisational framework to the centralisation of support and the use of more-efficient IT systems.

### The controller role, forecasting, and follow-up

The controller function provides administrative support to the follow-up, budgeting, and forecasting processes at KTH. This is an extensive activity that takes place at every organisational level.

In the AAE, financial and human resources data were in focus. The evaluation shows a lack of cohesion and co-ordination between the central level and the schools; there is no common system for budgeting and follow-up across KTH. In addition, the self-evaluation identifies a need for shared routines, tools, and guidelines. The AAE also indicates that a great deal of data is collected manually for specific local purposes, despite the fact that data are regularly compiled at the central level and presented in the KTH School and Indicator Reports. The self-evaluation highlights a need to clarify and communicate the purpose of these reports. Currently, they mainly serve the requirements of KTH management. The assessment panel emphasises the user perspective and recommends that the number of follow-up variables be reduced to a core minimum. A division should be made between key performance indicators, performance indicators and indicators.



## Internal communication

Communication is important in all strategic processes. One AAE project was dedicated to internal communication from a management point of view. The self-evaluation shows that the primary channels for this type of communication are (a) meetings within the management chain in the organisational hierarchy and (b) the distribution of decisions made by management. While some complementary communication channels (such as web-based newsletters) exist, they are relatively indirect. The process is not co-ordinated but involves numerous actors at various organisational levels. Because of this delegated responsibility, the quality and effectiveness of communication varies. Few managers have received communication training, and administrative support is often limited to technical assistance. In consequence, it is difficult to bridge the distance between managers and employees.

The assessment panel argues that these difficulties are rooted in a traditional view of communication at KTH. Rather than a mere channel, communication should form an integral part of the management process. Leaders should be supported by strategic communicators, working together to further the aims of the organisation. The self-evaluation and the panel report both point to the need for a holistic vision for internal communication at KTH. Areas for development include management-staff communication and communication between KTH and its students, as well as its intranet and web-based communication in general.

## Procurement

As an internationally oriented technical university, KTH dedicates substantial resources to the purchase of advanced research equipment and other high-quality goods and services. Therefore, the procurement process is strategically important. At KTH, the procurement function was centralised approximately one year before the AAE project began in order to create a streamlined process for the whole university, meeting service needs as well as legal requirements.

According to the AAE, most stakeholders are positive regarding the new organisation and its achievements so far. The main strengths include staff competence in the procurement department and a well-defined, structured process. The main weaknesses are identified as delays at the beginning of the process and a lack of flexibility when it comes to purchases outside the annual procurement plan. In order to enable a smoother procurement process, the assessment panel argues that the communication with faculty needs to be improved so that the added value of procurement support is clarified.



## Follow-up of education and research

Within the decentralised KTH structure, the main steering process is that in which schools and central management agree on assignments for the coming year. Each assignment includes budget allocation and names strategic activities to be undertaken over and above the regular education and research delivery. The follow-up to preceding assignments forms an important part of the process.

In the AAE, the administrative support to the follow-up of education and research was evaluated. Generally, the process is found to be predictable and well structured, and staff competence is high. The follow-up of education is identified as more developed than that of research. One key finding is that the administrative support is appropriate and sufficient from a central-management perspective but less so from a school perspective. For central management, the process functions as a fully-fledged steering mechanism, whereas schools use it, at best, as a budgeting tool.

In order for schools to derive greater benefit, a revision of the information-system support (also relevant to the controller function) is suggested. The self-evaluation and the panel report both propose the development of common systems for all organisational levels. It is argued that this would favour analysis and forecasting capabilities across KTH. However, change may be difficult to achieve given the current heterogeneous school-administration structure. The assessment panel therefore proposes a comprehensive review of the organisation, including roles and responsibilities at the school versus at the central-management level.

## Internal audit

The internal audit is an independent function with the task of reviewing and assessing the internal control at KTH. The university board decides on the charter for the internal audit, comprising the annual audit plan and measures to be taken based on audit findings. The internal audit is regulated by national legislation and guidelines, according to which the internal-audit review process is subject to external evaluation once every five years. In 2014, this evaluation was combined with the AAE.

In the AAE, the KTH internal audit process is found to achieve high quality from a competence and a cost perspective. Regarding service, some areas are identified for further development. The self-evaluation and the panel report both indicate that the visibility of the internal audit could be improved to benefit the whole organisation. In particular, risk analysis and follow-up activities could be strengthened and communicated more effectively. Further, the assessment panel highlights a need to clarify the formal position of the internal audit within KTH to ensure that it is detached from management influence.



## 4. The way forward

The AAE has shed light on many issues, ranging from broad, overarching themes to small, area-specific matters. Even though some of these issues may have been known beforehand, the AAE has provided a new opportunity to contextualise and analyse them and to propose solutions. Importantly, the project has also served as a meeting point for administrative staff, faculty, students, and other stakeholders and as a forum for the strategic discussion of administrative matters. In the day-to-day life of the university, such meeting points are rare. Thanks to the AAE, there is now a better and broader understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the administrative processes at KTH.

It is crucial that the interest and enthusiasm created by the AAE be followed by measures to improve the administrative processes. As the project phase comes to a close, the findings are fed back into the regular-line management. Administrative managers, heads of departments, project co-ordinators, faculty, and students have all been active in suggesting follow-up initiatives to be undertaken in the coming year. Some of these initiatives will take the shape of co-ordinated projects, similar to the annual administrative-development projects that preceded the AAE. The bulk of the follow-up, however, will take place as part of routine work within the university administration and the school administrations.

To a large extent, the AAE marks an attempt to promote increased process orientation in the KTH administration; this work continues. Following the principle of continuous improvement, the future focus will be on building and consolidating administrative processes. The ambition is to create efficient flows that add value for faculty, students, and other stakeholders. This in turn is dependent on teamwork, communication, and the strategic use of resources. In fact, the most important follow-up to the AAE may be the continued incremental cultural change that is already underway.

Finally, the AAE has already attracted interest within the surrounding community. Several external panel members were impressed by the methodology and expressed an ambition to replicate the exercise, or parts thereof, at their home universities. The following quotes are illustrative:

*“That KTH is taking such a holistic and vigorous approach and sharing its experiences like this is brave as well as generous.”*

*“I am impressed by the enthusiasm and the willingness to change that exists.”*

*“The fact that KTH evaluates its entire administration this way is very useful, not least for us external assessors. All universities have improvement potential.”*

The AAE, in other words, may come to have followers.

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Page 2: Left to right, top to bottom

Allegories of mining, electrical engineering and mathematics, *Ivar Johnsson*

Iduna, *Georg Pauli*

Man's struggle with the four elements, *Carl Milles*

Easy rider, *Tomas Karlsson*

Page 4: Travelling north, cabinet for long distances, *Franz Ackerman*

Page 7: Foundation stone of KTH

Page 8: Bell above clock, *Ivar Johnsson*

Page 13: The electrical currents, *Axel Törneman*

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