

# Director of Science Bridge, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Aarhus University

The Faculty of Natural Sciences, Aarhus University (AU) invites applications for a unique leadership position with the opportunity to build and lead a new strategic initiative, the *Science Bridge*, at the interface between research and society spanning all scientific disciplines at the faculty.

As Director of *Science Bridge*, you will play a central role in shaping how basic research at the Faculty of Natural Sciences engages with companies and other societal entities. The position offers a rare opportunity to develop a new organisational unit with a clear mandate, strong institutional backing, and significant strategic importance for the faculty. You will work at the forefront of innovation, collaboration, and societal engagement, helping to unlock the societal value of research by enabling new forms of early-stage knowledge exchange and co-creation of research projects.

This is a role for a visionary and experienced leader who is motivated by building something new and has proven ability to execute on strategic decisions, who thrives in complex knowledge environments, and who is driven by the ambition to strengthen the connections between research, education, industry, and society.

You will refer to the dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, and you will be part of the faculty management team and thus be expected to contribute to the overall direction of the faculty.

## Your responsibilities

*Science Bridge* is in its establishment phase, and the Director will play a key role in building the organisation. This includes shaping its strategic profile, establishing its governance and operational model, recruiting and leading the core team, and positioning *Science Bridge* internally and externally. As Director, you act under the authority of the AU rector and the dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, and you will have responsibility for the leadership and performance of *Science Bridge*, and together with the faculty leadership team, you will develop its strategic direction.

## The Director of *Science Bridge* is responsible for:

- Developing and implementing the strategic vision and objectives of *Science Bridge* set by the faculty management and ensuring that its activities create value for both research, education and society.
- Develop *Science Bridge* as a new organisational unit, including defining structures, processes, and ways of working, and ensuring a strong and coherent operational foundation.
- Contributing to [Aarhus University 2030 strategy and the Faculty's strategic direction](#) by developing new forms of engagement between researchers and societal partners and by strengthening the faculty's capacity for interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaboration.
- Building and maintaining strong relationships with companies, public organisations, foundations, and other external stakeholders, and positioning *Science Bridge* as a credible and attractive collaboration partner at national and international level.
- Enabling collaboration with faculties and units across Aarhus University, including other research-based innovation initiatives such as Kitchen and research support units within [AU Research](#).
- Leading *Science Bridge*'s organisation, which is centred around a secretariat

**Application Deadline:**  
15 April 2026

**Institute/Faculty:**  
Nat Dean's Office

**Faculty:**  
Faculty of Natural Sciences

**Academic contact person:**  
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**Vacant positions:**  
1

**Hours per week:**  
37

**Expected date of accession:**  
01/08/2026

headed by a Head of Secretariat and a group of innovation facilitators. Ensuring that staff have clear mandates, strong leadership support, and the conditions needed to drive the unit effectively.

- Holding overall responsibility for the strategic and framework-based management of Science Bridge's budget and resources, as well as for monitoring, learning, and reporting on activities and outcomes.
- Contribute to the overall development of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and help securing that cross departmental functions and tasks are developed and managed properly as part of Science Bridge's extended portfolio.

## Qualifications

### We are seeking a candidate with the following profile:

- A strong professional background from either academia, industry, or another knowledge-intensive organisation, with substantial experience working at the interface between research, innovation, and society.
- Demonstrated experience with strategic leadership, preferably from senior roles involving organisational development, collaboration, or innovation.
- Deep understanding of research-based knowledge production, interdisciplinary collaboration, and co-creation across sectors.
- Proven ability to build and lead complex collaborations involving multiple stakeholders with different incentives, cultures, and time horizons.
- Strong strategic, analytical, and communication skills, and the ability to translate ambition into concrete organisational frameworks.
- Communicate clearly and credibly with respect for others and with propriety
- Have experience with research, innovation processes, and cross-sector collaboration.

## About *Science Bridge*

*Science Bridge* is a new strategic initiative at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Aarhus University, established to strengthen systematic and early-stage knowledge exchange between basic research and society. The initiative is founded on the recognition that while the faculty delivers internationally leading basic research, much of the knowledge generated at low levels of technological readiness does not readily translate into societal or industrial contexts. *Science Bridge* is designed to address this structural gap.

*Science Bridge* does not conduct research itself and does not employ scientific staff. Instead, it functions as an enabling organisational framework that supports and facilitates interaction between researchers from all departments at the faculty and external societal partners, and companies. As a part of this, *Science Bridge* will take a role as a cross-departmental unit, which additionally includes educational aspects as well as activities and tasks related to the PhD-studies at the faculty. The ambition is to create structured, long-term arenas for dialogue, exploration, and co-creation of research projects at a stage where traditional project funding, technology transfer mechanisms, or intellectual property frameworks are often not applicable.

The core operational unit of *Science Bridge* is the Actions. An Action is a time-limited, thematic collaboration that brings together a few academic research groups from different disciplines and a corresponding group of external partners around a shared challenge or area of interest. Actions are deliberately designed as pre-project-based collaborations: they are not initiated by dedicated project funding, predefined deliverables, or intellectual property agreements. The purpose is to allow participants to engage openly, exchange knowledge, and jointly explore ideas, methods, and perspectives in a trust-based setting, favouring knowledge transfer and development of

joint projects. In setting up such meetings, *Science Bridge* will collaborate with other cross-faculty entities on a daily basis.

*Science Bridge* provides the strategic direction, governance, and operational support for the Actions, while the Actions themselves constitute the primary arena for concrete interaction and knowledge exchange. To support this work, *Science Bridge* employs a professional secretariat consisting primarily of innovation facilitators. The innovation facilitators play a central role in initiating, structuring, and sustaining interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaboration. They work closely with researchers and external partners to identify opportunities, translate between academic and non-academic contexts, and ensure momentum and continuity within and across Actions. In addition to these tasks, the Science Bridge is planned to over time host and manage interdisciplinary and cross faculty activities and functions such as e.g. interdisciplinary PhD courses and seminars.

*Science Bridge* is in its establishment phase. Thus, its structure, thematic focus areas, and ways of working will be further developed in the coming years. The Director of *Science Bridge* will therefore have a decisive influence on shaping the organisation, defining its strategic priorities, and embedding *Science Bridge* as a central and credible platform for innovation, collaboration, and societal engagement at the Faculty of Natural Sciences.

*Science Bridge* is established as a unit under the Faculty of Natural Sciences, and the director reports directly to the Dean.

### **Language**

Candidates must be able to communicate in both Danish and English. Since the management language of the Faculty of Natural Sciences is Danish, ability to understand and read Danish is a prerequisite.

### **Appointment procedure**

If you have any questions regarding the position, you are welcome to contact: The dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Birgit Schiøtt at email: [dean.nat@au.dk](mailto:dean.nat@au.dk) or phone: +45 2982 6882, or vice-dean, Ole Bækgaard Nielsen at email: [obn@au.dk](mailto:obn@au.dk) or phone: +45 6020 2674. An external consultant will be involved in the process, please contact Lone Vestergaard from Curia on phone: +45 2094 1653.

Please state your motivation for applying and your vision for developing *Science Bridge*. Include a short record of your background in relation to the expected competencies of our new director of *Science Bridge*.

An advisory committee has been set up to advise the Dean on which candidates are to be invited to an interview, and consists of members from faculty management, academic staff and technical/administrative staff as well as students. An appointment committee will conduct the interviews, which are scheduled to 7 and 8 May 2026 (1. Round) and 27, 28 and 29 May 2026 (2. Round). Candidates selected for the second interview have to conduct a leadership profile between the two interviews.

Application deadline: 15 April 2026

Expected start date: 1 August 2026

### **About the Faculty of Natural Sciences**

Aarhus University is recognized as one of the world's best universities (top-100), and the Faculty of Natural Sciences has strong and international basic research environments that address major societal challenges and hosts several internationally leading research environments. The ambition is to enhance the faculty's position of strength as well as to develop new ones – in interaction with the outside world and across disciplines. The faculty's primary activities cover research, education and external collaboration, and consists of 7 departments (biology, physics & astronomy, chemistry, geology, mathematics, computer science, and molecular biology & genetics), a graduate school, and several research centres. In addition, we host interdisciplinary networks and clusters to stimulate interactions across departments and Faculties. Furthermore, we participate in interdisciplinary centres and initiatives across Aarhus University. The faculty has a proud tradition of communicating scientific contexts and insights to policymakers and the public.

The Faculty of Natural Sciences is one of five faculties at Aarhus University and has approx. 3,200 students and 1400 employees. Learn more at [www.nat.au.dk](http://www.nat.au.dk)

### **Formalities and salary range**

The position is full-time. Employment is on terms under collective agreement terms and is in accordance with the collective agreement for academics in the state concluded between the Ministry of Finance and AC, including circulars on heads of departments and deans at the universities. Employment is time-limited and is in accordance with the principles in circulars on fixed-term employment in the state. The fixed-term period is initially 5 years, with the possibility of an extension for up to 3 years.

Aarhus University's ambition is to be an attractive and inspiring workplace for all and to foster a culture in which everyone has opportunities to thrive, achieve and develop. We view equality and diversity as assets, and all interested candidates are encouraged to apply, regardless of their personal background. Aarhus University is a signatory of the Danish government's charter regarding the appointment of more women in management. Both women and men are encouraged to apply. No one will have priority, and all applicants will be assessed in accordance with the requirement profile for the position.

Aarhus University has recently launched a new [strategy towards 2030](#) with the ambition of becoming one of the leading European comprehensive universities within research-based innovation and entrepreneurship. The Faculty of Natural Sciences has defined its [strategic directions within this framework](#), and *Science Bridge* will play a central role in obtaining the visions of improving the faculty's collaboration with society by translating key discoveries from research into solutions.

The application must be submitted via Aarhus University's recruitment system, which can be accessed under the job advertisement on Aarhus University's website.

### **Aarhus University**

*Aarhus University is an academically diverse and research-intensive university with a strong commitment to high-quality research and education and the development of society nationally and globally. The university offers an inspiring research and teaching environment to its 37,000 students (FTEs) and 8.700 employees and has an annual revenue of EUR 1.106 billion. Learn more at [www.international.au.dk/](http://www.international.au.dk/)*