



Collective bargaining 2026

Are you ready for the 2026 collective bargaining negotiations in your workplace?

A guide from the Danish academic organisations to help you stand strong

In 2026, new collective agreements will be negotiated in the private labour market.

As a member of an academic organisation, you now have the opportunity to exert direct and significant influence on pay and employment conditions at your workplace. In the process of collective bargaining, in Danish known as OK26,

Akademikerne represents privately employed members from its 26 member organisations – including yours. Before the negotiations themselves begin, each member organisation prepares a prioritised list of concerns and demands to be handed over to negotiators - and you and your colleagues can help decide which topics we should focus on by giving voice to your opinion as an employee group.

Participatory democracy provides a great opportunity for influence. Every vote, every idea and every desire for improvement counts. We therefore encourage you to get involved, discuss with colleagues and think about what you would like to improve in your current collective agreement and what demands should be put on the table for your employer when negotiations begin.

In this guide you will find questions and information that can help you consider which improvements to your collective agreement are most relevant to you.

You may not be fully aware of the content of your

current collective agreement. That's perfectly fine. A good starting point is to visit your trade union's website, where you can find your specific collective agreement. If your collective agreement is only available in Danish, you can ask your academic club or works council to summarise its contents.

The academic organisations have selected seven themes that we recommend employees include in their demands in 2026.

These themes are:

The 8 themes:

- Salary and pension
- A sustainable working life
- A flexible working life
- Competency development
- AI and the workplaces of the future
- Psychosocial work environment
- Better conditions for union representatives
- Job security



Salary and pension

Salary is always a key theme in collective agreement negotiations. Salary is crucial for well-being, retention and recruitment. Many employees experience a lack of transparency in salary determination and feel that their salary development does not reflect the tasks they perform. Pensions are also important, but more people are demanding flexibility, especially early in their working lives when financial needs vary.

Discuss how salary and pension work in your workplace and whether the current level reflects your professional responsibilities, efforts and expectations. Use the discussions to reach a common understanding of your salary situation so that you are in a stronger position in terms of your local priorities ahead of OK26.

Questions you can discuss:

- How do you perceive the salary level in relation to responsibilities and tasks?
- Does your salary development keep pace with the rest of the industry?
- Do you know what triggers pay rises – and are the criteria clear?
- Is there a need for greater transparency about pay in the workplace?
- Should the club work towards systematic salary reviews or a local salary policy?
- Is the pension level appropriate for employees in different stages of life?
- Would greater pension flexibility be an advantage for some?
- What will you prioritise overall in your dialogue with management ahead of OK26?



A sustainable working life

A sustainable working life is about balancing tasks, breaks and private life. Many people are experiencing increasing work pressure, more deadlines and less breathing space in their everyday lives. This affects both well-being and quality. A sustainable working life requires flexible arrangements, an understanding of life stages and clear expectations.

Discuss how you can create a working life that is sustainable in the long term – both for you as employees and for the workplace. Use the theme to gain a common understanding of what puts pressure on you and what frameworks give you energy and well-being in your everyday life.

Questions you can discuss:

- It might be a good idea to ensure that your collective agreement meets your individual needs. It's rare that every right stipulated in a collective agreement is relevant to you. For example, parental leave and senior schemes target two different age groups. Perhaps you could benefit from a model where you have a savings account and can "purchase" additional terms that are relevant to you right now in your career?
- What about your working hours? Does it make sense to you that your working day is structured according to the traditional 8am-4pm model or would a flexible organisation of working hours, both in terms of the length of the working week, placement of working hours and where you do your work, help to create greater job satisfaction?
- Is there a need for extended rights in relation to illness and care?
- Senior schemes, which are designed to help retain you in the workplace, typically involve giving you extra days off when you reach a certain age. Is it this time off that will retain you in the job, or do you need other incentives to make you feel valued and make you want to stay in the job longer?



A flexible working life

Flexibility is not a single model – but many solutions that must suit both employees and daily operations. Fixed home working days, flexitime, flexible weeks and the option of temporarily reducing working hours are among the most sought-after arrangements. Experience shows that flexibility works best when the framework is clear and agreed upon jointly.

Discuss the flexibility you need in your everyday life and the framework that gives you the best work-life balance. Use this theme to clarify how working hours and attendance works in practice at your workplace.

Questions you can discuss:

- What kind of flexibility do you need in your everyday life?
- Do your current rules for working from home work well?
- Do you feel that management limits flexibility without giving specific reasons?
- Should you work towards local agreements on flexible working hours?
- How can flexibility improve both your well-being and workplace operations?



Competency development

Working life is changing rapidly, and skills are becoming an increasingly important part of individual job security and development. Continuing education, courses and on-the-job learning enhance well-being, quality and retention. However, time and finances can be a barrier if workplaces lack a clear plan.

Discuss what skills you will need in the coming period – both to perform your tasks as well as possible and to strengthen your development and job opportunities. Use this theme to get an overview of the needs you see locally.

Questions you can discuss:

- What skills do you need in the short and long term?
- Do you get the necessary time for courses and upskilling?
- Do you have a clear agreement on development interviews and skills plans?
- How can skills development become a natural part of your work?
- Should the club require systematic upskilling?



AI and the workplaces of the future

AI now affects all professions, types of companies (large and small) and industries. A report from Statistics Denmark shows that over 40% of Danish companies use various forms of AI technologies, and according to the latest figures from the Danish Agency for Digital Government, the use of AI has increased from 15% in 2023 to 42% in 2025, i.e. almost tripling in two years.

Discuss how AI and new technologies affect your workplace – in terms of tasks, responsibilities and quality. Use this theme to get an overview of the skills and frameworks you need.

Questions you can discuss:

- What AI tools do you have access to in your workplace?
- Have you been involved in discussions about the introduction of AI tools?
- Where are AI tools used, i.e. in which tasks and teams?
- If something goes wrong or there are unintended consequences of using AI: Who is responsible (company, employee, supplier)? How can reporting be done and to whom?
- Are data profiles of employees (e.g. performance) created and used with the help of AI tools?
- How can individual workplaces strike a balance between efficiency and fairness (human control over decisions) in the use of AI tools?
- How can time and funding for AI skills development be secured?



Psychosocial work environment

There can be several sources of stress in the workplace, such as working hours, workload and work intensity. It can also be about limitless work – for example, having work tasks that can be done at any time and in any place – having a negative impact on breaks and restitution. A stress reaction can also arise from conflicts, poor management, offensive behaviour, or high emotional demands in the job.

We also know that Denmark has a European record in organisational change, according to various studies, and we know that change can be a strain on the psychosocial work environment, a strain that can become a source of stress if it is not prevented and mitigated.

Discuss how you experience your psychosocial work environment and where there is room for improvement. Use the theme to talk about workload, priorities and well-being.

Questions you can discuss:

- Are you experiencing problems with stress in your workplace?
- How do you generally experience your psychosocial work environment?
- Do you feel that your workplace works effectively to prevent stress, e.g. on the basis of policies or guidelines?
- Do you feel that managers and employee representatives (working environment representatives/union reps) have knowledge of and skills relevant to supporting a healthy psychosocial work environment?
- Are relevant measures being implemented with a focus on improving the psychosocial work environment?
- What could ensure a better psychosocial work environment at your workplace that supports well-being? And are there any suggestions for improvements that should be included in the upcoming negotiations?



Better framework for union representatives

Many union reps feel that their workload is growing, while time, information and resources are not keeping pace. A strong union rep system requires access to relevant information, time to fulfil the role and established channels for dialogue with management. This strengthens both the climate of cooperation and the quality of the solutions.

Discuss the framework that union representatives and working environment representatives (AMRs) have in your organisation and whether it is sufficient for them to perform their duties properly. Use the theme to gain a common understanding of needs, challenges and possible improvements.

Questions you can discuss in the club:

- Do union reps and AMRs have enough time to perform their tasks?
- Do they have access to relevant information about, for example, working hours, absenteeism or well-being?
- Is the cooperation between management and employees working well?
- Should the club demand clearer guidelines for the role?
- What improvements would strengthen the role of the union rep at your workplace?



Job security

Even though employment is high, changes in tasks, technology and the economy can quickly create uncertainty. Security is about proper processes for redundancies and access to advice and transparency about the company's decisions. This strengthens both employees and the workplace.

Discuss how you can ensure security in the workplace – both in good times and if the economy takes a downturn. Use the theme to discuss how redundancies are handled and what is needed to create proper procedures.

Questions you can discuss:

- How does the company handle redundancies and restructuring?
- Do employees who are made redundant receive support to move on?
- Are notice periods and information sufficient?
- Should there be a right to outplacement or counselling?
- What measures could make you feel more secure?



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