Faculty Strategic Goals for 2018/2019 - 2022

Faculty of Social Sciences
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0. Summary of main Faculty goals

UCPH’s overall vision is to be “among the world's best universities, measured by the quality of research and education, and recognised for excellence and intellectual creativity”. The key words for UCPH's strategy for the period 2018-2023 are “talent and collaboration”. The Faculty will contribute to realising UCPH’s vision in the social-science disciplines by, among others, focusing on talent and collaboration at both departmental and Faculty level.

In order to realise both the UCPH strategy and the Faculty’s strategy, we will focus on areas where we face particular challenges or can identify new opportunities. The Faculty’s strategy and its stipulated goals and action plans will not describe all the activities and “day-to-day operations” at the Faculty, but concentrate on the common challenges and opportunities we have, as well as on the strategic changes we intend to prioritise. Consequently, a significant proportion of our research, education and knowledge dissemination will not be explicitly described here, but will continue to constitute the “foundation and main building blocks” at the Faculty of Social Sciences, UCPH.

The Faculty has two overall strategic objectives of equal value and importance:

- **Research at the Faculty is of high quality and has strong impact. In selected areas we are on a par with research ranked as world-leading**

- **Degree programmes at the Faculty are providing a high learning outcome and a high employment rate of candidates**

The majority of the current activities at the Faculty in the form of outstanding research, education and knowledge dissemination must continue to be our top priority and thus will be supported in the best possible way – even if they are not explicitly mentioned in the strategy.

The Faculty has selected **five strategic themes** that support and boost the current efforts in relation to the two overall strategic goals and are to further develop and enable new activities.
The themes are:

- Talent
- Collaboration
- Digital transformation and "social data science"
- Global insight and vision
- Research, teaching and work environments

Relating to both the UCPH strategy and to the strategic priorities of the Faculty and departments, the above themes incorporate elements to support research, education, knowledge dissemination, external relations and administration.

**Goal A. Talent**

- **The Faculty attracts, develops and backs up talents who contribute to high-class research and education**

The Faculty’s greatest assets are its staff and students. It is crucial to recruit the best talents from all over the world, develop talent among the current employees, and ensure the best possible environment for cultivating talent and fostering creativity for all employees and students at the Faculty. Moreover, the latest research assessment emphasises the value of talents when developing research excellence.

Skilled researchers, teachers and students are much sought after internationally. Although the Faculty receives many applications, it is difficult to attract competent researchers with major international experience at senior level, partly due to wage issues. In general, UCPH cannot match the salaries of the salary level leading international universities. Thus, it is crucial for us to be competitive in other areas such as for instance research environment, research support measures, administrative support in the phase of recruitment and establishment, skilled students and digital infrastructure etc.

Generally, the Faculty aims to enable the mobility of researchers by increasing the number of talented PhD students and Postdocs with international backgrounds and experience. Moreover, we
want to attract more guests and ensure that our researchers and teachers are inspired through stays abroad.

The Faculty's academic staff are all expected to contribute through excellent research, teaching and knowledge dissemination and to attract more external funding, as well. It is therefore important to ensure the best possible framework for these activities, so that the staff members can develop and exploit their full potential. The Faculty and department administrations must support the core activities. It is our aim to ensure the best possible interaction between administration and core activities - such as enabling the development opportunities for administrative staff members, cf. goal E.

**Goal B. Collaboration**

- **The Faculty boosts impact within as well as outside academia**

- **The Faculty strengthens cross-departmental collaboration at Faculty and UCPH level as well as increasing collaboration with external Danish or international parties in terms of research and education**

One objective will be to **increase** the national and international **impact** of our research and our degree programmes within and outside academia. Many activities contributing to impact must be carried out at department level, but selected initiatives must as well be pursued jointly at Faculty level, via collaboration between departments, or together with other units.

The joint impact activities will be related to the above-mentioned academic and cross-disciplinary themes as well as to joint communicative initiatives and conferences. Moreover, we will implement new common (digital) platforms and resources to support activities, communication and visibility to maximise impact.

Another objective is to strengthen joint relations within education, research and administration between the Faculty/departments and external partners. There is a lot of very effective collaboration between individual researchers at the Faculty and researchers, practitioners and organisations from
outside the Faculty. It is important that the conditions for optimising such joint collaboration are in place, and in some areas there is a need for more robust and institutional collaboration to be set up between relevant stakeholders and the Faculty/departments - both nationally and internationally.

**Goal C. Digital transformation and "social data science"**

- The Faculty develops and boosts the use of digital methods and insights in relation to research, education, knowledge dissemination and administration
- The Faculty enhances research and education in relation to Social Data Science

Digital transformation will be a central focal point at the Faculty. In the strategy period a separate digitalisation action plan will be formulated and implemented addressing research, education, external relations and administrative support.

The theme is the result of the many exciting new opportunities that digitalisation and Big Data/complex data have opened up in the social sciences. Digital tools have created a wealth of new opportunities both in research and in teaching/education.

At the same time, digital transformation will lead to major changes in society in the coming years, creating a whole range of new potential research themes in the social sciences. Consequently, the Faculty will give priority to and support the research field of Social Data Science, a major part of which will become embedded in the Copenhagen Centre for Social Data Science, (SODAS).

On the education side, the Faculty is planning to offer a new master's programme in “Social Data Science" and to set up a joint BA programme with the Faculty of Science in “Computer Science and Economics”. Additionally, all degree programmes are to formulate a digitalisation strategy in order to cater for the future labour market requirements for data analyses, handling and ethics. Finally, all degree programmes are to notably boost the use of digital tools in education and teaching.

Focusing on digitalisation, the Faculty Library of Social Sciences has established, among others, the "Digital Social Science Lab" that aims to develop and boost the students’ digital competences, their
knowledge and urge to innovate. Further development will be coordinated with other activities at the Faculty.

Goal D. Global insight and vision

- The Faculty consolidates and develops research and degree programmes/courses that contribute to global insight and vision

- The Faculty strengthens internationalisation, global visibility and international collaboration in terms of research and education

Increasingly, the global agenda is providing the framework for society’s development in a small country like Denmark. Thus, the internationalisation of research and education are key to achieving the University’s overall vision. The research assessment carried out at the Faculty highlighted how vitally important increased internationalisation and global visibility are to enhancing the quality of research. Furthermore, a number of key research themes at the Faculty are firmly rooted in the global arena, including international politics, the EU, development economics and key parts of anthropology, in which areas our research also enjoys a high international reputation. The Faculty's latest two master's degree programmes in “Global Development” and "Security Risk Management” are very globally oriented, both in content and in student cohorts, and the Faculty aims generally to promote internationalisation in the programmes, for example by encouraging student mobility.

Goal E. Research, teaching and working environments

This is partly a departmental issue and partly a matter for the individual administrative support units. However, this goal will also entail joint initiatives with a focus on relations between technical and administrative units and departments as well as between the members of technical/administrative staff and academic staff.

A general rule at the Faculty states that permanent academic staff can devote 40% of their working time to research. Within this framework and financial resources the objective is to develop an excellent and internationally attractive environment for research and teaching that enables talent and
supports research, education and knowledge dissemination in the best possible way (see also goal A).

PhD students, postdocs and other academic staff with fixed-term employment contribute significantly to the scientific activities. It is our objective to improve the work environment of this group by offering career guidance.

Technical and administrative support is crucial in order to develop our core activities. It is thus our goal to improve the work environment for this group of employees by taking steps to ensure attractive development opportunities and language skills. Likewise, we must enhance cooperation and mutual recognition between members of technical and administrative staff and academic staff, as well as between the joint administrative units and the departments.

The following text describes the Faculty's key objectives within the University's four main focus areas in Strategy 2023.
1. Research. Attracting, developing and retaining academic talent

It is a general objective to ensure that research at the Faculty is of high quality and on a par with the best in the world in selected areas. As mentioned above, the Faculty has formulated a strategic goal (A) to:

"attract, develop and support talents that contribute to top-class research and education”

The research carried out at the Faculty was internationally assessed in 2016. The assessment proved that research is generally at a high international level and proposed a number of specific initiatives that could contribute to enhancing the quality of the research even further.

The research assessment pointed out that a high degree of internationalisation; ambitious publication strategies and success in obtaining external funding are key drivers of success at the departments.

Specifically, the assessment recommended increased focus on career paths and development, on improved internationalisation, on enhanced academic visibility as well as on a clearer academic profile. Likewise, according to the assessment, there is a need for working in a more structured way with external funding, for enhancing interdisciplinary research and for boosting impact and outreach outside academia. Finally, a clearer organisation of research is required at some of the departments.

The relevance of the recommendations varies between departments, but all departments have received specific recommendations to work with and implement during the strategy period. Part of the implementation will be based on Faculty goals, whereas others will be more department-specific initiatives.

A common denominator for the work will be the particular attention devoted to the following goals:
**Goal 1.1: The Faculty enjoys consolidated positions of strength and has (world) leading research environments at the individual departments owing to an internationally perceptible recruitment and career system as well as efficient recruitment processes**

This goal implies that the Faculty:

- Implements the tenure track model for assistant professors as well as a future model for promotion from associate professor to professor
- Professionalises search processes and strengthens the international network in order to recruit from abroad
- Clarifies promotion requirements and content descriptions for the various academic job categories and career paths, comprising the task of drawing up a postdoc policy

In 2021/22, a new research assessment will be carried out, either within the framework of the University's joint concept, if continued, or else in accordance with our own concept based on the current version. Furthermore, the Faculty will be participating in the University's joint PhD evaluation in 2019/20.

**Goal 1.2: The Faculty has fortified selected interdisciplinary research themes**

The Faculty is committed to protecting freedom of research, and research themes and methods are determined by the individual researchers and in the individual research groups. At the same time, it is deemed expedient at both Faculty and departmental level to identify a few cross-disciplinary, academic themes that deserve special attention, primarily because they hold unfulfilled potential, which may be realised through concerted and coordinated efforts from a majority of our departments.

As mentioned, “digital transformation and social data science” is one of the five strategic themes in the Faculty's strategy. Joint and interdisciplinary activities will play a central role. The strengthening and further developing of the Copenhagen Center for Social Data Science (SODAS) will be a key factor in the planning of such activities.

At the start of the strategy period, we will focus particularly on the following areas:

- Social Data Science
- Social science health research
- Global security, global development and sustainable societies

The themes have been selected for the following reasons:
- They support new or more recent initiatives and activities at the departments, and they cover activities across several departments and/or faculties with potential for growth
- There is a need for and an interest in research-based education within the themes, just as they cover central societal issues
- There is significant potential for obtaining external funding in these areas, and there are opportunities for joint and coordinated promotion of these areas.

However, it should be made clear that in no way are the chosen themes to be considered as replacements for the already well-established cross-disciplinary focus areas "children and young people's well-being" and "international conflicts and security".

Across departments other interdisciplinary research-related activities are taking place, which are backed by the departments and may be catered for through so-called "seed money"-activities, joint branding, etc. Finally, new proposals for interdisciplinary research activities will be encouraged, discussed and prioritised continuously during the strategy period.

**Goal 1.3: The Faculty enjoys a strong and visible research reputation internationally**

By means of a number of initiatives across departments, the Faculty will advance and make its research visible internationally, among other things by:

- Hosting more high-profile international academic conferences, workshops and seminars
- Establishing a joint "Visiting Fellow program"
- Increasing focus on international out-placement of PhDs and postdocs
- Increasing focus on publishing via the most widely recognised channels
Goal 1.4: The Faculty ensures suitable framework for talent development through increased external funding

To fortify our framework and foundation, the Faculty will boost external funding, among other things by:

- Ensuring continuously updated department strategies for external funding including concrete prioritisation of initiatives that ensure better coverage of expenses for "infrastructure" and improved administrative support for researchers.
- Obtaining increased funding from the EU’s forthcoming framework programme Horizon Europe, including the means to enable the recruitment of researchers from leading (foreign) research institutions. Both the EU’s excellence column (ERC Grants and Marie Curie individual fellowships) and the EU’s "Societal Challenges' column are relevant in this respect.
2. Education with closer ties to research and practice

In relation to teaching and learning generally, the Faculty will focus on programme quality and teaching development, in addition to the five overall themes (talent, collaboration, digital transformation, global/international issues and work environment).

The Faculty will continue its work on quality using the framework that was established for the institutional accreditation. The work will take place as a follow-up to the approved programme statements and reports.

Particular focus will be devoted to study intensity, students’ completion rates, dropout rates, graduate employment and on the transparency and documentation of the quality of education and of teaching.

In addition, it is a joint overall goal at the Faculty to ensure that:

- We attract the most dedicated and talented students both nationally and internationally
- All students see their degree programme as a means to a subsequent job/profession, and that the programmes focus clearly on the employability of graduates
- All degree programmes offer training in digital knowhow, data analysis and data handling skills
- All degree programmes focus on societal relevance and address vital issues in society
- All students come into contact with active researchers and research
- All students earn an international degree, i.e. through exchange programmes, fieldwork and collaboration, through internationally comparable degree programmes in terms of structure and curriculum, and through their participation in courses and activities that strengthen their global insight and vision
- All students experience their study environment as positive and inclusive
As regards the UCPH strategy, special attention is devoted to the following three goals:

**Goal 2.1: The Faculty makes use of state-of-the-art digital teaching methods, in which the teachers have substantial expertise. Moreover, curricula and course themes reflect the trend towards a steadily more digitalised society relying on big data**

As mentioned earlier, digitisation and digital transformation are given high priority at the Faculty. Therefore, digitisation will be a central theme as regards educational initiatives at the Faculty. Also, many of the future job functions require specific insight into and understanding of data management.

We will draw up an action plan for digitisation to pave the way for the digital transformation at the Faculty of Social Sciences during the strategy period. With regard to teaching, the aim of this plan is among others to ensure:

- The development of digital teaching methods and the development of digital insight among all students
- The presence of digital competences at all degree programmes through the elective subject, specialisations and the support of extra-curricular activities
- The development of teachers’ skills in digital teaching and best practice

**Goal 2.2: The Faculty possesses an innovative learning environment with inspiring research-based teaching that has close ties to practice**

In some disciplines taught at the Faculty a major challenge is to ensure closer ties to practice with a view to further enhancing the graduates’ job opportunities whereas in other academic disciplines, there is a need for and opportunities of developing and further fortifying the ties to research.

In addition to participating in joint initiatives at university level, the Faculty will notably focus on the following aspects during the strategy period:

- Enhancement of research-based teaching by means of appointing academic staff
- Provision of feedback and platforms for informal contacts between students and researchers
- Upgrade of the teaching skills of academic staff
• Establishment of a student innovation lab as part of the digital and data science theme
• Improvement of students’ contacts to practice in order to advance their job and career opportunities

As a logical consequence of the fact that the global agenda is vital for Denmark's development, **global insight and vision**, as mentioned above, is another central theme in the Faculty strategy. Hence, the Faculty pursues the following goals within the field of education:

**Goal 2.3: All students earn an international degree, i.e. through exchange programmes, fieldwork and collaboration, through internationally comparable degree programmes in terms of structure and curriculum, and through their participation in courses and activities that strengthen their global insight and vision**

Priority will be given to:
• Providing full degree students with the opportunity to enroll in degree programmes taught in English
• Attracting the most talented and gifted students, nationally and internationally
• Contributing to successful career opportunities in Denmark for our international students
• Maintaining and developing courses and degree programmes with a clear international perspective such as e.g. the master’s programmes in “Global Development” and “Security Risk Management”
• Establishing collaboration in education with leading universities abroad
• Involving our international academic staff in teaching
3. Collaboration and societal commitment – nationally and globally

The Faculty of Social Sciences aims to intensify collaboration across the Faculty, the University of Copenhagen and with external partners, nationally and internationally in relation to research and education. Moreover, we want to boost our impact, within and outside academia.

**Goal 3.1. The Faculty provides solutions to Danish and global challenges in society**

Many researchers at the Faculty are currently working within a wide range of research fields and important aspects that contribute to solutions to national and global societal challenges. This research is carried out across disciplines and with the participation of several, different partners, both as part of the individual researchers' projects and as part of specific initiatives at department level. At the beginning of the strategy period, we will focus on the following cross-disciplinary themes across the Faculty as mentioned in section 1:

- Social Data Science
- Social science health research
- Global security, global development and sustainable societies

In relation to the above three themes, new courses will be developed, and we are currently planning to set up two new degree programmes – a master's programme in “Social Data Science” and a bachelor’s programme in “Computer Science and Economics”. In addition, we expect an increased intake of PhD students within these disciplines. We will continue to develop strategic partnerships with relevant universities abroad. In relation to the third cross-disciplinary theme, the Faculty will continue to weight Asia-related initiatives within the framework of the Asian Dynamics Initiative (ADI) and the cooperation with Fudan University.

**Goal 3.2. Faculty impact is profound, known and respected inside and outside academia**

A number of activities to fortify the Faculty's international research position are described in section 1 whereas the following deals primarily with impact outside academia. The Faculty aims to boost our contribution to society and thus considers impact an important element as regards social sciences legitimacy as well as it is a means to improve research funding opportunities.
The overall objective comprises a number of milestones:

- **Illustrating our impact in the form of impact cases.** The aim is to continue to develop and communicate various cases supporting impact.

- **Influencing the concept of impact.** The aim is to discuss and develop several concepts and examples of impact and to define goals to support the contributions from the social sciences in the best possible and most effective way, instead of complying with existing impact targets and concepts from other research areas.

- **Reinforcing knowledge exchange and interacting with key users and stakeholders in terms of further development of our Public Policy Networks (PPN).** All departments at the Faculty are establishing and developing formal partnerships (PPN) with external partners in order to leave a distinct research and evidence-based stamp on the policy making. In addition, conferences, seminars and workshops are to be held in close cooperation with users, foundations and other stakeholders within and outside our PPNs.

- **Supporting digital communication platforms.** Further developing of and engaging into the use of modern communication technology, such as the Department of Political Science’s policy platform, called P.I.A. (Political Ideas and Analysis) and MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses).

- **Developing the area of Continuing and Professional Education.** Gaining experience and forming new networks with external stakeholders and employers as well as targeting our efforts to areas of demand in which the Faculty has a substantial level of expertise to offer.
4. One unified and focused university. Organisation, employees and physical framework

A satisfactory work environment is considered vital in achieving the overall goals within research and education. Thus, enhancing the work environment has high priority in all sections of the Faculty. Likewise, it is a main goal to provide all students with an effective and inclusive study environment. Furthermore, we aim to improve interaction between members of technical and administrative staff and academic staff, between departments and relevant sections at Faculty level including the Faculty Library and the Teaching and Learning Unit. Finally, we aim to optimise interaction between the Faculty and the university level (including the UCPH IT, the HR South and City Campuses etc).

Goal 4.1. The Faculty has a sound study environment

A high level of learning requires a satisfactory and sound study environment. Therefore, the Faculty wants to:

- Single out, together with students, three key themes to improve the study environment in connection with the next Study Environment Survey
- Implement and evaluate initiatives that entail awarding fewer grades in the first year of study at selected degree programmes in order to avoid some of the severe stress-related issues among our students
- Contribute to a better clarification of expectations with potential students prior to their choice of study
- Secure that international students feel included, accepted and part of the local study environment
Goal 4.2. The Faculty provides a sound work environment for all employees

On top of the planned joint initiatives, several of the departments have developed specific initiatives as part of their goals and action plan. For example, the Department of Psychology will be working with supportive management and thus will draw on their research results about stress and work environment issues in order to introduce concrete initiatives in the field.

At joint level, the Faculty aims to:

- Single out three joint efforts to enhance the work environment in connection with the next workplace assessment. This will be coordinated through the Collaboration Committees
- Support parallel language efforts by ensuring that members of technical and administrative staff possess the necessary English skills and that international members of the academic staff are provided with Danish language skills
- Render visible career paths for academic as well as technical and administrative staff, see section 1 for further details regarding academic staff
- Ensure better use of the various opportunities for staff mobility internally at UCPH targeted technical and administrative staff, "shadow schemes" (in which technical and administrative staff team up with other colleagues at UCPH for some days to get a broader network and learn new ways of solving tasks), etc.
- Focus on equality and diversity (Faculty participation in UCPH initiatives)
- Develop methods and processes to ensure that user experience is effectively included in the improvement of administration

Goal 4.3 The Faculty provides effective digital support of research, education and administration, and staff and students possess the necessary digital skills

This goal will be described in further details in the before-mentioned digital action plan, which - in addition to the objectives set out in connection with education (Goal 2.1) - will focus on research and administration and will include areas such as information security, data management, (social) data science and infrastructure.

As is the case in other areas, a wide range of specific actions are to be initiated in close cooperation with other units of UCPH.
5. Process of employee involvement

- The Academic Council, the Faculty Collaboration Committee and the Dean’s Student Dialogue Forum have all been involved in the strategy process at the Faculty. Several meetings were held during the past year with more recent meetings in February and March 2018.
- All staff and students were invited to a strategy meeting on 6 March 2018 to provide input.
- Moreover, a meeting was held on 9 March 2018 for postdocs at the Faculty.
- In addition, the strategy was discussed at a meeting of the PhD Study Committee on 21 March 2018.
- We held a joint meeting on 22 March 2018 for members of the Academic Council and the Faculty Collaboration Committee. At this meeting, an external guest spoke on various aspects of gender and diversity.
- Finally, the plans for a new strategy were discussed at various meetings in the Heads of Studies’ Forum, the Faculty Management Team and the Administrators’ Forum.
- On 23 March 2018, Heads of Departments, Heads of Studies and Faculty Management (Dean, Associate Deans and Faculty Director) met for a one-day seminar about the plan.
- This plan was further discussed at individual meetings between the managements of the five departments and the Faculty Management in the second week of April 2018.

At department level, a similar process has taken place with staff meetings and involvement of formal local forums such as the Local Collaboration Committees and the Boards of Studies.

Following our meeting with the rectorate on 9 May 2018 and the feedback from rector concerning this meeting, we have made an amended version of the Plan with a matching Action Plan valid for the period up to and including 2019 (this document).

The revised documents have been circulated among the departments for their consideration and have been discussed in the Management Team (FLT). Likewise, the plans were discussed in the Faculty Collaboration Committee and in the Academic Council on 20 September 2018. Any comments of more substantial/fundamental importance were put forward at the Faculty Management's meeting with the rectorate on 2 October 2018.
In parallel with the process of revising the documents at Faculty level, the departments have been working to adjust their respective Goals and Action Plans in view of input from the Faculty Management after the individual meetings in week 15/2018 and a continued local dialogue, as well.