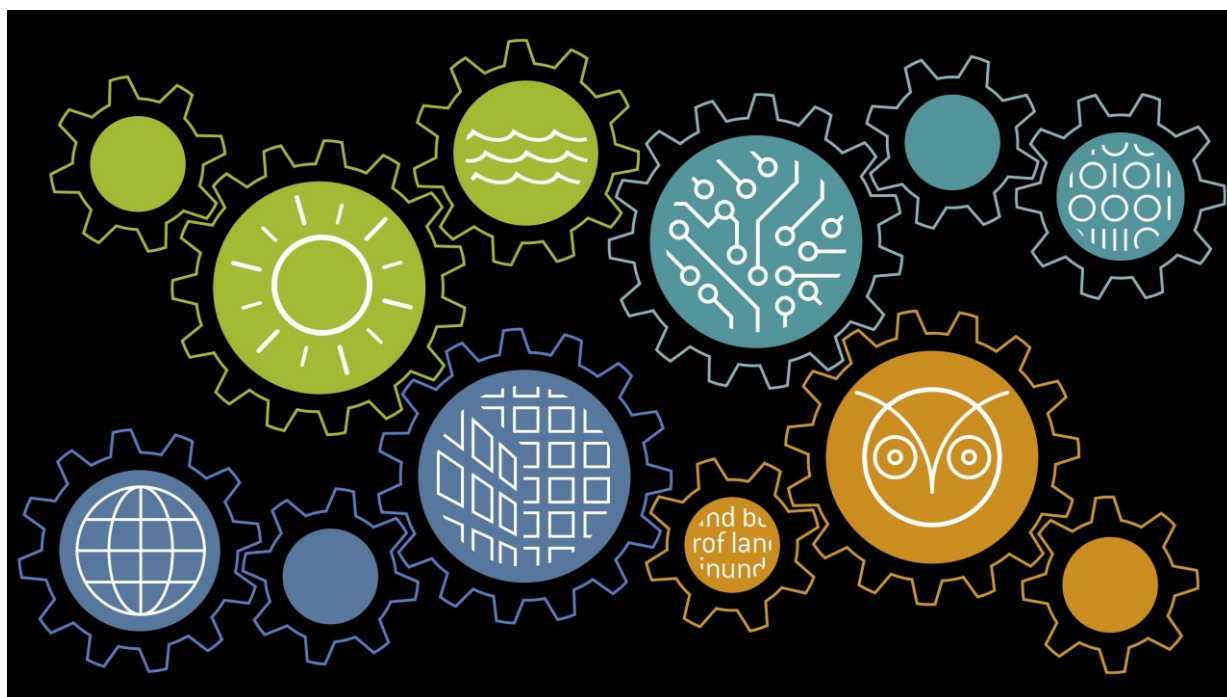UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

November 2019

Target plan 2020-2023

Faculty of Social Sciences

Contents

0. Summary of strategic priorities

SAMF Digital (SOCIAL SCIENCE Digital):
- SODAS
- Digitalisation of degree programmes

SAMF Public (SOCIAL SCIENCE Public):
- Impact capacity
- Centre of Public Policy

SAMF Læring (SOCIAL SCIENCE Learning):
- Reform of programme management and study administration services
- Interdisciplinary patterns of study
- Continuing and professional education

SAMF Klima (SOCIAL SCIENCE Climate):
- Climate and sustainability committee
- Green Innovation Prize
- Climate courses, including continuing and further education

0.1 Social Sciences in society (SAMF i samfundet)

SAMF Vision (SOCIAL SCIENCE Vision)

- *Engage partners in the co-creation of knowledge, learning and social change*

- *Empower our students to become reflective and responsible citizens, who have the vision, the knowledge and the competences to change society for the better*

- *Energise global, European and Danish communities of knowledge by innovating research methodologies and by research findings with impact.*

The Faculty of Social Sciences (SOCIAL SCIENCE) is a successful academic community based on strong disciplines and organised into five departments. The faculty's high academic standards mean that its graduates are among the architects of the Danish welfare state and that the knowledge generated by the faculty plays a key role in debates on the future of the welfare state. Places on the faculty's degree programmes are highly coveted, and its graduates are in demand in both the private and public sectors.

Within the framework of the overall UCPH strategy, the Faculty of Social Sciences' strategic target is to provide interdisciplinary responses to major societal issues in a changing world. It does so by establishing a coherent and unique research and teaching environment based on collaboration with actors from all parts of Danish society and contributing to the development of unique research and teaching at UCPH.

A pluralistic environment that poses big, difficult and relevant questions is a prerequisite for unique research and teaching. The best way to promote pluralism and collaboration is for the faculty to engage students and academic staff at all levels in dialogue that ensures diversity and safe and secure working conditions. This dialogue also promotes respect for different research methods and a range of publication and knowledge traditions.

Technical and administrative staff will have the opportunity to develop their skills across departments and the faculty, including in environments that combine operational and development tasks. Work will be allocated between units and levels in an effective and relevant manner.

Coherence within the faculty is a prerequisite for SOCIAL SCIENCE's ability to contribute to the development of a unified and focused university. More ambitious shared targets require that all staff groups and students contribute to dialogue in the faculty. In a complex organisation, one of the key management tasks is to facilitate the kind of conversations that play a crucial role in strengthening and developing shared values and setting collective targets.

The SOCIAL SCIENCE strategy, with its associated target and action plans, does not seek to describe the faculty's overall activities and day-to-day operations, but to concentrate on strategic focus areas. The faculty has four strategic focus areas in the period leading up to 2023:

SAMF Digital (SOCIAL SCIENCE Digital): Strengthening and developing the interdisciplinary research and teaching environment within **social data science** by consolidating the research environment at SODAS and setting up programmes in both Social Data Science and Computer Science-Economics; developing and implementing a digitisation strategy for all degree programmes, including improving the range of courses and increasing the amount of external research funding.

SAMF Public (SOCIAL SCIENCE Public): Engaging staff and stakeholders in specific collaborations for the purpose of solving societal problems. This initiative involves setting up an interdisciplinary **public policy** and innovation centre. Through research, education and impact work, the centre will address the challenges facing private- and public-sector actors in a world in which technological and demographic development, climate change, and shifting global power structures create new societal conditions.

SAMF Læring (SOCIAL SCIENCE Learning): Ensure **pluralism, interdisciplinarity and collaboration in teaching,** based on a new form of dynamic co-operation between academic environments on the development and provision of degree programmes by the faculty. Reform of programme management and study administration services will enable SOCIAL SCIENCE to improve opportunities for students to combine academic skills, and to develop new products within continuing and professional education. The faculty will also be an active and proactive partner, both at UCPH and in relation to external stakeholders, partly to ensure a greater practical element in the degree programmes.

SAMF Klima (SOCIAL SCIENCE Climate): SOCIAL SCIENCE will launch a **climate initiative** that strengthens and develops the programmes' orientation towards interdisciplinary competencies aimed at solving specific societal problems within the areas of climate and sustainability. The initiative will also promote a green study environment and develop the faculty's sustainability profile as part of a participatory collaboration between students, staff and the administration.

These four interdisciplinary targets at faculty level will be supported and complemented by department-level targets, as described in the departments' target plans. This means that the majority of the current activities at SOCIAL SCIENCE, in the form of outstanding research, education and public outreach, will continue to be the top priority. These activities must be given as much support as possible, even if this is not explicitly mentioned in the strategy. This document's focus is therefore on new initiatives at faculty level.

SOCIAL SCIENCE's key targets within UCPH's four main focus areas in Strategy 2023 are as follows:

1. Research. Attracting, developing and retaining academic talent

The 2016 research assessment emphasised that a high degree of internationalisation, ambitious publication strategies and success in relation to external funding are key factors for the departments' success. Specifically, the evaluation recommended a closer focus on career paths and development, greater internationalisation and a clearer research profile. It also identified a need to work in a more structured manner with applications for external research funding, enhanced interdisciplinary research, closer collaboration with the rest of society and clearer organisation of research in some of the departments.

Based on the research assessment, the departments have been working toward a number of specific targets for consolidating positions of strength and developing the research and teaching environments. We consider these initiatives to be part of the ongoing quality assurance, which is a key element of professional research management.

Target 1.1: Consolidating SOCIAL SCIENCE's positions of strength, including (world-)leading research environments

A number of initiatives at UCPH level contribute to strengthening SOCIAL SCIENCE's talent development and recruitment, including specifying the promotion requirements and content descriptions for various job categories and career paths. SOCIAL SCIENCE will have a particular focus on career development at all levels, including:

- Implementing the tenure-track model for assistant professors, as well as a new model for promotion from associate professor to professor
- Professionalising application processes and strengthening the international network with a view to recruitment
- Setting specific placement targets for BA, MA and PhD graduates in the private sector, employer networks, mentoring schemes, internships, etc.

A new research assessment will be carried out in 2021/2022. SOCIAL SCIENCE will also participate in the UCPH-wide PhD evaluation in 2019/20

Target 1.2: Realising the potential of social data science

By setting up the interdisciplinary research centre SODAS, SOCIAL SCIENCE has established a leading research environment in social data science. All of the departments have also, to varying degrees, established research groups that span both data science and their own specific area of expertise. During the strategy period, a number of initiatives will enhance research and research collaboration, both in the departments and in SODAS, including:

- Consolidating SODAS as an independent, sustainable and development-oriented organisation
- Landing a number of major grants for research and education in the digital field
- Providing continuing and professional education in social data science methods for academic staff.

Target 1.3: Ensuring a healthy environment for talent development, e.g. by landing more external funding

In recent years, SOCIAL SCIENCE has significantly increased the number of external research grants. The ambition for the next few years is to strengthen the frameworks and foundations for attracting external funding, e.g. by:

- Regularly updating departmental strategies for external funding, involving the specific prioritisation of initiatives, in order to meet more of the actual costs of research and its infrastructure and to provide better administrative support for researchers
- Pursuing major research grants that support projects with a tangible impact on society
- Seeking more funding from the EUs upcoming framework programme Horizon Europe to facilitate the recruitment of researchers from leading (non-Danish) research institutions. The EU's "excellence" (ERC Grants and Marie Curie fellowships) and "societal challenges" pillars are both relevant in this context.

2. Education. Closer links to research and practice

Based on strong subject disciplines and through problem-oriented teaching focusing on **pluralism, interdisciplinary knowledge and collaboration**, SOCIAL SCIENCE seeks to produce competent and critical graduates. The faculty's courses are developed in close dialogue with private- and public-sector employers. The teaching is planned and provided on the basis of the individual student's needs. SOCIAL SCIENCE's overarching targets are to:

- Attract and develop the most committed and talented students from Denmark and abroad
- Ensure that all degree programmes address key societal problems, including climate challenges, at national, European and global level
- Equip all students with the competencies to adopt a critical approach to societal developments, and to influence societal developments in their future employment
- Ensure that all programmes provide digital insight, as well as skills in data-processing and -analysis
- Ensure that all degree programmes offer the opportunity to specialise in a climate and sustainability perspective on the subject
- Give all students the opportunity to work with active researchers and research
- Ensure all students have global insight and outlook, e.g. through exchanges, field work and joint projects abroad, through internationally comparable programmes in terms of structure and curriculum, and through participating in courses/activities that offer global insight and awareness
- Provide a positive and inclusive study environment for all.

These targets translate into a number of specific initiatives, as described below.

Target 2.1: Using *state-of-the-art* digital teaching methods

As a starting point for the realisation of the digital transformation in SOCIAL SCIENCE during the strategy period, we will formulate a digitisation action plan. In regard to teaching, this will ensure:

- The development of digital teaching methods and digital skills for all students
- The incorporation of digitisation competences into all degree programmes, through elective courses, specialisations and support for extra-curricular activities
- Enhancing lecturers' skills in various forms of digital teaching, and sharing best practices
- Investing in infrastructure that will make forms of digital teaching possible.

Target 2.2: Maintaining an innovative and inspiring research-based learning environment with close links to practice

In some of the faculty's subject areas, the biggest challenge is to link the programmes more closely with practice, with a view toward improving employment opportunities for graduates. In other subjects, there is a greater need for opportunities to develop and strengthen links to research.

In addition to participating in joint initiatives at UCPH level, during the strategy period SOCIAL SCIENCE will have a particular focus on:

- Strengthening the research base via appointments of academic staff
- Feedback and informal contact between students and researchers
- Improving the pedagogic qualifications of academic staff
- Establishing a student Inno-Lab in connection with the digitisation and data-science theme

- Enhancing external contacts in the business community, with a view to improving job and career opportunities.

Target 2.3: Providing all students with global insight and a global outlook

The focus will be on:
- Ensuring options for English-language degree programmes for full-degree students
- Providing a global curriculum that ensures representation of different perspectives on the disciplines at a high academic level, in a manner that respects academic traditions
- Recruiting the most talented and committed students from Denmark and abroad
- Helping international students prepare for life in the Danish labour market
- Maintaining and developing courses and degree programmes with an international focus, e.g. "Global Development" and "Security Risk Management"
- Establishing partnerships with leading universities abroad.

Target 2.4: Ensuring pluralism, interdisciplinarity and co-operation in teaching

Based on a new dynamic co-operation between academic areas on the development and running of degree programmes, SOCIAL SCIENCE will focus on supplementing and enhancing the range of degree programmes it provides. The faculty will also be an active and proactive partner, both at UCPH and in relation to external stakeholders, partly to ensure a greater practical element in the study programmes.
- Ensuring that students have opportunities to take courses on all degree programmes at the faculty and securing the budget for this
- Running workshops, etc. for interdisciplinary groups of students
- Exploring options that will make it easier for students to put together an interdisciplinary master's programme
- Offering a number of interdisciplinary SOCIAL SCIENCE-based courses for all students at UCPH
- Offering specialisations across existing degree programmes, e.g. in the areas of climate, security and labour-market policy.

Target 2.5: Offering high-level continuing and professional education

SOCIAL SCIENCE will build networks with external stakeholders and clients in order to draw on their experience and target our initiatives in areas in which there is proven demand for our services and where the faculty has specialist competencies.

- Establishing a continuing and professional education unit at faculty level
- Offering a range of interdisciplinary courses that draw on all relevant research environments at SOCIAL SCIENCE and on co-operation with other academic environments and stakeholders.

Target 2.6: Providing a supportive study environment

Positive learning outcomes require a good study environment. SOCIAL SCIENCE will therefore:

- In connection with the next study environment survey, and in collaboration with the students, identify three focus themes related to improving the study environment
- Run trials with fewer graded exams in the first year of study in an attempt to lower stress levels
- Improve alignment of expectations when choosing degree programmes
- Better integrate students into the local study environment
- Involve student groups in the implementation of the faculty's strategy, as well as the development of the campus and the subjects.

Target 2.7: Reorganising programme management and study administration services

SOCIAL SCIENCE has efficient programme management and study administration services but we face challenges such as the heavy workload of heads of studies/study board chairs, vulnerable study administrations in the departments, and the lack of capacity to undertake special strategic work. SOCIAL SCIENCE will therefore initiate analysis that will form the basis for the reorganisation of the study administration services area, including:

- Reducing the workload for heads of studies and making the position more attractive
- Ensuring robustness and development opportunities for study administrative staff
- Consolidating strategically important tasks with more specialised units or work functions
- Ensuring a coherent approach to solving increasingly complex problems
- Developing interdisciplinary educational initiatives.

3. Collaboration and societal commitment – at national, regional and global level

SOCIAL SCIENCE wishes to be considered a natural partner for everybody working to tackle the big, difficult and topical questions facing society. The faculty will therefore contribute to the University's interdisciplinary initiatives in this area, and also mobilise researchers across disciplines to work with private and public-sector stakeholders on analysing and solving societal problems.

Target 3.1: Making a difference to society, e.g. via impact initiatives

SOCIAL SCIENCE's researchers often work on a broad range of problems related to national and global societal challenges. They work across subject disciplines and with a number of different partners. One of the faculty's strengths is that social commitment is a natural part of so many of our employees' daily lives. During the strategy period, we will supplement existing initiatives with faculty efforts to target the implementation of this commitment. Two initiatives in particular will be key:

- The faculty as a whole will focus on a range of interdisciplinary themes, including social data science, social-science health research, international security and global development, as well as climate and sustainable societies.
- Setting up two–three positions at faculty level to focus on impact and relations with foundations, etc.

Target 3.2: Establishing a Centre of Public Policy

In order to promote the University's target of increasing the social impact of its research and education, and to strengthen co-operation between different academic environments, SOCIAL SCIENCE will – preferably in co-operation with other faculties – establish an interdisciplinary research and education initiative within public policy.

The new centre will use research, education and impact work to address the challenges facing private and public stakeholders in a world in which technological and demographic development, climate change and shifting global power structures create new societal conditions.

The centre will also work closely with public-sector agencies and private companies to formulate specific solutions and tailor-made programmes and courses that will address major societal problems.

- During 2019–2020, a working group will draw up the framework for the centre, which is expected to start work in 2021.

Target 3.3: Making an active contribution to climate issues

The climate is a major topical issue that mobilises our students and staff, who are committed to building a better and more sustainable society. The climate agenda is a key issue for anyone who wants to understand and change society at national, European and global level. As the climate becomes a key political topic, in line with (or in contrast to) growth, security, democracy, equality, etc., researchers and students must identify the economic, psychological, political, social and cultural logics under which the climate agenda operates. They must also be able to critically relate to the way in which the climate issue is managed politically, as well as the societal consequences of dealing with the crisis.

Navigating the climate agenda will be a key competence for many of our students in their future professional careers. The climate and sustainability are therefore key questions, among others, to which social science students must relate. These issues open up good opportunities for interdisciplinarity, e.g. collaboration with the natural sciences. At the same time, however, the theme also raises classic social science questions.

In other words, the faculty will build on its commitment to the climate and sustainability in the development of its research and teaching. In this context, it is important to bear in mind that SOCIAL SCIENCE is a university faculty, and as such is rooted in critical thinking. This also applies to its activities in the climate area. It should also be noted that the University is responsible for a range of issues relating to travel, buildings, etc. and the faculty is, therefore, unable to take independent initiatives in relation to these topics.

During the strategy period, SOCIAL SCIENCE will launch a series of tangible initiatives on climate and sustainability, including:
- Setting up a climate and sustainability committee comprising faculty management, academic staff, technical and administrative staff, student groups and operational staff, in order to collect, develop and implement initiatives in this area The committee will, among other things, support student events, discuss transport policy for students and researchers, the green campus, the canteen, etc. The committee will also award an annual "Green Innovation Prize" on Campus Day.
- The faculty will set up and develop a website and ongoing e-communication that describes and profiles its teaching and research in climate and sustainability issues.
- The faculty will develop and offer interdisciplinary courses, as well as continuing and professional education, preferably in collaboration with other faculties working in the climate and sustainability field.
- SOCIAL SCIENCE is part of the "Green Accelerators" innovation cooperation.
- The faculty supports networking and lobbies foundations working on climate and sustainability issues with a view to entering into research projects with other ("wet") subject areas, eg in the natural or medical sciences.

4. A unified and focused university: Organisation, employees and physical environment

A good working environment is a crucial factor for achieving the faculty's overall research and education targets. Improving the working environment in all units is therefore a high priority. Another clear target is that all students experience a diverse, inclusive and challenging study environment *(as touched upon above)*. SOCIAL SCIENCE also aims to optimise the interaction between technical and administrative staff and academic staff, both between the departments and among the relevant (service-)units at faculty level, including the Faculty Library and the Teaching and Learning Unit, as well as at University level (UCPH IT, HR South City, etc.).

Target 4.1: Providing a great working environment for all employees

In addition to planned joint initiatives, several departments at SOCIAL SCIENCE work with specific initiatives related to the targets and action plans. For example, the Department of Psychology has adopted a supportive management approach, based on its own research into stress and the working environment.

At faculty level, SOCIAL SCIENCE will:

- As a follow-up to WPA 2019, and under the auspices of the cooperation committees, identify three joint initiatives to strengthen the working environment
- Promote increased parallel language use, e.g. by ensuring that administrative staff possess good English-language skills and that international academic staff have good Danish-language skills
- Ensure clear career paths for both academic and technical/administrative staff, *cf. also Section 1 (above) on academic staff.*
- Draw up best practice for career paths for academic staff in fixed-term appointments, including postdocs and PhD students
- Ensure better use of internal opportunities for mobility for technical and administrative staff, including "shadow schemes", which involve spending a few days working closely with a colleague somewhere else at UCPH in order to broaden networks and study new problem-solving approaches
- Focus on equality and diversity (participate in UCPH initiatives)
- Develop methods and processes that incorporate user experiences in the development of the administration.

5. Process and staff involvement

SOCIAL SCIENCE's targets and action plan were originally formulated in 2018, as a result of the following process:

- At faculty level, the Academic Council, the Faculty Collaboration Committee and the Dean's Dialogue Forum held several meetings in the past year – most recently in February and March 2018
- A general meeting for all faculty staff was held on 6 March 2018
- A meeting for all of the faculty's postdocs was held on 9 March 2018
- The strategy was discussed at the PhD Committee meeting on 21 March 2018
- A joint meeting on diversity problems, attended by members of the Academic Council and Faculty Collaboration Committee, as well as external speakers, was held on 22 March 2018
- The plans were discussed at a number of meetings of the heads of studies group, among the Faculty Management Team and in the Administrators' Forum
- The heads of department, heads of studies and the Faculty Management Team held a full-day seminar on the plan on 23 March 2018
- The plan was also discussed at individual meetings of management groups in all departments, as well as faculty management, in week 15 of 2018.

At department level, a similar process took place involving staff meetings and local forums, i.e. local collaboration committees and study boards.

After the meeting with the rectorate on 9 May 2018, and following feedback from it, a revised version of the faculty's target plan and an associated action plan were drawn up for the period up to and including 2019. *(This document)*

These revised documents were submitted for consultation to the departments and discussed by the Faculty Management Team. They were also discussed by the Faculty Collaboration Committee and the Academic Council on 20 September 2018. Feedback regarding matters such as the frequency of meetings were submitted in advance of the meeting with the rectorate on 2 October 2018 so that committees were able to provide input.

In parallel with the revision process at faculty level, the departments have adjusted their own targets and action plans, based on input from department management received following the meetings in week 15 and on ongoing local dialogue.

The target plan was revised following the change of dean in May 2019. The revised strategy was discussed by the Faculty Management Team on several occasions, including at a seminar on 2–3 September 2019, at an extended management meeting on 13 September 2019, by the Faculty Collaboration Committee on 19 September and by the Academic Council on 27 September. Finally, the revised target plan formed the basis for local dialogue when the dean attended department meetings in autumn 2019.