

# Aarhus BSS – Strategy 2017-2020

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Aarhus BSS' strategy 2017-2020 is characterised and guided by our aspirations to achieve the highest quality in our degree programmes and research, and reinforce our international outlook and external relations. The strategy confirms and intensifies our commitment to the present course of delivering research-based degree programmes constructed to meet the highest international standards and of conducting impactful research within and across traditional fields of business and social sciences that addresses complex societal issues.

## Aarhus BSS mission

*To be a quality-driven broad business school that contributes to society through delivering leading research in business and social science disciplines and graduates highly valued by national and international job markets.*

## Aarhus BSS vision

*To contribute to the welfare of society by creating first-class research and education for the benefit of all our stakeholders.*

The school's efforts to achieve its mission and vision are guided by a clear set of goals and actions carefully aligned with the central strategic priorities of Aarhus University, as we have a common interest in being the frontrunners in delivering high-quality research and education. We strive for excellence by staying one step ahead of responsibilities that educational institutions face as contributors of future workforce to the ever so changing global communities. Our professional administrative staff will play an important role in this endeavour through providing service and support to the academic departments and delivering coherent, flexible and user oriented administrative services, which are timely, professionally and proactively aligned with the strategic priorities of Aarhus BSS.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN 2017 – 2020**

Embarking on a successful career upon graduation requires more than just knowledge of one's own core discipline. It requires cultural understanding, people skills and knowledge of legal, political, financial and societal matters across borders. At Aarhus BSS, we gather these disciplines in our broad business school – a term we use to signal that we are more than a traditional business school, but that we place business education in a broader perspective by letting it thrive and prosper alongside core fields of psychology, political science and law. Housing all of these fields under our broad umbrella is what enables us to provide our students and faculty with more opportunities to meet, work side by side, and initiate relevant interdisciplinary collaboration between business and politics, business and law and business and psychology. We take the lead in delivering high-quality research and education, which is why strong research fields at the very core of each discipline are a prerequisite for successful cross-disciplinary collaboration. Therefore, we strive to support and improve the conditions for our students, faculty and staff, be it in business or social science disciplines, or in the mix of the two, as part of our long-term commitment to the growth and welfare of society through delivering graduates and research that make a significant impact.

We facilitate collaboration and dialogue across academic, organisational and geographical boundaries without compromising the academic freedom of our individual researchers. By providing an outstanding research and teaching environment, we promote the overall academic objectives of the school where excellence is key and give our students a solid return on investment for choosing a degree from Aarhus BSS.

Our strategic priorities for 2017-2020 are rooted in four mutually interrelated and intertwined key elements, namely education, research, international outlook and external relations. Excelling within and across these areas with high quality as a common thread and denominator is our *raison d'être* as a quality-driven broad business school that contributes to society through delivering high-impact education and cutting-edge research. For each key element, an overarching strategic goal is identified together with a limited number of actions, which will steer the school and the departments in the right direction towards realising our mission and vision and place us among leading, internationally accredited educational institutions in Europe.

## **EDUCATION**

***Our goal is to improve the quality and relevance of our research-based education to ensure optimal employment opportunities for our graduates on national and international job markets.***

Research-based teaching is the foundation of the degree programmes at Aarhus BSS. In order to ensure that our students, from bachelor's to PhD level, enter the degree programmes with expectations and motivation to become active and successful students and ultimately attractive graduates, we will intensify students' academic learning and development of professional skills through close collaboration and dialogue between and among our school's faculty, students and stakeholders, and through continuous reviews and development of the school's course and programme portfolio. Specific attention will be on ensuring the best possible conditions for maximising the talents of each individual student and challenging each of them to excel to their full potential during their time of study. By doing this, we will provide our students with deeper knowledge and broader understanding of the global challenges, and ensure that the academic and professional qualifications acquired during their time at Aarhus BSS meet the demands of national and international job markets.

### ***Actions***

- Ensure a high level of qualifications at entry by attracting top-end students to our degree programmes and by supporting them in identifying the right educational path.
- Emphasise academic learning and professional development of students, empowering them to realise their full potential in an academically and socially inspiring and challenging study environment.
- Increase focus on innovative and student-based learning activities and competence building aligned with learning outcomes at course and programme level.
- Strengthen the research core in our academic offerings and exploit relevant interdisciplinarity in education and research between and across social science and business disciplines.

### ***Metric for Success***

Our performance will be measured by our ability to attract talented students with high qualifications, alignment between learning objectives and competencies, improvement of student retention rates, study and teaching environment surveys, as well as employment and remuneration rates of school graduates relative to national and international levels.

## **RESEARCH**

***Our goal is to significantly improve the quality of our research output and increase external research funding.***

The overarching general research objectives of Aarhus BSS are to improve research quality and widen the range of cutting-edge research areas. Our research output has been steadily increasing for years and numerous of the school's researchers are working at the international frontier in collaboration with colleagues from top universities worldwide. Through carefully selected strategic actions, we will focus on further improving the impact and the quality of the research undertaken at the school and widen the range of areas in which our faculty members can contribute to advancing research frontiers, motivating them to publish in high-quality outlets. Since innovative research ideas and internationally competitive CVs are prerequisites for attracting external research funding, we will support departments in linking individual researcher rewards and career advancement to research performance and high-quality publication.

### ***Actions***

- Increase publication in high-quality outlets, i.e., research journals and other prestigious outlets with high impact in accordance with field traditions.
- Develop clear incentives and support mechanisms for faculty to attract research funding from national and international sources.
- Facilitate the use of flexible and competitive career paths to attract highly qualified and promising faculty, especially at junior level.
- Motivate faculty to disseminate research results as a mean to raise complex issues and make their research findings widely known and acted upon.

### ***Metric for Success***

Important performance metrics will be the amount of external research funding attracted and the scale of publication in top research outlets according to international standards.

## **INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK**

***Our goal is to raise the quality of recruitment and mobility at all levels and strengthen our international outlook.***

With a view to positioning ourselves among the international elite and maintaining a competitive edge in a highly homogenous market for higher education, we must create optimal conditions for students and faculty to interact across nationalities and cultures in inspiring and demanding study and teaching environments with fellow students and esteemed academics. Moreover, we must maintain and further develop transparent, internationally competitive degree programmes as well as researcher career paths in a way that will further improve recruitment and retention of highly talented students and researchers.

As different aspects of mobility are becoming increasingly important to graduates and faculty today, increased international collaboration in research and education activities across our academic disciplines is essential. In the strategy period 2017-20, we will continue to further expand our networks with international peers with whom we can share experiences, exchange knowledge, do benchmarking and develop common initiatives that advance the agenda of the school.

### ***Actions***

- Increase the proportion of highly qualified faculty with international experience and encourage international collaboration in research.
- Extend the scope of English-taught bachelor's programmes and improve the international study and teaching environment.
- Increase strategic collaboration with international peer universities at school, department and programme level to improve the quality of research and teaching activities.

### ***Metric for success***

Our performance will be measured by our ability to attract highly qualified international students and faculty, to place students, graduates and faculty at other distinguished academic institutions on exchange, research stays and sabbaticals, and by the amount of international collaborations established at school, department and/or programme level.

## **EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

***Our goal is to improve the quality of services to public and private organisations and become a preferred provider of skilled graduates to relevant industries.***

At Aarhus BSS, we collaborate with many different organisations in different ways within research and education across our broad academic scope. This manifests through a wide range of corporate, institutional, governmental and professional contacts, spanning widely across industries and organisational levels.

We will focus on further strengthening these relations as well as our continuing education offers, alumni and career services, public consultancy and research, as we acknowledge the importance of knowledge sharing and close dialogue with the world around us. Staying grounded with external stakeholders will ensure that our degree programmes, research projects and services rendered to society stay relevant, adaptable to change and can develop in tandem with society's needs and expectations.

### ***Actions***

- Foster and extend our networks across government, industry and other knowledge partners to strengthen employee recruitment and retention and to promote employment prospects for graduates.
- Strengthen academic quality, scope and relevance of internships and student-related activities aimed at companies and organisations.
- Expand offerings of short, tailor-made continuing education courses and programmes.
- Build on the strengths of existing alumni relations and exploit the opportunities of alumni engagement.

### ***Metric for success***

Our performance will be measured by the scope of our continuing education offers and enrolment numbers, amount of internships and corporate collaborations, employment rates of graduates and alumni engagement in school activities.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Alignment, coordination and implementation of the strategy 2017-2020 throughout the organisation will be realised through cross-organisational management focus, organisational involvement, annual priorities and target setting, action plans and follow ups. Performance in each action will be monitored and measured throughout the strategy period so that the necessary means can be taken and resources allocated to progress in accordance with the strategic priorities.