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# Strategy 2015-2018

## Department of Psychology

## University of Copenhagen

Copenhagen / March 20, 2015



# Foreword

This strategy plan for the Department of Psychology comprises the years 2015-2018. In this period we aim to firmly establish our position as one of the 2-3 leading departments of psychology in Scandinavia with areas of strength within the main international fields of psychology.

In the following sections the general strategy for education, research organization, societal outreach, and administration will be described. We then describe five specific points that combine these main functions of the department (see below). Each section is organized in three steps that answer the following questions: (1) Why is the point important? (2) What are our aims? and (3) How will we achieve the aims? Please note that after each action the approximate time of *initiation* is indicated in brackets.<sup>1</sup>

Søren Kyllingsbæk  
Head of Department

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<sup>1</sup> In the text, the following abbreviations are used for the Faculties of Humanities (HUM), Social Sciences (SAMF), Health and Medical Sciences (SUND), and Science (SCIENCE).

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# VISION

The core purpose of the Department of Psychology is to produce original psychological knowledge and to educate highly qualified psychologists and PhDs in psychology. In addition, the department aims to disseminate psychological knowledge to society in general and to collaborate with relevant external partners in both the private and the public sectors.

The vision of the Department of Psychology is described in the following:

- Research at the Department of Psychology is of high international and ethical standards – and is characterized by a fundamental curiosity to unravel the nature of psychological phenomena. Further, the research takes advantage of a strong synergistic interaction between basic and applied psychological research, as well as interdisciplinary research.
- Education at the Department of Psychology is directed towards the psychological profession and is characterized by an internationally high level with respect to methodological, theoretical, and applied subjects. Teaching is also oriented towards other scientific disciplines and the department takes part in several interdisciplinary academic programs.
- The Department of Psychology is internationally oriented and characterized by strong and elaborate collaboration with other internationally leading research departments as well as working in partnerships with public and private institutions and organizations in Denmark.
- The Department of Psychology is a key player in increasing psychological well-being and health in Danish society and in the dissemination and discussion of scientific psychological knowledge in the general public.
- The Department of Psychology is characterized by high job satisfaction and a good working environment.

# GENERAL STRATEGY

## 1. Education

The graduates in psychology from the University of Copenhagen are in strong competition for jobs with graduates from the other Danish psychology departments and related educations. Thus, our education should provide our students with the strongest possible preparation for the psychological profession. Education based on teaching by highly qualified active researchers and practicing professionals is a defining property of the department.

### Aims

- We aim to educate our students, PhD students, and Post-Doctoral fellows to be among the best qualified in Denmark, broadly covering the main areas of psychology.
- Our education shall be at an internationally high level, comparable to similar psychology teaching programs in Scandinavia, the European Union, and the United States.
- Our students should be proficient in combining theoretical knowledge, advanced research methods, and applied psychology. These qualifications should be in accordance with the changing demands of the labor market and give our graduates a competitive advantage when applying for employment after finishing their studies.
- The courses shall encompass the main theoretical and methodological traditions of psychology, as they are defined internationally within the topics and fields of the courses.
- We aim to improve the general integration and progression of the education. This includes more linkages to professional training at postgraduate levels.

### How shall we aim to educate excellent psychologists and PhDs in psychology?

- Together with the study board, administration, course coordinators, and department leadership, the research groups (see point 2) will be responsible for the general organization of teaching. The research groups will collaborate on teaching within 3-4 main areas. (Fall 2016)
- Teaching shall be engaging and based on a variety of different forms, including general lectures, seminars and tutorials by senior faculty, article-reading with junior staff, and 'hands-on' exercises. In addition we will explore new internet-based teaching methods. (Fall 2015)
- Faculty at all levels shall undergo continuous pedagogical development and courses (Spring 2016)

- We will further strengthen the methodological courses and elements of the education. (Spring 2016)
- In line with the current reform of the Master's program in psychology, we will further develop the integration between theoretical and applied areas, including more external contact and case-based teaching. (Fall 2015)
- We will explore the possibility of increasing the number of participant-paid courses at the Open University program and extend this to other courses of the Bachelor's program. (Spring 2016)
- We will increase the department's involvement in postgraduate supplementary training for both practicing psychologists and other relevant groups. (Fall 2016)

## **2. Research organization**

The organization of research is of critical importance in determining the productivity and quality of both research and education at the department. In particular, the research groups are pivotal due to their impact on such issues as the generation of research ideas, flexibility in the organization and development of teaching, external funding, talent development, training, supervision, and the quality of the general work environment.

### **Aims**

- The research groups shall function as effective collaborative work communities and solve common tasks within research, teaching, and external relations.
- Each research group shall have a sufficient size with a minimum of three faculty members as well as a number of PhD students and Post-Doctoral fellows.
- At least two to four of the research groups shall be internationally leading within their respective research fields.
- The research groups shall provide effective supervision and talent development of assistant professors, Post-Doctoral fellows, PhD students, and students.
- The research groups shall attract substantial external funding to continue and expand the positive track record of the department in the last 5-10 years.
- The research groups will be organized into three or four main areas, each including both basic and applied research, and which are responsible for the major areas of the education.

### **How shall we achieve our aims for research organization?**

- Based on dialogue with the research groups, we will set up performance criteria that comply with the general aims of the department, and follow systematically up on these. (Spring 2015)
- We will continue the present development of the research groups so they can meet the criterion of a minimum of three faculty members and function as intended, i.e. as collaborative work communities. (Spring 2015)
- We will place the members of the research groups so their offices are in close proximity to each other, and to other groups with related foci. (Spring 2015)
- Through regular dialogue and leadership training we will help the research groups establish well-functioning work environments and develop their abilities to supervise and support their assistant professors, Post-Doctoral fellows and PhD students, together with undergraduate and Master's students. (Spring 2015)
- We will set up an internal peer review procedure of funding applications. (Spring 2015)
- We will recruit new faculty into the research groups who either have the potential to achieve, or already are at, a high international level of research and teaching. Similarly, PhD scholarships will be allocated to promising lines of research in the groups. (Fall 2015)

### **3. Societal outreach**

To increase the impact of research from the Department of Psychology it is essential for the department to actively collaborate with partners outside the university in the private and public sectors. This is also a key to achieving more external funding for the activities at the department. In addition, dissemination of the research findings to the general public is essential.

#### **Aims**

- Foundation of a public policy network for psychological health and well-being including partners from the hospital sector, treatment centers, government, and NGOs<sup>2</sup>.
- Establishment of a network of Work and Organizational Psychology for faculty, Post-Doctoral fellows and PhD students, Master's students, and partners from the private consultant sector and HR departments.
- A strong and prominent place in the public media coverage of psychological issues.

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<sup>2</sup> see e.g. the EPRN at the Department of Economics, UCPH:  
<http://www.econ.ku.dk/EPRN/>

- A general communication strategy, including clear and relevant communication at the department's website.

#### **How shall we achieve our aims of better societal outreach?**

- We will explore the possibilities of establishing a public policy network by contacting relevant partners through the already established networks of the faculties as well as the faculty leadership. (Fall 2015)
- Together with the research group in Work and Organizational psychology, we will contact relevant partners in the private sector to establish a network, which will also include Master's students in Work and Organizational psychology. We will host an annual meeting and engage the external partners in the teaching program. (Fall 2015)
- We will strengthen the collaboration with the panel of employer representatives. (Spring 2015)
- We shall organize the dissemination of the department's research, so that it is efficient and works in concert with the general strategy of the department. (Fall 2015)
- A working group including administrative and faculty staff will be set up to devise a strategy for the department's website. (Fall 2015)

#### **4. Administration**

The administrative service is the backbone of every well-functioning university department both with regard to research and education. Currently the administration at the Department of Psychology faces a number of challenges: Several major reforms of the education, more international faculty members and students, as well as a general increase in the transfer of administrative tasks to the scientific staff, leading to more supervision of these.

##### **Aims**

- The level of the administrative service shall be maintained and improved in order to handle the challenges posed by new reforms of teaching and administration in a satisfactory way.
- Closer contact and improved communication between the administration and the undergraduate and Master's students, PhD students and Post-Doctoral fellows, and faculty at the department.
- More efficient and systematic research application processes.
- Integration and interaction with the administration across SAMF.
- Development of a general language policy of the department.



**How shall we achieve our aims of strengthening the administrative service?**

- The department leadership team shall be in regular contact with the administration, scientific staff, and students to promote efficient work-flow and communication between these groups. (Spring 2015)
- We will develop the use of the intranet and other internet-based platforms to promote better communication between the administration and the faculty members and students. (Fall 2015)
- The leadership will work with the administrative research support staff and faculty representatives to improve grant application procedures and implement an efficient internal peer review process. (Spring 2015)
- The leadership will work in collaboration with the other departments to improve knowledge sharing and collaboration across administrations at SAMF. (Spring 2016)
- We will analyze the needs of Danish and English language use in different contexts, such as internal and external communication, teaching, and research, in order to develop a language policy for the Department of Psychology. (Fall 2015)

# STRATEGIC FOCUS POINTS

## 5. Synergy between basic and applied research

Historically, basic and applied areas of psychology have been separated at the University of Copenhagen, both in terms of research and education. The Department of Psychology originated as the merger of two separate departments: the Psychological Laboratory and the Department of Clinical Psychology. There is a strong potential for synergistic effects by expanding the current initiatives to integrate basic and applied approaches both in research and education.

### Aims

- Extended collaboration between applied research areas and basic research areas, where, for example, unsolved applied challenges (e.g. clinical, pedagogical, or organizational) may spur the development of new methods of data collection and analyses of these.
- Development of new advanced basic research methods and their utilization in applied areas. For example, advanced computational models of mental processes and behavior may be used when developing diagnostic tools in applied assessment and treatment.
- Increase the quality of, and strengthen, the interaction between theories, advanced research methods, and applied skills in the psychology education.

### How shall we achieve our aims of creating more synergy between basic and applied research?

- We will support research initiatives both within and between research groups that combine basic and applied research. Likewise, we will support external collaboration on such projects. (Fall 2015)
- We shall support development of new research methods at the department both financially and in our recruitment strategy. (Spring 2016)
- We shall support the development and testing of novel applied methods and the dissemination of these to the psychological profession, e.g. as commercial diagnostic test batteries. (Fall 2016)
- We shall increase integration between courses that focus on basic research and applied research. (Fall 2015)

## 6. Clinical research and education

Clinical research and teaching is essential for the training of our students to become professional psychologists and it is also part of the core vision of the department. The financial organization of the clinical research and teaching at the

department needs to be substantially restructured, due to recent major reductions in internal funding.

#### **Aims**

- Accommodate the new funding situation including the reduction of the internal funding of the clinical program.
- Establishment of externally-funded clinical research centers.
- Retain and develop our status as the leading research and educational institution in Clinical Psychology and Clinical Neuropsychology in Denmark.
- Be a major contributor to postgraduate supplementary training programs.
- Be a major contributor to the postgraduate clinical education, e.g. the Specialist education (specialistuddannelsen) and the Special Psychologist education (specialpsykologuddannelsen).
- Improve talent development and clinical career opportunities for PhD students and Post-Doctoral fellows.
- Strengthen the department's impact on societal initiatives to improve psychological well-being and health in Danish society.

#### **How shall we achieve our aims of advancing clinical research and education?**

- Reorganize the financial structure of clinical research and education at the department in order to accommodate the new funding situation with a major focus on attracting external funding. (Spring 2015)
- Establish contact and partnerships with governmental, regional and municipal health services, hospitals, foundations, etc. to raise funding for new treatment centers and to participate in the postgraduate education programs. (Fall 2015)
- Improve departmental support for existing and new collaborative research projects with external partners in Denmark. (Spring 2015)
- Reorganize and reprioritize the support functions for the clinical research groups. (Spring 2015)
- Seek new external funding for clinical supervision. (Fall 2015)
- Analyze the potential of offering specific one-year Master's education programs within Clinical Psychology. (Fall 2016)
- Explore possibilities for authorization credits for clinical PhD students based on their clinical work during the PhD. (Fall 2015)

### **7. Interdisciplinary research and education**

Psychology by its nature spans into all major research disciplines including the humanities, social sciences, medical sciences, and natural sciences. Major new scientific discoveries are often made at the borders of research disciplines, and psychology occupies a unique position that should be utilized in the pursuit of

ground-breaking discoveries. In addition, many problems in society can only be solved based on interdisciplinary research; thus funding programs are increasingly targeted at interdisciplinary research (e.g. Horizon 2020).

#### **Aims**

- The department shall engage in the development of several interdisciplinary research projects within SAMF and with partners at SUND, SCIENCE, and HUM, as well as with other local universities (e.g. the Danish Technical University).
- Parallel to this, we shall develop and participate in interdisciplinary teaching programs with the other departments at SAMF as well as with the departments of the other faculties at the University of Copenhagen.

#### **How shall we achieve our aims of developing interdisciplinary research and education?**

- We shall continue and expand the number of interdisciplinary courses at SAMF. (Fall 2015)
- Research groups at the department shall participate in research projects with groups at other departments of SAMF (e.g. the Social Fabric project). (Spring 2015)
- We shall develop a Master's and PhD program in Cognitive Neuroscience in collaboration with the departments of Neuroscience and Pharmacology at SUND. (Fall 2015)
- Investigate possibilities for interdisciplinary research and education in the direction of HUM and SCIENCE at the University of Copenhagen. (Spring 2016)

### **8. Internationalization of research and education**

Psychology is a global field and internationalization is essential to increase the impact and quality of the research and education at the department. Contact at many levels with international psychology is necessary to support the department's high levels of scientific ambition. The department has been progressing well in this direction, and we aim to further strengthen this development.

#### **Aims**

- Strong and numerous collaborations with internationally leading researchers and departments abroad.
- Recruitment of excellent researchers with a focus on high publication quality and productivity, international research experience, and first-rate teaching abilities of direct relevance to our education.
- An increase in the number of high-level international publications.
- An increased number of foreign students taking courses at our department. An increased number of our own students who study abroad.

### **How shall we achieve our aims of increased internationalization of research and education?**

- Implementation of an invited speakers program with internationally leading researchers. (Spring 2015)
- Funding of PhD and Post-Doctoral scholarships for longer stays abroad (6-12 months). (Fall 2015)
- Exchange sabbaticals for researchers at the department and for visiting professors. (Spring 2016)
- Explicit supervision of junior and senior faculty members on international career opportunities and help with international placement for PhD students and Post-Doctoral fellows. (Spring 2016)
- More courses taught in English and an increase in the usage of English at department meetings, information materials, intranet, etc. (Fall 2016)

## **9. Internal relations and Leadership**

An assertive, transparent and dialogue-based leadership is essential for the creation of optimal conditions for a modern research and teaching environment, as well as for the efficient implementation of the strategy of the department. To handle this, as well as the changing external demands on the department, continued leadership training is critical.

### **Aims**

- Better and more visible leadership and intensified leadership training including research leaders.
- Transparent communication of strategic and financial decisions to the faculty and administrative staff.
- An organization with research section coordinators who collaborate with the department leadership team.
- Better organization and implementation of the Performance and Development Review (PDR; MUS).
- Improved work environment and job satisfaction.

### **How shall we achieve our aims of improved leadership?**

- Participation of the leadership in LUKU 1 for individuals, LUKU 2 for the department leadership team, and in LUKU 3 for research leaders<sup>3</sup> as well as other leadership courses given by external organizations. (Fall 2015)
- Department head has PDR with faculty members and Post-Doctoral fellows. The PhD program director has PDR with PhD students, assisted by 1-2 other senior faculty members. (Spring 2015)

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<sup>3</sup> LUKU1-3 is the University of Copenhagen internal leadership training program.

- Continued focus on the work environment and initiatives to improve this, based on the annual work environment reports (APV) and other feedback from staff. (Spring 2015)
- Support of initiatives that promote social interaction within the department (e.g. informal weekly tea and coffee gatherings, summer and winter lunches, art clubs, etc.). (Spring 2015)
- Implementation of good meeting practices, e.g. at department faculty meetings. (Spring 2015)
- Regular and transparent communication of strategic decisions and department budget to the faculty members. (Fall 2015)
- Establishment of an external scientific advisory board of research and education. (Fall 2015)
- Annual seminars for the faculty, Post-Doctoral fellows and PhD students, together with administrative staff. (Fall 2015)