



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
AARHUS UNIVERSITY



# Aarhus BSS Strategy 2017-2020



A broad  
**business  
school**  
within  
Aarhus  
University

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# Introduction

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 conducting high-impact research within and across traditional fields of business and social sciences and offering research-based degree programmes in a broad business school setting constructed to meet the highest international standards.

We strive for excellence by staying ahead of our peers as contributors of the future workforce to the ever changing global communities. The school's efforts to achieve its mission and vision are guided by a clear set of goals and actions carefully aligned with the broader strategic goals of Aarhus University within research, education, talent development and knowledge exchange.

## Aarhus BSS mission

To be a quality-driven 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.

## 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, interpersonal skills and knowledge of legal, political, financial and societal issues on an international level. At Aarhus BSS, we bring business and social science disciplines together in a broad business school – a term we use to signal that we place business education in a broader perspective by letting it thrive and prosper alongside strong, core fields of psychology, political science and law. Housing all of these disciplines under our broad umbrella enables us to create the foundation for the welfare of society and provide students and faculty with ample opportunities to meet, work side by side, and initiate relevant interdisciplinary collaboration between e.g. business and politics, business and technology, business and law and business and psychology.

Academic freedom is a core value underlying the research and teaching activities at the school, and collaboration and dialogue are facilitated across academic, organisational and geographical boundaries. By providing an outstanding research and teaching environment, we promote the overall academic objectives of the school where excellence is key, and we give our students a solid return on

investment for choosing a degree from Aarhus BSS. Only by further strengthening and investing in all of our core disciplines are we able to take the lead in delivering first-class research and education for the benefit of our stakeholders. Therefore, we will continue to support and improve the conditions for our students, faculty and staff through delivering graduates and research that make a significant impact on the growth and welfare of society.





Our strategic priorities for 2017-2020 are rooted in four mutually interrelated 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. 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 the leading, internationally accredited educational institutions in Europe. Our professional administrative staff will play an important role in this endeavour by 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.



## 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. This means that research is integrated into the teaching with the aim of strengthening students' learning by presenting state-of-the-art research methods and turning new knowledge into hands-on solutions for real-life situations.

We will further 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 evaluations and development of the school's course and programme portfolio. By doing this, we can 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. Specific attention will be paid to ensuring the best possible conditions for further developing the talents of each individual student and challenging each of them to rise to their full potential during their time of study. Consequently, we will provide our students

with deeper knowledge and broader understanding of 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

- 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 the focus on innovative, effective and student-based learning activities and competence building aligned with learning goals at course and programme level.
- Ensure a high level of qualifications at entry by attracting top-end students to our degree programmes and by supporting students in identifying the proper educational path for their interests.
- Strengthen the research core in our academic offerings and exploit relevant research interdisciplinarity in education within and across social science and business disciplines.

## Metric for Success

Our performance will be measured by high employment and remuneration rates of Aarhus BSS' graduates relative to national and international levels, our ability to attract talented students with high

qualifications, alignment between learning objectives and competences, satisfactory student retention rates, as well as positive results in study and teaching environment surveys.









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.







# 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 increase the number of cutting-edge research areas within the school and in interdisciplinary collaboration between the school's core disciplines. 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 increase the number 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, and focus on maintaining favourable work conditions and a good working environment for our researchers.

## 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 and engage in public and private organisations as a means to raise and intervene in complex issues and make research findings widely known and acted upon.

## Metric for Success

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

## International Outlook

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

With an aim to position Aarhus BSS among the international elite and maintain an edge in a highly competitive market for higher education, we must create optimal conditions for students and faculty to interact across nationalities and cultures in inspiring and challenging learning and teaching environments. Moreover, we must maintain and further develop transparent, internationally competitive degree programmes and researcher career paths in a way that will advance the recruitment and retention of highly talented students and researchers.

Since different aspects of mobility are becoming increasingly important to graduates and faculty today, increased international collaboration in research and education 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, faculty and students, conduct benchmarking and develop collaborative 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 as well as the students' global and intercultural competences.
- Increase our strategic collaboration and exchange of students and faculty 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 the ability to attract highly qualified international students and faculty, the ability to place students, graduates and faculty at other distinguished academic institutions on exchange, research stays and sabbaticals, and by the number of international co-publications.







We strive for **excellence by staying ahead of our peers** as contributors of the future workforce to the ever changing global communities.







## 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.**

Aarhus BSS collaborates with many different organisations on numerous research and education initiatives across our broad academic scope. This manifests itself through a wide range of public, corporate, institutional, governmental and professional contacts, spanning across industries and organisational levels.

We will focus on further strengthening these relations through 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. Continuous dialogue with external stakeholders will ensure that our degree programmes, research projects and services rendered to society remain relevant, adaptable to change and can develop in tandem with society's needs and expectations.



## Actions

- Foster and extend our networks across government, industry, media, civic organisations and other knowledge partners to strengthen employee recruitment and retention and to promote employment prospects for graduates.
- Interact with public and private organisations to put research into practice and practice back into research and education.
- Strengthen the academic quality, scope and relevance of internships and student-related activities aimed at companies and organisations.
- Expand our offerings of short, tailored continuing education courses and programmes.
- Build on the strengths of existing alumni relations and exploit the opportunities of increased alumni engagement.

## Metric for success

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





## Implementation

The alignment, coordination and implementation of the strategy 2017-2020 throughout the organisation will be realised through cross-organisational management focus, involvement from all levels of the organisation, annual priorities and target setting, action plans and progress reviews. In respect of field differences, the strategic goals will be realised through specific action plans drawn up within the departments. Performance in each action will be monitored and measured throughout the strategy period so that necessary means can be taken and resources allocated to progress in accordance with the strategic priorities.







