

DPU STRATEGY 2025

Danish School of Education (DPU),
Aarhus University



DANISH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
AARHUS UNIVERSITY

PREFACE

It is our ambition that the Danish School of Education (DPU) will become an attractive powerhouse at the forefront of research and teaching within the field of education and pedagogy – with an international outlook and of an international standard. This ambition will be realised by offering research-based degree programmes. By conducting research focused on pressing issues, whether theoretical, methodological or empirical. And through DPU's participation in partnerships that generate value in the broadest sense - with public sector institutions, civil society and private businesses.

High quality teaching and education are of crucial importance, both for the individual and for society. This constantly places DPU in a central role and presents a wide array of new and exacting expectations. DPU meets these expectations by conducting research and teaching activities within various disciplines, in cross-disciplinary initiatives and by applying a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches.

On this basis, DPU contributes to the identification of societal challenges and their solutions, and thereby to Aarhus University's vision of creating value for the Danish and global society. This is a contribution that supports an enlightened democracy and a sustainable future, as well as helping to qualify the pedagogical professions and educational activities and approaches within Danish society.

At the launch of Strategy 2025, DPU has strengthened its profile within research and education; building on this foundation, ensuring a balance between continuity and innovation across DPU's activities and tasks is a specific strategic goal. This means that DPU will continue its efforts to develop and strengthen its international research profile. It likewise entails a renewed focus on efforts to develop DPU's degree programmes during the period covered by the strategy. Furthermore, it means that, during the period 2020-2025, DPU will address pressing issues such as sustainability, diversity and climate change, as well as instructional practices and learning strategies supporting the use of digital learning platforms. Finally, it is key that the balance between continuity and innovation helps ensure an attractive working environment for employees.

FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

As part of Aarhus University, DPU's activities are rooted in the University Act, the Magna Charta of the European Universities and the university's overall strategy. This results in the following values at DPU:

- Autonomy and freedom within research and education
- Research and education of the highest scientific quality
- An international outlook, perspective and standards
- Open dialogue, tolerance and diversity as the very foundation of the school's activities
- Responsibility for the development of an enlightened, democratic and sustainable society.

These values form the foundation for the vision and mission that DPU will pursue during the period 2020-2025.

VISION AND MISSION

DPU's vision is to continue to strive to become an attractive powerhouse at the forefront of international research and teaching within the field of education and pedagogy. This vision will be realised through a mission outlining goals and actions within the school's core activities:

- Research
- Education
- Organisational development and a supportive working environment
- Dissemination
- Collaboration

Goals and activities for research, education and organisational development are detailed in three specific sections below, while dissemination and collaboration are transversal activities, and are embedded in each of these three sections.

PHOTO: HENRIK GROTH



RESEARCH

The Danish School of Education is home to a research environment with an increasingly international orientation characterised by a diverse array of theoretical and methodological approaches within the field of education and pedagogy. As we begin the strategy period 2020-2025, DPU has significantly raised its international profile and strengthened its reputation. Since 2017, DPU has been placed 51-100 in the QS World University Ranking for Education.

At the national level, DPU is a significant player, especially as a major supplier of graduates to the Danish university colleges. DPU attracts a high and stable level of external funding, both in the form of grants based on researchers' own original ideas and those tied to public sector consultancy.

During the strategy period 2020-2025, DPU will continue to consolidate its status as a strong research environment that promotes and drives innovation in identifying and resolving challenges within the field of education and pedagogy, as well as contributing to original and experimental research that challenges and promotes the development of educational theories, methods and practices.

On this basis, *the overall goals* for the school's research are:

1. To continue to strengthen as an independent and internationally oriented research environment.
2. To strengthen and support collaboration between researchers and their prioritisation of particular research initiatives.
3. To recruit the most talented doctoral students and junior researchers.
4. To disseminate - and collaborate on applications of - the school's research.

These overall goals are pursued through the following *initiatives*, which, both individually and taken as a whole, address and help achieve the objectives:

1. DPU will provide a framework for developing research initiatives:
 - By regularly giving priority to, shaping and supporting 5-10 cross-disciplinary short-term research initiatives addressing current and future challenges. The focus could be on societal issues, educational policy, empirical or theoretical quandaries, or challenges related to professional and institutional practice.
 - By, and as part of Aarhus University's framework contract with the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, continuing to establish and develop strategic partnerships and initiatives within the 0-18 sector in collaboration with other universities, university colleges, large private businesses, government ministries and municipal authorities.
 - By evaluating and developing management styles, organisational structures and ways of working that best support the school's research activities; both those focused on a single discipline and cross-disciplinary approaches. Evaluation will be conducted as part of the evaluation of the existing research programmes and research centres late 2020/early 2021 and the evaluation of the *focus on research* initiative, as described below.
2. DPU will continue to develop and support both the independent work of individual researchers and collaboration among researchers focused on increasing levels of external research funding, including at the international level. To this end, DPU's *focus on research* initiative outlines the following three-pronged approach:
 - By developing the culture surrounding research applications and research support at DPU.
 - By establishing new research communities – both internal and external.
 - By refining research management practices.
3. DPU will strive to compete internationally in recruiting the most talented doctoral students and junior researchers in order to gain a greater balance between junior and senior researchers at the school.
4. DPU will develop national and international collaboration and dissemination activities through the following initiatives:
 - By contributing to a stronger educational public sphere, to public sector consultancy supporting an enlightened democracy and to high quality educational practice.
 - By developing and expanding the use of different modes of collaboration and partnership agreements – with other departments at Aarhus University, and with other Danish universities and university colleges, ministries and municipalities as well as public and private enterprises. This includes the establishment of academies, networks, the publication of and col-

laboration on a series of research overviews (under the title *Pædagogisk indblik*) etc.

- By further strengthening international relations through increased collaboration with foreign universities and researchers, including the affiliation of leading international researchers as honorary professors, making greater use of Erasmus agreements, and increasing participation in international research projects and networks.



EDUCATION

The Danish School of Education has a strong, attractive educational profile, with high numbers of applicants to its degree programmes and graduates in high demand. The degree programmes at DPU are characterised by a high academic level, cross-disciplinarity and a focus on linking theoretical knowledge to real-world issues.

During the strategy period 2020-2025, DPU will continue to focus on improving the framework for supporting and strengthening students' academic skills and knowledge, as well as their well-being and the general study environment. This also involves a more focused effort to experiment with new forms of learning based on ambitious pedagogical and instructional goals and using digital technologies and platforms in teaching, when it makes sense to do so.

At the same time, DPU will regularly compile ideas for developing and refreshing the school's range of programmes and courses at all levels, addressing the needs for competence development within the field of education and pedagogy, as well as in relation to new technologies, sustainability, diversity, educational theory and curriculum studies, globalisation etc. DPU will likewise work towards an internationalisation of its degree programmes and the re-establishment of an internationally oriented English-language programme should the possibility arise.

DPU continually adapts its range of further and supplementary programmes and courses, including professional master's degree programmes, to address current labour market needs and challenges.

In an overall perspective, DPU offers a unique, popular and relevant range of courses and degree programmes within the field of education and pedagogy, with ambitions to further improve the quality of these programmes through a dialogue with both students and employers.

On this basis, *the overall goals* for the school's degree programmes are:

1. To strengthen and support students' academic skills and knowledge by developing DPU's educational practice and ideals.
2. To increasingly develop DPU as a laboratory for experimenting with higher education pedagogies, instructional methods and teaching strategies, establishing a framework for research-informed and experimental applications of Educational IT (EDU IT) and other new teaching formats.
3. To ensure and strengthen the relevance of DPU's degree programmes for employers and society in general.

These overall goals are pursued through the following *initiatives*:

1. DPU will enhance and support students' academic skills and knowledge by developing the school's educational practice and ideals through the following initiatives:
 - By further qualifying the introductory period for new students, including their development of academic literacy.
 - By supporting students' participation in activities that develop their professional and academic competences, including study groups, individual study and taking part in research activities.
 - By continuing to work systematically to realise the ambitious goals concerning the study environment at DPU.
 - By exploring the possibilities for a further internationalisation of the school's degree programmes benefitting the entire student body.
2. DPU will qualify and develop experimental teaching practices through the following initiatives:
 - By systematically developing and/or applying research-based knowledge to organise teaching on the basis of well-founded instructional and pedagogical methods that allow experimental and innovative courses and instructional approaches. This will include experimental approaches seeking to determine how educational theories and instructional methods and strategies can qualify the use of various digital learning platforms and technologies.
 - By working closely with teaching staff to experiment with and apply theory-informed and research-based development of teaching and supervision methods. This includes support in making use of relevant competence development programmes.
3. DPU will strengthen and clearly communicate the relevance of DPU's degree programmes for employers and society in general through the following initiatives:
 - By increasing dissemination activities regarding the content, level and relevance of the school's degree programmes, including how graduates' critical and creative abilities can help in solving existing and new real-world problems.
 - By actively involving students, alumni and specific employers – from both the public and private sectors – in the development of certain educational activities, including case competitions, in-company student projects etc.
 - By launching and trialling a new range of professional master's programmes as well as further and supplementary programmes and courses in 2020 and 2021, representing both a redesign of DPU's professional master's degree programmes and the development of new forms and formats for further and supplementary programmes and courses.

ORGANISATION

DPU wants to provide an attractive international research, teaching and study environment for all employees and students. This is both a goal in itself and a prerequisite for achieving the various strategic objectives for research and education.

Based on the workplace assessment survey, the school management team will be strongly focused on measures that help to establish a balance between time and tasks in order to prevent stress and overburdening of employees. In addition, it is necessary to protect DPU as an academic institution characterised by academic pluralism, a respectful tone and diversity in the broadest sense of the word. There will be a focus on ensuring academic cohesion and integration of activities across the school's campuses in Aarhus and Copenhagen. Initiatives focused on student well-being and an attractive study environment are outlined in the above section on education.

Aarhus University's strategy highlights the need to place sustainability, diversity and climate change on the agenda. DPU will engage with and take action on these issues during the strategy period.

To strengthen the school's attractiveness as a framework for employees' working lives and students engagement in their studies, the *overall objectives* during the strategy period 2020-2025 are:

1. To continue to improve the match between tasks and resources. The ideals are fairness and flexibility.
2. To continue to develop an attractive physical and psychosocial work environment characterised by opportunities to participate in academic communities and space for individual study. The ideals are integration and academic well-being.
3. To protect academic pluralism, diversity and a respectful tone among peers. The ideal is DPU as a diverse university school.
4. To continue to work with competence and career development in a way that takes into account DPU's research and educational profile. The ideals are academic well-being and development.

These overall goals are pursued through the following *initiatives*, which, both individually and taken as a whole, address and help achieve the objectives:

1. By following up on the workplace assessment survey, systematically working with the tasks identified in the agreed action plan.
2. By campus development creating attractive surroundings for research, teaching and study activities, including the establishment and development of sustainable meeting places, both physical and digital/virtual.
3. By compiling a local climate and sustainability strategy outlining local measures at DPU based on Aarhus University's climate strategy.
4. By the management team's focus on needs and opportunities for career and competence development, and a focus on possibilities for creating organisational diversity.



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