



STRATEGY 2017 - 2021

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to outline the main strategy for the development of the School of Business, Economics and Law at the University of Gothenburg (the School) for the period 2017–2021. It builds on the existing strategy that has been implemented since 2012. That strategy has guided the School along a number of clear paths for development:

- Continuous development of quality in research and education
- Integration of sustainability perspectives in all study programmes
- A closer link between research and education
- Increased focus on societal engagement in research and education
- A more structured and entrenched internationalization of our operations

It is now time to take further strategic steps in the School's development. This revised strategy will push us further in the direction we are moving in, taking into account contemporary changes in the societal context we are operating in. The present document is in full concordance with the strategy of the University of Gothenburg, Vision 2020, and thus constitutes a means for the School to contribute to the mission and vision of the University.

It is important to stress that this document is written in a rather general manner; it outlines targeted areas in which we want to be active in the next five years. Thus, this general plan both allows for and should be accompanied by plans for each individual department as well as annual action plans at the School level.

Finally, it should be noted that linked to this strategy is the introduction of a set of key performance indicators that will be used systematically to follow up our development at

both School and department level.

This document has been discussed and developed in the following settings:

- The Faculty Board
- The Heads of Departments
- Circulation for consideration by the departments, units and the Student Association
- The Corporate Advisory Board
- The International Academic Advisory Council
- The University of Gothenburg's management team

It is structured in three sections:

Section A presents and elaborates the School's mission and vision statements. Section B sets out the strategic objectives for our core activities research and education. The last section, Section C, defines the strategic objectives for the contextual support that is necessary in order to attain the aims for our core activities.

SECTION A

OUR MISSION AND VISION

MISSION

To develop knowledge, educate, and foster independent thinking for the advancement of organizations, policy and a sustainable world

VISION

To be internationally respected as an excellent and progressive academic institution.

A1. MAKING THE MISSION CONCRETE

In 2016, the School adopted the following mission statement:

To develop knowledge, educate, and foster independent thinking for the advancement of organizations, policy and a sustainable world

This statement captures the essence of our existence as an academic institution and is well suited to guide our endeavour to contribute to the advancement of society in general. However, in order to make it meaningful to our School, the content of its various elements needs to be elaborated.

Developing knowledge and disseminating it through education for the development of society are core activities of any serious academic institution. Thus, our mission statement implies the paramount importance of a close relationship between research and education. We see this relationship as a prerequisite for attaining excellence in both of these two core activities.

From this follows that it is our ambition to convey to our students the academic ideal of independent, critical and innovative thinking and to provide them with the intellectual tools necessary to challenge prevailing notions and be able to formulate new solutions to problems they are confronted with.

Moreover, our School's research and education have a clear purpose: to make an impact and thus contribute to the advancement of society at large. This presupposes an active engagement in contemporary societal development and close collaboration with the surrounding society. In this context, we act on problems facing the world today, whether it is environmental degradation, migratory flows, social exclusion, the stress of an ageing population on the public budget, the vulnerability of political and financial systems, the distribution and redistribution of resources, or fundamental structural changes accruing from technological development. We have a responsibility, both collectively and individually, that is taken into account in all our activities and carefully conveyed to our students. The school should be at the international forefront of integrating sustainable development in education and of producing research that can inform policy-makers and businesses in their handling of societal challenges. These challenges should, in both research and education, be analysed with the most appropriate academic tools available, which often involve cross-disciplinary approaches. Thus, we consider it to be important assets that our School includes a broad set of academic disciplines and that we constitute a part of a comprehensive university.

Lastly, it should be emphasized that our mission does not stop at the national or regional borders; rather, it includes a

globalist approach characterized by international exchange and cooperation. This requires that all our activities are continuously developed and improved in order to meet high international academic standards. Moreover, our success as an academic institution largely relies on our ability to attract the best staff and students in an international context. We shall therefore promote the development of an open, multifaceted, tolerant and thereby attractive academic environment at our campus in Gothenburg.

A.2 THE VISION

The fulfilment of our mission is directly linked to the attainment of our vision:

To be internationally respected as an excellent and progressive academic institution.

This vision focuses on how other academic institutions and society at large perceive us and how we want to be perceived, globally and locally. There should be no discrepancy between these two perspectives. Respect has to be earned and must build on our performance as an academic institution. The vision spells out the basis on which we want to earn respect: academic excellence and continuous innovative development in research and education. Thus, fulfilling our mission is the only credible way to attain our vision.

A3. TOGETHER WE SHAPE OUR IDENTITY

The research and education at the School build on and benefit from a shared, strong identity that supports the ability of the School to attract the best students, the most qualified academic staff, the best partners and sufficient external funding. The School's identity thereby depends on our continuous development to fulfil our mission.

The image of the School is primarily shaped by the activities, actions and meetings that the School's staff and students create and take part in every day – the students' experiences in the lecture halls, their preparedness for entering

the job market and their subsequent professional success, the faculty's participation in research projects, and the contacts with companies and organizations, just to give some examples. Communication and marketing are important complementary tools in the work to attain the School's vision. In this work, staff, students, alumni and partners are important ambassadors and prioritized target groups.

Our brand, *the School of Business, Economics and Law at the University of Gothenburg*, shall communicate a strong and clear message in terms of common identity and core values. These values include striving for obtaining the highest scientific quality in our core activities, for social responsibility, openness and curiosity and for the promotion of key academic ideals such as independent and critical thinking among both staff and students. We also want the School to be legitimately perceived as responsible, curious, engaged, modern, progressive and open-minded with high integrity. We encourage staff and students to question conventional wisdom, and we consider a sound heterogeneity of opinions, regarding e.g. political values and views on scientific methodology, to be an important asset.

The mission and vision, as well as this strategy document, constitute instruments for building a shared view of the School. Together, they create a platform and give direction that each individual in our organization can make use of in their everyday work.

SECTION B

THE CORE: RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

B1. RESEARCH

More than a decade ago, the School, in particular in the areas of business and law, started a transition from being a predominantly teaching-oriented institution to becoming an institution where high-quality research and high-quality education are of equal weight and importance. This transition process will continue over the next five years.

The importance of research culture

A strong research culture is an important facilitator of becoming an internationally leading research institution, as suggested by a great deal of evidence. Such a culture is characterized by:

- being curiosity driven and cooperative, and having senior researchers help, support and guide more junior researchers,
- being constructively critical, such that ideas, methodologies and propositions are systematically questioned and criticized based on scientific arguments,
- taking large responsibility in the scientific community with respect to important tasks such as editorship, serving on editorial and research boards and carrying out evaluations and referee assignments, and
- always striving for the highest possible quality.

With respect to the last point, it is at present a priority of the School to further increase research quality rather than quantity.¹ A strong research culture is also an important means to limit, and ideally eliminate, suboptimal behaviour of individuals or departments in response to incentive-based systems (including the ones adopted by the School).

Promoting high-quality research

In order to further increase our production of influential high-quality research published in leading academic journals and by the most respected publishers, the main strategy is to support organic growth in research. Thus, we shall promote an environment that particularly encourages and supports strong research groups to reach the highest international standard. The individual departments have the main responsibility for achieving this, e.g. through strategic decisions regarding recruitments and policies.

The School management should support this in close dialogues with the departments, by providing arenas for sharing of ideas between the departments, by providing detailed bibliometric support concerning the development over time, by providing such information for competing schools to facilitate effective benchmarking and by encouraging and supporting corresponding comparisons at department level. The School should also support, and work together with, the departments in order to increase the level of external research funding.

Increased research cooperation with internationally leading researchers should be supported by both the departments and the School. The latter should primarily focus on quality issues when it comes to various initiatives that support international cooperation. The School should moreover work actively to receive sufficient funding to maintain a permanent visiting professor programme.

Providing sufficient research breadth

The departments should also strive for sufficient breadth of research, in order to ensure high teaching competence for the broad set of courses that the school provides. This does not mean that we should strive to conduct active research in

¹ This does of course not mean that high quantity is always associated with low quality and vice versa. Many world-leading research institutions (and researchers) indeed produce a large amount of research of excellent quality. Nevertheless, there is at present a priority of the School to increase its research quality rather than quantity.

all sub-disciplines in which the School provides education. Instead, the key is to have teachers who are also active researchers and who have the ability to understand and discuss leading research relevant for each course, including research outside the teacher's own area. Yet, while the school cannot conduct research on every subject taught it is important to have research capacity in the School's core academic areas, including methodological expertise. It is also essential to have a good mix of more fundamental research, including development of research methods, and more applied research. The latter is particularly important in some fields, such as research on Swedish accounting standards and Swedish tax laws, in which it is sometimes also important to be able to conduct research in Swedish in order to make a real impact. Moreover, evidence suggests that there are often positive synergy effects between different kinds of research. Having access to methodological expertise can often largely increase the quality of more applied research, whereas closeness to more applied researchers can increase the relevance and quality of more methodologically oriented research. The School should support this in close dialogue with the departments.

Close relations with the surrounding society and the role of research centres

Close relations with the surrounding society are important since they often increase the quality and relevance of the research produced. In addition, they help increase the societal value and impact of the research. Just as the School aims for increased research quality, it aims for improved social impact, of which effective research dissemination is an important element. The latter can take several forms, including production of popular science articles, summarizing important development in research fields for a broader audience in media and professional organizations, giving public lectures, advising and having close dialogues with private and public organizations, and contributing in various ways to public inquiries and policy development.

Close relations with the surrounding society are im-

portant for all of the School's departments and units, and its multidisciplinary research centres should continue to have a particularly important role in relation to our ambition to maintain and develop said relations. Another important role of these research centres is to produce challenge-driven multidisciplinary research of high quality and relevance, and as such constructively deal with current issues for individuals, private and public organizations, and society in general. The research centres are highly flexible and temporary constructions without any employed staff. They will continue to be encouraged and supported by the School, as long as they fulfil their mission and provide a sufficient amount of value added given their costs and staff resources. In order to ensure this, they shall undergo external evaluation at regular intervals, and correspondingly be closed when their existence can no longer be justified in terms of their value added.

Moreover, the School's unit for external relations shall continue to provide an essential framework for developing and maintaining strong links with partners in the private and public sectors.

Research priorities

Research priorities shall continue to be based primarily on bottom-up processes, where individual researchers decide what to analyse and the bulk of the governmental research funding is distributed to the departments. To the extent that the School prioritizes, the focus shall be on research that, in addition to being of high quality, relates to the nexus between

- Sustainability
- Globalization in terms of both focus and outreach
- High societal relevance.

Such priorities by the School refer primarily to support for new research centres and co-funding of larger research initiatives.

Overall, the most prioritized objective concerning re-

search for the period 2017–2021 is to further increase the quality of the School’s research, the development of which should be visible in various indicators, such as level 2 of the so-called Norwegian list², levels 3, 4 and 4* of the *British Chartered Association of Business Schools’ Academic Journal Guide*³ (henceforth the British ABS system), or any other system or list that is suitable for a department or research area.

The recruitment and promotion policy is an essential element in order to fulfil this objective; see further below under C3. Increased external research funding is another such element. Yet, while increased external funding is important, it is also important to be selective in relation to the available sources in order to ensure that the conditions for funding are compatible with high-quality research. The main responsibility for expanding external funding, and for the corresponding prioritizations, lies with the departments, with the continuous and active support of the School.

KPIs for research

Key performance indicators (KPIs) should ideally be straightforward to measure, and they should also give reasonably good indications of whether we are improving over time in strategically important dimensions. At the same time, we have to remember that they do not measure everything of importance.

In terms of publications, the School already collects information based on the Norwegian list as well as the British ABS system, and it is therefore natural to measure the development of publications in higher-quality segments in these bibliometric systems.

Moreover, these journal rankings are typically based on *average* citations of papers published in the journals; they say little about the academic impact of *individual* papers. It is therefore natural to supplement such measures with citations of the School’s output actually produced. While all available citation measures have innate problems, the broadest one available, and as such the one which best cover the

academic publications of the School, appears to be the Google Scholar measure.

While, as mentioned, increased research cooperation with internationally leading researchers and top research institutions is of key importance on the path to increased research quality, the magnitude of such cooperation is non-trivial to measure. Yet, the overall amount of research cooperation with researchers outside the School, while not a perfect indicator, is quite straightforward to measure. Another indicator of successful research is the size of external funding, given the highly competitive landscape for research funding.

Thus, as KPIs for research quality, the School will continuously measure and annually report:

- Overall publications of books and journal articles at level 2 of the Norwegian list.
- Publications of journal articles at levels 3, 4 and 4*, respectively, of the British ABS system.
- Books and journal articles included in the categories above co-authored with researchers outside the School.
- Google scholar citations.
- External research funding.

In line with the overall goal of further increasing research quality over time, the ambition is that the KPIs, which will be followed carefully, will increase over time.

B2. EDUCATION AND TEACHING

The School provides education in the fields of business, economics and law, taking historical and geographical perspectives into account. Societal structures are primarily formed through social, political, legal and economic systems, and the School’s disciplines mainly cover two of these systems. The fact that the School’s students are future decision-makers within these systems implies a strong importance of our teaching for future societal development. The primary impact of the School can be found in the work done by its alumni. The School therefore emphasizes the

² <https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringsskanaler/Forside>

³ <https://charteredabs.org/academic-journal-guide-2015/>

great responsibility we have to equip students with the knowledge and tools they will need to be able to contribute to a sustainable and inclusive society.

School-level teaching objectives

The School's unique combination of business, economics and law enables it to offer high-quality law courses in the business and economics programmes and high-quality business and economics courses in the law programme. In addition, being part of a large comprehensive university facilitates interaction with other faculties in a wide range of disciplines. The resources available for interdisciplinary approaches should be further utilized where appropriate in order to strengthen our academic programmes.

All teaching at the School shall be based on research. A close link between teaching and research – through staff involved in both activities – gives two distinct benefits. First, it ensures currency of knowledge in courses and among staff. Second, it allows for a scientific mind-set, including systematic *critical and independent thinking* and rigor in arguments. Instilling critical and independent thinking in students is essential to the School. Once they have questioned arguments presented to them, they should also be able to formulate their own rigorous arguments, based on facts, logic and values. In the fields of business and economics, less so in law, this points to the importance of providing students with tools for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. While all education is based on research, it is essential that teaching staff make research relevant to students. This can be done e.g. by systematically relating it to practice.

Engagement with practice is an essential feature of all education at the School. External partners are involved in programme and curriculum development. Students are exposed to practice-oriented cases as well as practitioner presentations in class. In such engagement, there should be an appropriate balance between the private and public sectors.

We will ensure that more than 90% of the teaching is performed by staff with a long-term commitment to the

School. Most teaching should be provided by teachers who are active in research. In order to meet the School's objectives for engagement with practice, teaching staff with knowledge from practice should also participate in all study programmes. We recognize that in order to reach the objectives of currency of knowledge in all disciplines, it is necessary to go beyond general measures of staff qualifications. We will therefore conduct a systematic review of the actual topical alignment between staff specialization and course content.

Technological development, in particular relating to the applications of information technology, shall be reflected in both the content of the curriculum and the development of pedagogical approaches.

To further strengthen engagement with practice within programme curricula, the aim is to implement a policy with the following characteristics by 2021.

- Bachelor's and master's programmes should be developed in a structured dialogue with partners from practice.
- A systematic structure for practice-related curriculum content in programmes.
- A systematic structure for further integration of sustainability-related curriculum content (including progression between courses).

In addition to integrating sustainability perspectives into existing courses, we aim to strengthen the curriculum also in other ways, particularly in the area of global challenges.

Graduates of the School must – as future decision-makers – understand the concept of *responsibility*. While we shall not tell students how they should act in a specific situation, we shall provide tools for their thinking and reflection on responsibility. The ability to see one's own role in a larger context is an essential aspect of responsibility. We do this e.g. through continuous integration of sustainability perspectives in all study programmes (see Section C1).

The School gives the students an *international* perspective (see section C2) in order to increase their capacity as future

decision-makers in a globalized world. This is achieved through curriculum content and international student exchanges. In addition, a substantial number of international free-movers are expected to enrol in the study programmes offered in English. Our objective is to both make curriculum content more international and increase the number of international free-movers.

Effectiveness in teaching

Effectiveness in teaching is a continuous improvement objective. It is supported by the introduction of the academic title Excellent Teacher and the University of Gothenburg's Pedagogical Ideas Programme. Student-centred learning is an essential concept in this programme. Our interpretation of this is e.g. that we must recognize each student as an individual and not as a representative of a group. This is related to two absolutes, i.e. that no student is discriminated against and all students are treated equally. We ensure that students meet an open and tolerant study environment.

We will develop a policy for how the School centrally (as opposed to departments and study programmes) will work with effectiveness in and development of teaching. Though most development is carried out locally at the departments, the School management supports the development through teaching conferences and by facilitating exchange of ideas between departments. In the 2017–2021 period, the School will arrange a seminar series on pedagogical development, where teaching staff can inspire each other across disciplines.

As for the construction of new facilities, we will systematically assess physical needs relating to the development of teaching methods and modes for increased interactivity in the learning process (see Section C5). The potential for a new learning environment offered by the future facilities implies added opportunities for pedagogical development.

Programme portfolio and curriculum content

The School provides programmes at three levels: bachelor's, master's and doctoral. The basic structure is three years of bachelor's, two years of master's and four years of doctoral

studies. There are some exceptions to this:

- Degrees related to professional regulatory requirements. This applies to lawyers and certified public accountants.
- Structures that facilitate engagement with practice. This applies e.g. to the Executive MBA programme.

All bachelor's programmes and the Master of Laws programme currently require a high proficiency in Swedish. The possibilities for an English-language bachelor's programme in business and economics will be assessed, and a programme may be launched, in the 2017–2021 period. This will expand the student recruitment base.

The two-year MSc programmes in business and economics are offered entirely in English and are organized within a special unit, the Graduate School. The rationale for having a special unit is to gain synergies from our variety of disciplines and competencies. The Graduate School welcomes both international free-movers and Swedish students, and thereby offers a valuable international learning environment. In addition to the existing programmes, the School aims to establish a 2-year master's programme in law in the period 2017–2021.

As part of our ambition to offer programmes at all academic levels and contribute to lifelong learning, the School offers an Executive MBA programme. This part-time post-experience programme targets active professionals and is delivered by School teaching staff through the GU School of Executive Education. The Executive MBA programme is an important integrated part of our programme portfolio. It provides opportunities for lifelong learning, stimulates research and pedagogical development and strengthens the link between the School and its corporate partners.

The School is involved in several joint study programmes with other schools/faculties at the University of Gothenburg. These programmes benefit from the wide range of disciplines at the University. If deemed appropriate, the number of such programmes will be increased over time.

The PhD programmes are the highest, most demanding

and by far the most expensive programmes offered by the School. As such, they constitute elite education for a small group of students, typically admitted in fierce competition. The programmes are organized by the departments under supervision by the School, with each of the four departments offering at least one doctoral programme. Since provision of PhD education is a core task of the School, continuous improvement of the quality is essential. The aim to further increase quality at the School's PhD education largely parallels the quest for increased research quality, as PhD education is closely related to the research conducted in each department. Since the PhD programmes also prepare doctoral students for contributions in the surrounding society outside academia, the development of more generic skills is also important.

Important quality assurance measures have recently been implemented in each PhD programme. For example, effective measures have been taken to increase transparency in admissions to the programmes, which has substantially increased the competition for enrolment and the fraction of non-Swedish PhD students. The specific remaining challenges differ between the programmes. For example, smaller programmes/disciplines have to rely on good cooperation with other PhD programmes in the same discipline, in Sweden and abroad, in order to ensure high-quality courses and PhD supervision at the research frontier. Overall, it is an ambition that the fraction of PhD students who spend a substantial time abroad at a high-quality institution should increase. A problem that all programmes share is the substantial cost increase of PhD education, and more generally the challenge to fund such education. The School shall therefore, in cooperation with the departments, work to obtain increased external funding for PhD education.

In addition to study programmes, the School offers single-subject courses at the undergraduate level. Such courses are important to the School for at least three reasons: First, our subjects are important complements to the content of many other study programmes offered at the University, i.e. it is useful for pre-experience education. Second, we have a

responsibility to contribute to people's opportunities for lifelong learning, i.e. post-experience education. Third, in certain disciplines, single-subject courses at the advanced level constitute a necessary instrument for the School to be able to offer a full cycle of education from bachelor to PhD level.

Course content is continuously updated as part of regular operations. Sustainability and self-leadership will continue to be integrated in all programmes.

We must challenge students throughout the curriculum. All of the School's courses should require the average student to spend time comparable to full-time work in order to meet the learning goals.

Students

We will continue to monitor the quality of admitted students at the bachelor's level and increase the quality of students at the master's level. Within the framework of a meritocratic admission process, we will continue to act to increase the number of competitive applicants from a broader spectrum in terms of social background, ethnicity etc., with the aim to increase the diversity of the student body. We believe that a breadth of experience and knowledge provides for better education and a deeper understanding of society.

We will work to improve student progression in the programmes. A first step is to better understand the various reasons students do not complete programmes on time. The objective is that a majority of students shall graduate within the allotted time frame.

Two factors in particular relate to the quality of graduating students: assurance of learning and employability. Regarding assurance of learning, we will start by making a clear distinction between regulatory learning goals and local learning goals in all programme syllabi. Local learning goals should be directly relatable to the School's mission. Before 2021, goal fulfilment for all programme level learning goals, both regulatory and local, will be measured, and identified weaknesses will be addressed.

KPIs for education

In order to support the School's development in the area of education, we will measure performance using the following KPIs and targets:

- Student admission:
 - Bachelor's level: Average GPA/SAT among top three business and law schools in Sweden
 - Master's level: Among top five business and law schools in the Nordic region
- Progression: Increase the percentage of programme students who graduate on time
- Assurance of learning: 90% of graduating students achieve each programme learning goal.
- Employment: 90% of graduating students have programme-relevant employment within 6 months of graduation.

SECTION C

THE CONTEXT

C1. SUSTAINABILITY

The School's mission expresses that we see sustainability issues in a broad sense, including ecologic, economic and social perspectives, as crucial. Thus, we stress that sustainability considerations revolve around a variety of areas, such as stability of major ecosystems, responsible management, ethics, poverty alleviation, equal treatment and non-discrimination.

In 2015, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the UN General Assembly. These goals and challenges are by no means new to us. Almost all of the challenges and goals are addressed (at least to some extent) in current research projects at the School. Further strengthening of the School's research in these fields is in accordance with our research priorities, as explained in Section B1. To strengthen curriculum content and student learning, dealing with global challenges is a strategic focus within our education, as explained in Section B2. All departments conduct extensive research and offer courses within the broad spectrum of sustainable development. Again, having a variety of disciplines within the School is a major advantage for sustainability issues, which by nature are diverse and complex. Furthermore, in both research and education, we explicitly encourage and support sustainability-oriented collaboration between departments within the School, within the University as a whole and with Chalmers University of Technology.

The School has in recent years been increasingly recognized for its integration of sustainability perspectives into its study programmes. This process has been successful but is far from complete. It will continue as a standard aspect of our operations. The objective is for all programmes to give students relevant tools in the form of concrete skills and in-

sights related to key sustainability issues. Accordingly, one important element of this continued development is to clearly link the sustainability-related knowledge content to the respective programme learning outcomes and examinations.

Collaboration between academia, corporate and public partners, regulators and civil society is crucial in the process of building increasingly sustainable societies. The School will develop its engagement in cooperation with national and local actors in order to develop its concrete engagement in sustainability related issues, in education as well as in research.

Moreover, the School has the ambition to take an active part in the establishment and development of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network – Northern Europe (SDSN-NE). The objective of this network is to facilitate the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The University of Gothenburg and Chalmers University of Technology have been entrusted with the responsibility to administer the SDSN-NE. On the basis of the School's sustainability-related research and education and its well-developed relations with relevant external partners, it is the School's ambition to be an active partner in this development. It is also our ambition to actively implement our commitments under the Global Compact⁴ and the Principles for Responsible Management Education⁵ and make these concrete in our operations. Finally, it should be stressed that the School's emphasis on high scientific quality and encouragement of critical and independent thinking among both students and academic staff is of course equally important in dealing with sustainability issues as it is in other areas.

⁴ United Nations Global Compact, www.unglobalcompact.org/.

⁵ United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education, www.unprme.org.

C2. INTERNATIONALIZATION

Far-reaching international academic cooperation and exchanges are essential for attaining excellence in research and education. It is an area in which the School is continuously developing its activities.

International student exchanges constitute the most important instrument for giving our students skills in intercultural communication. This instrument shall be further developed. Students from our School are given the opportunity to experience a different cultural and academic context abroad, and incoming exchange students contribute to establishing an international environment in Gothenburg. From an academic perspective, international exchange agreements expand the curriculum of both universities involved. In recent decades, the School has developed an extensive international network that includes more than 160 student exchange agreements with foreign universities as well as a vast array of international research contacts and cooperative projects.

In order to achieve further improvements in the area of international exchanges, we need to structure our international academic relations better on the basis of clearer priorities. We will therefore establish and develop deeper long-term reciprocal relations with a limited group of strategic partner universities. To this end, the School shall formulate clear criteria for establishing, and discontinuing, international partnerships. Such criteria will be developed by 2017 and effectively implemented thereafter.

In order to further the development of cooperation with the most respected foreign academic institutions, we will, where appropriate, cooperate with our internationally established corporate partners and relevant regional and national public authorities. In this context, it is of great importance that we, where relevant, coordinate our actions with other parts of the University and with Chalmers University of Technology. In all international cooperation, we shall abide by the School's commitment to fundamental academic values.

Our more far-reaching cooperative efforts in education

include the development of double degrees and mutually recognized course modules at the master's level. The present portfolio of double degrees will be evaluated and new agreements established with high-quality partners.

We also need to enhance the possibilities for both incoming and outgoing academic staff exchanges. This is an important part of staff development that furthers international cross-cultural cooperation and sharing of experiences from different contexts. The School will take measures to further enable our staff to take leave for teaching and research assignments at foreign universities and develop its ability to integrate visiting staff into the ordinary operations in Gothenburg.

Moreover, we need to give continued special attention to attracting highly talented international students to our MSc and PhD programmes, not least from countries outside the European Economic Area. The School will take measures to sustain the present positive trend in the number of international applicants. The development will be closely monitored and appropriate international benchmarks shall be identified.

Research is becoming increasingly global in most disciplines, which makes international cooperation essential. Yet, international research cooperation is primarily developed by individual researchers; not through administrative measures. However, by developing more comprehensive formal international contacts, the School creates networks with a potential to enhance its international research cooperation. In addition, the School encourages researchers to cooperate with strong researchers worldwide, and supports participation in, and organization of, international seminars and conferences of the highest quality.

The School's externally funded international visiting professor programme has been particularly successful as a means of enhancing the internationalization and quality of teaching and research. A very ambitious goal of the School is to raise the funds necessary to make this programme permanent. This fundraising activity, related to the School's centennial, will be implemented 2017–2023.

C3. RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION

Experience from other academic institutions that have achieved steady improvements over time clearly demonstrates the importance of a progressive and forward-looking recruitment and promotion policy. In order to become a leading academic institution, it will be essential to hire international academic top performers to an increasing extent.

We shall continue the established policy of advertising all academic positions internationally and ensuring an open, transparent and competitive recruitment process. We must also further strengthen the School's recruitment and promotion policy. The recruitment process is meritocratic, based on a competitive assessment of scientific and pedagogical qualifications. It is therefore of crucial importance that a sufficient amount of work is invested in finding the most suitable group of candidates available worldwide for each open academic position at the School. This process needs to be strengthened and made more systematic. The departments have the main responsibility for this, while the School management should actively support this process in close dialogue with the departments and also provide arenas where the departments can share positive and negative experiences with each other.

In order to promote an improved gender balance, within the meritocratic system for recruitment, active identification of highly competitive candidates of underrepresented gender is a priority.

The School's formalized criteria for recruitment and promotion to academic position will be supplemented with more specified guidelines at each department. These guidelines should have a high degree of clarity, be effectively communicated with full transparency and promote higher quality in research and teaching in each discipline.

The collegiate system for external assessment of scientific and pedagogic merits must be developed further. The School will intensify its efforts to obtain high-quality assessors, and moreover develop clearer guidelines to assessors regarding what the expectations are, both in terms of quality and expected time of delivery. Given the competitive situa-

tion internationally, it is also important to more generally speed up the assessment processes without eroding quality and rigor. In choosing assessors, the School shall always strive for a gender balance.

It is also important to further strengthen the flow of postdoctoral and early-career scientists from and to the School in order to generate a creative and dynamic research environment. More generally, as has been repeatedly made clear from recent external assessments, we need to increase the share of academic staff with significant international experience more generally, in particular with respect to expertise that needs to be strengthened at the School. Still, in several study programmes the teaching staff must be required to be fully proficient in Swedish.

In order to meet the increasing complexities of academic administration, recruitment of administrative staff has to prioritize high professional competence. This is a precondition for maintaining an efficient and professional administration on which the academic staff can rely with a high degree of confidence. Sufficient resources shall be allocated to secure open, rigorous and efficient recruitment processes.

C4. WORK ENVIRONMENT

A sustainable, dynamic and stimulating work environment built on academic freedom, mutual respect between all categories of staff and students, responsibility, a high degree of collegiality, and the opportunity for personal development is a fundamental prerequisite for our ability to reach our ambitious goals. It is a precondition for the effective functioning of the School's daily operations and its ability to recruit highly competent academic and administrative staff as well as talented students.

The School will take all precautionary measures necessary to maintain and develop its work environment. All students and staff members shall feel comfortable and respected, regardless of gender, sexuality, political opinion and religious affiliation. The School will act promptly when incidents related to the physical or social working environment occur. When needed, specific investments in competence and skill

development will be made. The School will act to effectively implement the University-wide programme for integrating gender equality in all of its operations.

We will develop an integrated form of work environment management. In line with the relevant national regulations, this will focus on prevention, health promotion and organizational aspects of work environment. The organizational aspects to be prioritized include communication, the management of resources and the assignment of individual responsibilities. Priorities for the work environment, relating to these organizational aspects, will be set with the objective to promote a sustainable work environment with a special focus on the links between our assignments, daily operations and health issues. In this context a special instruction for the School's work environment committee will be adopted.

C5. THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODERN PHYSICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The project to expand the premises at Vasagatan 1 was launched in 2014 and the estimated time of completion has been set to 2022/2023. The expansion offers a solution to the current spatial restraints on our development.

The School considers this to be a great opportunity to create a modern, attractive physical learning environment that will give us new possibilities to develop. Particularly, this project will give us possibilities to develop a modern physical environment that can support pedagogical development and innovation. In order to increase the positive effects of this project, the School will allocate resources to take an active part in the detailed planning process scheduled to begin in early 2017. To this end, we need to acquire knowledge about experiences from similar projects and an understanding of the current international forefront of dynamic physical learning environments.

C6. CORPORATE, STUDENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

Well-developed corporate relations, including partners in the private and public sector, are crucial to the School's societal

engagement and the development of its research and teaching portfolio. Corporate relations also contribute to increased internationalization and constitute an important source of external funding.

The School's partnership platform, which has been established and developed over the past 15 years, is well functioning and expanding. Yet, the present platform needs to be developed to be suitable to a wider range of organizations, such as public sector entities, innovation and growth companies and NGOs. The School will continuously review and develop the partnership offer to the mutual benefit of all parties involved. One objective is that a partnership offer adapted to the needs and conditions of organizations in the public sector be fully developed by 2018.

The School will strive to better utilize the partnership network as an arena for continuous discussions concerning the contemporary and shifting demands for competence in our society. We will thereby increase our ability to produce research and education of high societal relevance. This is linked to the aim that all bachelor's and master's programmes shall have a structured partner dialogue.

The corporate advisory council is well established as a central arena for discussions concerning the development of the School. Over the years, its advice has been highly valuable to the School management. The composition of the advisory council helps strengthen our connections with our corporate partners. It is our expressed ambition that the council's high level of engagement should be sustained and further developed, through both well prepared agenda setting and through continuous succession of the membership.

The School will develop its already good relations with the very active and constructive student association even further. It is of particular importance that the student association be encouraged to continue to take responsibility for participating in the process of quality assurance of our education. Proud and successful students, at all levels, are the School's main and best ambassadors.

Alumni relations are important in order to strengthen our brand, expand our executive education offerings, ex-

pand our partnership platform and help us in fundraising. The structure for our alumni relations has been developed over the last ten years, and we shall continue this process on the basis of mutual benefit. The international alumni network will be strengthened with alumni activities outside Sweden. The alumni network will be engaged in the School's centennial fund-raising activities planned for 2017–2023.

C7. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATIONS

The School is accredited according to the EQUIS standards since 2004. It was awarded an AMBA accreditation in 2013 and achieved an accreditation according to the AACSB standards in 2016. We consider accreditation procedures to be one, out of several, important means of quality assurance through a structured system for international peer review. Moreover, accreditations are important when it comes to creating international academic partnerships with high-quality institutions. They are also increasingly important as quality indicators for students when deciding which schools to apply to. A limitation of these accreditations, however, is that they clearly focus on business education and related research. Thus, the scope of the accreditations covers only a portion of the School's activities.

We will continue our policy of sustaining international accreditations according to the EQUIS, AACSB and AMBA standards. Where suitable, we will engage in additional external assessment procedures. The Master of Laws programme will be given special attention in this context.

Despite their benefits, accreditation and assessment procedures come at a cost to our organization and it is of great

importance that they are administratively coordinated as far as possible. It is a clear objective for us to establish effective routines for the handling of these procedures without diluting their importance as a means of quality assurance. In order to effectively contribute to the School's continuous development, the preparations for assessments must be internalized in our regular operations for quality assurance and development. A special challenge for the School is to develop improved systems for data collection and analysis. The establishment of basic KPIs annexed to this strategy is a step to meet this challenge.

In preparation for the upcoming national system for assessment of quality in education, the School has reached an agreement with the University that the AACSB accreditation will be recognized as a fulfilment of the national assessment. The School shall explore to what extent the basic methodology of the AACSB assessment can be meaningfully applied to the School's operations outside the scope of this accreditation procedure.

Benchmarking with peer institutions will be carried out to further develop the School's quality assurance. In connection with this, the School will actively engage in relevant international collegiate structures such as EFMD, AACSB and ELFA.

Since 2014, the School benefits from having an International Academic Advisory Council that has given important input to the School's development. It is the ambition of the School to further utilize this highly competent multinational body for qualified advice concerning its future development and to secure a good succession of the council members. ■

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