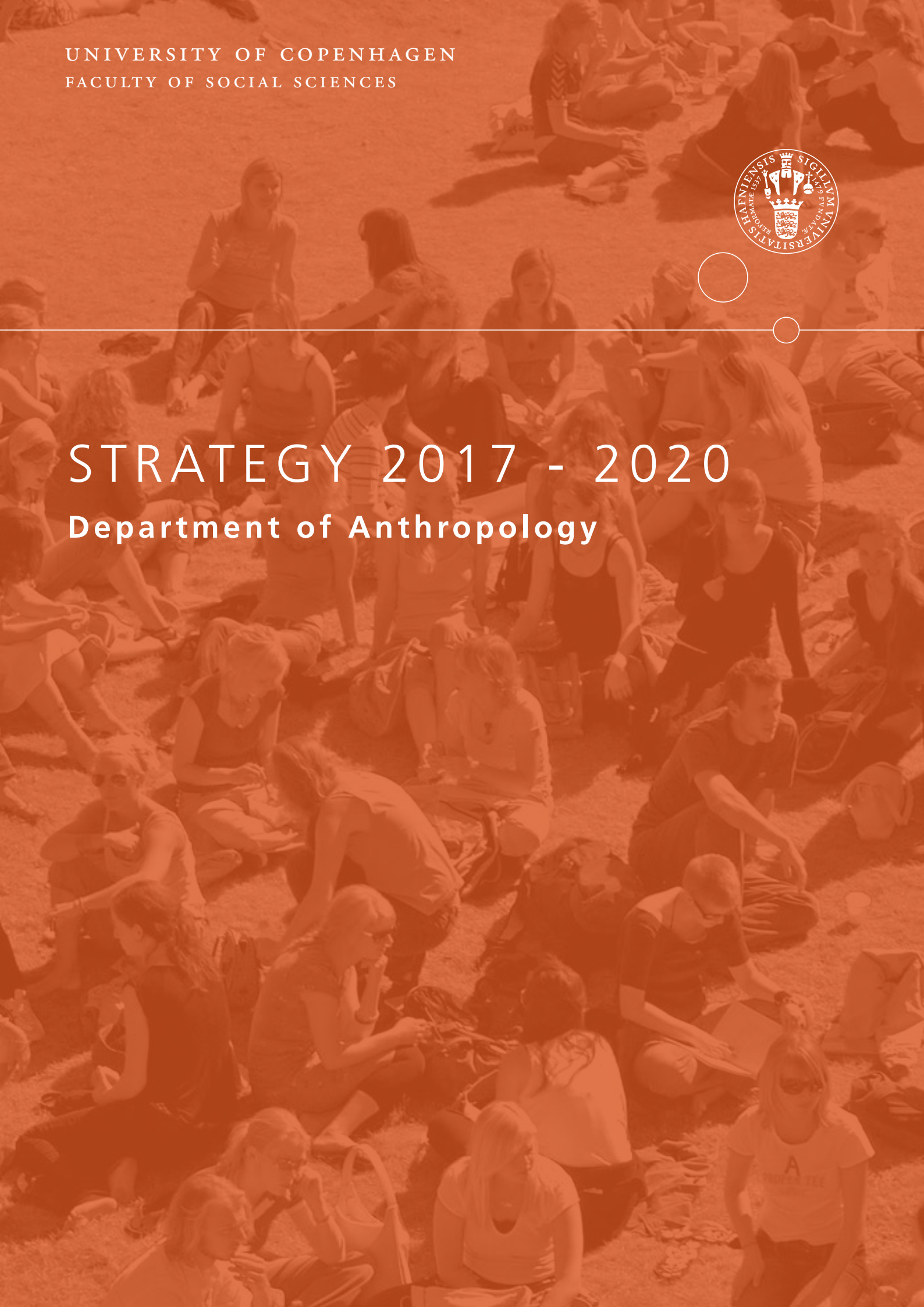


UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES



# STRATEGY 2017 - 2020

## Department of Anthropology



## INTRODUCTION / VISION

The Department of Anthropology in Copenhagen prides itself in being recognised as a world class centre of scholarship by international peers. We see it as our core responsibility to maintain and develop the discipline of Anthropology in three mutually reinforcing ways: First, by further developing the discipline of Anthropology as a social science by nurturing a dynamic research environment (for PhD candidates, junior scholars as well as tenured staff) and bringing our research experiences and findings into productive dialogues with colleagues both nationally and internationally; second, by continuously improving and developing our educational programmes in ways that ensure our graduates are robustly prepared for their next career steps; and finally, by conducting and communicating our research and teaching in ways that contribute to building successful responses to the manifold challenges that face Danish society and humanity today.

These intertwined responsibilities are reflected in the Department's broad diversity of research themes and formats, and in our shared commitment to producing research at the highest international level – as well as to address a range of issues of a pressing national and global character. They are also reflected in our teaching, in which we strive to educate the Department's students to become competent and responsible professionals and critical and engaged citizens – capable of analyzing and responding to the challenges that face Danish society and the world today. This responsibility is further reflected in the ways in which we strive to disseminate our insights to the public.

## CURRENT CHALLENGES / CONDITIONS

As one of the largest anthropological departments on the European continent with a strong international reputation (ranked as the 20<sup>th</sup> best anthropological department in the world by QS World University Rankings in 2016), we are in a strong position to contribute to the further development of the discipline. Furthermore, the recent research assessment of the department (2015/16) describes the Department as “a centre of world class research” (Link to the research assessment). However, the current situation and the immediate future pose a number of challenges to the Department. (These challenges are also reflected in the Department's Research Vision <http://anthropology.ku.dk/research/researchvision/>)

- Reforms of the financing of Danish universities, including drastic cuts in basic funding and in available public research grants, make it imperative that the Department secures funding from new sources and in new forms of collaborations with external funding parties.
- Reforms of the overall organization and requirements of teaching and study programmes at Danish universities (“fremdriftsreform”, “dimensionering”, etc.) make it imperative to address our internal organization of teaching, including considerations of course planning, uptake, and development of new study programmes.
- With rising public pressure on both our Department and on our graduates to demonstrate the contribution anthropologists make to society, we need to re-emphasize the discipline's character as a social science. Both on the BA and on the MA level, we need to strengthen our students' ability to articulate their competencies as anthropologists in relation to societal challenges.
- Even though our graduates do eventually find employment to a satisfactory degree, the unemployment level of our recent graduates (“dimittender”) continues to be too high within the first two years of their graduation. This is not only an unacceptable situation for the graduates, it also has direct and adverse effects on the Department's permitted uptake of students, and in the long run it harms the status of the Department and the public reputation of the discipline. Even though the problem has a number of causes, many of them beyond our influence, we need to focus on measures that we *can* influence in order to improve the situation.
- In the face of the above challenges, which call for solutions that focus on social and economic purpose, the Department finds it vitally important to insist on the qualities that characterize a university: we seek to always go beyond the purposes that we are asked to serve, conducting our enquiries in an open-ended and critical manner. Even though we too must operate in a world where rationales of utility and economy dominate, the Department strives to remain a place of free, critical and independent thinking.

## RESEARCH

### *The Department strives to nurture a pluralistic research and teaching profile at the cutting edge of international developments in the discipline*

The protection of our researchers' rights and obligations to freely pursue their individual and collective scientific interests remains the foundation of development of the discipline and hence of the Department. At the same time, we have a responsibility, not least towards students and future research, to use recruitment policy and practice also to ensure as far as reasonably possible that all major regions, major thematic specializations, and major theoretical developments are represented among research staff in the Department, with a view to the double-sided character of our vision of the discipline mentioned above.

In terms of recruitment policy, this implies striking a balance between entirely open calls and calls that address the intention to cover particular needs in terms of supplementing existing research interests and teaching competences among staff. With any call, we will work actively to attract the best possible candidates internationally.

**HOW:** By the beginning of 2017, the Head of Department will present a recruitment plan towards 2020, which will be implemented as far as developments in the financial situation of the Department and the university allow. The plan needs to remain flexible towards opportunities and conditions that arise and to which the Department must respond.

### *Enhanced organization of the research (and teaching) activities in the Department*

The current organization of the Department into eight researcher groups was praised in the recent research assessment report as having "achieved an impressive balance between fostering of 'hot spots' of shared intellectual exchange and research collaboration". It is of high priority that the Department continuously ensure that the organization of research and teaching in the best possible ways supports our visions for teaching-based research and research-based teaching. Furthermore, a clear and dynamic internal organization of research and teaching is expected to further develop the work satisfaction of all employees.

**HOW:** Based on the recommendations of the research evaluation and discussions among researchers at the Department, the current organization into eight researcher groups will be reviewed in the first half of 2017. This process will be coordinated by the Research Committee.

***Continuous development of high-quality research-based teaching and teaching-based research at the Department.***

The Ethnographic Exploratory, established in 2012, has served as a laboratory for experimentation and testing of new approaches to research and teaching. The Department will continue to explore and develop the links between research and teaching in the Ethnographic Exploratory as well as in other Departmental activities.

**HOW:** A brief status report of the Ethnographic Exploratory among researchers, teachers and students will be carried out with the purpose of preparing new paths for teaching-based research as well as research-based teaching. The report will be presented at the teaching seminar in January 2017.

***Improved facilitation and documentation of impact***

The question of research impact is quickly becoming a cornerstone for assessing performance for universities, Departments and research projects both nationally and internationally. The Department therefore seeks to enhance the impact of research conducted at the Department and to contribute to the development of relevant methods to define, measure, and document the impact of specific research projects. It is important that the social sciences – and the discipline of anthropology – are involved in developing models designed to measure and document impact of research within our disciplines.

**HOW:** The Department strives to improve the impact of research projects through an active and targeted public relations effort and by exploring new avenues by which the impact of our research can be enhanced.

*In the course of 2016 and 2017, based on knowledge about the international development of impact measurements and documentations, a working group under the Research Committee will engage itself in the further development of a model for the documentation of impact. This model will be applied in the Department as well as promoted to the Faculty of Social Sciences as a whole and, as far as possible, internationally.*

***Continued development of research funding strategies in the Department, with a strong focus on the diversification of funding sources***

The Danish Council for Independent Research (DFF) has had its pool of funds cut substantially. In addition, government research funding is increasingly being directed towards “strategic” research that focuses on societal challenges, innovation, business, etc. The Department needs to develop new approaches to apply for this type of funding. In addition, we need to address a range of different funding opportunities in the EU system, as well as other international agencies, as well as private Danish and international foundations and grant systems. Funding for particular (temporary) positions rather than research projects should also be considered.

**HOW:** The new funding landscape involves new external partnerships and new types of support within the Department, not least in terms of strong mutual support among researchers. A new system of pipelining research funding applications will be developed overseen by the Research Committee. Staff members will be asked to keep an updated portfolio of nascent ideas. Moreover, we will consider our combined networks as a collective resource that may be drawn upon in our common endeavour to secure external research funding. Networking for fundraising is a long-term time investment, and in order to keep this issue on the agenda, a yearly status report prepared by the Department's Research Committee will be drawn up for strategic discussion in the Department.

## TEACHING

*Strengthening the profile of anthropology as a social science with a more explicit link to societal challenges and ensuring that the BA in anthropology is a degree in its own right, not just a preparation for the MSc in anthropology.*

In the upcoming revision of our BA curriculum, we will introduce new courses and course elements that will emphasise the potential of anthropological forms of research and analysis to respond to the many challenges in contemporary society. The BA should give our students access, ability, and interest to pursue a range of MSc/MA studies, including but not restricted to the MSc in anthropology at our Department. Also, it should give students fundamental competences as graduates in a social science, as well as competences for relevant employment.

**HOW:** Parts of the BA curriculum should be revised in order to ensure that BA students in anthropology have relevant theoretical and methodological competences to be enrolled in other social science/humanities MSc programmes and/or to be employable with a BA degree. The head of studies will present a plan for the revision of the BA before the end of 2017.

*Improve the employability and employment rate of graduates in anthropology*

The employment rate of our graduates, particularly recent graduates ("dimittender"), needs to be improved. Basically their employability rests on their ability to use their anthropological - general academic-and other competencies towards solving problems in the world and meeting the challenges of the labour market.

**HOW:** An overview needs to be drawn up on how the Department (and the Faculty of Social Science) may help our graduates achieve higher employment rates. The overview should include every level from pre-admission through all years of education to graduation and beyond. Based on this overview, the Department will identify specific initiatives to be implemented before summer 2017, with follow-up status discussions in each year until 2020.

### *Striking a balance between the increasingly important role of Denmark as ethnographic site and place of employment and maintaining a global outlook as a key characteristic of our Department*

Teaching and research at the Department relate to the whole world reflecting the move from internationalisation to globalisation and global transformation. In our teaching and research, we will address global issues theoretically, conceptually and empirically. We are committed to diversity of both people (staff and students) and perspectives. At the same time, we are acutely aware that most of our students will seek employment in Denmark. We see a double focus on a global horizon of anthropological research and on Denmark as tremendously productive for both our research and our teaching, with the Master in the Anthropology of Health as a strong example of this approach

**HOW:** We continue to do fieldwork and research all over the world and work systematically with comparative approaches in our teaching curricula. We encourage participation in exchange programmes for students as well as teachers. We will strengthen our work with the MSc programmes in Global Development and Global Health and we will continually explore new (global) partnerships within teaching or research. The Head of Department and Head of Studies will ensure that a mid-term status is conducted in 2018. At the same time, we will strengthen the theoretical and methodological integration between our global expertise and the Danish elements of our research and teaching portfolio.

### *Further improving the study environment of students*

The Department recognizes the importance of having a good study environment for students to become active members of the Department and dedicated to the study programmes, and in order for them to become engaged, active, and critical citizens.

**HOW:** The organization of our courses will facilitate academic discussions and exchange between students and faculty in both formal and informal ways. We will organize extra-curricula activities at the Department where students and staff jointly participate, such as the Department day, activities in the Ethnographic Exploratorium, and other activities that support and strengthen the students' sense of belonging to the Department. This also involves active support of "Antropologforeningen" and other activities that are important parts of the anthropological community in Denmark for students and staff alike.

### *Explore possibilities of expanding the Department's teaching portfolio*

The uptake of students in our BA and MSc in Anthropology is limited by ministerial decision, and continues to be the target of politically defined restrictions. However, the Department has a larger scope of manoeuvre in terms of other forms of teaching programmes including post-graduate courses and teaching programmes such as our Masters in the Anthropology of Health, just as it contributed considerably to the establishment of the MSc programmes in Global Health and Global Development. We will continuously look for new and relevant opportunities to strengthen our discipline's contribution to existing and new teaching programmes, within the Faculty of Social Sciences as well as in the Department itself, and in the form of academic degrees at BA and MA/MSc level as well as adult and continuing education, outreach courses for

the general public or targeted audiences. This should also be regarded as a form of income generation for the Department.

**HOW:** At least once a year, the Head of Studies will invite the Department staff to a strategic discussion of ideas for new courses and programmes, to be discussed by the Department management and the academic staff as a whole.

## OUTREACH AND DISSEMINATION

### *Improve and expand relations to the public and to collaborative partners in society beyond the university*

It is increasingly required of Danish academic institutions that they communicate and collaborate with the general public as well as public and private organizations in Danish society and internationally. The Department recognizes this as an expression of the general responsibility of the university to play an active role in society, just as it is well in accordance with the dual vision of the Department outlined in the introductory statement above. Through our research, teaching, and outreach work, the Department aims to be a nationally as well as internationally recognized centre for the study and practice of anthropology as an important contribution to the world.

**HOW:** In order to improve our communication with stakeholders and potential employers of our candidates, also with an eye to ensure a continuous (and increasing) demand for graduates in anthropology and for anthropological expertise, we will draw up a dissemination and communication strategy in the course of 2017, in order to achieve a higher degree of public visibility and presence in the Danish press. The work of Anthropological Analysis in terms of strengthening the development of collaborative and innovative research with public and private institutions and enterprises will be maintained.

### *Strengthening of the working environment at the Department*

An inspiring and collegial working environment is important for all employees at the Department. This is important for the well-being of each individual employee, and it is important for the sustained high quality of our teaching and research activities at the Department. All employees, regardless of seniority and position, are valued and essential members of the Department as a whole. Transparency of decisions and the opportunity to discuss and influence essential decisions in the Department are important parts of academic life; this is achieved by formal arrangements such as the Collaborative Committee (SU) and regular academic staff meetings, as well as informally by maintaining a positive and constructive, as well as critical and engaging, working atmosphere at all times.



**HOW:** We want to ensure a high level of information through newsletters and other written information (emails, minutes from meetings etc.) as well as updates at the various Department meetings. Furthermore, we want to nurture an open dialogue by encouraging informal and formal meetings that facilitate mutual collegial engagement in the development of teaching plans, research proposals, and publications.

The work-life balance is difficult in every research based institution. At the Department of Anthropology, we aim to address this problem through joint efforts to ensure as much coherent research time as possible through strategic planning of teaching, meetings, and other activities.

We want to ensure that the researcher groups are well-functioning in order for the individual researcher to have a sense of belonging and for researcher groups to serve as collegial bodies with an open and constructive atmosphere.

## Administrative support

### *Strong administrative support of the strategic goals of the Department*

The core activities at the Department - research, teaching and outreach/communication - depend on high quality administrative support. Administrative support is provided at many levels at the University of Copenhagen. Locally, we have a secretariat shared between the Department of Anthropology and the Department of Sociology. It is the ambition to ensure high quality administrative services with strong focus on professionalism and service. The Faculty of Social Sciences has a long tradition for a relatively decentralised administrative structure and the Department strives to maintain this structure. It permits a closer interaction between scientific and administrative staff, a more limited sliding of administrative tasks to researchers and teachers, and a constant focus on limiting resources for administration in order to maintain resources allocated for research and teaching. To mitigate the disadvantages of a decentralised administrative organisation, it is the responsibility of the administrative staff to ensure collaboration with other administrative staff, especially across the Faculty of Social Sciences. Furthermore, the secretariat will work to enhance collaboration within teams and groups to provide more robust services and a more collaborative working environment.

**HOW:** The Department will establish a working group composed of scientific and administrative staff to produce suggestions for developing the services of the Administration. The aim is to ensure that the point of view of the scientific staff is incorporated into which services are prioritized and to ensure that services are organized in a cost-effective way.

Head of Department and Head of Administration will once a year systematically review how the overall priorities of the Department align with the administrative services provided.