



# Goal plan for 2021-2024

Department of Communication



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# Preface

This goal plan outlines how the Department of Communication will implement University of Copenhagen's strategy from 2017: *Talent and cooperation - Strategy 2023*<sup>1</sup>. The University's strategy describes the ambitions and goals which the university as a whole will strive for in the coming years. The strategy articulates the university's mission and vision:

## MISSION

The University of Copenhagen is a knowledge and culture-bearing institution, which, based on independent research and research-based education at the highest level, provides a framework for critical thinking, insights and a quest for truth for the benefit of society.

## VISION

The University of Copenhagen aims to be among the world's best universities measured by the quality of research and education and to be recognised for excellence and intellectual creativity.

And, the strategy outlines the university's strengths and key development potentials:

## STRENGTHS

- Research beacons with world-class academic staff.
- Success in winning prestigious research grants.
- Modern, attractive and international learning environments and research infrastructure.
- Large number of applicants for the University's highly esteemed degree programmes.
- Talented academic and technical/administrative staff, skilled in developing and supporting research and education.

## KEY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIALS

- Continuing to develop an excellent, international work and study environment in order to attract and retain the best academic staff.
- Fostering closer ties between education and both research and the job market.

<sup>1</sup> <https://about.ku.dk/strategy2023>

- Leveraging the University’s academic breadth more effectively through both internal and external collaboration in order to help resolve societal challenges.
- Developing a digital organisation and strengthening the digital skills of staff and students.
- Working towards a common goal and promoting a profile, which will better position UCPH internationally.

The strategy outlines a total of 36 goals (expressed as “*we will*” in the strategy) divided into four main areas: 1. Attracting, developing and retaining academic talent; 2. Education with closer ties to research and practice; 3. Collaboration and societal commitment – nationally and globally; and 4. One unified and focused university. The university’s strategy, and the goals outlined in the four focus areas, set the framework for the development of goal plans and action plans at all levels at the university.

The ambition is that all faculties and departments at the university share the same strategy and work towards the same, shared goals<sup>2</sup>.

As such, the university has only one strategy as described in "*Talent and cooperation - Strategy 2023*". This goal plan is therefore *not* a strategic plan for the Department of Communication. For the purpose of this goal plan, the department’s mission, vision, strengths and potentials are shared with the rest of the university and described in the university’s strategy.

This goal plan outlines, discusses, and describes the goals (“we will”) from the university’s strategy which the department has chosen as a special focus in the coming years. The purpose of the goal plan is to outline how the Department of Communication contributes to the university’s shared strategic goals. The purpose is therefore *not* to describe everything that the department does nor does it aim to discuss and describe all activities that the department engages in.

The specific goals, incl. the specific wording of the goals, are lifted from the university’s strategy – and the goals are printed in the goal plan in the same wording as found in the strategy. The goals are printed in bold in the goal plan, and each goal is numbered accordingly with the strategy. It is

<sup>2</sup> <https://kunet.ku.dk/work-areas/management/strategy/goals-plan/Pages/default.aspx>

therefore important that the department's goal plan is read in conjunction with the university's strategy – the two are part of the same strategic framework. The discussion of each goal is situated within the context of the Department of Communication and outlines the more specific goals the department has set for each of the chosen “we will”.

This goal plan is the first goal plan for the Department of Communication. The department was created in the summer of 2019 as the result of the merger of the Department of Information Studies (INF) and the Department of Media, Cognition and Communication (MCC). Both INF's and MCC's goal plans were developed in inclusive and iterative processes at the two departments in the spring of 2018 – the current goal plan is therefore by and large a merger of those two goal plans. As part of the university's strategy concept, the goal plan will be revised annually.

The goal plan will be supplemented with annual action plans that outline specific activities that the department will engage in during the coming years to move closer to the fulfillment of the goal plan. As such, the goal plan is abstract in nature, whereas the action plans are specific and concrete.

The goal plan and action plan form the basis for the department's leadership team's annual review and budget meetings with the dean's office.

## Introduction – COMM

The Department of Communication (COMM) was established on September 1, 2019 on the basis of a merger of the Department of Information Studies (INF) and the Department of Media, Cognition and Communication (MCC).

The department is home to approx. 75 faculty members, 40 PhD students, 20 postdocs, 40 part-time lecturers, 27 administrative staff, and 2200 students. The department annually generates approx. 30 million DKK in external research funding, and it produces research and scholarship that is world leading, and which sets the agenda for many national initiatives and conversations. The department offers seven degree programs: Philosophy, Rhetoric, Education, Film and Media Studies, Communication and IT, Information Studies, and Cognition & Communication educating successful candidates to many sectors and parts of the Danish society and beyond.

The establishment of the Department of Communication (COMM) has facilitated a strong interdisciplinary research environment with a large potential to contribute with knowledge about how art, culture, media, communication and critical thinking have value and impact in relation to current societal challenges and discourses in a range of current interest for the development of society, incl. digitization and datafication as highlighted in the ‘Global Trends’ and ‘Key development potentials’ in the University’s strategy. Researchers at the department are organized into eight sections and two centers, but most research activities take place in close collaboration with national and international partners.

The department is characterized by mutual respect and interest for the diversity of scholarly and academic traditions and fields represented in the department, each of which comes with its own publication patterns, norms and collaborative styles.

At a more principled level, it is important to the department that the university takes a special place in society. The university’s unique function and place in society is both to contribute to the development of society through research, scholarship, innovation, and teaching but the university needs also to safeguard scientific methods and critical thinking. While many of the specific goals in this plan concern our contribution to the development of society, it is of utmost importance to us up front to affirm the university’s mission and emphasize that we are as a scholarly community

committed to the protection of intellectual freedom, freedom of speech and that we regard freedom of research as the essential foundation for our long-term legitimacy.



## **Summary of the department's most important goals**

### **Goal A: Expand the framework for talent development by winning more external funding (Goal 1.2.4)**

The department aims to attract external funding to sustain a vibrant, attractive, and stimulating research environment. The current research funding landscape at the University of Copenhagen and in Denmark requires that the department attracts external funding to support younger researchers' academic careers and the building of research infrastructures and facilities.

It is a goal that the department attracts a level of external research funding that allows the department to support a sufficient number of PhD students and postdoc scholars, strengthen its standing in the international research community, and develop its technical infrastructure.

### **Goal B: Support students' career planning, and demonstrate how programmes can be applied in the job market, including strengthening initiatives to ensure that students have the requisite skills for innovation and entrepreneurship (Goal 2.2.2)**

The department's educational programs are strong and sought after. It is an important goal that graduates are prepared for the next step in their lives and careers, and the department plays an important role in supporting the students in achieving their goals. It is a goal that graduates of the department's degree programs have the knowledge, skills and competencies to contribute to, challenge, and change society, workplaces, and institutions in positive and meaningful ways.

### **Goal C: Improve the working environment and the psycho-social study environment in order to fuel a high level of commitment and well-being for all (Goal 4.1.1)**

It is the department's goal to offer all employees an attractive, challenging, and supporting work environment. The department has a concerted focus on improving employees' well-being and their general work environment, and the department has initiated a long-term project with the goal of examining amongst all employees what steps can be taken to enhance work-life balance, reduce stress, and allow more time for the most important tasks. It is a goal to improve the overall scores in the upcoming Workplace Assessment review (APV).

# 1. Attracting, developing and retaining academic talent

## **Goal I: Expand the framework for talent development by winning more external funding (Goal 1.2.4)**

The department's faculty members have a long and strong history of attracting external funding to support their research activities. External funding supports junior researcher positions (PhD and postdocs), operational costs (travel, workshops, guests), and digital infrastructure, and allows individual faculty members to form research teams and work collectively.

A number of faculty members in the department belong to fields and traditions where it has been custom to work individually and contribute solo-authored publications (both as journal articles and monographs) without the need for external research funding. Some faculty members will continue to work and publish individually.

Within the majority of research fields at the department there are strong traditions for seeking external funding to support their activities and ambitions. It is, however, becoming ever more competitive to win external research grants -- especially in the social sciences and humanities -- which requires individual faculty members to carefully consider when to develop applications for research funding, and to weigh the development of external funding applications against other research activities. To that end, it is a goal for the department to create a collective, supportive research culture, and to develop internal structures and procedures that support and help faculty members develop research ideas, draft successful applications, and share experiences.

It is further a goal that the department supports faculty members in their effort to develop applications for external funding in ways that are helpful and meaningful to the individual faculty member. To help faculty members achieve their ambitions in terms of applying for external funding, it is a goal that the department supports faculty members in identifying potential funding opportunities, provides support throughout the application process, and sets up a structure to provide qualified peer-review and feedback.

It is a goal for the department to continue to attract a significant portion of external funding, primarily to attract and support PhD students and postdoc scholars. The continuous development of

research traditions and scholarly disciplines at the department are contingent upon the renewal of the traditions and disciplines by junior researchers. Attracting junior researchers to the department requires external funding.

It is the ambition that a focus on this strategic goal (goal 1.2.4) will also have an indirect positive and supportive effect on the development of the department's overall research environment (goal 1.2.1), support researchers' intellectual creativity (goal 1.2.1), as well as contributing to the department's development of a strong culture of mutual feedback and peer review (goal 1.2.2).

The department encourages and supports the development of collective research environments, where individual researchers help, support and guide each other and in a collegiate spirit share knowledge and experience – incl. experience with seeking external research funding. The department researchers are organized into sections and centers which have been established to support individual researchers' need and desire for a "local home" for their researcher activities, as well as helping develop greater communities for development of collective research environments. All PhD students and postdoc scholars belong to a section or center, and it is expected that senior researchers support the integration of junior researchers into the section's/center's activities and plans.

**Goal II: Use an internationally recognisable and attractive recruitment and career system, including tenure track – *and* clearly identify internal career development tracks and ensure a management focus on talent and career development, among other things by way of increased attention to diversity (Goals 1.1.1 and 1.2.3)**

It is the department's goal to remain an attractive work environment that supports faculty members' individual career development and aspirations.

The department will support faculty members in the development of their careers, incl. identifying career tracks appropriate to their individual ambition and career level. The department needs to prepare junior researchers and scholars for the next step in their careers, which in many cases will

be outside the department<sup>3</sup>, and the internal career tracks need to be clearly identified for faculty members<sup>4</sup>. It will, furthermore, be a specific point of focus to ensure greater diversity<sup>5</sup> among staff and faculty members.

The department's greatest asset in recruiting talented PhD students, postdoc scholars, and new faculty members is the department's strong and internationally leading research environments, and the scientific and scholarly contributions of current faculty members. At the same time, job satisfaction and well-being of current faculty members at the department is closely tied to research culture and environment at the department – it is therefore a goal that the department continues to develop and nurture a healthy, vibrant, supporting, and stimulating work environment.

Further, the department has three specific goals:

- Recruitment of permanent faculty members will primarily take place at the assistant professor level through the tenure-track system<sup>6</sup>, although we might recruit faculty members at the associate or full professor levels for specific strategic reasons. Advertisements for faculty members will be circulated widely and internationally through our networks, via international outlets and scholarly associations. It is a goal that the department attracts high numbers of applications for permanent job openings, incl. international applicants where appropriate.

<sup>3</sup> The department will explore the report from the 2023-project on career tracks for PhDs and postdocs to find inspiration for how this could be done at the department. [The report (in Danish) is available at: <https://kUNET.ku.dk/arbejdsomraader/ledelse/strategi/2023-projekter/VIP-karriereudvikling/Documents/Anbefalinger%20til%20karrierearbejdet%20blandt%20phd.%20og%20postdocs%20på%20KU.pdf>]

<sup>4</sup> As a departmental supplement to the UCPH criteria for recognizing merit [<https://employment.ku.dk/faculty/criteria-for-recognising-merit/>]

<sup>5</sup> In UCPH's strategic work on diversity, focus is mostly on gender and international background of academic staff, while diversity in the context of this goal plan and the work at the department is used in its broadest sense.

<sup>6</sup> The department notes that the use of "tenure" in this context is different from the common use of the term as it is employed for instance at universities in North America. Here the term "tenure" is merely meant to mean "a permanent" position.

- The internal UCPH promotion system will be used to promote associate professors to full professors. It is a goal that qualified associate professors are promoted to full professors based on their individual qualifications according to the UCPH criteria for promotion<sup>7</sup>.
- There will be a special focus on securing that recruitment and promotion processes are fair, transparent and ensures diversity and equality in all decisions. The department takes part in the UCPH strategic project, “*Equality and diversity in recruitment, retention and attraction of faculty VIP*”, and the goal is to implement lessons from this project in the department’s recruitment and promotion procedures.

<sup>7</sup> <https://employment.ku.dk/faculty/criteria-for-recognising-merit/>

## 2. Education with closer ties to research and practice

### **Goal I: Provide a strong framework for all academic communities to contribute to making programmes research-based and openly acknowledge excellent teaching (Goal 2.1.2)**

The department will continue its focus on the development of models and initiatives to strengthen instructors' integration of research processes, methods, and strategies into the department's educational programs. The department will also explore possibilities for students, for instance as part of their master thesis projects, to become involved in faculty members' research activities, e.g. by participating in research group meetings. It is a goal that students in the department's educational programs have experiences with faculty members' research activities during their studies, and it is a specific goal to find ways to introduce students to ideas and research that is placed between the department's educational programs, sections and centers.

The UCPH criteria for recognizing merits emphasize the needs and requirements that faculty members develop their teaching methods, experiences and strategies throughout their careers. It is a goal that the department supports the development of current faculty members' teaching skills and experiences in ways that are supportive of their ambitions, and it is further a goal that teaching skills and experiences are thoroughly and systematically evaluated in hiring and promotion processes.

Lastly, it is a goal that the department finds ways to recognize excellent teaching and excellent instructors<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://employment.ku.dk/faculty/criteria-for-recognising-merit/>

<sup>9</sup> The department will explore the report from the 2023-project on recognizing excellent teaching for ideas on how to recognize excellent teaching at the department. [The report (in Danish) is available at:

<https://kUNET.ku.dk/arbejdsomraader/ledelse/strategi/2023-projekter/VIP-karriereudvikling/Documents/Anbefalinger%20til%20anerkendelse%20af%20excellent%20undervisnin.pdf>]

**Goal II: Support students' career planning skills, and demonstrate how programs can be applied in the job market, including strengthening initiatives to ensure that students have the requisite skills for innovation and entrepreneurship (Goal 2.2.2)**

Graduates of the department's educational programs are employed and contribute to many sectors of both the Danish society and internationally. During their studies at the department, students gain knowledge, insight, skills and competences in their chosen area of specialization that help them achieve their life goals and the careers they choose.

It is a goal that educational programs at the department continuously are developed to provide students with educational experiences in which they are challenged, and in which students develop their critical thinking and abilities to contribute to the solving of pertinent societal issues and issues of public relevance. It is therefore a goal that graduates of the department's educational programs have clear profiles that are important and relevant to addressing, challenging, and solving society's challenges and tasks. The graduates' profiles are formed by their deep engagement with research-based educational activities during their studies in which they gain useful and relevant knowledge and competencies at the highest level. Therefore, educational programs are designed with a strong and clear focus on attaining a high academic level, innovative thinking, as well as creativity among graduates.

The department will in the coming years expand its ties with businesses and organizations to continue the development of cases for course work and strengthening students' opportunities for internships. It is a goal that the department develops educational frameworks to involve professionals from relevant businesses and organizations in providing feedback and engagement with students in the classroom and at presentations of students' work and products.

It is a goal that students at the department are provided opportunities for dialogues about their ambitions and career plans during their studies, and the department will explore the best structure and content for such dialogues with students and staff.

### **3. Collaboration and societal commitment – nationally and globally**

**Goal I: Initiate development projects based on specific societal issues where different academic disciplines and collaboration partners contribute to resolving concrete challenges – *and* improve students' and academic staff's opportunities to exploit the potential of digitisation and big data across the University and with our collaboration partners (Goals 3.1.3 and 3.1.4)**

The department is in a unique position to participate in societal conversations about the ethical, political, cultural, institutional, and social consequences of the increased digitalization and datafication of the public sector, private organizations, cultural and creative industries, education, and the political sphere – not to mention everyday life through the general public's use of products and services supplied by large, international tech corporations. It is a goal that the department in the coming years initiates projects with external partners, along with collaborators from other faculties and departments across the university, to explore societal issues and challenges related to digitalization. It is expected that this effort will lead to the development of new research projects, and as such will support strategic goal 1.2.4 regarding attracting more external research funding.

The department will reinforce its strategic effort to increase uses of DigiLabs and the South Campus DataLab in educational experiences and research projects. It is a goal that DigiLabs and South Campus DataLab become resources for all students and faculty members in ways that support their interests and needs with regard to research and educational activities in datafication, digital tools, and the scientific and social uses of data.

The advancement of digitization and datafication of most sectors of society presents new job opportunities for graduates from the humanities, if they supplement their primary grounding in language, culture, communication, history, and other subject fields in the humanities with the necessary technical competences. It is the department's goal and ambition that it takes a leadership role in the development of such initiatives at the Faculty of Humanities, incl. for instance by developing elective courses for students from across the humanities that will strengthen their digital skills and increase job opportunities upon graduation.



**Goal II: Contribute to greater cohesion in the Danish educational system through the development of courses and subject-specific didactics as well as bridge-building to upper secondary schools (Goal 3.4)**

As a whole, the department actively engages in the education of tomorrow's educators and the further development and improvement of the educational system at all levels. The significant value of the teaching profession ought to be recognized, and the department will continue to emphasize teaching as an attractive career path for graduates of the department's educational programs.

Teaching, especially in the Danish high school (gymnasium), is already an important career choice for many graduates from the department's programs and it is a goal to explore ways in which graduates from more programs could aim for teaching in the Danish high school (gymnasium) as a career choice. It is a specific goal that the department develops relationships with high schools (gymnasier) to explore ways for students to gain teaching experiences in connection with their studies, such that they can gain a richer understanding of teaching as an attractive career path.

Many faculty members will continue to produce books and other forms of educational material that are used throughout the Danish educational system, and it is a goal to develop ways to recognize and reward these contributions to a greater extent in the future.

## **4. One unified and focused university. Organisation, employees and physical framework**

### **Goal I: Improve the working environment and the psycho-social study environment in order to fuel a high level of commitment and well-being for all (Goal 4.1.1)**

It is the department's goal to offer all employees an attractive, challenging, and supporting work environment. The department has a concerted focus on improving employees' well-being and their general work environment, and the department has initiated a long-term project with the goal of examining amongst all employees what steps can be taken to enhance work-life balance, reduce stress, and allow more time for the most important tasks. Based on the outcome of such an examination, it is a goal that the department takes concrete steps towards improving employees' well-being and work environment.

The department will set up structures to include students at the department in significant discussions that matter to students and the department as a whole. It is important that students experience a rich, stimulating and satisfying study environment, which supports students' study activities both in and outside the classroom and provides opportunities for developing social ties and peer relations. It is a goal that the department continues to develop a study environment that is inclusive, accepting and has focus on reducing stress among students in close collaboration with students.

### **Goal II: Promote a work and study environment of parallel language use in order to attract and retain talent (Goal 4.1.3)**

The department aims, along with the rest of the university, to be a "Research beacon with world-class academic staff". To fulfill this ambition, the department needs to welcome its international faculty members and students in a culture and structure of inclusion and acceptance.

It is a goal that the department develops an inclusive work and study environment that is welcoming to international and non-Danish speaking students and researchers. This goal entails that the department will combine Danish and English as working languages, develop best practices for when and how to communicate in Danish or English, and strengthen the language skills of staff as needed (both Danish and English). Furthermore, it is a goal to develop an inclusive work and study

environment beyond merely translating central documents into English by encouraging staff and students to acknowledge a multi-cultural environment in which each person is respected and cultural differences are embraced.

## 5. Process and employee involvement

This goal plan was developed with an outset in the goal plans developed by the Department of Information Studies (INF) and the Department of Media, Cognition and Communication (MCC). Both INF's and MCC's goal plans were developed in inclusive and iterative processes at the two departments in the spring of 2018 – the current goal plan is therefore by and large a merger of those two goal plans.

It is important that the department's goal plan is broadly based in the department, and that students and staff have had the opportunity to read, reflect on and contribute to the development of the goal plan before it was submitted. Therefore, a broad hearing process was conducted at the department where students and staff were consulted and involved in reviewing, discussing and providing feedback to the goal plan.

Two rounds of hearings in the department's councils, boards, committees, sections, centers and staff groups were conducted to invite students and staff to provide comments and feedback to earlier versions of the goal plan. The groups that were heard were:

- Koordinationsudvalget
- Sections
- Centers
- Research Committee
- Uddannelsesledelsesgruppen
- TAP-gruppen
- LSU/AMG
- PhD Council
- Study Board
- Forum for Studerende og Ledelse på KOMM

A site was created at the department's KUNet platform at which all suggestions, inputs and comments were made available for all students and staff.

### Schedule for hearings and information

Week 50	Message posted at the COMM KUNet message board re. the development of the COMM goal plan.
Week 51	Discussion at the department meeting re. the development of the COMM goal plan.
Week 5	Message in the COMM newsletter re. the development of the COMM goal plan.

Week 5	The Koordinationsudvalget discussed the development of the COMM goal plan.
Week 7	Process plan discussed in the Koordinationsudvalget
Week 7	The site at KUnet was made available. MEF's and INF's goal plans and the process plan were made available.
Week 8	The proces plan was discussed in the Forum for Studerende og Ledelse på KOMM.
Week 9	The process plan was presented at the department meeting.
Week 11	Draft of the goal plan was discussed in the Koordinationsudvalget.
Week 11	1 <sup>st</sup> version of the COMM goal plan was posted at the KUnet site.
Week 12-21	1 <sup>st</sup> version of the COMM goal plan was reviewed and discussed in fora across the department. Comments were posted on the KUnet site.
Week 22-23	ILT rewrites the goal plan based on the received comments and suggestions.
Week 23	2 <sup>nd</sup> version of the COMM goal plan was posted at the KUnet site.
Week 23-25	2 <sup>nd</sup> version of the COMM goal plan was reviewed and discussed in fora across the department. Comments were posted on the KUnet site.
Week 26	ILT rewrites the goal plan based on the received comments and suggestions.
June 26, 2020	Final version of the COMM goal plan for 2021-2024 was posted on the KUnet site.
July 3, 2020	Final version of the COMM goal plan for 2021-2024 was submitted to the dean's office.