



## Department of Psychology

### Strategy 2022-2025

#### The Current Landscape

The Department of Psychology, University of Copenhagen is structured around providing excellent research as well as a broad-based and critically-aware education that draws on social science, humanistic, and natural science traditions towards psychology with the main goal of preparing students to work as professional psychologists in Denmark. Our students are excellent. They enter the program with a very high GPA, are highly motivated in their education, and generally graduate with immediate entry into employment. Our staff is equally motivated, and external evaluations of our research profile indicate an upward trajectory.

Yet, the current broader landscape within which we operate is constantly shifting, creating potential uncertainties and challenges for the near and long-term future. To confidently navigate these challenges, the department needs to unite behind common missions with a strategic focus on the activities and actions that will secure a sustainable base for research and teaching, underscoring the department's resilience and continued thriving.

#### Our Aspiration

Psychology advances the understanding of how people think, feel and act. We are guided by a desire to support individuals, groups, and societies to cope with challenges and to seize opportunities and thrive, as well as a desire to identify the optimal conditions for human functioning. This involves the scientific study of the human mind and behaviour as well as the processes and contexts that shape this, including the mental, biological, developmental, social, cultural, and historical.

#### In meeting this aspiration, we aim to be:

1. **Innovative:** A leading hub of psychological science in Europe, including some world-leading research areas;
2. **Impactful:** Co-creating solutions and exchanging knowledge openly in partnerships and with society as a whole;
3. **Inspiring:** Delivering excellent teaching to our students that builds their professionalism and competence; and
4. **Inclusive:** Cultivating a fair and balanced workplace that supports the well-being and ambition of its employees.

## Specific Goals

By 2025 we will be:

- **Recognized as a leading centre for basic and applied psychological research** in Europe, with specific areas of strength that are competitive internationally.
- **A key-player in co-creating and translating psychological knowledge**, building the capacity to use this knowledge to address complex societally-significant challenges through informing policy and practice both locally and within Europe.
- **Providing our students with the best education**, which is firmly based in up-to-date scientific knowledge and which develops their skills to work in a variety of psychological professions.
- **Vibrant and diverse**, a department where we work together to support each other's ambitions while also maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

### 1. Being an internationally leading hub of science

We aim to be a department that is recognized as a leading centre for basic and applied psychological research in Europe, with specific areas of strength that are competitive internationally. Pursuing this goal signifies that we will be:

- Focused on promoting and supporting the best quality research.
- United by values of curiosity and exploration, openness and transparent research.
- Respecting academic freedom.
- Embracing multiple levels of analysis, methodological and scientific traditions across the social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences.
- Building on our strengths but also exploring new and novel directions.
- Bringing people together to share their research, talk across boundaries, and through this identify new research questions.
- Recognizing success but also supporting the risk of failure and valuing persistence: enduring discoveries and genuine impact often comes from playing the long game.
- Valuing equally basic and applied research, as well as the ability to translate knowledge into informed policy and practice.
- An incubator for the training, development, and onward careers of junior researchers (PhD and postdoc)

### What does success look like?

Research excellence manifests itself in many ways and can include:

- Scientific discovery.
- Innovation and curiosity that endures and creates impact over time.
- Publications in high-ranking journals and grant income.
- Recognition from our peers, learned societies, and awards.
- PhD graduates and early career researchers who secure positions at other world-leading institutions or organizations.

Whatever form it takes, excellence is not defined solely in our own terms but also in relation to how others see us and against benchmarks that exist in the wider international scientific community.

## 2. Co-creating and disseminating our knowledge widely and openly

Our research and teaching goals are supported to the extent that we can also broaden the external understanding of psychology and encourage decision-makers, stakeholders, funding bodies, and the public to see the relevance and value of psychological knowledge. In pursuing this aspiration, we will:

- Share the knowledge produced through our research widely and openly and help audiences to understand the science that underpins our knowledge.
- Actively pursue partnerships with external bodies (national & international) to engage in collaborative research, educational activities and capacity building.
- Contribute our expertise to help the development of scientifically-informed policies and practices that promote individual and collective health, well-being, and performance.
- Engage with external partners to translate our knowledge and help them to use this in practice.

### **What does success look like?**

Developing an external reputation and cultivating partnerships takes time. Success is revealed when external bodies and potential partners seek us out rather than vice versa.

## 3. Inspiring our students and building their professionalism and competence

Education is our most immediate impact on society. Our aim is to provide our students with the best possible education, which is both firmly based in current scientific knowledge and that prepares them for a variety of psychological professions. Ultimately, we aim to teach our students how to think and make decisions, not what to think. To achieve this we will:

- Give our students the best possible foundation for understanding human thought, feeling, and action from multiple standpoints – including biological, developmental, social, cultural, and historical – and support them in navigating the inherent complexity of our field.
- Inspire students' curiosity and encourage them to ask important questions, produce well-informed answers, critically reflect on knowledge, and adjudicate between competing perspectives.
- Cultivate an ability to think abstractly, but also to translate abstract knowledge into concrete analyses that engage with real-world problems and to communicate these analyses effectively to a variety of audiences.
- Prepare our students at all levels – including undergraduate, masters, PhD, and further education – to compete in the labour market and continually raise their professional standards and competencies.
- Prepare the labour market and employers to understand and recognize the value of psychology degrees and the skills and competencies of our students.
- Prepare our students to be culturally sensitive and aware of the diverse populations they might come to work with after graduation.
- Regularly revise and update the content of our education to ensure that it is both grounded in an appreciation of the historical foundations of the field and aligned with cutting-edge scientific knowledge and contemporary debates.
- Regularly revise and update the form of our education to ensure that it is in keeping with best practice and maximally effective in the contemporary educational market.

### **What does success look like?**

The success of our efforts to continually update and improve our educational provision will be evidenced by:

- Being recognized as a key player in the local and European educational market, and one that is at the cutting-edge in both content and educational delivery formats.
- Post-graduation students experiencing that they have acquired a strong skillset of analytical competences, methodological skills, critical thinking and applied understanding.
- Employers evaluating our graduates highly in their knowledge, understanding, skills, and ability to engage with and help solve real-world problems.
- Diversification of graduate destinations.
- Increased engagement of alumni with us.
- Increased responsibility for providing ongoing professional development and training for those who work in psychological professions and allied domains.

## **4. Cultivate a fair, balanced, and inclusive workplace that supports the well-being and ambition of its employees**

All members of staff contribute to the teaching, research, administrative and outreach goals of the department and we aim for a workplace culture that supports, recognizes, and values these contributions. To be a vibrant and diverse department that works together to support each other's ambitions while also maintaining a healthy work-life balance, we will:

- Promote values of academic freedom, freedom of expression, and constructive debate.
- Promote equally values of respect, inclusion, and mutual support.
- Promote diversity and cultivate a work environment that values diversity in all its forms, including differences in scientific training, research tradition, life experience and social background.
- Strive for a workplace that maximizes fairness, supports and encourages individual aspirations, and is guided by transparent decision-making that focusses on the best interests of the collective as well as respect for the individual.
- Build effective channels of communication among staff, between staff and students, with and across clusters, and with management to ensure maximum voice for all around important decisions and the integration of diverse groups into departmental life.

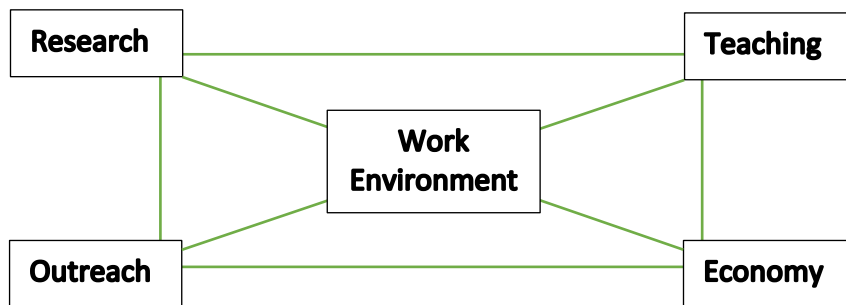
### **What does success look like?**

A fair, balanced, and inclusive workplace that promotes ambition and well-being is one that people want to work in. Accordingly, success is revealed by:

- Staff satisfaction with their working environment and pride in the department.
- A positive external reputation that is reinforced by staff promoting their colleagues and their department.
- Increased engagement in and attendance at collective activities and events.
- Increased appreciation of the contribution others make to the department through their research, teaching, and administrative work.

## Guiding Principles

The first Guiding Principle that will help us achieve our aspirations and respond to critical and unforeseen challenges is informed by this quadrant:



Our Guiding Principle is that all decisions will be evaluated in terms of its consequence for the **balance** between the dimensions in this quadrant and their combined impact on the overall work environment. All four corners of this quadrant are important for the work environment, and as such across decisions and across time we will aim for a balance that maximally satisfies all of them.

However, specific activities and initiatives might contribute differently to how this overall ambition is achieved, and at any given point in time not all dimensions will be equally important. In these instances, it is the task of leadership to prioritize individual activities against one another.

We also apply the principle of balance across individuals. Our aspirations are realized collectively, but that does not mean that every individual needs to excel on all dimensions.

Our second Guiding Principle is **participatory decision-making**.

In line with this approach, we will generally strive to make involvement as wide as possible, and we will discuss issues that involve or affect a significant proportion of department members in relevant fora before making decisions.

For areas, that do not affect the majority of department members, involvement may be limited to those who are affected or relevant. For other areas, for example where external contingencies require immediate decisions, wider participation, consultation and discussion may be more limited.

Ultimately, we are decision driven. Accordingly, once a decision is reached, we move on to other issues (unless the situation changes or new evidence comes up). In all cases, we aim to be open and transparent in our communication of decisions and doing so in a timely fashion.