

# **STRATEGY**

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EXECUTIVE EDUCATION  
THE FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
2016-2020



## BACKGROUND:

In the past decade, Professional Development and Executive Education (PDEE) in the field of social sciences have undergone a change in the competitive situation, which have put pressure on us in several ways. The market for Graduate Diplomas in Business Administration (HD), Professional Masters, and part-time studies is being challenged by new suppliers. These suppliers are of a different international character as they use strong professional marketing efforts and provide both shorter and longer courses which correspond to the specific requests of specific segments.

Some of the potential users focus more on how the courses are held than on content, which has formed a basis for new providers, both institutions and private companies. This makes the market opaque and puts pressure on our study programmes. We do not normally perceive these players as competitors to our ECTS based university programmes, but some of the users do. They give equal status to these courses and programmes, and this is a fact we must deal with.

In addition, Danish universities are under pressure due to international accreditations and foreign universities which, on their own or via cooperation agreements with Danish institutions and companies, attract potential students who want a clear international imprint on their degrees.

Up until now, the Faculty has put together a PDEE portfolio on the basis of an "inside out approach" based on our research expertise. Judging from the evaluations in the field of HD, Professional Master, and part-time studies we do this really well. The students are generally very satisfied with our programmes. However, we still believe that it is necessary to rethink our portfolio of programmes in order to adapt it to the new competitive situation, which points to a need for increased customisation.

Internally, there is also an increasing need for further development of our PDEE portfolio. We are increasingly dependent on growth in this area if we want to generate revenues that can help to maintain or increase our funding for research.

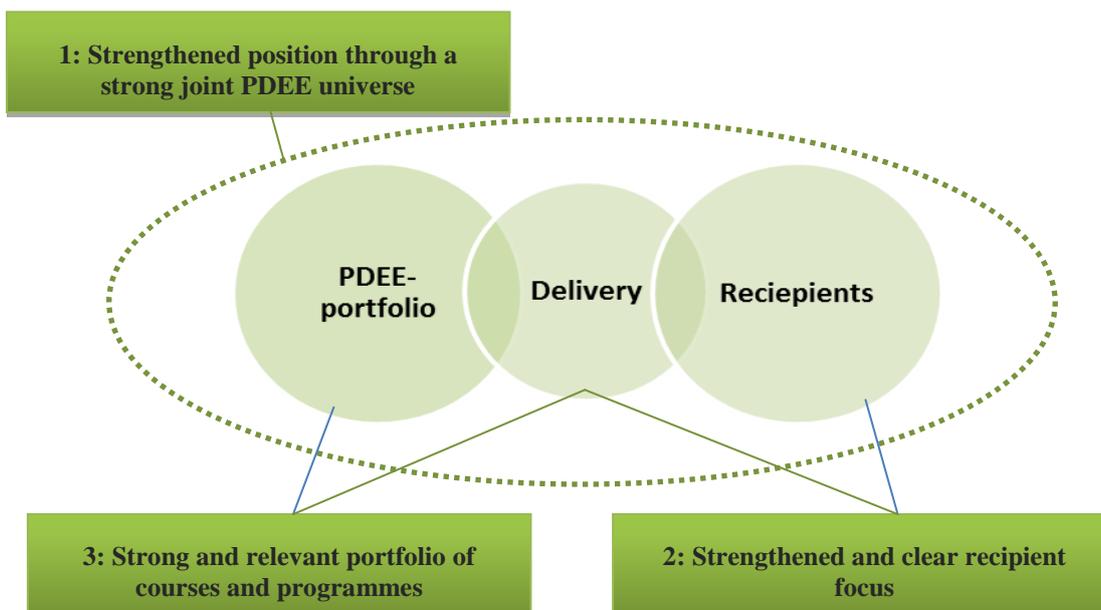
In the future, we wish to offer research-based PDEE activities which stand out as relevant because of the applied educational principles that bind theory and practice closely together and meet the students' requirements. Also, there is a need for independent courses, both as a respond to the need for shorter and longer competence development courses and as introductory courses for HD, Professional Master, and part-time studies. We try to accommodate this new reality in the strategy, based on the following strategic objectives.

## THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

We will create a portfolio of professional development and executive education relevant to society and practice-related with a national anchor and international quality. This will happen through an integration of our professional development and executive education activities and our additional research and educational activities and achieved through the below three key initiatives.

## THE STRATEGY

The Faculty of Business and Social Sciences' strategy for PDEE can be illustrated via the following model, which shows the connections between the three key initiatives.



The left circle represents the PDEE portfolio, which is connected directly to the research groups' expertise. The right circle represents the PDEE recipients, both individuals and organisations. The middle circle represents the provision of the educational services. This circle connects the PDEE portfolio and the recipients through a practice-based teaching model which links the scientific expertise and theory with the daily practices of the recipients, in a tangible and communicative manner.

**The strategy is to result in the following:**

- A strong and clearly positioned PDEE portfolio which both recipients and suppliers can vouch for, and which develops practices and creates a clear profile
- A PDEE portfolio which strengthens the students' education, knowledge, and power to act, and is developed on the basis of research strengths and in-depth knowledge of the employing organisations
- A balanced PDEE portfolio with both shorter and longer courses which contribute positively to the employer's practices and solve their specific business challenges – regionally, nationally and internationally
- A growth in employers and students from all over the country, and with international educational activities for employers and students
- A portfolio of programmes and courses which ensures consistency and transition between research and development projects, shorter courses and HD, Professional Master, and part-time studies.
- A joint and relevant contribution to the PDEE portfolio from all academic environments, especially in extension of research and development projects
- A professional and recipient-oriented support

**This is accomplished through the following three key initiatives:**

1. Strengthened position through a strong joint PDEE universe
2. Strengthened and clear recipient focus
3. Strong and relevant portfolio of courses and programmes

# 1. STRENGTHENED POSITION THROUGH A STRONG JOINT PDEE UNIVERSE

## OBJECTIVE

Developing and implementing a strong joint concept for our PDEE universe which supports:

- A virtual universe with a focus on the recipients
- A physical universe rooted in the HD and Professional Master Secretariat

*With the following characteristics:*

- A clear virtual and physical profile:
  - which is reflected in a portfolio and provision of services that focus on the needs of the recipients, that is based on a relevant selection of courses and programmes and that can differentiate us and make us stand out from other providers
  - which is founded on research-based and practice-oriented programmes and courses which the students can be proud of and identify with
- A broad and flexible support which creates the best environment for a professional and competent administrative support and combines the HD and Professional Master Secretariat's competencies with the departments' initiatives and idea generation
- A strong foundation for competent and competitive marketing
- A physical environment which supports the high academic quality of our teaching and competence development courses

## ACTIONS

- ▶ Developing a joint concept for the PDEE, which will be the starting point for a strong virtual and physical PDEE universe

*In terms of the virtual universe, we will focus on:*

- A two-part platform aimed at the recipients externally and the researchers internally
- Competent and transparent guidance which helps the recipients on the basis of their backgrounds and the qualifications they want to require. E.g. via a question guide that identifies the recipients' needs and lists the relevant programmes and courses
- Administrative systems which are tailored to the recipients' individual needs, which are easy to use and which signal professionalism. E.g. by making clear who is the academic and administrative anchor person on the individual educational activities.

*In terms of the physical universe, we will focus on:*

- Joint templates, manuals, and design which reflect the virtual PDEE universe
  - Identifying the need for a physical PDEE building with services and physical surroundings of "executive" standards
  - Establishing a physical PDEE universe, either in a new building or in existing premises
- ▶ Identifying the Danish and international PDEE market by mapping out the competitors, the supply, and recipient segments
    - ▶ Formulating a clear strategic position of our PDEE activities which makes us stand out from other providers in the field
    - ▶ Clarifying the possibilities of setting up a joint PDEE area at SDU
    - ▶ Creating a PDEE Council with the purpose of: 1. supporting and improving information-sharing and the exchange of experience regarding short courses and income-generating activities, 2: provide inspiration for the development of new courses to avoid repetition of mistakes and strengthens quality assurance. Staff members from IVØ and IER and the Secretariat are preparing the Council's ToR.
    - ▶ Ensuring that PDEE ambitions and goals are clearly consistent with the departments' own strategies via coordinated efforts of both the departments and the HD and Professional Master Secretariat
    - ▶ Establishing a strong joint unit in the HD and Professional Master Secretariat and ensure the recruitment of new staff so that the whole PDEE portfolio can be supported
    - ▶ Developing resources and competences in the HD and Professional Master Secretariat, which creates a transparent structure and makes clear to the teachers and researchers where and for what they can get support.

## 2. STRENGTHENED AND CLEAR RECIPIENT FOCUS

### OBJECTIVE

Creating a strengthened and clear recipient focus anchored in the recipients' needs and challenges

*With the following characteristics:*

- A PDEE portfolio which is tailored to the recipient's needs both at the individual and organisational level, including:
  - the HD, Professional Master, and part-time studies that are focused on both segments: individuals/students and organisations/payers
  - Short courses:
    - Flexible certified courses and package solutions which provide ECTS, and which can be included in a Professional Master's programme
    - Customised courses that do not necessarily provide ECTS
    - Other short courses, events, and conferences
- Practice-based teaching which relates theory to practice in a tangible and communicative manner and strengthens the students' ability to communicate and act in complex situations
- Increased flexibility through an adaptation of the administrative structures, e.g. via examination and semester structures and approaches to learning that are targeted at the recipient segments

*With the aim of:*

- Meeting employer organisations' needs by solving their challenges and identifying the competences that students and organisations can expect to achieve from the PDEE activities
- Recruiting widely from all over Denmark, first with a focus on the regional and national markets and subsequently also with an international focus

## ACTIONS

- ▶ Reforming the existing HD, Professional Master, and part-time studies, so that the individual profiles and the interplay between these will be targeted at both segments of recipients
- ▶ Establishing work processes and structures to ensure that short programmes are relevant to the recipients
- ▶ Setting up a PDEE coordinator who will be responsible for the planning and development of each initiative in close collaboration with the academic environments (the PDEE coordination group) to gain insight into the recipients' needs for academic content and provision of services. In particular with a view to relieving the researchers' administrative work and together with them coordinate the establishment of contact, sales, and marketing
- ▶ Establishing PDEE coordination groups which will function as links between the recipients, the research groups, and the administration, and consist of relevant researchers who are typically connected to the recipients, the PDEE coordinator, and other relevant administrative staff members
- ▶ Adapting the administrative and educational resources and competences to the increased flexibility of the recipients. The selection of PDEE is adapted through a close and direct contact to the recipients, based on PDEE alumni as an obvious entrance to private and public enterprises
- ▶ Building a relevant portfolio of collaborations and partnerships with national and international universities and organisations to offer joint PDEE with an increased relevance, quality, and prestige and thereby recruit more widely
- ▶ Improving the link to the private and public sectors and strengthening the international dimension of the PDEE area via a model and organisation which, through PDEE alumni and employer panels, ensures:
  - ▶ The recipients' input to practice-based teaching via the teacher's practical experience, specific cases, and involvement of practitioners
  - ▶ The recipients' input to a continued focus on their needs in our PDEE portfolio
- ▶ Developing models to ensure the creation of permanent academic networks for the recipients relating to our educational activities
- ▶ Work to highlight the recipients' gains in participating in our educational activities, such as the recipients' opportunities for making career jumps

### 3. A STRONG AND RELEVANT PORTFOLIO OF COURSES AND PROGRAMMES

#### OBJECTIVE

Providing a strong and relevant PDEE portfolio anchored in the research groups' strengths and interests

*With the following characteristics:*

- Balance between HD, Professional Master, and part-time studies, certified courses and customised courses, as well as ensuring the proper interaction between these and in relation to other educational activities
- A portfolio of short courses adapted to the recipients' needs, which will serve as a supply chain for HD, Professional Master, and part-time studies
- A range of educational activities which can contribute to the recruitment for the shorter and longer courses
- Involving the leading academics in the PDEE activities through a strong connection to the departments and specific research groups
- Quality assured and research-based courses anchored in both research and practice to ensure that theoretical insight will be helpful to the recipients in their everyday lives and provide them with the necessary tools to tackle practical issues

## ACTIONS

- ▶ Drawing up a list of the PDEE portfolio which outlines the courses, their structure, quality assurance, and the target segment, with the purpose of making the area more accessible both externally to the recipients and internally to the researchers and teachers
- ▶ Establishing a portfolio of certified and customised courses and other educational activities that will significantly increase the activity and revenues in the PDEE area
- ▶ Making the link between PDEE activities and the other knowledge exchange activities (including externally funded research and development partnerships, analyses and studies) more clear to expand the quantity, the nature, and quality of the PDEE portfolio
- ▶ Drawing up a systematic list of the research groups' competences and strengths for the purpose of creating a database of PDEE resources based on the commitment of the researchers
- ▶ Developing a quality assurance system to ensure research-based teaching of the entire PDEE portfolio via the study boards and the heads of department
- ▶ Developing an incentive structure which clarifies the importance, the attractiveness, and the financial profitability of handling PDEE activities with the purpose of increasing the departments' and employees' prioritisation of the area and ensuring the departments' ability to invest in future initiatives
- ▶ Developing the teachers' pedagogical competences, enabling them to communicate theoretical knowledge in a practice-related manner and to provide teaching that helps the recipients to gain insight, knowledge and competences to make decisions and implement