



UMEÅ SCHOOL OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS
UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

STRATEGY 2019-2025

Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics

July 1, 2019 - December 31, 2025





CONTENT

1.	INTRODUCTION	4
2.	STARTING POINTS - VISION, MISSION & CORE VALUES	5
	2.1 Vision and mission.....	5
	Vision.....	5
	Mission.....	5
	2.2 Professional ethical foundations	6
3.	RESEARCH AND DOCTORAL STUDIES	8
	3.1 Strategic focus areas 2025.....	8
	3.2 Research of a high international standard – range and depth	8
	3.3 Doctoral studies	9
	3.4 Research funding and prioritization.....	10
	3.5 Follow-up.....	11
4.	EDUCATION	12
	4.1 Strategic focus areas 2025	13
	4.2 First-cycle and second-cycle education	13
	4.3 The quality management system	14
	4.4 Learning environment - focus on the student.....	14
	4.5 From mission to intended learning outcomes.....	14
	4.6 Education implementation and development – programs	15
	4.7 Links to research and teaching effectiveness.....	15
	4.8 Sustainable development and internationalization.....	16
	4.9 Collaboration and links to the job market.....	16
	4.10 Follow-up.....	17
5.	COLLABORATION.....	18
	5.1 Strategic focus areas 2025.....	18
	5.2 Different collaboration forms.....	18
	5.3 Life-long learning	19
	5.4 Follow-up.....	19
6.	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	20
	6.1 Strategic focus areas 2025	20
	6.2 Sustainable development – how we work.....	20



UMEÅ SCHOOL OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS
UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

6.3 Follow-up.....	21
7. INTERNATIONALIZATION.....	22
7.1 Strategic focus areas 2025.....	22
7.2 USBE - an international environment.....	22
7.3 Partner portfolio	23
7.4 Student mobility	24
7.5 Teacher mobility	24
7.6 Follow-up.....	24
8. A GOOD AND EFFICIENT WORKPLACE	25
8.1 Strategic focus areas 2025	25
8.2 Together we are USBE.....	26
8.3 Management's role, communication, and recruitment.....	26
8.4 Follow-up.....	27



1. INTRODUCTION

This document presents the overall strategy of Umeå School of Business, Economics, and Statistics (USBE) for the period 2019–2025. The strategy describes the conditions under which the school conducts its activities and provides a framework for USBE's continued activities during the period in question. The document also includes general goals and indicators for the ongoing and systematic follow-up of activities. The primary areas of activity are defined as education, research, collaboration, and administrative support.

This strategy builds on and replaces the strategy approved by USBE's board in 2013. The strategic initiatives identified at that time were as follows:

- implementing an international quality management system for business schools according to AACSB and achieving the corresponding accreditation
- clearer profiling towards sustainable development in all activities along with the ambition to complete ISO 14001 certification
- strengthening research, specifically certain strong research environments with support from the Umeå University Board.

The first of the strategic initiatives contained in the 2013 strategy, *implementing an international quality management system* for business schools according to AACSB¹, has provided us with a model for continuous and systematic development and follow-up with a focus on quality in education, research and collaboration and the synergies between these areas. We have been *ISO 14001-certified* since 2015, and as of early 2018, we are also AACSB-accredited. Furthermore, we are now more clearly profiled towards *sustainable development*, and our *research has generally been strengthened*. *The University Board's strategic investment* in the areas of economics has been an important factor in these positive developments. As a whole, the past five-year period has been eventful, and as a well-established business school, we have taken further steps to develop all our areas of activity.

The current strategy has been developed in collaboration with USBE's Board, International Advisory Board, Business Advisory Board, and the management team with support from the Heads of Research, Head of Teaching and Learning, the Directors of Studies, and the international coordinators. The staff at USBE have been given the opportunity to comment and propose changes. The work on the strategy has also been based on discussions from the planning days of recent years with regard to strategic issues linked to education, research, and collaboration.

The strategies and objectives for the different operational areas are intentionally described in quite general terms. The annual operational plan will outline more specific objectives and activities. A summary of the strategy is provided in a separate document.

This strategy is valid from July 1, 2019 to December 31, 2025. Umeå University's upcoming vision will be implemented during the period 2020 to 2025 and is supported by USBE's strategy.

¹ Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business



2. STARTING POINTS - VISION, MISSION & CORE VALUES

2.1 Vision and mission

Vision

"As an internationally respected, nationally influential, and regionally rooted part of Umeå University, Umeå School of Business, Economics, and Statistics contributes to societal development through education and research of a high international standard".

Mission

"Through interplay with surrounding society, we provide education and research that contributes to the understanding, ability, and responsibility of individuals in relation to societal challenges and the importance of sustainable development".

We fulfil our mission by:

- offering a high-quality learning environment that encourages analytical, critical, and independent thinking
- providing a dynamic research environment of a high international standard within USBE's academic disciplines
- functioning as an attractive partner at the international, national, and regional level where we develop and disseminate knowledge in collaboration with other academic institutions, industry, and other actors in society.



UMEÅ SCHOOL OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS
UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

The activities pursued at USBE shall comprise education, ranging from first-cycle to doctoral studies, research and collaboration within Business Administration, Economics, and Statistics. Business Administration shall include the following subjects: Entrepreneurship, Financing, Leadership and Organization, Marketing, and Accounting. All activities are supported by the USBE office.

USBE's most important resource is our staff, and our stakeholders including students, partners, and financiers. Together we are USBE, we make it what it is and we create its identity. We are strong in all our areas of activity and are propelled by our purpose as outlined in our mission statement. Our other hallmarks as a business school includes a good relationship between students and staff, the engagement of students and other stakeholders in our ongoing activities, and a well-developed system for ensuring the students' learning processes. As part of Umeå University, USBE contributes to the University's attractiveness within the areas of education, research and collaboration, and vice versa. At the same time, Umeå University provides us access to the scientific expertise and support functions that come with being a prominent university.

It is crucial that academic work such as ours enables education, research, and collaboration that are of a high quality and socially relevant. This is achieved through ensuring our activities have a solid scientific foundation, are independent and dynamic, apply an international perspective, and have regional and national anchoring.

It is our ambition to maintain and develop such an environment and to ensure that conditions are established for engagement and the encouragement of new initiatives and avenues of development within education, research, collaboration, and support functions. This will increase our chances of making an impact internationally, nationally, and regionally. Our vision and mission reflects an international perspective, our responsibility in relation to societal challenges and how we, as a pivotal actor in the region, contribute to regional development and skills provision.

Our mission states that our education produces responsible individuals with good insights into societal challenges who, regardless of their future professional roles, can make a difference on a local as well as global level. We do this by integrating sustainable development in the content of our courses and programs. This work is supported by research and collaboration linked to sustainable development. Initially, our sustainability policy was based on the definition of sustainable development as provided by the Bruntland Commission and the three dimensions that are environmental, social, and economic sustainability. With this as our foundation, we are now working according to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations (UN).

By systematically working with sustainable development within education, research, and collaboration, a direct link is created to the quality work pursued within the framework of AACSB. The two processes are integrated to support the activities at USBE and its development. By 2025, we have passed the deadline for renewing our AACSB accreditation, which we aim to maintain.

2.2 Professional ethical foundations

The common professional ethical foundations for all state employees reflects and summarizes the fundamental values of Swedish society, our constitution and other legislation. These core values apply to all government agencies and thus also to USBE. For our activities, the six basic principles specified in the professional ethical foundations for all state employees represent the following:



UMEÅ SCHOOL OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS
UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

Democracy

Our work generates societal benefits, is characterized by academic freedom, is pursued on behalf of the citizens, and adheres to democratic principles.

Legality

As an institution engaged in education, research, and collaboration, we have a great responsibility and our work must therefore comply with laws and regulations.

Objectivity

In our work, we strive to ensure a high degree of confidence among our stakeholders. This means that we must act responsibly, both in speech and action, which in turn requires that we respect the democratic principles and that we are objective and impartial in our actions.

Transparency

We are open about what we do within the scope of education, research, and collaboration. This includes, for example, effective procedures for compliance with the principle of public access, informing students of expected learning outcomes, and ensuring that research results are verifiable.

Respect

We respect each other's integrity, rights, and differences, and combat all forms of discrimination as defined in the legislated grounds for discrimination: (1) sex, (2) transgender identity or expression, (3) ethnicity, (4) religion or other belief, (5) disability, (6) sexual orientation, and (7) age.

Efficiency and service

The work is to be conducted as efficiently as possible, with consideration given to the resources of the school and society.

The common professional ethical foundations for all state employees are to characterize our actions in all aspects of school activities, in relation to each other, our students, partners, and society as a whole. This entails that we want to be viewed as an open-minded organization that encourages development and a critical and responsible approach, in concept and action, and that we are open to collaboration with others. Together and with the help of others, we will continue to develop.



3. RESEARCH AND DOCTORAL STUDIES

The overall goal of USBE's research is to have a dynamic research environment where research of a high international standard is conducted within our three main disciplines: Business Administration, Economics, and Statistics.

To achieve this goal, our staff must cooperate within USBE, within Umeå University, with other Swedish and international universities, and with the surrounding society. An international outlook improves our ability to contribute nationally and regionally, and to work according to our stated mission and vision.

As with our other activities, our research is to follow the basic principles stated in the core values, while at the same time complying with the general research principles provided in the Higher Education Act:

“The following general principles shall apply to research: (1) research issues may be freely selected, (2) research methodologies may be freely developed, and (3) research results may be freely published”.

As Swedish research policy to a large extent relies on external research funding and targeted calls for proposals, this is a delicate task. It is, nevertheless, important to emphasize the importance of research that is independent and allows for analysis of current policies and of developments in operations and society.

3.1 Strategic focus areas 2025

By 2025, the goals are for USBE to have developed and strengthened the impact of research with a focus on quality rather than quantity, to have strengthened our external research funding, to have increased the number and proportion of academically qualified staff, and to have increased the number of doctoral students and international postdocs. The number of doctoral students should be at the level needed to maintain high-quality doctoral programs and contribute to sustaining a high level of competence within the organization.

The scholarly ambitions have been raised and USBE's strengths, as well as joint and complementary competencies, have been utilized and can be seen in current research projects. These ambitions are expressed through the requirements that our quality management system sets for the staff. To do this, the portfolio of research financiers and partners in external research projects needs to be broadened.

Below, the strategic work related to research and the goals for 2025 are detailed.

3.2 Research of a high international standard – range and depth

It is crucial for our research environment that our employees are internationally competitive and that they generate new and societally relevant knowledge in a number of areas through their research. USBE has a broad education portfolio and the goal that all courses and programs have a sound scientific foundation. This means that our staff must have the necessary scientific expertise to understand others' research and disseminate knowledge in various fields and educational areas. At the



same time, it is equally important that we have internationally competitive research within different elements of USBE's main disciplines, Business Administration, Economics, and Statistics.

The research environment must therefore allow for scope and in-depth analysis in a way that encourages the establishment of new research areas while already established academic fields are maintained and developed. USBE shall offer high-quality doctoral education within each of our three main disciplines.

Our research ambitions are strongly dependent on us being able to offer a dynamic research environment, and we are the ones who must create the conditions to achieve this. USBE's most important research resource is our staff, and our research expertise and its quality is shaped by who our staff are.

In terms of our attractiveness, the impact of our research, and our ability to adapt to a dynamic global context, it is vital that our research ranges from basic research to policy-oriented research, from theoretical to empirical approaches, from quantitative to qualitative methods, and includes the development of new methods. Furthermore, establishing the conditions required for the staff to conduct research and doctoral education is essential for us to be internationally respected, nationally influential and regionally relevant.

As part of our research ambitions, it is important that our staff are internationally respected and participate in public debate on various levels, as experts, members of councils, boards, and committees. This is achieved through high-quality international publications and participation in international collaborations, appointments as experts, participation in conferences and other such activities.

It is also important that we host conferences and international and national doctoral courses, and organize other academic meetings and networks. It is essential that we have dynamic seminar series within Business Administration, Economics, and Statistics involving external speakers, workshops, seminars for internal presentations of preliminary research, and doctoral seminars (doctoral student days and preparation seminars/concluding seminars).

Overall, these activities help identify new research areas, establish networks and collaborations, and disseminate knowledge about our research, creating the conditions for contributing to societal development in general and regional development in particular.

The harnessing of our combined strengths and complementary competencies within USBE is stimulated by, for example, joint strategy and planning days, joint meetings for USBE's professors and associate professors, joint doctoral student days, and by encouraging this through strategic initiatives.

3.3 Doctoral studies

Our doctoral courses and programs are strategically important for many reasons. One reason is that they contribute to the overall quality of our education and another is ensuring the future competence supply within our own organization and in other public and private organizations. Dynamic doctoral education also contributes to the work and research environment at USBE. To attract doctoral students to our academic areas and to achieve our vision, we must have attractive doctoral programs within the subject of Business Administration, Economics, and Statistics. With the current national structure for funding doctoral studies, conditions for this are largely dependent on external funding for doctoral students. It is therefore important that we apply for external funding for doctoral students



and the funding that Umeå University offers for graduate schools with external parties. As part of their studies, doctoral students shall be encouraged to learn how to apply for external funding.



3.4 Research funding and prioritization

Our research is funded via government grants, but also to a large degree by external grants. The external research funding comes from research councils, foundations, and external partners in the industrial sector and the public sector. The initiation of research is, considering the conditions of its funding, a bottom-up process where individual staff members are best suited and assume primary responsibility for assessing which areas they should be active in. If some form of prioritization is performed at the management level, this must take into account the following criteria in addition to ensuring that the research is of a high international quality:

Societal challenges

The societal challenges relating to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, but also digitalization, artificial intelligence, and automation.

Global perspective

The global perspective concerns the potential of the research to lead to expanded international networks and its international impact.

Development of new research areas or methods

By prioritizing the development of new research areas or methods, we can cater to a dynamic global context at the international, national, or regional level.

Regional development

As a significant regional actor, we benefit from and have a responsibility to conduct research that contributes to the regions' development.



Links to research and development of our courses and programs

Ensuring that our courses and programs are linked to our research means making sure that the content is aligned with our areas of expertise, particularly in terms of program specializations. Another reason for linking education to research is to maintain research expertise in teaching, as stated in USBE's quality management system.

Special priority can also be given to initiatives that lead to reducing inequalities, such as skewed gender representation, or increased use of complementary competencies which are present across USBE's main disciplines. The criteria above are assessed independently of each other and prioritizations can be made using one or more criteria.

Prioritizations may be relevant in the case of co-funding, supporting promotions to full professor and the advertising of professorships, the advertising of doctoral positions, nominations for academic awards and similar, and when deciding to support the formation of new centers.

USBE has long been involved in valuable collaboration with the Foundation for Economic Research and the Foundation of Per and Eivor Wikström. These collaborations strengthen our research environment and strategic initiatives, and they provide opportunities for cooperation with the business community, but also international exchanges for our staff and students.

3.5 Follow-up

Research and doctoral education is reviewed and followed up within the quality management system. This includes information about publications (number, types, citations, H-index, and quality levels as defined in the accreditation quality management system), external funding (applications, who applies where, with whom, and with what outcome), admission and completion rate of doctoral students, research assignments, knowledge dissemination in the form of e.g. presentations at conferences, seminars, awards received (academic prizes), and various forms of expert appointments and commissions of trust. Follow-up is also carried out with regards to the number of new graduates, associate professors, and professors. Follow-up within research and doctoral studies also provides data for performance appraisals and competence supply plans for the coming year.



4. EDUCATION

HH:s The overall goal of USBE's education is to offer a high-quality learning environment that promotes analytical, critical, and independent thinking in order to prepare our students for societal challenges. Our education shall rest upon a scientific foundation and shall include programs and courses from first-cycle level up to doctoral studies within Business Administration, Economics, and Statistics. We want to attract students both nationally and internationally.

Currently, we offer four professional degree programs, one of which is offered in English, one Bachelor's program in Statistics, one Master's program in Statistics, six Master's programs in Business Administration and Economics, and three doctoral programs. All programs are on campus and are characterized by a clear progression. We also offer single subject courses in campus-based and digital environments. The Master's and doctoral programs are offered in English.

USBE's courses and programs are characterized by student-centred learning, based on the mission for Higher Education Institutions in Sweden and on the USBE's mission. We strive to design courses that encourage students to take on responsibility and an active role in the learning process, stimulate the students' curiosity and capacity for innovation, and allow for reflection and a critical approach.

In accordance with our mission, our courses and programs shall also provide students with the opportunities to develop into responsible individuals with an awareness of societal challenges, as formulated in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, but also in terms of digitalization, artificial intelligence, and automation.

USBE has a broad education portfolio. The goal of our courses and programs having a solid scientific foundation requires both breadth and depth in research as well as the encouragement of our staff to be active in research.



The job market for our students is flourishing and their employability is high. Almost all our students are employed within six months of completing their studies. There are also students who, due to demand for their skills in the job market and their own attractiveness among employers, end their studies prematurely. In a long-term perspective regarding expert knowledge and career opportunities, this is problematic. With a student-centred approach, we will work to ensure that a greater proportion of students complete their degrees, and as part of this, we will communicate the long-term benefits of doing so. The relevance of our courses and programs is reinforced by our cooperation with surrounding society.

Communication relating to our courses and programs, the students' path to employment, dynamic alumni networks, and participation in student recruitment activities at Umeå University create greater awareness about our education, and this is an area which can be developed further.

4.1 Strategic focus areas 2025

The educational goals up until 2025 include strengthening the national and international student recruitment, with a focus on second-cycle education for international students. We will have evaluated and developed our program portfolio with regard to various forms of learning and examination, predicted demands from surrounding society, research development, and the utilization of other strengths found within USBE and Umeå University.

Our efforts to integrate sustainable development into our education will continue, and the links between our subject areas and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals will be made clearer. We will also review how we prepare our students for facing other societal challenges and opportunities, such as digitalization, artificial intelligence, and automation. We will work on developing the international dimension of our programs, courses, and learning environment. We also intend to increase the proportion of students completing their degrees.

Below, the strategic work related to education and the goals for 2025 are detailed.

4.2 First-cycle and second-cycle education

USBE offers students, staff, and partners an international environment centrally located at Umeå University's campus. Through well-developed forms of collaboration with the industrial sector, the public sector, and selected partner universities, we utilize our own and our partners' strengths, improving the quality of both our education and our research. Just like today, the education will be relevant and prepare students for the job market, while also being linked to our vision and mission.

USBE offers a broad range of programs and courses from first-cycle to second-cycle level, including doctoral studies in Business Administration, Economics, and Statistics. The fact that we can offer doctoral studies in our three main disciplines is crucial for the quality of our first-cycle and second-cycle courses and programs.

Through having a broad education portfolio with various opportunities for specialization, breadth and depth are balanced while at the same time students are prepared following graduation for different types of assignments in the international, national, or regional job market, as well as career opportunities within the academic sector. Given its geographical location, USBE has a special responsibility for educating capable and employable students in the region.



4.3 The quality management system

The quality management system at USBE consists of five central themes that are to permeate our courses and programs, and which are implemented and developed by competent staff members.

1. Student-centred learning
2. Organization and management of programs and pedagogical work
3. Employee competence and continuing professional development
4. Resources and support in learning environments
5. Evaluation of student learning and of program design and content

The themes are based on Umeå University's quality management system and on international quality standards for business schools. The quality management system also enables systematic follow-up and development work where synergies and complementary competencies across USBE's academic areas are utilized in the best possible way.

4.4 Learning environment - focus on the student

Teaching at USBE is based on student-centred learning, meaning that we acknowledge that students are different, come to us with varying prior knowledge and experience, have different ways of learning, and have different interests. Teaching is to be organized and performed as to make students responsible for and in control of their own learning process. Faculty and staff will support students and provide good conditions for learning. This in turn requires a close relationship between students and staff, with mutual respect between the parties.

In order to give students good opportunities to complete their studies, the expected learning outcomes must be clear. Ensuring that the expected learning outcomes at the program level permeate the courses is part of our continual follow-up and development work. This ensures that we provide our students with the necessary conditions to reach the goals set at the course and program level, while at the same time clarifying our expectations for the students.

In coming years, we will work on the development and use of various methods and techniques for supporting students' life-long learning, being able to optimize our resources, developing teaching methods, and preparing students for the challenges and opportunities of digitalization which they will face in the job market. Our students must also be prepared to face a constantly changing world – a skill fostered through critical and analytical thinking.

The learning environment at USBE is to be developed based on the above, and will therefore involve different learning methods and examination formats. The learning methods could, and should, vary between courses, disciplines and programs.

4.5 From mission to intended learning outcomes

National and local program goals specify the knowledge that our students are to obtain while studying at USBE. Local goals are set in line with our mission and translated into expected learning outcomes at the course level.

USBE has a well-developed system for setting, revising, and following up on program goals. The system includes design, implementation, and development of the programs with regards to goal



attainment and quality assurance. The program coordinators for the various programs are continuously working on charting how we support students' development of generic skills.

In the coming years, the quality work will be developed with a special focus on local qualitative targets since these give USBE's programs their respective profiles.

4.6 Education implementation and development – programs

Teaching at USBE is to be based on research, shall include collaboration, give students an international perspective, and contribute to the students learning of and ability to promote sustainable development. Overall, this contributes to the relevance and utility of the education.

Program development is a long-term, continuous undertaking performed in connection with course revision. Any major changes to a syllabus shall be handled with care and based on a long-term perspective. A long-term perspective in syllabus planning and education formats that can integrate a changeable global context relate, among other things, to the values of legality, objectivity, and confidence building. Our ambition to attract students both nationally and internationally entails that our programs and courses are provided and developed with a focus on both elements.

In addition to the regular follow-up that is carried out as part of the quality management system, we will prioritize a review of USBE's programs to ensure their relevance, that they match societal developments and the competence available at USBE. The review will include how issues concerning research links, sustainable development, internationalization, equality, collaboration, and job market connections are integrated into our education.

4.7 Links to research and teaching effectiveness

Research links in teaching are ensured through our education having a scientific foundation, and through scientifically qualified faculty participating in the program's and courses implementation and development. Breadth and depth in the research provide good opportunities for aligning with the breadth of our education portfolio and its specializations. All USBE staff are responsible for ensuring that the education has a scientific foundation and that students are familiarized with and gain an understanding of research related to the content of the courses or programs.

USBE's quality management system specifies criteria (faculty qualifications) that must be fulfilled for a member of faculty to be eligible to teach at a given level. Faculty qualifications are annually followed up on in order to ensure that teaching staff at USBE meet the criteria specified in the quality management system. Ensuring and creating the conditions for employees to retain or develop their qualifications is an area which needs to be strengthened. When staffing the programs, the requirements of the quality management system and our accreditation are binding.

The pedagogical seminar series at USBE, as well as participation in international and national conferences on learning, contributes to the teachers' continuing professional development. USBE has a large proportion of the teachers within the Social Sciences Faculty that are qualified according to the Umeå University pedagogical-promotion system. This facilitates pedagogical discussions and pedagogical development.



4.8 Sustainable development and internationalization

In the coming years, work on integrating sustainable development into our programs will continue. All new students at USBE are to be introduced to our sustainability work and issues relating to societal challenges. It is very important that we monitor societal developments in order to fulfil our teaching assignment, to achieve our purpose as stated in our mission and, through our programs, develop students so that they leave us with an ability to responsibly handle societal challenges using relevant knowledge.

The sustainable development work is based on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. We have chosen an integrated approach to sustainable development in our programs to allow students to better understand how this relates to specific course content. The downside of an integrated perspective is the risk of our initiatives and ambitions becoming vague. We therefore need to become better at communicating our sustainable development work and how our students learn about sustainable development.

USBE has an international learning environment with international students and a large number of incoming and outgoing exchange students. Internationalization continues to be an important topic and involves ongoing work relating to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Work on the goals requires a global perspective as the problems that the goals address often differ between countries and regions, whereas in other cases, problems are independent of geographical borders. Furthermore, problems can involve conflicting goals and interests particularly on a national and global level.

Internationalization encompasses students' opportunities to study at our partner universities and the mobility of staff members, as well as designing courses and teaching within the framework of our programs with an international perspective – we want to teach about internationalization and promote its value. Exchange opportunities are offered through USBE's exchange agreements as well as university-wide exchange agreements. Through attractive agreements, we create conditions for incoming and outgoing exchange students and employees to acquire international experience, which benefits our activities and the students' future employment prospects.

To offer an international perspective for students in Umeå, we need to more explicitly integrate the international perspective and awareness of global challenges into our teaching. Students at USBE are to be given international perspectives on the subjects being studied while also being offered an international study environment. We therefore want to be even clearer in developing the international dimension of our courses, programs, and learning environment.

4.9 Collaboration and links to the job market

Through collaboration with surrounding society, we ensure that the courses and programs are relevant, we prepare the students for working life, and we give students the ability to make contact with potential employers while still studying. Stakeholder involvement within education includes visiting lectures within and outside the course context, case studies in cooperation with external actors, writing theses in cooperation with external actors, mentoring, and internships within and outside of Sweden.

Meetings between students and external actors in the course context are beneficial to the development of both parties. Here, business ideas, strategic considerations, market challenges, and ethical



considerations can be discussed in a way that helps the external party's development while allowing students to apply course content to actual problems and thus hone their analytical skills.

The utility of this can also be related to the career service in order to give students a better understanding of how the education can help them reach their goals. Since 2015, USBE has developed a systematic career service focusing on the programs. This work needs to be further established and developed. This also includes working with alumni. Alumni can be important role models and give inspiration to our students. They are also important for collaboration within the education in terms of relevance and preparation for the job market.

4.10 Follow-up

The quality, attractiveness, and extent to which programs and courses give students the conditions to reach the intended learning outcomes are followed-up through our quality management system. Application, admission, and completion rate statistics are continually reviewed on an annual or semi-annual basis. The follow-up is conducted in relation to our own development over time and in comparison with other Higher Education Institutions in Sweden. We also chart internships and degree projects with external parties. Furthermore, at USBE, we follow-up on students after graduation, on our international exchange agreements, and the traveling patterns among incoming and outgoing students. Course follow-up is performed regularly through the course evaluations. We also monitor and focus on employees according to Umeå University's pedagogical-promotion system. We need to further develop systematic follow-up of collaboration with society and internationalization within our education activities.



5. COLLABORATION

Our vision of being internationally, nationally, and regionally relevant gives our students an advantage as they head for the job market. Strategic partners are involved in the life of the school to expand our activities within education, research, and doctoral studies.

Furthermore, we aim to strengthen the relationship with our alumni and contribute to life-long learning among those already holding professional positions. We also want to be an attractive collaboration partner in contexts where our employees' are enrolled as experts

USBE has well-developed forms of international, national, and regional collaboration with the industrial sector, the public sector, and selected partner universities. The collaboration utilizes our own and our partners' strengths and improves the quality of both education and research. A strong environment for research and education coupled with an environment that supports innovation contribute to the development of society.

5.1 Strategic focus areas 2025

Through collaboration, USBE aims to strengthen its productive dialogue with surrounding society and the school's partners. The collaborative activities are to include and relate to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The career center and alumni activities are to be further developed during the period. There is a special focus on strengthening the alumni activities in Umeå. We will develop our communication about what we can offer in terms of skills development for alumni already holding professional positions.

5.2 Different collaboration forms

Industry and the public sector can collaborate with our students in a number of ways. Through, for example, visiting lectures, theses, internships, and case studies, we create the conditions for mutual exchanges between actors in industry, the public sector, and our students, which benefit all parties. The collaboration and the meeting between students and external actors are adapted to the external actor's operational area and size. While larger organizations have special university contacts with their own budget for such matters, others may have significantly less resources at their disposal. Some collaborations entail longer assignments while others are shorter, but are still valuable additions to the student's education. Through collaboration in education, students are allowed to familiarize themselves with and prepare for the job market.

Industry and the public sector can collaborate with our staff in a number of ways. These can include shorter and longer joint research projects and assignments, consultation, advisory assignments, or for us as experts to be involved in investigations, boards of directors and committees, etc. Industrial doctoral students and donations are others ways of collaborating on research. Research impact is fed back via, for example, articles, publications, seminars, workshops, lectures, books, and reports. In continuing professional development, we can offer custom educational initiatives to external partners. These kinds of collaborative activities allow us to contribute to the development of society and other opportunities, especially in our local region.

Our regional connection and national perspective allow us to be active and visible in different contexts linked to the development of our activities, or society in general. Our commitment can take various forms and include participation in regional events, various dialogues and continuing professional



development initiatives. It also means that industry and public sector representatives are continually invited to activities organized by USBE.

Together with the members of our Business Advisory Board (BAB), we develop our activities and ensure their relevance with a special emphasis on the regional dimension. The members of the BAB are industrial sector and public sector actors. In the composition of the BAB, we strive for diversity in terms of activities, gender distribution, and a broad regional connection in the geographical dimension.

The International Advisory Board (IAB) is a council which strengthens USBE's international contacts and allows us to maintain a continuous dialogue with representatives from international industry and academic representatives from different countries.

5.3 Life-long learning

Life-long learning also includes continuing professional development following completion of studies. In the coming period, USBE will be more explicit in communicating that we are broad and flexible in our areas of expertise. To best utilize USBE's complementary competencies and provide needs-adapted professional development, we are basing our offer on modules. The modular structure is based on existing competencies being packaged in demarcated modules, which can be combined both in standardized and custom offers.

5.4 Follow-up

The job market for our students is followed-up annually through surveys and activities organized by our career center. The follow-up also includes the courses and number of participants in continuing professional development, activities with BAB and IAB, and other collaborative activities, which we have participated in.



6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Together with surrounding society, we provide education and research to produce responsible individuals with an understanding of and ability to handle society's challenges based on the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Within Swedish higher education, universities must work to promote sustainable development which means that current and future generations are guaranteed a healthy and good environment, economic and social welfare, and justice. (Section 5 of the Higher Education Act). USBE does this by implementing sustainable development in its education and research, and by collaborating with others to create and disseminate knowledge relating to the 17 goals. Our sustainability work is coordinated by the Council for Sustainable Development, but it also permeates all work at USBE.

6.1 Strategic focus areas 2025

USBE's focus on sustainable development will be developed and be further strengthened within education, research, and collaboration. The direct environmental impact of our activities must be sustainable. In the period up to 2025, our involvement in PRME, SDSN, and GBSN will be developed, and we will work in a way which allows us to remain ISO 14001-certified.² By working with sustainable development and the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, USBE contributes to Umeå University's ambitions in this field.

6.2 Sustainable development – how we work

By integrating sustainable development into our courses and programs, conducting research and doctoral studies which contribute to increased knowledge of and within sustainable development, collaborating on these issues, and working to ensure that USBE's own environmental impact is at a sustainable level, our sustainability work supports our mission. Through active participation in

² PRME: Principles for Responsible Management Education, SDSN: The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network and GBSN: Global Business School Network.



national and international organizations and networks, USBE's sustainable development work is honed and given greater potential for impact.

As an international business school with a clear sustainability profile, we are both able and responsible for contributing to improvements within societal challenges. Our work with sustainable development is quality assured through our environmental management system. Systematic internal and external follow-up via our ISO 14001 certification ensures that our work is effective and allows us to identify areas for improvement within education, research, and collaboration related to sustainable development.

The environmental management system is a well-integrated part of our overall quality management system, adapted to the requirements of the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ), AACSB³, and other stakeholders. USBE has adopted the six principles for responsible education set out in PRME and we organize our activities accordingly; we are also active members of SDSN and GBSN. All in all, these three international organizations, with connections to the UN, contribute to the development of our activities and our ability to support other organizations in their sustainability efforts.

6.3 Follow-up

To be ISO 14001-certified means that we annually undergo an external as well as an internal audit, giving us opportunities for continuous improvement. The external audit focuses on following up on activities in relation to the general and specific goals of the sustainability work. The general and specific goals are stated in USBE's sustainability policy, and the activities are described in the annual operational plan. The annual internal audit follows up on the specific focus area that the sustainability council has selected. The summary of the previous year includes a report on academic publications directly linked to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, as well as projects which have applied and been approved within this area. Sustainable development in education and compliance with our mission is followed up on within the framework of education and ensuring the students' performance in relation to the intended learning outcomes. Our direct impact is followed up in relation to the annual sustainability work plan.

³ AACSB: Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business



7. INTERNATIONALIZATION

Students and employees are to be provided with the opportunity to work in an international study and work environment, and this is achieved through international experiences and internationalization at home. This creates and develops a good international understanding and intercultural expertise while allowing us to obtain knowledge about and learn from other schools.

Activities at universities are in many ways international by definition. In previous sections, we have emphasized the importance of an international perspective in USBE's education and research, and its importance for achieving a high level of quality and relevance.

Overall, the international perspective can be justified, as is done in the 2018 interim report from the Government Inquiry on Internationalization, based on the following:

- the labour market awaiting our students is increasingly global or international in nature
- societal development as a whole and in particular with respect to the global challenges
- financial incentives linked to research and education as drivers of innovation, the provision of highly-skilled professionals, and
- social and cultural aspects.

7.1 Strategic focus areas 2025

From now until 2025, we strive to work in a more active and focused way with the international recruitment of students, and to produce supporting communication material. International understanding and intercultural competence must be highlighted in expected learning outcomes when it is relevant to do so. We are developing USBE's support functions for students and staff in order to promote and disseminate information about exchange opportunities. The aim is to achieve an increased representation of visiting lectures with international perspectives. Internationally recruited staff must also receive support and be encouraged to learn Swedish.

Below is a more detailed description of the strategic internationalization work for 2025.

7.2 USBE – an international environment

USBE's international environment is prominent thanks to our large share of international students and employees. International students can be found on our programs offered in English, as well as incoming exchange students. Overall, this contributes to internationalization at home as a complement to our exchange activities and our participation in international contexts linked to education, research, and collaboration. Students and employees at USBE are to be part of an international study and work environment, giving employees and students opportunities to develop a good international understanding and intercultural competence.

Through our internationalization work, we also support and contribute to Umeå University's overall internationalization. We see the benefit of being part of a university which can offer additional exchange opportunities, beyond our own agreements. This gives our students a greater range of schools and countries to choose from, while providing us with incoming students from additional parts



of the world. Incoming and outgoing students are offered good support through international coordinators at USBE and central functions at the university level.

Our partner portfolio will be continually evaluated and adjusted to reflect USBE's interests and to contribute to our activities, while at the same time our activities create added value for our partner universities. This includes systematic follow-up and evaluation of incoming and outgoing students' experiences of exchanges. When discussing new and existing agreements, we consider which subject-related and geographical areas we want to develop. Quality and range must be balanced, and focus is to be on the former. Our partnerships are to be characterized by hospitality.

International exchanges presuppose that we, in addition to our Swedish range, offer courses in English at all levels.

Overall, the internationalization work allows us to offer attractive opportunities for international mobility to staff and students, geographically as well as in terms of levels and disciplines. As a step in this direction, teaching, support functions, and communication at USBE are to be provided in both Swedish and English, but with emphasis on the former. When inviting visiting lecturers, the international perspective is to be incorporated in terms of language and content. When composing student and teacher groups in course activities, the international perspective is to be taken into consideration.

Our collaboration with the Foundation of Per and Eivor Wikström provides scholarships for student and teacher mobility linked to French-speaking environments.

7.3 Partner portfolio

USBE's partner portfolio is to be of a high international quality. The share of partner universities accredited according to AACSB, AMBA, or EQUIS is high and several are "Triple Crown", i.e. holding all three accreditations. The goal is to increase this share. A school being accredited is a clear signal that it maintains high quality throughout its courses and programs. At the same time, non-accredited partners can maintain a standard that is at least as high.

At Umeå University and the Social Sciences Faculty, university-wide and faculty-specific exchange agreements are offered, complementing our own agreements. We also have bilateral agreements.

Our own partner portfolio is to be continuously developed in a way which prioritizes quality over quantity and it must be continually evaluated and adjusted to reflect USBE's interests. When developing our partner portfolio, the following criteria are to be considered:

- The school's education and research quality, which is to be at least equal to our own
- The school's accreditation
- The school's core values
- Safety issues, based on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' recommendations
- The school's geographical location
- The opportunities for financial support for students and employees
- The school's semesters, range of courses, and credit transfer provisions
- The opportunities for drawing up an agreement which includes student, teacher, and research exchanges



The criteria are assessed independently of each other and prioritizations can be made using one or more criteria.

7.4 Student mobility

Ever since the start of the European exchange program “Socrates” (1987), USBE has had relatively significant and successful student mobility. Over time, around half of all exchanges at Umeå University have involved students at USBE’s programs. We continuously work to offer as attractive and high-quality a portfolio of partner universities as possible to our students. Our already strong international profile, with an extensive partner portfolio, is therefore to be strengthened further and profiled in the next few years. Students must be given the opportunity to write theses with international ties and go on internships abroad. When working to develop our range of courses and programs, opportunities for international experiences are to continue being considered.

We strive for an overall balance between incoming and outgoing students, but we do not consider this to be a goal in itself for each individual agreement. Collaborations regarding double degrees are requested both by foreign schools and foreign students. A double degree means that students participating in the exchange may, under certain circumstances, receive a national degree from the exchange university. The conditions for offering this are to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

7.5 Teacher mobility

Several of our exchange agreements include the option of teacher exchanges. These require both parties to have an intention to, should opportunity arise, receive each other’s staff members for teaching activities during a short or extended period. Some partner universities offer the chance to come and teach at “international weeks”, while others are looking for staff with certain expertise to teach specific courses. Our employees are to be encouraged to undertake short or extended stays at schools abroad.

7.6 Follow-up

Incoming and outgoing students and employees’ experiences are followed-up on and evaluated continually during the year. For recipients of scholarships from the Foundation of Per and Eivor Wikström, this is done during the board’s follow-up work. The composition of the portfolio in terms of accreditations, number of agreements, number of seats, geographical coverage, and change of composition is reported annually. The annual follow-up also includes incoming and outgoing students and employees with regard to total number, distribution by nation and by school. For students, the follow-up will also include the corresponding information for application patterns and internships abroad.



8. A GOOD AND EFFICIENT WORKPLACE

Our activities shall be characterized by an awareness that the staff are our most important resource and that we contribute to each other's work environment. Together we shape USBE, making it what it is and creating its identity, including the goal of a good and efficient workplace.

USBE is an attractive workplace in an international environment where our core values can be seen in our attitudes and actions. Specialized support functions at USBE's offices create better conditions for achieving our ambitions within education, research, and collaboration. More specifically, the activities are supported through general administration, study administration, study guidance, the career center, internationalization efforts, communication, IT, web, finance, and HR-related issues.

8.1 Strategic focus areas 2025

USBE as a workplace continues to have a low level of sick-listing and high workplace satisfaction. USBE's aim to have more women in senior faculty positions by 2025 has led to more women working on qualifying as associate professors or full professors. The USBE office is to efficiently support activities in education, research, and collaboration. To ensure that this is the case, administrative needs are to be monitored in order to further develop the support functions.

Below is a detailed description of our work related to ensuring a good and efficient workplace by 2025.



8.2 Together we are USBE

USBE is a workplace where diversity is seen as an asset and where equality is integrated into our operational planning, decisions, and implementation, and where employee health is emphasized. We also actively work to promote sustainable development with indirect impact via education, research, and collaboration and direct impact via the university's environmental management system.

Internal and external communication of education, research, and collaboration supports our activities and recruitment of students, competence provision, collaboration projects, research funding, dissemination of results, and daily activities at or related to USBE.

USBE actively and continuously works with the physical and psychosocial work environment and equal opportunities. In our work on the psychosocial work environment, we are guided by the common professional ethical foundation for central government employees and the fundamental idea that we constitute each other's work environment.

The work is supported by the annual work environment plan and our representatives for work environment and equal opportunities. Communication and information about activities and decisions is provided online, via the social wall (digital communication in our premises), workplace meetings, internal newsletters, and in some cases e-mail. The approach is inclusive and, whenever possible, information is provided both in Swedish and English. USBE works to ensure that information coming from the central university offices and the Social Sciences Faculty follows the same principles.

8.3 Management's role, communication, and recruitment

The role of the management is to provide follow-up and information about our courses and programs and the impact of our research, and to create conditions for interesting contacts within and outside of Umeå University which promote and stimulate collaboration within our education.

In cooperation with the Directors of Studies, the management is to support the development of employees' teaching skills, stimulate the development of programs and courses and the development of new methods and examination forms, and ensure our commitment in educational issues on a national and international level.

The management must also, in close collaboration with the Heads of Research, support staff and doctoral students in their academic skills development, and encourage them to apply for funding for research, for international conferences and international exchanges, for themselves and for events in Umeå. Through systematic and continual follow-up of publications, projects, and assignments, research applications and their outcomes, we get data which allow researchers to make strategic decisions linked to publication and the application processes. At the same time, researchers are encouraged to be more active in generating new knowledge, publications, projects, assignments, and applications for external research funding.

When recruiting, consideration is to be given to applicants' ability to meet our requirements regarding teaching skills and that they have the qualifications required for teaching and development work in our programs, as well as the potential for:

- contributing with internationally competitive research



- meeting our requirements for research and collaboration performance, as laid out in our quality management system, and
- contributing to our research environment in general, including applying for and obtaining external funding.

Recruitment must also be based on applicants' ability to contribute to the attractiveness of our programs and courses and to give students opportunities to achieve the expected learning outcomes and program goals.

The management's follow-up and development of USBE's activities is supported by our board of directors and our advisory bodies (BAB, IAB) and through effective dialogue with the Social Sciences Faculty and university level management. USBE's autonomy and governance with the delegation of authority from the Vice-Chancellor allow us to be an internationally competitive business school and to maintain our AACSB accreditation.

8.4 Follow-up

The board and local cooperation groups continuously monitor the work environment efforts. Recruitment and staff composition are continuously followed-up within the quality management system and the work with a competence supply plan.

Workplace meetings, performance appraisals, and salary negotiations are important components of the follow-up and development work. The fact that we celebrate and highlight various types of achievements, innovations, and initiatives from all corners of our organisation, salary criteria and nominations for awards are all components of our incentive structure.