

Annual Plan 2008 for the Department of Economics

Approved by the Board of the Department, 6 March 2008

## **Introduction**

The Annual Plan 2008 for the Department of Economics consists in part of a strategy for the long term development of the Department and in part a specific action plan on how to realise this strategy for the present year.

The plan will place each staff member's work into a larger context which will act as a common measure for the activities of the Department. In addition, the plan will give information to others concerning the Department's activities.

The plan is based on similar plans for the Department of Social Sciences and the University of Oslo. The plan is implemented yearly and is approved by the Board of the Department.

The Annual Plan is based on the goal of the Department of Economics, which is to contribute to the development and transfer of the knowledge of Economics and its relating disciplines and with this provide society with new research results and understanding.

This goal is reached by

- conducting research on a high international level;
- offering research-based teaching of the highest international standard in our bachelor, master and research education;
- participate in the dissemination and exchange of knowledge with the rest of society.

If the goal is reached the Department will

- be a prominent contributor to the dissemination of new knowledge;
- be acknowledged nationally and internationally as a leading research and teaching institution;
- occupy a central position in the education of economists and contribute to their education giving them good job opportunities;
- be open to our national and international surroundings;
- be a well functioning and attractive workplace for all employees and guests, and have a well-functioning and attractive student environment;

Below we discuss the Departments strategic goals along with the measures for the present year categorized into five topics; research, research education, teaching, dissemination and knowledge exchange and staff, organization and economy. The strategic goals are long-term, guiding goals which are mainly qualitative. The strategic goals indicate a direction for the Department's activities. They should be verifiable using comparisons based on key figures. The measures are derived from the strategic goals and indicate the specific actions for the present year which will contribute to the fulfilment of the strategic goals.

## Research

The strategic goals for the Department's research are

- the Department shall maintain its basic and applied research as well as both its theoretical and empirical related research of high relevance and quality. The Department shall defend academic freedom, trustworthiness and scholarly independence.
- The Department shall be among the European elite in chosen fields of research and among the international elite in 1-2 fields. The Department shall be a leading institution of Norway within Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and Econometrics and also within many applied fields.
- The Department shall constitute an attractive research environment. The Department shall attract highly qualified researchers and participate in attractive guest exchanges and cooperation agreements with other universities.

When evaluating the strategic goals for research we will consider, among other things, international rankings, research publications divided into main categories, types of periodicals and international classifications, along with research man-year figures divided into main groups (financing, positions and guests).

To reach the goals, the Department will concentrate its efforts on organisation, limitations and resources. The specific topics and methods are to a large extent decided upon by the individual researcher; both with regards to productivity and quality, research should be based on each researcher's initiative and insight. This entails that the planning of research at the Department level should concentrate on

- research quality
- research-based teaching
- external financing, and
- synergy effects, for instance by organising larger, theme-based research centres or groups.

Even if each individual researcher has a large extent of freedom by being able to choose both the topic and the method of their research, the Department will encourage the concentration of certain topic and method areas, among other things to take advantage of synergy effects. In practice this means that the Department will prioritise resources to chosen areas. The choice of prioritised areas will in part have to be assessed continually and in part be ensured by continuity. When considering new priorities, whether the research area is promising, the possibilities of financing, the need for teaching resources and the possibility of collaborating with other institutions, also from different fields, will be a part of the decision. The prioritized areas can be organised and supported through their own research centres or research groups at the Department. The centre for excellence ESOP represents the largest strategic priority from the Department in the coming year. The Department will also strongly prioritise Econometrics, where the Department traditionally has had a very strong position but where many of the involved researchers are reaching the age of retirement.

The Department strives for researches to participate in and contribute to externally financed projects. These projects should be of a long-term character, should be adapted to the Department's research profile and should, to the largest degree possible, be located at the

Department. A good example is the project Young Researchers of Excellence and the professorship financed by the Norwegian Central Bank. The Department will contribute by assisting with the applications for external resources. The Department will continually conduct evaluations of the research productivity and quality. The Department has just recently been evaluated in connection with a larger evaluation of economic research in Norway. The Department will utilise this evaluation in its continued effort of strengthening productivity and research.

The Department expects that researchers aim to publish research in leading international journals or other publication channels of similar quality. The Department encourages publications in the leading journals by creating attention around and honouring the published researchers. Participation in Department seminars and other professional seminars is considered to be an important part of the research process which contributes to a common academic identity and is in part a prerequisite for inviting external lecturers. The Department will continue the tradition of holding a weekly seminar with mainly external presenters (The Thursday Seminar) and a weekly internal seminar (The Friday Seminar). In addition, the Department will support more specialized seminars such as the ESOP seminar and the Econometrics seminar.

As part of a larger national and international research environment, the Department considers it as a natural part of its activities to host research conferences of all sizes. The Department will work towards organizing the European conferences EEA/ESEM in 2011. The Department hopes to have an extensive guest program. The Department will encourage research stays by prominent researchers working within the Department's fields of research for both shorter and longer durations. These visits will by large be dependent on the initiatives of the individual researchers, based on personal contacts and collaboration projects. In a similar way, the Department hopes that its staff will at regular intervals visit other reputable research institutions for shorter and longer durations. The Department will especially work towards longer stays abroad for doctoral students at prominent research institutions.

In our efforts to reach the strategic goals for research, the Department will implement the following measures in 2008:

1. Apply for external resources for new recruitments to the field of Econometrics.  
Responsible: Head of Department
2. Continue the HERO collaboration with the Frisch Centre and HELED. Responsible: Head of Department
3. Encourage the formation of more internal research groups at the Department.  
Responsible: Head of Department
4. Follow up the evaluation of economic research conducted by the Council of Research.  
Responsible: The Board and Head of Department
5. Encourage researchers to participate in and contribute to externally financed projects.  
Responsible: Head of Department
6. Carry out the preparations needed for the Department to organize the European conferences EEA/ESEM in 2011, such as applying to the university for project funding.  
Responsible: Appointed committee
7. Organize the 3rd Oslo Workshop on Monetary Policy and the Labour Market.  
Responsible: Steinar Holden
8. Organize the ESOP workshop. Responsible: ESOP centre leader

9. Consider the continuation of the cooperation between the Department of Economics and the University of Zimbabwe. Responsible: Head of Department/ Harald Goldstein.

## **Research education**

The strategic goals for the Department concerning research education are:

- The Department shall offer education at the doctoral level which is directed both towards a career within research and other demanding jobs in public and private sector.
- The Department aims to have a total admission of 6-10 doctoral students per year and a strengthened interest for doctoral studies among graduates both at home and abroad.
- The Department's aim is that the research education will be at a level equivalent to what can be offered at renowned universities abroad. The Department shall be the preferred provider of research education for economics in Norway, alone or in alliance with selected partners.

When evaluating the strategic goals for research education we will consider the conditions of employment for doctoral graduates, admissions, rate of transition from master to doctoral level, man-years, financing and doctoral production along with evaluating dissertations international quality based on nominations from evaluation committees or other measures.

In order to reach these goals, the Department will work towards an improved integration of the externally financed doctoral students in the Department environment, among other things by securing that the students have the Department as their work place for a certain time period. The Department also wants to work towards an improved range of courses, among other things by cooperating with other institutions both at home and abroad.

In our efforts to reach the strategic goals for research, the Department will implement the following measures in 2008:

10. Participate in the Advanced Programme in Labour Studies collaboration at the faculty.  
Responsible: Head of Department/doctoral committee
11. The Department will follow up the Faculty's work on adapting the quality protection system for the doctoral programme and report to the Faculty if the system is not working.  
Responsible: Doctoral committee
12. Evaluate the routines for how the Department should handle candidates who are no longer active. Responsible: Doctoral committee
13. Improve routines connected to the appointment and supervision of new research fellows.  
Responsible: Head of Department/doctoral committee
14. Follow up the Faculty's work on implementing the Common Student System (FS) for the registration of all parts of research education, including the training portion. Responsible: Head of administration
15. Work towards an improved integration of the externally financed doctoral students in the Department environment, among other things by securing that the students have the Department as their work place for a certain time period. Responsible: Head of Department/Head of administration/doctoral committee

16. Work towards research fellows receiving longer stays abroad at a prominent research institution. Responsible: Head of Department/doctoral committee
17. Improve the information concerning doctoral dissertations for external members in the evaluation committee. Responsible: Doctoral committee/administration

## **Teaching**

The strategic goals for the Department concerning teaching are:

- The Department shall offer high quality teaching which secures good job opportunities for graduates on the basis of their education. The Department shall be a natural first choice for students who want an education in Economics based on a solid theoretical and methodological foundation.
- The Department shall have attractive study programmes with a large number of well qualified applicants and a low drop-out rate.
- The Department shall offer attractive study opportunities for foreign students and support academically attractive studies abroad for Norwegian students. The Department shall be able to compete on the international educational market and will offer courses at an international elite level in chosen areas.

When evaluating the strategic goals for teaching we will among other things consider the conditions of employment for graduates, admissions, drop-out rate and completion time, credits obtained by foreign guest students, studies abroad for Norwegian students and statistics related to the use of resources for teaching and counselling.

To reach these goals the Department will further develop the range courses within the existing framework. The Department will not engage in any major alterations of the range of courses, neither on bachelor nor master level. It is however necessary to continually adapt the courses based on evaluations, the number of participants and available resources.

The Department will to a large extent allow the individual course teacher to choose the kind of teaching and examination which he/she considers to be appropriate for the course. A teaching method which ensures good academic skills is expected and the type of examination should document and support learning.

It is also expected that the teaching is based on research. Therefore the course should mainly be planned and taught by active researchers. Due to lack of capacity or expertise in the internal staff, the use of advanced students or other qualified teachers will in some cases be needed for teaching. The academic quality is ensured through a continual evaluation and control from those responsible for the programme and courses. The Department will work towards developing more cost-effective and goal-oriented types of evaluation.

To reach the goal that graduates should be attractive in the labour market, the Department will in addition to offering high quality teaching contribute to efficient and goal-oriented study guidance, descriptions of the qualifications obtained by the different degrees, visibility and promotion of graduates' qualifications along with continual contact and dialogue with potential employers. The

Department will at regular intervals conduct more systematic evaluations concerning whether the study programmes are adapted to labour market needs.

The Department will also work towards the recruitment of motivated and capable students through, among other things, strengthening the study's reputation among potential students, efficient and goal-oriented information to upper secondary school students, a good student environment, engaging and developing ways of teaching along with evaluations during and after completion of studies.

The Department will work towards a larger degree of international recruitment. This requires that the student programmes are perceived as able to compete internationally, clear demands to academic requirements and expected effort and a system for evaluating applicants qualifications. The Department will also work towards Norwegian students carrying out a portion of their studies abroad.

The student drop-out rate will be reduced and the speed at which studies are completed will be increased among other things through investigating the causes, improved study counselling and improved contact between teachers and students.

In our efforts to reach the strategic goals for teaching, the Department will in 2008 complete the following measures:

18. Further develop the quality protection system for programmes and courses. Go through the routines for the external examiner arrangement in accordance with the Quality of studies report for 2007. Responsible: Programme council
19. Consider reducing the admission of master students to once a year. Responsible: Programme council
20. Propose measures to ensure more active student participation at seminars. Responsible: Programme council
21. Consider whether the changes in the seminar arrangement can replace the compulsory assignment in certain courses. Responsible: Programme council
22. Consider reducing oral examinations to 3 times a year. Responsible: Programme council/Head of examinations
23. Follow up on the results from the employer survey and the candidate survey. Follow up on the contact panel with representatives from the working life. Include the working life panel in the work on the bachelor programme. Responsible: Head of Department/programme council
24. Consider measures to increase the number of students that complete the masters programme in the prescribed amount of time, such as appointing a supervisor when entering the masters programme. Responsible: Head of the Department/programme council
25. Strengthen the programme and class fellowship academically and socially, especially for first year students. Responsible: Programme council/study consultant
26. Examine the compulsory macroeconomics courses in the Economics programmes. Responsible: Programme council
27. Study and follow up the drop-out rates of the study programmes. Responsible: Programme council

28. Clarify the rules for approval of non-economic courses in the master programmes. Study relevant subjects from other institutions (TIK, HELED, Economic history) which can be approved in the master programmes. Responsible: Programme council
29. Once again send a proposal to limit the possibility to retake exams at a lower level after completing higher level courses. Responsible: Head of administration
30. Consider whether the Department's courses cover the programmes' needs for elective courses in economics. Responsible: Programme council
31. Follow up the proposal from the University to change regulations concerning admissions to the master programme with the intention of being able to use GRE as a part of the admission criteria. Responsible: Head of Department/Programme council
32. Promote the two year master programme actively internationally if the GRE requirement is carried out. Responsible: Head of the Master programmes/study consultant
33. Consider changes in the amount of teaching in light of the Department's financial situation. Responsible: Programme council
34. Improve information on the web pages directed towards students, among other things in order to reduce the need for individual counselling. Responsible: Programme council/study consultant
35. Make the Department's study programmes visible at upper secondary school arrangements and promote the study among other things through the web pages. Responsible: Head of the bachelor programme/study consultant
36. Consider entering a team in the Econometric Game 2009. Responsible: Head of Department/econometrics group
37. Consider whether to keep, or possibly develop new bachelor courses taught in English in response to the Social Sciences Faculty suggestion that we develop more courses of the sort. Responsible: Head of Department/Programme council
38. Consider whether to start using "clickers" to improve the attendance at lectures and larger seminar groups, in line with the Study quality rapport for 2007. Responsible: Programme council
39. Examine the construction and completion of the study programmes in economics in light of a new course in microeconomics for the Fall 2009. Responsible: Programme council

### **Dissemination and knowledge exchange**

The strategic goals for the Department's dissemination and knowledge exchange are:

- The Department shall contribute to dissemination and knowledge exchange with the surrounding world in the areas where the Department is in possession of academic competence and comparative advantages by measures such as actively participating in the national and international economic debate.
- The Department shall especially make sure to keep in contact with institutions and environments that have particular conditions and needs to utilize research results.
- Dissemination and knowledge exchange shall contribute to profiling the Department to the outside world as a well-functioning and open teaching and research institution

When evaluating the strategic goals for dissemination and knowledge exchange, we will among other things consider dissemination contributions and activities and external contacts.

To reach our goals on dissemination and knowledge exchange it is especially important to prioritize target groups and dissemination activities. The foremost target groups are the graduated economists and others with professional qualification and interest in acquiring research results. The dissemination activities that are especially effective for such groups are attendance at professional conferences, internal and external seminars, public committees and expert groups, acting as an expert, preparing teaching materials and reports as well as publishing in national and international professional journals directed towards non-academic economists. The Department considers it valuable that the staff, using their special research competence, participate in the public debate.

The Department hosts conferences with the intention of disseminating and exchanging research-based knowledge. This happens among other things through the yearly seminar for the Norwegian Parliaments Finance Committee, representatives from the government, the political parties, public administration, business-, industry- and labour organisations, researchers and media. The Department will work towards having more goal-oriented dissemination activities.

The Department will also work towards a professionalisation of the communication in the Annual plan and the Annual report, on the website and in other channels.

In our efforts to reach the strategic goals for dissemination and knowledge exchange, the Department will implement the following measures in 2008:

40. Make sure the Department's debate page is frequently updated and make the Department visible on the homepage in connection with staff participation in media. Responsible: Head of Department/Head of administration

41. Host a conference for the Norwegian Parliaments Finance Committee, representatives from the government, the political parties, public administration, business-, industry- and labour organizations, researchers and media. Plan a similar conference for January 2009. Responsible: Deputy Head of Department

42. Prepare the work related to ESOP's dissemination conference in 2011 on the Nordic model. Responsible: ESOP centre leader

43. Consider establishing annual half day seminars for working economists. Responsible: Deputy Head of Department

### **Staff, Organization and Economy**

The strategic goals for the Department's staff, organisation and economy are:

- The Department's staff politics shall contribute to attract and develop highly qualified co-workers to all positions, including researchers from abroad. The Department shall be known as an attractive, challenging and developing work place for all employees. The Department hopes to acquire a higher share of females among its research staff.
- The Department shall be partakein the University's main organization with a high degree of autonomy concerning leadership and economy. The relations to higher organisational levels shall be clear and precise.



- The Department's administration, IT support and other support functions will be among the most efficient and well functioning compared to corresponding functions within and outside the University.
- The Department will have a transparent and robust economy which will ensure sufficient degrees of freedom for a successful development of research, education and dissemination.

When evaluating the strategic goals for staff, organization and economy, the Department will consider among other things the budgets and accounts as well as recruitment statistics.

To reach the goals related to staff politics, this has to be developed by the leadership in cooperation with representatives for the staff along the lines of the University's general staff politics. Staff politics has to be perceived as clear, precise and just. This will contribute to a good professional and social fellowship and a good working environment. This is ensured among other things through good information, internal openness and making visible the individual's tasks.

The development of a good working environment is the joint responsibility of the leadership and the individual employee. Development and engagement are supported by motivating forms of leadership where employees have a large influence on the organisation of daily tasks.

The Department has a skewed age profile for its permanent research staff with an average age well over 50 and with many employees approaching retirement. At the same time the economic situation is such that it does not allow new hirings on a large scale. The Department will nevertheless work towards a certain amount of new recruitments in the coming years, possibly financed through external sources. In the long term the Department hopes to be in a situation with a much more steady renewal of the staff.

It is especially important that new recruitments secure the entry of individuals that can contribute to renewal and development of the professional environment. Recruitments must therefore be directed towards renowned researchers or very promising young researchers. The Department must work towards conditions that make the Department attractive for such researchers.

The Department also strives towards a steady recruitment in temporary research positions. The Department has just hired a large number of research fellows, and with concern to the economic situation, the number of hirings must be kept at a low level in the near future. The Department hopes to quickly pass over to a phase where the hiring of research fellows is relatively constant from one year to the next.

The Department has relatively frequent changes in the administrative staff. Here it is important that the Department holds on to good co-workers. When recruiting new staff, the qualification and education requirements must be adjusted to the tasks they are going to do. The Department hopes to recruit administrative staff from both the public and the private sector and offer good development opportunities for each individual.

The Department follows the University's equal opportunity and senior politics and strives towards a more proportionate gender distribution in all positions.

The Department's wage policy will support the Department's strategic goals. The leadership will strive towards wage setting based on principles that are commonly known and accepted among

the staff. Wage differentials will be based on documented differences in contributions to the Department's work.

The Department uses considerable resources on IT equipment and IT support. The Department will continually work towards good access to and quality of the IT equipment and that the support functions are adjusted to the users' needs.

The Department's administration will give the best possible service so that the Department will reach its goals for research, teaching and dissemination. The administration's resources, tasks and competence must continuously be adjusted to meet the needs. In the current economic situation it is necessary to consider measures that aim to increase the efficiency of the administration.

In our efforts to reach the strategic goals for staff, organization and economy, the Department will implement the following measures in 2008:

44. Clarify the relationship between ESOP and the Department, among other things with respect to the economic responsibilities. Responsible: Head of Department/ ESOP centre leader

45. Carry out co-worker talks with all employees. Responsible: Head of Department/head of administration

46. Make use of the new resource planning tools from the Faculty, aiming to have an updated account of hours spent on teaching and academic tasks with a prognosis so that the staff may know the prognosis for the end of the current semester when planning the teaching for the next semester. Responsible: Head of administration

47. Follow up the faculty's action plan for equal opportunity to improve the recruitment of women to the Department. Consider specific measures to improve the gender balance in research positions in the long run. Responsible: Head of Department/Head of administration