

## **School of Culture and Society - Strategy 2020-2025**

The School of Culture and Society consists of seven strong academic departments: Anthropology, Archaeology and Heritage Studies, Philosophy and History of Ideas, Global Studies, History and Classical Studies, the Study of Religion, and Theology. The School educates Bachelor's, Master's and PhD students, who, across disciplines, are characterised by profound and transferrable academic skills, an interdisciplinary outlook and sound critical thinking.

The School of Culture and Society is an ambitious research institution. Our research into cultural and societal conditions is wide-ranging and relates human culture and society to nature, technology and theology – from prehistoric times to the present day and in a local and a global perspective. We aim to strengthen our attractive and international research environment further and foster an inspiring and inclusive work environment for senior and junior researchers alike.

We aim to create intensive and innovative learning environments, provide space for in-depth study and we expect a high level of student engagement through participatory, competence-developing and research-based teaching. It is our ambition to educate highly skilled graduates and to equip them with the academic prerequisites they need to make a difference in a global society.

The School of Culture and Society aims to be a driving partner in collaborations across sectors and disciplines, extending research in response to pressing societal challenges. Through research and education, we will work actively to connect the humanities and the social sciences with external partners. Our researchers are dedicated to qualifying public debate and strengthening societal knowledge through new communication formats.

As a research and educational institution, we are committed to analysing and interacting with the world around us. A changing world, which continues to challenge us in new ways and which is shaped by urgent crises of the environment, climate, health and global coexistence, calls for both reflection and action. The humanities and social sciences play a key role in conceptualising initiatives and defining possible fields of action to address our current challenges.

As a research and educational institution and as a workplace, we aim to assume responsibility for promoting sustainable societal development. We will work to ensure that this commitment is increasingly reflected in our research, in our degree programmes, and in our actions.

For the period 2020-2025, the School of Culture and Society will focus on six fundamental objectives in particular.

- **An international environment with strong academic disciplines engaging in interdisciplinary collaboration**
- **An innovative and experimental approach to research, teaching and communication**
- **A School that educates for the world of today and for the future**
- **A broad focus on digital humanities**
- **A local and global societal commitment**
- **An attractive and diverse workplace and a sustainable organisation**

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### **An international environment with strong academic disciplines engaging in interdisciplinary collaboration**

The School of Culture and Society is based on strong academic traditions. At the same time, we are committed to the continued development of high profile, dynamic research environments that transcend established disciplines and encourage space for experimental and creative interaction. We consider a diverse and international environment to be a strength and an important point of departure for a high level of research. The school is determined to maintain a strong, ambitious and well-integrated flow of research talent in all our departments and to ensure equal opportunities across genders.

For this reason, it is our ambition to

- Strengthen all of our academic disciplines by supporting the development and integration of new research and teaching methods, and by prioritising a continued exchange and collaboration with international academic environments.
- Support innovative collaborations and research development across the school's academic disciplines e.g. through interdisciplinary research centres.
- Promote and support large international research projects e.g. through the ongoing optimisation of our administrative support.
- Facilitate and support initiatives that create the best framework for talent recruitment and development and which support and encourage academic synergy and integration between junior and senior researchers.

- Promote diversity – and counter skewed gender balances – in our academic environments e.g. in relation to our recruitment processes.

### **An innovative and experimental approach to research, teaching and communication**

The School of Culture and Society considers research, teaching and communication to be closely interrelated. We consider it an academic strength that our School has the competences to understand and communicate cultural, conceptual, physical and cognitive dimensions of social processes. It is the School's ambition to support bold ideas, innovative methodological approaches and free basic research and hereby continue to develop our strong research profile.

We will support our academic environments in developing explorative and intervening didactic approaches that engage our students and prepare them for the future labour market.

We recognize the importance of communicating our research locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, and we are committed to the co-creation of new knowledge in mutual exchange with society.

For this reason, it is our ambition to

- Support innovative teaching, for example insuring the right physical frameworks for creative teaching formats and by supporting the ongoing development of new didactic initiatives.
- Have a particular focus on experimental approaches to research development and innovative partnerships – for example with artists, creative industries, entrepreneurs, museums and other learning environments.
- Work to increase synergy between research and teaching by strengthening and upholding research-based teaching, but also by supporting the development of new forms of teaching-based research.
- Strengthen our social commitment by contributing to and developing new forms of research dissemination and by working to expand the opportunities for the inclusion of students, citizens and external partners in our research and teaching activities.

## **A School that educates for the world of today and for the future**

The School understands education in the broadest sense as *Bildung* and considers it a core task. *Bildung* is a result of the interplay between established knowledge and new research insight that is communicated broadly and through dialogue and, as such, helps to inform public debate. *Bildung* requires in-depth study, but it also involves preparing students in the best possible way to become committed citizens who, through cultural understanding, historical insight, strong analytical skills and a well-developed ethical compass, take responsibility in a global society

The School of Culture and Society considers *Bildung* an academic foundation of knowledge that guides responsible and sustainable action. *Bildung* also involves digital literacy. It is our ambition to contribute to a varied understanding of the implications of technological development for our society and the way we live as well as for the way we teach, engage in research, and acquire knowledge.

For this reason, it is our ambition to

- Conduct critical, creative and constructive research into democracy and democratic processes.
- Critically explore how digital and technological developments affect, support and challenge the modern human being.
- Include central themes such as ethics, sustainability, climate, gender equality, diversity and global citizenship in our degree programmes and courses.
- Maintain and develop our strong tradition for the broad communication of academic knowledge and research results, for example through engaging in a wide range of communication strategies.

## **A broad focus on digital humanities**

The digital development is changing the possibilities and conditions for research and education within the humanities and the social sciences. It increases the availability of new and old sources, it offers new methods of analysis, and fosters entirely new research questions.

Thanks to the dedicated digital pioneers among our academic staff and our focused centres for digital and computational research support, the School of Culture and Society is in a strong position when facing these new digital challenges and opportunities.

It is our ambition to continue to build on this strong foundation and to prioritise being at the forefront of the many new opportunities created by technological development.

Thus, The School of Culture and Society considers it important to support the development of competences with new digital tools and didactic methods among teaching staff. The School's students must acquire a comprehensive and up-to-date portfolio of digital competences as a natural and well-integrated part of their education. We aim to ensure that our teachers and students are prepared to act – constructively and critically – in response to digital opportunities.

For this reason, it is our ambition to

- Strengthen and further develop our researchers' and teachers' digital competences.
- Strengthen the digital approaches to research and teaching within the humanities and social sciences and facilitate increased access to relevant digital data for researchers and students by further developing the existing infrastructure.
- Increase our focus on strengthening our students' acquisition of digital competences by providing basic, well-qualified and critical insights into the opportunities, pitfalls and future perspectives of digital and computational approaches to the disciplines within the humanities and social sciences.
- Consider it a particular responsibility to contribute to society with important research-based knowledge on the ethical – and research ethical – use of new technological possibilities within digitalisation and artificial intelligence

### **A local and global societal commitment**

The School of Culture and Society contributes to society research-based knowledge of culture, religion, language and social conditions from a national, regional and global perspective. We aim to provide answers and solutions to common challenges in close collaboration with our external partners. We will engage our students and prepare them to enter the future labour market

through participatory methods of teaching that encourage and provide the opportunity to transform knowledge into practice.

It is our ambition to cultivate closer relations with companies, organisations and institutions in our immediate community, but we will also be measured by our commitment to a wider world. We will continue to engage with different communities through dedicated research communication. We strive to offer an attractive and international study environment and we will continue to build on our strong tradition for long-term research collaborations that connect research environments across the globe.

For this reason, it is our ambition to

- Increase the School's external collaborations in research and teaching by means of organisational support, recognition and clear incentives.
- Participate actively in the society of which we are a part, globally, nationally, and locally, in collaboration with our city and region.
- Support the continued development of research collaborations that transcend continents and national borders.
- Develop and support new dialogical and didactic methods for transferring the academic skills and disciplines of our researchers, teachers and students, to meet the needs and challenges of citizens and external partners.

### **An attractive and diverse workplace and a sustainable organisation**

The School of Culture and Society aims to be an inclusive, sustainable workplace that values a healthy work-life balance. We believe that the diversity of our employees and our academic approaches increases the School's general level of research and teaching.

The School will ensure the recognition of a broad range of academic and organisational competences. We will work with dedication to promote diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all employees.

It is important for the School to create a coherent organisation across junior and senior researchers, permanent and project employees and academic and administrative staff.

As an organisation, we also commit ourselves to acting with due consideration to the pressing challenges of climate change. We recognise the compelling necessity of a green transition and a respectful approach to nature and our planet's resources.

For this reason, it is our ambition to

- Support a green transition in our research and teaching activities and in our daily operations by rethinking our policies and our behaviour, for example in relation to travel, catering, conferences and purchasing.
- Be an inclusive workplace that values the diverse backgrounds of our employees
- Promote an open and tolerant study environment with a focus on general well-being, learning and commitment to the world around us.
- Support our employees' ability to create a healthy work-life balance.
- Maintain a continued focus on initiatives that promote well-being, good relations between colleagues, and an inclusive social and academic environment in all our departments.

The School of Culture and Society is in a strong position at the entrance of a new strategy period. We are entering this period with a clear expectation that our School will be further strengthened in the next five years through the above-mentioned focus on interdisciplinary interaction between our strong academic environments, frontier research, innovative teaching formats and inclusive partnerships.

We will take responsibility, educate for a global and digital future, and contribute to sustainable development both as a research and educational institution and as a workplace.