

Goals and Means

Research strategy at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University

Adopted at departmental board meeting 2011-11-07

Introduction

A research strategy was first adopted by the department in 2005/2006. In the light of an extensive evaluation of the strategy which was carried out in the spring of 2011 and the results of the Quality and Renewal 2011 Report (KoF2011), the research strategy has been revised. The strategy is to be seen as a steering instrument, a guide for those that are responsible for research at different levels (projects, programmes, etc.). It is intended to assist their efforts at securing and developing further the research conducted at the Department, including making it measurable. The proposed means are often expressed in general terms. This is so that those with principal responsibility for implementing the strategy—the Head of Department, professors, leaders of research programmes, project leaders and individual researchers—shall be able to develop specific, concrete means within the framework of the activities they direct.

The strategy is motivated by the following overriding goal:

The primary goal of research of the Department is to understand the causes, dynamics and resolution of armed conflict. The goal is attained through maintaining and further enhancing internationally recognized academic excellence.

This goal is translated into six subgoals. Means aimed at the attainment of each subgoal are then listed. Finally, a number of methods for evaluating what has been done are identified.

Sub-goal 1: Strengthen faculty-funded research

Examples of *means* to attain this:

- ensure a share in each lectorate devoted to research
- create a system of sabbatical leave for lecturers and professors to ensure more quality-time for research
- create more assistant professor positions

Sub-goal 2: Strengthen the PhD programme

Examples of *means* to attain this:

- ensure regular admission of PhD candidates on faculty funding
- maintain high-quality supervision, including the group supervision programme pioneered by the department
- strengthen methods training by offering advanced methods courses at the department
- organize PhD courses jointly with other departments and institutions, in Sweden and internationally
- facilitate and encourage international exchange
- facilitate and encourage participation in international training programmes (theory and methods) and summer schools
- support PhD candidate participation in international conferences
- evaluate the PhD recruitment process

Sub-goal 3: Enhance quality in publications

Examples of *means* to attain this:

- make the value of publishing research results visible, e.g., by reporting publications and reviews in the Weekly News and on the website etc.
- compile and place on the homepage an annotated list of all publications from the Department
- introduce the aim that academic activities—programme meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences—should result in some form of publication
- devote one research seminar per year to collect the past year's experiences in publication-related activities, e.g., lessons from contacts with publishers and journals, lessons from received peer reviews, etc.
- more jointly authored publications, e.g., by senior researchers and Ph.D. candidates
- provide publication mentoring for junior researchers

Sub-goal 4: Maintain and increase the inflow of funds for research (in particular for basic research, but also for applied research)

Examples of *means* to attain this:

- improved administrative support for the authoring of grant applications
- improved cooperation and coordination, internal and external, in connection with the authoring of grant applications
- explicit linking of grant applications to ongoing work at the Department, e.g., by referring to research programmes, other research projects, etc.
- utilize research funds and research positions economically, e.g. by creating efficient administrative routines
- devote one research seminar per year to discuss experiences of the past year's grant applications—maintain an institutional memory in this area
- make the Department's profile visible, e.g., on the homepage via accessible descriptions of research programmes, projects and how they are related, area expertise,

multi-methodological competence, etc. widen the funding base and identify new sources/donors of research funds

Sub-goal 5: Strengthen internal research collaboration

Examples of *means* to attain this:

- develop and deepen existing research programmes
- initiate new research groups to develop long-term research agendas and programmes
- maintain an active research seminar with broad participation
- initiate regular poster presentations at the Department in order to sharing information and ideas about ongoing research and research ideas

Sub-goal 6: Strengthen external research collaboration

Examples of *means* to attain this:

- joint applications with relevant external departments/institutions
- joint research cooperation with relevant external departments/institutions, e.g., in the form of joint workshops, seminars, research and publications
- aim at a continued high degree of internationalization, e.g., through participation in international conferences, shorter stays at external departments/institutions, etc.
- strategically invite guest researchers/professors for short-term and long-term engagements
- maintain an active Speaker's Series with broad participation
- encourage faculty exchange

Follow-up/Evaluation of goals and means

The formal responsibility for implementing and evaluating the strategy rests with the Head of Department. He/she shall ensure that the structures, instructions and resources required for the implementation and evaluation of the strategy are created and made accessible. At the same time, the intention is that the implementation of the strategy shall be a decentralised process, where the practical responsibility mainly rests with those in charge of research at different levels.

A process of follow-up, assessment and evaluation is, in itself, a form of implementation. A systematic evaluation of actions taken shall be carried out, compiled and presented on an annual basis, in a form decided upon by the Department Board. If needed, the strategy may be revised/amended in this context.

By producing statistics of our activities, we can follow the development of the research at the Department over time and, thus, get a more systematic appreciation of how we perform. Related to the above partial goals, we may, e.g., produce statistics on:

- grant applications made/granted (total and by grantee, including sums)
- received research funds per year (total and by project type, i.e. individual projects, internal cooperation projects, external cooperation projects)
- research funds spent per year (total and by programme/project)

- publications per year (divided by type, i.e., peer review articles, books, book chapters, external reports, internal reports, educational material, conference papers, newspaper articles, etc.) citations per year and over time
- participation/presentation at the research seminar and participation in conferences.

A biannual compilation of this kind will generate a better understanding of what we do, our outreach, the balance between achievements and costs, where we tend to get funds from and for what kind of research, what works/ does not work in terms of attracting grants, etc.