

UCPH School of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science (VetSchool) Strategy 2023-2026

Introduction

The UCPH VetSchool consists of two departments, the Department of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (D-VAS) and the Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences (D-VCS). The UCPH VetSchool is part of the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences. Other schools at the faculty include the School of Medicine, School of Pharmaceutical Sciences and School of Dentistry. Each school includes two or more departments. The strategy of the VetSchool and the two veterinary departments closely follows the general UCPH and UCPH-Health strategies 2019-2023, approved by the UCPH rectorate and board. The overall UCPH strategy 2023 comprise four main pillars:

1. Attracting, developing and retaining academic talent,
2. Education with closer ties to research and practice,
3. Collaboration and societal commitment – nationally and globally,
4. One unified and focused university.

The UCPH veterinary education supplies candidates to all specific veterinary fields in Denmark, including companion animal, equine, and production animal practice, Academia, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration, and the pharmaceutical industries. The UCPH animal science education supplies candidates to all fields within animal science at both national and international level.

The below Vision and Mission statements is copied from the EAEVE visitation report 2019.

***Vision:** Health and welfare for animals and human beings in a changing world.*

The VetSchool **vision** is further detailed as:

- To ensure that research, teaching and clinical activities are world class
- The VetSchool adds significantly to the University of Copenhagen's ranking by being ranked highly within veterinary medicine

***Mission:** To deliver research and research-based teaching necessary for education in veterinary medicine and animal science, including research and research-based teaching in the challenges emanating from interaction between animals and human beings. Our research contributes to solving actual societal tasks and to anchoring the evidence-based growth of our society.*

The VetSchool **mission** is further detailed as follows:

- To ensure veterinary teaching hospitals support clinical research and teaching at the highest international level
- Performing high-quality veterinary and animal science research to the benefit of individual animals, animal populations and human beings
- To develop and customize diagnostic procedures, treatment and care to enhance health and welfare for the individual animal
- Based on our high professional level, to train and educate future veterinarians for a professional and balanced work life
- To communicate our knowledge at a high level to society

Strategic aims for the VetSchool:

UCPH pillar 1. Attracting, developing and retaining academic talent

Strategic aim 1. To maintain The VetSchool's top international ranking

Since 2020, The UCPH VetSchool has ranked in the top ten on the QS ranking list and a primary aim is to maintain this high ranking. To achieve this, our research and education must be of superior quality. The main challenges in achieving this goal are declining government funding and limited access to external funding to some of the areas within the VetSchool especially to the clinical areas. Consequently, the two departments will focus on retention, development and recruitment of academic and clinical specialist talent.

Actions:

- Ensure recruitment and retention of talented faculty and staff by increased transparency in career tracks, expectations and succession planning, including using the new UCPH faculty career programs with defined promotion criteria
- Recruit EBVS diplomats and further development and approval of own EBVS residency programs
- Promote further collaboration across the two departments by cross department scientific and educational brainstorming meetings to create common ideas for educational and scientific projects including applications for attraction of external funding
- Promote “future preparedness” in a 5-10-year perspective through faculty and department leadership scenario workshops
- Promote continuous development of innovative teaching methods and tools

Success criteria:

- Continued top 10 on the QS ranking and top 5 on the Shanghai list

Timeline: Yearly evaluation

Anchor persons: Department Heads and VetSchool Director

Strategic aim 2. Ensure a functioning physical framework and state-of-the art infrastructure

A sufficient and healthy physical framework and state-of-the art infrastructure is a prerequisite for being able to perform international leading research and research-based teaching in basic, applied, and clinical veterinary science as well as animal science. Advanced imaging equipment incl. CT- and MRI-scanners, state-of-the art laboratories and up-to-date experimental animal facilities for different animal species are therefore of utmost importance for the future development across our department activities.

Actions:

- The D-VAS and D-VCS department heads coordinate, prioritize, and agree on the VetSchool infrastructure necessary for research and research-based teaching in both preclinical and clinical areas including communicating these to the faculty and university level leadership.

Success criteria:

- Continued state-of the art infrastructure is secured at both departments
- Yearly revised prioritized infrastructure plans at the Veterinary departments

Timeline: Yearly evaluation

Anchor persons: Department Heads

UCPH pillar 2. Education with closer ties to research and practice, and pillar 4. One unified and focused university.

Strategic aim 3. Ensure continued EAEVE accreditation

Maintaining EAEVE accreditation is a key priority as part of continued international benchmarking of the quality of the UCPH Veterinary education to ensure, that our candidates have day-one-competences for an international labor market, and to use our position to retain and attract the best faculty. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to reach overall compliance with the EAEVE standards.

Actions:

- Continuous close collaboration and regular meetings between the D-VAS and D-VCS Department Heads, the VetSchool Director, and the Head of Studies regarding our curriculum and resources. This action is outside the current regular meetings in the study board and educational council and aims for ensuring a common “voice” to the faculty and university level regarding the necessary resources.
- Cross department quarterly information meetings for all staff initiated February 2022
- Broad and more targeted dialogue and ideation meetings for relevant staff, where quality and mutual challenges in our VetSchool program are addressed.

Success criteria:

- Achieve and maintain full EAEVE accreditation

Timeline: Full accreditation achieved in 2022 and reaccreditation in 2029
Anchorpersons: VetSchool Director and Department Heads

Strategic aim 4. UCPH VetSchool as an attractive and competitive workplace

Our most important resource is our dedicated and committed employees. High levels of commitment, well-being and a balanced work-life are fundamental to ensure the continued high quality across all core veterinary and animal science education, research, clinical and support activities. Therefore, there is a strong focus on well-being and a healthy physical work environment, and on clearly formulated career paths and expectations to the employees.

An increasingly important challenge in attracting and retaining highly competent and specialized staff is ensuring a sufficient balance between workload and time, work-life balance, and avoiding work-related illness and stress among faculty and staff. The responsibility for the health and safety of staff in our two departments' is anchored within the Local Work Environment Committee (LAMU), but is also a fixed agenda item at the Local Collaboration Committee (LSU) meetings and department leadership meetings. It is a shared responsibility of the leadership and staff at all levels to contribute to the well-being and a healthy physical work environment. The every third year UCPH work place assessment was completed in spring 2022.

Actions:

- Improve the well-being by aiming at a sufficient balance between workload and time, and work-life balance to prevent work-related illness and stress by:
 - Follow up on 2022 work place assessment across LSU, LAMU, sections and leadership teams of the two departments
 - Clear job descriptions and expectations for the different employee groups and leaders including research group leaders, section heads, heads of teaching committees, and heads of department
 - Increased focus by department heads, assisted by department leadership teams, on prioritization to match resources, competences, and tasks

Success criteria:

- Improved 2025 workplace assessment related to the criterias for stress and work life balance
- Decreased work-related illness
- Departmental recruitment and retention plans where all sections have updated succession plans
- All posted positions attract highly qualified candidates

Timeline: Yearly evaluation by each department and the workplace assessment in 2025
Anchor persons: Department Heads

Strategic aim 5. UCPH VetSchool as a safe and supportive learning environment

The UCPH VetSchool wishes to train and educate future veterinarians and animal scientists for a professional and balanced work life. The veterinary education requires fast knowledge acquisition and is a challenging full time study, with many on-campus hours and little flexibility. To ensure optimal learning, the students need to feel secure and supported by both staff and fellow students.

Actions:

- Secure an up-to-date safe and supportive learning environment for students by:
 - Securing follow up and implementation of actions on key findings from the 2021 survey on student well-being in close collaboration with the Study Board for Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science and student societies
 - Implement and enforce the newly developed Code of Conduct for the study and teaching environment at the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences seeking to promote a culture based on inclusion, respect and the prevention of offensive behavior
 - Ensure relevant pedagogical training of all staff involved in teaching activities

Success criteria:

- 20% decrease in student reported stress in the next survey on student well-being in 2023/24
- Dedicated pedagogical training programs for clinical and technical staff completed in 2023-2024

Timeline: Yearly evaluation

Anchor persons: Department Heads, Head of Studies, Chair of the Study Board

Strategic aim 6. Ensure sustainable alternatives to a reduction of experimental animals in teaching

Awareness of animal welfare and other ethical considerations is increasing in the society and among students and teachers. Traditionally, the UCPH VetSchool uses healthy animals in propaedeutic and clinical training, to obtain necessary clinical skills, The use of experimental animals in teaching is currently being reviewed, with a renewed focus on State of the Art physical and virtual skills models, to promote and allow 24/7 student training, as well as increasing companion animal surgery patient numbers, to strengthen student surgical skills.

Actions:

- Reduce and replace the use of experimental animals in the propaedeutic and clinical teaching by increasing investment in and use of
 - 1) “skills” models, and
 - 2) exploring technological and digital development including virtual reality (VR).

Success criteria:

- At least 30% reduction in the use of experimental animals in curriculum

- Continuous implementation of state of the art skills models to replace live animals and allow student training access 24/7

Timeline: 2024 and every other year

Anchor persons: Leadership group at D-VCS

UCPH pillar 3. Collaboration and societal commitment – nationally and globally

Strategic aim 7. Improve the impact and branding of our research and education

We contribute to society by educating qualified graduates in veterinary and animal science.

Traditionally we measure the value of our study programs by graduate surveys and unemployment statistics. There is a high and increasing demand for our graduates who are highly sought after at the national and international labor market.

In addition, lifelong learning is in focus and there is a demand for postgraduate continuous professional development (CPD) programs and courses.

Actions:

- Continue to match the tracking options and dimensions to the specific competency demands from the labor market in collaboration with the Employer Panel
- To re-review especially the production animal track of the veterinary education, to include more clinical work to attract students to this area
- To further develop and offer international post-graduate CPD programs and courses to meet the needs of society and the labor market in close collaboration with different stakeholders

Success criteria:

- Continuous low unemployment of our candidates
- Increased satisfaction in employer surveys including satisfaction with obtained EAEVE Day 1 competences

Timeline: Bi-annual meetings with Employer Panel, evaluation and follow-up actions on graduate and employer surveys every 3rd year

Anchor persons: Department Heads, VetSchool Director and Chair of Veterinary Study Board

Strategic aim 8. Increased use of the Veterinary Public Sector Consultancy and Contingency (Danish Veterinary Consortium) in our teaching

A proper functioning veterinary contingency and research-based public sector consultancy of the highest quality is essential to prevent and control diseases in livestock and zoonotic infections and antimicrobial resistance in society in general. High quality in the research-based public-sector consultancy is required to contribute to the authorities' regulation of the veterinary field for the benefit of public health, animal welfare, and the food industry's earnings and export opportunities. Both veterinary departments have competences relevant to the veterinary

contingency. It is an overall goal to ensure that the veterinary public-sector consultancy will contribute to the strengthening of our research and teaching.

Actions:

- Increased use of case stories and experience from the veterinary contingency in teaching on relevant courses.

Success criteria:

- Improved student evaluation within courses including infectious diseases

Timeline: Student evaluations in 2023

Anchor persons: Chair of teaching committee D-VAS and Chair of the Veterinary Study Board

Strategic aim 9. Ensure optimal collaboration and synergy with the new Danish Veterinary and Animal Science educations (AU- Campus Viborg)

In 2021, the Danish government made a political agreement under the heading “Regionalization” including a decision to establish a second Danish veterinary education under the auspices of Aarhus University (AU) –CampusViborg. Another consequence of the “Regionalization” is that the Animal Science education will move from UCPH to Aarhus University (AU) CampusViborg.

Actions:

- To continuously seek and establish good relations and collaborations with AU
- To acknowledge a commitment to dialogue with AU and national stakeholders to explore and achieve synergies

Success criteria:

- Establishment of collaboration agreements in specific areas pending progress in establishment of education in Viborg

Timeline: formal collaboration agreements established in 2024

Anchor: Director of VetSchool and Heads of Departments