

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 [UCPH-Health strategies 2019- 2023](#), approved by the UCPH rectorate and board. The overall UCPH strategy 2023 comprises 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 trains graduates in all veterinary specialties related to private and public sectors 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 graduates to all fields within animal science at both national and international level.

Vision:

The UCPH VetSchool is world leading in veterinary and animal research, education and innovation, continuously advancing the health and quality of life for animals and people in a changing world.

Mission:

The UCPH VetSchool delivers outstanding research and research-based education in veterinary medicine and animal science, advancing the health of animals and targeting the challenges emanating from the interaction between animals, people and the environment. The UCPH VetSchool engages in a supportive and inclusive learning environment where our research and educations contribute to evidence-based solutions to individual and societal challenges in animal health and welfare, considering also public health and planetary sustainability.

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 diplomates and further develop and establish own EBVS residency programmes
- 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 to attract external funding
- Promote continuous inspiration from educational and societal development and requirements and strategically embrace upcoming challenges and possibilities, through faculty and department leadership scenario workshops
- Promote continuous development of innovative teaching methods and tools

Success criteria:

- Continued Top-10 on the QS World University Rankings and Top-5 on the Academic Ranking of World Universities (Shanghai Ranking) for the next 4 years

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 healthy physical framework and state-of-the art infrastructure is a prerequisite for being able to perform international leading research and research-based education in basic, applied, and clinical veterinary science as well as animal science. State-of-the art laboratories, advanced equipment incl. CT- and MRI-scanners, 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 UCPH 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:

- State-of-the-art infrastructure at UCPH VetSchool
- Yearly revised prioritized infrastructure plans at the Veterinary departments and the UCPH VetSchool

Timeline: Yearly

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 in the continued international benchmarking of the quality of the UCPH Veterinary education and leading position in international rankings. The accreditation ensures that our graduates have day-one-competences compatible with the international labour market and support the UCPH VetSchool's focus to retain and attract the best faculty. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to comply with the EAEVE standards.

Actions:

- Continuous close collaboration with regular meetings between the D-VAS and D-VCS Department Heads, the VetSchool Director, and the Head of Studies regarding curriculum and resources to secure alignment with EAEVE requirements. 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 that include updates on changing EAEVE SOP's 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.
- Secure alignment with EAEVE policies by Faculty-VIP participating as experts in EAEVE accreditation visits

Success criteria:

- Achieve and maintain full EAEVE accreditation
- Faculty-VIP participate as experts in EAEVE accreditation visits

Timeline: Full accreditation achieved in 2022 and reaccreditation in 2029

Anchor persons: 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' of the UCPH VetSchool 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 employees at all levels to contribute to the well-being and a healthy physical work environment. Every third year UCPH a workplace assessment is performed; the most recent was completed in the spring of 2022.

Actions:

- To secure continuous attraction and retention of talent, it is necessary to improve employee 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 and implement necessary actions on 2022 workplace 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 departments
- Increased focus by department heads, assisted by department leadership teams, on prioritization to match resources, competences, and tasks
- Offer seminars where employees are introduced to tools to achieve a better work-life balance
- Promote exit interviews with employees choosing a career outside the UCPH VetSchool

Success criteria:

- A significantly improved 2025 workplace assessment related to the criteria for stress and work-life balance
- Decreased work-related illness
- Implementation of 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. The 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 UCPH VetSchool educations require fast knowledge acquisition and is a challenging full-time study, with many on-campus hours and little flexibility. To facilitate 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 behaviour
- Ensure relevant pedagogical training of all staff involved in teaching activities

Success criteria:

- Decrease in student reported stress in the next survey on student well-being in 2023/24
- Twice yearly pedagogical training programmes targeting clinical and technical staff

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).
- Increase numbers of surgical patients

Success criteria:

- At least 30% reduction in the use of large experimental animals in curriculum in comparison to 2022
- 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

The UCPH VetSchool contributes to society by disseminating original evidence-based knowledge as well as educating highly qualified graduates in veterinary and animal science. Study programmes and graduate competences are continuously evaluated through graduate surveys and unemployment statistics. Dedicated follow-up on these surveys secures the high and increasing demand for our graduates, who are highly sought after in the national and international labour markets.

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

Actions:

- Continue to match the curricular content, tracking options and dimensions to the specific competency demands from the labour market in collaboration with the VetSchool Stakeholder Advisory Panel and Employer focus groups
- To evaluate the production animal track of the veterinary education to secure that it continues 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 labour market in close collaboration with relevant stakeholders

Success criteria:

- Continued high demand for UCPH VetSchool graduates from the labour markets
- Continued satisfaction in employer surveys including satisfaction with obtained EAEVE Day 1 competences

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

Anchor persons: Department Heads, The UCPH 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.

- Establish education related collaboration with the Danish Veterinary and Food administration

Success criteria:

- Established external practice training (EPT) opportunities with the Danish Veterinary and Food administration
- Increased number of students electing the Herd Health/One Health tracking

Timeline: EPT established in 2023, increased student number by 2026

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

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

In 2021, the Danish government decided to establish a veterinary programme at Aarhus University's Campus Viborg. In addition, the Animal Science programme at UCPH will be replaced by a programme at Aarhus University's Campus Viborg in 2024.

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 programmes at Aarhus University's Campus Viborg

Timeline: Formal collaboration agreements established in 2024

Anchor persons: Director of VetSchool and Heads of Departments

VetSchool Strategy 2023-2026 - Operating plan

Formulating, agreeing on and implementing a shared strategic plan for the VetSchool, UCPH		
Initiation: January 2022	Final implementation: UCPH Strategy period 2023-2026	Main responsible: VetSchool director, Charlotte Reinhard Bjørnvad, Co-responsibles: Department of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (D-VAS) and Veterinary Clinical Sciences (D-VCS) heads of departments (HoD).
Background	Following the EAEVE re-accreditation visitation in September 2021, the VetSchool received an ECOVE decision of Conditional Accreditation due to a major deficiency for standard 1.3: <i>“The Establishment must have a strategic plan, which includes a SWOT analysis of its current activities, a list of objectives, and an operating plan with a timeframe and indicators for its implementation.”</i> The Committee concluded that the following Major Deficiency had been identified <i>“Non-compliance with Substandard 1.3 because of the need to implement a strategic plan on the VEE level in addition to the existing plans for the two departments”</i>	
Purpose	To develop and implement a <u>shared strategic plan</u> for the VetSchool, UCPH-Health	

Actions	Proces plan	Responsible	Timeline
	Internal – UCPH-Health		
1	New interim Department chair, D-VCS	Dean	January 1st 2022
2	New Director of VetSchool	Dean	February 1st 2022
3	UCPH-Health departmental Strategic aims for D-VCS and D-VAS	D-VAS & D-VCS HoD	Draft ultimo March/ approval June 2022
4	Drafting a Shared VetSchool Strategic plan	VetSchool director D-VAS & D-VCS HoD	May/June 2022
5	Input to the drafted strategic plan from the Dept. leadership groups and through these department staff, VetSchool Council and Veterinary Study Board (VSB)	VetSchool director D-VAS & D-VCS HoD	June/July 2022
6	Presentation of draft strategic focus areas to VetSchool staff across D-VAS and D-VCS	VetSchool director D-VAS & D-VCS HoD	June 16 th , 2022
7	Including Draft Strategic plan in the RSER to EAEVE	VetSchool director D-VAS & D-VCS HoD	July 2022
8	D-VAS and D-VCS Strategy Day on the Future of UCPH Veterinary education in a 5-10 year perspective, input to revision of Vision and Mission statements	VetSchool director D-VAS & D-VCS HoD, Chair, VSB	August 29, 2022
9	Finalizing Strategic plan draft and presentation to dept. incl. local corporation committees, local work environment committees and via scientific and hospital section heads all VetSchool staff and via Head of VSB and VetSchool director to VSB and D-VAS and D-VCS teaching committees	VetSchool director D-VAS & D-VCS HoD	September-October, 2022
10	Revised draft based on all received input and Presentation of final strategic plan for approval by Vet School, D-VAS and D-VCS and the Veterinary Study Board (VSB)	VetSchool director D-VAS & D-VCS HoD	November 2022
11	Presentation of strategic plan for the Deanship, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences	Dean and Associate Dean of Education	November 2022
12	External – Advice and input from the VetSchool Stakeholder Advisory Board	VetSchool director and Associate Dean of Education	November-December 2022
13	Final approval of strategic plan by the Dean, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences	Dean	December 2022
14	Upload final version to homepage	VetSchool director	December 2022
15	Vet School Strategic plan – Implementation with yearly follow up	D-VAS, D-VCS, VetSchool, Deanship	2023-2026