Strategic action plan for the Doctoral School of Social Sciences at Aalborg University 2012-2015

The overall purpose of the Doctoral School is to ensure a doctoral study programme of quality, efficiency and high international standards. Firstly, the School attaches great importance to creating the best possible study environment which can motivate PhD students in developing their research competences as innovatively as possible. Secondly, to establishing a volume of PhD students who are highly qualified researchers for the private and public sector (including university research). Thus, the Doctoral School seeks to meet the stated objective in the Strategy for The Faculty of Social Sciences of admitting in average 40 PhD students per year until 2015.

The Doctoral School is based on 7 Doctoral programmes:

- Sociology and Social Work
- Political Science
- Innovation Economic Programme
- Business Economic Programme
- SPIRIT
- The Doctoral Programme in Law and Business Law
- Education and Learning

The Doctoral School has the following organisational structure: a director, a secretariat, a PhD committee whose members are representatives from each programme and two PhD students. The PhD committee undertakes the political management of the PhD School in close interaction with the faculty’s research and internationalisation strategy.

Within the period of 2012-2015, the areas mentioned below will be prioritised. A number of subsidiary goals have been decided for 2012 and 2013. Subsequently, the plan will be evaluated and new subsidiary goals will be drawn up for 2014 and 2015.

1. Efficiency improvements and completion of present and future PhD projects. The principal activities being:
   - Status of and a plan for “delayed” PhD students
   - Evaluation of the new stepwise assessments with special focus on the discussions taking place after 12 and 30 months of the PhD study
   - Mandatory supervisor courses and implementation of the memorandum concerning supervision (November 2011)
   - Accessible and flexible guidelines for writing a thesis
   - Discussion and a possible revision of the required hours of teaching and knowledge mediation for PhD students
   - Discussion and a possible increase of the supervision hours for the PhD supervisors

The work on these areas commenced in Spring 2012, will carry on in Autumn 2012 and will be included in the annual report of 2012. The follow-up work will continue for the next 3 years.
2. Strengthening the Doctoral School’s international profile, including development of joint and double degrees

- Information from the Doctoral School shall be available in Danish and English
- Ensuring optimal conditions for international cooperation on doctoral programmes, including the establishment of double and joint degrees
- Strengthening the coordination of the Faculties’ initiatives for cooperation with international Doctoral Schools
- Encouraging a stay abroad for PhD students; increased number of international job advertisements, etc.

2012: All documents on the website should be available in Danish and English.
2012 and 2013: Developing agreements on joint and double degrees. The objective: To develop a minimum of 1-2 agreements per programme.

3. Embedment of previous cross-institutional doctoral programmes and development of new interdisciplinary PhD cooperation agreements in Denmark

- List of the cross-institutional PhD cooperation agreements which the School’s doctoral programmes are involved in (e.g. FiOL, JurForsk as well as History, Archaeology and Ethnology)
- Preparation of a plan for embedment of activities from cross-institutional programmes that expire (e.g. PolForsk and VoF-Welfare State and Diversity)
- Develop national and international cooperation agreements
- Develop cooperation with other doctoral schools at AAU

2012: An overview is created, and a memorandum is made concerning the development and contribution to cross-institutional cooperation, including the plan for embedment. 2013: Development and consolidation of network and cooperation agreements.

4. Development of PhD courses

Increasing PhD course activities. These are expected to be organised as follows:

- **Generic PhD courses** offered every or every second year (e.g. method courses, philosophy of science, research design and process-oriented courses such as flow writing, media and communication, basic pedagogic courses and a course for PhD supervisors)
- **Basic PhD courses** within different disciplines that are offered every or every second year (e.g. Basic sociologic course and welfare state course)
- **Thematic PhD courses** depending on current requirements which will take place in interaction with research initiatives e.g. visits by guest professors, conferences and seminars

The PhD courses will have several purposes: Firstly, to offer a wide range of qualified educational opportunities for our PhD students; secondly, to attract other Danish and international PhD students as a means of profiling the Doctoral School and the faculty’s research environments; thirdly, to strengthen the connection between the research programme and the faculty’s research environments, including active involvement of guest researchers in the education and supervision of PhD students.

2012: Determination and consolidation of the model for PhD courses, including registration in national database. Autumn 2012 and 2013: Development of existing and new PhD courses. The
objective: That the existing courses are supplemented with at least one basic course in every one of the Doctoral School’s programmes.

5. **Ensuring optimal everyday conditions for the PhD students:**
   - Participation in the research groups on the department level
   - Teaching and knowledge mediation obligations
   - Visits and stays at other institutions as part of internationalisation

Autumn 2012 – overview of PhD students’ stay abroad. Focus on the relation between research, teaching and knowledge mediation 2013: APV-information (workplace assessment) about PhD students (cooperation with HR).

6. **Support to the PhD-students’ organisations and networks**
   - Delphi, the PhD association at the Faculty of Social Sciences at AAU
   - Local networks in the doctoral programmes

Continuing financial support to Delphi. Initiate local networks in the doctoral programmes

7. **Continuing focus on administrative efficiency improvements**
Administrative tasks have been leaned in the following areas:
   - Job adverts, enrolment and composition of assessment committees
   - Approval of assessments, including PhD courses and teaching obligations
   - Approval of application for credit transfer, advance credit transfer and dispensation
   - Networking with other administrative employees at AAU’s Doctoral schools for the purpose of exchange of experience

Autumn 2012: A guide is issued to all the PhD supervisors and PhD students. Ensure that administrative efficiency improvements are implemented at all levels.

8. **Annual reports and ongoing progress reports for the development of the Doctoral School**
Annual reports containing the school’s and the programme’s development are produced. The reports will contain the number of Danish and foreign PhD students, completed theses, average PhD enrolment period and a list of course activities offered by the Doctoral School and the doctoral programmes.

The first progress report for the development of the Doctoral School has been produced and will, in an updated version, be included in the annual report 2012 which will be available at the beginning of 2013.

9. **The international evaluation in 2013**
   - Establishing the framework for the international evaluation of the Doctoral School. The evaluation will presumably be conducted in 2014

Autumn 2012 and autumn 2013: Drafting documentation material (simultaneously with the annual report). Spring 2014: Preparation of self-evaluation report and subsequently appointment of an international evaluation panel. The evaluation will be coordinated with The Doctoral School of the Humanities (overlap between two of the programmes).
The present PhD Committee was formed on February 28th 2012

Representatives of the academic staff
Ann-Dorte Christensen, Professor, (chairman/Director of Doctoral School)
Anette Borchorst, Professor, Dept. of Political Science
Christian R. Østergaard, Associate Professor, Dept. of Business and Management
Mogens Rüdiger, Professor, Dept. of Culture and Global Studies
John Klausen, Associate Professor, Dept. of Law
Erik Laursen, Professor, Dept. of Learning and Philosophy
Annick Prieur, Professor, (observer), Dept. of Sociology and Social Work

Representatives of the PhD students
Iben Nørup, Dept. of Political Science
Lars Oddershede, Dept. of Business and Management

The secretary of the committee
Henrik Marcher Larsen, Academic Officer

PhD administration
Lone Corfixen, Senior Secretary
Tove Hau Jensen, Senior Secretary