

**The Swedish School of Economics and Business  
Administration to 2015**

an international business school

Approved by the Board of the Swedish School of Economics and Business  
Administration on 11 February 2003

## **1. Mission**

**The Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration (Hanken)** promotes the acquisition of new knowledge in the scientific field of economics and business administration with a view to enhancing the level of economic knowledge within business life and in the world outside. The aim is to develop expertise of a socially responsible nature and an ethically high standard.

## **2. Vision**

By 2015, Hanken will have consolidated its position as a leading, accredited university with international appeal, and as one of the leading university-level business schools in Europe.

The School is responsible for academic studies in Swedish in the field of economics and business administration in Finland. Its research activities are of a high standard and are internationally acclaimed. The research and study environment is innovative, and co-operation with the corporate sector and society in general is intensive. Graduates have good career opportunities in the internationalising labour market.

## **3. Future changes in the operating environment**

Our strategy is based on the development trends that permeate the operating environment. The dominant trends that will restructure our society are listed and described below, and special emphasis is put on their effects on the academic community in general, and on the Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration in particular.

### **Dominant developmental trends**

#### **A growing need for new knowledge at an ever-increasing pace**

The emerging information society is dependent on the development and competence of individuals, the economy and society, and scientific and technical

development is vital in pursuing the competitive edge. The speed of change is increasing steadily, and new knowledge is being produced at an ever-accelerating rate. Continuous investment in human capital is therefore vital. Access to information and the exploitation of relevant knowledge are of prime importance to the individual in the information society. This development means that knowledge content and educational processes face constant re-evaluation.

### **The globalisation of available information**

The development of information technology and the related expansion of the use of the Internet will dramatically decrease the importance of geographic distance in the collection and distribution of information. The need for efficient screening mechanisms will increase in areas in which the gathering and compilation of data used to be the major problem. The ability to interpret new information will become ever more crucial.

### **Continuous international integration**

Finnish business life is facing a strong and continuous integration process. The number of companies building their operations merely on domestic demand is steadily decreasing, while the need for knowledge and experience beyond established national borders is increasing. The expanding role of information technology is creating new opportunities and forms of operation for business and society in general, and this will have an impact on labour-market demand and supply. In future, human resources will be increasingly devoted to problem solving and innovative assignments.

### **Changes in the population structure and the balance between resources and expenditure**

The relative proportion of the population that is active in working life will fall considerably during the next few decades. This means that the tax burden on the active working population will increase at the same time as the mobility of the workforce is increasing. The level of public expenditure will not diminish, however. Fewer services will be financed from tax revenue, and the number of privately financed services will increase. This development will also affect the education sector.

## **Consequences for universities**

Developments in information technology and the dramatically improved access to information means that knowledge, and above all new knowledge, will become a major competitive factor in all walks of life, both in business and in society. Countries that can generate and exploit new knowledge and information better than others will have a definite competitive edge. The importance of academic research and education will increase, and their key role will be to teach students how to interpret new information. At the same time, the academic community is expected to take on new responsibilities.

The harmonisation of the examination structure in Europe entails a clearer division between the bachelor's and master's degrees and the integration of master's-level and post-graduate studies. The formation of the European

Research Area (ERA) will lead to greater mobility among researchers, the establishment of international consortia and changes in the market for research funding. Universities will forge more and more strategic international alliances.

The harmonisation process will blur the differences between universities and polytechnics in the eyes of both employers and potential students, as polytechnics will also offer post-graduate studies. As a consequence, universities will strongly emphasise their teaching quality and research orientation.

The scope for the tax-funded development of university education is shrinking. Consequently, universities will, to a growing extent, have to finance their activities by other means, and success will depend on their ability to attract external financiers. Even though the basis of external financing lies in research and education of a high standard, growing dependence on it will force universities to pay more attention to the demands and wishes of the society in which they operate. The efficient use of resources will become an increasingly important element in their internal planning.

Demographic developments in Finland will influence the recruitment of university students and the proportion of foreign students will increase. The annual number of Swedish-speaking students taking their matriculation examination in Finland is currently still growing, and in recent years has exceeded 2,000 due to larger age classes and the increasing proportion of pupils choosing upper-secondary education. The numbers will continue to exceed 2,400 for some time after 2010, but in the longer term will take a downward turn.

## **Hanken's position**

Hanken fulfils its mission by carrying out research and offering education in the scientific fields of economics and business administration. Even though research and education are essentially different, our university status means that these activities must be conducted hand in hand. Research has a dual role. It creates new knowledge, which is further disseminated through the education that we offer. The active research carried out by both researchers and teachers at the School, which also attracts attention from outside, makes it easier for the teachers to follow international developments in their field. Our research activities thus guarantee that these latest developments are rapidly integrated into the education we offer.

The Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration is currently a major player in the scientific field of economics and business administration in Finland, with an acknowledged impact on research, basic studies and researcher education. Up until now, however, we have had a modest role in post-graduate education. In Scandinavia we have established ourselves at a level that is not essentially below that of the top business schools in the region. Internationally, we are at the forefront of education and research activities in certain narrow segments of the field.

The competitive situation in Finnish university education changed considerably in the 1990s, mainly as a result of the internationalisation of the education market, the introduction of polytechnics, and investments in R & D.

Hanken's main competitors are still the other Finnish business schools and the domestic universities that are engaged in education and research in the fields of economics and commerce. Competition for students as well as researcher and teacher resources from business schools in the other Nordic countries is on the increase, however. Universities from outside Scandinavia are recruiting more students in Finland, although still to a modest degree. As far as attracting highly qualified researchers and teachers with foreign degrees is concerned, our geographical location and a low salary level work to our disadvantage.

Hanken is the clear market leader in the provision of economic and commercial education in Swedish in Finland. Nevertheless, there is some competition for new students as well as for teacher resources.

In terms of our ability to compete with corresponding Finnish-language education and research institutes in our field, our possibilities of attracting teacher resources are limited by the Finnish university act as well as by the language-skills requirements imposed by Finnish law.

The present position of Hanken is influenced by the strategic choices made in the 1990s. In accordance with national education and research policies, we have systematically focused our education and research on selected strong areas of expertise. Within these areas, we have expanded our range of activities to cover not only research and degree-oriented studies, but also, to some extent, adult education in the form of open-university and post-graduate studies. We have also systematically diversified our area of operation and have expanded our language portfolio. We now offer degree-oriented education in both Swedish and English, in accordance with an agreement between Hanken and the government. Post-graduate and researcher education is provided in Swedish, English and Finnish. This has increased our potential in terms of recruiting new students.

## **Strategic implications**

The bedrock of Hanken's strategy is that its statutory autonomy and present size offer clear competitive advantages in terms of its ability to meet new challenges. It is easier to conduct open debate on reform needs and plans in a relatively small organisation, and the implementation of the selected strategy is easier.

**Research and education of a high quality** is the cornerstone of our ability to sharpen our competitive edge. The quality of our operations must be critically assessed at regular intervals.

### **Internationalisation**

An open attitude towards the world around us has traditionally been one of our advantages over our domestic competitors. One of the main reasons for this has

been that our working language is Swedish, which naturally facilitates contacts with other Nordic countries. Another factor has been our versatile selection of language studies, which facilitates contacts with countries outside Europe. Hanken has good prospects for maintaining its leading position in the field through systematic investments in the internationalisation of its teachers, researchers and students.

### **Investments in learning**

The globalisation of information supply means that the ability to separate relevant from non-relevant information will play an increasingly important role in the future. Teachers will turn into tutors whose role is to help students to navigate the abundant flow of information. Good information competence, in other words the ability to search for, handle and critically assess and efficiently exploit information, will be built up, and we will develop co-operation between students, teachers and supporting personnel in order to enhance the learning process.

### **Creating an innovation-friendly environment**

The globalisation of competition means that the speed at which companies are able to turn abstract ideas into profitable business will become an increasingly important factor. We must create an innovation-friendly environment to ensure that knowledge can easily be transformed into commercial activities. We will develop the means of identifying, supporting and developing research results with business potential in co-operation with other universities in Finland. A positive attitude towards entrepreneurship and sufficient knowledge of what running a business means must therefore be seen as essential elements of the education we offer.

**Flexibility** must be a key factor in the strategy of the Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration. In this context, flexibility means the will and ability to redistribute existing resources, to identify opportunities, and to make changes. This applies not only to the resources for research and education, but also to the maintenance of support functions.

### **Efficiency**

We aim to create a flexible and efficient administration. The success of Hanken and its units in terms of the efficient use of resources must be systematically measured against the performance of competing universities. Resources must be allocated in line with the work loads of the units in order to optimise their use without compromising on quality. We will take on external research assignments only if our competence in the field is indisputable and the project is profitable.

### **Ethics**

The ongoing and future changes in the interaction between universities and the surrounding society emphasise the importance of ethical accountability. Questions related to ethics must be given a more prominent role in all education.

### **A modern and open information environment**

In order to maintain our competitive edge in the international research and education market, we must exploit the opportunities offered by modern information and communication technologies (ICT). We encourage all our

employees to use tools that make it possible for them to carry out their duties more efficiently. We must be able to make decisions on new ICT-related service forms of learning and research.

## **4. Strategic choices**

The strategy outlined below is based on an analysis of the current situation and the developmental trends in society, as well as of our position in relation to our competitors.

The Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration is a competence-development organisation in which investments in human capital are of major importance. We will balance our investments in research against our investments in education of a high quality in the subjects for which we are responsible. It is essential for us to consider our operations from a sufficiently long-term perspective so that we can guarantee that our future ability to absorb new knowledge and transfer it to the education we offer will not be jeopardised. This requires systematic investment in research of an internationally high standard. Many of our teachers are both researchers and teachers. The pedagogical skills of the staff will be developed.

Striking a balance between concentration on selected areas of expertise on the one hand and sufficient diversification of research and education on the other is one of our strategic choices. A university aspiring to be a leader in its field internationally, while at the same time bearing the responsibility for Swedish-language tertiary education in the field of economics and business administration in Finland, must conduct research and offer education of sufficient scope. We specialise in selected areas of expertise at our two campuses. This specialisation is reflected in our research activities, our basic and researcher education, and in our post-graduate studies.

We are investing strongly in the internationalisation of all our activities. We will consolidate our degree-oriented teaching in English. Substantial investments in education in English and research of an internationally high standard are absolute prerequisites if we wish to maintain our position as an internationally acknowledged research and education partner. This, in turn, will strengthen our ability to shoulder the responsibility for Swedish-language higher education in our field in Finland, and to fulfil our national and regional educational obligations. In accordance with the harmonisation of the European examination structure, we will shift the emphasis of our basic education towards the master's degree. The internationalisation of our operations will require major investments in the recruitment of both students and staff from outside Finland.

Hanken invests in life-long learning by developing post-graduate education for the corporate community, equipping individuals with university degrees, and offering academic study opportunities to a wider target group through its open-university programmes. Our alumni activities are of major strategic importance in terms of our investments in life-long learning and internationalisation. We wish to engage our alumni in our developmental programme.

It is our aim to foster an innovative work and study culture that is characterised by co-operation, respect and equal opportunities. We are developing the work environment and our management expertise on all levels with a view to attracting and retaining competent staff members who enjoy their work. We plan to increase the number of permanent and long-term employment contracts in high-performance units and will develop the study environment by encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. Our objective is to provide a modern information-rich environment that offers comprehensive scale advantages at both of our campuses.

Our budgeting is based on the assumption that degree-oriented studies will remain free of charge for students in Finland. Nevertheless, we will develop the financing of our activities to incorporate external funding with a view to increasing Hanken's profile. Our goal is to strengthen our financial base through fund-raising, establishing partnerships with the corporate community, and offering post-graduate studies that generate a surplus to be used to support research and the development of our basic education programme.

The aim of all our activities at the Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration is to ensure that our autonomy, the integrity of our research and our ethical standards are not jeopardised.

**This overall strategy of the Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration was approved by the Board on 11 February 2003.**

**The strategy is complemented by:**

- The strategy for the development of the basic examinations in 2002-2006 (approved by the Board on 17 December 2001)**
- The regional development strategy for universities and colleges operating in Helsinki and Vaasa**
- The ICT strategy (approved by the Board on 10 December 2002)**
- The School's European Policy Statement (approved by the Board on 29 October 2002).**