The Department makes an impact through research, teaching and direct engagement with political and societal issues. We offer nuanced understandings of, critical reflection on, and robust solutions to Danish, European and global political problems. We contribute to the global production of knowledge and understanding of these challenges by developing theory and method in political science.
Research Excellence

The Department is ranked as the 25th Politics and International Relations Department in the world and the 6th Department in Europe according to the 2017 QS-rankings. These rankings are based on four sources: academic reputation, employer reputation, research citations and the h-index.

The ranking confirms the findings of a recent research evaluation. The Department of Political Science has graduated from the national to the international stage in terms of achievements and aspirations. The good ranking thus cements the Department’s ability to produce research of high international quality while at the same time minimizing the distance between the research community and political decision-makers.
“The Department of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen provides one of the best research environments in Europe for the conduct of leading edge research of international quality in all aspects of political science and international relations”

*International peer-review research evaluation of the Department (2016).*
Problem-Solvers

The Department of Political Science produces future decision-makers, top civil servants and leaders in the private sector. Two-thirds of our candidates are employed in the public sector and the remainder in the private sector. Because of the general competences and specific skill-set in qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods that our students develop over the course of their education, they are attractive to both the public and private sectors. Over the course of their studies, many of our students work as interns in corporate headquarters or public administration. Because of the need to employ personnel who are able to navigate a complex reality, our graduates are among some of the most sought-after in the country. In turn, this means that the unemployment rate (4 to 19 months after graduation) among our graduates (11%) is significantly lower than the national mean for all graduate studies programmes in Denmark (18%).

Societal Impact

Our research leaves a footprint on society and policy, as our knowledge and expertise helps decision-makers on all levels navigate the waters of the complex contemporary world. By contributing to the understanding of societal problems, we also highlight the path towards more prudent policymaking. The influence of our research therefore reaches beyond academia, and our findings have a direct influence on how we organise societies, how we solve common problems, and how we perceive the future. The following are examples of some of our faculty’s high-impact initiatives:
Making Citizens Vote:

QUANTITATIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH ON VOTER TURNOUT

For more than a decade, Professor Kasper Møller Hansen and other researchers at the Centre for Voting and Parties (CVAP) have followed the paradox of turnout. Why are turnouts so high when the chance of influencing the outcome is so small? These studies provide vital evidence for understanding turnout behaviour, and the evidence points in the direction that turning out for elections is a social act. Using field experiments and an evidence-based approach to behavioural campaigns, we have provided specific tools and products now being used by municipalities, cities and organisations to engage voters. These include text-messaging campaigns, distributing letters and postcards, and sending the constitution to young people just before an election. These studies have provided important insights into turnout patterns, which in turn have helped spark a cultural change in many organisations, making their campaigns more purposeful in order to reach specific goals.
What happens when world leaders and diplomats use their smartphones inside the negotiation room? Professor Rebecca Adler-Nissen and her research group explore how social media affects international politics in the ERC-funded research project DIPLOFACE. The rise of social media, coupled with intensifying demands for more transparency and democracy in world politics, brings new challenges to international diplomacy. By combining intensive fieldwork and digital methods, DIPLOFACE advances our understanding of the mechanisms of international negotiations in the digital age, including what happens when spontaneous tweets interfere with confidential talks. Thereby, the project helps us navigate a digitalized foreign policy. The findings are featured in international journal articles, media appearances from newspapers to a TED talk and presentations to a wide range of stakeholders such as foreign affairs professionals, think tanks, companies and political festivals. Illustrative examples of the project’s impact so far include contributions to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ strategic thinking on digitalization and technological disruption (in 2017, Denmark became the first country in the world to establish a digital ambassador) and courses for journalists, providing them with tools to understand how digital social media changes foreign policy.
Citizens Go Green:

ENCOUNTERING ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

Our researchers are making a major contribution to the understanding of how to tackle climate change and environmental challenges by engaging with actors on different levels of society. Through solution-oriented research, Professor Jens Villiam Hoff has provided vital insights into how to counter environmental challenges by studying effective responses to them on the citizen and state levels. In the Citizen Driven Environmental Action Program (CIDEA), we have worked together with local governments in creating different programmes to help citizens minimise their carbon footprint. Examples of these initiatives include car-free schools, energy-efficient home renovations and the education of climate ambassadors in social housing areas to advise residents on how to save water and electricity.

In another current project, Professor Hoff works with the Department of Economics and Statistics Denmark in developing a Green GDP and to encourage businesses, wider political and administrative institutions and legislators to use Green National Accounts. Aimed at minimising environmental costs of production, the project thus focuses on developing and promoting a measure of sustainable growth to be used by central actors in both the public and private domains.
Frontline Diplomacy:

**DESCRIBING BEST PRACTICES**

In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Professor Martin Marcussen has mapped diplomatic practices as they unfold in everyday life in Copenhagen and around the world through a multitude of interviews with Danish ambassadors and civil servants in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Professor Marcussen has shown how the end of the Cold War, the European integration process and globalization have multiplied the actors related to foreign policy, both within and beyond Denmark’s borders. At the same time, Marcussen has found that the demand for the presence of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the world is increasing. These trends have led to the necessary re-examination and reassessment of the diplomatic practices of the Foreign Service. Here, Marcussen has helped describe best practices in a number of different diplomatic contexts and assisted in developing policies and in preparing reforms.
The Impact of the Normative Power Approach:

THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Normative Power Approach (NPA) to the European Union’s relations with the rest of the world was drafted by Professor Ian Manners in Copenhagen in 2000 and published in the leading EU Journal of Common Market Studies in 2002. It was named the best JCMS article of the year and voted one of the five most important EU publications of the decade in 2007, with European Commission President José Manuel Barroso reading and commenting on the concept. The article has become one of the most cited articles on the EU, while the author’s research is among the top-dozen cited EU works in the world.

The immediate policy impact of the NPA is found in its advocacy by Barroso during his presidency (2004–14) and in European Commission policies. Ideas of normative power can be found incorporated into Commission support for the principles of sustainable peace, human security, conflict transformation, Fair Trade and the creation of the European Endowment for Democracy. The NPA argues for an analytical focus on the EU’s use of ‘normative justification’ rather than physical force or material incentives, which provides a practical guide for the practice of EU normative power in global politics. In this respect, the greatest impact of the NPA has been to encourage a more open conversation between researchers, policymakers and politicians, both within and outside of the EU, over what the EU is and should be doing in global politics.