Template for the document "Strategy for research and doctoral education in the university's prioritised research areas."

The University of Borås has six prioritised research areas. To facilitate the development of the university's research and doctoral education, each prioritised research area receives funding to guarantee and develop a strong research environment. The funding comes from allocating 50% of the university's funding for research and doctoral education to the Faculties with a basis in the university's prioritised research areas.

To ensure the continued development of research and doctoral education in the university's prioritised research areas, each area must have a strategic approach that is driven by clear goals relating to quality and which must be planned in a strategy document. A description of the links between this strategy document and the university's overall vision, goals, and strategies (Reg. no. 601-20) is to be included. Faculties are to ensure that such strategies for the university's prioritised research areas are drawn up and formally adopted no later than 15 April annually. The strategy documents will form the basis for the Governing Board of the University of Borås's decisions when it comes to allocating funds for research and doctoral education and is to be the basis for the strategic planning of university operations. The allocation of funds for Faculties' research and doctoral education requires that formally adopted strategy documents for the university's prioritised research areas are in place.

The purpose of this template is to facilitate the development of such research and doctoral education strategy documents within the university's prioritised research areas. The headings in this template relate to the formally adopted criteria for the evaluation of research (Reg. no. 061-20). These strategy documents are to be archived via the Registrar's Office and, together with any appendices, are to be regarded as public documents. The research groups' research plans can be attached as part of the strategy. The strategy document does not exceed 10 pages, excluding any attachments, and the summary should not exceed one page.

Strategy for research and doctoral education in Library and Information Science, May 2023

Summary (for the university board)

Library and information science, also named Information Studies, is a social science field devoted to the study of information in its broadest sense. Traditionally libraries, and the education of librarians, has played an important role but the field of research is much broader today. Clearly, the broadness in terms of theories, methods and perspectives has been a distinct advantage for research in the area.

Major achievements:

1. ReSource: A VR financed national PhD-program with funding for 11 doctoral students (3 in Borås) with a total budget of 23 million SEK. ReSource explores the current "crisis of information" caused by the proliferation of misinformation and conspiracy ideologies, the commercialisation of the public information infrastructure, and the development of AI.

2. In addition to the funding of the PhD-program, we received major research and networking grants from the European Union, Vetenskapsrådet, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, and Formas.

3. The impact and influence of research conducted at SSLIS are continuously visible both within academia and outside. SSLIS is constantly ranked as the leading department in the Nordic region, and it is among the top departments in Europe. The research conducted at SSLIS receives considerable attention both in Sweden and internationally.

4. The research centre *INCLUDE – Centre for Inclusive Studies* was established forming a strong multidisciplinary environment for critical examination of cultural, historical, economic, social, and political, values, actions and structures that lead to unequal treatment of members of society.

Aims for 2023-2028

1. An important goal is that the PhD-program ReSource is implemented and organised in such a way that its potential to strengthen SSLIS is fully realised. This means that the department's research leadership will actively work to ensure that sufficient resources are made available in the form of supervision, seminars and courses.

2. An aim related to the above is to support and encourage researchers aiming to advance their research and careers. A range of different activities related to career advancements, such as funding programs, seminars, and workshops, are being planned.

3. A recurring goal for the area is to ensure an influxof external funding for developing our research. This involves work strategically with funding both in a national and international context. A recent activity aimed at this is the launch of a "research application program" which will start in the autumn of 2023 (with funding from the Vice Chancellor).

4. In a similar fashion mobility and internationalisation remain issues that we continuously work with at SSLIS. Several large EU-projects (some of them lead by us) as well as long-term collaborations in form of SIDA-projects for research exchange attest to these goals. There are also detailed plans for launching an initiative in which we will host renown scholars in the form of a guest research program.

1. PRIORITISED RESEARCH AREA
    Library and Information Science

2. RESEARCH PROFILE

Library and information science, also named Information Studies, is a social science field devoted to the study of information in its broadest sense. Traditionally libraries, and the education of librarians, has played an important role but the field of research much broader today. This broadness in terms of theories, methods and perspectives has been a distinct advantage for research in the area.

Swedish School of Library and Information Science (SSLIS) which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2022, has typically ranked highly in its field in various ranking systems (e.g., QS World University Rankings). It is active in several international networks and conferences, such as iSchools or ISIC (Information Seeking in Context), The Information Behaviour Conference), and publishes international journals (*Information Research* - IR, one of the core journals of the field, and the uniquely positioned *Nordisk Kulturpolitisk Tidskrift*). The publications of SSLIS researchers typically appear in highly respected peer-reviewed international journals and conferences.

3. RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

The research staff (faculty) has been continuously strengthened in recent decades. This has to a large extent been accomplished through an active doctoral program. In addition, staff has also been recruited from other universities such as those in Lund, Uppsala, Umeå and Gothenburg. The current tally of the research staff is:

- Three full-time professors, 32 senior lecturers (+2 since 2021), of which six hold associate professor (docent) positions. In addition, three senior professors are still employed on a part-time basis. We expect 2-4 senior lecturers to attain the level of associate professor during 2023-2025. Similarly, we envision that 1-2 associate professors are appointed as full professors in coming years.
- At the time of writing 15 doctoral students are active. 3 new doctoral students are currently being recruited.

The doctoral program is the largest and oldest in the field in Sweden. Since 2023, the Swedish School of Library and Information Science coordinates ReSource - a research school, which includes all library and information studies departments at Swedish higher education institutions, funded by the Swedish Research Council (2023-2026). ReSource explores the current "crisis of information" caused by the proliferation of misinformation and conspiracy ideologies, the commercialisation of the public information infrastructure, and the development of AI. This environment ensures a high quality doctoral program as well as a vibrant and supportive research environment with networking opportunities

The research groups at SSLIS are broad and oriented toward several subareas. However, we consider ourselves as one research environment that is also is highly integrated and charactarised bythe ambition to work together to strengthen our research. A number of internationally recognised researchers with strong profiles in there are areas of expertise are active at SSLIS. At the same time,the research area is also characterised by a high degree of collegiality in how decisions are made and strategies are formed. In addition to our research groups, we also have labs and centres which works horizontally across groups. Overall, this structure allows for both a stable configuration of research and

for dynamic and boundary crossing constellations. The joint weekly Monday seminar is important for organising vital collegial exchange concerning both research and doctoral education.

- **Research groups**:
- Culture, library and policy (KUBIK)
- Information Practices and Digital Cultures
- Knowledge Infrastructures (KIR)

- **Labs**
- Data as Impact Lab
- Haptic Lab

- **Centres**
- INCLUDE – Centre for Inclusive Studies
- The Centre for Cultural Policy Research (KPC)

We work with a shared responsibility leadership model where each research group has two leaders. We believe this creates a more dynamic and creative research milieu compared to the single-leader approach.

3.1 Description of the research equipment and infrastructure:

Haptic Lab is formed in relation to work conducted by SSLIS colleagues in projects such as SUITCEYES and MuseIT, as part of which research and development are ongoing in the area of haptic communication, development of methodologies and means of conveying semantic contents through haptic stimuli and multisensory representation of objects and sensations.

Data as Impact Lab performs analyses and offers an infrastructure for AI applications involving bibliometric methodology, semantic modelling, and visualization. Some of our clients and partners involve authorities, research organizations within and outside academia, libraries and private companies.

Information Research is a leading international journal which is indexed in all major databases (including Web of Science) and it's ranked on level one in the Norwegian directory of journals.

Nordisk Kulturpolitisk Tidskrift has a unique profile in its focus on cultural policy, and its renowned editorial board includes members from all Nordic countries.

3.2 Description of academic networks and collaborations

The Swedish network of Library and Information Science departments, including Linnaeus, Lund, Södertörn, Uppsala and Umeå is an important setting for the development of research and research education. SSLIS as the largest, and oldest, department takes on a leading role in this network. The collaboration involves joint workshops, seminars, and doctoral courses as well as collaboration in terms of funding and publication. The national network extends to neighbouring fields where for example area such as digital humanities, sociology of literature, pedagogic work, environmental sciences, and sociology of science are prominent fields.

SSLIS is part of and a leading member of the iSchools network which gathers information studies departments and schools from around the world. A testimony to the important part played by SSLIS is that we arranged the iConference in Borås (subsequently moved online due to the pandemic) in 2019.
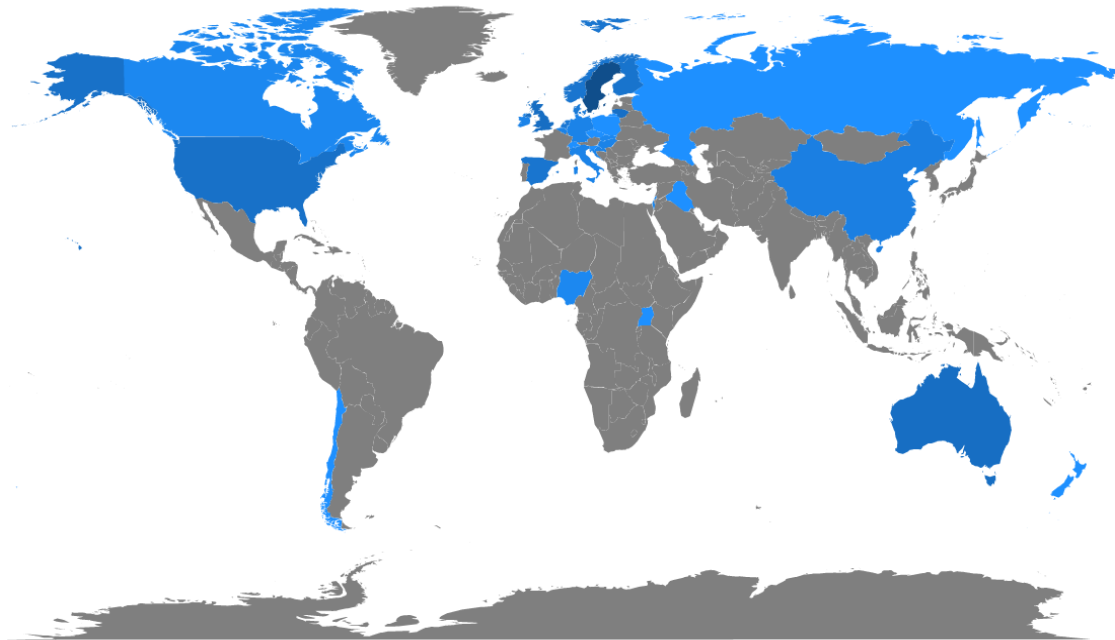
Participation in various EU-funded projects has helped establish a strong and extensive network of

contacts and collaborative efforts nationally and internationally. For example, SILVANUS comprises 49 partner organisations from 15 EU countries as well as members from Australia, Brazil and Indonesia. MuseIT brings together 11 organisations from 7 EU countries as well as two associate partners from the UK (Kings College London) and US (Stanford University).

Through our SIDA collaborations – primarily geared towards PhD education – has long-term networks been developed with researchers in Africa with Rwanda and Mocambique being the primary collaboration partners.

Smaller networks, as well as project and authorship collaborations, are too many to list in detail, but the map below provides an illustration of the vast global network of SSLIS.
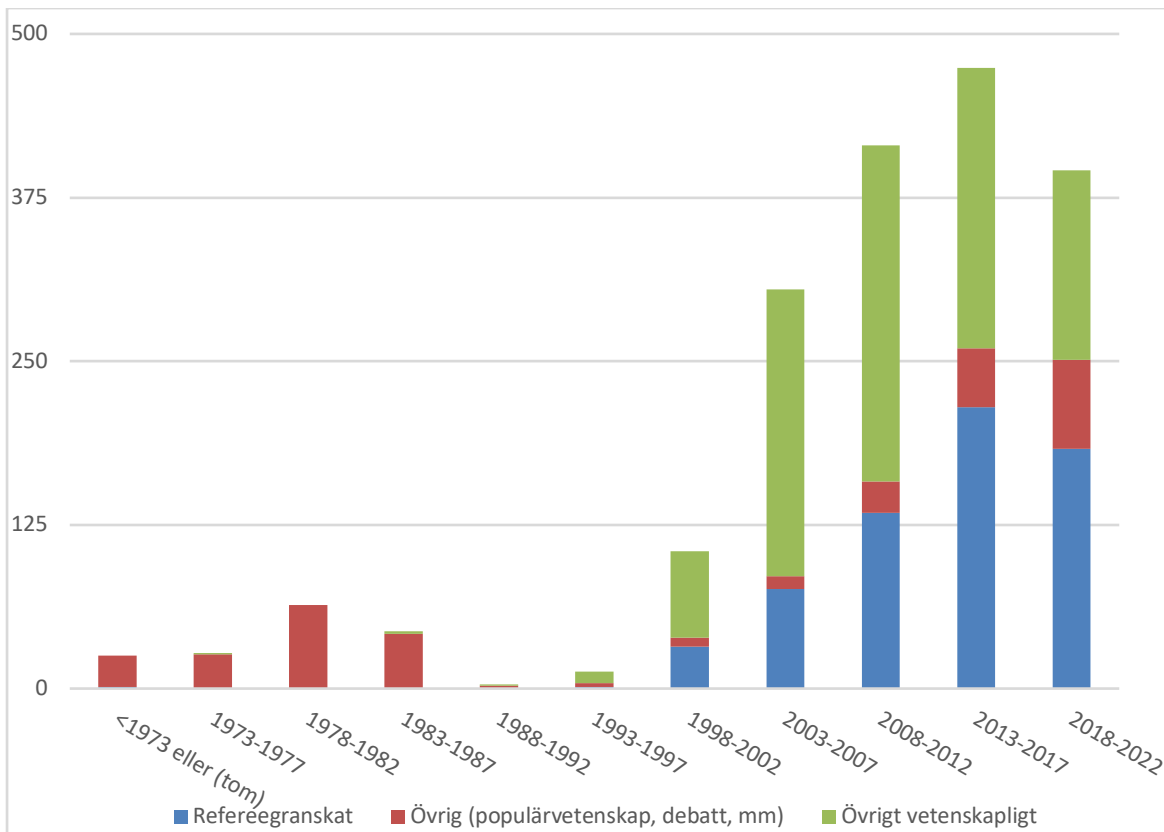
Fig 1. Co-authorship map. The darker the colour, the more frequent collaboration is in the form of joint authorship. (from Nelhans and Hammarfelt 2023)

4. PRODUCTIVITY AND IMPACT

The dissemination of research from SSLIS is done through various sources, with peer-reviewed articles being the main publication channel. However, book chapters, monographs, and reports of various kinds play an important role, not the least to reach professional and non-academic audiences. Moreover, as indicated above the academic impact of research cannot always be easily separated from its societal relevance, and it is therefore difficult to sometimes draw a distinct boundary between different types of impact. The overview of publications (fig 2) does however depict the general pattern of publication and its development over the last years. (Note that the decline in publications for the last years is probably due to a corona-effect, as well as a backlog of publications for 2022 which was not registered when the data was collected in the early autumn of 2022.)

Fig 2. Publication trends for SSLIS (from Nelhans and Hammarfelt, 2023)

Chart legend: Refereegranskat (blue) — Övrig (populärvetenskap, debatt, mm) (red) — Övrigt vetenskapligt (green)

External funding

Currently we have several newly funded and ongoing projects at the department. The details of some of these are listed below:

- EU, Silvanus (2021-2025) 6 million SEK (total budget 25 million EURO)

- EU, MuseIT (2022-2024), coordinated by HB, Full budget 10,5 million SEK

- EU, PASSIM (2018-2023), (advanced grant), HBs share 4 million SEK, with Linköping University

- VR, Huminfra (2022-2024), national infrastructure for Digital humanities, University of Borås share 3,3 million SEK.

- Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (2023-2025), Det lilla livets läsning, with Uppsala University, 4, 5 million SEK

- MISTRA Environmental communication (2020-2024) with a consortium led by SLU (Total budget 60 Mio SEK)(several SSLIS-lead sub-projects, e.g. Fighting windmills: Tracing (mis/dis)information about wind power online)

- Formas (2023-2026) Meaning-making on the Climate Crisis with SLU (Total budget: 4 mio SEK)

In addition to these grants, we also receive funding from Kulturrådet and, various library organisations for smaller projects. These projects are of great importance for our research, and

about one million SEK is awarded through such funders.

5. EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

External engagement is an important part of the work conducted by researchers in the area, and SSLIS is highly visible and well-known in both national and international contexts. A search for "Bibliotekshögskolan" for the last three years yields almost 500 matches in the Swedish media database Retriever. Examples of influential interactions are for example debates about cultural policy around the election in 2022, but we also have considerable coverage of our research on reading, audiobooks, algorithms, and scholarly communication. On an international level research on environmental information as well as the work on inclusion and disabilities have been highlighted. Testimony to the impact outside academia is for example, professor Jutta Haider receiving the "Det gyllene förstoringsglaset" which is a yearly national prize awarded by Internetstiftelsen and Källkritikbyrån and Elisa Tattersal Wallin receiving a very prestigious prize as first runner-up for the iSchools "Doctoral Dissertation Award. SUITCEYES (2018-2021), another EU-Funded project led by the department was highlighted by the prestigious Innovation Radar Prize as one of the 8 shortlisted most promising innovations in the health category. Moreover, researchers at SSLIS have important roles nationally were for example Gustaf Nelhans (chairman) and Julia Pennlert are on the research board for the Royal Library of Sweden.

7. DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY

In 5-7 years we envision that the research area of LIS at HB has strengthened its position both within academia and as an important actor in society. We will achieve this by developing our interdisciplinary work in areas such as reading, digital methods (including AI), cultural policy and scholarly communication while also strengthening core areas of research such as information practices and library research. The strength of SSLIS has always been its diversity and dynamic structure, and this is a legacy that we aim to preserve by adopting a coherent and overarching program for the future. On a shorter horizon (2023-2025) we identify the following strategies as important:

A key goal for the period 2023-2025 is that the PhD-program Resources are implemented and organised in such a way that its potential for strengthening SSLIS is fully realised. This means that the research leadership at the department works actively in ensuring that sufficient resources are provided in terms of supervision, seminars and courses.

An aim related to the one above is to support and promote researchers aiming to advance in their careers into positions as docents (associate professors) and professors. Our current tally of professors and associate professors is rather low, especially in comparison to the number of lecturers and doctoral students. Increasing the number of senior staff, also in terms if strategic recruitment of leading and promising researchers, is important in relation to funding and supervision, but also for the overarching goal of the University of Borås to achieve the status of "universitet". A range of different activities related to career advancements as programs, mentors and workshops, are being planned, yet resources will be needed to realize this long terms strategy.

A recurring goal for the area is to secure resources through external funding. This involves primarily funding for research projects but also for doctoral training (for example through Marie Curie applications). A recent activity aimed at this is the launch of a "research application program" which will start in the autumn of 2023 (with funding from the vice-chancellor). Important in relation to funding is to ensure that external grants can be used to strengthen the coherence and long-term strategies of the department. For example, it has been a continuous challenge that funding related to public libraries has been hard to obtain. Hence, finding ways to ensure that external funding leads to a strong integrated research environment, which is related to our educational programs, is an important goal moving forward.

Similarly, mobility and internationalisation are issues that we continuously work with at SSLIS. Several large EU-projects as well as long-term co-operations in form of SIDA-projects for research exchange attest to these goals. Moreover, there are detailed plans for launching an initiative in which we will host renown international scholars in the form of a guest research program. This will involve longer and shorter stays which aims for concrete collaborations in the form of publications and grant applications.