

# CBS Student Learning Strategy

CBS is a learning university that strives to educate graduates who are able to think and to take decisive action – in other words, graduates who are professionally and academically reflexive, and who are able to act competently in many different situations and contexts. CBS graduates must be able to navigate today's international knowledge society and, in order to do this, they must be able to identify problems, to structure, to analyse, to synthesise and to reflect critically. Furthermore, they must be able to cope in multilingual environments and work constructively with both information and communication technologies. Thus, CBS aims not only to develop the professional, methodological and academic competencies of its students but also their personal and interpersonal skills.

CBS focuses upon the individual learning processes of its students. Individuality is emphasised because learning constitutes an individual process of development and experience that is dependent upon the individual's identity and social position. At the same time, learning is perceived as a social process taking place in the interaction of students, teachers and others involved in the process.

At CBS education is regarded as the product of a close partnership between the students, the teachers, business practitioners, administrators and others who are in some way involved.

The learning strategy for CBS clearly defines the learning philosophy of the university by making the basic assumptions of what learning is and how learning takes place explicit. This is essential for the students, the teachers, the course administrators and for the university's external partners. The clarification of basic assumptions allows a discussion of the roles and responsibilities that each of the participants in the educational and teaching process can and ought to adopt. Further, the learning strategy defines the CBS ideal in terms of the mindset of its graduates i.e. the characteristics and qualities that students should develop in the course of their studies at the university. It specifies the concrete content of the overall profile that CBS would like to be the hallmark of its graduates.

Finally, the clarification and definition of basic assumptions and expectations (learning philosophy and mindset of the graduates) enables CBS to establish principles to guide curriculum development i.e. the development of the study programmes, and the preparation and carrying out of the course activities.

CBS will maintain the breadth and diversity that characterises its portfolio of study programmes. The many different programmes will continue to work from very different conditions and contexts in terms of academic area, market conditions, student numbers and relations to future employers. As such, the clear formulation of CBS's learning philosophy, of expectations to the mindset of its graduates and of principles for curriculum development is at the very heart of the continuing quality development at the school. By constantly upholding a critical stance, by reappraising and further developing the core components of the learning strategy, CBS will truly be a learning university. This will involve a process of continuous development and implementation of the learning strategy at CBS; a process in which the learning strategy will develop through an ongoing dialogue with both internal and external stakeholders.

## **Learning philosophy**

As a learning university, the study programmes at CBS are founded upon an understanding of what learning is and how learning processes take place. This understanding, in turn, is realised in practice by a wide range of actual course activities designed to promote the learning of the students. The central tenets of the learning philosophy at CBS can be summarised as follows:

- Basically, learning is the construction and maintenance of meaning.
- Learning is the ability to doubt and to question one's own assumptions.
- Learning involves acquiring new personal knowledge, skills and competencies that can be used to resolve forthcoming challenges in life.
- Learning is both individual and social.
- Learning is contextual in the sense that it is embedded in ongoing social relations and is affected by the identity and social position of the learner.
- Learning contexts change through time and space. Each new combination of students, teachers, technologies and media constitutes a new learning context; each context will affect the learning process of the individual student.

### **The mindset of the graduates**

At CBS we strive towards educating graduates who are both professionally and academically reflexive, and who are able to act competently in different situations and contexts. Our graduates are capable of thinking and acting decisively.

First of all, we expect our graduates to be able to reflect on both the academic knowledge and academic traditions that they encounter during their studies (and to be aware of the status and background of this knowledge); second, they must be able to discern what the customary practice is in any given situation and to judge how their knowledge can best be utilised in that situation. We set great store by academic achievement, but we also value highly the development of students' personal and interpersonal skills. These goals are reached at CBS by the combination of many different forms of study and learning; by integrating research-based teaching with hands-on learning techniques that involve a high degree of problem-solving, innovation, and creative and active decision making.

The qualities of CBS's "ideal graduate" can be summarised as follows:

- CBS graduates are competent in both methodology and in their chosen academic area. They are capable of applying models and theories; they are able to use relevant research methodologies; they are able to analyse empirical observations of current practice.
- CBS graduates are both innovative and reflexive in their thinking.
- CBS graduates are well-founded in their core disciplines, but they also possess interdisciplinary knowledge and skills; these graduates are, thus, able to understand and to work with people from different academic and professional backgrounds.
- CBS graduates are trained to apply their knowledge and they are familiar with business practice; they have transferable skills that strengthen their employability.
- CBS graduates have personal and interpersonal competencies – abilities that enable them to cope with the demands of a study programme in higher education and to work in both a national and an international business environment. They are, for example, able to take responsibility for and to organise their own learning process; they can collaborate in team projects; they are able to identify and to formulate problems, they can read and understand a wide range of academic literature; they can transfer knowledge to action in concrete situations; they are skilled at expressing themselves verbally and in writing; they are able to communicate with others across cultural barriers.
- CBS graduates are able to act decisively; they are capable of reaching a decision even in situations where information or knowledge is not fully adequate.
- CBS graduates are efficient and ethical. They are trained to make decisions on the basis of efficiency but, nevertheless, with an understanding of societal and interpersonal relationships that ensures an ethical and, in business terms, morally responsible way of dealing with other people.
- CBS graduates are prepared for lifelong learning.

### **Principles guiding curriculum development at CBS**

A graduate profile such as that described in CBS's ideal graduate mindset demands the development, organisation and implementation of a curriculum that promotes the learning processes of the students. At CBS we regard education, with its many study-related activities, as a process of general development for the individual student. Education is regarded as the product of a close partnership between the students, the teachers, and business practitioners. The overall principles guiding curriculum development at CBS can be summarised as follows:

1. The curriculum includes a mix of study methods and course activities that are designed to activate the students and which also take into consideration the level of the course, individual learning styles and differences in academic content.
2. Study methods, course activities and academic content are prioritised according to the qualifications that the students are expected to achieve.
3. Courses are structured in such a way that the students are able to take responsibility for their learning.
4. The form and content of examinations are grounded in and reflect the course or programme objectives.
5. Study programmes are related to current practice and are problem-based.
6. All teaching and learning is research-based.
7. Students are ensured a considerable range of options in terms of electives, course directions, syllabus, examination methods and learning techniques.
8. Students are ensured flexibility in terms of where, how, when and how fast they wish to study.
9. Information and communication technology is used when and where this promotes the students' learning processes and facilitates communication between students, teachers and the administration.

It is crucial that the ideals and assumptions of the learning strategy rest on an organisational culture in which the will to experiment and to challenge and inspire through continuous dialogue are central. The following diagram illustrates this ongoing dialogue and developmental process; it also provides some examples of the kinds of activities that can maintain this process.

## The dynamics of the learning strategy - maintaining the dialogue

