What Responsible Management Competencies do HA ALMEN ERHVERVSØKONOMI Students Acquire?
This report was prepared by the CBS Office of Responsible Management Education and is part of our engagement in the UN-backed Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME).

Photos: Bjarke MacCarthy, Jakob Boserup
INTRODUCTION

This report highlights the role that responsible management education plays in the Erhvervsøkonomi (HA Almen) programme. Through the Curriculum Development project the CBS PRME office has sought to identify and explore which competencies related to responsible management are acquired by HA Almen students during their time in the programme based on findings from student focus groups and from ongoing interaction with faculty members. This report is based on updated information received from faculty and study boards over the course of 2018 and 2019. The purpose is to explicitly address how the HA Almen competencies are integrated in different courses and to encourage a coherent progression across the entire programme.


COMPETENCY PROFILE

Discussions with the members of the study board and faculty have identified the following competencies in responsible management acquired by HA Almen students:

- The ability and awareness needed to identify and take into account the possible responsibility issues associated with management decisions.
- The ability to understand the dynamic and complex nature of a company’s responsibilities.
- The ability to recognize that responsible management should be embedded in all management activities rather than being a separate function.

While all courses are naturally aimed at supporting the development of these competencies in HA Almen students, they are specifically addressed in the flagship course Strategi (4th semester), and further elaborated in the following cornerstone courses: Mikroøkonomi, Managerial Economics, Organisationsanalyse (1st semester); Managerial Economics fortsat, Organisationsanalyse fortsat (2nd semester); Finansiering (3rd semester) and Erhvervsøkonomiens Videnskabsteori (6th semester).

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to all those who contributed to this project. In particular, we would like to thank Trine Pallesen for all her help with the development of this report and for acting as an ambassador for the HA Almen study programme. We would also like to thank the study board director, Carsten Krogholt Hansen, for his continuous support.
**Semester Review of Responsible Management at HA Almen**

**First and Second Semester**

**Responsibility Day** is the first opportunity for HA Almen students to reflect on business practices through the lens of their study programme. During this day, educational input on responsible management is presented through a selected case, which is then critically discussed by the students. Jeanette Willert was the HA Almen faculty representative for Responsibility Day 2018.

The **Mikroøkonomi** course involves students in discussions of monopolies and raises issues concerning the effect of cartels. These are amongst the many moral and ethical issues that managers and firms are obliged to deal with. The course addresses the impact that cartels have on society, as well as the options available to policy-makers for addressing the consequences of law-breaking firms. This is illustrated through the Maersk case and their involvement in a cartel arrangement with other container shipping lines. The course also encourages students to reflect on the role of the economic agent beyond that of profit maximization, and to identify the mentality behind illegal actions. In addition, students are introduced to externalities and the social and marginal costs of the economic agent. Furthermore, the course has a focus on consumer behavior by discussing preferences and the general equilibrium. It highlights ethics as essential to business and consumer activity and decision making.

**Managerial Economics** and **Managerial Economics fortsat** both address profit optimisation, specifically through the theory of the firm. Students gain an understanding of the complexities involved in profit optimisation and in balancing the needs of multiple stakeholders while simultaneously maintaining an air of transparency and legitimacy.

**Organisationsanalyse** and **Organisationsanalyse fortsat** focus on making students able to analyze organizations with a view to the often complex relations and interdependencies both internally as well as with the wider society. As such the course provides an understanding of responsibility as an inherent element in management decisions in relation to employees, external interests and others.
**Third Semester**

In **Finansiering** students are introduced to moral conflicts in relation to management pay. The course raises students’ awareness of the possible threats to employees’ morals when too much emphasis is placed on monetary compensation. Students are invited to reflect upon and challenge the common economic standpoint on monetary incentives as a motivational tool. Emphasis is placed on employees’ moral commitment to their work and their genuine interest in succeeding. Two examples are orally presented in classes to illustrate and explore this topic. One refers to the remuneration of blood donors, where economists would expect payment to increase the number of donors while in reality the effect might very easily be the opposite. Another example presents the situation of an Israeli kindergarten in which a payment system was implemented for parents who were late in picking up their children. The system was believed to motivate the parents to be on time, but in fact resulted in more parents being late. They subsequently felt that letting the children stay for an extra hour was a service for which they paid the kindergarten. The study found that the parents did not feel any moral commitment to the institution to pick up their children at the proper time.

**Fourth Semester**

**Strategi** emphasises how responsible corporate strategies depend on an understanding of societies and societal issues. Working with empirical cases, students analyse situations where a lack of understanding has resulted in a challenge to the organisation’s legitimacy. They reflect on how the dairy producer Arla handled the controversy over the Muhammad cartoons; how the pharmaceutical company Lundbeck responded when one of its products was used for executions in US prisons; and how the oil company Shell had to reverse its decision to dump an oil-rig at sea. Overall, the strategy course teaches students to consider how public interests and political demands require adequate strategic responses. This is the flagship course of the HA Almen programme in terms of responsible management education.
Fifth Semester

This semester is dedicated to an exchange, elective course or an internship within a company. A number of electives at CBS directly address issues of responsible management.

Sixth Semester

Since the core topic of the course Erhvervsøkonomiens Videnskabsteori is “Philosophy of Science”/”Business Research Methodology”, the primary aim is to provide the students with certain methodological competencies pertinent to Business Economics. Yet it is also aimed at providing students with the ability to reflect on contemporary firms and various ways of observing organizational phenomena. Of course, complex political, ethical or environmental problems are among the dilemmas confronting firms today. Accordingly, questions/problems belonging to these fields and the associated ways of methodologically looking at company behavior from this angle do come up from time to time during the course. While there are no lectures solely devoted to the topic of responsible management/CSR/diversity etc., it is thus a theme which is at least partially discussed at various points during the course.
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**Flagship Course**

Flagship courses act as anchors in the programme and play a central role in coordinating the generation of responsible management competencies.

**Corner Stone Course**

Corner stone courses act as binding blocks between the semesters and ensure a systematic progression of content and competencies related to responsible management.
Below we have a list of the key people associated with HA Almen, which you may find useful:

**HA Almen Ambassador**
Assistant Professor Trine Pallesen has agreed to be the ambassador for HA Almen. Please feel free to contact her if you have any questions regarding responsible management education within the programme.

**Trine Pallesen:**
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**HA Almen Programme Manager**
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**HA Almen Study Director**
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**PRME Project Manager**
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**PRME Academic Director**
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This report refers to the Academic Year 2018/2019.