

Copenhagen Business School, Copenhagen, Denmark

HOW TO GET STARTED? KICKING OFF THE PRME PROCESS

Introduction



**Copenhagen
Business School**
HANDELSHØJSKOLEN

Copenhagen Business School – where university means business

Founded in 1917, Copenhagen Business School (CBS) is one of the largest business schools in Europe with more than 18,000 students and 1,500 staff. CBS offers an innovative research environment to ensure value for society and a comprehensive range of degrees in various business disciplines. In 2011, the Aspen Institute ranked CBS ninth in Research in the Aspen Institute's global Beyond Grey Pinstripes review and ranking.



Challenges

A systematic approach to responsible management education

Scandinavian companies are disproportionately well-represented in the major corporate sustainability performance rankings and indexes, such as the Dow Jones Sustainability Index and the FTSE4Good. It is thus not surprising that issues of responsible management have traditionally been well embedded in Scandinavian business education. However, before signing onto the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative in August 2008, these topics were – to a large extent – addressed implicitly and unsystematically in the 17 study programmes taught at CBS.

Actions taken

Crucial factors in the success of taking up PRME at CBS

The process of signing up to PRME was initiated by the Centre for CSR, which started discussions on responsible management education (RME) with the support of 12-20 committed staff members. The discussion was then raised to 40 top managers, including heads of departments, where it was soon realised that RME already had a strong presence at CBS. As such, the decision to sign onto the PRME initiative became a way of streamlining this work through a formal anchor under the Office of the Dean of Education and making it visible as one of CBS's unique selling points.

The management support has been important by making RME one of five unique selling points (USPs) for CBS and laying out a clear strategy and goals for where we want CBS to go in the future.

Kai Hockerts, Professor and Academic Director of Responsible Management Education, Copenhagen Business School

Management support, which includes a highly visible endorsement of ambitious stretch goals, i.e., the Aspen Institute's Beyond Grey Pinstripes review and ranking, has been crucial in spreading out PRME in a systematic way throughout the organisation. Second, management support has been important in setting up a PRME office, creating positions for an administrative PRME manager and an academic director of PRME at CBS. Moreover, allocating a PRME budget has allowed us to kick-start transformation projects for internal staff and students.

Allocation of resources has allowed the PRME office to initiative the streamlining of RME throughout the organisation and to involve faculty more broadly. This process was started by offering 5 openings for 17 study programmes to review their curricula and be at the forefront of innovative programmes. This has since been offered to all programmes. Projects such as these have not only created awareness on RME, but also real change and new ways of teaching, i.e., Responsibility Day; the first day on campus for 2,700 BA students, where they are challenged with an RME case, and corporate speakers address some of the grand challenges of the 21st century. Finally, setting up future objectives publically in the CBS PRME

report has been very instrumental in keeping CBS's commitment to being at the forefront of RME – constantly and systematically trying to improve the integration of PRME (see <http://www.unprme.org/reports/CBS2010PRMEReportOnProgress.pdf>).

Results

An obvious outcome of signing up to PRME has been a more explicit way of working with and thinking of RME. A clear result has been to achieve a research position among top ten in the world in the Aspen Institute's Beyond Grey Pinstripes review and ranking. Other examples include successful projects launched as a part of PRME, three examples of which are discussed below.

Curriculum change

As part of this initiative, the syllabus of each core course in a given study programme was analysed for RME content and meetings with the lead faculty were arranged. The initiative was launched in CBS with the full-time MBA during 2008/2009 and, at present, is currently being rolled out across 17 bachelor study programmes. The personal meetings have three aims:

1. Identify existing RME content and make it explicit in the syllabus and, where possible, in the learning objectives.
2. Offer support in identifying readings, cases and other material to increase the explicit RME content in the class.
3. Propose optional background readings to be included in the syllabi to allow interested students to study RME issues beyond the primary content of the class.

CBS Sustainability Alumni Network

The Network is creating vast opportunities for CBS to draw on the experiences of CBS alumni currently working within different areas of responsibility and sustainability. The Network is used for different purposes, i.e., the so-called “roundtable discussions”, where corporations and academics get together to discuss issues around sustainability on an informal basis. The Network is also used for events and conferences as well as for providing interested faculty with guest lecturers from outside

academia, taking the perspectives of NGOs, corporations, cooperatives, multi-stakeholder initiatives, etc. into the classroom and creating new ways of teaching. The latter is currently being turned into a book on practical CSR using the perspective of multiple stakeholders.

Establishment of a Green Office and a Green Ambassador Programme

This gives students and staff the opportunity to take an active part towards changing the mindset and culture through responsible and sustainable behaviour throughout the institution.

Why PRME is/was important

- Creating a unique contact for interested staff.
- Creating a way of benchmarking an effort to integrate RME by looking at other PRME schools.
- Through identifying potential areas and methods for improving the approach to RME.