

Research Unit “Learning & Talent in Sport” – LET’S
Department of Sports Science and Clinical Biomechanics
Strategy 2015-2020

Background

The Research Unit for Learning and Talent in Sport (LET’S) builds on one of the Institute’s original foundations – the pedagogy of human movement. Within the unit, this has been applied to three principal areas.

Firstly, there has been a focus on innovative approaches to teaching and learning, with particular emphasis on practice aspects, such as activated learning. LET’S challenges the assumptions and theories underpinning the status quo on these subjects, and investigates the potential for change and improvement of methods of teaching human movement, through action research.

Secondly, with the growing interest in elite sports, there has been a research focus on sports psychology, predominantly in the field of talent development. LET’S has taken a holistic approach to look at social relations and their influence on athlete development and performance, and particularly on successful talent development environments.

Thirdly, with the University of Southern Denmark’s increasing emphasis on entrepreneurship, LET’S is encouraging new ways of thinking and learning through its research in entrepreneurship education for practitioners involved in human movement. Inside that a major research interest is “Human Movement Computer Interaction” which seeks to obtain an understanding of the human who moves and learns through interaction with computers and at the same time study the design process of developing such concepts.



Figure 1. The three research areas in the research unit Learning & Talent in Sport

As researchers in the unit we have backgrounds in sports science, pedagogy, psychology, and interaction design. We work in collaboration with researchers and practitioners both inside and outside the University to address key research questions. A common method we use in the development of innovative approaches to applying knowledge to the areas of human movement practice is to collaborate with the relevant end-user groups. The description, understanding and explanation of each of these areas of movement practice are documented through qualitative approaches and research methods. A substantial proportion of the practical elements of our research work are undertaken with practitioners in their professional settings or in the Lab for Play and Innovation at the Department of Sports Science and Clinical Biomechanics.

LET'S role is:

- To research the innovative and applied use of the pedagogy of human movement and sports psychology in order to enhance participation, performance, learning and talent development.
- To expose students, partners, and the public to the latest theories and practices of teaching and learning human movement.
- To stimulate entrepreneurial thinking in the fields of teaching human movement and sport psychology to equip practitioners with the knowledge and skills to implement innovative ideas and create value.

Vision

In 2020, our research unit is recognised across Denmark and internationally as *'the place to go'* for the latest innovative thinking and research, in talent development, pedagogy, and entrepreneurship of human movement.

Definition of success

To realise this vision, we will have achieved the following:

- The research unit has built on its identified competencies and strengths in three main research areas, for which we receive external funding:
 - Pedagogy of human movement
 - Talent development and sports psychology
 - Entrepreneurship and innovative technologies for learning and movement.
- We have a national and international reputation for our contribution to these research areas, as evidenced by our publications, our invitations to present at significant professional conferences, and requests for personnel secondments or exchange.
- We have successfully run our first boutique international conference in one of our main research areas, with one of the key outputs being an edited book or special issue of a leading journal in the field.

- The Research Unit comprises at least seven full-time staff that on average is publishing two peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters or books a year.
- We collaborate on research projects with European countries, Australia, New Zealand, and leading national organisations such as Team Denmark, sports schools and municipalities.
- The other research units in the Department are aware of our competencies and resources and look for opportunities to collaborate with us.
- Our end-users (such as physical educators, sports coaches and companies associated with human movement) value the seminars we run annually to share recent innovations in research and education.
- As a result of our research and education, there is evidence of uptake of new practices in Danish contexts of the pedagogy of human movement, talent development, sports psychology, entrepreneurship and innovative technologies.
- Other countries are adopting some of these practices of the pedagogy of human movement, talent development, sports psychology, entrepreneurship and innovative technologies.
- We have developed successful collaborations with private enterprises to develop new technologies for pedagogy of human movement, talent development, sports psychology, entrepreneurship and innovative technologies.
- We operate as a cohesive group through knowledge sharing and collaborative activities.
- Our image is influenced by our cooperative spirit and for our very visible demonstration of 'practising what we preach'.

Key external influences

We have identified a number of factors in our operating environment that will influence our strategy going forward. The main ones are illustrated in the diagram to the right.

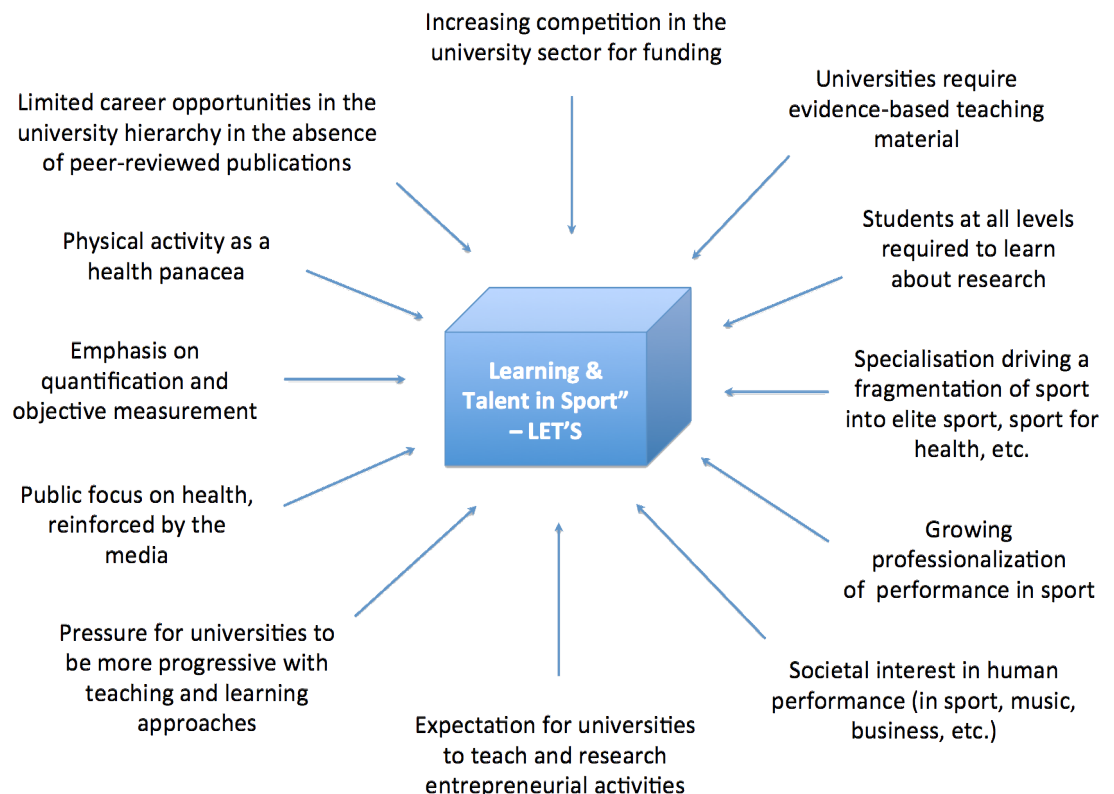


Figure 2. External influences on the LET'S strategy

Strategic priorities

We will pursue five strategic priorities to position our research unit for a successful future:

1. Articulate the three principal research areas on which the research unit will target its grant applications apply for and thereby receive research funding.
2. Secure new professorial positions to raise the awareness of the profile of the research unit.
3. Seek new collaborations with sporting organisations, private enterprise and municipalities to develop technologies to enhance the performance in sports, learning and human movement.
4. Implement new organisational measures to improve communication and coordination of research unit activities.
5. Design and implement activities that demonstrate that we 'practise what we preach' in terms of talent development and teaching of human movement.



Figure 3, The logo and slogan of LET'S