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1991 - 2024

IBA



**FROM A SMALL, LOCAL DANISH
BUSINESS ACADEMY TO DENMARK'S
MOST SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS ACADEMY**



INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS ACADEMY

FOREWORD

In the heart of Kolding – overlooking the fjord – lies IBA Erhvervsakademi Kolding. The institution offers higher education programmes that attract students from all over Denmark. The majority of young people attend classes on campus, while a third have chosen to begin their studies online.

IBA Erhvervsakademi Kolding also hosts one of the country's largest continuing education departments. Both during the day and in the evening, we teach adults who wish to update and expand their qualifications within areas such as management and finance.

At the same time, the IBA maintains a well-functioning collaboration with two English universities, Leeds Beckett University and Coventry University, offering their programmes either physically in Kolding or online.

In other words, it is a busy house – and at the same time, an elegant and striking building, which won the municipal architecture award in 2019, after the then Minister for Higher Education and Science, Ane Halsboe-Jørgensen, cut the ribbon at the inauguration.

The IBA was established as an independent business academy in 2009, but the institution's roots stretch much further back. That is the purpose of this publication, which poses the question: How did it all begin?

To find the answer, we must go back to 1991, when Handelsakademiet for Trekantsom-

rådet was renamed the International Business Academy (IBA). The English name was by no means chosen at random. From its inception, the IBA has been driven by international partnerships, always to the benefit of both Danish and international students. On the one hand, international students come to Kolding, where they become part of student life, and on the other, Danish students can spend a semester abroad either studying or doing an internship.

As can be seen, the abbreviation the IBA is now part of the Danish name (IBA Erhvervsakademi Kolding), while the English name, International Business Academy, continues to be used abroad and in collaboration with our 80 international partners around the world.

This is the story of the international platform on which the IBA stands. The history of the International Business Academy is recalled by Academic Advisor Keld Hvam. He has been involved from the very beginning and has contributed significantly to the development of the IBA's international profile.

Keld's recollections reach back to the 1980s, when the first ideas began to take shape, and extend up to 2024.

Enjoy the read.

*Britt Johnsen, Head of Communications
John Ahle Petersen, Journalist*

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THE FORMATIVE YEARS

If the right people are at the right place at the right time, things may happen. It is often a question of willingness to act on opportunities presented and willingness to take certain risks as well as having an open mind and an innovative and entrepreneurial spirit. These traits, characteristics and situations came together and contributed to the creation of the new IBA and the subsequent development described in this publication.

Today the IBA is a successful international business academy with thousands of students and still attracting and reacting to new opportunities. **But how did it all start?**

The following is by no means a complete account. It is the early history of the IBA as I see it, as my personal journey coincides with these early years, and I played a not insignificant role in the process together with Niels Egelund and Ian Charles. We had no preconceived idea of what we were aiming at, but we were open to new ideas and very good at reacting to opportunities that often presented themselves unexpectedly.

The IBA's and my journey started at Kolding Købmandsskole, now known as IBC International Business College, which is

an educational institution for secondary education located in Kolding, Denmark. It offers various programmes and courses focused on business and related fields. The school provides both full-time and part-time programmes, catering to students aiming for careers in business and industry. The institution aims to equip young students in the age group of 16-19 years old with practical skills and theoretical knowledge necessary for the business world and to prepare them for continuing education programmes to support lifelong learning and professional development.

Kolding Købmandsskole was an innovative and forward-looking institution under the management of Johannes Riis Pedersen from 1967 to 1982, and at the beginning of the 1970s, a new programme area, a higher education department, in collaboration with the Business School in Copenhagen (Now called CBS – Copenhagen Business School) was established, and two-year full-time programmes teaching business languages of English, German, and Spanish as well as part-time bachelor programmes – called HD - were offered. In 1987 this department was made an independent institution in its own right, and later it merged with the University of Odense to become SDU - University of Southern Denmark.



Kolding Købmandsskole - where the journey began.

In 1982 Jørgen Houmann took over as principal of Kolding Købmandsskole, and in 1983 the school established "Handelsakademiet for Trekantsområdet" under the leadership of Senior Lecturer Arnold Hansen and started offering a 2-year Academy Economist programme. This programme was based on the concept of alternating academic study with periods of practical experience, and thus it would offer business college pupils the opportunity to continue their studies at higher education level without the need to move to another institution.

It proved difficult to attract many students to this new programme, and it was not easy to persuade Danish companies to take in these students as trainees for shorter periods at a time. Therefore, the Academy had only one group of students of 10-15 students for several years. Officially, these trainees would be employed by the company and paid a salary, also during the periods when they were at school. A school year would typically consist of alternating periods of two weeks' duration during which the students were at school or working in their companies.

The reason why it was not easy to persuade companies to hire these students was because it would cost them money, and they would only have these students at their disposal for half of the time. But it turned out that these students became very good, both academically and in practice, and many of them stayed on at their company after finishing this education and became great assets to their employers.

Two lecturers, Niels Egelund, who had taken over the responsibility for the Academy as principal in 1989, and the writer of this paper, who had been teaching the academy students English and participated in the development of the curriculum since the beginning in 1983, got the idea of modifying the Academy Economist programme to create a more 'international' flavour to

the existing study programme. The idea was formed during a study tour with an Academy Economist group to Britain in 1990. This tour included several company visits to companies in both London and Edinburgh, one of which was BAe British Aerospace in Peterborough. During the train ride from London to Peterborough the idea was conceived of sending Danish students on work placements to Britain. And I suggested that the existing name of "Handelsakademiet for Trekantsområdet" be changed to "**IBA International Business Academy**", which would of course be easier to understand and pronounce for British employers, who were to be persuaded to take in Danish students on work placements for shorter periods of time, and better fit the new Academy concept that we were thinking of.

The new concept that Niels and I discussed during the train ride to Peterborough would involve being able to find suitable British companies, being permitted by the Danish Ministry of Education to send Danish students in work placements in Britain and teaching them more English. This could be done by giving the students more English lessons or by teaching all subjects in English. The latter would of course demand permission from the Danish Ministry of Education. We were discussing whether this would at all be possible, but sometimes fate works to your advantage:

In 1990, the Danish Ministry of Education opened up for more flexibility in the running and development of the academies in Denmark, of which "Handelsakademiet for Trekantsområdet" was one. This certainly created new opportunities for enterprising souls.

This coincided with the imminent adoption of the Single Market Act in 1992 that enabled free movement within (the then) EEC – which at that time included the UK.

But then – lo and behold – in March 1991 “Handelsakademiet for Trekantsområdet” received a letter from Ian Charles, who was at that time employed as a lecturer at City of Westminster College in the centre of London. Ian had sent letters to several business colleges in Denmark looking for a new international partner. I received the letter and was asked to “take care of this” by one of my heads of department, Birte Sørensen, because “you speak English”. So, in April, three lecturers from City of Westminster College, Ian Charles, Peter Harden and Monica Jennings, arrived for a visit to Kolding. I sat down with the visitors and started a general discussion on how and what we could co-operate about. We had no preconceived ideas. Suddenly, I remembered the talk I had had with Niels on the train ride to Peterborough the year before and asked the visitors whether they would be able to provide work placements in British companies for Danish academy

students. It turned out that Ian was the right person to ask, for he immediately answered, “No problem”.

After that, things moved very fast. After a follow-up visit by Niels and me to London at the end of May 1991, the partnership was formed, and the first students taking the new, revised programme could begin just 2 months later in August. The IBA was very fortunate in having from the outset an enlightened management, administration and teaching faculty with the vision to understand the opportunities and benefits achievable through internationalisation.



“The birth certificate of the new IBA” - The first visit by lecturers from City of Westminster College to Kolding Købmandsskole – April 1991

From left: Niels Egelund (Head of the IBA), Peter Harden, Jørgen Houmann (Principal of Kolding Købmandsskole), Keld Hvam, Monica Jennings and Ian Charles.

1991

THE NEW IBA IS BORN

In 1991, the “Handelsakademiet for Trekantsområdet” is renamed the International Business Academy (IBA), and the new academy now has two groups taught in English and two in German. All the students on the English line take their work placement in London, and they are housed in accommodation together.

“I visited Denmark in 1991 to find a business school that wanted to work internationally. I saw many fine institutions, but the one that stood out then and still stands out today is the International Business Academy. And although those first IBA students in 1991 would be amazed at the ways in which we’ve grown and developed, they would also recognize two steadfast principles we had then and retain today: Our commitment to take the IBA to the world, and our commitment to bring the world to the IBA” – Ian Charles

There were some initial teething problems in 1991-1992, but by and large these were quickly resolved, and the programme was judged a success from the beginning. Enrolment increased for the next cohort but...

for the next and subsequent cohorts, there was a decline in numbers wanting to study in German although the German line continued for some more years, but it was discontinued eventually. The English line changed, too. With all the students in one place (London), weekly classes were offered at City of Westminster College. At the same time, students were questioning why they needed to take their work placement in London and live together.

This led to a fundamental change to the IBA, which led to exponential growth and greatly increased diversity: students having the opportunity to study anywhere in the world where a suitable work placement was provided, vastly increased the popularity of the programme and for the first time students started to arrive from all over the country rather than study at their local school. And very soon students also started arriving from other countries, which was made possible by the fact that the IBA now offered teaching in English on all courses.

From the beginning, employer feedback was very positive towards IBA students - too positive in fact. While Ian was making a monitoring visit to a company, the employer asked what course the IBA student was following - was it post-graduate, MBA? When told it was a 2-year undergraduate programme, not even a full bachelor, the employer said he would complain because the student deserved far more for such a high standard of knowledge.



The first IBA logo was introduced in 1991.

As a result, Ian suggested the IBA should seek a dual award, offering students a more visible and known international qualification to go alongside their Danish diploma, and he established contact to the Open University in Britain.

Subsequently, in 1993 the IBA embarked on an application to be validated by the Open University to offer the Danish diploma in parallel with a UK Diploma of High-

er Education (DipHE). This would enable IBA's students to walk into universities in the UK and other countries to complete a bachelor's degree – with invariably excellent results.

After a painstaking and gruelling process, this was achieved just in time for the 1994 graduating cohort. That year, the IBA became the first non-university institution in Denmark to offer a dual award, one of which was from another country. This was an almost unheard-of concept at the time. Following this, other Danish business schools attempted something similar although for several years the IBA stood alone in offering this.

The IBA soon learned that its innovative approach, high academic standards, fine facilities and willingness to co-operate made it an ideal institutional partner for much larger universities and organisations that valued its ability to experiment with new programmes and ideas.

WORK PLACEMENTS OUTSIDE DENMARK

The work placements in Britain turned out to be a huge success. They were of course attractive to Danish students who wanted to get an international flavour, and they also contributed to attracting international students from other countries. Ian turned out to be good at identifying and persuading suitable companies to take on the IBA's students. A contributing factor may have been the fact that these students did not expect or require payment by the companies as the first Danish students had received from their Danish companies originally. The IBA students did actually receive study grants from the Danish government, also when they were in Britain. This arrangement was later extended to all EU citizens who were studying at the IBA.

Some of the companies that offered work placements to the Danish students were well known British and international organisations like British Gas and Reuters. Some students were also sent to unfamiliar placements in the much larger voluntary sector outside Denmark, but this had no detrimental effect on their outcomes – actually, the first three students in voluntary organisations went on to careers with EON, LEGO and Maersk.

After the initial period when students were offered to live and work in London only, the IBA soon started offering work placements in Edinburgh. Later, work placements and study opportunities at international universities were also offered in other countries, for instance in Ireland and New Zealand.

The number of students and thus the need for international work placements continued to grow, and Ian soon left his employment at City of Westminster College in London and became IBA's international co-ordinator, and head of our international office, but still working from a base in London. He proved an invaluable asset for the IBA.

1993-2003

COLLABORATION WITH THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN BRITAIN

The growing number of students ending up with a dual DipHE education from the IBA and the Open University (OU) and subsequently working in good jobs in international organisations soon realized that they needed a “real” bachelor education to further their careers. The IBA was unable to offer this opportunity at the time, because no top-up bachelor programmes were available at Danish business academies, and many universities would not accept DipHe students from business academies into their programmes.

The answer to this problem lay in the IBA's collaboration with the OU. The Open University (OU) is a public university based in the United Kingdom that specializes in distance learning and offers flexible, accessible higher education to students across the world. It was founded in 1969 with the aim of providing higher education to people who might not have been able to attend traditional, campus-based universities, such as working adults, those with family commitments, or people living in remote areas.

The Open University offers distance learning, in which students typically study from home, using a combination of online resources, textbooks, and multimedia materials. The university uses technology to deliver its courses, offering a highly flexible learning experience.

While based in the UK, the Open University has students worldwide and is one of the largest providers of distance learning globally. The Open University is also recognized for the quality of its teaching and research. Its degrees are accredited and are widely respected in both the UK and internationally.

As mentioned, the Open University in Britain had validated the Danish DipHe programme offered by the IBA in 1993, and this opened the doors for further studies in Britain. However, many of the IBA's academy economist graduates ended up in good jobs and did not want to return to full-time studies to get a bachelor's degree.

During this period, computer technology had also developed, and it became possible to send messages from one computer to the next (e-mails) and the Internet was emerging. I had been representing Kolding Købmandsskole and in that capacity working for a joint study programme called “Fleksibel Merkonom” or “Merkoflex”, which was a co-operation between business schools in southern Jutland to offer part-time courses to Danish businesspeople. These courses were normally offered as evening classes, but now experiments were being made by Merkoflex to offer courses online through e-learning. I was part of their development group and thus took part in and saw all the experiments first-hand.

This led to an idea that the IBA should start offering top-up bachelor programmes online to our students. There was clearly a market as this would enable our DipHe graduates to take courses online while still maintaining their good jobs. The only problem was that business academies were not permitted to do this under the Danish educational set-up.

But now, we saw the opportunity to develop our own bachelor top-up and get it validated by the Open University, and if we could offer it online, we would meet our students' wishes and avoid restrictions from the Danish Ministry.

Niels was open for this opportunity. So, a development process was set in motion at the IBA, and in 1995 we could ask the Open University Validation Services to validate our new programme. This was done quickly and in 1996, we could offer our

new Bachelor (Honours) in International Business (E-BA) as an online programme to students internationally. Thus, the IBA introduced a study programme enabling students with the equivalent to two years' higher education (DipHE) to achieve the degree of BA (Honours) in International Business, validated by the Open University.

"I manage to strengthen my theoretical foundation and at the same time have a good family life and a good career, due to the fact, that I can plan when and where to study. The study has already proved to be lucrative to my career." – Manager of a Danish company

The new E-BA, which we were now able to offer online, consisted of six independent modules that students could take in any order they liked, and as it was validated by the Open University, the academic standard was high from the beginning, and comparable to the quality normally offered by onsite taught programmes internationally. Thus, the hallmark of this programme became flexibility and quality.

FROM INSTRUCTIONS FOR LECTURERS ON DISCUSSION-BASED E-LEARNING

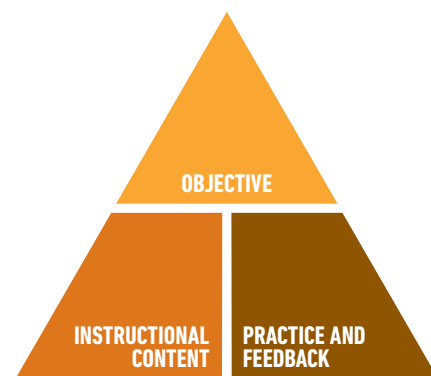
- Asynchronous discussions
- Student-administered discussion topics
- Teaching through discussions rather than lecturing
- Focus on opinions and application to practical business situations
- Make discussion-participation mandatory and/or part of the overall mark for the module

And now, in 1996, I started working officially as programme manager for this programme and e-learning director, a position I held until 2023, when Oksana Jørgensen took over, but I continued working as Academic Advisor and Developer to support Oksana in her new and demanding position.

1996 THE BIRTH OF E-LEARNING

As mentioned, experiments with e-learning and online teaching were carried out by Merkoflex, whose administrative headquarters were in Tønder in southern Jutland.

The process was difficult and the tools we had were relatively primitive. One of the tools called Toolbook enabled lecturers to develop modules with multiple-choice exercises, which could be placed on webpages or sent by e-mail to students. Many students did not have access to the necessary technology and had to be assisted in many ways. They were also unused to working in this way, and the pedagogical methods had to be developed and adapted from scratch. We took our starting points in the tools available and the traditional Danish pedagogical methods of dialogue-based and student-centred learning.



Thus, having been involved in the first attempts to develop e-learning in Denmark, I saw it as a natural process to take this experience home and apply it to our new international aspirations at the IBA.

So, we had a good starting point, and now we took our e-learning knowledge and experience much further by developing a specific IBA e-learning methodology to fit our new programmes – in the first place the planned E-BA and later on other programmes.

The main characteristic of the new IBA e-learning concept became asynchronous learning. The students were not expected to be “on” at the same time. They could log on at a time and place that suited them, but they should still learn through an open dialogue with their peers and lecturers. This was of course supplemented by access to written materials and books, from which students got the factual information they needed, and which they could then discuss and form opinions on.

This kind of learning proved ideal for businesspeople working full-time.

So, at the IBA, we were looking for electronic tools that would fit our pedagogical methods and wishes. In the beginning, we had to use several separate tools, and the focus was on developing so-called learning objects, which were centred around one learning objective with information and exercises as well as lecturer feedback. This could be developed in Toolbook and presented as separate objects on a webpage.

A learning object might also be a video in which a lecturer explained a specific topic, but this could not stand alone, as there was no student interaction and further activities had to be added in a separate learning object.

But things became easier when we got access to so-called e-learning platforms,

which in one place included many of the separate tools that we had used earlier. The first one used at the IBA was Blackboard, and this was later replaced by Canvas, which in my opinion is one of the best Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) available today.

Experiments are still taking place as new tools and opportunities continue to present themselves, and the IBA e-learning concept is further developed and adapted to fit the wishes of students and the possibilities as well as challenges presented by the development of e-learning technology. It will continue to be an ongoing process.

The advent of artificial intelligence in 2024 has for instance proved a challenge. Now students are able to use tools like ChatGPT to write texts and whole assignments for them. However, the introduction of detection software has been able to detect misuse and thus discourage students from using such tools. However, these tools may be used by students in the preparation of their papers, to get ideas and inspiration, but finished papers need to be their own work. It has also proved useful that many modules have oral exams, in which students are asked to present and defend their prepared papers at an online video conference. On these occasions it is relatively easy for the internal and external examiners present to identify misuse. Such exams will probably be used more in the future.

LEARNING LAB (EARLIER PEDAGOGICAL CENTRE)

The growing number of international students at the IBA brought new opportunities, a new outlook, but also challenges. We soon realized that many of these students were used to teaching methods in their homelands that were very different from the way we were teaching in the classrooms at the IBA, but also from the e-learning concept that we were developing. Thus, the question arose whether we should change our pedagogical methodology to meet the expectations of some of these new students or whether we should teach them how to learn “the Danish way”. Anyway, there was an added focus on pedagogical and didactic methods. Therefore, we decided to establish a pedagogical centre (now called Learning Lab), in which I was working with two experienced lecturers, Morten Kier and Søren Bladt.

The purpose of this new centre was to train our fellow lecturers to teach the cohorts of international and Danish students in the most optimal way. We focused on advising on and solving practical pedagogical problems that arose in the classrooms and online, and also on bringing new teaching methods to the IBA. Inspiration was found externally at international conferences like the annual OEB Conference in Berlin and a conference on visual learning in London, but also from Danish sources like SmartLearning. This is an organisation developed from MerkoFlex, which is aiming to inspire member academies to improve their pedagogical methods, and also offering academy courses online to Danish students.

Among the pedagogical methods that we were trying to introduce to the IBA were Visible Learning and SCL (student-centred learning), information on which we encourage the reader to seek online. Methodologies that may be applied to both classroom

as well as online teaching, but also to the combination called Blended Learning.

In the Pedagogical Centre we decided that our focus should remain on discussion-based, peer-to-peer and active learning, and on attempts to move students from having a fixed mindset to a growth mindset (see the theories developed by Carol Dweck), and this should apply to both Danish and international students.

There is no doubt that LearningLab/Pedagogical Centre has been a source of inspiration for many lecturers over the years and has contributed to the strong pedagogical base that the IBA has today.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION AND ACCREDITATIONS

The IBA's international office worked hard to establish contacts and cooperations throughout the world, and in this process, we benefitted very much from Ian's extensive networking and untiring work to bring the IBA to the world.

The IBA soon became one of the founding institutions of a new network, established in 1993, the Network of International Business Schools (NIBS), an association of business schools and institutions that collaborate to enhance international education and research in business and management. The network facilitates partnerships, academic exchanges, and cooperative programmes among its member institutions around the world. Its goal is to promote global collaboration in business education and prepare students for an increasingly interconnected global business environment. This network creates opportunities for students to participate in exchange programmes, internships, and collaborative research projects.

Being a member of and accredited by NIBS indicate that a business school adheres to high academic standards and is committed to offering a global perspective in its programmes. The network promotes the exchange of knowledge and helps member schools align with international benchmarks of business education.

NIBS institutions tend to focus on providing practical, real-world business education that is relevant to the global marketplace. This may include case studies, business simulations, and opportunities to interact with international businesses and industries. Over the years, students from the IBA have participated in case competitions arranged by NIBS with very good results. The teams competing from the IBA have been coached and trained by senior lecturer Albert Elam among others for several years, and the teams clearly reflect the international composition of students at the IBA in general and the international and cross-cultural collaboration of students, as it appears from these photos.

The opportunity to join the NIBS network was made possible through the contacts that Ian had established in London. The founding president of NIBS was David Gillingham, who turned out to be one of the best friends of the IBA, and also an initiator of new partnerships and new study programmes. When David Gillingham resigned as president, Ian took over, while still working as the international co-ordinator of the IBA. Thus, the IBA actually provided the presidency of NIBS from 2008 to 2010.

Over the years, the IBA also joined other international networks such as the Magellan Exchange, making the IBA the first and only Academy in Denmark to become part of a free study exchange programme with US institutions. Similarly, a partnership with CIEE (Council on International Education and Exchange) enabled the IBA to be the first Academy to be able to send

students on a systematic basis for trainee placements to the USA.

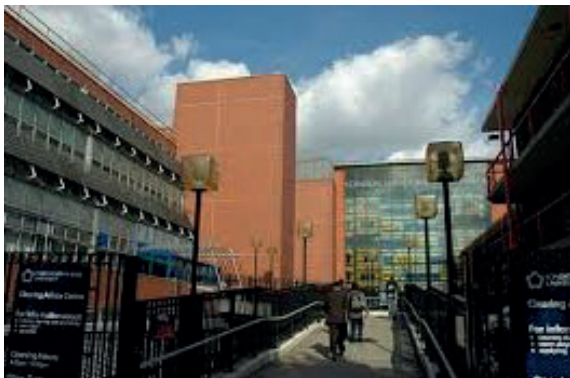
In the very early 2000s Ian successfully completed an Erasmus Charter application and its subsequent adoption led to an exponential rise in exchange students with opportunities for Danish students to study abroad but also providing a major increase in diversity amongst the IBA cohort from incoming students. And in order to ensure good assimilation and integration amongst international students, a member of staff was appointed for the specific purpose of furthering this.



2002-2018

COLLABORATION WITH LONDON SOUTH BANK UNIVERSITY (LSBU)

Even though the IBA's cooperation with the Open University generated a boost to our international aspirations, we soon realized that the OU was not a "real" university in the traditional sense. We needed pedagogical discussions and feedback, and when we saw an opportunity to work with London South Bank University we switched over, and from 2002 we worked with LSBU.



In the first place LSBU accredited our existing full-time DipHe and online bachelor programmes, and we started discussing whether there were other programmes that we could offer as online programmes. LSBU had offered a Master of Science in International Business (MScIB) together

with other partners for several years, and we were invited to participate in that partnership. However, this programme was offered as a full-time onsite programme, and we did not see a market for that in Denmark. Instead, we persuaded LSBU to let us convert the MScIB to online delivery. This was done, and in 2003 we started offering this programme online as well.

The IBA's version of the MScIB was taught entirely by e-learning. This meant that students, who were often businesspeople, could now work independently of time and place. The programme is divided into separate units that can be taken separately. This flexibility works especially well for people who want to improve their qualifications, skills and career opportunities without having to sacrifice job and income in order to study further. The IBA method makes it possible to continue to work and study at the same time.

This new initiative was well received both by students and faculty, and soon closer co-operation was initiated among staff and lecturers for the benefit of both institutions.

Professor Phil Cardew, who was Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic), at LSBU during those years formed close links with the IBA, visited us several times and in general supported us in our daily work and further development.



28th March 2011 - the signing of a continued collaboration agreement with London South Bank University by Phil Cardew and Niels Egelund.

Another successful programme initiated by Ian was a Double Degree, an online bachelor top-up offered to some of the IBA's full-time students on the new professional bachelor programme in sales and marketing now made available by the academies in Denmark. Students on this programme could take some of the modules from the online E-BA (Bachelor in International Business) and combine them with their work-based learning period and bachelor project from their full-time studies and thus achieve a British bachelor degree at the same time – consequently a Double Degree, which immensely enhanced their future study options and career prospects.

A further initiative, and in many ways one of the IBA's finest achievements, was - the European Business Management degree (now called Business Management across Europe) This is a unique "three-country" degree, the first and probably only one of its kind, enabling students to complete a business degree in 3 different countries. It was initiated at the IBA by Ian in 2007, with the first cohort studying at the IBA for one year, then proceeding to KHS Leuven in Belgium and completing their BA degree in European Management at Coventry University UK. From its humble beginning, the extraordinary success of this programme now offers students a choice of study at a wide array of universities throughout Europe.

The Faculty is especially pleased to collaborate with the International Business Academy in Kolding, Denmark. IBA is an acknowledged leader in business e-learning developments, and we have joint programmes at both undergraduate and masters' levels which combine the approaches and expertise of our two institutions. Moreover, many Kolding graduates have over the years entered directly into the final year of our 3-year BA (Hons) Business Administration/Studies degree, and have proved themselves excellent students. We look forward to developing and extending our association with your fine institution, and would welcome visits from students and staff alike.

Roger Smith

Pro Dean, Faculty of Business, Computing and Information Management, London South Bank University



30th June 2011 – graduation ceremony at Koldinghus Castle with partners from LSBU
 Standing behind from the left: Finn Sander, Albert Elam, Ian Charles, Keld Hvam, Jette Gøbel, Morten Kier
 Sitting in front from the left: Colin Knapp, Colquhoun Ferguson, Niels Egelund, Phil Cardew, Geoff Elliott

Following on from our success with the three online programmes, Bachelor (Honours) in International Business, the Double Degree and Master of Science in International Business, the IBA soon sought to develop and offer an online MBA programme as well. Although this was in some ways to prove one of our most challenging projects, as LSBU was not able or particularly willing to share an MBA with us, a suitable and willing partner was found at Coventry University in Britain.

2005 **COVENTRY UNIVERSITY**

The collaboration began in 2005. Our NIBS partnership and accreditation had brought us into close contact with David Gillingham, who was president of NIBS, but also Pro-Vice Chancellor of Coventry University. Following a meeting in Kolding, I visited Coventry University together with one of my colleagues, Morten Kier, later the same year. We were met by Pro Dean Paul Jackson in Coventry, and together we agreed on the content of the new MBA taught in English that the IBA would offer. It was meant to be a part-time, but not necessarily online programme. And soon the IBA was able to welcome the first cohort.

Initially, I was in charge of this new programme as well, but later responsibility was passed on to other colleagues, and now the programme manager for all the Coventry courses is Peter Lei, who has taken this collaboration to new heights, as described under “The IBA Today”. He has certainly acted on the opportunities presenting themselves.

2008 **COLLABORATION WITH EUROPÄISCHE FERNHOCHSCHULE (EuroFH) HAMBURG**

In 2008 the IBA was contacted by Europäische Fernhochschule (EuroFH) in Hamburg, which is a large business university that offers part-time e-learning programmes at bachelor, master and MBA levels to German businesspeople. They had been referred to the IBA by Professor Svend Hollensen at the University of Southern Denmark with whom they had been co-operating earlier. The IBA was considered a more suitable partner for them due to its experience within internationalisation and e-learning. Being an innovative and entrepreneurial spirit, Niels welcomed EuroFH and their ideas and entrusted me with the task of developing and running courses for them – a position I held until 2023, when Oksana Jørgensen took over this activity together with her other responsibilities as E-Learning Director. I also continued as Academic Advisor and Developer to support Oksana here.

EuroFH wanted residential 2-week courses on the “Scandinavian Model” for their bachelor students. It was quickly agreed that the courses should include topics like Culture Studies, Scandinavian Management, Innovation and Flexicurity, among others.

The courses were to be taught by the IBA's own lecturers and take place at the IBA. The pedagogical methods adopted were to be typically Danish, so that students would not only hear about Danish culture but experience it at first hand. The students quickly realized that the teaching methods in Denmark were very different from the ones used in Germany – and they actually liked them.

**EXTRACT FROM COURSE CONTENT
FOR THE FIRST COURSE IN 2008:**

The course will give students an understanding of how business is done in Scandinavia. It will focus on elements that have contributed to making Scandinavian and especially Danish business successful. The current unemployment rate in Denmark is below 3 %, and the country needs and welcomes workers from Eastern Europe in great numbers, without whom the economy would slow down. Much manual work is being outsourced to third world countries leaving the Danes to develop new innovative ideas, do service jobs, esp. within the experience economy, and focus on things like design.

Management practices are more or less the same in the Scandinavian countries, but at the moment the Danish economy is doing much better than most other EU members in spite of the fact that Denmark does not participate in the common currency but has kept its own currency, the Krone.

There is no doubt that Scandinavian and especially Danish cultural characteristics have contributed heavily to this development. However, there is not one, simple explanation for the current success of the Danish economy, but this course aims at exploring, discussing and trying to identify the reasons behind.

Company visits were also included to well-known Danish companies like LEGO, Danfoss, ECCO Shoes, Montana and others. The visits to the LEGO company were

especially popular and contributed to making these courses very attractive for the German businesspeople participating. This agreement with EuroFH was made during the summer of 2008, and consequently, the first course was called "summer school" to distinguish it from other courses that the IBA was running. This name stuck, and all the following courses were called "summer school courses" subsequently. Now, they are running throughout the calendar years – from February to November – still with the same illogical name, but the adoption of a new name like "Short Residential Courses" is being considered.

The "summer school" courses on the "Scandinavian Model" turned out to be very popular, and later other courses for Master, MBA and psychology students were added.

When the Covid-19 pandemic struck suddenly in the spring of 2020, 10 residential courses had been planned to take place in Kolding. The German students did not want to risk coming, so consequently, the IBA quickly converted all the planned residential courses into 100 % online ones that would allow the students to stay at home and still get the benefit of the same education. This turned out to be a huge success, and all the students got the education that they wanted. The IBA's flexibility and willingness to meet the students' requirements generated much admiration among its partners. At the time of writing this publication, more than 100 courses have been run at the IBA for EuroFH, and new courses are being offered continuously.

This is just another example of the importance for an educational institution of being flexible and innovative as well as having an international and high-quality image.

2018 COLLABORATION WITH LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY (LBU)

In 2017, the IBA reached a turning point. A strategic review of international collaborations at London South Bank University, led to our needing a new institutional partner in the UK and this was found through Professor Phil Cardew who had become Deputy Vice Chancellor at Leeds Beckett University. He was very interested in the IBA's e-learning concept, and I was then invited to attend an e-learning conference at his new university. I accepted the invitation and ended up presenting the IBA's e-learning concept at the conference in 2016.



22nd November 2016 – Keld Hvam talking at a Distance Learning Unit conference at Leeds Beckett University

Following this, we started talks with Leeds Beckett University to collaborate on e-learning, and in 2017 it was agreed that we should move our three online programmes, the Bachelor in International Business, the Double Degree, and Master

of Science in International Business from London South Bank University to Leeds Beckett University. An onsite version of the Master programme was moved to Coventry University. This meant we continued to have close links to two British universities. Our international, part-time online programmes would now be offered in collaboration with Leeds Beckett University and our international, full-time onsite programmes would be offered in collaboration with Coventry University.

The new collaboration with LBU has proved very productive. Very soon, we transformed our new European Executive MBA to run online with this new partner while keeping the onsite version with Coventry University. In 2023, the IBA was even able to increase its portfolio by presenting a new online Executive MBA programme in Sustainability in addition to the four other online programmes.

Our new partner, Leeds Beckett University, which has almost 200 years of teaching experience, is based in the vibrant and cosmopolitan city of Leeds, the UK's largest centre for business and financial services outside of London. The University is one of the most popular in the UK. It employs more than 3,300 people, and over 29,000 students study a Leeds Beckett University qualification in the UK and overseas.

Shortly after, now aged 68, Ian retired from the IBA although he has continued since then to provide consultancy for Danish institutions.



14th December 2017 – the first visit to the IBA by lecturers from Leeds Beckett University. From the left: Becky Baldaro (LBU), Niels Egelund (IBA), Morten Kier (IBA), Jeanne Keay (LBU), Keld Hvam (IBA), Sanne Nielsen (IBA), Jon James (LBU)



Re-validation with Leeds Beckett University in 2023
 From the left: Jeanette Lemmergaard (IBA), Niels Egelund (IBA), Oksana Jørgensen (IBA), Morten Kier (IBA), Julie Barnaby (LBU), Sanne Nielsen (IBA), Lee Jones (LBU), Kay Hartley (LBU)

2019

THE IBA'S NEW CAMPUS

The IBA started as a higher education department at Kolding Købmandsskole in 1983, and for many years shared the same premises. However, the IBA continued to grow and was eventually made an independent institution, and as a consequence we moved to new specially designed premises in September 2019.

The IBA is now located on the harbour front in Kolding next to the University of Southern Denmark, SDU, another off-spring from Kolding Købmandsskole. These institutions together with University College South Denmark and the Kolding School of Design form part of a cohesive campus area for higher education making Kolding a key educational hub in southern Denmark and attracting thousands of students.

THE IBA IN 2024

Over time, the academy has expanded its offerings to include various degree programmes in areas like international marketing, management, finance, and entre-

preneurship, as well as courses in digital transformation and sustainability.

The IBA's focus on global business and international relations has been a cornerstone of its philosophy, attracting students from across Denmark and around the world. The institution emphasizes hands-on experience, industry collaboration, and a strong network of international partnerships, which enhance students' career opportunities and global perspectives.

International Operations

Today, the director of international co-operation is Ildiko Antal, and the IBA works with over 85 universities and institutions across the globe, from overseas or far-flung countries such as China, South Korea, Brazil and America, to European countries such as England, France, Spain and Romania.

The IBA has Erasmus Charter. Individual students from our partner institutions are therefore welcome here as exchange students, just as our Danish students have many opportunities to include an overseas stay as part of their studies.



Since 2010 the IBA Confucius Institute for Business, Culture and Language has also been an established collaboration between Shanghai Lixin University of Accounting and Finance and the IBA. Through this collaboration IBA students are offered the opportunity to learn Chinese.

In the summer of 2024, the IBA was added to the list of UNESCO Schools Network. This is a worldwide network of educational institutions that collaborate and exchange knowledge. Members recognise UNESCO's values and the United Nations' 17 Global Goals.

IBA Nexttech

Another opportunity that presented itself was Nexttech - a large collection of industrial 3D printers that was offered to the IBA by Business Kolding. Niels saw the possibilities here, and in 2017 IBA Nexttech was established as an integral but also separate department of the IBA. Today IBA Nexttech offers both full-time and continuing education in industrial 3D printing, also known as Additive Manufacturing.

In addition, Nexttech regularly handles tasks related to designing, developing, advising, and producing prototypes for businesses and organizations.

Teaching industrial 3D printing requires up-to-date knowledge and a state-of-the-art machinery setup. Both of these are available at IBA Nexttech.

Online Full-Time Programmes

Until 2023, e-learning was only used for part-time courses, but this teaching method had proved both practical and efficient over the years, and in 2023 the IBA decided to introduce this teaching method to some of our full-time programmes, and initially DipHE programmes like finance economist, marketing economist and multi-media as well as some top-up bachelor programmes were offered in this way.

This teaching method seemed to appeal

to many students from the start, but there proved to be some initial teething problems. We realized that the target group for these programmes was different from the target groups that the IBA had attracted to our online part-time programmes until now. These students expected different methodologies. We are currently addressing these problems and expect them to be solved eventually.

Coventry University

Senior lecturer Peter Lei, who is programme manager of the full-time programmes that the IBA is now running in collaboration with Coventry University, has been able to extend the portfolio of international on-site taught programmes considerably. The target group for these programmes was originally students from Asia, especially Nepal and India, but now the IBA is working on extending this target group to students from many other countries around the world. These students pay full tuition fees and receive no student grants from the Danish authorities. In spite of the relatively high costs involved for them, a significant number have wanted to come, and in recent years, the IBA has even had to limit the number of students that we can admit.

The 6 programmes currently offered include bachelor, master of science, and MBA programmes. Together with the online students registered with Leeds Beckett University these activities with Coventry University still uphold the international image that has been the hallmark of the IBA for so many years.

Short-Term Courses

In addition to its academic programmes, the IBA also offers a range of executive education and corporate training services, providing businesses with customized solutions to enhance their staff's skills in line with evolving industry demands.

The courses offered in this depart-

ment may be called short-term courses, which provide an opportunity to explore new fields or industries with shorter duration as compared to long-term courses. They enable individuals to gain exposure to different subjects, helping them identify their areas of interest or passion before pursuing further education or career transitions.

From the start as an independent institution the IBA has had a relatively large department offering such short-term courses to businesspeople from many parts of Denmark. The head of this department of continuing education has been Director Henrik Kjær Christensen, who has managed to develop successful courses over the years and generating significant income to the IBA. The courses, which are mostly customized and focus on areas like finance and project management among many others, are taught in Danish. Single modules of some of the IBA's full-time academy economist programmes are also available.

Continuing Education

In 2024 Niels Egelund retired, and a new principal was appointed.

Read the more recent part of IBA's history on the website [IBA.DK](https://www.iba.dk)

FACTS 2024

- 1,233 annual students enrolled in our Danish higher education full-time programmes.
- 13,200 per year taking shorter or longer continuing education courses – including those who attend specialized courses within the finance sector.
- 619 annual international students on our English bachelor's and master's programmes (in collaboration with Coventry University) on a full-time basis and 91 on a part-time basis (in collaboration with Leeds Beckett University).
- Approximately 100 international students who come each year from partner universities, for example from Germany, to take two-week courses or similar with us (residential courses)
- 150 permanent employees and 85 freelance teachers.

*A heartfelt thank you
to my good friend
and colleague over
the years, Ian Charles,
without whom I would
not have been able
to write this account.*

Keld Hvam



KELD HVAM

MA in English and history

- Lecturing at Kolding Købmandsskole (IBC) and University of Southern Denmark (SDU) 1976-1998
- Lecturing at Handelsakademiet for Trekantsområdet (IBA) from 1983
- Director of E-Learning and programme Manager at the IBA 1991-2023
- Academic Advisor and Developer at the IBA from 2023

External examiner at 5 Danish universities

Visiting Professor at London South Bank University

President of E-Fokus – a network of Danish organisations using e-learning.

Author of 9 textbooks for English teaching and "MOOCs – a Challenge or an Opportunity"

Chapter 1 in "Furthering Higher Education Possibilities through Massive Open Online Courses"

IGI Global 2014

