

Recipient(s): Schools at the Faculty of Arts

Memo

Review of degree programmes at the Faculty of Arts: framework and objectives

Following the government's degree programme resizing initiative in the autumn of 2014, the Faculty Management Team at the Faculty of Arts has decided to carry out a review of the faculty's degree programmes in the spring semester of 2015 with a view to equipping these degree programmes to cope with the financial and academic consequences of changes in the educational landscape in Denmark. Based on the review at the Faculty of Arts in the autumn of 2014, the faculty wants the task of working with the faculty's degree programmes to be founded on the priorities and wishes of our schools with regard to their future subject and programme profiles. This task will be completed by the end of June 2015. In addition to local discussions at our schools, there will be discussions in the Faculty Management Team and the Committee on Education. Two management seminars have been planned for these discussions, and there will be ongoing discussions by the Faculty Liaison Committee and Academic Council.

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Framework

The Faculty Management Team is aware that long-term solutions are probably not possible at the level of our schools in isolation because the joint financial conditions, contexts and collaborations within our degree programmes (including the model for degree programme resizing) dictate the use of a shared framework. However, the Faculty Management Team wants the review of our degree programmes at joint level to be based on a sound foundation in terms of the wishes and development strategies of our schools and subject environments. Consequently, the Faculty Management Team has proposed that as soon as possible our departments, boards of studies, school forums and other bodies initiate provisional discussions of how they think these challenges should be met. Having said that, we are aware that there is a need to identify the central questions on which the local discussions should focus. And at a joint meeting of the Faculty Liaison Committee and Academic Council, a wish was expressed that the faculty should define a framework for the upcoming discussions – without prescribing solutions or laying down binding criteria for the discussions in advance. This memorandum seeks to comply with this need for a framework for the local discussions, as well as indicating a direction and range of topics for the discussions that are to take place at faculty level.

1. One of the deciding factors is that based on provisional prognoses, which are still surrounded by uncertainty, the faculty expects to lose up to DKK 50-60 million per annum of the income generated by student FTEs (full-time equivalents) between now and 2020. It is important to point out that the distribution of this loss of income has still not been finalised. So one of the first tasks facing the faculty and our schools is to discuss how to achieve the prescribed result targets within the four-year framework budgets between now and 2018. It is also important that these decisions should seek to meet the need to ensure the financial sustainability of our degree programmes until the full financial implementation of the resizing plan in 2020. In accordance with the decision of 12 December 2014 regarding a follow-up on the faculty's review process, the financial consequences of the resizing initiative will be included in the Faculty Management Team's discussions of the balance principles in the faculty's financial model – in line with other special factors.
2. The other vital framework factor concerns the reductions of student places stipulated in the resizing model with regard to the faculty's degree programmes that are affected by the resizing initiative. As announced previously, in 2014 the Faculty Management Team decided to allocate the reductions of student admissions in 2015 almost automatically. The aim of this was to ensure that there was ample time in the spring of 2015 for detailed discussions before allocating student place reductions for 2016 and subsequent years. One major question for the discussions by our schools and the Faculty Management Team is how we wish to prioritise the limited number of student places at Bachelor's and Master's level with due regard for both the financial situation and the sustainability of our degree programmes. Clearly, it is not realistic to continue to allocate student place reductions automatically because it will generate problems not least with regard to the critical mass of our degree programmes and the associated factors related to the study environment.

It is important that the discussions allow for the fact that future decisions will have a major impact on the long-term development profile of our individual subjects and schools with regard to our degree programmes – as well as having an influence on the faculty's research profile in various ways. So it is important that the local discussions and considerations adopt a holistic perspective with regard to the range of conditions and opportunities that are available with a view to meeting the two challenges outlined above. The local discussions should consider the following three general categories of options, including the underlying sub-categories.

1. New opportunities
 - a. Further and continuing education
 - i. Our schools should discuss whether it is possible to expand their further education activities, which will not be affected by the resizing initiative.
 - b. New study programmes
 - i. Naturally, one major feature of this discussion concerns opportunities to develop new degree programmes. It is important that this should take place in focused fashion and in close dialogue with the

Faculty Management Team, because in future it will be necessary to adopt a cautious approach to the development of new degree programmes.

- c. Financing our research
 - i. Our schools and subject environments should consider whether they can develop initiatives to improve the financing of our research or take other measures to compensate for a reduction in income from degree programmes.

2. Better cohesion

- a. Drop-out rates
 - i. Our schools and subject environments should discuss what actions can be taken to reduce drop-out rates, or whether it would be a good idea in connection with the reductions of student places to prioritise degree programmes with low drop-out rates.
- b. Careers and employment
 - i. One vital factor with regard to the quality assurance and future of the faculty's degree programmes will involve increasing the focus on career and employment opportunities at the right juncture during our degree programmes. There is a need for our schools and subject environments to discuss how best to strengthen their efforts in this area so that the career and employment perspective is closely integrated with the work done by individual degree programmes.
After all, the underlying reason for the government's resizing initiative is to ensure employment for future graduates. Consequently, past and future employment opportunities should be included in the discussions of the allocation of student places.
- c. Educational collaboration
 - i. In the near future there will be a need for closer collaboration between deans of the humanities in Denmark with a view to strengthening the coordination of the educational landscape and perhaps improving collaboration. In order to ensure that this work is informed as well as possible by our subject environments and schools, it is important that local discussions are started as to whether there are any collaboration options that should be discussed nationally or locally, including options relating to vocational degree programmes.
- d. Cohesion
 - i. Our schools and subject environments should discuss what can be done to strengthen the financial situation and cohesion of the faculty's degree programmes, including any opportunities to merge related degree programmes, options for joint study etc.
- e. International collaboration
 - i. Our schools and subject environments should discuss the extent to which international collaboration is possible, for instance in the form of outsourced teaching, joint courses or joint degree programmes with international partner universities.
- f. Recruitment

- i. The resizing initiative will have far-reaching consequences for the profiles of the students admitted to our degree programmes in future. Our schools and subject environments should discuss these consequences with regard to future recruitment efforts, and whether the change in profile will require changes in educational practice, for instance.

3. Sustainability

- a. Study progress reform and completion bonus
 - i. One vital requirement with regard to meeting the financial targets is that the goals for study progress and completion bonuses are met. It is important that our schools and subject environments discuss whether the necessary steps have been taken with a view to achieving these goals.
- b. Changing the degree programmes on offer
 - i. The review must also include a discussion by our schools and subject environments of whether or not certain degree programmes (or parts of them) should be discontinued. Decisions at faculty level on these questions will be taken based on the recommendations of our schools.
- c. Supplementary subjects and subsidiary subjects
 - i. The faculty has completed a project entitled “The good supplementary subject”, the results of which will be discussed in the near future. This project indicates the value of supplementary subjects, but also the need to discuss whether there are any options which are less critical in relation to the financial situation of our degree programmes and the cohesion of our subjects. However, we want to maintain a strong range of subsidiary subjects with a view to maintaining our strong position with regard to the training of upper-secondary school teachers.
- d. Administrative units
 - i. Our schools and subject environments should consider the administrative effects/consequences of the measures that are discussed, including the issue of whether it would be an advantage to simplify any specific practices and thereby free up resources for other purposes. The administration centre will produce a list of potential measures by way of inspiration.

The faculty will ensure that the data required for the discussions is available at our schools.

Objectives

One vital factor in developing the faculty’s degree programmes in future will involve maintaining broad, classical Bachelor’s degree programmes of high quality, as well as international Master’s degree programmes with a social focus and a strong research profile. The faculty will retain its position as the centre of the PhD programme within its own academic areas.

A greater division of tasks in the Danish educational landscape is expected in the long term, as well as limited opportunities for expanding and diversifying the courses offered within the faculty's area, and a focus on the educational core activities of the subjects within each subject area.

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In dialogue with decision-makers and other stakeholders involved in education policy regarding any future changes of the resizing model, the faculty will continue its efforts to improve opportunities for greater mobility between Bachelor's and Master's level and for admitting Master's students from other universities in Denmark and abroad as well as other institutions of education such as university colleges. We believe that in its current shape the resizing initiative limits the opportunities of the universities to compete in terms of the quality of their degree programmes as well as limiting the options of the students.