

Meeting: 17th November 2021 at 13.00-15.00

Place: 1485 - 316

UN-meeting, LICS

Minutes

Present:

UN members:

Ethan Weed (chair of the meeting), Alexandra Kratschmer

UN LICS

Dato: 17.11 2021

Observers:

Helle Skjøth Sørensen (student representative), Mina Almasi (student representative), Beatrix Wagner Fredensborg (studerende), William McGregor, Karsten Olsen, Rebekah Baglini, Lau Møller Andersen, Peer Bundgaard, Jakob Steensig, Chris Mathys, Joshua Skewes (head of department), Josephine Sørensen Brunsgaard (student counsellor), Camilla Mark Thygesen (SNUK, minute taker)

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Side 1/5

MINUTES

1. Approval of agenda and follow up on the minutes from last meeting

The agenda was approved and there was no follow-up on the minutes from the last meeting.

2. Briefings (orientation)

2.1 News from the Board of Studies

Ethan Weed gave the following briefings:

- Questions for teaching evaluations: The Board of Studies has decided to change the current question about follow up on midterm evaluations, so it becomes broader, and gives the teachers room for more open dialogues instead of making actual midterm evaluations.
- Changes to the quality control guidelines were discussed and the Board of Studies had two comments:
 - Strong objection to a sentence about getting the students quickly into attractive jobs. It was suggested to changes to “flexible” and “meaningful”
 - Students should be able to change their name and pronoun in Brightspace

2.2 News from the Institute Forum

The representative was not present, but it was mentioned that there had not been a meeting since the last UN meeting.

2.3 News from the student guidance

The representative from the student guidance informed:

- The different events and meetings taking place at the moment was presented.

- There has been a concern about study groups from the students at cognitive science. Different suggestions were mentioned:
 - It was suggested not to use the study groups as much in the teaching, since students can feel that they do not get to know the others in the class.
 - It was suggested to make a workshop in the middle of the semester to talk about what works and what does not work in the groups. Head of department will contact VEST about the possibilities for this.
 - It was also mentioned that it is important to remember the international students in the group work and how to integrate them into the study groups, since group work is not that common in some other countries. Some problems might be fixed by talking openly about it.

2.4 News from fagrådet

Cognitive science:

- There has been a meeting about the options with the IV courses and supplementary subjects (tilvalg), since the students feel they lack relevant options. The department has listened to the students, which they were very happy about. Head of Department responded to this by explaining that he will be looking at the IV-courses, but since the deadline is coming up, it might not be until next year. Regarding the supplementary subjects, smaller changes can be made within the frames of the academic regulations, but it is not possible to make larger changes at the moment.
- Feedback on assignments during the course has also been discussed. It was mentioned that students expect feedback on their assignments in a portfolio, but is not always given this. The UN discussed different methods for giving the feedback within the time frame of 30 minutes pr. students, which is what the teachers get. It was suggested that teachers should be open about how they intend to give this feedback, and mention to the students that they should feel comfortable following the general feedback, and know that teachers will let the students know, if they come across anything in the students assignment that they do not think will pass the exam.

2.5 News from staff

It was mentioned that late dropouts at linguistics this semester has meant that some study groups has been changed, but in general students are happy about their study groups.

2.6 News from the study administration

Camilla Mark Thygesen presented the Arts Studier Newsletter which is publicly available at: <https://medarbejdere.au.dk/fakulteter/ar/til-undervisere-paa-arts/nyhedsbrev-fra-arts-studier/>

3. Pilot project: Expanding the course portfolio for the 3rd semester on Master's degree programmes at the Faculty of Arts prior to an evaluation and possible restructuring of the 3rd semester

Ethan weed informed that in autumn 2022, a pilot project to expand the portfolio of courses offered in the 3rd semester on Master's degree programmes at the Faculty of Arts will be launched. This pilot project precedes an evaluation of the academic regulations, which will focus on the 3rd semester and a possible restructuring of this semester. The courses must be approved by the Board of Studies and the Dean's Office in February 2022.

The objectives of the pilot project are:

- to expand the current portfolio of courses on the 3rd semester on Master's degree programmes at the Faculty of Arts by offering three new 10 ECTS elective profile courses: in sustainability, digitality and entrepreneurship,
- to test the new elective courses prior to an expected future restructuring of the 3rd semester based on an overall evaluation of existing Master's degree programmes.

There are several reasons for launching a pilot project:

- At the Faculty of Arts, we are increasingly required to collaborate across the university to offer elective courses, particularly within the areas of entrepreneurship and sustainability.
- The focus on digital competences for all students in the new strategies requires that students are able to add a digital dimension to their education.
- It has become clear that students who cannot be enrolled on a project placement have had limited options and have only been able to take the profile course Humanistic Innovation. This issue has worsened over the Corona period, since fewer students have been able to travel and thus more students have been referred to the one available profile course. It is expected that this issue will continue into autumn 2022.

Comments from the UN:

- It was asked why the Board of Studies are not part of the process of deciding on the course content but only comes in at the end for approval.
- It was asked why it is courses in sustainability, digitality and entrepreneurship. Head of Department explained that these subjects probably comes from the new University strategy.
- There was a general wonder about who has decided on this project and the courses being developed.

4. Exam form Project Placement MA Cognitive Science, MA Linguistic, MA Cognitive Semiotics

As part of the approval of the new academic regulations for the Master's Degree Programme in Cognitive Science, it has been suggested to change the exam form for the Project Placement from a Take-home assignment on topic of student's choice to an oral exam

on the basis of a synopsis. The UN discussed this suggestion and due to co-teaching with the Master's Degree Programme in Linguistics and the Master's Degree Programme in Cognitive Semiotics, the UN discussed if a change in those two regulations should be suggested as well.

Comments from the UN:

- An oral exam might be a problem for students doing their internships abroad and wants to stay abroad while making their thesis, or international students going "home" for their project placement and thesis. If it becomes an oral exam it should be a requirement that it can be done online.
- It is a lot to require to different forms – both written (synopsis) and oral. Students have to show the same, but it is now spread between two different parts. So it will be more difficult for the students.
- It was suggested to make a shorter synopsis.
- If sticking with the written exam, it was mentioned that teachers can encourage students to do the assignment during the course and not all of it at the end of the semester.
- A lot of the teachers do not experience any problems with meeting the requirements for the exam as it is now.
- It can be difficult to find out who should examine the students – should it be the overall project placement coordinator or the individual supervisors.

Decision:

The UN decided to stick with the written exam for all three Master's degree programmes at the department. The main concern in this decision, is to the students going abroad, since it cannot be promised that it is possible to do the online exams. A coherent 3rd and 4th semester is important for the department, so it do not make sense to force students to come to Aarhus, if it makes more sense for them to stay where they are for both semesters. The suggestions can be discussed again, if it becomes possible to have online exams guaranteed.

The new academic regulations for the Master's degree programme in Cognitive Science will therefor remain as it was at the last UN meeting, where it was approved by the UN. The Board of Studies will be presented to the academic regulations in later in November.

5. News from Head of Department (Orientation/discussion)

Head of Department informed about the ongoing discussions at the University and the faculty regarding the regional dimensioning. The target from the government is to move 10% of study spaces from the big cities to other regions of Denmark. If this is not possible the same amount of study spaces should be cut. At the entire university 6% will be moved or cut, while it is 9% at Arts.

The UN discussed the decisions.

6. Issues for upcoming meetings

- 11.1 Issues for upcoming UN meetings
- 11.2 Issues for upcoming meetings suggested for the Board of Studies

7. "Rondvraag" (short questions/comments before the closure of meeting.)

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