

**Meeting: 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 11.00-13.00**

**Place: 1485, 316**

**UN-meeting, LICS**

**Minutes**

**Present:**

*UN members:* Ethan Weed (chair of the meeting), Alexandra Kratschmer

UN LICS

*Observers:*

Emma Olsen (student representative and head tutor), Rebekah Baglini, Marc Andersen, Karsten Olsen, Jakob Steensig, Kristian Tylén, Mikkel Wallentin, Lau Andersen, Anna Zamm, Nina Thomsen, Charlotte Sandager Bilde (guest – head tutor), Nina Vad Thomsen (guest – head tutor) Joshua Skewes (Head of Department), Josephine Sørensen Brunsgaard (student counsellor), Sabrina Bækkelund Larsen, Camilla Mark Thygesen (minute taker)

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**MINUTES**

**1. Approval of agenda and follow up on the minutes from last meeting (decision)**

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 informed of the following:

- The ministry of education requires a new practice for the way it is registered that the research question for Master thesis changes from one exam try to the next. It is not a new requirement that it has to change, but there is a focus on documenting it. This means that students now have to admit the advising plan to be able to hand in the thesis. It was asked how much the formulation should change for the different tries. This is an academic decision, but it was discussed that the research question students starts out with in the beginning of the process, never ends up being the final question for the thesis they admit. This is one way of dealing with the requirement. It was suggested also to change the title, to make it visible that it has changed from the original.
- Removal of the prerequisite for the exams will be discussed at the next meeting in the board of studies and will also be introduced for the UN at the next meeting.

**2.2 News from the Institute Forum**

There has not been a meeting since the last UN meeting

**2.3 News from the student guidance**

The representative from the student guidance informed of the following:

- Career path meetings are being held for the MA students.
- They are looking for a new counsellor since Kristina is stopping.
- It is a quiet period due to exams

#### 2.4 News from fagrådet

Cognitive science:

At the last meeting the students discussed the suggestion about making A-level math a requirement for the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Cognitive Science. Head of Department, Joshua Skewes (HoD) explained that this is not up to the students or even the department to decide, but it has been discussed in different fora.

Cognitive semiotics:

No students were present.

Linguistics:

No students were present.

#### 2.5 News from staff

It was mentioned that reports of harsh comments in the teaching evaluation have been experienced at the department. This might be discussed at the board of studies, and at a later time in the UN. HoD explained that this has been experienced at other departments as well. This might be because of corona, and frustration due to the situation the last couple of semesters. Feedback (also negative) is a good thing, but it should be held in a professional tone. HoD will send out this information to students as well to get a focus on it. Teachers who experience this should talk to the HoD.

#### 2.6 News from the study administration

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

### 3. Annual status review 2022 – part 2 (discussion)

The annual status review is part of the ongoing quality assurance process relating to degree programmes at the Faculty of Arts, and is described in greater detail in [degree programme quality processes at Arts](#). The purpose of [the annual status review process](#) is that the degree programme board, board of studies and school should prioritise the areas on which the degree programme board will focus in the upcoming quality year to ensure the quality of our degree programmes in accordance with [AU's quality assurance policy](#), based on a systematic review of these degree programmes in their entirety.

The UN is the primary forum for subject-specific discussions. Heads of department and the UN are encouraged to focus on the following activities during their discussions:

- Revisiting plans of action for degree programmes from the previous quality year, remembering that there are now four sub-policies instead of five
- Incorporating the subject-specific actions that have been included in the plans of action for the assessment of teaching environment
- Discussing the proportion of teaching done by researchers: is there a sufficient match between the research areas of the teachers and the courses taught on our degree programmes (staffing plans)
- Pay special attention to indicator 7: Time on task (Studieintensitet)
- Making the plans of action as specific as possible
- Discussing a realistic timetable for implementing and achieving the actions desired

HoD explained that based on the discussions at the last UN meeting, he had made a draft for this year's plans of action. The plans of action contain both a status of last year's actions, and a list of new actions. A lot of the actions are long term, and are therefore the same as last year.

#### *Staffing plans:*

HoD informed of the staffing plans for all degree programmes, which looks good. The department has been understaffed, but are looking to hire at cognitive science. But overall, the staffing plans look good and all topics are covered by researchers.

#### **Bachelor's degree programme in Cognitive Science:**

##### *1. Status plans of action 2021:*

The following is mentioned in the action plan and was approved at the meeting:

*"Much of our developmental work continues to be focused on implementing the new BSc regulations. This is relevant for the policies relating to study start, academic quality, learning environment, and relation to the labor market. The most salient changes to the program, and the specific policies they relate to, are as follows:*

*1) A new applied cognitive science course on second semester, to emphasize the relevance of the program, and to engage students in thinking of applications of their field (retention and relation to the labor market)*

*2) Re-naming and elaboration of descriptions of our methods courses, so that progress on mathematical, statistical, and computational topics is made clearer for students and potential employers (learning environment and relation to the labor market)*

*3) Revision of Methods 2: the General Linear Model, to focus on more fundamental mathematical topics, to provide a more solid basis for upper level methods courses (academic quality and learning environment)*

4) *Moving neuroscience to later in the program, so that students are more qualified to learn and apply the necessary data analysis methods (academic quality and learning environment)*

5) *Revision of some examination forms to better reinforce learning goals (academic quality and learning environment)*

*The first class of the new program started in fall 2020. Given the coronavirus lockdowns, it has been difficult to evaluate the success of the changes, so we will need to consider these actions as ongoing for some years yet.*

*In addition to these changes, we also continue our focus on retention, with some actions that are still in earlier implementation stages. Actions to improve retention include: development of career days and other outreach activities to demonstrate relevance of program; establishment of a student mentor program; establishment of a study cafe. Importantly, we have also developed our mentor program this past year, by providing training for student mentors, in collaboration with VEST.*

*We have also done substantial work across programs to build and broaden student representation on the program. This includes initiating a new student forum, which meets once a month to discuss topics related to all four policy areas. The forum includes the Head of Department, the Departmental Consultant, student UN representatives from all LICS programs, our student representative for IKK's institute forum, heads of student councils, and student guidance counselors. The agenda is set by the student members, and is used to prepare points for the UN and staff meeting agenda.*

*We have also increased staffing on the program, and worked to integrate new staff into the teaching environment surrounding the program. New positions include 3 new assistant professors and one new lecturer. All new staff meet weekly with the Head of Department to discuss matters relating to pedagogy, concrete teaching situations, student politics, and quality assessment and control. “*

## *2. Annual status 2022:*

HoD mentioned that overall it looks good for the programme, and then went through the actions mentioned for each sub-policy.

### **Sub-policy 1: Getting students off to a good start**

The indicator for first-year drop-out is yellow and HoD mentioned, that there are two things that can be done about this issue:

- make sure to have the right students and (requirement)
- make a great first year (maintain students)

It was mentioned that the number of students admitted in the programme is lower than usual, probably because of corona.

As a concrete action for this issue HoD will hold weekly support meetings with staff responsible for the program's first semester. The agenda for the meetings will be open, and will be expected to cover topics ranging from AU educational administration, LICS norms and academic culture, the academic focus areas of the courses, and general university pedagogy.

### **Sub-policy 2: High-quality, coherent degree programmes**

HoD mentioned that the programme has just been revised and they are waiting to see how it goes.

### **Sub-policy 3: Motivational teaching and learning environments**

The indicator for time on task is red, and was therefore discussed by the UN. The department focuses on making a lot of extracurricular events, but it was also discussed that students might under report the numbers of hours they actually use. This might be because they do not know what can count as academic work, but also because they forget to take the exam period into account, since they answer the questions in the middle of the semester.

It was agreed that an action should be that teachers should focus on telling the students how to answer this question at the time the survey are send out.

### **Sub-policy 4: Highly qualified graduates with relevant competencies**

There is no data for indicator 8, so this was not discussed.

#### *Decision*

The UN approved the plan of action with the comments above. The plans of action for 2022 will be submitted for discussion by the board of studies in June.

### **Master´s degree programme in Cognitive Science:**

#### *1. Status plans of action 2021:*

The following is mentioned in the plan of action and was approved at the meeting:

*“Last year, students gave feedback on how the program could be revised for improvement. This feedback consisted of student discussions and a survey organized by students. This feedback was used to implement the following main revisions to the program:*

- 1) Changes to the Natural Language Processing exam form*
- 2) Changes to the learning goals for Decision Making, to simplify the course*
- 3) Removal of unnecessary interdependencies between courses, to simplify the program*
- 4) Revision of the Data Science course to focus on time series, prediction and forecasting*

5) *Alignment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester profile and thesis preparation courses with other programs on the degree*

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*The new revisions will be implemented from 2022 and are expected to make the program clearer, easier to administer and teach, and more relevant for students.*

*We have also done substantial work across programs to build and broaden student representation. This includes initiating a new student forum, which meets once a month to discuss topics related to all four policy areas. The forum includes the Head of Department, the Departmental Consultant, student UN representatives from all LICS programs, our student representative for IKK's institute forum, heads of student councils, and student guidance counsellors. The agenda is set by the student members, and is used to prepare points for the UN and staff meeting agenda.*

*We have also increased staffing on the program, and worked to integrate new staff into the teaching environment surrounding the program. New positions include 3 new assistant professors and one new lecturer. All new staff meet weekly with the Head of Department to discuss matters relating to pedagogy, concrete teaching situations, student politics, and quality assessment and control."*

*2. Annual status 2022:*

HoD mentioned that overall it looks good for the programme, and then went through the actions mentioned for each sub-policy.

**Sub-policy 1: Getting students off to a good start**

HoD mentioned that the indicator for first-year drop-out is green, and no new actions are required. The department is discussion recruiting students from psychology or psycho-biology from the Netherlands since they are qualified for the programme. This could be included next year's discussion.

**Sub-policy 2: High-quality, coherent degree programmes**

HoD mentioned that there have been some complaints about the profile courses, due to the lack of relevant courses, and on that background HoD is looking at creating a new profile course and has send an application to IT-VEST for funds.

**Sub-policy 3: Motivational teaching and learning environments**

HoD mentioned that the scores for the teaching evaluations are a bit lower, but a lot of changes have been made to the academic regulations due to comments from students, so they are expecting this to help.

**Sub-policy 4: Highly qualified graduates with relevant competencies**

There is no data for indicator 8, so this was not discussed.

### *Decision*

The UN approved the plan of action with the comments above. The plans of action for 2022 will be submitted for discussion by the board of studies in June.

### **Bachelor´s degree programme in Linguistics:**

#### *1. Status plans of action 2021:*

The following is mentioned in the action plan and was approved at the meeting:

*“Completed or nearly completed actions to improve retention: updated and improved web material about the program, including pages linking to the program; implemented new module in applied linguistics dedicated to working in a second language (i.e. English); development of an “uddannelsesjækker” survey for our webpage; employment of a social ambassador to increase engagement in social and extracurricular academic activities; development of career days and other outreach activities to demonstrate relevance of program; further development of our student mentor program, in the form of training for mentors.*

*We have also done substantial work across programs to build and broaden student representation on the program. This includes initiating a new student forum, which meets once a month to discuss topics related to all four policy areas. The forum includes the Head of Department, the Departmental Consultant, student UN representatives from all LICS programs, our student representative for IKK’s institute forum, heads of student councils, and student guidance counsellors. The agenda is set by the student members, and is used to prepare points for the UN and staff meeting agenda.”*

#### *2. Annual status 2022:*

HoD mentioned that overall it looks good for the programme, and then went through the actions mentioned for each sub-policy.

### **Sub-policy 1: Getting students off to a good start**

HoD mentioned that the indicator for first-year drop-outs is red, but he also mentioned that a high dropout rate at small programmes only means a low number of students. But it is still too high, and the department is working with different actions at the department.

- A student ambassador has been found, who will be working on getting the social environment better.
- Due to a high number of vulnerable students, they are looking at changing the group exam at the course applied linguistics. This examination will be discussed when the process for changes in the academic regulations will come in the fall.

In general, the department does not feel that the reason for drop-out is the content or quality of the degree programme, but is more connected to different personal issues among the students, as well as students realizing, that linguistics was not the right study for them.

It was suggested to have more focus on communication information about the possibilities for dispensations or extra help, for students with different issues.

This issue will be looked more thoroughly at, in the evaluation process that the degree programme will go through next year.

### **Sub-policy 2: High-quality, coherent degree programmes**

HoD mentioned that it is a strong programme with high quality, which has been increased with changes to the academic regulations.

### **Sub-policy 3: Motivational teaching and learning environments**

The indicator for time on task is red and the same actions as discussed as part of the discussion of the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Cognitive Science will be added to the plan of action for the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Linguistics. Besides this the students' contact with teachers has been increased, and there is a focus on workshops and more time in class to support both the time on task and the environment.

### **Sub-policy 4: Highly qualified graduates with relevant competencies**

There is no data for indicator 8, so this was not discussed.

#### *Decision*

The UN approved the plan of action with the comments above. The plans of action for 2022 will be submitted for discussion by the board of studies in June.

### **Master's degree programme in Linguistics:**

#### *1. Status plans of action 2021:*

The following is mentioned in the action plan and was approved at the meeting:

*Hire an assistant professor in computational linguistics to develop computational and technical aspects of the MA*

*Develop a database of internship opportunities and develop greater support for internship placements*

*Support and encourage students to write corporate theses*

*Complete revision of the MA program, with a complete overhaul of all courses*

*Inclusion of a computational skills workshop during study start week, to onboard students to more difficult coding and statistical content on the new MA*

*We have also done substantial work across programs to build and broaden student representation on the program. This includes initiating a new student forum, which*

meets once a month to discuss topics related to all four policy areas. The forum includes the Head of Department, the Departmental Consultant, student UN representatives from all LICs programs, our student representative for IKK's institute forum, heads of student councils, and student guidance counsellors. The agenda is set by the student members, and is used to prepare points for the UN and staff meeting agenda.

#### 2. Annual status 2022:

HoD mentioned that overall it looks good for the programme, and then went through the actions mentioned for each sub-policy.

#### **Sub-policy 1: Getting students off to a good start**

HoD mentioned, that the indicator for first-year drop-out is red, but that due to the small cohorts, it is only two students. But the department has a focus on improving the social environment.

#### **Sub-policy 2: High-quality, coherent degree programmes**

The focus in the programme might be a problem for some students, but it is not felt to be an issue. Some changes have been made to the regulations and some content in the degree programme has been pushed around, which is expected to change the indicator for teaching evaluations.

#### **Sub-policy 3: Motivational teaching and learning environments**

The discussion of the time on task indicator can be seen under the discussion of the Bachelor's Degree Programme for Cognitive Science.

Like on the BA, there is a focus on the mentoring programme and the hiring of a student ambassador in order to support a better environment for the students.

#### **Sub-policy 4: Highly qualified graduates with relevant competencies**

HoD informed that even though the indicator is yellow, the numbers are alright and are actually high for Arts.

The statistics are still being made with information from students who finished their degree on the old academic regulations, so they cannot see the effect of the changes from the new academic regulations yet.

#### *Decision*

The UN approved the plan of action with the comments above. The plans of action for 2022 will be submitted for discussion by the board of studies in June.

#### **4. Election of new deputy chair person of the UN (decision)**

Mina Almasi was elected new deputy chair for the UN and will represent the UN in the Board of Studies.

#### **5. Annual report from the chair of external co-examiners (discussion)**

Due to lack of time this will be sent around for written comments after the meeting.

## 6. Approval of programme(s) for the introductory week (item for decision)

### **Cognitive science:**

Head tutor Emma Olsen presented the programme for the introduction week for the upcoming Cognitive Science students. The programme can be seen in the appendix.

### *Decision:*

The UN agreed that the tutors had done a great job with the programme and approved it.

### **Linguistics:**

Head tutors Charlotte Sandager Bilde and Nina Vad Thomsen presented the programme for the introduction week for the upcoming Linguistics students. The programme can be seen in the appendix.

It was asked when the study groups are being made. This year the study groups will not be introduced until later in the week (Wednesday or Friday), so they get to talk to a lot of different people. The tutor group are discussing the exact time. The procedure for making the study groups is, that the head tutor is making the groups by dividing the students randomly.

It was discussed how to make the best study groups, since different models have been tried at the department. Random division might be the best. There is a workshop later in the semester about how to use the study groups.

It was mentioned that the students at the department share the Friday bar with Nordic studies. They are planning on making an event to get the two groups of students together, to make the students from linguistics, semiotics and cognitive science feel more comfortable going to the Friday bar in smaller groups.

### *Decision:*

The UN agreed that the tutors had done a great job with the programme and approved it.

Next step: The head tutors must send the approved programme to the study start coordinators in VEST Jannie Laigaard or Trine Schouborg no later than 1 June 2022.

It was asked about whether or not there is a study start programme for the MA programmes as well. HoD informed that there is, but they do not have to be approved formally in the same way and they are not as detailed. HoD presented the

overall content of the programmes. It was mentioned that it would be a good idea to bring in the teachers in the programme as well.

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**7. News from Head of Department (Orientation/discussion)**

**8. Issues for upcoming meetings**

11.1 Issues for upcoming UN meetings

11.2 Issues for upcoming meetings suggested for the Board of Studies

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