

16 August 2019

Minutes from Employment Board Meeting (aftagerpanel)
Study Boards for Cross Cultural Studies and Language and International Studies
18 June 2019

Present:

Falko Nørr, Communication and Strategy Consultant
Nicolai Houe, Consultant, MacMann Berg
Maj Norman Pallesen, Bankdata
Margrethe Thomassen, Integrationsmedarbejder Mariagerfjord Kommune
Zuzanna Warsoe, Project Coordinator, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (skype)
Peter Graversen, Projektleder, Enjoy Limfjorden (Skype)

Ben Dorfman, Studienævnsformand for Sprog og Internationale Studier
Martin Bak, Studienævnsformand for Tværkulturelle Studier
Ana Maria Marcias Garcia, koordinator for Sprog og Internationale Studier, Spansk
Malene Karmisholt, Studiesekretær for Culture, Communication & Globalisation
Laura Høvring Møller, Studievejleder for LISE (Referent)

Cancellations:

Robert C. Thomsen (RCT) Skoleleder
Susanne Hald (SH) Skolesekretær
Anette Galskjøt, Chief Executive Officer IFHP,
Heidi Westerby, Projekt manager, DEIF Wind Power Technology
Marie-Louise Gammelgaard Larsen, Head of Section, Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration

Referent: Laura Høvring Møller (studievejleder for LISE)

Agenda

1. Introduction of participants
2. Educations: current status, considerations for curriculum changes, considerations of career/employability issues, students and their path “through and after” LISE, SIS & CCG.
 - a. Language and International Studies, English (LISE); Ben Dorfman
 - b. Sprog og international studier, spansk (SIS); Ana Maria Marcias Garcia
 - c. Culture, Communication and Globalization (CCG); Martin Bak Jørgensen
 - d. What’s going on at AAU, and how does it affect LISE, SIS & CCG?
3. Discussion/reaction from panel

Minutes

1. Introduction of participants

Everybody introduced themselves.

2. Educations: current status, considerations for curriculum changes, considerations of career/employability issues, students and their path “through and after” LISE, SIS & CCG.

a. Language and International Studies, English (LISE); Ben Dorfman

- LISE largely remains the same as a year ago.
- Focus on international politics, culture and English as a global language
- Regular structure, attempting to stay within international norms vis-a-vis international studies with a strong language competence component
- Oriented towards MA and MSc degrees in international politics, development, diplomacy, international and intercultural communication studies
- Oriented towards careers in IGOs, NGOs, diplomacy, national and local governments, migration and integration, public and private companies etc.

Successes

- 2018-19; our best year ever? 98 students started, 94 still with the program. Graduating 76 students this year.
- High level of integration and cooperation between “national” and international students

Challenges

- The program's de-internationalization (due to a government decision, LISE now have an entry requirement of Danish A-level)
- Combating provincialization - how to maintain the ‘LISE spirit’ for students who will now be of a more limited set of national backgrounds.

Initiatives on the Career Front

- LinkedIn page: a network of 260 former and current students
- The “Life after LISE” survey: documenting study tracks after LISE
- Annual LISE MA/Career Day - former students present their career paths and work experiences
- Flexible education: electives, study abroad
- New Student Survey: early identification of ambitions with LISE, dialogue with students on ambitions, and advice on how to form the education in the most useful way

Proposed curriculum changes

- New module in genre writing (press releases, journalistic writing, public communications and political communication). Need more focus on writing skills; too many problems in the area (students not up to level).
- Sharpened PBL skills (demanded set of curriculum changes) - increased focus on “real world” problem solving vis-a-vis international affairs and intercultural conflicts
- Continued insistence on use of English in all facets of the education and as the education’s daily language

b. Sprog og international studier, spansk (SIS); Ana Maria Marcias Garcia

- Spanish language, communication, social and cultural analysis, international relations vis-a-vis the Spanish speaking world
- An intimate education; 20-25 students in a given semester. Close work with instructors and supervisors on competences in language, culture and politics.
- More emphasis on language than in LISE
- Awareness of diversity of student skills vis-a-vis especially language.

Life after SIS

- Primary master's at AAU: Development and International Relations, International Business Communication, CCG (Culture, Communication and Globalisation), tourism
- Examples of other master's in Denmark: Intercultural Studies at AU
- Historically, master's largely taken in Denmark, but now more awareness of master's possibilities across Scandinavia, Europe and potentially Latin America
- Career examples:
 - Development directors of NGOs in Latin America
 - Entrepreneurs (e.g. school language in Malaga)
 - Teachers of Spanish in schools (gymnasium)
 - Aalborg Kommune (integration experts)
 - Writer of textbooks with Nicaragua as a theme.
 - Working for the publishing firm Turbine.
 - Global tourist office of Spain.

Potential points on the curriculum

- More integrative approach to language. The main change is that grammar will play a smaller role; as an enabling tool. It will be integrated in other courses as well. Language is assessed written, orally and grammatically in other exams.
- Continued development of areas innovated in last curriculum: more "straightforward" modules and goals vis-a-vis international relations and intercultural studies.
- Continued provisions of heightened level of methodology and theory section.

Development projects

- SIS LinkedIn project
- SIS New Student Survey
- Intensified PBL focus - solving real world problems
- "Rolling University" - we prepare the students to give "lectures" on the things they have studied - present their studies to e.g. primary school students and high school students.

c. Culture, Communication and Globalization (CCG); Martin Bak Jørgensen

Overview: curriculum modules

- Satisfied with what we are doing.
- Not a big amount of drop-out, student starts and students finish on time.
- We do have big unemployment rate (1-1,5 years after graduation, 25%).

- Only candidates who stay in Denmark are part of this statistics, so candidates working outside Denmark do not count in the statistics.
- Explanations to why they are unemployed: first of all, there is now a bigger focus on employability. Furthermore, graduates tend to stay in the region and apply for jobs for a longer period of time before applying to jobs in other regions. Relevant student jobs also increase the chance of getting a job, and there are not many relevant student jobs in Aalborg.
- “Dimensionering” - there is a risk that the programme will be downsized further, if the unemployment rate does not drop.
- Have been through the process of accreditation, where the entire programme was discussed. Good process to reflect on the programme.
- A few changes to the curriculum:
 - Integrate stronger focus on employability. Working with AAU Career and the Jobcenter in Aalborg.
 - Create a new political stream to replace the two current “political” streams. Will be in effect from 2020.
 - More flexibility in the programme: possibility to take electives from other programmes. Possibility to change the “profile course” from year to year.
 - Strengthened focus on PBL.
- CCG singled out to cooperate with AAU Career to create a comprehensive programme for the students, starting from 7th semester and working with the students throughout the programme.
- Strategy Plan for the next years:
 - Changing curriculum
 - Working with employability
 - Building a stronger communicative strategy towards employers (branding of the programme)

d. What's going on at AAU, and how does it affect LISE, SIS & CCG?

3. Discussion/reaction from panel

Below the discussion of the employment panel can be found in bullet points. The discussion is divided in LISE, SIS, CCG and the educations generally.

LISE

- Could you sharpen the list of possible careers to increase the precision of the education regarding the competitiveness of the education on the job market?
- Is it possible to use the website to present former students and their career paths? External members were in favor of this idea.
- Crucial to assure English skills are at a high level. External members were in agreement that it is a game changer to be able to write a good English text if a candidate wishes to take part in the international job market, or national job markets with an international orientation.
 - Many candidates are good at good at English orally, but it is key to be good at written English as well.

- In relation to the “international studies” skills set, intercultural diversity is relevant in e.g. Danish municipalities. But also many companies are turning more international and less national (LEGO as an example). Important to make the case for the re-internationalization of the student body/education.
- The de-internationalisation of the programme can be seen as a big risk. Dramatic action might be needed. One potential solution is dual-degrees; offering the option to have an education that takes place 50% in Denmark and 50% in another country/at another institution. Build strong ties with universities abroad.
 - Erasmus+ is a possibility used too little at AAU.
 - Panel members wonder if there is a window of opportunity now that the department is splitting and DIR (which do have a dual degree) is moving to Statskundskab.
- It is key to ensure an international milieu. If we cannot create an international milieu here in Aalborg, we will have to find alternative modes to expose students to an international milieu.
- There is a big difference between being taught intercultural or international studies, and actually having “done” it in practice, and it is crucial to have practiced it.
- Top 100 companies in Denmark currently are working in a global market, but looking 50 years ahead, smaller and medium-sized companies will also be looking towards the global market, and therefore, it makes no sense to fundamentally transform educations where students are exposed to a globally oriented environment.
- Having worked abroad for a couple of years is a strength for a CV, even if a candidate wants to stay mostly in their home country (e.g. Denmark).

SIS

- There were no specific points for the SIS programme, but please see points under “Educations generally” which all refer to the SIS programme.

CCG

- Students use different terms for the programme on LinkedIn. This can make it difficult for employers to find the candidates and get an overview.
- If employers know the CCG programme, there is a bigger chance of them employing candidates. But this is also an issue with many other programmes in Denmark.
- The work with AAU Career is also focused on teaching the students to put into words their competences and work areas.

Educations generally

- Last year we discussed the fundamentals of the programmes, which were thought to be in good shape. This year, the focus is de-internationalisation and other specifics, indicating that the fundamentals are in order. There is a sense the programs are in good hands regarding their academic development.
- Today, however, it is not enough to have a high academic level. Necessary to supplement it with new perspectives: the ability to exceed long-term, analytical, thorough academic work, work quickly, and produce concise, usable analyses.
 - Also important in terms of the big body of students who are very “perfectionist” - teach them that sometimes you have to work fast to reach a short-term deadline and in those cases, it can be ok to perform 80% rather than 100%.

- Important to adapt to the work sphere. Sometimes you have a short deadline and need to deliver within 2 weeks, so there will not be time to analyse for 2 months first.
 - This is part of the vision for the new methods course at CCG.
 - At SIS and LISE, they also have many different kinds of assignments (take-home assignments, sit-in exams, 48-exams etc.) and also smaller exams during the project period. There might be further reflection on exam forms. The genre-writing class would be helpful in this regard.
- There is also a difference between working in a private company and a public, politically led organisation (e.g. a municipality).
 - Again, in relation to this, very good that LISE will have a course where the students learn to write different genres.
- Last year it was mentioned that there should be a bigger focus on technical skills (e.g., good acquaintance with basic software programs, good computer skills, etc); such areas are fundamental to a wide range of jobs.
- Technical skills in terms of programmes (Excel PowerPoint, Publisher, ERP systems). It should not necessarily be implemented in the programmes, but students need to know that it is expected of them as part of their skill set.
- Sustainable Development Goals: Important to include this in the programmes, and important to educate students who can work with them in an integrated fashion.
- Important to balance *problem*-oriented work with *solution*-oriented work. The work might be based on a problem, but the aim will be a solution.
- On the other hand, a big focus is also co-creation (*samskabelse*), where you need to find out what the problem is, before you can start co-creating.
- Employability: one thing is what you do at university, but it is also important what you do in your spare time such as student jobs but also to a large extent volunteer work.
 - We do have a global graduate programme. The Global Graduate Programme is based on a points system, which means that we will issue certificates to all students, who have collected a minimum of 100 points. You can gain points through participation in a variety of curricular and extracurricular activities. Read more here:
<https://www.en.cgs.aau.dk/education/global-graduate/>