



AALBORG UNIVERSITET

Minutes from Employment Board Meeting (aftagerpanelmøde)
Study Boards for Cross Cultural Studies and Language and International Studies

18.12.2020

INSTITUT FOR KULTUR OG LÆRING
KROGHSTRÆDE 3
9220 AALBORG

Mødedato og –tidspunkt	20.11.2020 14.00-16:00
Sted	
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laura James (LJ), Chair of the Study Board for Cross Cultural Studies, lektor• Mads Trysøe Christensen (MTC), Vice Chair of the Study Board for Cross Cultural Studies, student at CCG Aalborg• Anette Galskjøt (AG), Generalkonsul i Istanbul• Maj Norman Pallesen (MNP), HR Business Partner, BASF• Peter Graversen (PG), Adjunkt, Erhvervsakademi MidtVest• Kirsten Jæger (KJ), studienævnformand SIS (formand)• Laura James (LJ), studienævnformand Tværkulturelle studier (formand)• Martin Bak Jørgensen (MBJ), KarriereVip, CCG• Falk Heinrich (FH), Prodekan for Uddannelse, Det Humanistiske Fakultet• Elias Mark (EM) (næstformand LISE)• Ana Maria Macias (AMM), adjunkt, SIS spansk• Susanne Hald (SH), head of the study section and responsible for quality assurance, Institut for Kultur og Læring (referent)
Participants Observatører/gæster	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
Cancellations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Margrethe Thomassen, Netværkskoordinator for flygtninge/ integrationsmedarbejder Mariagerfjord Kommune• Morten Ziethen, studieleder Institut for Kultur og Læring• Heidi Westerby, Projekt manager, DEIF Wind Power• Nicolai Houe, Consultant, MacMann Berg• Falko Nørr, Communication and Strategy Consultant• Marie-Louise Gammelgaard Larsen, Head of Section, Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration• Zuzanna Warsoe, Project Coordinator, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
Referent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Susanne Hald

Punkt/sagsfremstilling	Referat
1. Introduction of participants	LJ welcomed the panel and thanked the members for their willingness to spend time on the meeting and the development of the CCG, SIS and LISE programmes. The participants introduced themselves.

<p>2 Educations: current status, curriculum changes</p> <p>a) Culture, Communication and Globalization (CCG); Martin Bak Jørgensen CCG: https://studieordninger.aau.dk/2020/23/1740</p> <p>b) Language and International Studies, English (LISE); Kirsten Jæger LISE: https://studieordninger.aau.dk/2020/20/1889</p> <p>c) Sprog og international studier, spansk (SIS); Ana Maria Macias SIS, spansk: https://studieordninger.aau.dk/2020/20/1923</p>	<p>MBJ introduced CCG, which has a maximum intake of 79 students, of which 50 % are Danish students and 50 % students from abroad.</p> <p>This year, the following changes have been made to the curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • four streams changed into three profiles (due to the downsizing (dimensionering)) • Change of exam forms into pass/not pass exams with active participation • Possibility of taking up current issues to allow more topics (7th and 8th semester) • Area specializations as before: Arctic Studies, Chinese Area Studies, Latin American Studies, Global Gender studies; 5 ECTS at 7th and 8th semester plus Project-oriented course/Master Thesis within the specialization. <p>Furthermore, different ways have been introduced to assure the same workload under the changes: Workshops, Collaboration with Pace University NYC with joint exercises, online discussions, etc.</p> <p>KJ introduced the LISE program, which has an intake of max 100 students. The new 2020 curriculum (https://studieordninger.aau.dk/2020/20/1889) has a sharper profile, and PBL learning objectives have been added to specify how students develop PBL competences over course of the program. Modules have been changed to reflect students' interest in making their contribution to preventing conflicts in the world. Focus in the program is on intercultural issues and language skills (professional genre writing)</p> <p>AMM introduced the SIS Spanish program that includes Spanish language, communication, social and cultural analysis and international relations in the Spanish speaking world. The program has an intake of 20-25 students per semester. The emphasis is on language throughout the program and there is an awareness of the diversity of student language skills. Students find their own profile especially from the 5th semester. The study board has decided to underline the International Studies profile by offering LISE courses to SIS students in addition to their Spanish courses on similar subjects.</p> <p>The new curriculum includes problem-oriented, interpersonal, structural and reflective/meta-cognitive competencies (see the curriculum: https://studieordninger.aau.dk/2020/20/1923).</p> <p>Students most often choose masters at AAU within international relations, business communication or CCG/Tourism.</p>
<p>3 Career/employability issues</p>	<p>KJ explained that the two BA programs have a different perspective on employability than a MA program will have. The programs admit a very diverse range of students, and we must allow them to build up a profile/make personal, academic and professional choices along the way to go on to master programs after BA. The BA is their first step on the career ladder, and the important thing is to allow them to get an employability mindset in order to be equipped to work with employability at their master's program.</p> <p>Elias mentioned that in terms of specialization, LISE does a good job in enabling students to get ECTS from electives to go on to a master's program. AMM agreed that the electives provide us with clear ideas of the tendencies for the master choice.</p> <p>AG found it interesting to turn things around and discuss how to get the industry and the employers to understand that the important thing at university is to learn to learn, and that you will have to start from scratch in your first job. We should get that dialogue going in Denmark since the fact that you HAVE studied is much more interesting, and what counts is general competencies and the ability to learn. Changing names of modules, names of courses, etc. does not change much. It should be possible to leave university after the BA and go out and take a trainee job.</p> <p>LJ and KJ agreed and found this an interesting point. Employability literature mentions that a more loose connection between academic content and job profile afterwards is very typical for the UK, and we might need a cultural change in that direction in Denmark.</p>

MBJ also found the point of view refreshing and noticed that CCG sees students returning from a job after their BA, very focused and determined and with some real life experience. The program would benefit from more of those students.

FH mentioned that the relationship with the employment panel is an important tool in enabling the university to work closely together with the market.

MNP mentioned that it is still relevant to look at the employment statistics that are going up for the CCG and down for engineers who have a closer connection to the labor market and graduate with skills that are immediately useful. It is much faster to get an engineer or an economist up and running than it is with a candidate from the Humanities.

Unfortunately, the latest unemployment figures we have date from 2017. CCG faces some challenges with an average above 30 percent between 4-7 quarters. The study board has a focus on these figures and is working hard to try to improve the employment situation of the candidates. MBJ mentioned that we do have a problem to solve and we have been working very persistently over the last three years with AAU Career.

We also work on connecting the internship semester to the thesis semester in order for students to be able to write their thesis in collaboration with their internship organization. This has proved often to be a way to the first job.

Furthermore, AAU Career introduce students to tools integrating employability exercises and workshops in relevant courses to make the students reflect on their future career. Our ambition is that it becomes a natural thing to integrate employability in all courses.

We have made a small survey of challenges finding a student job, and the result told us that one third of our students have difficulties in finding a student job. We work to create a better alumni program and on to show the career paths of our graduates on our website, etc.

Mads noted that it's a good idea to get a feeling of what students have been doing and that the internship makes students aware of their competencies or makes them realize that they have a lot to offer.

MBJ explained that the internship evaluations conducted every year show that our students possess the competencies demanded by the employers who express that our candidates have very good qualifications.

MNP noticed that it is important to keep in mind that taking in an intern does not necessarily mean that you are able to offer a job after the internship period. The employers must consider the time and costs it takes to train a new employee. Small businesses need candidates who are up and going very fast, and often there is a task that needs to be performed fast without having to train an employee first. Small companies will often choose a consultant to do the job instead. Only bigger companies can afford to hire and train a new candidate. It is the usual problem that you need experience to get a job, but how do you get the necessary experience?

AG recommended to use the positive feedback from the internship hosts since it is valuable information for other companies and is useful as a marketing tool.

It could be interesting to discuss graduate programs in companies where you do not expect a massive experience. How can we motivate the SMEs to take in candidates for half a year with a discount? Perhaps by creating a new kind of graduate program for SMEs (90 % of employers). They all have the same challenges, and you should bring it up with the minister of education. It is not an issue for engineering but for the humanities, and it is worth a discussion to ease the entry into the SME job market.

FH appreciated the good ideas and wanted to know the specific competencies that may open up the job market for humanities candidates? MNP answered that we need to be able to explain what we are good at: translating knowledge into actions, analyze complex data and come up with more than one specific solution, having concrete language skills at a different level than others and being able to produce texts that you can send out

	<p>immediately. These competencies give a massive competitive advantage for the humanities, and we need to be much better at telling those stories</p> <p>MNP suggested that one might consider short periods of employment like 6 months for specific tasks that would normally be given to consultants, e.g. to analyze diversities/inclusion in a company. AG supported this and suggested that the private sector should be made aware of the possibility of hiring for a short amount of time and then see the value and find the money to continue keep the employee instead of hiring a consultant. AAU should tell this to the labor market.</p>
<p>4 Current issues, and how does it affect LISE, SIS & CCG?</p>	<p>KJ explained how Covid 19 has had a large impact on the students' learning environment now taking a form of a combination of streaming and teaching. There has been no increase in dropouts even though every social event has been cancelled, and students lack normal contact with other students and teachers.</p> <p>There has been a larger intake in the LISE program because students cannot travel after their high school exam. MBJ told that at CCG, this has not been the case and the intake has been smaller than usual. Students from abroad had troubles getting to Aalborg, but streaming made it possible for them to start although abroad.</p> <p>There has been fewer dropouts so maybe there is some learning in the crisis management. It appears that students are better at coping than teachers.</p> <p>AMM told that the SIS Spanish program has had the biggest intake in four years. The pandemic does not change the number of dropouts with so far only 4 dropouts. Teachers had challenges and needed support, but there has been a huge effort from all students and teachers. 4th semester was abroad in the spring, and they had to come home but some stayed in Latin America. There has been a good collaboration with the universities abroad and a good help from AAU. Also exams online went well, and the level of anxiety was drastically diminished. The social part is of course lacking but students seem to cope.</p> <p>MNP and AG stated that having been able to do all your education online will be an employability advantage. Conducting meetings etc. online is normal routine in Lego, but other companies still meet physically. It is super important to stress that students have been able to take in the same learning online as before.</p> <p>Mads supported this and added that students general quality level does not change and their qualities as employees will be the same.</p>
<p>5 Discussion/reaction from panel</p>	<p>MNP suggested that meeting online with the panel should continue in order to reduce time consumption. All participants online is better than some online, some present.</p> <p>LJ thanked the panel for being present and for their contributions.</p>