



AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

Approved minutes 4/2016 in the Study Board of Languages and International Studies, October 27, at 1430-1600

Study Board of Languages and International Studies,
Krogstræde 1,
DK- 9220 Aalborg East

Study Board Secretary
Inga Ernst Andersen
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Present: Kirsten Jæger(KJ), Sara Elmiina Viitanen(SEV), Laura Høvring Møller(LHM), LISE student counselor Anita Toft Jepsen (ATJ), SIS Spanish student counselor Trine Degn Preuss (TDP), Bent Boel(BB), Robert C. Thomsen(RCT), Inga Ernst Andersen (IEA)

Not present: Randi Kallestrup (RK), Oscar Garcia (OG), Laura Bang Lindegaard(LBL)

Referent: ATJ/IEA/KJ

Agenda

1. Approval of agenda
 2. Studienævnsrapport" including strategi/handleplan (4 files attached)
 3. RUSTur (continued from Sept 14th)
 4. Change of LISE curriculum, exam in English Communication and grammar based on student complaint(description attached)
 5. New curriculum for SIS Spanish
 6. Other issues
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1. Approval of agenda and minutes 3/2016
The agenda was approved. The minutes were approved with minor changes.
 2. "Studienævnsrapport" including strategi/handleplan (4 files attached)
KJ presented the study board report. The drop-out rate is too high, study efficiency is still too low, however it has improved from 0,78 in 2014 to 0,83 in 2015/16 (LISE program) and in the Spanish program it has improved from 0,68 in 2014/15 to 0,81 in 2015/16. The faculty average in bachelor programs is 0,86. Finally, in both programs (!), the number of months it takes the average student to complete the program is too high. KJ addressed a number of caveats in relation to interpretation of the

numbers. Firstly, regarding study efficiency, this rate is affected by the number of students going abroad each year. Students going abroad count as enrolled students but do not earn credits in the programs. The extent to which this is taken into account in the calculation of the efficiency rate is unclear. Obviously this affects all study programs. However, as LISE and SIS Spanish are programs sending a high percentage of their students abroad, the effect is disproportionately high in these programs. The number of months it takes the average student to complete the program may be affected by the fact that the total sum of months for each student is calculated as starting from the date on which the student was enrolled in *any* program within the faculty of the humanities. This method will affect programs receiving many students from other programs negatively. Most students finish their BA project on time. The typical problem seems to be students missing a few 5 ECTS exams, which are then placed in the reexam term in August. Finally, the high drop-out rate is partly due to the high number of students who are disenrolled by the university because of lack of participation in first-year exams or failing to complete all required exams before the end of the 4th semester.

Drop-out rate:

The study board has addressed the drop-out rate by trying to control the intake of the students (emphasized in the strategy plan). However, the influence on the intake is limited. A required grade average of 4 has been introduced and has taken effect from the fall of 2016. This may have a positive influence on a problem mentioned by LHM: that the LISE program may represent an 'easy choice' for many students because it apparently consists of disciplines that are popular in high school: English and social science.

The study board has had discussions with the admissions office. The recommendation is that the study board should seek to attract a higher number of international students to the LISE program. The LISE program has in fact received a very high number of applications in 2016. However, only a small percentage of international applicants are eligible for the LISE program due to the requirement of second foreign-language qualifications. In order to open the LISE program even more to international students, it has been investigated whether the second foreign-language requirement can be met through a language test similar to the TOEFL and IELTS tests. The admissions office has been addressed re this issue and confirmed that international applicants can meet the second foreign-language requirement by submitting a passed language test. The long-term goal of the study board is to have the second foreign language requirement removed.

Both LISE and SIS Spanish applicants and first-year students may have an inadequate understanding of the programs' profile and content. The LISE study counselor has been approached by a number of students who were surprised by the political and historical orientation of the LISE program. The SIS Spanish study counselor has detected that some versions of the information material on the SIS Spanish program contains misleading information.

In summary, the two explanations: 1) students who are unable to fulfill the program and end up being disenrolled by the university and 2) students who have misunderstood the program profile and content seem to cover most of the drop-outs in the LISE program. In the SIS Spanish program, the high drop-out rate seems to be connected to some students' low entry qualifications. However, the study board is reluctant to introduce a grade average of 4 due to the low number of applicants to the program.

Actions and initiatives

We must make sure that the opportunity to take a language test in order to meet the second foreign language requirement is made very clear in the application material addressing international students.

The study board will again arrange meetings with the admissions office to learn about this year's applications and admissions and potential effects of the introduced grade average.

Information material for the programs has been controlled and revised. Information meetings regarding the curriculum and other administrative issues must be held each fall/early in the spring semester to prevent students from being disenrolled due to inadequate understanding of the exam system.

3. RUSur (continued from Sept 14th)

The RUS coordinators would like to present in November instead. The issue is on the agenda for the November meeting.

4. Change of LISE curriculum, exam in English Communication and grammar based on student complaint (description attached)

The study board has received a complaint from a student who had failed his exam in English communication and grammar. He argued that it was not made clear in the curriculum that the exam consisted of two parts and that each of these parts needed to be passed in order to pass the exam. The study board agreed with the student's complaint, and the student was granted an extra exam attempt.

The problem can be solved by adding to the description of the exam that it consists of two parts that each has to be passed. This description was approved by the study board and has been passed on to the faculty of the humanities for immediate implementation (will take effect next spring).

5. New curriculum for SIS Spanish

Will be postponed to next meeting as well

Has just been finished but is not quite ready for presentation

6. Other issues

LHM and SEV reported that 6 LISE-student want to join the LISE-study board – they are competing for 3 spots. LHM and SEV have had an informal orientation meeting with some of the new candidates.

A SIS **Spanish** student is also joining

More working space for students will be available soon. There will be new 'study-cubicles' both for groups and individual students in KS1 and KS3