



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
DENMARK

**Study Board of Languages  
and International Studies**

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**Study Board Secretary**

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**Approved minutes Constituent meeting and meeting 1/2017 in the  
Study Board of Languages and International Studies,  
22 February 2017, 9.00-12.30**

**Present:** Ben Dorfman (BD), Kirsten Jæger(KJ), Bent Boel (BB), Sara Elmiina Viitanen(SEV), Laura Høvring Møller(LHM), Camilla Søndergaard (CS), SIS Studievejledere Nanna Søndergaard Holt (NSH) & Trine Degn Preuss, Susanne Hald(SH), Inga Ernst Andersen(IEA) and Liza Pank (LP)  
(Signe Juul Rasmussen and Anita Toft Jepsen from Connect Int'l. attended the meeting under point 2)

**Not present:** Oscar Garcia (OG)

**Referent:** NSH, IEA, BD

**1. Welcome, approval of agenda and presentation**

**2. Election of new chair and student vice chairman (VC) of SB**

The study board concurs that Ben Dorfman remains the chairman of the study board  
Election of vice chairman is to be determined later, among the student representations of the study board. As of now Laura Høvring Møller remains the vice chairman  
The study board is informed that vice chairmen from the humanities and the vice-dean are collaborating on a mini conference (1 day) for all humanities students on 20. April. The current vice chairman suggests that the coming vice chairman attends the above-mentioned collaboration.

**3. Presentation from Connect Int'l.**

In an update from the student association Connect Int'l. it was reported that Signe Juul Rasmussen and Anita Toft Jepsen have been elected chairman and vice chairman.  
Connect Int'l. informed of the upcoming events: A social Fastelavns party in February; An academic Masters day, 'MA Day' on 16<sup>th</sup> March. There will student representations from the programs DIR, ES, Tourism and CCG, by former LISE/SIS students. The student counselors are also invited; An academic course for the students in collaboration with Kommunikation og Sprog, on 27<sup>th</sup> March. The course will be on job application and CV checks; An academic information event titled 'Study Aboard' in April/May. The event will include AAU exchange programs and free-mover presentations. Connect Int'l. plans to discuss moving this into the fall semester; Connect Int'l.'s General Assembly will be held in May/June. Here all elections of all positions, expect chairman; A social pub crawl will be arranged in June, planned not to interfere with exams.

The study board chairman seeks to introduce more extracurricular activities, such as documentary nights and political discussions. Chairman suggests collaborating with Connect Int'l. for these. Connect Int'l. would like to help coordinate and promote it but does not want to participate in the actual event.

The chairman comments in relation to Connect Int'l.'s MA day, perhaps introducing students to the event who are in the process of applying to MA programs in other DK universities and outside DK.

On this point the student counselors share that students are having a difficult time writing motivation letters (letter of intent) for MA programs outside DK. Study board chairman will see to this and work with Connect Int'l. to introduce this as a tool for the students.

The study board will seek to find a representative which may have more knowledge about writing these from DK universities. As such; this information should be made available earlier as the international university deadlines have passed. A member of the board suggests a 'help to self-help' method, starting already at the 3. semester. A possible solution could be contacting older students who have written a successful motivational letter. Ben Dorfman and Kirsten Jæger will coordinate this together in conjunction with Connect Int'l.

The School representative suggests asking academic assessors such as Helene Pristed or Julia Zhukova Klausen from CCG. Another suggestion was Ken Henriksen from Århus University.

Connect Int'l. inquired about recommendations to Connect Int'l. members after leaving the association. The chairman confirms this being possible. Connect Int'l. will make a template and chairman from Connect Int'l. will also make a comment about the student, to ease the workload for the chairman. It was noted that requesting recommendations need to come from the students themselves.

#### 4. Evaluation (Courses, semester and project) Fall 2016

##### a. Sprog og Internationale Studier, Spansk

No Spanish representation present at the meeting. SIS course evaluations may need to be discussed in detail with Oscar Garcia Agustin.

The chairman notes the following:

##### 1. Semester review:

Problem: empty schedule

Solution: The study board has money available, and the study board should seek to utilize that to introduce more intellectually-informative events for the students. The study board chairman will in consultation with the SIS group and Oscar seek to accomplish this.

##### 2. Supervision:

Problem: part time supervisors, primarily TAs. This is likely due to lack of experience as a supervisor.

Solution: Full time staff will be preferred.

##### 3. Project work:

Problem: Students wish to start earlier on projects. The courses in the semester build up to the project. A concern at the policy level may be that classes may be ignored when projects are started too early.

Solution: This will need to be decided among the SIS group. Study board chairman will discuss this issue and the possibility of starting project work earlier. Topics which will also feature in the discussion will be, how uniform is the supervisor procedures are, and sharing of information and experience.

The student representation comments that the students can be told to start *thinking* about it earlier. This point is supported by the study board.

A way to implement this is by coordinating the teaching staff. Project courses should be viewed as a means to inspire project thinking. This message should be said at the semester introduction meetings.

##### 4. Course reviews:

Problem: PBL seemed confusing to the students.

Solution: Chairman will discuss with SIS group.

Problem: For the language courses, some wanted more, some wanted less. Split among the students between preferring the language part and the international studies part.

Solution: Chairman will discuss with SIS group. Perhaps the teaching staff should seek to address the students' differing interests.

b. Language and International Studies, English

The chairman notes the following:

1. Semester review:

Problem: Receiving grades is taking too long.

Solution: The teaching staff will be notified, striving for the four-week mark will be emphasized.

Positive: Several students expressed contentment with the study program

Problem: Internal problems with groups dynamics. Single students looking for a group with a similar topic not being able to get into a group is a large problem. Furthermore, there are still problems with groups often being constituted along lines of students' nationalities.

Problem: Having information earlier (exam dates, schedule etc.)

Solution: The study board seeks to inform student as quick as possible and maximum effort is being made to send out information from the secretaries and the teaching staff. The board will seek to formulate a document as a reminder to inform the students when administrative deadlines (schedule, grades, exam dates). This will be made by the School and the secretaries will note it in the Moodle pages.

The student representatives express that the information flow at the moment is satisfactory and is send out in proper time. The study's coordinators and secretariat note that it is simply not possible to generate information earlier than is currently done.

2. Supervision reviews:

Overall good.

Problem: Supervisors being unavailable

Solution: Chairman will mention this at LISE group meeting, as to remind the supervisors to be aware of emails and informing of potential time away from the AAU campus.

3. Course reviews:

World history course

Problem: Heavy workload.

Introduction to sociology

Problem: Purpose and relation to the course.

Solution: Review the need for sociology as a course. The form of the course may need to be rethought.

The student counselor comments that there should be clear linkage international studies so that students see that purpose in relation to their program. The student representations comment that perhaps sociology should be an elective course. Other suggestions for elective courses were international law and world religion.

Language classes

Problem: Differing opinions. Some found it helpful others did not.

Solution: The differing reactions are noted but the course is valuable for the program and the teaching staff is seeking to provide English teaching in correlation to international studies. The study board notes the concerns, and will continue to speak with the language teachers to keep the courses within the frame of international studies.

The student representation comments that in general, the students who are unhappy with the grammar are the ones who are struggling with the grammar in particular. The study board acknowledges the positive feedback on the teaching staff. It is also noted that instruction in English language is core to the program.

#### **5. Semester descriptions spring 2017**

Coordinators have already commented and chairman will go through and make it unified. Following comments were made:

The coordinators claim that certain updates need to be made to certain course descriptions. The School representative expressed that the teaching staff should aim to have less writing on the Course Room Moodle pages. The chairman of the study board will meet with Susanne Hald to clarify this.

#### **6. Minutes 'Aftagerpanelet'**

The study board discussed whether it should function together with the study board of 'tværkulturelle studier'.

Problem: A concern is expressed with the lack of international career representation. Kirsten Jæger comments that currently the MA programs are discussed at lengths compared to the BA program, at the 'aftagerpanel'.

Solution: It was suggested that the study board formulated an 'aftagerpanel' more tailored to international studies.

Action: The School representative suggests contacting the faculty and comments that the chairman must find the new 'aftagere'. A board member suggested finding inspiration from other BA programs. The chairman comments that this will signal a strong BA in where we tailor and craft our program in the best way possible for the students, as we wish to advance SIS/LISE in the best way possible, not steamrolled by a MA.

The study board decides to explore the possibility.

#### **7. Review of new students' entry survey**

The chairman has reviewed the surveys. The study board discusses the point of 'early academic clarification' by the students when they first start. The student representation comment on the overall difficulty of stating their academic aspirations from the first semester. This clarification often comes later on.

Additionally, the chairman will have a meeting with the vice-dean of admissions procedures, especially regarding motivational letters upon entry.

#### **8. Review of dis-enrolled students survey**

Largest reason for dis-enrollment is changing to another institution. It is difficult pinpoint the exact reason why the students are not clear on their program preferences this before starting at Aalborg University.

#### **9. Notice about using full-time faculty for BA projects**

The study board notes this as a requirement

#### **10. Status on SIS Spanish curriculum revisions (Oscar)**

The School representative mentions that the deadline is passed but revisions will be submitted as soon as possible.

#### **11. Discussion of inclusion of “stop exam” in LISE curriculum (Spanish too?)**

The point behind the ‘stop exam’ was to filter out the students who do not wish to be at LISE/SIS. Measures will be taken to filter these students out before starting the program. The point is thus a bit obsolete.

#### **12. Discussion of policy around offering odd semester make-up exams in even semesters and vice versa**

Offering odd semester make up exams is very unstable and demands a great deal of administrative effort. Third attempt students are advised to retake the course pertaining to the exam, odd make up exams counteract this. The study board concurs that make-up exams should be in connection with the semester in which the exam naturally falls – one exception being the BA project exam. Even numbered semester exams need to be in spring, and vice versa regarding exams in odd semesters.

#### **13. Discussion of policy that students must have passed all 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> semester exams to be allowed to study abroad**

The study board concurs.

An additional point was brought by concerning going abroad without having passed exams, therefore being away for their third exam attempt. The study board decides that students cannot be abroad without having passed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. Adding to this, the student cannot be abroad when they are registered for their third exam attempt, i.e. where they should be advised retaking the course. If a student has arranged a study abroad and do not meet these requirements, they cannot go. This is decided for both LISE and SIS, the chairman will talk further with Oscar Garcia Agustin on this point.

The vice chairman has voiced concerns on this. Certain courses are difficult for some students to pass, e.g. grammar. The point of a student having to abruptly cancel their study abroad also raises concerns. It was commented that some student may have special circumstance.

In relation to the vice chairman’s concern, the study board decides that dispensation may occur under very special circumstances.

#### **14. Addendum**

The student counselors raise the point of updating knowledge of LISE/SIS students’ access into MA programs on AAU websites. There seems to be a slight disconnect between this information and ‘Uddannelsesstjekkeren’. Students have been confused with which MA programs LISE and SIS grant access to. These may need to be revised; this will be done between Susanne Hald and the student counselors. The chairman comments that the four main MA programs for LISE and SIS should be highlighted. These include: Culture Communication and Globalization, Tourism, Development and International Relations and European Studies.

*Semester coordinator and semester student representation meetings:*

These meeting will occur as collaboration between one or two students (representing that particular semester) and the coordinator, these will meet at least once. At the meeting the representatives will discuss the overall workings of the semester and reoccurring issues from the semester reviews, i.e. supervision process, as these perhaps could then be tackled in unison.

The student representation comments that the students from 5<sup>th</sup> semester could continue into 6<sup>th</sup> semester. Otherwise it should be strived to be new students for each semester.

The student representation brings up 4<sup>th</sup> exam attempts as there is a concern that these are given on too loose of a foundation. The chairman comments that the attempts are nearly

never given and, on the occasions that they are only for medical reason or reasons of the most extenuating nature. The vice chairman wishes to be more informed on this matter. It is decided that the study board shall be informed when a 4<sup>th</sup> exam attempts are granted. Personal information will be excluded.

A comment was made on the minutes from previous meeting regarding the course 'Regional Studies' and that an overall theory should be given in the beginning of the course. Two problems were noted in response. Substantial problem: there is no single theory defining regional studies. Another pragmatic issue is that different instructors have different approaches to the issue.

Solution: This point should be modified or discussed at length between the coordinator, the study board chairman and the teachers involved.

The student representation comments that current formulation of the course is working.