Guidelines for Introductory Activities

Introductory activities at the University of Copenhagen are designed to acquaint new students with the academic and social study environment. The aim is to introduce them to the academic identity and requirements of their study programme and bring them together socially. All of the activities must be inclusive and reflect the diversity of the student body. They must not include political, sexual and religious activities, or initiation rituals or any activities that force students out of their comfort zone.

The dean has overall responsibility for the introductory activities but may opt to delegate it, e.g. to the head of studies. Organising and putting together individual elements of the programme may be delegated to coordinators from the technical and administrative staff or to tutors (senior students). It is, however, essential that the governance structure is clearly described and the division of roles is set down in writing.

The contribution made by the tutors is appreciated and often indispensable. They act as representatives of the head of studies and the University, and it is important that they exercise responsibility and tolerance towards the new students. In many parts of the University, these tutors are volunteers. Whilst commendable, this is not a particularly robust foundation for the programme. A better alternative might be to make full-time members of technical and administrative staff ‘study-start co-ordinators’ and issue contracts to the tutors. This would make it possible to subject tutors to the same requirements as other University employees, e.g. not drinking alcohol during working hours and complying with ethical guidelines. The University has considerable and positive experience of appointing a tutor co-ordination group.

The introductory programme must revolve around the new students. To minimise the risk of activities being perceived as a 'party for the tutors', it is
worth considering how many tutors it is appropriate to involve, e.g. drawing up rules that no more than one tutor may be appointed per 10 new students, and that students may only act as tutors twice during their studies.

Alcohol has no place in the daytime social and academic programme for new students and must not be served before 17:00 on the campus and at introduction camps. Tutors are responsible for ensuring that new students are not pushed to drink alcohol at any point during the introductory programme, i.e. they are not allowed to organise activities that involve alcohol. It is also worth considering whether tutors should be banned from drinking alcohol altogether, while playing the role. At the very least, an appropriate number of tutors should be sober and capable of reacting to accidents, etc., at any given time.