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Guidelines for the Closure and Merger of Study Programmes at the University of Copenhagen

Purpose

As part of the deliberations regarding the closure or merger of study programmes, the faculties must ensure that all issues are addressed, and that the most important stakeholders have been involved in the process, before a decision is made. The guidelines serve as a framework for the faculties' ongoing work to adapt the portfolio of study programmes while retaining a focus on quality, relevance and finances.

The guidelines must also be followed when considering the closure of study programmes for which intake has been halted.

Deliberations concerning the closure or merger of study programmes are made on an ongoing basis and are a fixed item in the faculties' annual programme reports.

Requirements placed on faculty procedures

All faculties must have a procedure in place for closing or merging study programmes. The University of Copenhagen places requirements on the elements that the faculties must always incorporate into their considerations regarding the closure or merger of study programmes, and on which stakeholders must always be involved. The faculties' procedures must also describe how and to whom the faculty communicates decisions to close or merge study programmes.

Faculty decision-making processes

What must be considered prior to a decision to close or merge study programmes?

The decision to close or merge study programmes is based on an overall consideration that takes into account multiple factors, none of which are decisive in isolation.

When considering the closure or merger of study programmes, the faculties must, at a minimum, consider the following:

- The programme's viability (intake, dropout rates, completion times). Is the programme financially viable?
- The study programme's research base.
- What will be the consequences for the academic environment if the study programme is closed or merged with another one? Will the academic environment surrounding the study programme be lost or could the academics involved be deployed on other study programmes?
- The study environment. Does the study programme have a good study environment?
- Graduate (un)employment. Have graduates in the last five years found relevant employment?
- The relevance of the programme to the Danish labour market.
- The University's portfolio of study programmes, from a national perspective. It is possible to study the same programme elsewhere in Denmark?

The faculties may opt to supplement the above list with other elements that they wish to include in deliberations about the closure or merger of study programmes.

Who should be involved in deliberations about the closure or merger of study programmes?

The procedure must clearly stipulate who has the overall responsibility to make the final decision on the closure or merger of study programmes and who, as a minimum, is included in the deliberations.

When considering the closure or merging of study programmes, the faculties must, at a minimum, include:

- Academic staff representatives from the study programme(s) – either directly or via councils, boards and committees
- Student representatives from the study programme(s)
- The study programme's employer panel
- The study programme's head of studies
- The study programme's study board.

The faculties may opt to supplement the above list with other stakeholders whom the faculty will include in deliberations about the closure or merger of study programmes.

The dean's recommendation and the Rector's approval

The dean is responsible for approving proposals for the closure or merger of study programmes, including plans for phasing them out, and submits these to the Rector for approval.

The plans must include information about the programme's final intake, the student numbers per semester, an account of how all students will be able to complete the study programme, and a definitive closing date for the study programme. When closing or merging master's programmes to which bachelor graduates have a legal right of admission, the plan must also stipulate to which master's programme(s) bachelor graduates will have a legal right of admission in future, and when these changes to the curriculum will take effect.

The dean's recommendation must include a description of how the outside world is expected to react to a closure or merger, and how the faculty intends to handle this.

In connection with the merger of degree programmes, a schematic overview of the structural changes to the course of study for the combined programme must be included. When closing degree programmes and instead setting them up as profiles on another existing programme, an overview of the overall course of study, including profiles, must be included. The overview must clearly show the programme structure, with an indication of the ECTS weighting of the study activities.

The dean's recommendation must also state on which date the study board processed the recommendation for the closure or merger.

The process for the Rector's consideration and approval of the dean's recommendation of the closure or merger of the study programme is outlined in "Procedure for the Rector's approval of the closure and merger of existing study programmes".

The faculties' communication of the Rector's decision

Following the Rector's decision, who should the faculty inform about the closure or merger of study programmes?

Once the Rector has approved the closure or merger of study programmes, the faculties are responsible for communicating the decision to the stakeholders concerned. In their procedures, the faculties must describe how this communication will take place, and who needs to be informed of the closure or merger of the study programmes.

The faculties must at least inform the following:

- All academic staff affiliated with the programme(s)
- All students enrolled on the study programme(s)
- The study programme's employer panel
- The study programme's head of studies
- The study programme's study board.

The faculties can opt to supplement the above list with other stakeholders whom the faculty wishes to inform about the closure or merger of study programmes.