



AALBORG UNIVERSITET

## Approved Minutes 2/2021

### Study Board of Language and International Studies

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### Study Board Secretary

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<b>Date and time</b>	April 26, 2021 kl 1230-1430
<b>Place</b>	Teams
<b>Present: Elected VIP</b>	Ben Dorfman (BD, Chair of the Study Board), Kirsten Jæger (KJ, representative for LISE), Bent Boel (BB, representative for LISE), Ana Maria Macias (AMM, representative for SIS Spanish),
<b>Present: Elected students</b>	Flavia-Gabriela Sandu (FGS, student representative for LISE), Elias Mark (EM, student representative for LISE), Andrea Nygaard Silkjær (ANS, student representative for SIS Spanish), Lea Thies (LT, student representative for LISE)
<b>Present Observers</b>	Ida Vejnø (IV, SIS Spanish Student Counsellor); ), Helja Asadi-Gholami (LISE Student Counsellor); Susanne Hald(SH); Karina Madsen Smed (KMS)
<b>Not Present</b>	Morten Ziethen (Study Leader), Oscar Garcia (Representative for SIS Spanish);
<b>Referent</b>	Helja Asadi-Gholami (LISE Student Counsellor), Ben Dorfman, Inga Ernst Andersen (IEA Study Board Secretary)
<b>Approved</b>	July, 2 2021



	Redegørelse/vurdering	Evt. opfølgning
1. Approval of Agenda	The board approved the agenda.	
2. Approval of Minutes 1/2021	Approved in Teams.	
3. Corona and Return to Campus	<p><i>General Return to Campus</i></p> <p>BD notes that a note to the SIS/LISE students regarding the ability to go on to campus. Not many students have made use of this. BD states that it is now possible to meet and teach on campus if there is a justifiable reason for doing so. BD has planned for the second semester students to have an in-person review session in which they can see their instructors again and get to know them better. BD states that while it is recognized this might be desire by fourth and sixth semester students, emphasis would be put on second because of the degree to which they've been affected by Corona restriction. However, he asked for input from the students on the board.</p> <p>EM agrees that there is no need. HAG relates that some students have expressed a need for a similar opportunity to go to campus again. LT points out that the proposal letter written by IV on behalf of SIS and LISE students shows that several students do feel this need. LT further notes that it would be nice to have the option for the students interested to come to campus. BD asks the students what kind of activities they would like to see; LT answers that it could be an event on BA exam preparation and goodbyes for the 6<sup>th</sup> semester students. EM also suggests that it could be an event in which 6<sup>th</sup> semester students give feedback on the entirety of their study.</p> <p>BD relates that he has received an email from Sofie Mikkelsen, a LISE student who volunteers for Connect, regarding a graduation event for the 6<sup>th</sup> semester students. BD notes that this event could provide the sense of closure that the students need, while being outside the purview of the university, and as such something that is more easily arranged. BD states that this event seems to currently be the best option regarding providing the students a final chance to see each other. EM agrees with this assessment based on the logistic difficulties discussed earlier. BD notes that he will put the Student Representatives into contact with Sofie Mikkelsen to make a plan that for the graduation event that will conform with the public regulations.</p> <p><b>It was decided that a "semester review" event would be arranged for second semester students and that any graduation activity would be handled through Connect</b></p>	



	<p><i>Exams</i></p> <p>BD addresses the letter written by IV on behalf of SIS students requesting that the BA Project exam be in person/on campus. BD states that it is not up to the board to decide on this, and that it was the department that makes this decision. EM states that the 6<sup>th</sup> semester students need this exam to be on campus and in person for a sense of closure, as not getting this closure is psychologically taxing, especially since the vast majority of the students will not come to AAU again after graduating. EM also points out that censors could join the exam online. LT supports EM's point regarding the students' need for closure by seeing each other one last time. LT asks if the letter was be sent to the department, as the content is important.</p> <p>BD understands the concerns voiced by LT and EM but reiterates that it is highly unlikely that the department will change their decision, since these concerns have already been discussed with the department before the decision was finalised. BD also points out that the hybrid model – where students and examiners can choose for themselves whether to be there in person or online – presents an administrative challenge, particularly since the Corona recommendations/restrictions might change, as we get closer to the exam dates.</p> <p><b>The conclusion is that, short of a different announcement from the department or university, orals will be held online.</b></p>	
<p><b>4. Semester Plans Fall 2021</b></p>	<p><b>LISE</b></p> <p>BD notes that the curriculum is further ahead in terms of planning than what has been usual in the past. The new course 'Professional Genre Writing' does not have an instructor as of yet, so an advertisement needs to be made for an external instructor. BD notes that supervision is missing in every semester at the moment, and there likely is a need for external people to be hired.</p> <p><b>The LISE teaching plan was approved with the knowledge that it was also incomplete.</b></p> <p><b>SIS</b></p> <p>Based on student feedback, efforts have been made to create extra activities to facilitate language learning. AMMG states that the first week for 1<sup>st</sup> semester students will be purely language classes. The classes will consist of grammar, speaking, and reading exercises, the classes will also be an opportunity for students to work together more intensely. Students from other semesters have also expressed an interest in having such a week. The 3<sup>rd</sup> semester students will have a six-week collaborative online course with a Spanish university. AMMG also notes that for 5<sup>th</sup> semester students who are unable to go abroad will be spending their 5<sup>th</sup> semester with 3<sup>rd</sup> semester LISE students.</p> <p><b>The SIS teaching plan was approved.</b></p>	



<b>5. Status on Uncompleted Exams (trafiklysrapport)</b>	<p>BD notes that the board is aware of the students who are falling behind.</p> <p><b>LISE</b> BD notes that sixteen students are in the red zone (students who lack more than 15 ECTS), and eight students in the yellow zone (students who lack less than 15 ECTS).</p> <p><b>SIS</b> BD notes that two students are in the red zone, and 4 are in the yellow zone. AMM states that individual agreements have been made with the students in question</p>	
<b>6. Årsberetning censorkorps Spansk 2020</b>	<p>The few comments that were available in the report concerned problems around the publication of exam schedules and the rescheduling of exams. BD and AMM have discussed this and they are aware that these concerns need to be addressed. BD further notes that some censors complained that they had not been sent exam material in time. BD also states that there is no report for LISE yet. AMMG notes that in general the problems with the schedule could also be at Copenhagen University, because the report does not explicitly state that it is AAU. AMM does not recall any kind of problems with censors, and certainly not any problems similar to those in the report.</p>	
<b>7. Semester and Supervision Reviews Fall 2020, LISE</b>	<p>BD notes that there were some delays as to when these reviews were provided, which is why they were not discussed at the first Study Board meeting.</p> <p><b>SIS Supervision Evaluation</b> AMMG states that most of the reviews came from the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. Regarding 'project method', most students agreed that they received adequate support. Two groups expressed that sometimes they did not know exactly what to expect, and this confusion created frustration. However, these two also noted that their supervisor was readily available and made it easy for them to schedule meetings. Only one group expressed that they did not receive adequate supervision regarding theory, however this group did not elaborate further. AMMG states that generally 1<sup>st</sup> semester students do not know what to expect from their supervisors and from the entire experience. This is also reflected in their evaluations, as the disparity between answers is greater than in other semester evaluations.</p>	



However, most groups were pleased with the supervisor availability, only one group expressed that their supervisor had not been available as expected.

AMM notes that there were several comments related to one supervisor; the supervisor in question has been notified. The students felt that this supervisor was not available enough and that the direction received from this supervisor was insufficient. AMM notes that this perhaps can be resolved by working with all supervisors to ensure that there is clarity regarding the scope of supervision. On this note, EM states that there is a general issue in 1<sup>st</sup> semester for all students, regardless of study, regarding what to expect. EM notes that this issue usually resolves itself as students learn more about what to expect at university through their semesters. AMM acknowledges this point, yet asserts that there is a need for all supervisors to meet and develop a common set of thought on the parameters they use to approach supervision.

#### **SIS Semester Evaluation**

AMM notes that Corona is the overall theme and has given cause to both negative and positive comments. The students seem to be able to spend an appropriate number of hours on the study. Most students are also happy with the amount of effort needed to keep up with their studies. However, one student expressed that they do not feel that the study can be viewed as a full 37,5 hours per week. Most students also reported that they were happy with the amount of information available. Again, there was one student who did not share this feeling at all, AMM will reach out to this student. Generally, the students feel that they have gotten a lot from their studies, and further the students note that the teachers did the best they could with the corona restrictions.

Regarding the projects, AMM notes that some students were frustrated with working in their groups because there were problems with the group. AMM will also approach this student. AMM relates that there are several students who do not know how to use Moodle, and who additionally do not check their emails often enough, and so do not get the information they need.

AMM relates that a project-group booked a time with a librarian to find literature suitable for their project, and the librarian was perplexed that they had not had a course on literature searching. AMM notes that every September/October students go through literature searching workshop with librarians. BD notes that a literature-search workshop is offered by the library every year. AMM states that in previous years, SIS made use of this offer, but AMM does not recall receiving this mail in the last semester.

BD notes that students generally often seem confused about where to find information. HAG agrees on this point and relates that there are still a surprising number of students in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> semester who do not know where to find information regarding many different things, for example, exam schedules, courses on Moodle, STADS, etc. BD states that supervisors are aware of these challenges and that it is obvious that students should learn how to use AAU's various platforms in their first semester.



	<p>AMM notes that regarding the physical environment, the students complained about the amount of noise during classes. In addition, some students complained about the prices in the cafeteria.</p> <p><b>LISE</b>          BD also relates that a number of first semester students made written comments in which they questioned whether or not they felt like they had much during the first semester. BD reflects that this is perhaps also a question of the standards that the students set for themselves. Additionally, BD comments on the fact that most first semester students estimated that they work 20-30 hours a week, which is less than the ideal that they work 40 hours per week. In relation to this, BD remarks that a couple of first semester students felt that smaller assignments along the way would help them manage/assess these work hours.</p> <p>Considering the problems in with group-work for the projects, BD notes that it takes some time for first semester students to get used to working together in groups, and that it becomes less of a challenge as the students get into the later semesters. However, BD also reflects that students who do not have a good experience with writing the projects in groups tend to write increasingly on their own.</p> <p>Regarding supervisor availability, BD comments that supervisors need to respond within a reasonable time.</p> <p>AMM questions who to contact or refer students to if the student in question seems to be dealing with psychological problems. HAG notes that these students can be referred to the student counsellors of the specific study, or they can be referred to the general AAU student counselling office. HAG also wrote an informal document regarding the mental health resources listed on the AAU website; this document can be found on Moodle under the 'Study Secretariat' page.</p>	
<p><b>8. News from Students and Student Councilors</b></p>	<p>Regarding break-out rooms on Zoom, FS reports that the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester students find that the rooms are not focused enough. 6<sup>th</sup> semester students do not find them at all useful, furthermore the 6<sup>th</sup> semester students feel that they should not be obliged to be on camera.</p> <p>FS also states that the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester students also expressed that they would like a meeting to get to know the study a bit more.</p> <p>FS states that there were three comments from 6<sup>th</sup> semester students in which the students expressed that they felt that the teaching in the course Regional Studies was too biased towards a pro-EU stance. One comment stated that students in the program in general were presented to pro-EU positions and that it would be nice to learn about different perspectives. Another comment specifically for the 'Regional Studies' class</p>	<p><b>It was decided that IE will notify these students about the change in deadline. BD notes that there is a need for the study to engage in clearer communication with students in terms of what is meant by and expected with "methodology" (and clearer understandings need be</b></p>



stated that a more critical EU perspective would be welcome. FS states that she personally finds that the student who wrote this comment misinterpreted the class. EM points out that it is interesting that three students mentioned a bias towards the EU.

EM reports that 6<sup>th</sup> semester students expressed that they felt they lacked methods in the study. One student noted that most methods are within discourse of organisational studies. EM points out that students might feel that there is not enough distinction in classes between theories and methods.

EM states that the 6<sup>th</sup> semester students expressed that there is not enough time for the project because of the other exams. EM elaborates that realistically, the students can only start working on the projects now that the exams have ended.

Additionally, EM states that some students suddenly got new supervisors, which means that these students have less time to work on the project in comparison to the students who did not get new supervisors. BB points out that the students who got new supervisors have gotten their deadline extended by three days. EM states that the students affected have not been made aware of this.

LT reports that the students commented that there were some difficulties with the online lectures, yet the students also praised some teachers for their online teaching.

LT states that a 4<sup>th</sup> semester student commented that there was some unclarity regarding a teacher being appointed halfway through a course. Another student stated that information regarding the exam of another course only came about 3 weeks before the exam. Also states that some confusion is also caused by different guidelines as to the grading. ANS states that, for example, LISE students get grades, but SIS students do not, and this is also not fair in terms of student effort.

ANS reports that a 4<sup>th</sup> semester SIS student comments that they have had a tough time in the past semester and that they have difficulty in linking the study to actual further careers. ANS suggests that workshops might be needed for students to see how they can use their degree in their future careers.

**shared within the program's staff).**

**BD notes that there may be a need to examine the fourth semester in the SIS curriculum as it is designed specifically for students to be abroad.**

**BD notes that the study addresses this by asking about career goals upon arrival at the study, holding a master's/career day, maintaining an extensive LinkedIn network, and consistent dialogue with the employment board.**



<b>9. News from Coordinators and Chair Man</b>	BD states that the RUS coordinators have been hired, the next step is the announcement for tutors. BD also notes that because of the new online awareness, it is easier to facilitate activities concerning career opportunities in organisations.	
<b>10. Further Issues</b>	IV questions whether the letter from the students has been discussed. BD summarised what was discussed earlier in the meeting and reiterates that the best option seems to be the event organised by Connect.	