

To: Members of the employer panels at the Faculty of Social Sciences



MEMORANDUM

7 APRIL 2015

Re: Employer panels at the Faculty of Social Sciences

DEANS OFFICE

Case handler PRO/MFJ

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Pursuant to the University Act, the University of Copenhagen is to set up employer panels to ensure a dialogue with the University on the quality and relevance to society of the study programmes. Thus the University will involve the panels when developing new and existing programmes and new forms of teaching and exams.

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Due to the many and diverse challenges that the panels are expected to help address, the Faculty of Social Sciences has decided that it is most appropriate with employer panels at departmental level.

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Each department has set up an employer panel, which covers the study programs offered by the department. The main task of the panels is to advise the departments and the Dean about intake, new study programmes and/or courses, new curricula/revision of existing curricula within the subject area in question, as well as contact with relevant group(s) of employers.

REF: MFJ

According to the [University of Copenhagen's strategy for collaboration with private enterprises](#) the faculties shall establish strategic advisory panels to ensure dialogue with society about the faculty's strategic work covering research, education, innovation and collaboration with the outside world. This panel may include members of the employer panels. The Faculty of Social Sciences has established SAMF Advisory Board with participation of the chairs of the employer panels as well as an additional number of members. [Read more about SAMF Advisory Board here](#)

Employer panel at departmental level

Objective

The purpose of the departmental employer panels is to ensure systematic dialogue between the departments/the Faculty and the labour market. Each panel acts as a sparring partner for the department and the Dean regarding education and employment (in relation to full-time study programmes, continuing and further education programmes and PhD programmes). The members can also act externally as ambassadors for the individual study programmes.

The primary task of the employer panel at each department is to advise the department and the Dean about the following:

1) New study programmes and/or courses

The employer panels are consulted on the development of new courses and programmes, in both Danish and English, to ensure relevance to the labour market. The panels' work also includes identifying the need for new programmes or courses, including English-language courses/study programmes. Some of the panels may also find it necessary to help develop more interdisciplinary programmes/courses at the Faculty.

2) New curricula/revision of existing curricula within the relevant subject area

The employer panels are involved in the departments' ongoing work to ensure that the existing study programmes reflect the labour market's competence requirements. Panel members provide ongoing advice regarding the development of the study programmes' competence profile.

3) Contact with the relevant group(s) of employers

Systematic dialogue with employers of the departments' graduates enhances the departments' ability to provide students with advice on skill requirements, career paths and graduate employment opportunities. Panel members act as ambassadors, e.g. helping raise employers' awareness of social-science competences. Panel members also help set up study places/internships, mentoring schemes, company visits, give lectures, etc.

4) Intake – graduate (un)employment data and the outlook for graduate employment

The panel advises the Dean on intake for the individual fields of study, based on employment figures and available analyses of graduate employment prospects for the individual study programmes.

Organisation

Each department's panel consists of 8–12 representatives from business and industry, the public sector and voluntary organisations. They shall be selected according to the following criteria:

- a) The participants have broad knowledge of the labour market, preferably with close links to their company/organisation's recruitment and skills-development work
- b) The participants broadly represent the labour market; both private and public sector as well as businesses and organisations of different types and sizes
- c) The participants have sufficient insight into the subject area to discuss competence profiles, curricula, etc. (members may be former students of the department concerned or another faculty department, but this is not a requirement)
- d) The participants are appointed in their personal capacity (it is not necessary, for example, that all trade unions in a subject area are represented).

In addition, up to four representatives of the department also take part, including the head of studies and head of department. Other departmental nominees might include 1–2 researchers with a special interest in career and skills development, and the deputy chair of the study board.

Members are appointed for a three-year period and may be reappointed. The panel elects a chairperson and deputy chair. The chairperson must be an external representative, and the deputy an internal. The head of studies or an administrative officer acts as secretary to the panel and is responsible for planning meetings and contact with the Dean/Faculty, including sending out agendas, papers, and reports to the faculty management.

Appointment of new members: The Dean is responsible for appointing new panel members. Following approval by the Dean, the department is responsible for the practical aspects of the process.

The panel generally meets once or twice a year, for approx. two hours. Agendas are sent out in advance of the meetings. The Dean might attend the meetings (or sends a representative).

Documentation

Minutes are taken at each meeting, sent to members of the panel and the Dean, and posted on the department website, as well. Members' recommendations may also be used in internal working papers (see end of memo).

The Dean is responsible for ensuring that all of the study programmes maintain an ongoing dialogue with their employer panels, and that the knowledge gained from this process is applied to the quality assurance and enhancement of the relevance of the study programmes. If minutes are not issued from meetings in the employer panels, the Dean is responsible for following up on this.

Follow-up on panel recommendations

The employer panels act in an advisory capacity. Follow-up on the panels' discussions, proposals, etc. is done by the local study boards, the Faculty Management Team and the Faculty's Heads of Studies Forum.