



Education Strategy 2015-2017 for the Royal School of Library and Information Science (RSLIS), Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen (UCPH-HUM)

Preamble

The Education Strategy 2015-2017 replaces the Education Strategy 2011-2014. Though several priorities have been retained, this strategy reflects to a greater extent that the Royal School of Library and Information Science (RSLIS) is a department of the Faculty of Humanities (HUM) at the University of Copenhagen (UCPH). The Education Strategy 2015-2017 refers to RSLIS's general strategy, including the Research Strategy 2015-2017¹. In addition, the education strategy refers to UCPH and HUM policies and strategies² as well as political and ministerial requirements in a national and an international perspective.

Background

RSLIS has a long-established tradition of prioritising pedagogy and dedicated teaching. The quality and relevance of the study programmes is under constant review, which includes consideration of how to maximise the proportion of research-based teaching in order to promote academic standards. Recent examples of this are two major revisions of the bachelor and master's study programmes in information science and cultural communication. RSLIS also focuses on the development of its teaching practice, including the development of new types of teaching

¹ Link to the Department Strategy 2015-2017 and link to the Research Strategy 2015-2017

² Strategy 2016 HUM, and the Faculty of Humanities' Quality Assurance Policy for Study Programmes (October 2014)

and examination forms such as blended learning initiatives and other innovations supported by the Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship.

Hence, RSLIS starts the strategy period with a good, solid foundation from which to make a positive contribution to the ongoing development and improvement of the education and teaching area. The aim is not only for the students to graduate in time, but also to graduate from improved study programmes and high-quality study environments. In this respect, the strategy identifies two areas that should be focused on in the years to come. RSLIS faces a challenge of retention, with too many bachelor students dropping out at the end of their first year. Graduate unemployment is also unacceptably high, with too many graduates failing to find a job in the first year after graduation. Alongside these two areas, the education strategy will address issues derived from overarching University strategies and policies, including the Study Progress Reform and HUM's quality assurance policy³.

Overall objectives for the education area

The overall objectives for the education area are to:

- develop and improve study programmes and teaching to the highest academic and pedagogic quality and relevance
- develop and strengthen the career orientation in study programmes and teaching, as well as the relationships with employers
- develop and maintain a dynamic, lively and high-quality study environment
- promote a positive teaching environment for academic staff characterised by dialogue, a holistic perspective and mutual respect that also respects the academic staff's research duties.

The strategy focuses on seven areas:

1. improved employability
2. better retention and completion
3. recruitment of skilled and motivated students
4. quality and relevance of study programmes and teaching
5. quality of the study environment
6. enhanced mobility and internationalisation
7. targeted and relevant continuing education.

These primary priorities are described and explained below.

1. Improved employability

Since 2010, graduate unemployment has been on the rise at RSLIS, and at times it

³ Subject to changes in priorities and reforms at UCPH and by the Ministry of Education

has been particularly high compared to other university study programmes in Denmark. Although it has dropped in 2014 to a level that is similar to other university study programmes and falls to approximately 7% two years after graduation, it is still too high. Graduate unemployment also affects ‘dimensioning’ of student numbers and the approval of new study programmes.

Students need to orient themselves not only towards the public sector but also towards the private sector, where the greatest growth in demand for graduates is expected until 2020. It is also crucial for RSLIS to put greater effort into establishing relations with potential employers throughout the study programmes – from the first semester to the very last one. Similarly, it is crucial to promote awareness of RSLIS’s study programmes and its graduates’ competencies in the business sector.

2. Better retention and completion

Since 2010, RSLIS has seen an increasing drop-out rate from the bachelor study programme in Information Science and Cultural Communication, especially during the first year. The drop-out rate has general repercussions for FTE production, which again affects RSLIS’s funding and budget. To address the issue of better retention, more knowledge is needed, e.g. to understand:

- Why students choose RSLIS
- Why they drop out
- How RSLIS’s marketing of the bachelor study programme corresponds with the students’ experiences of it

Based on a thorough analysis of students’ motivation for choosing or dropping out of RSLIS, appropriate measures will be devised and implemented to improve student retention and completion of the bachelor study programme.

3. Recruitment of skilled and motivated students

The number of applicants for RSLIS’s bachelor study programme has increased from 2010 to 2014. However, the number of applicants who list the study programme as their first choice has decreased. Similarly, less than half of the students admitted annually have an average grade of seven or more from Danish upper-secondary schools, which will be the admission requirement from 2018 onwards. This represents a particularly big challenge for RSLIS’s Aalborg campus, where only about a quarter of the students admitted annually generally have an average grade of seven or more.

The new ‘dimensioning’ (student numbers) system is expected to change this picture, but there will still be a need to work on recruiting talented and motivated students. Analyses have shown that students admitted with an average grade of six or less are much more likely to drop out, while motivated students admitted via quota 2 generally perform well and complete their studies.

4. Quality and relevance of study programmes and teaching

In recent years, RSLIS has revised the master's and bachelor programmes in Information Science and Cultural Communication, including designing new curricula that comply with HUM's standards and programme structure. The new bachelor curriculum, which will apply from autumn 2015, will imply the development of new courses and elective studies over the next three years that accord with RSLIS's academic and research profile. This work is expected to be done in co-operation with the other departments in HUM and the Centre for Computing and Communications.

The new courses and the teaching at RSLIS should be research-based in order to form graduates who master:

- working digitally with information and culture
- communicating information and culture to different target groups
- supporting different target groups' needs for information, knowledge and experience.

New forms of teaching, supervision and exams will be tested, with focus on the 12-hour requirement, more practise orientation, use of IT (e-learning) and the ability to demonstrate practical skills.

5. Quality of the study environment

The students must be guided carefully through their studies at RSLIS, but they must also take an active part themselves and take responsibility for their progress. A grant of DKK 750,000 to develop and promote the psychosocial environment at RSLIS should make it more conducive to studying. The funds will facilitate the initiation, development and implementation of a range of projects involving the active participation of students, academic staff, Student Counselling and the Study Board. The effect of these interventions should be seen in the University's annual satisfaction and well-being assessment.

6. Enhanced mobility and internationalisation

The international study environment at RSLIS needs to be strengthened and promoted. One specific objective is to help and encourage RSLIS students to study abroad, thus improving international and cultural understanding and knowledge. Similarly, a higher proportion of students from other Nordic countries, the EU/EEA and elsewhere should be encouraged to apply to RSLIS.

The academic staff at RSLIS should also be encouraged to go on short or extended stays at a university abroad. In addition to the academic dimension, greater mobility should also give the staff international experience that contributes positively to the courses taught in English at RSLIS.

7. Targeted and relevant continuing education

RSLIS has a long tradition of providing continuing education for library assistants, librarians and information specialists via the diploma programme in Knowledge Organisation and Information Retrieval, as well as the professional master's programme in Information Science and Cultural Communication. Due to a fall in the numbers of applicants to both courses in recent years, they will be phased out and replaced by more market-oriented and attractive new diploma and master's study programmes. However, until 2017, the focus will be on developing a new diploma programme that meets the continuing education needs of librarians, information officers and teachers at primary and secondary schools.