



## Module Coordinator Report

<b>Module title</b>	<b>Problem Based Approaches (PBL) in Social Work</b>
<b>University where module is delivered</b>	<b>Aalborg University, Denmark</b>
<b>Module coordinator</b>	<b>Lars Uggerhøj</b>
<b>Module teaching team</b>	<b>Lone Krogh, Kjeld Høgsbro, Pia Ringø, Vibeke Bak Nielsen, Søren Peter Olesen, Lars Uggerhøj</b>
<b>Dates of the classes</b>	<b>February: 5<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> April: 16<sup>th</sup> May: 10<sup>th</sup> June: 21<sup>st</sup> Supervision during: April, May and June</b>
<b>Number of classroom hours</b>	<b>18 + assessment and supervision (35 hours pr. group)</b>

### Distribution of assessment marks:

Type of assignment	ECTS Scale							Total
	A	B	C	D	E	Fx	F	
Written project with oral defence								
<b>Overall</b>								

### Commentary on teaching

- What teaching activities and methods were used?
- What worked well during teaching?
- Were there any problems during teaching?
- What reading or work was set for students outside class?
- How engaged and committed did students seem?

The aim of the module is to provide students with knowledge about the theories, the methods and the practical forms of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model as well as practical guidelines on how to conduct Problem and Project Based Learning when doing research on social work issues. The module will through lectures, class discussions and especially project-based group work identify PBL as an approach to



teaching, learning and research practices based on the idea that wondering and reflecting should guide the learning process and the definition of the problem to be studied. Students will be trained in understanding and working with PBL as a combination of theoretical, methodological, empirical and practical problems within the field of study. As well as students will be taught how PBL can be seen as an appropriate approach when doing research in different European contexts characterized by different interests and actors pursuing and promoting conflicting perspectives and interests, discourses, concepts, theories and models of social work and that PBL can encourages students to do research in such a context in an independent, reflective and knowledge based way. These learning processes are established through lectures, supervision and group work with the main emphasis on supervision and group work.

The PBL approach is well received and most students enjoy the freedom of choosing their own subject, in being responsible for the process and the task and in working with their fellow students in groups. Comparing with the 2017 evaluation there are few differences. Some elements are evaluated a little better and some a little lower, but some of them were just the other way round in 2017 and 2016. However comparing all cohorts, cohort 5 seems to be the most positive cohort towards the PBL approach.

### Commentary on assessment:

- Brief description of the module assessments
- What information was given to students about the assignment?
- What type of feedback was given to students?
- How was student performance?
- What was the range of marks achieved by the cohort?
- Was there any learning outcome that students achieved particularly well or less well than others?

The assessment is based on a written report produced by a group of students – established before the Field Study – and defended in a group exam. Groups are all the way through the process of writing the report supported by a supervisor from the teaching team. The combined written and oral form values the student's knowledge, skills and competences to do problem based research in complex contexts in an independent, reflective and knowledge based way. Groups are free to choose the focus of the project-study, but it has to be within the theme of 'Power Relations and Actor Perspectives'. The project must involve a clear reference to the theoretical, methodological, empirical and practical problems of knowledge within the field of study as well as it involves looking at the individual student's and the groups capability to reflect on processes of learning and the academic advancement. The written part counts 50 % and the oral part 50 %. All though the assessment of this module integrates knowledge from module 6 and 8 it represents an independent assessment.



Two representatives from the teaching team – the supervisor and a general marker (participating at all oral exams) – have read the report and participated in the oral defence as well as they have undertaken all marking and comments to students. There was agreement on the range of marks. Students are given an oral feedback together with the mark immediately after the oral presentation and a small discussion among the markers.

The average marking (in the Danish marking-scale) has raised from 7,69 in 2017 to 9,0 in 2018 – and hereby reached almost the same level as in 2016. Students are marked individually, but as the PBL report is written and defended in a group the groups often have the same mark – except from one group in 2017 where two students had the same mark, while the third student had a lower mark. Consequently we often see the average marking changing quite a lot as a very low or high marking in a group of three or four people out of 12 or 13 students influence the average marking heavily. In 2017 one group was marked low – two group members with 4 (D) and one group member with 2 (E). If this group had 7 (C) instead of 4, 4 and 2 the average marking would raise from 7,69 to 8,53.. In 2018 the marks were focused in 10 (B) and 7 (C) with 8 students having 10 (B) and 4 students having 7 (C). Comparing to 2017 there is a big difference as marks in 2017 were spread with 4 students being marked 12 (A), none marked 10 (B), 6 marked 7 (C), two marked 4 (D) and one marked 2 (E). According to the examiners the difference between 2017 and 2018 is a clear picture of the different levels in the two cohorts – and especially that one group – as mentioned above – had a quite low marking (4,4, and 2 (D,D and E).

The examiner feedback shows that many students seem to ‘fall in love’ with their projects and forget to be critical towards their own choices of research methods, literature and theories while the ‘outside critique’ towards social work, organizations etc. is strong and qualified.

As this was also seen in the final research project the ‘inside critical’ element of projects will be strengthened in advances 2.0.

### Comments on the module evaluation by students:

- What did students most enjoy?
- What areas did students identify as needing development?
- What pieces of the qualitative feedback are interesting and useful?

Number of respondents: 8 out of 12 students which is quite low. Students have been reminded several times about the evaluation.

In general the feedback in 2018 is close to the 2017 feedback, but compared to all cohort feedback this is the most positive feedback towards the PBL approach. As one student writes it is when working with PBL in this module he/she really starts to understand and enjoy working in a PBL process – it is brain stimulating as one student puts it referring to the autonomous and group oriented way of working. Also the opportunity to do small scale research is challenging and inspiring according to the feedback.

**Action points for next academic year:**

- What changes are recommended for the module next year?

1. Since 2014 (first cohort) the descriptions of the module, the assessment and practical matters have been qualified through the module Handbook. The Handbook descriptions are an ongoing process. Therefore the handbook is changed throughout the semester whenever needed as well as we will make necessary changes after going through the evaluation where students suggest small changes – please also see the notes from the evaluation meeting with representatives from the cohort below.

2. Besides the Handbook Blackboard has been introduced and used in Aalborg at the spring semester 2015. This is also an ongoing process that will carry on through each semester.

3. As described in the ‘Power Relation and Actor Perspective’ module report information about local traditions and processes is important as students have to get used to systems different from the ones in Lincoln. Therefore the information will be critically looked through and qualified if possible and this also goes for information about assessments.

4. It seems that the PBL teaching, supervision, assessment and working have reached a high level – according to the students’ feedback. By the start of working on the PBL report the students seem ready to start working autonomously and to work with the group processes. The yearly evaluation point out that the same information is adapted differently by different cohorts. Therefore it’s not possible just to do the same at each cohort and we will work on giving the same information in different ways.

5. The critical aspects of choosing research methods, theories and analytic approaches will be emphasized in the future. This will primarily be seen in the Filed Study module – in the future the methodological module – but also as a part of the supervision.

**Are there any specific matters or questions where you would like advice from the External Expert?**

No.

Module coordinators should submit the following information to the External Expert to aid the evaluation of the module:

1. 5-6 marked pieces of student work, including feedback, covering the full range of grades awarded

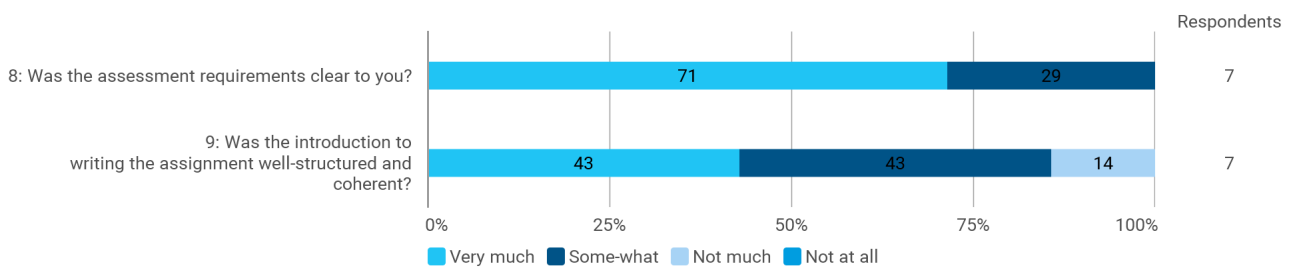
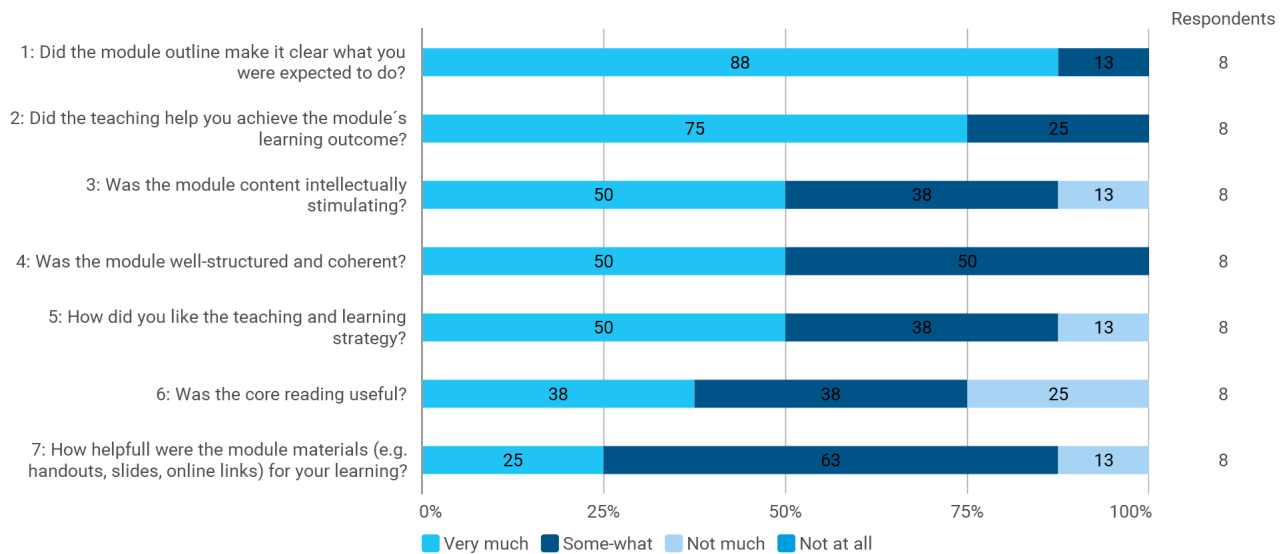




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2. Full list of student marks for the module, including evidence of moderation or double marking
3. Module handbook, giving an overview of the module and teaching and learning; assessment(s) and marking criteria
4. Report by module coordinator, including ideas for changes in the next academic year
5. Summary of the module evaluation by students (see grid below)
6. Any additional relevant materials provided to students, for example, assessment guidance.

## Responses to module evaluation (please highlight most popular response in yellow)



## 10: What did you enjoy during this module?

- The lectures, field visit and the group work
- I enjoyed the freedom of choosing our own topic and the autonomy that followed the investigation and research of this.
- it was challenging as it called for much initiative from me as a student for my own learning.
- to be able to carry out a research on our own
- Defining the problematics based on ethnographic research
- The whole experience of doing the group project. It helps us to collaborate with others and appreciate the different perspectives of the group members.
- Group work

## 11: What did you least enjoy about the module?

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- I found the lectures not very helpful or stimulating
- group work as much as it is part of the PBL approach was not particularly enjoyable



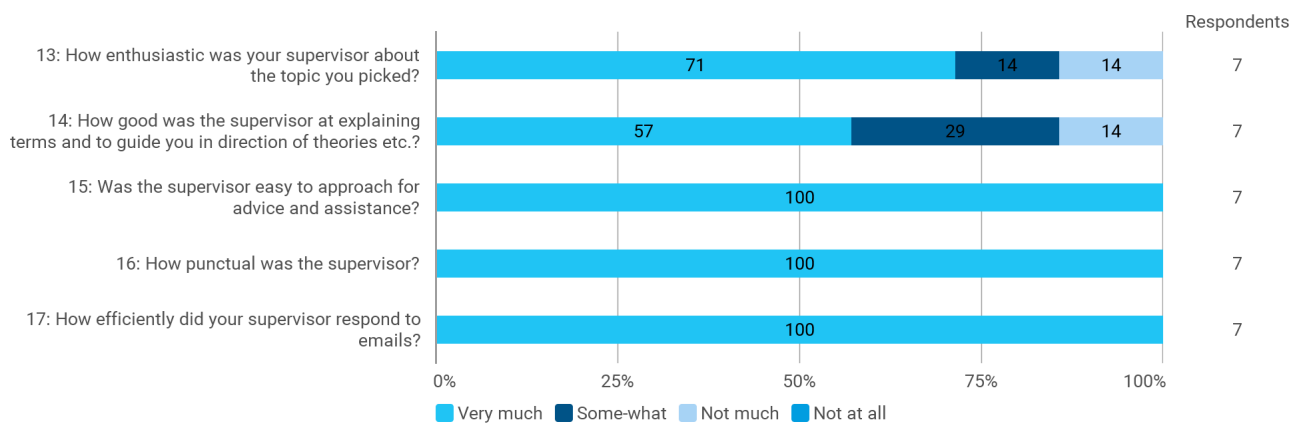


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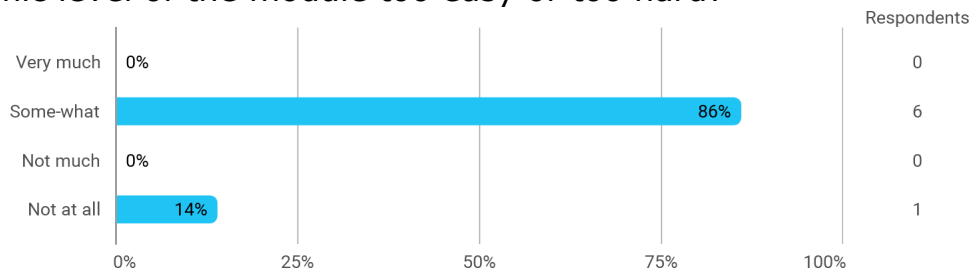
- the lectures introducing the research can be lengthened to deepen students' understandings on it
- n/a
- Perhaps the writing process as writing it coherently with others is a challenge.
- None

## 12: What changes, if any, could be made to improve the introduction to writing the assignment?

- -
- I believe the lectures could be a lot more interactive and stimulating.
- It could be made earlier than it was done.
- N.A.
- n/a
- Perhaps to share the projects of the former students of the program and see how they approach it
- N/a



## 18: Was the academic level of the module too easy or too hard?



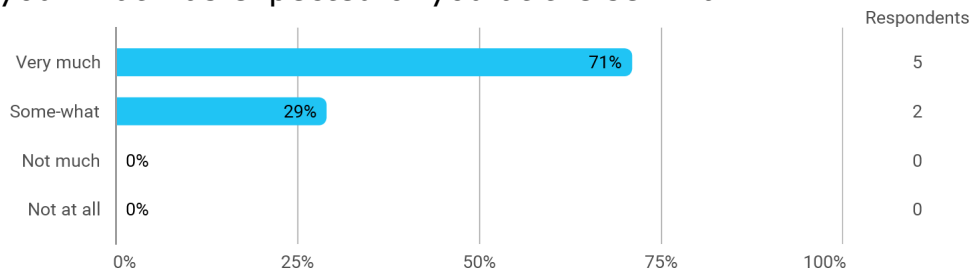
## 18a: Please explain your answer

- It was perfect
- I believe the academic level wasn't too easy or too hard, although some explanations given with regards to the introduction to writing the report seemed complicated, once we were working on it ourselves it was easier to understand and a good challenge.
- it was challenging as we had to find our way through different phases of the project, initiating ideas and engaging in rigorous reading and discussions.
- Conducting a research is somehow new to some of our classmates as it involves many processes.
- Both the instructions and the task were sufficient for the masters level. I didn't see a big gap. It was brain stimulating, and group work was very good chance for understanding the group dynamics and ethics of working in a team, which is very helpful for an international master's student who wants to work in an international community.
- It's challenging I would say. It's my first time to be involved on a group research so it's a bit difficult but exciting
- The module gave us an opportunity to do more research especially on theories

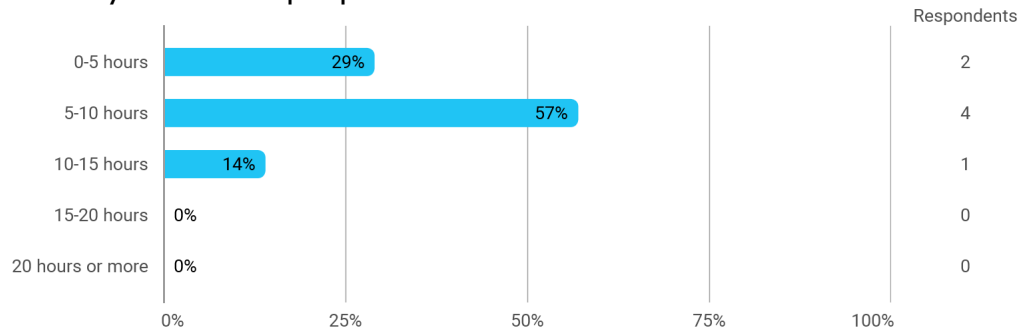




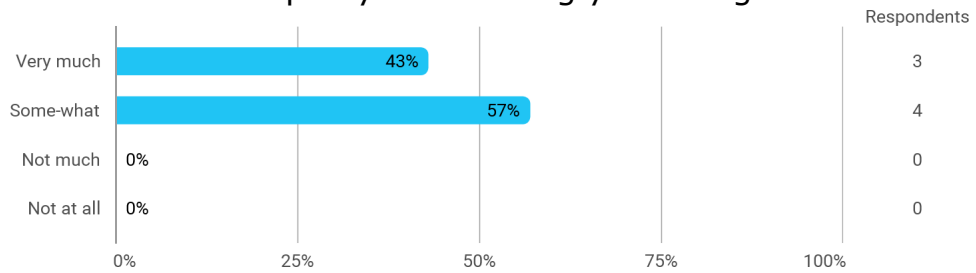
19: Was it clear to you what was expected of you at the seminar?



20: How long time did you use to prepare for the seminar?



21: Did you feel that the seminar helped you in writing your assignment?



21a: Please explain your answer

- The concepts introduced by the lectures and the explanations
- The seminar was extremely beneficial and came at the perfect time in terms of where we were with our research. It gave us different perspectives with regards to our project and helped us to ensure that we had a good grasp of our focus and what we were trying to achieve.
- There were several ideas and feedback suggested on what we had to do. However, somehow there wasn't time to respond to those ideas and perhaps to explain our choices as a group so that the others could have a more clearer picture of what we intended to achieve on our project.
- The feedback from professors and classmates are useful.
- Especially the feedback from other groups was very reflective and helpful.
- The issues raised by the colleagues and professor were discussed and debated by the group before the seminar. So somehow it helped us to focus more on the raised issue and incorporate their suggestions.
- N/a

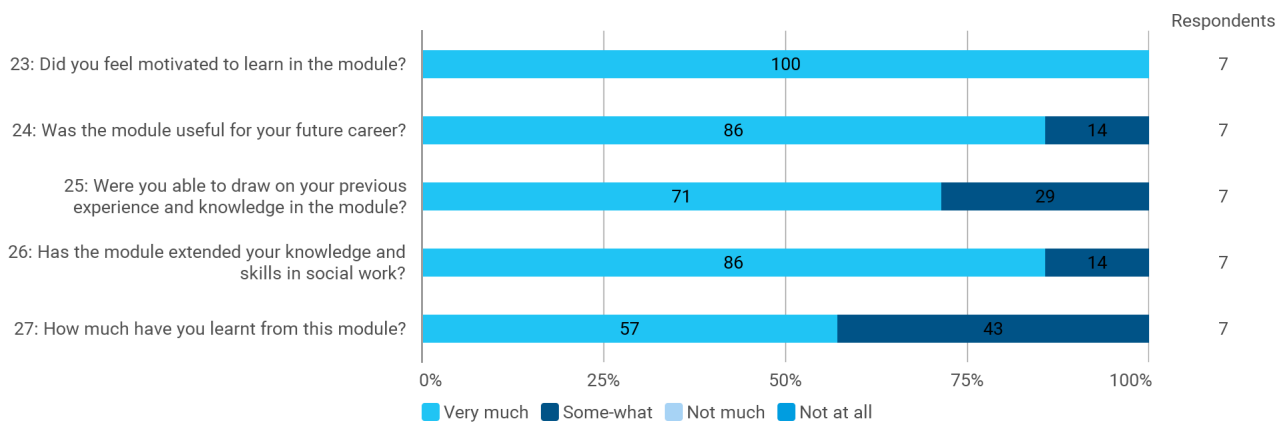
22: What changes, if any, could be made to improve the seminar? Please explain your answer.

- -
- To get feedback from each group, not just one.
- Students if possible should be given an opportunity to respond to feedback and clarify their decisions on their chosen topics.
- To be able to arrange the seminar a bit earlier and the seminar can be used as a platform for discussion instead of merely receiving feedback.
- n/a
- None
- B/a

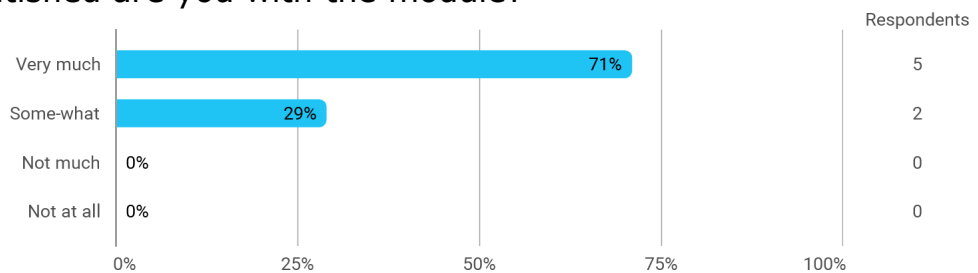




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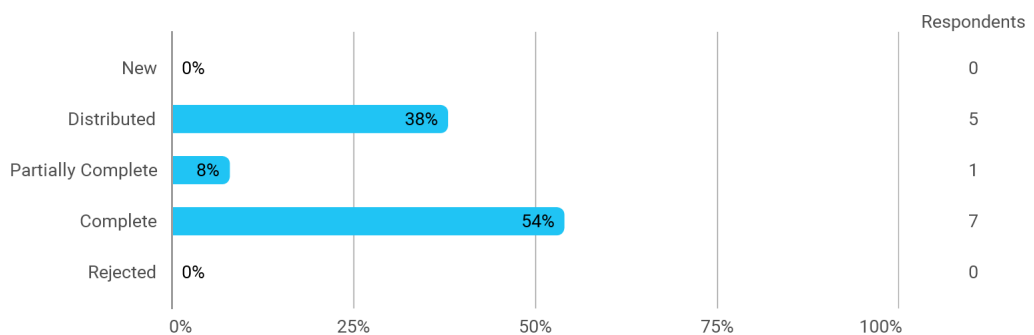
## 28: Overall, how satisfied are you with the module?



## 29: Was the workload for this module acceptable? Please explain your answer

- Yes, was very well structured
- Yes, we were given enough time to complete the work required without too much stress.
- Yes it was. We had good enough time to work on assignments.
- Yes, it is acceptable as we are able to share the workload among our classmates.
- Yes, it was perfectly balanced
- Workload is acceptable but it was a bit of a challenge in coordinating with the research participants' time as we don't control of their priorities. So sometimes we have to wait on their availability before we can proceed with the next process of the research.
- N/a

## Overall Status







## Notes from meeting with students from cohort 5 May 3rd 2018

*Participants:* Duncan Otieno Chando, Arthur Thibaud Adrien Dromard, Respect Farai Mugodhir, Benard Ogwok, Inessa Adilkhanyani, Johanne Kær Berg and Lars Uggerhøj

*Notes:* Lars

The aim of the meeting was to get feedback from students about the Aalborg semester – both content of the program and administrative issues.

The feedback was based on a dialogue between participants.

The following issues were raised and discussed:

Advances students were happy about the co-teaching together with students from the Danish master programme – it gave new and more knowledge about Danish social work and the Danish system, it opened for discussions between students, it gave both Danish and advances students new perspectives on social work as well as it created new friendships between Danish and international students. Friendships have lasted all the way through the semesters – some students meet every Friday.

All though the structure was good and made it possible to get into discussions the days didn't seem to fit into the Danish master programme and traditions. Days were too long for Danish students.

The co-teaching was primarily planned with four lectures in the very beginning and one lecture late in the semester – and this lecture was postponed further. While 35 Danish students participated in the beginning only two participated in the last lecture. All agree that lectures should be placed in the beginning and close to each other.

It could be interesting also to work together on reports/assessments.

Could be interesting to participate in social work activities – seminars, conferences, meetings etc – but a challenge is that most activities are in Danish.

Students would like to celebrate 'World Social Work Day'. Lars will look into this when Advances 2 and cohort 6 has started – and involve students in the planning.

Students miss a short introduction to Danish and practical issues – shopping, using public transport etc. Courses in Danish come late – or students should apply already in the fall semester before arriving in Denmark.

Also the library should be introduced very early.



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Blackboard didn't work in the beginning. Students didn't understand the self-printing task – must be explained better from the very beginning – also the reason why we have this tradition. Students think that everything will be the same way as in UK.

Printing is difficult – need to be introduced on the welcoming day.

There is a contradiction between frames for the PBL report in the lecture plan and in the handbook.

Accommodation is very expensive – and hard to pay for the 6<sup>th</sup> month. On top of that students need to pay for accommodation in France/Poland at the same time. Johanne will talk to international office to see if month 6 could be taken from the deposit paid when writing the contract.

## Marks - Cohort 4 and 5

Cohort 4 – 2017			
Nr.	Field Study	Essay	PBL
1	Passed	10/B	02/E
2	Passed	7/C	12/A
3	Passed	7/C	7/C
4	Passed	12/A	12/A
5	Passed	7/C	7/C
6	Passed	7/C	7/C
7	Passed	7/C	7/C
8	Passed	7/C	7/C
9	Passed	12/A	4/D
10	Passed	10/B	12/A
11	Passed	12/A	4/D
12	Passed	12/A	12/A
13	Passed	12/A	7/C





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Grade point average	Passed	9,38	7,69
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Cohort 5 – 2018			
Nr.	Field Study	Essay	PBL
1	Passed	12/A	07/C
2	Passed	04/D	10/B
3	Passed	07/C	10/B
4	Passed	04/D	07/C
5	Passed	12/A	10/B
6	Passed	04/D	07/C
7	Passed	07/C	07/C
8	Passed	07/C	10/B
9	Passed	10/B	10/B
10	Passed	10/B	10/B
11	Passed	12/A	10/B
12	Passed	07/C	10/B
Grade point average	Passed	08	09