Centre of African Studies  
Employers Panel

Minutes from meeting

**Time:** Monday 7 November 2016, 16.00-18.00  
**Venue:** Centre of African Studies, Købmagergade 46, 4.  
1150 København K., Room 039  
**Note taker:** Anja Mee Foldberg

**Present:** Camilla Torp Olsen, (Programme Coordinator, SOS Children’s Villages, Denmark)  
Steffen Frølund Thomsen (Consultant), Søren Jeppesen (Associate Professor at Copenhagen Business School and chairman of FAU (the Association of Development Researchers in Denmark), Mette Müller Kristensen, (Project Manager, Bestseller Fund), Amanda Hammar (Director, CAS), Kirsten Busch Nielsen (Dean, Faculty of Theology), Carsten Selch Jensen (Head of Studies, Faculty of Theology), Stig Jensen (Chairman of the CAS Study Board) and Anja Mee Foldberg (Administration).

**Appendix:**
- Proposed restructuring of CAS education_NOV 2016
- CURRENT CAS TEACHING STRUCTURE_2016
- Minutes CAS Advisory Board 2 May 2016
- Rapport til Eksternt råd vedr. CAS

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome (Amanda Hammar)
2. Approval of minutes
3. Matters arising
4. Updated overview of developments at CAS (Amanda Hammar, Director of CAS) – discussion – 20 minutes
5. Update of data related to CAS students and Study Programme Carsten Selch Jensen, (Head of Studies) – 15 mins – document attached

6. Feedback from Accreditation panel meetings (Steffen Thompson, Aftagerpanel member, and Stig Jensen, Chair of CAS Study Board) 15 mins – no docs circulated

7. Presentation of developments at Ministry of Foreign Affairs relevant for CAS (Anders Bjørn Hansen, Africa Department, UM) – 10 mins

8. Key focus on proposed restructuring of CAS full-time Masters education: – feedback from panel members requested/open discussion – 15 mins – please see Tables 1 and 2 attached

9. Round Table: any issues to be raised by Aftagerpanel members – 15 – 20 mins

10. Concluding remarks – Amanda Hammar – 5 mins

11. Date of next meeting

1. Welcome (Amanda Hammar)
Amanda Hammer welcomed the present members of the Employer Panel. Anders Garly Andersen replaces Anders Bjørn Hansen as panel member.

2. Approval of minutes
The minutes from the last meeting held on 2. May 2016 were approved.

3. Matters arising (together with item 4.)

4. Updated overview of developments at CAS (Amanda Hammar, Director of CAS) – discussion

Appendix handed out: 3 key challenges for CAS
Amanda Hammer (AHA) updated on 3 key issues and requested the Panel for feedback

1) Reduction in student numbers.

The Student intake 2016 has been lower than allowed by ‘dimensionering’. This might be the consequence of several new competing study programmes such as Global Development (GD) and Advanced Migration Studies (AMS) both at UCPH, and Global Refugee Studies (GRS) at Aalborg University in Kbh, and at the same time very little marketing of CAS’s MA in African Studies until now. This raises the question of how to develop an active promotion campaign for the CAS Masters degree. The aim is to increase the pool of applicants, as well as the quality of applicants.

Steffen Frølund Thomsen (SFT): does CAS collaborate with other study programmes? Can CAS students do credit studies at the other programmes and vice versa?
AHA is in the process of exploring the possibility of collaboration on joint courses with Global Development (GD), which is a co-run/collaborative KU degree involving a number of faculties but coordinated by Social Sciences.

Students from GD have easy access to credit studies, students from Global Refugee Studies (GRS) – run by Aalborg University (in Copenhagen) have normal credit students who can access courses at CAS. CAS-students have access to credit studies at these or other programmes with approval by the Study Board.

Mette Müller Kristensen (MMK): CAS has great promotion possibilities. Agree on 2-3 key messages and do so consistently. Also the cooperation with the Danish army via the Royal Military Academy is unique and should be clear within the CAS profile.

As part of new efforts at marketing, AHA is in the process of contacting alumni to do career track descriptions in order to highlight the many career openings that the MA from CAS can provide. These are to be published on www.teol.ku.dk/cas

2) **Drop-out rates appearing too high**

With low student numbers CAS needs to have high academic quality in student activities such as exams and class participation. AHA wishes to place emphasis on close student mentoring, but this needs an investment of staff resources which has so far proved difficult to prioritise.

Stig Jensen (StJ): CAS needs to attract the right students, of higher quality. This would in itself have a positive effect on study progress as well as drop-out rates.

3) **Slow/low student employment rate**

CAS is going to be working on profiling the students more robustly in terms of their competencies. The development sector has been substantially reduced in recent years which affects employment to some extent. However the CAS candidates have always spread themselves jobwise in all kinds of job sectors.

Søren Jeppesen (SøJ): What are the opportunities in the labour market? With development sector reductions, alternatives should be highlighted in the promotional student profiles.

Camilla Torp Olsen (CTO): It’s a changing study environment as well as a changing labour market. Focus in marketing should be on: How to make CAS sexy? How can I use this degree afterwards?

MMK: The way the education programme is structured is maybe 60% of why people get jobs afterwards. Suggestion: encouragement on both optional courses and thesis – specific theoretical knowledge on something like Corporate Social Responsibility, HIV-AIDS, and so on.

In order to deepen linkages and enhance relevant networks for CAS students, CAS is aiming to work more directly with contacts in Dansk Industri, relevant embassies and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Collaboration possibilities around research projects for Masters theses and other projects could occur for the right students.
5. Update of data related to CAS students and Study Programme  Carsten Selch Jensen, (Head of Studies)

Appendix handed out: 3.2 and 3.3 of CAS Study Curriculum

Carsten Selch Jensen (CSJ) updated the meeting on the summary for Eksternt Råd and requested feedback from the Panel with regard to the competence profile. The competence profile will be updated in Spring 2017 as part of a Study Curriculum update to keep up with accreditation requirements.

As a general comment “interdisciplinary” is used quite a lot. The descriptions could me more specific but still stress that these are broader skills.

AHA: Some things could be tightened and emphasized. Why is only economic development described in detail?

Kirsten Busch Nielsen (KBN): This is exactly the goal, namely to make clearer and more precise the formerly insufficient descriptions of academic profiles, and the restructuring around: Knowledge, skills and competencies The Study Board (SB) is asked to relate to the progression at Masters level from a BA-programme, regarding Knowledge, Skills and Competencies.

SøJ: The descriptions could be linked to profile stories and also a list of possible jobs.

MMK: Agrees with SøJ. Also, the list could include not only where you can work but what you can do at these places in terms of actual skills. Research is not mentioned a lot (as a specialised skill), but should be emphasised.

CSJ: The Study Board will look at it in the next couple of months, as well as looking into the MA programme structure

Graduate survey and unemployment numbers

CSJ: The numbers are uncertain. With such small numbers responding it’s hard to tell who is unemployed and who is not? If Danish students count as employed – but part time only count as partly employed. Foreign students who are entitled to unemployment benefits count. If they leave and don’t take funds they don’t count regardless of employment. In the general UCPH Graduate Survey 90% of international graduates looked for employment in Storkøbenhavn. This could also affect the number negatively as employment is harder to come by for international graduates in comparison with Danish graduates. The Faculty will look into possibilities for career counseling.

Drop-out numbers

CSJ: Also the numbers are uncertain. 1 October is the basis for statistics. There are no legal grounds for ex-matriculation of no-show students prior to 1 October. We don’t have the statistical information on drop outs available

StJ: We have two types of ghost students: the no-shows and the later drop outs (inactive for years). As teachers we can see that there are no class drop outs during the first semester. We have no idea why the drop outs in fact drop out. We need qualitative information about drop outs in order to target or pre-empt the issues i.e. through the mentoring program.
SFT updated on the Accreditation Panel meeting in October. The procedure in an organization like UCPH is complex and needs the input of many people on multiple levels. SFT participated in two meetings at UCPH and the Faculty on accreditation of the quality procedure.

This included a meeting by the International Accreditation Panel with Det svenske videnskabsråd, focusing on 6 audit trails. The process included two preparation meetings. Invitees were asked to be honest. Participating were 5 members of different employer panels focusing on key questions: How we contribute? What we consider the main reason to participate? (this is much the same.) Are we heard? How we consider and use the graduate survey? Is it useful? Do the discussions of Employer Panel go further?

SFT suggested having The Employer Panel as a default point on the Study Board (SB) agenda. Annual report from Employment Panel could support this. The report is an extract of the minutes. Idea: for the SB to qualify the reports and to use them more. Julie Oxenvad prepared these Annual Reports in the past. Maybe look at best practice from other panels. Maybe exchange views in between meetings.

A further question was raised: How to improve Graduate Surveys in terms of response rates? It’s mostly a question of resources.

AHA: The Employment Panel was asked if they would like to have a look at the questions in the Survey? This could be placed on a future agenda. The Employment Panel agrees.

KBN thanked SFT for participating in the Accreditation Panel meetings. KBN left the meeting.

StJ: There has been some exchange of experience between members of the CAS Employment Panel and those from Global Health and Global Development.

On the issue of promoting student profile awareness, in the Nature, Population and Society course, StJ had included presentations on specific topics by four former CAS graduates now employed in the Danish Refugee Council, Danish family planning association, and a PhD at Roskilde University.

We need to expand our minutes from this meeting i.e. on the topic of employability. What have we done? What have we asked? We have to look at the context. It’s difficult to launch our candidates in a ‘frozen’ job market. Each is employed because of individual skills and competencies. This is extremely important. Employment is via personal profiles into jobs. This makes it hard to compare the employability of CAS students directly with other graduates, such as from Political Science.

MMK: CAS could set up a database of different institutions relevant for CAS graduate employment and fieldwork/internship for inspiration.

Anja Mee Foldberg: CAS has an unnoticed LinkedIn Alumni group for this purpose: used for students to look at internship/fieldwork and career courses beyond the 1-3 year structure of the graduate survey.

SoJ: LinkedIn is the right platform: building on connect culture and LinkedIn is self-maintaining, growing over time and will circulate experiences.
AHA- Maybe CAS could get an intern to work more on this? The Employer Panel agrees.

7. Presentation of developments at Ministry of Foreign Affairs relevant for CAS (Anders Bjørn Hansen, Africa Department, UM)
Skipped – not present.

8. Key focus on proposed restructuring of CAS full-time Masters education: – feedback from panel members requested/open discussion – please see Tables 1 and 2 attached

SøJ: It looks promising to accommodate interests in other areas. This needs to be balanced on the admin and economic side of optional courses versus compulsory courses. Allows attention on trends. Some content can come from other parts of UCPH or other universities. Could be utilized.

AHA: The circulated proposal suggests a model that provides/allows a maximum of 3 electives + Kiswahili according to available resources. The question was raised as to whether financial reasons or academic relevance was most important when the Study Board assesses applications by our students for pre-approval of credit studies outside CAS.

CSJ: Relevance is defining. Credit studies might also help with a student’s employment (profile).

SFT: The core courses are the fundament and unique. The optional courses are close to what others offer. What CAS is uniquely good at is to give a broad perspective on how to understand Africa. It’s a double-edged sword whether it’s good to limit core courses in favour of increasing optional courses

CTO: Why is Kiswahili mentioned so much? Kiswahili is only spoken in few countries.

AHA: The teaching of an African Language is quite fundamental within African Studies education: the process of learning a language is not only about the learning of a language itself but about an important encounter with different ways of thinking about another culture (in its broad sense).

CSJ: Is it legal to offer a basic level language course as part of a Masters programme? Resources could also be used otherwise.

StJ: On SB credit approval: Students can get credit if the studies are related to Africa. It’s generally good to revise the curriculum though some problems are related to multiple small ECTS-courses: limitations on exam forms must be taken into consideration. Also it’s hard for new students to choose at the beginning of a study programme what courses are relevant.

SøJ agrees that first semester courses are best to be fixed.

MMK: It has been good to see a draft of what ideas for restructuring the education are being considered and relevant to discuss in the Panel meeting. Relevant to have an optional course in first semester that could build on BA topic. Pleased that economic development is still there: crucial to have knowledge of statistics etc.
AHA: Strong feeling that there is room for a more modular approach to the Economic Development in Africa core course, for example to also include political economy.

The overall revision aims to be implemented in Autumn 2018. CAS is continuing to work on this. The Study Board will need to start working on the process soon, within Spring 2017.

The Panel was asked if it would be willing to provide feedback in the process? The Employment Panel agrees.

9. Round Table: any issues to be raised by Aftagerpanel members

CTO: A well prepared meeting. Nice with documents circulated before meeting.

10. Concluding remarks – Amanda Hammar – 5 mins

On Friday 18. Nov. CAS will host the Farewell to CAS at Købmagergade Party.

11. Date of next meeting

Will be in May. AHA will invite members via a Doodle.