FACULTY OF THEOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

Faculty of Theology Policy for Quality Assurance of Study Programmes

Faculty of Theology

Policy for Quality Assurance of Study Programmes at the Faculty of Theology

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Policy for the Quality Assurance of Study Programmes at the Faculty of Theology

Preface

Quality, quality culture and quality assurance in the Faculty of Theology

The Faculty of Theology provides study programmes at the highest international level within its subject areas. The study programmes are in close contact with the faculty's research environments. The lecturers are academically and pedagogically highly qualified and continue to develop their competencies. Full-time students are presented with academic challenges both during the courses and by independent study. They work in a constructive study and learning environment that facilitates close contact with the researchers. The study programmes are organised in a manner that involves employers and external partners, so that the graduates' competences meet the needs of the labour market.

The study programmes in the Faculty of Theology therefore fulfil the University of Copenhagen's definition of quality of education, and are quality-assured as per the University's overarching standards and guidelines. They are well-planned, demanding, research-based, relevant and quality-assured.

The University of Copenhagen's strategy, and the faculty's development plan set out the overarching strategic objectives for the education area. These objectives serve as guidelines for the development of the study programmes, including the development of new programme initiatives, amendments to curricula, pedagogic initiatives, etc.

The purpose of the Policy for Quality Assurance is to assess the extent to which the requirements for the quality of the study programme are met, and to stipulate methods for quickly and efficiently localising any problems that arise. It is vital for the study programmes' continued development and academic standard that the quality of the individual parts continues to be subjected to systematic checks and critique. This is why regular programme evaluations are conducted and programme reports written. Evaluation is based on the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), along with quantifiable criteria set by the faculty.

The faculty publishes the programme evaluations on its website to present an up-todate picture of the quality assurance of study programmes in the faculty.

However, the quality system cannot replace the most essential element in assuring the quality of education: the faculty's tradition of very close contact between students, lecturers, technical and administrative staff and management. The students' opinions therefore constitute the most important and most reliable instrument for assuring the quality of the study programmes. This contact is formalised by student participation in councils and boards and through regular meetings between the management and student organisations. Even more importantly, it takes place in informal, positive encounters between researchers and students, which are one of the faculty's most important indicators of quality.

Approved by the Dean on 1 October 2017 as the basis for the ongoing work on the faculty's quality assurance policy.

ESG 1.1. Policy and procedures for quality assurance

The Faculty of Theology's goal is to provide research-based study programmes at the highest international level. In order to assure the quality and ongoing enhancement of the study programmes, the faculty has established a series of internal procedures and descriptions, which comply with the frameworks, outlined in the general guidelines and standards in the *Policy for Quality Assurance of Study Programmes at the University of Copenhagen*.

The individual elements of the policy describe relevant procedures and who has responsibility for the individual areas.

1.1.a Indicators of quality of study programmes

The descriptions and procedures stipulate indicators for ensuring the quality of study programmes. Quantifiable standards stipulate when to react to adverse developments, while the allocation of duties and responsibilities stipulates who should do the work. These mechanisms ensure a constant overview of the status of the study programmes and that those responsible have the opportunity to respond consistently to challenges that arise.

The individual quality assurance procedures and the allocation of duties and responsibilities are outlined in *Description of monitoring of the study programmes*.

1.1.b Organisation and management responsibility

The Dean has delegated responsibility for the faculty's internal quality assurance, including drawing up policies and procedures, to the Head of Studies.

The Study Boards play a key role in the quality assurance work. Where deemed appropriate, the sections, centres and the Employer Panel are involved.

The Study Administration supports quality assurance by drawing up reports and providing management information.

The faculty's organisation and its allocation of quality assurance duties and responsibilities are as per *Description of responsibilities for quality assurance in the Faculty of Theology*.

1.1.c Contents of the faculty's procedures

The faculty has drawn up a schematic overview of accountability and of the frequency with which quality assurance procedures are implemented. All those who take part in each procedure are listed.

An overview of quality assurance procedures and responsibilities is contained in *Description of monitoring of the study programmes*.

1.1.d Implementation of the quality assurance policy

The quality assurance policy, as well as the faculty's procedures and descriptions are published on the faculty website under "About the faculty", which also links to the University of Copenhagen website for *Quality Assurance of study programmes*, which contains the UCPH quality assurance policy, procedures and guidelines, as well as study statistics and management information.

ESG 1.2 Approval, monitoring and regular evaluation of programmes and degrees

1.2.a Quality assurance of curricula and course descriptions

Curricula

Drawing up and monitoring curricula is a key element of quality assurance in the Faculty of Theology.

The Dean has overall responsibility for the programmes run by the faculty and for assuring the quality of the study programmes, teaching and interdisciplinary quality enhancement. This is achieved by setting up Study Boards, appointing Head of Studies and approving curricula. At present, the faculty has two Study Boards: the Study Board for Theology and the Study Board for African Studies.

The job of the Study Boards is to draw up proposals for curricula, decide on the range of courses, monitor the quality assurance of the study programmes, including conducting regular reviews and updates to the curricula, and to conduct and process course evaluations according to the faculty's guidelines and evaluation strategy. The Study Boards' proposals for and amendments to curricula are approved by the Dean.

The Study Board for Theology is responsible for drawing up and monitoring:

- the curriculum for the bachelor programme in Theology
- the curriculum for the master's programme in Theology
- the curriculum for the master's programme in Religious Roots of Europe (in English)

The Study Board for African Studies is responsible for drawing up and monitoring:

• the curriculum for the master's programme in African Studies (in English)

The curricula describe the programmes' structure and the order of the courses. They also contain information (in tables) about where the subject elements are usually placed in the programme, their correlation, weekly teaching hours and ECTS credits.

The Head of Studies is responsible for the overall organisation of courses and exams. Based on the Study Boards' discussion of the course evaluations, the Head of Studies is also responsible for the measures deemed necessary to ensure the quality of the courses. A more detailed description of the faculty's procedure in this area is described in *Procedure for the quality assurance and amendment of curricula and course descriptions*.

The Study Board is responsible for aligning the curricula with the qualifications framework, which serves as the basis for all new curricula and changes to existing ones. The curricula include competence profiles, learning objectives and competency goals. They also include assessment criteria and descriptions of the forms of exam. A more detailed description is found in *Procedure for the quality assurance and amendment of curricula and course descriptions*.

Course descriptions

The Study Boards have the overall responsibility for the organisation and range of courses in relation to the provisions in the curricula and the budget frameworks set by the Dean. The Study Board for Theology requests courses from the theological sections. The Study Board for African Studies requests courses from the Centre of African Studies.

The Study Board is responsible for ensuring that the range of courses and the course descriptions meet the curriculum requirements in terms of scope and content.

The sections have academic groups comprising researchers employed in the relevant fields of research, who are responsible for the specific design of the individual subject elements. It is, therefore, the academic group within sections and centres who draw up the range of courses and course descriptions, and determine the content of the teaching within the frameworks of the curriculum. The researchers are predominantly the same ones who teach the courses.

1.2.b Course evaluation

The Faculty of Theology complies with the University of Copenhagen guidelines for course evaluations and has drawn up additional guidelines for this work. The evaluation reports are published on the faculty website, in accordance with guidelines, procedures, the University Act, the Data Protection Act and the Act on Transparency and Openness in Study Programmes. Whenever the Head of Studies considers it necessary, focus group interviews are also held with students, lecturers, external examiners and others about specific academic and administrative questions. A more detailed description of faculty procedure in this area is found in *Procedure for course evaluations and the publication of course evaluation reports*.

1.2.c Annual programme reports

The faculty's prepares annually reports for all study programmes. This is done by the Head of Studies, in collaboration with the Study Boards and Study Administration. The Head of Studies has overall responsibility for the annual programme reports and reports to the Dean. A more detailed description of the faculty's procedure, which is drawn up in accordance with *Guidelines for Programme Reports at the University of Copenhagen*, is provided in *Procedure for annual programme reports and programme evaluation*.

1.2.d Programme evaluations

All of the faculty's study programmes are evaluated every six years by the Head of Studies, in collaboration with the Study Boards and Study Administration. The Head of Studies has overall responsibility for the evaluation of study programmes and reports to the Dean. The evaluation of programmes involves relevant quantitative and qualitative material.

External experts are involved in programme evaluation, contributing to the programme objectives, content and organisation via discussions with students and lecturers in the Study Board and with the Head of Studies for the programme concerned. This work takes the form of dialogue and discussion with the relevant Study Board and Head of Studies about new ideas and perspectives on the programme. A more detailed description of the faculty's procedure in this area, which is drawn up in accordance with *Guidelines for Programme Evaluations at the University of Copenhagen* and *Guidelines for the Selection and Involvement of External Experts in Programme Evaluations at the University of Copenhagen*, is provided in *Procedure for annual programme reports and programme evaluation*.

1.2.e Developing new study programmes

The faculty's development of new study programmes involves the Study Boards, academic groups, the Academic Council, the Employer Panel and Study Administration. The Dean approves new programmes.

The Faculty of Theology complies with the UCPH rules and regulations on *University Procedure for Approving New Study Programmes*, and has drawn up its own *Procedures for developing new study programmes*.

1.2.f Closing and merging of study programmes

The faculty's annual programme report includes deliberations about the closure or merge of study programmes. The Head of Studies is responsible for monitoring and identifying whether a study programme fails to meet the faculty's criteria.

The faculty complies with *Guidelines for the Closure and Merger of Study Pro*grammes at the University of Copenhagen., and has drawn up its own Procedure for the closure and merge of study programmes.

1.2.g Dialogue with graduates

The University conducts a graduate survey for all types of study programme every three years. The Head of Studies is responsible for presenting new graduate surveys to the Study Boards and the Employer Panels for their opinions. A more detailed description of the faculty's procedure in this area is described in *Procedure for dialogue with graduates*.

1.2.h Dialogue with the Employer Panels

The faculty has two Employer Panels linked to its study programmes. One covers the theology programmes and the master's programme on the Religious Roots of Europe, the other one covers the master's programme in African Studies. Head of Studies and chairmen of the Study Boards are responsible for involving the Employer Panels in assuring the relevance and quality of the study programmes. The ongoing dialogue with the Employer Panels consists of the Head of Studies and the chairmen of the Study Boards attending meetings with the Employer Panels, and informing them of discussions about current study-related issues and future initiatives. A more detailed description of the faculty's procedure in this area is contained in *Procedure for dialogue with the Employer Panels*.

1.2.i Involving the Chairmanship of External Examiners

The faculty operates with two Bodies of External Examiners: one for Theology, one for African Studies. The Body of External Examiners includes a number of external

examiners from relevant areas of the labour market (see *Ministerial Order concerning tests and exams on professionally-oriented programmes*). All external examiners must also be graduates of one of the Danish universities. A more detailed description of the role played by the Chairmanship of External Examiners is found in the *Procedure for involving the Chairmanship of the External Examiners*.

1.2.j Erasmus agreements and balance

The faculty monitors new agreements and the balance of incoming and outgoing students under existing agreements. The faculty's International Coordinator is responsible for entering into and extending exchange agreements, in accordance with UCPH's guidelines for *Procedure and Checklist for Entering into and Ending Erasmus agreements*, and annually monitoring the balance between incoming and outgoing students under exchange agreements. Exchange agreements are entered into, renewed and embedded in collaboration with the chairmen of the Study Boards and Head of Studies, who refer to the Dean, as described in *Procedure for monitoring new exchange agreements and the balance in exchange programmes*.

ESG 1.3. Assessment of students

1.3.a Curricula and exam rules

The Study Administration publishes the faculty's curricula immediately after the Dean approves them. The curricula contain information about each of the individual subject elements' exams, e.g. the forms of exam, grading and assessment, and the academic objectives, i.e. what students must do to pass or achieve grade 12.

The Head of Studies, in collaboration with Study Administration and the chairmen of the Study Boards, is responsible for exam planning, including ensuring that exams are held in accordance with the current rules and curricula. The curriculum and the general guidelines for study programmes on KUnet describe in detail the academic objectives, assessment criteria, forms of exam and competency goals. The study pages and staff sites on KUnet contain information about the exam rules, including complaints/appeals and cheating.

1.3.b Exam cheating and plagiarism

The faculty complies with and disseminates the University of Copenhagen guidelines regarding exam cheating and plagiarism: *Disciplinary measures towards students at the University of Copenhagen (the regulations).*

Further information on exam cheating is available on the study sites and staff sites on KUnet, where students are informed about the requirements for scientific honesty and good academic practice, as well as the general procedures that apply when cheating is suspected.

1.3.c Exam complaints and appeals

Students have the right to complain about exam conditions, including matters related to the assessment of written work (e.g. bachelor projects, papers on special topics and theses). This helps to assure the quality of the study programmes. While the exam directly determines whether programmes are on the right academic level, the right to appeal constitutes a more indirect form of quality assurance. The right to appeal also protects the students' legal rights regarding exams. The Exam Order stipulates the legal basis for complaints and appeals about exams during university study programmes. The assessment criteria and exam rules are detailed in the curricula and the general guidelines for the study programmes on KUnet, which also contain information about general exam provisions.

The Faculty of Theology has prepared additional guidance on complaints and appeals for students and staff: *Exam complaints and appeals*. The guide is published on the study sites on KUnet.

A more detailed description of the faculty's procedure in this regard is found in *Procedure for exam complaints and appeals*.

ESG 1.4. Quality assurance of lecturers' competences

1.4.a Vacancy announcements

The Dean decides whether to advertise vacancies after consulting with the head of section or centre, and the Head of Studies.

The Faculty Director is responsible for ensuring that the Faculty of Theology publishes information about all relevant requirements for academic posts, as per the national regulations, the University of Copenhagen HR rules and the UCPH *Common guidelines for teaching portfolios*. Students sit on the appointment committees for permanent academic posts.

1.4.b Pedagogic guidelines

The Faculty of Theology's pedagogic development work is based on the University of Copenhagen's framework for research-based education. The faculty assures sound pedagogic principles for its study programmes via regular evaluations and ongoing discussions in the academic environments. Course evaluations identify priorities for action. The Faculty of Theology's instruments for assuring the appropriate pedagogic level are described in greater detail in *Description of academic appointments, pedagogic guidelines, new and current lecturers' pedagogic skills enhancement, lecturers' academic qualifications and research-based study programmes.*

1.4.c. Pedagogic skills development for new and part-time teaching staff

The Dean has delegated overall responsibility for the introduction of new lecturers to teaching to the Head of Studies and the Heads of centres and sections. The aim is to guarantee that the study programmes are run according to sound pedagogic theory and practice. With due reference to *Policy guidelines for deploying and developing the skills of full- and part-time academic staff at the University of Copenhagen*, The Faculty of Theology has drawn up the *Description of academic appointments, pedagogic guidelines, new and current lecturers' pedagogic skills enhancement, lecturers' academic qualifications and research-based study programmes.*

Prior to each semester, all new lecturers – irrespective of the nature of their appointment – are called in for a short seminar with the Head of Studies about pedagogic and practical issues related to teaching at the faculty. Assistant professors at the faculty must complete the Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Programme as per the *University Guidelines for the Teaching and Learning in Higher Education programme*. Postdocs may be offered a place on the Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Programme. As far as possible, hourly-paid lecturers are offered a short course in university pedagogy upon appointment.

1.4.d. Pedagogic skills development (permanent academic staff)

The faculty provides opportunities for regular pedagogic skills development for all of its lecturers. With due reference to *Policy guidelines for deploying and developing the skills of full- and part-time academic staff at the University of Copenhagen, the Faculty of Theology has drawn up the Description of academic appointments, pedagogic guidelines, new and current lecturers' pedagogic skills enhancement, lecturers' academic qualifications and research-based study programmes.*

The Head of Studies organises regular courses and theme days on pedagogic topics. Associate professors and professors may, if they wish – where it is deemed appropriate and agreed with the Head of Studies and head of section or head of centre – take continuing education courses in university pedagogy. PhD students and assistant professors are offered the chance to take the Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Programme. PhD supervisors are trained as per UCPH *Guidelines for the competency development of PhD supervisors*. Members of the Study Board participate in events connected with the University's pedagogy and didactics programme. Representatives of the faculty's academic staff also take part in various other pedagogic theory- and practice-related activities.

The faculty follows the University of Copenhagen's guidelines for course evaluations and publication of evaluation reports. When it is deemed necessary, the Head of Studies, in collaboration with the relevant head of section and head of centre, can follow up on evaluations by offering lecturers training or other forms of assistance to develop their teaching skills. Further details are contained in *Procedure for course evaluations and the publication of course evaluation reports*.

1.4.e Improving academic qualifications

The individual subject elements are developed by the respective academic groups, which comprise permanent academic staff, and in the case of the theology academic group, student representatives. This ensures that the basis for the teaching is on par with the most advanced research.

The academic staff's ongoing skills development is part of the responsibilities of Heads of section and Heads of centre, and is one of the themes for staff performance and development reviews, at which the range and quality of research activities are discussed. *Description of academic appointments, pedagogic guidelines, new and current lecturers' pedagogic skills enhancement, lecturers' academic qualifications and research-based study programmes.*

1.4.f Research-based study programmes

The Faculty of Theology defines the research base as the impact of research on its study programmes. All subject elements are developed and taught by active researchers, based on the most advanced knowledge in their academic area. The study programmes' content is based on the latest research in the area. The lecturers and supervisors are all active researchers. The research base is reflected in the way in which the study programmes are organised and run. See *Description of academic appointments, pedagogic guidelines, new and current lecturers' pedagogic skills enhancement, lecturers' academic qualifications and research-based study programmes.*

ESG 1.5 Learning resources and student support

1.5.a Study start programme

The faculty's study start programmes are organised by the Academic Counsellor and student counselling and career guidance, in collaboration with the Head of Studies, Heads of centre and the chairmen of the Study Boards. Regular updates are sent to the Study Boards about the planning of the study start programmes. The student counsellors and career guidance staff adhere to the guidelines in the manuals drawn up for the work on study start programmes. The chairmen of the Study Boards and the Academic Counsellor have overall responsibility for the study start programmes. The faculty complies with UCPH's *Guidelines for Introductory Activities*, see *Procedure for study start programmes*.

1.5.b Student counselling and career guidance

The faculty procedure for student counselling and career guidance is designed to ensure that the counsellors provide the Study Boards and Head of Studies with systematically collated and relevant information and knowledge about students, study programmes and careers. The procedure also describes how the faculty incorporates experience and knowledge from the Employer Panels into its student counselling and career guidance. The faculty follows UCPH's *Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Student Counselling and Career Guidance* and describes its own procedures in greater detail in *Procedure for student counselling and career guidance*.

1.5.c Support for learning, student life and physical frameworks

The objectives for student education are laid out in the curricula description of the subject elements' academic objectives and the study programmes' competency goals. The aesthetic, psychological and physical study and teaching environments are examined at three-year intervals across the whole University by conducting a Study Environment Survey (UMV). The results of these are translated into faculty action plans to improve the study and teaching environment. For further details, see *Description of the support for the learning and study environment*.

1.5.d Influence on the study environment and learning resources

Students are involved in the work on the learning and study environment through regular evaluations of the courses and of the study- and teaching environment, and through representation on the Study Boards, Academic Council and theology academic groups. The Study Councils are also consulted on matters and decisions related to teaching and studies in the faculty. The Academic Counsellor attends meetings of the Study Board, the outcomes of which inform further discussion about the quality of study programmes, teaching, the study environment, etc. See *Description of students' involvement in the work with the study environment and learning resources*.

1.5.e Students contact with research

The Faculty of Theology facilitates close and direct contact between researchers and students. The faculty's architecture encourages informal encounters between researchers and students, e.g. classrooms and libraries are located in close proximity to the researchers' offices.

Particularly in externally funded research centres, the faculty strives to link studentoriented activities to its projects, e.g. by running specialist courses of study and advertising supervision for master's theses in the field covered by the research project.

For more details, see *Description of students' contact with the research environments*.

1.5.f Internationalisation

The faculty ensures an international study and research environment by supporting efforts to attract students and lecturers from abroad, providing students with the opportunity to take parts of their study programme abroad and supporting programmes in English. The quality of the internationalisation of study programmes is assured by achieving the objectives for the area, as set out in the faculty's development plan. The faculty's International Coordinator monitors the internationalisation of study programmes and refers to the Head of Studies and the Dean. For more details, see *Description of ensuring internationalisation of study programmes*.

ESG 1.6 Information systems

1.6.a Monitoring of management information

The faculty's study programmes are monitored using management information (qualitative evaluation and statistics), provided by University Education Services and the faculty's own Study Administration. Management information informs discussions and subsequent decisions by Study Boards and programme management related to the ongoing quality assurance of teaching and study programmes. The head of studies is responsible for drawing up action plans and follow-up plans if unacceptable deviations from the faculty's quality standards are identified. For a schematic description, see *Description of monitoring of the study programmes*.

ESG 1.7 Public information

The Faculty of Theology complies with the University's requirements for the publication of a quality assurance policy and it is available on the faculty's website under 'Quality of education' (via 'About the faculty').

Relevant quantitative and qualitative information about the organisation and design of the study programmes is sent to the Study Boards and used by both the boards and the programme management as part of the ongoing process of quality assurance and enhancement of the study programmes.

In accordance with the Act on Transparency and Openness on Study Programmes, the faculty's evaluation strategy and the UCPH requirements for the publication of a quality assurance policy, the faculty publishes the following:

- The quality assurance policy
- Procedures, guidelines and descriptions for quality assurance
- The range of courses and subjects
- The curricula and general regulations for study programmes
- Reports on course evaluations
- Programme evaluations

Overview of procedures and descriptions

- Description of responsibilities for quality assurance in the Faculty of Theology
- Procedure for course evaluations and the publication of course evaluation reports
- Procedure for the quality assurance and amendment of curricula and course descriptions
- Procedure for annual programme reports and programme evaluation
- Procedure for developing new study programmes
- Procedure for the closure and merge of study programmes
- Procedure for dialogue with graduates
- Procedure for dialogue with the Employer Panels
- Procedure for involving the Chairmanship of the External Examiners
- Procedure for monitoring new exchange agreements and the balance in exchange programmes
- Procedure for exam complaints and appeals
- Description of academic appointments, pedagogic guidelines, new and current lecturers' pedagogic skills enhancement, lecturers' academic qualifications and research-based study programmes.
- Procedure for study start programmes
- Procedure for student counselling and career guidance
- Description of the support for the learning and study environment
- Description of students' involvement in the work with the study environment and learning resources
- Description of students' contact with the research environments
- Description of ensuring internationalisation of study programmes
- Description of monitoring of the study programmes (Tables A E)