2019

An Expert committee is to examine the Danish State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme (SU)

March 2019

According to the Danish State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme (SU) a Danish student, who is 18 years old, are entitled to public support in the form of state grants for his or her education - regardless of social standing. Tuition at Danish public and most private educational institutions is free for Danish students, EU/EEA students and for students participating in an exchange programme. All other students have to pay a tuition fee.

However, the Danish government think it is time to examine if the Danish State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme is organized in the most efficient way and encourages the most appropriate study behavior.

Due to this, the government has set up an expert committee with the purpose of examining the State Grant and Loan Scheme. The committee consists of five Danish and international high ranking academics. The committee will among others focus on the State Grant and Loan Schemes impact on:

- Students’ incentive to study
- Study behaviour
- Social mobility
- Educational behaviour among students with physical and mental disabilities
- The number of international students including especially EU / EEA citizens

The expert committee’s studies will include:

- Socio-economic consequences of the State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme
- Comparative studies of other countries Educational Grant and Loan Schemes
- The consequences of potential changes in the State Grant and Loan Scheme

At the end of 2019 the expert committee has to hand in their report to the Danish Government.

For more information (in Danish), please consult the following link: Ekspertudvalg om SU
Regionalisation of Higher Education in Denmark

The Danish government wants a more balanced Denmark - also in the educational area. Due to this, the government has launched a plan for decentralisation and relocation of public workplaces.

Part of the government’s decentralisation plan is to establish 10 new higher education local units the so-called “educational stations”.

All educational stations are located in areas with high labour demand.

The stations are local departments of already existing educational institutions and they are located in towns where the offer of higher education programmes today is non-existent or limited. E.g. because of:

1. Long distances to the nearest higher education institution
2. Few study options and the options available do not meet local demand for qualified labour.

Every station offers one higher educational programme - either an Academy profession (AP) programme or Professional Bachelor’s programme. In total six Academy profession (AP) programmes and four Professional Bachelor’s programmes are offered. The nearest Business academy is responsible for the AP programmes while the nearest University College is responsible for the Professional Bachelor’s programmes.

The government estimates that by 2021 the 10 new educational stations will host 500-1000 students and 80 academic staff members.

In total, the government has allocated DKK 160 million for the stations’ establishment.

For more information (in Danish), please consult following link:

Regionalisation of Higher Education in Denmark

New National Institution for Guidance and Education Choice

In late spring 2018, the Danish Parliament passed an act on a new National Institution for Guidance on higher education and careers (Studievalg Danmark). The act came into force 1 May 2018.

The purpose of the new institution is to provide independent guidance to general and vocational upper secondary education students in their choice of a higher education programme, including expected employment prospects after graduation.

Today seven regional guidance centres are responsible for academic guidance in each of their respective regions. Thus, academic guidance can and do vary geographically.

In the future, the new national institution will ensure a homogenous and consistent content and strategy. However, the regional aspect in guidance is still important, which is why the present seven regional guidance centres are maintained as regional departments in the new institution in order to
provide the necessary flexibility across the regions.

According to the act, guidance on higher education and careers shall take into account how the student's choice of education programme and occupation most effectively benefit the student him or herself and society as a whole. Furthermore, the act states that the guidance institution must:

- Offer guidance to students in upper secondary education or to others who are on their way to qualify to enter higher education in Denmark (sabbaticals ex)
- Offer guidance nationwide and independent of sector and higher education institution interests
- Base their guidance on acknowledged methods and tools.

The National Institution for Guidance on higher education and careers is a state institution and funded by the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science [4].

For more information (in Danish), please consult the following link: Act on the National Institution for Guidance and Education Choice [5]

2017

A new Occupational Master Programme

The Ministry of Higher Education and Science has proposed a reform on an ‘Occupational Master Programme’ (erhvervskandidatuddannelsel). The aim of these programmes is to strengthen the interaction between the labour market and higher education to the benefit of the student as well as the business world.

The main principles of the reform are:

- An Occupational Master Programme is a four year long, part time master programme of 120 ECTS (like the full time master programmes).
- A student admitted to an Occupational Master Programme must at the same time have a relevant employment of 25 hours a week. Alternatively the student can be an entrepreneur working for his or her own company. The recruitment for this employment or entrepreneurship must be based on the student’s Bachelor degree.
- Students on an Occupational Master Programme do not pay fees.
- Students on an Occupational Master Programme cannot receive state grants.
- Only Universities and Higher Education Institutions within Fine Arts can offer Occupational Master Programmes.
- The right of the institutions to offer a specific Occupational Master Programme is based on the approval of Ministry of Higher Education and Science.

The reform is introduced as a pilot scheme. The Minister of Higher Education and Science can approve a maximum of 20 different Occupational Master Programmes. The programmes are to be developed and are at present not known.

The implementation of the reform requires a change of the present legislation, i.e. The University Act (Universitetsloven), by the the Danish parliament. The change will become effective in January 2018, thus the first Occupational Master Programmes can start in September 2018.
The government proposes a reform of higher education funding

In Denmark state grants amount to approximately 80 per cent of HEIs’ total funding. Today the taximeter system is the primary appropriation model for distributing state-funding of higher education.

In May 2017 the government presented a new appropriation model for the state-funding of higher education in Denmark. The new appropriation model will replace the present taximeter system. The state-funding system of the universities research activities is not affected.

The development of the model started in 2016 and has involved an intense dialog with and contributions from the higher education institutions (HEIs) and other stakeholders.

The intention behind the reform is to strengthen the HEIs’ focus on the quality of their education programmes and increase their focus on the newly qualified graduates’ transition to the labour market.

The new model consists of three types of grants:

- **A basic grant** providing 20 per cent of the state-funding: An activity-level independent basic grant in order to support the strategy of each institution. A basic grant will be fixed for a number of years, i.e. four years. When fixing the basic grant the type, size and positions of the HEI will also to be taken into consideration. The reason for this being that the rate of the fixed grant is a compensation for their relatively higher unit cost.

- **An activity grant** (providing 70 per cent of the state-funding): An activity-dependent grant in order to maintain an incentive for the HEIs to educate as many students as possible. The number of activity grant rates will be reduced from the present 49 to 10 different rates and the lowest activity grant rates will be increased.

- **A quality and performance grant** (providing 10 per cent of the state-funding): A quality and performance grant focusing on the HEI’s educational quality. The calculation of the grant is based on the students’ completion time, and the employment rate for recent graduates.

The new appropriation model for HEIs is planned to be come into force in 2019, but there will be a transition period of three years before the model is fully implemented.

For more information (in Danish), please consult the following link: Better educations and more autonomy to the institutions with new reform [8]

Strengthening of the framework for the management of universities

In June 2017, the government, the Social Democrats and the Danish People’s Party agreed on strengthening the tools for management of universities in Denmark. The agreement was implemented by an amendment of the Act on Universities (Universitetsloven).

The purpose of strengthening the framework for the management of the universities is to reduce the need for the present detailed regulation of the universities. The parties behind the agreement and the
act agree that the possible challenges primarily should be solved by the universities themselves in a dialogue with the Ministry of Higher Education and Science.

The agreement and act is based on the following elements:

- A clarification of the role and responsibilities of the university boards, i.e. the board has the overall responsibility and strategic management of the university.
- The external board members are appointed on the basis of their personal qualifications which must reflect the purpose of the university and includes knowledge of research, research based programmes, organisation, management, and economy including knowledge of budgeting and accounting. The chairman of the board must also have significant experience in strategic management from a large company or organisation.
- Each university has a body in charge of the appointments of the external members of the university board. The body of appointments acts on the basis of the recommendations of a body of nomination. The aim is to secure transparency in the nominations and appointments.

The ongoing dialogue between the university boards and the Minister of Higher Education and Science is to be strengthened, i.e. at least two times a year, the minister will meet with the chairmen of the boards. Furthermore, new framework contracts will replace the universities’ current development contracts.

For more information (in Danish), please consult the following link: Strengthened framework for management [9]

**A new and more flexible political agreement limiting second degrees in higher education**

In January 2017, the government, the Social Democrats and the Danish People’s Party entered into a new political agreement regarding the limitation of second degrees in higher education. The agreement, which allows for a more flexible approach than the original agreement from November 2016, is to ensure that young people choose their education wisely.

Contrary to the previous agreement, the new agreement makes it possible for a student to enroll at more than one educational programme on the same or a lower level provided that it has been six years since the completion of the initial degree. In contrast to the previous agreement, the new agreement furthermore creates better opportunities for lifelong learning by making it easier for people to change their career paths and by giving people more freedom in their educational choices.

The agreement contains several key elements:

- The new agreement still limits the occurrence of second degrees within the first six years of a student’s completion of the initial degree.
- Exemptions can be granted on health grounds or if a student’s initial degree is outdated within the six years following the completion of the degree.
- Exemptions can also be granted if a student wishes to enroll at an educational programme listed on the “Positive List” – a list consisting of a number of professions which are currently experiencing a shortage of qualified professionals and therefore are exempted from the agreement. The list, which at present consists of 24 educational programmes, is revised every second year.
- The agreement concerns fully state-financed higher education programmes under the auspices
of the Ministry of Higher Education and Science. Educational programmes, such as e.g. vocational education and training, which are under the auspices of other ministries, are not affected by the agreement.

- It is still possible for a student to complete a degree at a higher level than the initial degree; to continue his/her education within the area of Adult Education and Continuing Training, and to obtain support for studies abroad.

For more information (in Danish), please consult the following links:


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