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Lifelong learning in relation to the Bologna process at University of Copenhagen, Denmark

BeFlex visit by Ebba Ossiannilsson, Lund University, Sweden 070112.

The visit resulted into some changes in the answers of the questionnaire, which has been reviewed.

University of Copenhagen (UC) representatives who participated in the meetings: Philip Sønderberg, Head of Section, Competence Unit; Tanya Schwartz, Head of Section, Competence Unit and Anita Lindquist, Head of Section, Faculty of Humanities.

University of Copenhagen is the largest institution of research and education in Denmark and in Scandinavia. The purpose of the University – to quote the University Statute – is to 'conduct research and provide further education to the highest academic level'.

Approximately one hundred different institutes, departments, laboratories, centres, museums, etc., form the nucleus of the University, where professors, lecturers and other academic staff, as well as most of the technical and administrative personnel, carry out their daily work, and where teaching takes place.

These activities take place in various environments ranging from the plant world of the Botanical Gardens, through high-technology laboratories and auditoriums, to the historic buildings and lecture rooms of Frue Plads and other locations.

The first of January 2007, the University merged with The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University and The Danish University of Pharmaceutical Sciences. The two universities will become faculties under the University of Copenhagen. Together, the eight faculties offer over 200 programmes for study in health sciences, humanities, law, life sciences, pharmaceutical sciences, science, social sciences, and theology.

The University aims to prepare students for a broad range of jobs in the private and public sectors. For this reason, education at the University covers specific skills and scientific methods as well as other more theoretical skills that will enable graduates to improve their qualifications. Teaching and research are closely integrated in order to achieve this, first and foremost by according them equal importance in the daily work of the academic and scientific staff and whenever possible basing the teaching on research.

The University of Copenhagen offers several degrees of education in a variety of subjects. The degree structure is divided into three levels. Three years of undergraduate studies lead to a bachelor's degree, and an additional two years lead to a master's degree. Only the structures of the theological, medical and dentistry degrees differ from this model. Most of the masters degrees obtained from the University of Copenhagen can be extended with three more years of postgraduate work leading to a PhD degree.

University of Copenhagen has to a large extent implemented the goals of the Bologna declaration. Most of the implementation is a consequence of new laws incorporating the elements of the Bologna Process. Denmark is a signatory of the Bologna Declaration. Denmark had already introduced a two-cycle degree structure from the end of the 1980s, and legislation adopted in 2003 and 2004 made it mandatory in all study programmes. The use of ECTS has been mandatory since 2001, and the Diploma Supplement since 2002.

There is not any special Bologna promotor at UC, but in Denmark as country there are two Bologna promoters which the University as such co-operate with. In september 2005 the new study degrees for BA was implemented and the Master levels will be implemented in 2008.

The Bologna process has been the underlying inspiration to the changes and modernisation of the university sector in Denmark. The greatest benefits are the paradigm shift, the new way of thinking on education and LLL, transparency in the educational system, quality aspects and control. It has to be mentioned here that Denmark as all the Scandinavian countries, always has been very keen and for long time has had strategic development processes and actions concerning Human Resources, as people are seen as the most important resources in the country.

The strategy of the university does not hold a specific Lifelong Learning Strategy. The universities contribute to lifelong learning in Denmark by providing continuing education courses and programmes to adult learners. The continuing education strategy aims at developing new courses build on research where the university has strongholds.

At the moment the university offers 19 master programs for adult learners/working professionals, more than 100 different BSc and MSc courses, summer courses and short tailor-made courses for the public and private sector.

In the period 2006-2008 the university has a 25% increase in continuing education as a development aim.

How far has the Bologna process been implemented?

Denmark (incl UC) has been one of the first countries in Europe to start developing Bachelor and Master programmes according to the Bologna process, due to their law changes already in 2003. The Faculty of Humanities has been one of the leading Faculties at the University to work with and implement the Quality Framework (this work will be described in a special case for BeFlex from UC). This work seems to be worked out with highest carefulness and within democracy among the Faculty. Similar approaches is being implemented at the other faculties.

A new bill about adult education is being processed by the Ministry of Education which, among other things, holds aspects of recognition of prior learning. If the bill passes parliament universities are obliged to recognise prior learning to a larger extent than recognition of prior higher education.

Structure and organisation of UCE/LLL activities

The continuing education activities are developed at a faculty level. At a central level the activities are supported by the competence Unit. The Competence Unit consists of two people working with support, guidance and strategic development for the whole university.

Specific issues at the UC

The strategy deals with, among other things, the three main challenges we face in the years to come: Basic research as the trade mark of the University, Quality in our study programmes and Internationalisation and the University of Copenhagen as a Danish world university.

Denmark has always, as all the Scandinavian countries, due to get people employable and to get people adapted to the labour market invested a lot in education and investment in the Human Capital, people.

The Bologna process is an important underlying fundament for the internationalisation because it creates the necessary transparency, both within the University but mainly for international co-operation. Another issue is multidisciplinary co-operation. Furthermore there are expectations such as recruiting more international students, both from Europe but also world wide. Other issues are expectations as free mobility in education and in the labour market.

More outreach activities are expected. The University has just established an alumni. New external advisory boards are being established in connection to all academic and research areas and in general there is high focus on creating external cooperation and connections with society and business.

The expectations are that the increased outreach will give new possibilities for creating more scope and scale in the offered continuing education both to the national and international market.