

Minutes of meeting

Subject:	IGT Department Council	15 December 2025
Date and time:	9 December 2025, 13.00 – 15.00	
Location:	Tesla	
Participants:	Jens Ejbye Schmidt (JESC) Henrik Karring (HKA) Vahid Karimi (VAK) Shuang Ma Andersen (MASHU) Martin Aage Barsøe Hedegaard (MARHE) Christina J. Birke Rune (CJBR) Simon Svane (SIMS) Kathrine Lynge Wiingaard (KALW) Marie Lykke Diget (MLD) Maiken Helene Vestergaard Pedersen (MHP)	mkh@igt.sdu.dk T +4565509672
Guests:	Mathias Porsmose Clausen (MPC) Knud V. Christensen (KVC) – participation in agenda item 3	
Cancellation from:	Jasper Lorens Betton (JLB) Hossein Nami (HON) Raghunandan Sharma (RASH)	
Minutes:	Mette Kornelia Hansen (MKH)	

Agenda:

1. Approval of the agenda
2. Introductory remarks and messages by the chairman
3. Follow-up on input from student representatives concerning jobs and internships
4. Economy, incl. status of budget approval for 2025-2029
5. New overhead scheme at SDU
6. New potential educational programmes at the department
7. Result of inclusion survey for the department
8. IGT Strategy and Mission – update
9. Welfare and working environment at IGT (fixed point)
 - Update on enhanced departmental collaboration following JESC's presentation on initiatives at the August 28 IGT Long Coffee Meeting
See attached slides from the August meeting
 - IGT Welfare Committee

10. IGT Student Club (fixed point)
11. Planned future recruitment at IGT (fixed point)
12. AOB, incl. next meeting

Ad. 1

Approved.

Ad. 2

KVC participates in this meeting for agenda item 3.

Ad. 3

Sometimes students struggle to see the relevance of their studies in the first years. This can make it hard to stay motivated and can potentially have a contributing impact on the number of drop-outs.

More exposure to real-world company environments - through visits, lectures, and presentations - could help students connect their coursework to future job and motivate them to continue. Also, early exposure to companies can help students better understand potential career paths after graduation. KVC supports company visits and informs that information about internships is already available to students and are shared on ItsLearning. However, compiling a comprehensive list of relevant jobs for graduates has proven challenging, despite efforts to track where former students are employed.

Many details about student projects and internships cannot be shared because of non-disclosure agreements (NDA), limiting transparency and information sharing.

While lists of companies involved in past student projects can be provided, detailed contact information and specifics about the work can often not be made available because of NDA's and GDPR.

7th semester students who have finished their internship could be invited to give presentations on their experiences during their internships. This could be done via the IGT Student Club. KVC is willing to help with this as being the department's internship coordinator.

A suggestion was made for companies to give two-hour presentations, but non-disclosure agreements can sometimes limit the information that companies are able to share.

Ad. 4

The department's budget has been approved for the next five years, and the overall economic situation is good. However, there is concern about the reliability of projections for externally funded projects.

Historically, units have expected large increases in external funding, but actual growth has averaged only about 10% per year. This has led to significant discrepancies between optimistic forecasts and actual results.

There is a need for more reliable and realistic budgeting, suggesting that either projected increases should be limited (e.g., to 10%) or that units should be required to provide more accurate figures. Challenges include delays in project progress and hiring, sometimes due to difficulties in recruiting qualified candidates, and the complexity of adjusting budgets during the year when projects are postponed or funds are moved between years. There are also issues with co-financing and resource allocation, such as technician availability and infrastructure needs, which can impact project execution and funding eligibility.

Suggestions included adopting more conservative estimates, improving internal budgeting processes, and enhancing communication with TEK Economy to address frustrations and delays. The council agreed that while optimism is important, more realistic planning and regular follow-up are needed.

The discussion focused on strategies to enhance planning, budgeting, and overall project success rates, as well as future methods for allocating laboratory space, particularly in relation to the recruitment of new staff members.

Concerning frustration related to TEK Economy

If you experience issues (e.g. long answering time etc.) please speak to the TEK Economy person who is responsible for the unit – otherwise inform JESC and he will follow-up.

Ad. 5

The new overhead scheme at SDU involves increasing the share of external funding that faculties must contribute to cover central administration costs. Instead of drawing from base funding, the university now requires faculties with more external projects to pay higher overheads, which are intended to support strategic investments in research environments. However, this change raises several concerns:

- **Financial Uncertainty:** Faculties may have less money available, and it is unclear if or when the funds paid as overhead will be returned, especially if priorities or leadership change in the future.
- **Redistribution of Power:** The scheme shifts financial control from researchers and units to central administration, which some see as problematic for academic freedom and local decision-making.
- **Complexity and Transparency:** The process for calculating and allocating overheads is complicated, and there is a lack of clarity about how and when money flows back to units or researchers.
- **Impact on Research Infrastructure:** Units must now budget for significant overhead costs when applying for large infrastructure grants, which could limit flexibility and hiring capacity.
- **Concerns about Fairness:** There are questions about why the overhead rate is set at 20% and not lower, and whether the system is fair compared to practices at other universities.
- **Academic Council Involvement:** It is recommended that any discussion or challenge to the scheme should go through the Academic Council, as the changes affect the broader academic environment and researcher autonomy.

Overall, while the scheme aims for simplicity, it may reduce transparency and local influence over resources, and its long-term effects on research and staffing remain uncertain.

Ad. 6

The department is considering updates and new directions for our educational programmes. Currently, there are bachelor, diploma, and master's degrees in Chemical Engineering, Biotechnology, and Environmental Engineering. One working group is exploring whether to maintain a single education with two tracks, or to split into separate programmes to better attract and serve students. There is also discussion about introducing an international bachelor's programme for Environmental engineering.

Key points include:

- **Student Input:** Before making changes, the department aims to gather feedback from current and potential students to understand their preferences and needs.
- **Student Outflow:** There is concern about many students from Southern Denmark choosing other universities, possibly due to more attractive programmes elsewhere.
- **Programme Structure:** Some students value the combination of chemical and biotech subjects, while others might prefer more specialized tracks. The possibility of allowing specialization through elective courses is discussed, but resource constraints limit the number of electives offered.
- **Dropout Rates:** The department is aware of a high dropout rate (around 50%) and is considering whether programme structure or specialization options could help retain more students. However, it is difficult to get feedback from those who leave.
- **Internationalisation:** There is interest in launching an international bachelor's programme for environmental engineering, but the department notes that competition is high and there are limits on admitting students from outside the EU. Internationalisation brings both opportunities and challenges.
- **Implementation Challenges:** Major changes, such as creating new programmes, would take several years to implement and require approval. Adjustments to the curriculum are easier and have been done before.

The working group had a meeting with Thomas Skjødeberg Toftegaard, Director of Education, 3 December and will come up with suggestions before Christmas.

Also, LCE is considering changing the name "Environmental engineering" to a more accurate name. No final decision has been made yet.

Input from students MLD and MHP concerning the consideration of changing the educational programmes at IGT (one or two tracks):

- They believe that the current combination is really good due to the combination. We might lose potential students if we decide to divide the programmes. They suggest that we stick to our current structure - one education but with the possibility of specializing. The students request more electives. JESC acknowledges this request

and says that we may have cut too much in the number of electives but emphasizes that it is very cost-demanding.

Continuous updates will be provided regarding the progress of potential program reorganization efforts.

Ad. 7

Inclusion Survey

The results of the recent inclusion survey were briefly discussed. While some areas showed improvement and others declined, the results are difficult to compare directly with last year because the questions have changed. While detailed results cannot be shared, they will provide useful insights for the IGT Leadership Group to identify areas for improvement. Also, the IGT Working Environment Group (AMO) has already identified certain problem areas.

The survey results will be presented at an IGT Coffee Meeting 7 January 2026.

Ad. 8

A new mission statement for the department has been developed and reviewed to ensure inclusive and unbiased language. The draft received positive feedback from the SDU GET Team and has been incorporated into an updated departmental strategy document (December version). The document has been uploaded to our IGT Teams site.

The next step is for each unit to develop its own "mini mission," with the aim of finalizing these in the spring. The updated strategy and mini missions will be presented to faculty leadership, as there is interest in understanding how departmental strategies align with the TEK and SDU Strategy.

Ad. 9

Departmental collaboration

An update was provided on efforts to enhance collaboration within the department. Heads of units have been asked to reach out to staff, especially those involved in past conflicts, to assess whether any issues remain unresolved or if further action is needed. No feedback indicating outstanding issues has been received so far.

The approach of addressing sensitive matters in smaller groups rather than large meetings was discussed and generally supported. Some staff noted that recent initiatives were new to many, particularly postdocs, and in some cases led to confusion or concern about expected behavior.

It was agreed that not all topics need to be discussed in open forums, and targeted follow-ups are important to ensure progress. Overall, the experience with smaller group discussions has been positive, but ongoing follow-up and time investment are necessary to maintain momentum and address practical matters as they arise.

Recent conducted GRUS interviews with all IGT staff groups has led to a range of valuable reflections and insights. Having implemented the GRUS interviews require close follow-up from JESC' side, which is quite time-consuming.

IGT Welfare Committee

Most recently, the committee has helped with the preparation of our IGT Christmas Event 4 December.

On 15 December JESC will have a meeting with the Committee to discuss a new challenge related to the lack of office space at TEK. We need to make our use of the IGT Coffee Room even more efficient to prevent the room from being taken and instead used for offices or group rooms for students.

MPC highlighted that TEK generally does not have a dedicated space for socializing, which negatively affects staff well-being. OHM is not an attractive room, and it is only available during lunchtime.

JESC recognizes the lack of a place to socialize at TEK during the day and points out that this contributed to the original decision to allocate the IGT Coffee Room.

JESC will discuss the above issues with the IGT Welfare Committee.

Ad. 10

IGT Student Club

The students report lots of activity in the student club. New students will be taking over when the current responsible students are on internships next semester.

Ad. 11

Planned future recruitment at IGT (only base funding):

SDU CHEM

- Half time position to support teaching (1.2.2026) - Juan
- Lab Technician (1.4.2026)
- Special Consultant in Electrolysis (1.4.2026) - Raghunandan
- DIAS Fellow within Chemical Engineering (1.6.2026) - one or two
- Assistant / Associate Professor in Chemical Engineering (1.6.2026)

SDU BIO

- Lab Technician (1.2.2026)
- DIAS Fellow within MedTech – ERC Starting Grant

SDU LCE

- Extension of Postdoc (1.1 – 31.3) – Rowayda
- Assistant Professor in Biotech (1.4.2026) – Rowayda – paid 50% of external funded project
- DIAS Professor – Zhanyun Wang (1.3.2026)
- Professor – Andrea Hamilton (1.4.2026)
- Position for Lars Yde (Associate Professor) - one year at the time (1.3.2026)

Ad. 12

Next semester MLD and MHP are doing internships and are therefore unable to join the two meetings in the IGT Department Council. Our student alternate is also doing internship and is therefore unable to step in.

It was agreed that MLD and MHP reach out to fellow students and ask them if they are interested in joining the council for the upcoming 2 meetings in spring as observers/guests.

They will report back to MKH with an update.

Next meeting: 18 February 2026, 13.00 – 15.00 (Meeting Room “TEK Tesla”)

Agenda items are welcome at mkh@igt.sdu.dk.