Memo

Institut for Statskundskab

Title:	Principles for allocation of teaching assignments	11.10.2026
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Status:	Internal use	

Background

The allocation of teaching assignments runs more smoothly than in the past, as the process has been streamlined over the last few years. Recruitment, resource optimisation, and a reformed norm system have led to a declining surplus of norm hours and fewer shortages in teaching capacity.

However, the allocation of teaching assignments continues to involve dilemmas and challenges that cause dissatisfaction among both staff and management. Some staff members have a substantial surplus of norm hours, while others have large or increasing deficits. This is undesirable from both an employee and a management perspective.

To address these challenges, this document sets out a number of overarching Principles for allocation of teaching assignment. The expectation is that these principles will contribute to a more balanced and transparent allocation of the Department's teaching assignments.

Going forward, the principles will be applied by centre/group leaders in collaboration with the Vice Head of Department and the Department's education team. In the event of disagreement regarding a specific teaching assignment, the Vice Head of Department will make the final decision following consultation with the relevant centre and group leaders.

The principles will be implemented from January 2027. Department staff will be informed prior to implementation.

This document does not address a possible revision of the process for allocating teaching assignments itself. Any discussion of this will depend on future changes to the educational management structure and will therefore be addressed at a later stage.

Principles

Teaching at the Department of Political Science is a shared responsibility across the Department's educational programmes.

All academic staff are expected to contribute to the Department's overall teaching portfolio and to provide high-quality teaching. This means that staff may also be

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11.10.2026

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assigned teaching responsibilities that do not fall entirely within their specific research areas or fields of expertise.

In collaboration with the study boards, heads of studies, and course coordinators, the Department management may prioritise specific areas of teaching that are considered strategically important to the Department and its educational programmes.

The allocation of teaching assignments must be transparent, and staff should, as far as possible, be involved in planning their teaching responsibilities.

Based on these considerations, teaching assignments are allocated according to the following principles:

1. Academic profile
2. Norm hour balance
3. Language skills
4. Continuity in teaching

The four principles should be considered together and are not listed in order of priority. The allocation of individual teaching assignments is therefore based on an overall assessment of all four considerations, while ensuring the academic and pedagogical quality of the teaching.

Elaboration of the principles

Academic profile means that teaching assignments should, as far as possible, be allocated to staff with relevant academic expertise. At the same time, staff are expected to contribute to teaching beyond their specific research specialisation when necessary to meet the Department's overall teaching needs.

Norm hour balance means that teaching assignments should be actively used to reduce significant imbalances in staff members' norm hour accounts. Staff with a deficit of norm hours may be assigned teaching responsibilities outside their primary area of expertise. In such cases, the Department will provide relevant academic support and opportunities for professional development.

Language skills are also taken into account when planning teaching assignments. Over time, staff are expected to be able to teach in both Danish and English in accordance with the Department's language policy. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department, in collaboration with the relevant centre/group leader and the Vice Head of Department, to ensure that this is achieved.

Continuity in teaching means that staff who have developed or taken over teaching on a new course should, as a general rule, have the opportunity to teach the course several times, typically up to five times in total. The purpose is to support academic and pedagogical development, ensure continuity, and enable staff to benefit from the experience they build over time.

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Guidelines for balancing norm hours

To support a more balanced distribution of teaching assignments, the following guidelines apply:

1. Staff with a surplus of more than 1,000 norm hours should, as a general rule, be given the opportunity to reduce this surplus through adjustments to their teaching assignments. Once the largest surpluses have been reduced, the Department aims to gradually reduce surpluses exceeding 750 norm hours.
2. Staff with a persistent or increasing deficit of norm hours can expect particular attention to be given to restoring the balance through the allocation of relevant teaching assignments. When assessing a deficit, both its size and development over time will be taken into account, as well as the circumstances that have contributed to it.

Follow-up on teaching quality

Teaching quality is an independent consideration in the Department's teaching planning.

The Vice Head of Department has overall responsibility for monitoring teaching quality and ensuring appropriate follow-up and support for individual staff members. This is done in dialogue with the relevant Head of Studies or Programme Coordinator, as well as the relevant centre or group leader.

In cases where teaching evaluations fall below 3.0 (either for the course overall or for the individual lecturer), or where significant or repeated concerns are raised by students, a case-by-case assessment will be made of the need for follow-up.

Where relevant, a dialogue will be initiated with the staff member regarding potential challenges and the need for academic or pedagogical professional development. This may, for example, involve a programme offered by SDU Centre for Teaching and Learning (SDU UP) or a mentoring arrangement with an experienced lecturer.

The Vice Head of Department is responsible for initiating this process and ensuring appropriate follow-up.