

Memo- randum

Title: Background for the distribution of SDU's master's degree places of 120 ECTS among the faculties as a consequence of the master's degree reform

Status: Internal

As a result of the master's degree reform, the universities must restructure their master's degree programmes so that in 2032, 30% of the master's degree students will be admitted to master's degree programmes of 75 ECTS and master's degree programmes for working professionals. As part of the realisation, a dimensioning of the number of students that the universities may admit to master's degree programmes of 120 ECTS (full-time) per year will be introduced. The cap will be introduced gradually from 2028, from which point the new types of master's degree programmes will be offered. At the same time, SDU is facing a forecasted increase in the total number of master's students in the coming years, partly as a consequence of the political agreement on 'More and better educational opportunities throughout Denmark' from 2021.

Against this background, on 26 September 2024 SDU's Executive Board decided on the general distribution of SDU's master's degree programme places of 120 ECTS among the faculties in 2028. The distribution of 120-ECTS places is a prerequisite for the next step, which is to decide which of SDU's master's degree programmes should be retained as programmes of 120 ECTS and which should be restructured to new types of master's degree programmes.

The decision regarding the distribution of SDU's master's degree places of 120 ECTS consists of allocating a range of 120-ECTS places to the faculties. The faculties' final share of 120-ECTS places in 2028 will not be determined until 2027 as part of the annual process for determining educational capacity.

Political starting point for the restructuring of master's degree programmes

From 2028, the universities' master's degree places of 120 ECTS will gradually be dimensioned, so that the total intake in 2032 will only be 70% of the number of master's students that the Ministry of Higher Education and Science (UFM) expects the universities to admit in 2032. The dimensioning will be introduced gradually from 2028, at which point 80% may be admitted. As a result, SDU is allowed to admit a maximum of approx. 2,600 students to master's degree programmes of 120 ECTS (full-time) in 2028. This framework is preliminary and may change, but in the ongoing work it will serve as a benchmark for which – and how many – degree programmes SDU must restructure in 2028. In comparison, as of 27 September 2024, SDU has admitted 3,928 students to master's degree programmes of 120 ECTS in the 2024 intake.

As described above, SDU's 120-ECTS framework will be gradually reduced towards 2032. This memorandum and the Executive Board's decision only concern 2028. This is first of all because it is important that SDU does not restructure too many master's degree programmes. Second, the University is facing a future with several uncertainties, for instance in relation to the success of the new master's degree programmes and application patterns among applicants, and therefore the experiences gained must be taken into account until the final implementation of the master's degree programme in 2032.

The parties behind the master's degree reform propose that master's degree programmes in the five main academic areas will be restructured to different extents, which means that the main academic areas will have different restructuring rates. At SDU, three faculties (HUM, SAMF and SUND) offer educational programmes from

several main academic areas. For example, on the national level the master's degree programme in Psychology is located in the main field of the social sciences for which the political aim is a restructuring of 40%. From a political standpoint, this educational programme thus has a higher restructuring rate than that which applies to the majority of SUND's educational programmes, for which the political ambition for restructuring is 10%.

This means that the faculties' restructuring rates are not identical to the restructuring rates of the main academic areas, and that a restructuring that takes place solely on the basis of the politically determined restructuring percentages at the level of the main academic areas will result in faculty restructuring rates as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Politically determined restructuring percentages of the main academic areas converted to SDU's faculties

Main academic area, UFM	Restructuring rate of main academic area	Faculty	Restructuring rate of the faculty
Humanities	35%	HUM	31%
Science	30%	NAT	30%
Social Sciences	40%	SAMF	39%
Health Sciences	10%	SUND	17%
Technical Sciences	15%	TEK	15%

The restructuring percentages listed in Table 1 constitute the political ambition for restructuring in 2032. No requirements have been formulated for how the gradual restructuring from 2028 to 2032 is to be distributed among the main academic areas. However, there is an expectation that it will take into account the political ambitions for restructuring at the main area level to a large extent. At the same time, it must be coordinated with the other universities so that the national educational landscape appears coherent already from 2028.

There is also an expectation that the restructuring will meet the political ambitions for the realisation of new types of master's degree programmes. The ambition is that in 2028, 10% will be admitted to master's degree programmes of 75 ECTS and 10% to master's degree programmes for working professionals. In 2030, the proportion of students on master's degree programmes for working professionals must increase to 15%, and in 2032 to 20%, so that the proportion of students on new types of master's degree programmes amounts to 30% in total.

Distribution of SDU's master's degree places of 120 ECTS

In connection with the distribution of SDU's framework for master's degree places of 120 ECTS, the faculties have reported the total capacity that they consider necessary in 2028 to be able to maintain a high quality of the degree programmes and sustainable campuses. This is shown in Table 2 (column A). The same table (column B) shows how many 120-ECTS places the individual faculties will need if the faculties' 'necessary capacity' (column A) is restructured on the basis of the politically determined restructuring percentages.

Table 2: SDU's projection of intake and distribution of 120-ECTS places based on the politically determined restructuring rate

	(A) The faculties' assessment of the necessary total intake	(B) 120-ECTS places based on the politically determined restructuring rate at faculty level
	2028	2028
HUM	531	366
NAT	675	473
SAMF	1,285	784
SUND	1,101	914
TEK	570	485
Total	4,162	3,021
Deviation from target figure of 2600		421

As can be seen in Table 2, SDU is planning to have a total of 421 120-ECTS places more than the 120 ECTS framework that has been politically allocated to SDU. This means that SDU is facing a prioritisation task in relation to distributing the University's total framework of 120-ECTS places. The Executive Board has therefore adopted the ['Principles and process for developing SDU's programme portfolio'](#) which defines a number of considerations that form the starting point for developing SDU's programme portfolio, including how master's degree places of 120 ECTS are to be distributed.

Based on the principles, various considerations have been taken into account in the distribution of the 120-ECTS places. Firstly, the politically determined restructuring rate (Table 1) is used as a starting point for the distribution of the 120-ECTS places among the faculties, according to the principle that SDU's master's degree places of 120 ECTS are to be distributed among the faculties on the basis of the ambitions of the master's degree reform.

The Executive Board has also based the distribution of 120-ECTS places on the fact that the growth that SDU is facing in terms of master's degree places is a common matter to handle, even though it is not evenly distributed among the faculties. SDU's forecasted growth is partly driven by a political desire for more educational programmes outside the largest cities as well as a growing need for education in the STEM area and especially IT education programmes. This means that SDU's master's degree landscape will exhibit significant growth, particularly at TEK and NAT. SDU is the university of the Region of Southern Denmark and we prioritise regional anchoring, but the focus on building sustainable campus environments entails structural and resource challenges that we must balance. At the same time, the restructuring is made more difficult by the fact that Data Science, which will be offered in both Odense and Kolding in the future, requires a 120-ECTS master's degree programme in order to achieve the necessary deep academic expertise, as the students come from very different educational backgrounds. Finally, it has been politically decided that the master's degree programmes in Engineering can only be restructured to master's degree programmes for working professionals, and to the extent that we do not succeed in recruiting students and companies for master's degree programmes for working professionals, we will be forced to reduce the intake to the master's degree programmes in Engineering.

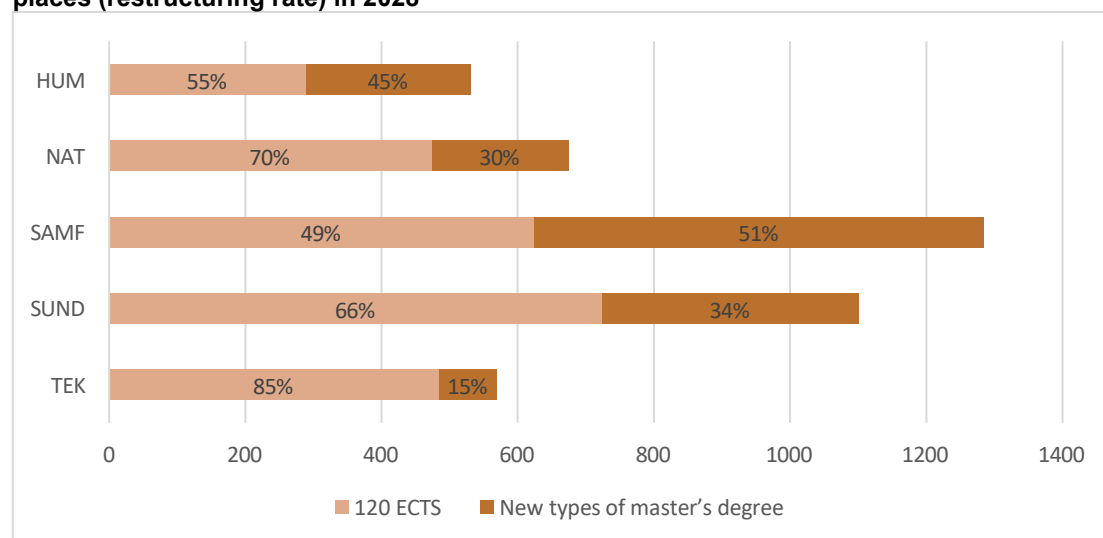
All of this means that 120-ECTS places for NAT and TEK are prioritised. This is done by assigning NAT and TEK a target figure range that is in line with the politically determined restructuring percentage, whereas the target figure ranges for HUM, SAMF and SUND are reduced by a total of approx. 420 places. The reduction is proportional to the three faculties' relative number of 120 places.

Table 3: SDU's projection of intake and distribution of 120-ECTS places based on the politically determined restructuring rate

	(B) 120-ECTS places based on the politically determined restructuring percentage at faculty level	(C) Distribution of SDU's framework for 120-ECTS places
	2028	2028
HUM	366	275–305
NAT	473	460–490
SAMF	784	610–640
SUND	914	710–740
TEK	485	470–500
Total	3,021	2,525–2,675
Deviation from Target figure of 2600	421	-/+75

The distribution of master's degree places of 120 ECTS and new types of master's degree programmes with the adjusted 120 target figures is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Distribution of master's degree places of 120 ECTS and new master's degree programme places (restructuring rate) in 2028



* The figure has been prepared using the midpoint of the interval from Table 3.

Application of the target figure intervals

The target figure intervals constitute a starting point for the faculties to identify which master's degree programmes have a potential for being restructured. This means that the figures may be changed in connection with the national coordination taking place in connection with the work of the Committee for Master's Degree Programmes and the final report that the Committee will submit in October. At the same time, SDU will continuously monitor the development in intake. If the forecasted growth is not realised, the faculties' target figure ranges will be reassessed.