

Principles and process for developing SDU's programme portfolio

Introduction

The principles in this document describe the starting point used when developing SDU's programme portfolio.

This means that the principles are applied to prioritise which programmes SDU should offer, including the subject area, level, type, size and language of the programmes.

As a consequence of the master's degree reform, the principles include ordinary programmes, but they will later be expanded to cover the entire programme portfolio. At the same time, the principles will initially be used to determine SDU's programme portfolio in 2028–2029 and prepare outlines for 2030–2031 and 2032.

The principles are systematically applied using a process outlined at the end of this document.

*Adopted by SDU's Executive Board
26 September 2024*

Purpose of the principles and process

Coherent programme portfolio

SDU's programme portfolio is coherent and reflects SDU's strategy. When new programmes are created and changes are made to existing programmes, it is therefore taken into account how it affects SDU's overall programme portfolio.

Common and transparent approach

Across the University, the development of the programme portfolio is based on the same general content principles and considerations.

Principles

Overall considerations

SDU's programme portfolio contributes to a **coherent educational landscape in Denmark**. Therefore, it is continuously developed based on three main considerations:

Strategic considerations

- SDU educates and trains **employable and value-creating graduates**, and the needs of society and **especially the Region of Southern Denmark** in terms of skills and new knowledge are met through a programme portfolio that reflects SDU's academic breadth and strong research environments.
- SDU offers **international-class education programmes** that bring SDU's fields of expertise into play through international educational collaborations.

Political considerations

- SDU is subject to a number of **political management frameworks and ambitions, which SDU uses as a starting point** when developing its programme portfolio. These include 'Reform of university degree programmes in Denmark' (2023) and 'More and better educational opportunities throughout Denmark' (2021).

Organisational considerations

- SDU's programme portfolio is developed taking into account that it **does not incur unnecessary complexity and costs**.

The following pages describe how these considerations are implemented for bachelor and professional bachelor programmes, master's degree programmes and English-language programmes.

Bachelor and professional bachelor programmes

Principles for prioritising bachelor and professional bachelor programmes

Strategic considerations

- SDU offers high-quality academic bachelor programmes with a high transition rate to master's degree programmes at SDU.
- SDU offers high-quality professional bachelor programmes that lead to employment – especially in the Region of Southern Denmark.

Political considerations

- SDU offers bachelor and professional bachelor programmes that contribute to attractive education, research and study environments on all campuses.

Organisational considerations

- SDU offers bachelor programmes that are linked to the master's degree landscape in terms of governance.

Master's degree programmes

Principles for prioritising master's degree programmes

Strategic considerations

- SDU offers high-quality master's degree programmes (75 and 120 ECTS) that lead to employment – especially in the Region of Southern Denmark.
- SDU offers high-quality business master's degree programmes (75 and 120 ECTS) and master's supplementary courses (45 ECTS) in binding collaboration with employers.
- Master's degree programmes are retained as 120 ECTS when this is deemed an essential prerequisite for delivering graduates with high academic standards. This includes:
 - Graduates face particularly highly specialised work demands
 - Heterogeneous bachelor programme background
 - Interdisciplinary education profile

Political considerations

- SDU's master's degree programme places of 120 ECTS are distributed between the faculties based on the ambitions of the master's degree reform.
- Planned growth is a shared responsibility and managed within the overall framework of student places.
- SDU offers campus portfolios of master's degree programmes of 75 ECTS and 120 ECTS, respectively. These contribute to attractive education, research and study environments on all campuses.

Organisational considerations

- As a rule, only programmes that admit at least 25 students annually are restructured.
- Priority is given to restructuring entire programmes, but partial restructuring is possible in special circumstances.

English-language programmes

Principles for prioritising English-language programmes

Strategic considerations

- SDU offers programmes in English when there is a specific demand from Danish businesses.
- SDU offers English-language programmes in order to maintain attractive study and educational environments

Political considerations

- SDU offers English-language programmes when there is a particularly high probability of attracting talented international students and the students want to work in Denmark upon graduation.

Organisational considerations

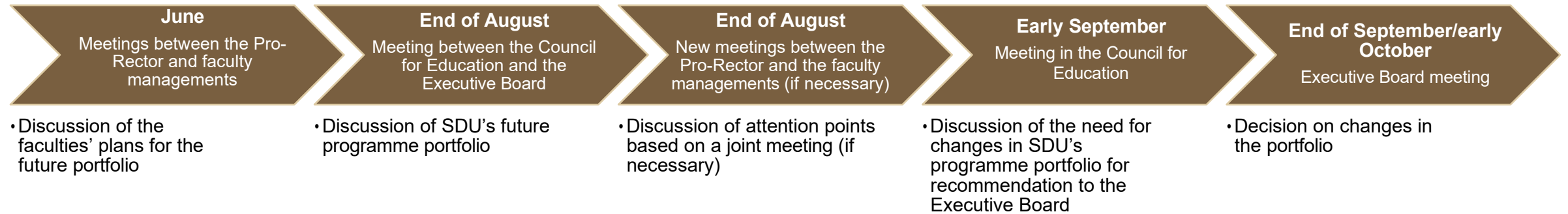
- SDU offers English-language programmes when it can be estimated with some probability how many English-speaking students will be admitted.

Process

Overall principles for the process

- The total programme portfolio is reviewed annually:
 - From March to October, the focus is on the composition of the programme portfolio in order to determine the long-term development of the programme portfolio.
 - From October to February, the focus is on the capacity of the programmes for the upcoming intake, including management against politically established frameworks.
- We work holistically with the overall programme portfolio and its associated processes:
 - Creation of new programmes (pre-qualification and application for change of format to e.g. master's degrees for working professionals).
 - Changes to existing programmes of a technical nature (submission to the Ministry of Higher Education and Science by 15 September).
 - Increasing the capacity on existing programmes.
 - Discontinuation of programmes
 - Development of SDU's programmes (as per SDU's quality system)
- The process focuses on the politically established framework and ambitions for academic bachelor programmes, master's degree programme places of 120 ECTS, new programme formats/types and English-language students, including the derived consequences between different programme levels and relapse opportunities between programmes, but without dictating SDU's programme portfolio.

Process for determining the long-term development of the programme portfolio



Process for determining the capacity of the programmes for the upcoming intake



Background

The master's degree reform and the relocation agreement place new demands on the development of SDU's programme portfolio. In the future there will, among other things, be a limit on how many students SDU can admit to academic bachelor programmes and master's degree programmes, as well as the intake of English-speaking students. This means that SDU's overall programme portfolio, including the capacity of the individual programmes, is determined from an overall SDU perspective.

Academic bachelor programmes

From 2025, SDU has an annual cap on the number of students admitted to academic bachelor programmes. In the period 2025–2029, the cap is 3,656 students annually.

In the short term, the task is to ensure that the framework for bachelor students is fully utilised. In the long term, there may be a need to prioritise student places due to the expansion of campuses outside Odense and the establishment of Campus Vejle.

Master's degree programmes

From 2028, SDU has an annual cap on the number of students admitted to master's degree programmes of 120 ECTS. In 2028 and 2029, the cap is approximately 2,550; in 2030 and 2031, the cap is approximately 2,391; and from 2032, the cap is approximately 2,295 (pending the final figures from the Ministry of Higher Education and Science).

In the short term, the task is to draw up a plan for which programmes will be restructured in 2028 and an outline for the restructuring of additional programmes in 2030 and 2032. In the long term, there must be ongoing monitoring of whether developments, e.g. in application and intake patterns, are consistent with the plans that have been made as well as the final restructuring plans to be made for 2030 and 2032.

English-speaking students

SDU has an existing cap on the intake of English-language students. The cap is approximately 141 students on bachelor programmes and approximately 460 students on master's degree programmes (however, special considerations apply to students on programmes at the Centre for Industrial Electronics, Sønderborg). The goal is to make sure the student intake does not exceed the established limit.

Implications for working with the programme portfolio

The above necessitates that SDU has principles for the development of SDU's programme portfolio that set the framework and direction for this, and a process that ensures a systematic approach to the need for changes in the programme portfolio.

When restructuring master's degree programmes, it is important that the academic environments are involved in the work.