

## Diskusjonsnotat for Sak 4 (46/2021) Gjennomgang av programmene: Første diskusjonsrunde

Undervisningsleder innleder til første diskusjonsrunde for gjennomgang av både bachelor - og masterprogrammet. Det utarbeides en preliminær tidsplan for arbeidet videre med ev. endringer i emneportefølje og innhold.

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At the [Programme Council meeting on May 5](#), there was support for the initiation of a review process of the bachelor and master programmes in human geography. Jemima was asked to draft a background note and a tentative timetable to guide the process.

The aim of this discussion note is to frame the discussion towards a common view of our programmes and the challenges we face. This note is not exhaustive, and other items can be identified. The note starts with a brief overview of both the bachelor and master programmes per Spring 2021, before identifying challenges and posing questions for alternative solutions. For detailed data on the programmes, see separate "Tallgrunnlag for diskusjonsnotat».

### SGO at a glance

- The programme receives 50 new students every year, usually a few more. Admission figures for SGO have shown a positive trend over the past ten years, both in terms of number of applicants per vacancy, but also in terms of higher admission grades. We have experienced a down turn in the 2021 admission, and admission grades are not available yet.
- Drop-out has increased over the past five years, particularly in 2019 and 2020 (Tabell 3), with the reference to the students that started in Autumn the previous year. This is a trend that we need to revert, and follow closely.
- Our courses and portfolio are [evaluated on a regular basis](#). Mid term evaluations are conducted in most courses, and many end-of-term evaluations as well, even when they are not mandatory. Results in course evaluations and Studiebarometer tend to show that our students are overall satisfied with our courses, yet there is always room for improvement. Recurrent issues concerning teaching is more feedback from teachers and work-life relevance.
- The [SGOs website](#) was revised in 2017, with special emphasis on the [learning outcomes](#). According to SV-fak, the programme pages are the main tool for the recruitment of new students.
- We offer 13 courses every year, the number of students oscillating between 30 to 150. The courses with higher number of registered students are SGO2500, SGO2302 and SGO2100.
- The mandatory methods course is SOSGEO1120 run by sociology. The previous SGO1900 run for last time in Spring 2018. The quantitative methods course is now recommended for the fourth semester, instead of the second semester. (\*)
- Many BA-students apply to our master programme at the end of their studies.

### HGO at a glance

- The programme is set to receive 26 new students every year since Autumn 2017. Admission figures for HGO have been very positive in the past two years, both in terms of number of applicants per place, but also in terms of higher admission grades.
- HGO is an international programme, but the number of international students joining the programme was low the first years. This is now changing. For Autumn 2020 9 out of 27 students had international background.

- HGO offers a total of 16 courses: 13 with ordinary teaching (3 every year, 10 every other year), 2 master thesis courses, 1 individual reading list. The course with the higher number of registered students is HGO4010.
- HGO has 4 specializations, requiring 2 out of 3 core courses for each specialization
- In 2020 we introduced teaching activities in the master thesis course, in the form of workshops for project design and thesis writing. A revised activity plan was approved V21 based on last year's experience. The workshops run from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> semester of study.
- The introductory course HGO4011 has just been revised, changes apply from H21.
- Drop out rate is relatively low at HGO. The number of students completing their degree in 2 years is relatively good: about 2/3 of students complete in time, most of the others the following semester.
- According to the Kandidatundersøkelse, the majority of students find a job within the first 6 months after completion.

### A few challenges with SGO

- a) Our course portfolio is designed to cover the major sub-disciplines in human geography (2000-courses) and provide some degree of specialization (3000-courses). Both types of courses are a requirement for a major in human geography. While 2000-courses are not a compulsory requirement for 3000-courses, it is expected that students follow the same track. This may limit the possibilities of students to discover new areas of interest, and later on, the possibility to work across subdisciplines in the bachelor thesis.
- b) Another effect of the 2000-3000 structure is a certain rigidity in our course portfolio: we update and review syllabus within subdisciplines, while increasingly the type of issues and topics we want to address run across subdisciplinary boundaries. To what extent are we missing out on relevant issues because they do not fit in the subdisciplines we do offer? Is there another way to structure our course portfolio to give room to ongoing developments in human geography? This may involve:
  - Combining or merging courses that are complementary.
  - Designing new 2000-courses to replace 3000-courses.
- c) Students are increasingly interested in the possibility of carrying out internships as part of their studies. Some organizations have established student internship programs, but a requirement is that the university where they study is able to grant 10 credits for the internship. Could this be an option for SGO (and ISS)?
- d) SGO3090 has relatively little teaching and supervision. It was designed that way to accommodate students' participation at 3000-courses to be taken in combination with 3090 (a requirement). This element allows little flexibility in the study plan, both for the students and the programme. Students expect more guidance for their BA-thesis from within 3090, not outside the course. Striking a balance between group and individual supervision is also a challenge.

### A few challenges with HGO

- e) We run 10 theory courses every other year, 4-4 Autumn semester, 1-1 Spring semester. The courses are open for other master programmes, yet most courses have between 15-30 students. Could we consider changes in the course portfolio in order to make more efficient use of our limited teaching resources? This can involve:
  - Combining or merging courses that are complementary
  - Identifying courses in other programmes that could replace some of our courses.
  - Designing new courses to replace several courses.
- f) A large proportion of master students show an interest in urban geography, with climate change and environmental issues following closely. Also, the combination of these two areas

is to be seen. We need to find a balance between student interests and supervision resources. Until now we suggest suitable supervisors and the student decide. Assigning supervisors might be an option.

- g) Several students are interested in developing their master thesis in relation to existing research projects at the department. How can we facilitate better integration of students into our research activities?

### **A few challenges across programmes**

- h) Positioning human geography: Sustainability issues in study programmes are receiving increased attention at UiO and SV-fak. Our course portfolio already addresses different aspects of environmental sustainability and transitions to a green economy. How can we position human geography programmes in these new processes?
- i) Worklife relevance has also become a focus area at UiO and SV-fak. SGO2040 CityStudio Oslo and HGO4203 Sustainable Urban Transformations have a project-based layout and/or internship component. How can we develop or introduce more WLR into our courses?
- j) Our teaching staff consists of 11 permanent staff members. In addition, we have PhD candidates (10-12) and postdocs (1-3), but not all of them have teaching duties. How do we tailor and balance what we need to offer to develop our discipline in terms of our human resources?
- k) Our GIS courses provide useful methodological, digital tools for our students learning. There is much potential in GIS for both teaching and research. How can we develop that potential without a permanent staff with GIS expertise?
- l) Last, but not least: Our academic profile. To what extent do we want to make explicit a stronger emphasis in specific fields or areas? Which areas would that be? This is not only about our website presentation, but about the content and profile of our programmes.

### **Tentative plan for review of the programmes**

- Programme council meeting (PCM) June 2 2021: Inputs based on discussion note
- Mid June or August 2021: workshop on academic profile and learning outcomes for SGO/HGO
- PCM September 2021: Discussion of revision of learning outcomes for SGO/HGO.
- October 2021: workshop to develop a detailed plan for revision of course portfolios, including new and revised courses.
- PCM November 2021: Approval of revised learning outcomes for SGO/HGO.
- November 2021: Evt søknad om endring av programstruktur til SV-fak gjeldende fra og med H22.

## Utdrag fra «Rapport for årlig programgjennomgang 2020»

### Pågående forbedringstiltak:

FS kode	Studieprogram	Beskrivelse av gjennomførte eller planlagte vesentlige endringer	Årsaker til endringen
SVB-SGO	Samfunnsgeografi	Mai 2021 starter en prosess med revidering av BA- og MA program, i tråd med ISS nylig vedtatt strategi. Det er en gjennomgang av programmets læringsmål, programstruktur og emnetilbud.	Ønske om fagfornyelse og tydeliggjøring av fagprofil. Utvikling av et studietilbud som er både aktuelt og i samsvar med tilgjengelige ressurser.
SVM2-HGO (1729/3358)	Human Geography	Ovennevnte prosess har startet på HGO, med revidering av innføringsemnet HGO4011 V21. Fra H20 ble det innført undervisningsaktiviteter i masteroppgave emne.	

### Styrker og svakheter ved programmene:

	<b>Bachelorprogrammet i samfunnsgeografi</b>
Styrke 1	Høyt kvalifiserte og motiverte undervisere, interessert i å ta i bruk studentaktive lærings- og vurderingsformer.
Styrke 2	Emnetilbud er variert og dekker hoved underdisipliner
Styrke 3	Globalt og bærekraftorientert disiplin med flerskala tilnærming
Utfordring 1	Begrenset tid til å videreutvikle fagpedagogisk kompetanse
Utfordring 2	Mindre fleksibilitet i emnetilbud og innhold når representasjon av underdisipliner er viktig styringsprinsipp.
Utfordring 3	Synlighet og profilering blant samfunnsvitenskapelige disipliner

	<b>Masterprogrammet Human Geography</b>
Styrke 1	Høyt kvalifiserte og motiverte undervisere, interessert i å ta i bruk studentaktive lærings- og vurderingsformer.
Styrke 2	Emnetilbud er variert, dekker hoved underdisipliner samt tematiske områder
Styrke 3	Engasjerte og dyktige studenter med økende internasjonal bakgrunn
Utfordring 1	Balanse mellom emnetilbud og tilgjengelig ressurser
Utfordring 2	Oppbygging av arbeidslivsrelevans innad de enkelte emner.
Utfordring 3	Sterkere integrering av studenter i stabbens forskningsprosjekter