

Towards a Danish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education

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Denmark has recently set-up a national Qualifications Framework (QF) for higher education, approved by The Danish Bologna follow up group 15 January 2003. Chair of the working group has been the Danish Qualification Agency, but representatives from the universities, the Danish rector conference, relevant student organisations as well as the two relevant ministries – The ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, has also been involved.

In accordance with the Tuning project, which is mentioned in the final report “Towards a Danish “Qualifications Framework” for higher education”, QF is defined as “a systematic description of an education system’s degrees that emphasises the description on final competencies”. As such the sole purpose of the work has been to develop a general description of the final competencies or learning outcomes inherent in the respective education programmes. However the presented QF should first and foremost be seen as an aid to simplifying the process of setting clear goals for curriculum planning. The working group has proposed that pilot projects should be carried out in order to test whether the QF can be useful in the changing of curricula planning from being discipline oriented to being competency oriented.

During the autumn 2004 and spring 2005 The Danish University of Education is planning to conduct a process in accordance with the presented QF. The intention is to describe clear goals and leaning outcomes of the individual programmes provided by the university. As expected similar projects will be implemented at other Danish universities e.g. The University of Copenhagen who already has begun such a process.

Components in the description of the individual degrees¹

The Danish QF working group has chosen a system comprising three elements:

1. First, a description of the entire *competency profile* for a particular degree. This competency profile is then used to give a general notion of the competencies a degree holder should possess.
2. Second, a set of *competency goals* in the form of tangible expectations specifications. These serve to specify what competencies a degree holder can be expected to possess in selected areas.
3. Third, a description of the *formal aspects* (I.e. admittance requirements, length of study and further education options). This category is included in the QF, in spite of the fact that it is not competency oriented, because it contributes to positioning the degrees in both a national and international context. The alternative is that this information be available elsewhere, but

¹ Source: The Danish Bologna follow-up group's QF working party. (2003, January 15). *Towards a Danish "Qualifications Framework" for Higher Education*. Retrieved May 26, 2004, from <http://www.vtu.dk/fsk/div/bologna/DanishQFReport.pdf>

this would make it more difficult to communicate to those without knowledge of the Danish education system.

In addition the working group has chosen to focus on three *competency goals* (2):

- Intellectual competencies
- Professional and academic competencies
- Practical competencies

A Danish QF/Length of studies

The following is a description of some of the Danish degrees as presented by the QF working group.

Professional Bachelor degree

1. Competency profile

A Professional Bachelor will have competencies gained during a development based study environment with research affiliation and with a relevant mandatory trainee programme in dialogue with the recruiters.

A Professional Bachelor should possess basic knowledge of and insight into the central disciplines and methodologies used in that profession. These attributes should qualify the Professional Bachelor to carry out vocational functions and act independently within the area targeted by the study programme and for further study in a relevant Master or Candidatus programme.

2. Competency goals

2.1 *Intellectual competencies*

A Professional Bachelor should be able to:

- Describe, formulate and communicate profession-related issues and options for taking action
- Analyse profession-oriented issues theoretically and consider them in practice
- Structure own learning

2.2 *Professional and academic competencies*

A Professional Bachelor should be able to:

- Apply and evaluate different methodologies within his or her discipline
- Demonstrate insight into central disciplines, theories, methodologies and concepts within his or her profession
- Document, analyse and evaluate the discipline's various types of practice
- Utilise research and development to develop own practice

2.3 *Practical competencies*

A Professional Bachelor should be able to:

- Master practical tool skills (be able to carry out a vocational duty immediately)
- Make and justify decisions based on his or her own areas of expertise
- Show personal integrity and act within the framework of professional ethics
- Work with other both in and outside his or her discipline
- Participate in development work

3. Formal aspects

- Admittance requirements: Upper secondary or relevant vocational education (possibly with certain special admission requirements)
- Length: Between 3 and 4 years (180-240 ECTS credits). Usually the programmes equal 210 ECTS credits.
- Further education options: Master and Candidatus programmes.
- The degree is recognised by the proper ministry.
- Degree-conferring programmes are provided by Centres for Higher Education or other institutions approved by the relevant ministries (such as institutions included in the University Act).

Bachelor degree

1. Competency profile

A Bachelor will have competencies that have been acquired via a course of study that has taken place in a research environment.

A Bachelor should have basic knowledge of and insight into his or her discipline's methods and scholarly foundation. These attributes should qualify a Bachelor for further education at a relevant graduate programme as well as for employment on the basis of his or her academic discipline.

2. Competency goals

2.1 *Intellectual competencies*

A Bachelor should be able to:

- Describe, formulate and communicate complex issues and results
- Conduct analyses using scientific methods
- Structure own learning

2.2 *Professional and academic competencies*

A Bachelor should be able to:

- Evaluate methods within his or her own academic discipline
- Demonstrate insight into central disciplines, theories and concepts

2.3 *Practical competencies*

A Bachelor should be able to:

- Analyse practical complex issues in a professional context
- Make and justify decisions on the basis of his or her academic discipline

3. Formal aspects

- Admittance requirements: Upper-secondary education (possibly with certain specific admittance requirements)
- Length: Three years full-time (180 ECTS credits)
- Further education options: Candidatus and Master programmes

Candidatus

1. Competency profile

A Candidatus graduate will have competencies that have been acquired via a course of study that has taken place in a research environment.

A Candidatus graduate should be qualified for employment on the labour market on the basis of his or her academic discipline as well as for further research (PhD programmes). A Candidatus graduate should, compared to a Bachelor, have developed his or her academic knowledge and independence so as to be able to apply scientific theory and method on an independent basis within both an academic and professional context.

2. Competency goals

2.1 *Intellectual competencies*

In addition to the competencies described for the Bachelor level, a Candidatus graduate should be able to:

- Communicate complex professional and academic issues to both specialists and laymen
- Formulate and analyse complex scholarly issues independently, systematically and critically
- Continue own competency development and specialisation

2.2 *Professional and academic competencies*

In addition to the competencies described for the Bachelor level, a Candidatus graduate should be able to:

- Evaluate the appropriateness of various methods of analysis and complex academic issues on an independent basis
- Demonstrate:
 - Either specialist understanding in extension of the Bachelor degree
 - Or a broader academic perspective for his or her Bachelor degree
 - Or new academic competencies in addition to his or her Bachelor degree
- Demonstrate understanding of research work and based on this be active in a research context
- Demonstrate insight into the implications of research (research ethics)

2.3 *Practical competencies*

In addition to the competencies described for the Bachelor level, a Candidatus graduate should be able to:

- Make and justify decisions on the basis of his or her academic discipline and if necessary carry out analyses that result in an adequate basis for decision-making
- Comprehend development work based on scholarly, theoretic and/or experimental methods

3. Formal aspects

- Admittance requirements: Selected Bachelor degree programmes or in some particular cases selected Professional Bachelor degree programmes.
- Length: Two years, full-time (120 ECTS credits)
- Further education options: PhD programmes

Master

1. Competency profile

A Master will have competencies that have been acquired through a course of study based on an integration of research results and practical experience.

A Master should be able to fulfil highly qualified functions in businesses, institutions and the like, through scholarship-based personal and academic competencies.

2. Competency goals

2.1 Intellectual competencies

In addition to the competencies described for the degrees that give access to a Master programme, a Master should be able to:

- Communicate complex academic issues to both specialists and laymen
- Formulate and analyse complex practical issues independently, systematically and critically on a scholarly basis
- Continue own competency development and specialisation on an independent basis

2.2 Professional and academic competencies

In addition to the competencies described for the degrees that give access to a Master programme, a Master should be able to:

- Evaluate the appropriateness of various methods of analysis and complex academic issues on an independent basis
- Demonstrate:
 - Either specialist understanding in extension of the Bachelor degree
 - Or a broader academic perspective for his or her Bachelor degree
 - Or new academic competency in addition to the Bachelor degree

2.3 Practical competencies

In addition to the competencies described for the degrees that give access to a Master programme, a Master should be able to:

- Independently make and justify decisions on the basis of his or her academic discipline
- Put into perspective and develop practice based on scholarly, theoretical and/or experimental methods
- Comprehend and deal with complex issues in a commercial /professional context

3. Formal aspects:

- Admittance requirements: Bachelor, Professional Bachelor or Diploma degrees. Additionally at least two year's relevant professional experience
- Length: Normally one year, full-time (60 ECTS credits)
- There are no degree-conferring further education options

The complete report *Towards a Danish "Qualifications Framework" for higher education* is available at: <http://www.vtu.dk/fsk/div/bologna/DanishQFReport.pdf>

Typical professions:

Examples of **Professional Bachelor** degrees:

Teacher Education: Length: 4 years (240 ECTS)

Social Education: Length: 3½ years (210 ECTS)

Social Worker: Length: 3½ years (210 ECTS)

Nursing: Length: 3½ years (210 ECTS)

Radiography: Length: 3½ years (210 ECTS)

Physiotherapy: Length: 3½ years (210 ECTS)

Occupational Therapy: Length: 3½ years (210 ECTS)

Examples of **Bachelor degrees**:

Bachelor of Arts in Education: Length: 3 years (180 ECTS)

Bachelor of Arts in *whatever*: Length 3 years (180 ECTS)

The same goes for:

Bachelor of Science in *whatever*...

Examples of **Candidatus** degrees:

Admittance requirements: Selected Bachelor degree programmes or/and in some particular cases selected Professional Bachelor degree programmes.

Master of Arts (Education) in Educational Sociology: Length: 2 years (120 ECTS)

Master of Arts (Education) in Educational Psychology: Length: 2 years (120 ECTS)

Master of Arts (Education) in Educational Anthropology: Length: 2 years (120 ECTS)

Master of Arts (Education) in Philosophy of Education: Length: 2 years (120 ECTS)

Master of Arts (Education) in Didactics math, language, chemistry etc: Length: 2 years (120 ECTS)

Examples of **Masters**:

Admittance requirements: Bachelor, Professional Bachelor or Diploma degrees (part time studies levelling the Professional Bachelor Degree). Additionally at least two year's relevant professional experience

These are primarily delivered as part time studies during a two year period.

Master in Educational and Professional Development: Length: 1 year (60 ECTS).

Master in Special Needs Education: Length: 1 year (60 ECTS).

Master of Adult Learning and Human Resource Development: Length: 1 year (60 ECTS).

Master of ICT and Education: Length: 1 year (60 ECTS).

Master in Health Promotion and Education: Length: 1 year (60 ECTS).

Master in Citizenship Education: Length: 1 year (60 ECTS).

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