

## **ENHANCED INSIGHT THROUGH GLOBAL OUTLOOK**

– more students studying abroad, stronger international learning environments and better foreign language skills

English summary of the Danish Government action plan  
'Øget indsigt gennem globalt udsyn'  
launched June 2013.

## Vision

Denmark must be an open society; one that collaborates with the wider world economically, politically and culturally.

Denmark should play its part and recognise its role in the global development – contributing solutions to the global challenges we face. With our knowledge, skills and values, we have a duty to recognise our co-responsibility for the world of tomorrow.

Our own growth and welfare is dependent on our ability to be an attractive global partner. With exports comprising 54 per cent of GDP, it is clear that Denmark's ability to create jobs is dependent on a successful interaction with other countries and our ability to identify and utilise the opportunities afforded by global change and growth.

Denmark is a small country, which must compete on knowledge. We should be able to hold our own with the best in the world, particularly within areas where Denmark has commercial core competences.

If Denmark is to contribute to and benefit fully from globalisation's opportunities to create growth and jobs, it needs companies and public institutions that can adopt a global outlook and insight and whose employees have a high professional skill level with international competences.

A fundamental prerequisite for this is relevant, high-quality education that meets market demand.

The Danish government has launched a number of initiatives that focus on improving the quality and relevance of education programmes so they may contribute to growth, competitiveness and individual personal competences. For example, the new development contracts between the government and the Danish educational institutions focus on the quality of education. Parliament recently adopted a law on a new accreditation system for higher education that improves quality assurance and the labour market relevance of the programmes. Finally, a broad political agreement on the "Reform of the SU<sup>1</sup> system and framework for study completion" creates a framework for ensuring that students can better complete their studies in a more timely fashion.

As part of the effort to improve the quality and employability of Danish education programmes, we must focus strategically on ensuring higher education students achieve professionally relevant international skills that are in demand. Not in few instances like today, but in the majority and with a vision of all future generations doing so. This should be adjusted to the individual ability, desire and expected future profession.

The first part of the action plan, presented now, focuses primarily on the effort to strengthen the international competences of Danish students and on the international learning environments that Danish institutions are involved in. The second part of the plan will be tabled later this year and will focus on how Denmark can attract and retain talented international students in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> SU – Danish Student Grants and Loans Scheme

To realise the vision of strengthening the internationalisation of Danish higher education, the first part of the action plan comprises 31 concrete initiatives aimed at accomplishing the following objectives:

**Objective 1:** More students should study, or take an internship, abroad

**Objective 2:** Danish higher education institutions must have stronger international learning environments

**Objective 3:** Students should have better foreign language skills

Furthermore, the action plan contains four performance measures to be achieved by 2020. They include:

*Measure 1: More students studying, or taking an internship, abroad:*

In 2011, 17 per cent of all Danish students had studied, or taken an internship, abroad as part of their studies. By 2020, at least 50 per cent of graduates from Danish higher education institutions should have studied, or taken an internship, abroad.

*Measure 2: More Danish students spending short periods abroad in growth countries:*

In 2011, a total of 563 Danish students either studied abroad or took an internship in growth countries like Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Korea. By 2020, the number of Danish students studying abroad, or taking an internship, in growth countries (including the BRIC countries) should increase by at least 15 per cent annually.

*Measure 3: More cooperation on double/joint degrees with international institutions:*

Most Danish educational institutions are involved in cooperative agreements with international educational institutions on the issue of dual and/or joint degrees. The institutions also have about 50 agreements in place for joint educational programmes, which have the potential to develop into collaborative whole degree programmes. By 2020, the percentage of cooperative agreements on double and/or joint degrees between international and Danish educational institutions should increase by 20 per cent compared to 2012 – measured per sector.

*Measure 4: More Danish students spending short periods abroad in non-English speaking European countries:*

In 2011, 2,167 Danish students studied, or took an internship, abroad in a non-English speaking European country. By 2020, the number of these students should increase by a minimum of 15 per cent annually.

The main objectives are detailed below, followed by an outline of the 31 individual initiatives.

### ***Objective 1 More students should study, or take an internship, abroad***

Danish students must be more aware of the value of graduating with relevant international study or work experience, and what that added value means for them, their personal development and future career opportunities. International experience should first and foremost include a relevant education for the individual, but also provide concrete cross-cultural experience.

The current percentage of Danish students undertaking a whole higher education programme abroad is 3.2 per cent. Denmark is outperformed by its Nordic neighbours in this regard (Finland 3.7 per cent, Sweden 4.3 per cent and Norway 6.7 per cent). Similar trends can be seen in the percentage of Danish students taking part in the Erasmus exchange programme, with Denmark being outperformed by e.g. the Netherlands, France and Finland.

In 2011/2012, 17 per cent of higher education Danish students studied abroad for a period of at least three months. There is also a significant difference across different higher education programmes for students being inclined to study abroad.

The government will therefore ensure easier access to the opportunity of studying or working abroad for all students, regardless of background. And it is in the best interest of companies to support the education programmes and subsequent recruitment. International experience must be a fully integrated element in our higher education programmes – something students choose naturally and accomplish without administrative barriers.

### ***Objective 2 Strong international learning environments***

Danish higher education institutions must continue, and increase, their involvement in international education cooperation and knowledge exchange to create international learning and study environments. These will benefit the quality and professional integration between institutions in Denmark and abroad.

Furthermore, the export of Danish higher education and related knowledge must be strengthened. Educational institutions must attract talented international students who are willing to pay for a Danish education and can also contribute to our educational environments. And the institutions should offer either whole or partial programmes abroad, possibly in collaboration with local educational institutions, in such a way that the programmes act as a bridge between Danish and international students, or so that the programmes are perfectly tailored to local needs.

Sixty-three per cent of Danish export is to Europe and we must continue to strengthen our presence on these markets. But we must also focus on high growth markets in China, India, Brazil, Russia and the “Next Eleven” countries, which include countries such as South Korea and Vietnam. International education cooperation can support relationships with these countries and help new research and business cooperation to blossom.

And we must peak interest in these countries early on. Many high schools are turning to growth countries in recent years, especially China, and have established school partnerships and the opportunity for students to visit these countries.

In this way, Denmark must also help take responsibility for global development.

***Objective 3 Students should have better foreign language skills***

The road to growth features Danish employees who have skills that translate to global value, including foreign language skills. Danish companies with a global outlook have an advantage when their employees have knowledge of the culture and language of the relevant export market.

In the future, employees must therefore have relevant foreign language skills and education programmes must, to a greater extent, be geared towards language skills that are in labour market demand.

## Action plan - 31 concrete initiatives

With the aim of achieving the three draft objectives, the action plan presents 31 concrete initiatives as described below.

### *Objective 1: More students should study, or take an internship, abroad*

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1.1 Ordinary higher education programmes should contain a mobility window	The initiative encourages higher education programmes to be structured in such a way that students have the opportunity to study abroad without extending the length of their studies. The study period abroad should therefore be an integrated part of the study programme. The proposal would see students having the opportunity to spend at least 15 per cent of their studies abroad, unless there are special circumstances.
1.2 Educational institutions should develop attractive and easily accessible exchange offers	The initiative encourages institutions to develop tailored exchange offers for students e.g. with the help of package offers where practical preparations and pre-approval of the study abroad programme are part of the system ('Grab and Go').
1.3 Automatic recognition of credits should be introduced for all pre-approved study abroad programmes	The initiative will ensure that automatic recognition of credits is introduced for all pre-approved study abroad programmes. Changes to the pre-approval during the process will be made easier and the possibility of contesting pre-approval decisions will be reviewed.
1.4 Educational institutions should increase the number of joint education programmes	Increasing the number of joint education programmes should be an important tool to entice more students to study abroad. The initiative therefore encourages the institutions to increase the number of joint education programmes between Danish and international institutions. Studying abroad thereby creates a kind of motorway for students, in that studying abroad would become a natural (and often mandatory) part of their studies.
1.5 More Danish students should take an international internship	This initiative encourages educational institutions to promote students seeking an internship abroad and to ensure that the internship can become an integrated part of their education programme. An internship abroad gives the student international experience, knowledge of another market and an international professional network.

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1.6 Students should have the opportunity to have exam results obtained when studying abroad converted to Danish grades

The special way in which international exam results are incorporated into Danish diplomas means that Danish students often receive their international grades as an annex to their diploma, while the credit – transfer exam results are described on a pass/fail basis on the diploma itself. This could discourage some students from studying abroad. The initiative therefore paves the way for offering students the possibility of having their international grades converted, and also giving them the option of whether they want the grades to appear in their converted form or on a pass/fail basis.

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1.7 The Scholarship for Study Abroad will be continued and the administration simplified

The Scholarship for Study Abroad is an attractive option for Danish students wishing to undertake a whole Master's abroad or study in another international institution different from those the Danish home institution has exchange agreements with. The Danish Parliament carried a motion to simplify the administration of the Scholarship for Study Abroad on 30 April 2013.

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1.8 A new loan opportunity will be created for students with a Scholarship for Study Abroad

Danish students should have the opportunity to apply for study loans totalling up to DKK 100,000 (ca. EUR 15,000) to cover international student fees. This initiative will improve the opportunities to study at top-class international institutions where student fees often surpass the Scholarship for Study Abroad amount. The Danish Parliament carried the related motion on 30 April 2013.

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1.9 Institutions should have a greater economic incentive to send students abroad. The requirement to maintain a balance between incoming and outgoing mobility will be abolished

Danish educational institutions currently receive an activity-determined education subsidy (taximeter funding system) for the ECTS obtained by incoming students on an exchange programme. The maximum subsidy relates to the value of credits obtained by Danish students studying abroad in the same year. This initiative paves the way for providing the education subsidy on the basis of credits earned in outgoing mobility instead of incoming mobility. This will increase the incentive for institutions to send students abroad. In addition, the requirement to maintain a balance between incoming and outgoing mobility (which has been in place so far for exchange mobility) will be abolished.

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**1.10** Institutions will have the opportunity to utilise the Scholarship for Study Abroad in connection with establishing exchange agreements with attractive international fee-paying educational institutions.

The initiative allows educational institutions to use the Scholarship for Study Abroad in instances where Danish institutions want to send more students abroad to attractive international institutions than the number of agreed exchange students. Thus it will be easier and more likely that Danish students can study abroad, while also ensuring that more places at these institutions go to talented Danish students.

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**1.11** A new website will be set up to inspire and inform students of relevant international options

To motivate students to study abroad, the Ministry of Higher Education is launching the campaign website [www.gribverden.dk](http://www.gribverden.dk) as an information portal to confront the notion that it is difficult to organise studying abroad. The aim of the website and the accompanying Facebook page is to facilitate student debate about potential problematic issues. Students may also gain knowledge and inspiration via contributions from higher education institutions, private organisations and other students.

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**1.12** Grade point average should be part of the diploma

As Danish students often need a grade point average to apply to international educational institutions, Danish institutions are recommended to include grade point averages on diplomas.

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**Objective 2: Danish higher education institutions must have stronger international learning environments**

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**2.1** More higher education educators should have international experience

Educator exchanges can benefit both the educators and the institutions by providing relevant inspiration and expanding the educators' professional, as well as language, competences. The educators can likewise inspire students to look abroad by revealing the positive relevant input that can be achieved by spending time abroad. The Ministry of Higher Education is developing a catalogue of best practice examples to support this initiative.

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**2.2** The quality of courses and programmes in English should be at the same level as programmes taught in Danish

Offering programmes taught through English is an important aspect of internationalising higher education. Higher education institutions are therefore encouraged to ensure that programmes taught in English are of the same quality as those taught in Danish, e.g. by focusing on the educators' English language skills.

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**2.3** The Ministry of Higher Education will initiate a study of how to improve the use of ICT-supported distance learning at educational institutions

Better international study environments must be supported by studying via the internet, project-based teaching and cross-border discussion. This can be accomplished through a combination of ICT-based learning and a global classroom where students, via the internet, interact with other students and environments around the world.

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**2.4** Collaboration with growth countries must be strengthened via the Danish innovation centres

Educational institutions are encouraged to increase cooperation with the Danish innovation centres for the purpose of facilitating cooperation with educational institutions in growth countries. The Danish innovation centres based in selected emerging economies can contribute by facilitating partnership and exchange agreements with local institutions, which otherwise may be difficult to achieve without local knowledge and presence.

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**2.5** Development of the Sino-Danish Centre for Education and Research in Beijing should continue

The Sino-Danish Centre for Education and Research (SDC) in Beijing is a joint Danish-Chinese university centre established in cooperation between the eight Danish universities, the Danish Ministry of Higher Education, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences (UCAS). The initiative paves the way for further development of the centre. When all activities are fully incorporated in the SDC, it is expected to house 100 researchers, 75 PhD students, and 300-400 Master's students – mainly from Denmark and China.

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**2.6** There should be the greatest possible participation in European and Nordic education programmes

In recent years, Denmark has had to return unused Erasmus mobility funding to the EU. One reason for this is that a certain number of students cancel at the last minute and the institutions do not have time to allocate their study abroad place to another student. This initiative encourages educational institutions to make better use of the opportunity afforded to them by the 2013 Budget to overbook funding for Erasmus and Nordplus programmes so that cancellations can be taken into account and there will no longer be a need to return unused funding to the EU.

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**2.7** Institutions should develop the use of strategic partnerships

Strategic cooperative agreements between Danish and international institutions is important to the development and future-proofing of Danish institutions and programmes' quality, as well as strengthening their international profile and attractiveness. The Ministry of Higher Education encourages institutions to utilise the expanded legal frameworks for international cooperation with other universities and develop more joint and double degrees on all levels.

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**2.8** Rules for educational cooperation and offer of international programmes abroad for institutions under the Ministry of Higher Education must be harmonised and optimised

The present rules for offering joint education programmes with an international partner and the rules for offering entire programmes abroad are not the same for the different kind of higher education institutions. The Ministry of Higher Education will therefore enter into dialogue with institutions to find out how to create the right framework for offering education abroad.

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**2.9** Institutions' offer of education programmes, or part thereof, abroad (either as a solo venture or with partner institutions) should be expanded

Denmark must increase its provision of higher education and higher education know-how abroad. The Ministry of Higher Education therefore encourages institutions to expand their international education offers abroad. This must be done taking into account and underpinning Danish higher education programmes' reputation for high quality.

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**2.10** There should be expanded recruitment of international external lecturers

Part-time external lecturers employed in Danish and international companies help create an international learning environment that focuses on real-world business experience in a global competitive situation. The Ministry of Higher Education will therefore enter into dialogue with institutions on how the recruitment of external lecturers can be expanded.

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2.11 Applicants with an international or foreign high school diploma should have better opportunities to meet the "Danish A" requirement

All Danish-language Bachelors' programmes at universities and some programmes at university colleges have a "Danish A" requirement for all applicants. The Ministry of Higher Education will enter into dialogue with the institutions to clarify the institutions' practice relating to the requirement for applicants with international or foreign exam results. The aim is to ensure a uniform assessment of international and foreign qualifications so students who speak Danish but do not have the standard "Danish A" in their international or foreign qualifications have an easier application process. The Ministry of Higher Education will also work with the Ministry of Children and Education to see that all Danish citizens with international or foreign qualifications, have the opportunity to sit a specific Danish test (on par with Studieprøven) so they may document they have the necessary Danish skills to be accepted to a Danish-language Bachelor's programme.

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**Objective 3: Students should have better foreign language skills**

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<p><b>3.1</b> Diplomas should contain a foreign language profile</p>	<p>Students from non-language focused programmes should have the opportunity to get official recognition on their diploma if they have made a special effort to acquire other languages than English.</p>
<p><b>3.2</b> Institutions should improve efforts to promote students' foreign language skills in other languages than English</p>	<p>Initiatives that maintain or improve students' foreign language skills should remain and be developed even further. Such efforts will be discussed at an annual meeting between the Higher Education Minister and the institutions, so that institutions may benefit from each other's experience and coordinate, to a certain extent, these initiatives for students not on language programmes.</p>
<p><b>3.3</b> Follow-up is needed on the offer of languages as a main subject in teacher-training programmes</p>	<p>With the political agreement on the reform of teacher-training education in June 2012, the government has paved the way for improving the education of language teachers in primary and secondary school, the option of becoming a trilingual teacher, as well as improving opportunities for studying abroad as part of their education. As such, university colleges must produce an annual status report of teacher-training supply and what subjects students are choosing to teach in. If the Higher Education Minister judges that there is not enough necessary development in relation to schools' needs, the minister is authorised to direct university colleges to develop and implement concrete initiatives to meet the needs of schools.</p>
<p><b>3.4</b> A study of the interpretation and translation field will be carried out</p>	<p>EU institutions and public authorities have commented on the recruitment difficulties in the interpretation and translation field. The Ministry of Higher Education will therefore initiate a study of user needs, including EU institutions, as well as charting the Danish supply in this area for the purpose of better cohesion between supply and demand in the interpretation and translation field.</p>

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<p>3.5 An annual account of intake development, completion rates and employment frequency within language programmes will be carried out</p>	<p>Accreditation decisions in recent years have shown challenges with quality as well as high drop-out rates in university foreign language programmes. In order to follow the development carefully, the Ministry of Higher Education will publish an annual overview of the development in relation to intake, completion rates, employability, etc. of language programmes. An external analysis of quality challenges and drop-out rates of foreign language programmes will also be initiated. The resulting data will be used to help improve the quality and relevance of language programmes.</p>
<p>3.6 Danish membership of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) under the Council of Europe</p>	<p>As of January 2013, Denmark is a member of the European Centre Modern Languages (ECML), an institution under the Council of Europe that supports efforts to improve foreign language education. As part of the membership, a national contact point will be set up to maintain the broadest possible network across Danish education sectors, so that all education can benefit from foreign language cooperation under the auspices of the ECML.</p>
<p>3.7 There should be increased Nordic cooperation on minor language subjects</p>	<p>More universities are experiencing difficulties sustaining minor language programmes due to too few students. There are similar trends in other Nordic countries. The Ministry of Higher Education, under the auspices of Nordic cooperation, is therefore investigating the possibilities for increased cross-border cooperation and division of labour in Nordic countries, to achieve optimal utilisation of resources and supply of minor language subjects in the Nordics in general.</p>
<p>3.8 Annual meeting about the language area and foreign language education</p>	<p>Many have expressed the need for national coordination with the aim of supporting and sharing knowledge of the many initiatives, endeavours and professional development processes within the foreign language area in recent years. The Higher Education Minister will therefore gather the rectors and other relevant leaders from educational institutions at an annual meeting to promote knowledge sharing and support interdisciplinary cooperation in the sector.</p>

## **Invitation to provide feedback**

With this action plan a broad range of institutions, students, educators, companies and other stakeholders are invited to provide feedback and present proposals for how we can create the best framework for strengthening the internationalisation of higher education in Denmark.

Sector dialogue will be an important aspect of the implementation and execution of initiatives in the action plan.

You can provide input via [the dialogue document](#) which you can send to [internationalisering@ui.dk](mailto:internationalisering@ui.dk). Please include Contribution to "Enhanced insight through global outlook" in the subject field.

Input will be published on the Danish section of the website and structured by sender and affiliation. English-language contributions will be marked (ENG).

The following links show various contributions:

[Contributions from private individuals.](#)

[Contributions from educational institutions.](#)

[Contributions from authorities.](#)

[Contributions from other public or private organisations.](#)

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