Move forward

VIA University College

Teaching Environment Assessment for Architectural Technology and Construction Management

Follow-up on the Danish Student Survey 2023

VIA has recently carried out a joint study environment survey and teaching environment assessment in connection with the national quality measurements in the The Danish Student Survey 2023. Follow-up on the results will take place locally at the education programmes – apart from the results regarding the physical facilities at campus. These results will be processed by the campus managements in dialogue with representatives of students and teachers.

Time, place, and participants at the follow-up meetings:

Time and place	Participants		
1st meeting - follow-up of results	**Students:**	**Teachers and management:**	**Facilitators**
Date: 11.09.2024 Meeting forum:	Daniela, Michael, Siddharth and Anna	Steen Fynbo, Michael Christiansen and Alan Klæbel Weisdorf	Louise Krogh Andersen and Kathrine Kibsgaard
2nd meeting - status of actions	**Students:**	**Teachers and management:**	**Facilitators**
Date: Meeting forum:	[Insert names]	[Insert names]	

TEA action plan for 2024-2025

	Sense of belonging
1. Theme *Insert the theme/questions from the survey that the planned action/initiatives part from*	**Sense of belonging & loneliness** - Sometimes I am not sure that I belong in my study programme 3,4
2. Analysis *Describe the problem in the theme/question response results. Why is it necessary to act on it? And what sustains the problem?*	**Experience A** ATCM-students express that there is a significant social distance between Danish and International students. Furthermore, Many ATCM-students experience loneliness during their studies due to the absence of a strong international environment, both on campus and in Horsens More broadly, ATCM-students experience that Danish society is generally not well-prepared to integrate international students. Finally, there are many expectations and requirements placed on international students that occupy their time, such as: • learning Danish • a study load of 42+hours per week • 10-12 hours student job to maintain SU-eligibility All this challenges VIA's ambition of high retention throughout the ATCM-programme and increased employment in Denmark post-graduation. **Suggested Solutions A** Increased cross-program activities between BK and ATCM would strengthen the opportunities for creating social bonds between Danish and international students. Outside of studies it would be beneficial to have well-supported opportunities for Danish and International students to interact socially. There already are a number of such social and academic activities, such as work-lounge and 'Danish' lunch. But they could work In addition, there needs to be a clear international student voice in VIA built environment **Experience B** Most ATCM-students come from an individual-based study environment that is characterized by inter-student competition. This clash with the teaching philosophy at ATCM, which is based on collaboration both within and between study groups. This competitive mindset is a barrier to learning and adds to student stress. **Suggested Solutions B** Lecturers should continuously emphasize that we expect collaboration rather than competition. Also, the lecturers need to cultivate opportunities that foster a collaborative study environment. **Experience C** The particular educational identity of the ATCM-programme challenges some of the students, who expected that the programme would qualify for a career as an architect either directly or as a basis for further education within the field of architecture.

	Suggested Solutions C The educational identity of the ATCM-programme and the expected professional field for graduates should be clear to all potential applicants.

3. What action are we taking?
Describe what you intend to do, including who does what, when and how - specify the start and end time of the initiative.
	Sense of Belonging & Loneliness
	
	• **ATCM-management Meetings**: Class representatives from all semesters will be invited to four annual meetings with the associate dean at ATCM. These meetings will focus on:
	   o Discussing day-to-day student life and well-being at ATCM.
	   o Encouraging participation in the BK-KSR meetings.
	   o Sharing relevant information about professional and social activities.
	   o Reviewing relevant data e.g. related to student well-being.
	
	• **Professional Activities in English across BK and ATCM**
	   • The associate dean of the ATCM-programme is investigating the possibilities of increased interaction between Danish and International Students. One option being looked into is the ministerial act regarding talent programs that could be offered to both Danish and international students.
	   • Input from the TEA discussions will be shared with ATCM staff and the new Global Engagement partner in VIA to enhance support for the international community.
	
	• **Masterclass and mentoring initiative:** ATCM – in cooperation with GE and Studieliv – has launched an initiative aimed at companies to create arrange 1-2 masterclasses per semester throughout 2nd til 5th semester. Furthermore, the initiative involves recruiting international alumni as mentors for small groups of ATCM-students.

4. What do we want to achieve with this initiative? *Describe the purpose of the initiative, including what effect you want it to have for the students.*	We aim for the students to experience to be an important part of the VIA community – we want to help them feel a sense of belonging in VIA Built Environment and on Campus. When we asked the students what they find the most important in relation to creating a good student environment, they emphasized: • A community where there is room for everyone. • Help with social integration • More social activities, both outside and within the class.
5. What signs tell us if we are on the right track? *How will you assess whether the initiative is having the desired effect? Type the characters you expect to see.*	If the assessment of the following statements is improved the next time, it will indicate if we are on the right track. Furthermore, the associate dean will follow up on the students' experience of the study environment at the ATCM-management meetings. - Sometimes I am not sure that I belong in my study programme 3,4
6. Status of the initiative *Fill in when a status is taken after e.g. 6 months or 1 year. Describe the status of the planned action.*	

	Feedback / stress
1. Theme *Insert the theme/questions from the survey that are the background for your initiatives.*	**Stress and planning** - Have you experienced feeling lonely at your study? 3,5 - Have you experienced strong stress symptoms* in connection with your study in everyday life? 3,3 **Learning and feedback**

	- I feel I get enough feedback on what I do on the programme (e.g. individual or collective feedback from teachers, peers or supervisors) 3,6 - On my study programme, I continuously receive feedback on what I do 3,6 - I often find that things are difficult to understand, even though I have tried to learn it over and over again 3,4 - I often find it difficult to understand what I need to learn because it is too complicated 3,5
2. Analysis *Describe the problem in the theme/question response results. Why is it necessary to act on it? And what sustains the problem?*	**Experience A** - *Learning and feedback* The ATCM-students express that the further they get in the programme, the easier it becomes to understand both the academic content and the form of learning. This is to be expected in educational progression. More problematic, ATCM-students experience some confusion and uncertainty, especially when transitioning between semesters and new lecturers. Because there are multiple possible solutions to challenges faced in the projects, different lecturers also come up with different suggestions for the students' projects. It can be confusing for students that they get different answers depending on which lecturer they ask. On some semesters, the ATCM-students do not work on the same projects as in BK. This complicates collaboration between Danish students and ATCM students. **Suggested solution A** - *Learning and feedback* Generally, there is a desire for lecturers to provide more feedback so that it's easier for students to gauge whether they are on the right track or not. And after the exam, the ATCM-students would appreciate more comprehensive feedback on the strength and weaknesses of their projects. When lecturers spot groups that are doing something well, it would also be great if they would communicate this to the class – that way the groups can learn from each other and generally foster a collaborative environment. **Experience B** - *Stress and planning* Many ATCM-students experience stress during their studies. This is not unexpected considering the workload they lift, as mentioned above. This is exasperated by their high level of academic ambition. They put a lot of effort and time into work, studies, and Danish lessons. International students are often hesitant to approach lecturers with various questions, fearing they might ask "stupid" questions. **Suggested solution B** - *Stress and planning* Courses in stress management courses could be beneficial. *Note from KATK and LOKA: Stress prevention would be preferable.* It's important for students to receive recognition from their lecturers when they fulfil or exceed our academic expectations. This gives them a sense that they are on the right track. Educational planning is crucial as well: • The timing of lecturers' trips to China (TCU) and their availability is inconvenient. It's important that students have proper access to at least some of their lecturers throughout the semester • Students need to know where they can go for guidance during the project phase. • Company dating coincides with the innovation course in Horsens, making it impossible for students to participate in both.

	• In some semesters, students feel that the organization of subjects, especially the sequence of subjects in relation to their learning needs, has not always been well thought out. Furthermore, it is important that the lecturers' attitude is warm and welcoming, so the students feel that they can approach them with questions.
3. What action are we taking? *Describe what you intend to do, including who does what, when and how - specify the start and end time of the initiative.*	**Stress and Planning / Learning and Feedback** • **Feedback Dialogues**: The associate dean for ATCM will discuss with ATCM lecturers how we can strengthen feedback to the students regarding their academic progress. • **Stress Management**: VIA Built Environment will investigate possibilities for providing ATCM-students with techniques for preventing and managing stress.
4. What do we want to achieve with this initiative? *Describe the purpose of the initiative, including what effect you want it to have for the students.*	We aim to help students manage the pressure they experience. Additionally, we want to provide more explicit feedback to reduce uncertainties regarding their academic progress. When we asked the students what they find the most important in relation to creating a good student environment, they among others mentioned: • A clear framework setting and expectation alignment – if students find an assignment framework clear, it can help them reduce stress. • Courses in stress management. • Important that the attitude among teachers constructive and encouraging – because it makes us as students dare to ask questions.
5. What signs tell us if we are on the right track? *How will you assess whether the initiative is having the desired effect? Type the characters you expect to see.*	If the assessment of the following statements is improved the next time, it will indicate if we are on the right track. Furthermore, the associate dean will follow up on the students' experience of the study environment at the ATCM-management meetings. **Stress and planning** - Have you experienced feeling lonely during your study? 3,5 - Have you experienced strong stress symptoms* in connection with your study in everyday life? 3,3 **Learning and feedback** - I feel I get enough feedback on what I do on the programme (e.g. individual or collective feedback from teachers, peers or supervisors) 3,6 - On my study programme, I continuously receive feedback on what I do 3,6 - I often find that things are difficult to understand, even though I have tried to learn it repeatedly 3,4 - I often find it difficult to understand what I need to learn because it is too complicated 3,5
6. Status of the initiative *Fill in when a status is taken after e.g. 6 months or 1 year. Describe the status of the planned action.*	