



Minutes from Programme Committee meeting in Master of Science in Economics (M-ECON)

Date: 14.02.2019

Location: T435

Attendees: Roberto J. Garcia, Mette Wik, Stein T. Holden, Pia Jihan Jonsson, Sharon Nytte Mokakha

Note Taker: Kateryna Krutskykh

Agenda

Approval of call for the meeting and agenda

Approved call for the meeting and agenda.

Approval of [minutes from the meeting 19.10.18](#)

Approved minutes from the meeting 19.10.18.

Action Items

Item 1/19:	Report on status of new specialization (Food and Agribusiness Economics), new courses and course changes, and update issues from the last meeting
<i>Discussion:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food and Agribusiness Economics specialization is put on hold until 2020.• Proposed new course ECN330 International Economics in Food and Agriculture (10 ECTS) is put on hold until 2020.• New mandatory course for students in Master of Science in Economics starting in 2019 will be BUS360 Taxes, Inequality and Sustainability (5 ECTS) that will be offered in the January block.• New elective course BUS327 Financial bubbles, Crashes and Crisis (5 ECTS) will be offered from Spring 2020.

Item 2/19:	ECN301 Econometric Methods – received student evaluation score less than 3.0 – discuss proposed intervention
<i>Discussion:</i>	Some background information was shared with the programme committee concerning the measures being taken to address the instruction of ECN301. The issues raised regarding the course, for some time, is that it is taught at too high a level to be useful for students in M-ECON. A proposal that is favored by the Dean and Head of Academic Studies is to request Frode Alfnes to be responsible for ECN301. No further action is to be taken by programme committee until after the Dean reports back on that discussion.

Item 3/19:	Learning outcomes M-ECON
<i>Discussion:</i>	<p>3.1 Process for the development of learning outcome matrix for M-ECON; explanation of codes to be used</p> <p>Programme Committee will have to plan some dates for going through the learning outcome matrix for all courses under M-ECON general studies (i.e., required courses) and specializations (core courses). An attachment with the codes to be used for the indicators listed was provided. A meeting will likely be arranged in early March.</p> <p>3.2 Discuss Aug block and autumn 2018 courses under M-ECON – relation to learning outcomes, teaching/evaluation methods</p> <p>ECN301 Course level too high; exercises are good, but not enough detail on why the codes to run the program were as they were; too little capacity to interpret the results; not enough feedback on exercises (not sure why one receives good work and why someone else received ok; no mid-term evaluation was given.</p> <p>ECN302 Good and useful. The course starts from scratch and is a good refresher for those who have not had math for a while. The exam is related to the exercises.</p> <p>ECN306 The course was considered “easy” because it was pass/fail. Was ok to work in groups and talk about certain issues. One problem raised was that discussions seemed to be driven by some with views from outside economics (e.g., ecology) and in some way the course was “hijacked” by those who were negative and critical of economics. One concern is whether the course should be closed to non-economics students to help foster the class cohesion and stay closer to</p>

	<p>“mainstream” topics that could be developed further into a thesis topic. It will be important to get Arild’s perspective on what happened and to see if this was just a “one-off” case from those who took the course.</p> <p>Item to discuss in future: should ECN306 be closed to students from outside economics.</p> <p>ECN311 Good course and had a mid-term evaluation. Exam is ok, but they always include some “twists” on what they did in class or exercises. Exercises too easy relative to the final exam. Exercises are good, but it is easy to copy and share solutions to the exercises. Not enough independent work. Maybe there can be an in-class exercise where they work alone in an exam- type setting with the “twists” that are included in exam-type questions. This could be done during an exercise session and then followed up the next week with detailed explanations and feedback.</p> <p>ECN372 Good course.</p> <p>ENC320 A concern that was raised is that there is too much focus on international economics. (We are only into the second session of the course.)</p>
<i>Attachment:</i>	Learning outcomes and learning matrix

Other information

Item 1/19:	Update on the situation since the last meeting
Item information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New program, new courses and course changes 2. Update on thesis workshop, blue sphere and ECN306 – no action taken 3. Learning outcomes M-ECON approved 4. Development of learning outcomes matrix – in progress 5. Agreed that programme committee must intervene when students’ evaluation of a course or instruction receives a score below 3.0.

Discussion Items

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do the topics covered adequately reflect what is in the course description? 2. Do students perceive they get adequate training in the skills outlined in the learning outcomes, e.g., writing? 3. Do students receive adequate feedback on submitted assignments? 4. Are the examination methods appropriate, proportionate to the work and effective?
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5. Are there other student issues that can be raised relevant to the M-ECON program, the specializations or the courses?

Other discussions

Discussion over whether ECN304 should become a required course for M-ECON. This is an item to be added to a forthcoming agenda, after the work of completing the learnings outcome matrix.