



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

Date: 02.09.2019

Location: T451

Attendees: Roberto J. Garcia, Mette Wik, Stein T. Holden, Sigurd Rysstad, Sharon Nytte Mokakha

Absent: Pia Jihan Jonsson, Nour Nabil Karim, Ståle Navrud

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 14.02.19](#)

Approved minutes from the meeting 14.02.19.

Action Items

Item 1/19:	Study program report 1.1 Minor changes Specialization in Environment, Climate and Energy Learning outcomes 1.2 Evaluations <u>Of students</u> p. 7 Share of grades that are A, B, ...; 2019 A = 14%, B = 43% , C = 13% p. 8 Coursework and thesis <u>Of faculty/teaching</u> Study Barometer and course evaluations 1.3 Advisory board 1.4 SHoT action plan: social cohesion of the students What can we do socially for the students, or with the students?
Attachment:	Study program report Evaluations

<i>Discussion:</i>	<p>1.1 Minor changes</p> <p>The specialization in Environment, Climate and Energy was changed to reduce confusion surrounding the two profiles within. There are no substantive changes with the requirement under the specialization, only that students need not specify whether they have a preference for environment/climate or energy. There is ample space for flexibility to tailor the specialization according to a student's particular interest.</p> <p>Sharon suggested that the profile prescribe more financial analysis for those who are interested in energy. Mette added that the specialization could be written in a manner that says XX ECTS must be chosen from among the following prescribed courses (ECN271, BUS311, ECN380, ECN304, and other BUS courses related to finance).</p> <p>A second minor change is in the learning outcomes. It was reported that minor changes to the learning outcomes were made and are reflected in the report for the M-ECON program of 2019. There were no objections to those as presented.</p> <p>1.2 Evaluation of students/of instructors</p> <p>The grades received by students are heavily weighted towards A and B grades but in 2018 there was a notable increase in B grades with reductions in all other grades. There is high correlation between grades on thesis and overall GPA, but there are more cases where the thesis grade is lower than GPA.</p> <p>Student evaluations of the courses and instructors has generally been very good with only few notable exceptions. Nevertheless, in the Study Barometer results students rate the School more poorly, including teaching and overall satisfaction. Furthermore, in comparing the School with other programs in Norway, the overall satisfaction at the School is generally an average of the individual scores on the specific criteria. Whereas, for the other institutions the overall score tends to be higher than an average of the individual scores (tables 7 and 8 of the report).</p> <p>1.3 Advisory board</p> <p>An advisory board has been created. A meeting will be arranged in the autumn 2019.</p>
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	<p>1.4 SHoT action plan: Social cohesion and group dynamics of the M-ECON classes</p> <p>Following up on the discussion of the student evaluations of instructors and courses, it was thought that there are two aspects to consider. The inconsistencies between the students' evaluation of the instructor/courses being positive and the overall satisfaction with the program being negative, seems to suggest a dissatisfaction with the social cohesion and group dynamic that exists among the M-ECON candidates. Part of this has a physical dimension and the other has a social dimension.</p> <p>One of the student representatives commented on student well-being. One reason could be that the study facilities are limited. Second year students are offered study space, but if there is additional space after 2nd year candidates have been allocated space, then 1st year candidates should be allowed to apply for that space. This could contribute to more interaction between students and at the same time students could take full advantage of the resources that are available to the faculty.</p> <p>As for the physical work environment, establishing a lunch room for master students could also foster better dynamics. It was noted also that this was more of a long shot request.</p> <p>Sigurd noted that there is ample funding for social programs, events involving M-ECON students for 1st year, 2nd year and both classes combined to improve interaction and dynamics. Roberto and Kateryna will address this during the information meeting in October.</p>
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<i>Item 2/19:</i>	Learning outcome matrix
<i>Attachment</i>	Learning outcomes matrix
<i>Discussion:</i>	<p>A learning outcome matrix was produced for the M-ECON required courses. The matrix will be extended to include all 300-level courses required under a specialization. Mette suggested that the M-30 ECON be included in the matrix. The program leader will take on these activities and present it at the next meeting for discussion. It will be requested that the students take on this exercise to confirm whether the faculty's perception of the matrix matches the students' perception of the learning methods, assessment methods, and the alignment of the subject matter with the learning outcomes.</p>

Item 3/19:	Joint specialization proposed for 2020-21 academic year
<i>Discussion:</i>	The limited number of M-ECON students prevents the creation of another specialization and new courses under the program. A specialization in Agribusiness and Food Economics would either have to be a joint specialization or a specialization under the Business curriculum. Core courses under the specialization would include economics (ECN330 Economic Integration and Trade Liberalization) and business (Supply Chain Management and/or Mergers and Acquisitions). Roberto will have to discuss with Sigurd and Jens to see whether and how we could include economics students in a joint specialization with Business or in specialization under the M-ØA program.

Item 4/19:	ECN304 Behavioral Economics as a required course under M-ECON?
<i>Discussion:</i>	An earlier discussion involved whether ECN304 should be added to the required courses under the M-ECON program. No student representatives were present at the time this was discussed. However, the general consensus was that there were too many required and core courses already. ECN304 would essentially cut into the flexibility to take electives under the specializations. It is acknowledged that the course would be very useful both in terms of theory and methods. It would be useful to get student input into this discussion. For now, it will be included among the prescribed electives under the specialization and the general studies option.

Item 5/19:	Do we need a thesis workshop beyond what ECN305 and ECN306 provide?
<i>Discussion:</i>	The intention of ECN305 and ECN306 is to help with problem definition, and writing and researching a thesis topic. No further workshop is desired for M-ECON candidates.

Item 6/19:	Other issues and plan for semester/year 6.1 Learning outcomes matrix for ECN300-level courses under specializations 6.2 Visit of the School as part of the accreditation process
<i>Discussion:</i>	The School will be visited by the accreditation body in October. Members of the program council will likely be asked to meet with representatives of the accreditation body to discuss specifics on the School and the M-ECON program. Specific recommendations/requirements that come about from their

	visit will be shared with the program council during the next meeting in November.
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Item 7/19:	Survey for new students Autumn 2019
<i>Attachment:</i>	Survey results 2019