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CAS Committee consultation response on Phase 3 in the Inclusive Process of Implementing the Master's Reform at Arts

This document represents the CAS Committee's response to the final proposal for the reform of MA programs on Arts.

Given that the faculty has limited the consultation parties to a narrow group of institutional bodies, the CAS Committee's response is more diverse and less cohesive than otherwise. This approach was chosen to ensure that as many perspectives as possible are represented despite the limited extension of the invitation to respond.

The structure of the responses mirrors the list structure of the intended reform changes, as listed on p. 8-10 in the consultation material. The response further contains a remark about the preliminary implementation plan, included for orientation in app. 3 + 4.

1. Social studies/Language and area studies

We (LBAS and AIS) support efforts to maintain and develop propaedeutics and to strengthen the language element in the Language-Based Area Studies BA framework. The language element should not be reduced, because we need to secure students' language competences. However, we disagree with the proposed rigid constraint, "The language element will be the only component with separate teaching" (p. 9). To create attractive and recognizable area study profiles, a new BA program in Area studies must include both language and area-specific content. Considering the limited budget frame for teaching hours, the staff ask for more flexibility and academic freedom in organizing teaching to ensure the right balance between language, area and joint elements in the new study regs. For example, a course may combine joint lectures (forelæsninger) with area-specific classroom instruction (holdundervisning).

When settling a minimal viability condition on yearly enrollments (p.9), AUs obligation to maintain and develop 'small disciplines' of critical significance to society must be considered. CAS currently receives 1.6 mill pr program p.a. for CS, ISA, BRA, RUS to fulfill this obligation.

Especially, ISA studies which holds the national obligation to offer Hindi in Denmark, see two ways to meet this responsibility: a reopening of currently paused intake for the BA in ISA from 2026. An inclusion of Hindi in the future LBAS BA framework. Furthermore, we see great potential in adding Hindi to the list of languages taught as a tillægskompetence to all AU students, building on the successful experience and high demand for those courses.

We (BRA studies) have a strong interest in strengthening Brazilian Studies as a knowledge area. We see great potential in adding Brazilian Portuguese to the list of languages taught as a tillægskompetence and in fostering research activities - for

instance by funding a PhD position¹ or short-term fellowships - in the context of the Center for Brazilian and Global Affairs (center application currently under review). These investments would mean important steps toward a clearer definition of what a "knowledge area" is in the absence of a degree program.

2. History and Philosophy

We (AFI) support the decision to maintain two independent MA programmes in Philosophy and History of Ideas with an increase in joint courseload (samlæsning).

We (AFI) support the proposed minimal viability condition for two independent programmes that requires a yearly enrollment of at least 20 students (philosophy) and 10 students (history of ideas), measured as a 3-year average.

CAS COM has not received inputs from dep. of History.

3. Theology and Religious studies

We (RS) believe that to ensure an attractive MA in religious studies, there is an even greater need to think across the different programs and engage in interdisciplinary collaborations and programs/courses for MA students. This requires alignment at the structural level, at a minimum at the school level but perhaps also at the faculty level. We suggest a common structure to all MA programs.

We (TEO) have been asked to "investigate whether professional master's programs can be established in collaboration with the Church of Denmark". Our Head of Department and the Head of Studies have already had a meeting with the bishops in Jutland to explore possibilities. We work with a time frame for 4-year EKA being ready in 2027 in terms of a "forsøgsordning" (2 x 10 ECTS per semester).

We (TEO) wish a strong focus on maintaining "core theological disciplines" to be competitive with the candidates from KU and to meet the expectations from potential applicants and the Church of Denmark. While we appreciate interdisciplinary explorations, we believe it is difficult to maintain the core disciplines in shortened, truncated programs.

4. Interdisciplinary MA programs

We (CAS COM) would encourage a more inclusive wording regarding the "incorporation of expertise" from discontinued programs into those who are "maintained" and "take over" legal requirement (p.10). To foster successful collaboration across existing disciplines and programs when developing the new interdisciplinary MA programs, the holistic plan should clarify uncertainties about the level of inclusion/exclusion and assimilation/integration of programs.

CAS COM has repeatedly called for a strategy to support better collaboration across disciplines, cf. inputs to [phase 1](#).

¹ For inspiration, KU opened three Ph.D. positions for Greenland and Arctic studies, Polish, and Turkish, with the earmarked extra funding for småfag from forskningsreserven <https://jobportal.ku.dk/phd/?show=163115>.

We (SHM) noted that words like 'sustainable' and 'heritage' were still recognised as being important, but they have ended up as free-floating "nice words" to attach to vague ambitions. We must recognise that these fields have got substance, and 'heritage' is a specialist field. If a future MA in digital cultural heritage is developed, we recommend focusing strongly on the substance that is attached to digital, e.g. 'cultural heritage', and avoiding a too narrow 'digital' focus on 'technology', which isn't very well resourced.

5. Implementation plan

We (CS, RS, TEO, LBAS staff + student reps) want to alert attention to the envisioned 'accelerated' implementation plan for launching new 'special' BA-educations with propaedeutics by Sep. 2026. Exactly these programs have the most demanding task of restructuring and merging study elements and need a more realistic time plan to develop robust study regs. Especially, since productive development work cannot start until we receive a ministerial decision about the propaedeutics standards for each program (30/60 ECTS normering).

In case the current propaedeutics standards continue, we must prepare for a situation in which students finalize their BAs in different tempi, e.g., students with 'merit' from high school after 3 years; +30 ECTS students after 3,5 years; +60 ECTS students after 4 years. 2026-intake students with a legal requirement for the new MA programs (launched by Sep. 2030) thus risk ending with a gap year or gap semester in the transition between BA and MA.

To avoid jeopardizing students' legal requirements or launching a new MA with a limited number of winter intake students, our recommendation is to adjust the time plan to better meet the complex realities. Hence, new 'special' BAs with propaedeutics should start by Sep. 2027, and from Sep 2030, graduates from these programs may gradually enroll (on summer or winter intake) in the new MA programs.

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