

SU POLICY

The SU-grant is a benefit that ensures our right to free and equal access to education, no matter where we were born or what our parents make. Therefore, the SU-grant is essential in terms of maintaining the high level of education that we have in Denmark today. It is important to DSF that the SU-grant remains the foundation that ensures that nobody will be prevented from getting an education by his or her economic situation, and that no one is forced to work alongside their full time studies. Therefore, the SU-grant should always be at a level where it is possible to focus solely on your studies.

The SU-grant and society

The SU-grant should cover expenses for housing, food, study related expenses and transportation. Nevertheless, it is important that we as students also have the opportunity to participate in society and that we can choose not to work if we are under pressure. That means that the SU-grant should not just enable us to barely survive, but be at a level where it is possible to have stable personal finances. This can of course be solved by increasing the SU-grant. However, it could also be resolved by addressing the discrepancies between our income and our expenses in other ways, for example by increasing housing subsidies, lowering prices for public transport or implementing a tax deduction for study related expenses. DSF believes that all opportunities for decreasing the discrepancies between income and outcomes for students should be investigated.

For all intents and purposes, being a student is considered a full time occupation. Therefore, DSF believes that student's work conditions should be equated to those in ordinary employment. Among other things, that means that we as students should be able to receive travel deductions, deductions for purchasing student literature as well as the possibility of earning employment deductions. It is important to note that there are a number of benefits connected to a grant in comparison with subsidiary initiatives or tax deductions. The grant allows us students to control our money and make our own prioritizations. Subsidies and deductions should therefore never replace an actual grant. As prices and salaries change, the SU-grant should follow. If the SU-grant is not properly regulated and prices increase, students will experience deteriorated living conditions. To make sure that students' conditions are not deteriorated in relation to the rest of society, DSF believes that the SU should be regulated in relation to salary development.

SU and the wage ceiling

The SU-grant should be enough for us students to live on while we study. Therefore, it should be an option to accept a student position alongside your studies, either because we want work experience within our profession or to make more money. Because of this, fribeløbet¹ is very important to us as students.

DSF believes that it is important to have the wage ceiling (fribebet) to secure, that the student positions that are offered are set to a number of hours that make them possible to combine with a full time study. Having a wage ceiling while studying will ensure that students with a high income receive less SU, as they have less need for it. At the same time, it reduces the incentives to offer student positions with a high amount of weekly hours, as fewer students will apply for them, which can lead to more student positions with a workload that is actually possible to combine with a full time education. However, there should not be a limit to your income while studying if you are not a SU recipient.

A flexible SU-system

In DSF we believe, that it is important that we as students have the opportunity to choose to immerse ourselves further in a course, use more than the allotted time on our master's thesis or accept a relevant job alongside our studies. These are all examples of things that can complement our education but which are at the same time hard to combine with the strict requirements on activity or the limit in SU-klip².

The wellbeing of students is at a lower level than ever. We are seeing far more sick leaves because of stress, depression and anxiety than before. These problems can get worse by the student losing their SU-grant before finishing their studies. Especially the activity requirements built into the SU system contribute to lowering the wellbeing of students.

As an amplifier of the already inadequate progress reform, the activity requirement threatens to eradicate students' economic livelihoods if they are delayed. In addition, students may mistakenly lose their SU due to long administrative processing, postponed examinations or sick leave. DSF therefore believes that the activity requirement must be abolished. We fundamentally believe that a sufficient and secure livelihood helps to ensure students' completion of their studies and the ability to be immersed throughout the study period. DSF therefore believes that students should be able to get SU as long as they are studying.

¹The amount you are allowed to make while still maintaining your SU-grant

² SU-klip are the number of months you can receive SU. One "klip" is one monthly stipend. Students are allowed 70 SU-klip (5 years and 10 months of SU-grant)

Meanwhile, situations can occur where students are in need of a new education or where they during their studies become interested in a different field. Yet again, the limit of SU-klip prevents a flexible educational system as well as the desire for lifelong learning. It is important that it is possible to change the direction of your education, which is why it should also be possible to receive SU-grant during a supplementary course no matter if it is between bachelor and master or between secondary and higher education.

Many students spend a semester abroad to study at other educational institutions, which is of great value to society. It is therefore important that it continues to be possible to receive SU while attending education abroad. Increased internationalization is not only of gain when Danish students go abroad to learn, but also when international students come to Denmark. Barriers or discriminatory treatment between Danish and international students can prevent this. DSF therefore believes that international students should be equated to Danish students in the SU-system.

Besides the flexibility for the average student, it is also important that there is room in the SU-system for people who have a harder time completing their education due to special circumstances. This for example applies to students who are parents, have disabilities or students who for other reasons are disadvantaged. It is therefore important to make sure that these initiatives are sufficient and accessible for students who need them.

SU-loans and student debt

The SU-loan should never replace the SU-grant and students should therefore never have to put themselves in debt to survive. The SU-loan should be a voluntary supplement to the SU-grant. The interest structure for SU-loans has two parts today, a fixed interest rate during your studies and a floating rate after studies are concluded. In times with a high market interest rate the current structure contributes to students receiving favorable lending terms. However, in times where market interest rates are low the SU-loan is usually raised. This is inexpedient as the state can then gain from putting students in debt. Therefore, the interest rate that applies while the student is actively studying should be changed to a floating rate like the current rules for students who have completed their education. An interest rate cap should however be added during active study years.

It is DSF's opinion that opportunities to apply for loans today are good but that students should also have the opportunity of covering larger amounts associated with life as a student. This could for example take the form of loans to cover advances and deposits on apartments.

DSF believes that the SU loan should be a fixed yearly amount that students themselves can dispose of. Many students are today forced to become indebted to make their everyday life work, as the SU-grant is not large enough to cover the real expenses of living that are connected to their studies. We never believe that it should be necessary to put yourself in debt to be able to study, but as long as final loans (slutlån) exist, the opportunity of taking them should be expanded. It should therefore be possible to take out final loans from the moment that you can no longer receive SU until the day that your studies are finished. To counteract the problems a larger SU-debt may cause later in life, all students with a large SU-debt should be offered impartial debt counselling.

The SU is a cornerstone when it comes to securing social mobility and a high level of education. To improve the SU, DSF believes that:

- For us as students to be able to focus on our studies, the SU-grant should at a minimum cover expenses like housing, transportation, food and study related expenses.
- Students should as a minimum have access to the same tax deductions and benefits that people who are employed have.
- The limit on how much you can earn while receiving SU should be maintained, so that there is an economic incentive for students to focus on their studies rather than working.
- You should be able to receive SU as long as you are studying
- International students should be equated to Danish students in the SU-system
- SU loans should be a voluntary supplement to the SU-grant and if a substantial debt is acquired, impartial debt counselling should be offered.