

# 1 EDUCATION QUALITY

2 Education quality has many facets and is primarily something that occurs in interactions between  
3 the learning situation, students, teachers and academic content. Therefore, it is not easy to establish a precise  
4 definition of quality, but DSF works with an understanding of quality that contains the following:

5 A high-quality education must:

- 6 • give the student a deep understanding of the academic field.
- 7 • give the student practical skills within their academic area.
- 8 • enable the student to use relevant scientific method(s) and/or  
9 artistic method(s).
- 10 • enable the student to reflect critically on academic substance and its methods.
- 11 • enable the student to apply the taught and to relate it to the outside world.
- 12 • give the student the tools for learning throughout life.

13 DSF believes that all students must have an education of high quality, which meets the above  
14 through a teaching that activates and motivates the student. This is largely something that is  
15 created locally and will vary from degree to degree. However, there are a number of settings and  
16 preconditions for quality educations that must be in general.

## 17 **Meaningful educations**

18 The baseline for university educations is research-based educations. An  
19 education that are research-based means the teachers as a rule must be active  
20 researchers, within their field in which they are teaching, that the teaching involves the most relevant  
21 methods and research and that the teaching introduces the students to scientific methods and  
22 gives them the opportunity to conduct independent research.

23 For the artistic higher educations applies that the educations also must be  
24 research-based. In addition, the teachers should have a connection to the artistic practise.  
25 The teaching is based on the relevant methods and tools that are continuously challenged and  
26 developed with involvement of the student, thereby introducing the students to the artistic methods  
27 and giving them the opportunity to practice the art independent.

28 Research-based also means that there should be a sufficient research coverage of our educations.  
29 Research coverage means that the educational institutions must have a  
30 research environment, that research in the relevant areas of an education and that there must be  
31 an adequately number of researchers to conduct the teaching. In addition, it is central  
32 that some of the researchers are not systematically bought out from their teaching obligations so that some  
33 areas of the research field never becomes a part of the education.

34 When analysing research coverage, it is important to look at the education with a holistic take.  
35 An important tool when analysing the research coverage is the so-called STUD/VIP-ratio, ergo the number  
36 of students per researcher. What is an acceptable level varies across educations and  
37 must be determined locally.

38 A general tendency is more students per researcher. More students  
39 per researcher provides a poorer basis for creating activating and involving  
40 teaching activities, where the students have the opportunity to engage in real dialogue with a researcher.  
41 This poses a problem for the research foundation of our educations and thereby the quality. This  
42 problem must not be solved through dimensioning; instead, it should be solved through employing more researchers.

43 The same conditions must be met for the artistic educations with consideration to the  
44 artistic academic coverage of the education.

45 One of the basis prerequisite for providing an education is a sustainable research environment. An  
46 important prerequisite for the function of education is the fact that research-based knowledge  
47 in itself has value and provides societal relevance in a broad sense and in the long term and therefore  
48 education neither can nor should be defined based on the job market's needs.

49 Long higher educations are organized with a bachelor degree and a master's degree.  
50 Master studies is crucial for the development of many of the academic skills that are  
51 special for the university educations through a high level of independence, specialization and  
52 research basis. Therefore, it is important to maintain the legal requirement that ensures the right to be  
53 admitted to the master's degree study that is an extension of the student's  
54 bachelor degree. This also assures more education, which benefits all. At the same time, DSF believes  
55 that the legal requirement must be expanded so students, who have completed a bachelor's degree but  
56 do not continue directly on the related master program, keep the right to be enrolled in  
57 the subsequent master's study or studies for minimum three years, after they have finished their  
58 bachelor degree. It must be ensured that the same number of students that are admitted to a bachelor  
59 program will have the opportunity to continue to the subsequent master's program.

60 Higher education degrees are by nature outward looking and it will weaken the  
61 education quality if students are limited to only educate themselves within their own  
62 institutions. Therefore, students must be ensured flexibility in their education, as well as in  
63 transitioning from a bachelor program to a master's program. This means that students must be  
64 ensured the possibility to go on exchange to another higher education  
65 institution, just as it is a strength for the Danish institutions whenever  
66 external students participates in a course. A positive side of the division between  
67 bachelors programs and master's programs is that the students are given the opportunity to change  
68 education or institution. The experience of and maintaining a good  
69 education quality are inextricably connected to the individual student, which is why it is of great value to  
70 assure a good match between the student and the academic content. Therefore, students must be ensured  
71 flexibility when switching institution from a bachelor program to a master's program. At certain educations,  
72 internships and/or project-oriented programs are either an integrated part of the education or  
73 an offer. It is central that these courses has a relation to the students'  
74 academic professionalism, just as it is essential that the conditions for the course ensures  
75 quality and relevance to the overall education.

76 Therefore, DSF believes that:

- 77 • the basis for university educations is research-based educations.
- 78 • artistic educations must be based in artistic practise.
- 79 • research-based requires a sufficient research coverage.

- 80 • the research-based knowledge is a value in itself and thereby leads to societal relevance in  
81 a broad and long-sighted understanding.
- 82 • long higher education degrees consist of both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree
- 83 • the legal requirement for master's degree studies should be maintained and expanded to  
84 minimum 3 years after a finished bachelor degree.

## 85 **Facilitating good education**

86 A prerequisite for quality education is that our educational institutions provide a sufficient  
87 number of contact hours, where there is possibility for dialogue and academic discussions. Consequently,  
88 the education institutions should offer real full-time studies. The education institutions must  
89 offer real full-time studies, where the amount and intensity of the teaching is on a level  
90 corresponding to 60 ECTS points a year, as defined by international standards. This is unfortunately  
91 not the case at all institutions today and therefore it is necessary to determine some timetable standards locally  
92 and ensure that these are compiled in practice.

93 Besides the amount of teaching, it is also central with a variation in teaching methods.  
94 Students are different and learn differently, thus it is important with a variety in  
95 teaching methods, with different appeals to different types of students. Especially important is it that our  
96 education, in addition to traditional lectures, also contains a significant proportion of teaching in  
97 smaller groups, where there is a possibility for real dialogue between students and teachers. This  
98 also means that our teachers master the language, in which they are teaching, to a degree that ensures clear  
99 and understandable teaching for both Danish and international students. At the same time, good  
100 physical, psychological and social settings, which contribute to learning and dialogue, must be ensured.

101 Access to guidance and feedback is also essential parts in a quality education. Every  
102 assignment and exam must end with the possibility for comprehensive feedback from a teacher, before  
103 the complaint deadline. A grade is not considered sufficient feedback. Furthermore, a  
104 passed/not-passed assessment of an exam, is not sufficient feedback on the  
105 academic performance. Passed/not-passed exam should therefore always be followed with comprehensive  
106 feedback. The extent and character of the feedback is adapted to the assignment and the details is to be determined  
107 in the curriculum. In addition to feedback on assignments and exams, it is also essential that the students  
108 continuously have the opportunity to speak with a teacher about their academic performance. Feedback  
109 can, for example, be supported by open-door policies, even though this is not a sufficient  
110 form of feedback in itself. Therefore, students must be ensured meaningful feedback and guidance during  
111 their courses and projects.

112 Naturally, our teachers are central to the education quality. Besides the fact that  
113 research must ensure the academic qualifications, it is important that the teachers have  
114 good didactic skills. Therefore, the education institutions must ensure prior and  
115 continuous upgrading of the teachers didactic skills, as well as they can take initiatives  
116 as e.g. periodic evaluation of the teaching from both students and colleagues, in order to assure the quality of  
117 the didactic and academic content.

118 At the same time teaching credits in employment and promotions of the scientific staff  
119 must be a central part of the assessment, so that recruitment is not solely based on  
120 research credits. This will ensure high quality in both research and education and make sure that consideration to  
121 research are not on the expense of the education. Education and research are  
122 interdependent. Just as good education depends on good research environments as well as knowing and  
123 experienced researchers, we cannot benefit from good research without good education. Therefore,

124 all institutions must adopt policies for requirements and assessments of the scientific staff  
125 teaching credits at the various levels of employment, e.g. through use of  
126 teaching portfolios or test lectures. Likewise, students must be included in  
127 hiring scientific staff to ensure that the teaching qualifications is an  
128 important criterion. Students must be involved in the collegiate bodies when employment policies  
129 are determined end may also have the opportunity to be included in assessment committees.

130 The use of external teachers can also contribute positively to our educations, under the right  
131 conditions. However, to ensure the quality and consistency of the rest of the program, each course should  
132 have a responsible for the course, who is a full-time scientific employee. At the same time, the proportion  
133 of external teachers must never get to high compared to the proportion of permanent scientific  
134 staff. The acceptable level is to be decided locally. Likewise, the use of student instructors can  
135 be a supplement to the teaching by scientific staff, but must never  
136 replace them. At the same time, we are critical towards the uncritical use of fixed term positions, since it  
137 gives our teachers uncertain and unattractive working conditions and can lead to a loss of knowledge  
138 along with a precarious learning environment. On the artistic educations a high proportion of  
139 permanent positions can be unsuitable, as the teachers ties to the artistic practise must  
140 be ensured, so the students are presented to a variation in approaches to the artistic  
141 practise.

142 It is also crucial that the exam, completing a course, is in extension of the  
143 teaching and supports the goals of the course. In order to assure the quality of the exam, the content of the course  
144 and to ensure the legal requirement of the student, it is essential, that the exam regularly is subjected to external  
145 censorship and that the examination forms are regularly revised. DSF wishes to increase the requirement, so  
146 that minimum 1/2 of all exams must be subject to external censorship. Furthermore, all exams must  
147 be subject to censorship. In addition, it is important that the censor corps reflects the level and  
148 have relevant competences for the exams they are a part of.

149 It is important that the purpose of learning does not become a narrow focus on passing the exams and that  
150 the best way to measure a student's abilities is not through grades. Because of this, each local institution should  
151 have the freedom to decide the most appropriate assessment. The current legal requirement for restriction  
152 on the proportion for passed/failed exams limits this freedom.

153 Accordingly, DSF believes that:

- 154 • the education institutions must provide real full-time studies with a reasonable amount  
155 of teaching.
- 156 • a variation in teaching methods and teaching in smaller groups is essential.
- 157 • everyone must have continuous access to meaningful guidance and feedback.
- 158 • teachers must prior and continuously get their didactic skills upgraded.
- 159 • the institutions must set policies for assessment of teaching credits, that  
160 must be a central part of the assessment in recruitment and promotions, and  
161 the students must be involved in hiring processes.
- 162 • the use of external teachers and student instructors should not be a substitute for  
163 teaching by permanent scientific staff, but it can be a good supplement.
- 164 • the form of an exam must be an extension of the course and support the learning outcome.
- 165 • all exams must be subjected to censorship and minimum 1/2 must be subjected to external  
166 censorship.
- 167 • the restriction on passed/not-passed exams must be abolished.

## 168 **Digital learning**

169 Many actors emphasizes the use of digital learning as a way of improving  
170 our educations. Digital learning contains a number of potentials to strengthen the quality in our  
171 educations e.g. optimization of learning outcome, use of simulation training and ensuring  
172 better communication, but also some pitfalls.

173 It is central, that digital learning becomes a supplement to the physical teaching and  
174 the meeting between students and teachers and between students and not a replacement  
175 of this. Digital learning should be a tool, that increases interaction and discussion, not  
176 a tool that limits this, and should be used to activate the students more and give them a better opportunity  
177 to participate actively in the teaching. At the same time, digital learning can  
178 allow the student to experiment with projects that otherwise would not be possible  
179 to do. In addition, the use of digital learning tools, such as simulation, virtual reality  
180 (VR) and digital learning games (DLG), can be seen as a positive supplement to the teaching.

181 Finally, it is a prerequisite for successful digital learning that it is not established on  
182 the cost of the quality of the teaching, for example by limiting the number of  
183 confrontation hours, or the management forcing this on the students and  
184 teachers. Digital learning must be used where it makes sense from a local academic and  
185 didactic point of view.

186 Digital learning can also be used as a way to open the higher educational  
187 institutions and offer learning throughout life by offering courses that  
188 largely use digital learning elements. However, the high quality is crucial,  
189 which is why we are not talking about offering massive open online courses that,  
190 due to poor quality, cannot replace traditional education forms for  
191 full-time students. Instead, the higher education institutes should use  
192 digital learning tools to make simple, limited courses, primarily targeted  
193 master graduates, with clear aims for feedback and teacher-dialogue, in spite of few  
194 physical meetings. This way it is possible to ensure that graduates has the possibility to  
195 update their knowledge, even though their everyday lives prevents participation in physical  
196 teaching on a weekly basis.

197 Therefore, DSF believes that:

- 198 • digital learning must be a supplement to the physical teaching, and should  
199 activate the students.
- 200 • digital learning must be used on the basis of local academic and didactic considerations.

## 201 **Assuring quality and development**

202 Managements and politicians have a responsibility to establish good settings for quality-educations,  
203 but the development and quality assurance of our educations is primarily a local  
204 task, which is the student councils responsibility. The study councils must be assured full competence and  
205 autonomy in matters related to content and organization of our educations. The  
206 study councils shapes the curriculum, appoints the study leader and facilitates the  
207 continuous evaluation of our educations. Besides, the parity in the study councils  
208 must be maintained.

209 Weakening the collegiate bodies, including students' within these, is an  
210 attack on the quality of our educations.

211 The ongoing student evaluation of courses is an important prerequisite for  
212 developing the quality. All courses must be evaluated, but the type of evaluation and the frequency must be  
213 adjusted the specific course. How the evaluations are organized must be determined in the collegial  
214 bodies, where students must be involved. The teachers and management should always take  
215 the evaluations seriously and act upon the results of the evaluations. At the same time, it  
216 is important that the raw data from the evaluations is qualified by the  
217 study councils.

218 The collegial bodies are central for student influence and the democratic process  
219 at the universities. They contribute to ensure quality teaching, research and processes  
220 at the education institutions. Therefore, it is essential that the influence and autonomy  
221 of these are maintained and that the students' legal rights within these bodies are upheld.

222 The impartial and external views on our educations are an important element  
223 in the quality assurance of our educations. This is done by different  
224 accreditation processes, but also by the institutions themselves inviting external experts  
225 to peer-review single studies. DSF does not believe that accreditation, as  
226 done by the Danish Accreditation Institution, is an optimal way to ensure quality  
227 in our educations. This is because accreditation can be used politically and it is important  
228 to be aware that quality ensuring of our educations is not political. At the same time,  
229 institutional accreditation can lead to a certain amount of standardization of our institutions. Still,  
230 DSF believes that institutional accreditation is a better compromise, since it is not  
231 as bureaucratic and resource-intensive as the previous rotation accreditation. Furthermore,  
232 it is essential that DSF work to ensure that students are involved in all parts of  
233 the accreditation process. Both as interview persons at the institution, as a part of  
234 accreditation panels and when decisions are made in the Accreditation Council.

235 Consequently, DSF believes that:

- 236 • the study councils must be ensured full competence and autonomy in questions about the content  
237 and organization of our educations.
- 238 • the collegial bodies as well as the students rights and influence within these must be  
239 maintained.
- 240 • all courses must be evaluated. The evaluations must be taken seriously and there should be acted  
241 upon the results.
- 242 • the impartial and external view on our educations are positive, but must  
243 not draw away resources from our educations.