

Teaching at Political Science

Department of Political Science

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Introduction

Managing the task of teaching is an important part of being employed at the Department of Political Science. Teaching is also an important part of the department's identity. High-quality teaching and study programmes, and delivery of highly qualified graduates to the Danish and international labour markets is thus an essential part of our mission.

Quality in teaching is, among other things, about research-based teaching. This means that we have researchers who teach, and also that (at Master's degree level in particular) we have research-like teaching; i.e. students working on individual research problems and analyses of their own choosing. Furthermore, quality is also about ensuring that the teaching involves the latest literature and knowledge in different areas, and that the teaching is organised on the basis of a carefully prepared pedagogy and didactics, which promote the students' learning. Here, it is particularly important to consider student activities outside classrooms, including to plan teaching to provide student activities and preparation with the most opportune conditions. At the Bachelor's degree programme, this is ensured by combining lectures with classroom teaching and by preparing weekly work-tasks (ugesedler) to provide guidance for the student's individual and group activities.

Half of the appointment as associate professor and professor is dedicated to teaching, while for assistant professors it is a little less than half. For postdocs and PhD students, teaching make up a minor proportion. For the individual employee, time of teaching is adjusted through the 'K-system', which is described on the website. K-standards for various teaching assignments also appear here. As a starting point, teaching is coordinated in the sections. This means that the distribution of various teaching assignments is handled within the sections and is communicated from the head of section to the director of studies and to the study administration.

Teaching methods at the Bachelor's degree programme

Teaching at the Bachelor's degree programme in Political Science and Social Studies and at the Bachelor's supplementary subject in Social Science contains a number of core curriculum subjects in the fields of political science. The learning objectives for the various subjects are available in the Study regulations and the Curriculum, but in general, the main purpose of the Bachelor's degree courses is to provide a broad and general introduction to the most important theories, methods and results within the subject areas.

Most subjects at the Bachelor's degree programme are structured as a combination of *lectures* and classroom teaching carried out by *student instructors*. In these subjects, lecturers are responsible for the primary academic coordination including the preparation of weekly work tasks and for coordinating the content of the teaching with the student instructors, who have a certain degree of freedom to plan the teaching in their own classes. The coordination typically takes place at weekly meetings between lecturers and student instructors. In almost all subjects, PhD students may teach together with student instructors, and, in individual subjects, post.docs/assistant professors may also

take on the instructor role. The exam is organised by lecturers, but the final papers are almost always corrected by a large group from the section. It may be beneficial to have PhD students and post.docs who have taught in the subject correct some of these papers.

In some Bachelor's degree subjects (for the moment 'Political Institutions' and 'Policy evaluation'), teaching is organised as a combination of lectures and classroom teaching by academic staff or so-called course instructors; i.e. by PhD students, post.docs/assistant professors, associate professors or professors. A certain overlap between lecturers and classroom teachers may be an advantage, always provided that, in general, PhD students are not giving lectures. In these cases, the coordination takes place among the group of lecturers and course instructors. The responsibility for preparation of weekly work tasks and weekly coordination may be taken care of on a rotational basis by the different members of the teaching team. Furthermore, different members of the team may take care of the organisation of the exam since it may be beneficial to recruit other members of the section to correct the exam papers (depending on the exam language).

All subjects at the Bachelor's degree level have a subject coordinator with overall responsibility for the practical planning of teaching and exam and for communication with the study administration. In addition, the coordinator acts as a project manager for the work in the team of lecturers and student instructors or classroom teachers.

In most of the subjects at the Bachelor's degree programme where lectures are combined with classroom teaching, teaching is offered in the form of two lectures and two classroom lessons per week in 13-15 weeks. In 'Methodology II', however, teaching is offered in the form of three lectures and two classroom lessons per week.

In the sixth semester at the Bachelor's degree programme, a number of Bachelor's seminars are offered where teaching takes place in small seminar classes (16 participants maximum) with a high degree of student supervision in preparation for the Bachelor's degree thesis. The teaching is carried out by academic staff with at least post.doc or associate professor level. Normally, teaching is offered in the form of three lessons per week in 15 weeks, or four lessons per week in 11 weeks followed by individual student supervision.

Danish is the language of instruction during the entire Bachelor's degree programme with the exception of the subject 'Political Institutions'. However, it is adopted by the Board of Studies that some lectures and classroom lessons may take place in English.

As mentioned, teaching at the Bachelor's degree aims at ensuring a broad introduction to the various political science fields. Consequently, every member of the academic staff is expected to be able to teach at the Bachelor's degree programme, including in at least one of the Bachelor's degree core subjects (as lecturer or classroom teacher) regardless of the possibility that the teaching subject may be somewhat far from one's primary research field.

Teaching at the Master's degree programme

Teaching at the Master's degree programme in political science and social science is offered as seminar teaching in small classes by academic staff; i.e. by PhD students, postdocs/assistant professors, associate professors or professors. There are a number of seminar forms all of which are described in detail in the Study regulations. The most important ones are described in the following:

- Political science seminars (10 ECTS) Three hours of teaching per week in 15 weeks. The type of exam varies. All re-exams are free take-home assignments of 6,000 words. Some political science seminars are held as courses in August; i.e. from 1 to 31 August.
- Political science seminars (20 ECTS) Two times three hours of teaching per week in 15 weeks. The exam form (also in connection with re-exams) is a free take-home assignment of 12,000 words.
- Core course in political science (20 ECTS). Two times three hours of teaching per week in 15 weeks. The exam form (also in connection with re-exams) is an oral examination with a synopsis.

Furthermore, it is possible for students to organise their own individual or group project seminar corresponding to 10 ECTS.

Seminars are planned approximately one semester in advance, i.e. seminar titles for the spring semester must be submitted in August the previous year, while seminar titles for the autumn semester must be submitted in January. The full seminar descriptions must be submitted a few weeks later, while the final seminar curriculum and the syllabus must be ready by the start of the semester. Additional to the seminar teaching, the Master's degree programme consists of a Master's thesis corresponding to 30 ECTS, which is supervised by a member of the academic staff holding at least post.doc/assistant professor level. However, post.docs/assistant professors are not obliged to take on thesis supervision.

Teaching outside of the department

The Department of Political Science is engaged in a number of collaborations on teaching in other degree programmes. This applies to the Flexible Master in Public Administration, the Master's degree programme in Journalism and the Erasmus Mundus programme in Global Journalism, the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes in Public Health, the Master's degree programme in International Studies as well as the Master's degree programme in Diaconia.

Expectations for teaching

As an employee you are a member of a section and as such you will be a part of this section's teaching activities. Some employees will also be associated with cross-disciplinary sections in methodology or in the political science introductory course. Staffing of the teaching tasks takes place on a decentralised basis in the section through discussions, and the head of section holds responsibility for the coordination of the discussions and for the subsequent communication with the director of studies and the study administration. In the sections, it would be advantageous to try to plan a few semesters ahead, to provide the individual employee with a general view over the teaching task.

During their PhD programme, *PhD students* must teach two courses; a Bachelor's degree course (as instructor or course instructor) and a Master's degree seminar. At the Master's degree seminar, teaching will typically take place in collaboration with an associate professor/professor (cf. memo on co-teaching). The PhD student will plan his/her teaching tasks in collaboration with the main supervisor and the section (the head of section). If the PhD student teaches in a Political Science Core Course instead of a Political Science Seminar, the PhD student must share a significant part of the responsibility for planning and conducting teaching activities, equivalent to a regular seminar. Teaching a Core Course will typically be conducted as co-teaching.

Assistant professors have an equal emphasis on research and teaching and the teaching obligations in a three year period will be 15K. A postdoc position is primarily a research position. Postdocs are required to teach 2K per full time equivalent postdoc per year. Only in very special circumstances can

a postdoc be exempted from teaching, for example if the sponsor does not accept this obligation or if the postdoc represent teaching competencies that are not relevant for the department. The department may offer to co-fund an externally funded postdoc, and thereby effectively turn the postdoc position into an assistant professor position. This decision will be taken by the department head either prior to, or as soon as possible - and no later than one year - after the person has started in the postdoc position. The decision will take into account applicant's prior teaching experience and the need for the applicant's teaching capacity in the relevant years. The teaching obligation for a full three year period (two years of external funding and one year of department funding) as postdoc/assistant professor is 15K.

During their appointment, *post.docs/assistant professors* will teach corresponding to 15K over three years. It is the responsibility of the individual post.doc/assistant professor in cooperation with the section (the head of section) and possibly a project manager to prepare a plan for the execution of the teaching in the course of the appointment. As a post.doc, you may expect to have to teach at the Bachelor's degree programme (possibly as a course instructor) and at the Master's degree programme, though the concrete planning will depend on the requirements of the section. Furthermore, post.docs/assistant professors may teach in connection with the collaboration of the department with other studies. If a post.doc/assistant professor has not taught at the department before, the first teaching course will typically be teaching in collaboration with an associate professor/professor (cf. memo on co-teaching).

Associate professors/professors must undertake teaching and student supervision corresponding to 9K per year. It is the responsibility of the individual associate professor/professor in cooperation with the section (the head of section) to continuously plan the execution of the teaching task and student supervision. As an associate professor/professor, you may expect to have to teach at the Bachelor's degree programme (possibly as a course instructor) and at the Master's degree programme, though the concrete planning will depend on the requirements of the section. Furthermore, associate professors/professors may teach in connection with the collaboration of the department with other studies (see the above).

When planning Master's degree seminars, we seek to predict the need for the number of seminars, as precisely as possible. However, we may have to cancel seminars when the actual demand is clear (in November and May). If a seminar is cancelled, the employee who was supposed to have taught the seminar will not get compensation, and subsequently, in collaboration with the director of studies, the head of section and possibly the project manager, you must revise your plan for the execution of teaching tasks.

Evaluation of teaching activities

In line with the employee's obligation to teach at the department, there is also an obligation to be a part of the teaching evaluation. The evaluation procedure is described in the memo from the department on quality assurance in teaching.

University pedagogics and courses

The academic teaching staff is expected to participate in the discussions in the sections on university pedagogics. Furthermore, post.docs/assistant professors are expected to participate in a course on pedagogics. Associate professors/professors are expected to participate in various courses on

university pedagogics, including the course on student supervision and the course on blended learning.

Co-teaching

Teachers that are not familiar with teaching at the department can be offered co-teaching with a senior faculty member the first time he or she teaches a MA seminar. In all cases this must be discussed with the study director.

Relevant links

Study regulations:

studerende.au.dk/studier/fagportaler/statskundskab/undervisning/studieordninger-og-bekendtgoerelser

Various policies and agreements, including the K-memo:

ps.medarbejdere.au.dk/politikker-og-aftaler

