

March 25, 2020

Employers Panel Meeting for BSc in Global Business Informatics (GBI) and MSc in Digital Innovation & Management (DIM)

5 February 2018, 16:00 – 18:00, room 2A08, the IT University in Copenhagen

Participants

Panel: Kirsten Nielsen, Nicolai Meelby, Simon Kiilerich Vedel, Martin Eberhard, Tanja Danna, Nina Husfeldt Clasen

The IT University (ITU): Martin Zachariasen, Baki Cakici, Marisa Cohn, Steffen Dalsgaard, Camilla Rosengaard, Anne Jensen, Anna Elizabeth Thomsen

Agenda

1. Welcome and brief round of introduction (Kirsten Nielsen)
2. Future meetings and a few formalities (Kirsten Nielsen and Aske Kammer)
 - Frequency of meetings, new Terms of Reference.
Appendix 1
3. The panel's input: increasing the intake to GBI (Steffen Dalsgaard)
4. Workshop and update from the programmes(Baki Cakici)
5. The Panel's Annual Report for 2019 (Plenum)
 - *Appendix 2*
6. Any Other Business

1. Welcome and brief round of introduction

Kirsten Nielsen, chair of the panel, opened the meeting. Baki Cakici introduced himself as new Head of DIM. Marisa Cohn introduced herself as interim Head of GBI. Steffen Dalsgaard participated at the meeting as acting Head of Business IT. Aske Kammer introduced himself as new Head of Studies.

2. Future meetings and a few formalities

Aske Kammer presented the new Terms of Reference for employers panels. The most important changes pertain to:

- Frequency of meetings. Panels will meet twice annually: in January and September.
- Purpose. The January meeting is focused on the panel's annual report, the focus of the autumn meeting is decided between panels and programmes.
- The template for the annual report, which is has been amended
- Terms for replacement within the panel

Aske informed that ITU will initiate a process for replacing panel members

The panel decided to have a third annual meeting in November as preparation for the annual report meeting in January and to invite students for the September meeting. Meeting students will give the panel a better idea about the programmes.

3. The panel's input: increasing the intake to GBI

Steffen Dalsgaard, acting Head of Department, explained that the university quality policy stipulates that programmes consider increasing their intake when they have enough well-qualified applicants that can be admitted without lowering the GPA. The GPA for GBI is currently 9.0 - well above the target of a GPA of 7.0 – but before taking any further steps, the panel was asked whether the market would be ready for more GBI graduates.

The panel supported that GBI increase its intake. "We generally need more candidates in Denmark and the level of unemployment is very low for DIM."

The panel asked if ITU on its side has capacity to support an increased intake? Vice chancellor Martin Zachariassen explained that the funding for teaching is in place, while the funding to ensure that this teaching continues to be research-based is still under negotiation with the Ministry.

4. Workshop and update from DIM and GBI

Update from DIM

Baki Cakici, Head of DIM, informed the panel that DIM has revised its curriculum and introduced a new mandatory course in programming and data processing. This is a result of a change in the specific admission criteria to the programme. The introduction of a Danish language requirement to the programme led to a dramatic decrease in qualified applicants last year corresponding to the lack of qualified international applicants. In response the programme decided to abandon the preference for applicants with technical skills and will instead provide technical skills to those who lack them so that all graduates have them at the end of the programme. Applicants who already have technical skills will get an elective instead of the new mandatory course. The only concern is that a number of students will not have a regular elective, but the programme will still allow students to make individual specialisations.

Update from GBI

Marisa Cohn, interim Head of GBI, informed the panel that there are no changes to the programme's courses, but the programme saw a significant drop in international applicants and admission. The quality of students did not go down, but the drop will affect the DIM programme and who graduates. There is still the issue of a global programme being very uniform and GBI is working to tackle that issue. Steffen added that the GPA in Introduction to Programming had possibly been lowered as a result of 'nationalising' the programme and that this is troubling and will be looked into.

Workshop

For the workshop the panel grouped in pairs and gave feedback on several statements. Baki explained that the statements represented conceptions/misconceptions about 'what employers are looking for in candidates'. He asked the panel to mark the statements as either true or false and explained that the purpose was to bring insights from the discussion back to the students, because they base their choices of what they do in the programme on their conceptions of what employers want. This would also create a direct line between panel and students that does not exist otherwise.

Before making their own statements, the panel discussed some of the concepts that are particularly contested -for example programming and what it means to know how to program.

The panel reached an understanding that some experience with programming is important in developing a logical mindset and sufficient understanding: "they need not be developers, or good

programmers, but they need to have done it to the level of understanding what happens in programming”.

The panel also gave input for focal points for new students:

- One of the important questions they should ask themselves is: do I have the right skills for what I want to do?
- Remember the human factor – education is the basis, the capability of using what you have learned is very important
- It matters less what your expertise is than being able to argue why it is important to have.
- Balance in a person is important. It is important to be good, but you also need to be a balanced person.

5. The Panel’s Annual Report for 2019

The meeting concluded with the panel discussing its annual report.

As part of this discussion, the panel expressed that need graduates who can work on top of processes and existing programmes in an organization.’ We need something about understanding that part of it is also to deal with what is at hand. You don’t get up and invent the whole world every morning’.

Marisa and Baki discussed with the panel how DIM can make some of this interest happen in the programme – ‘how can we show that mixed legacy can be interesting through cases? We are maybe telling them to much programming is exciting because you invent something new’.

All agrees that it would be relevant to teach students how to read code and make sense of it. For example, through the course Computational Literacies. The panel would be happy to help with case material and good examples.