

# **External Report**

## **Evaluation of educational environment**

Department of Peace and Conflict Research,  
Uppsala University, October 2022

## Summary

Education at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University is of high quality. The department's greatest strength is the close connection between research and teaching. Teachers who are recognized experts teach within their field, which is the preferred option in a university. The interviews with students show that they benefit from this in two ways: first, in terms of research knowledge; second, from the teachers' enthusiasm.

The department attracts a motivated, well functioning, international group of students. A high percentage of bachelor and master students complete their programmes. The department is successful in attracting students, retaining them and supporting them to successfully finish their studies in line with the learning outcomes. Alumni surveys confirm that the education is valued by future employers. The staff has clear engagement for their work plus a relatively low number of teaching hours per teacher, which increases the quality of individual courses.

The department has increased its teaching commitment and hired several new staff members. This organizational development has led to or accentuated a number of gaps in the teaching organization and its activities. The relatively few teaching hours per teacher and a high number of externally funded projects impacts the department's ability to plan its teaching activities. The department seeks to actively address this through ongoing recruitment but it is also relevant to find additional ways to retain good teachers. Improved software is needed to keep track of teaching hours.

There is room for teaching development and strengthened communication to students. Mentoring is already used to support new researchers and can thus be extended to support new teachers. Pedagogical foras, e.g. pedagogical lunches, have been practiced in the past and a renewed focus on such and similar activities is advised. Students appreciated teachers' openness and feedback, however, there is a need to make such feedback more consistent and try new ways to support student learning without overloading the teachers. Communication to international students can be improved to clarify department policies and expectations.

The department faces structural challenges to its international profile. First, the loss of the Minor Field Studies grants reduce students' abilities to do field studies. Second, there is a risk that merited student candidates and teachers are unable to join the department because of Visa conditions or other restrictions. The department should seek to address these structural issues in collaboration with the university's central administration.

# Purpose and process

The evaluation group consisted of:

Lars Löfquist (chairperson)	Uppsala universitet
Håvard Strand	Universitetet i Oslo
Elisabeth Olivius	Umeå universitet
Joakim Berndtsson	Göteborgs universitet
Izabela Karlsson	Student representative

The main purpose of the evaluation has been to assess the overall educational environment in the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University. This included the Bachelor of Social Science programme, Masters of Social Science programme and individual courses.

The department had produced a self-evaluation report which provided an overall assessment of the current state of education in relation to the 11 quality aspects. The self-evaluation was complemented with a shared folder with different teaching related material, such as course evaluations, annual reports and teaching planning spreadsheets. The Faculty of Social Sciences also shared a number of reports from evaluations of other departments at the faculty.

The evaluation group worked according to the following plan. The group had its first communication in June. The first meeting about the process was held in August. Follow up meetings were held in September, where the department's self evaluation was discussed, and in October, which addressed preparation for the field visit. The group visited the department on October 10-12. October 10 included interviews with students in bachelor and master programmes, teaching staff and administration including the head of department and the director of studies. October 11 was devoted to writing the first draft of the evaluation report. October 12 included a presentation of the findings to the project group, department and faculty plus a general discussion of these findings. This final report was submitted to the faculty on October 26, 2022.