

Resolution - Integration of international students with Norwegian language

The International Students at the University of Stavanger (UiS) are struggling with issues regarding language barriers and inclusion in the Norwegian culture. At the core of these issues are problems concerning the availability of language courses, clash of timetables, financial constraints and lack of pedagogy skills in the language courses. It is a known fact that many international students experience a common feeling of loneliness during their first semester. This can have negative outcomes and even lead to depression. Such consequences can be prevented by introducing international students to a language course, which can allow them to fully extend their knowledge about Norwegian culture and life.

Norwegian language is a mandatory requirement to feel integrated as part of the community at UiS. Even the official website of the university is not updated daily in both English and Norwegian. Students have to check both version of the website to be sure that they do not miss important notifications. If Norwegian courses are not a requirement with admissions, UiS should provide equal opportunity for all international students to acquire the necessary language skills during their studies at the university.

International students bring their culture with them from home when they arrive to this campus. They have different experiences and a different outlook on education and life, which is something the university could greatly benefit from. Unfortunately, a lack of language skills prevents them from engaging fully in student life and contributing to the development of UiS. Very few international students have Norwegian friends and this can be attributed to the fact that they do not speak the language.

Job opportunities are limited for international students due to Norwegian language requirements. Stavanger is known to be the oil capital of Europe and there are many small and big companies that offer a wide range of job opportunities. Norwegian-speaking students are at an advantage in the recruiting process even when it comes to multinational companies that operate with English as their work language. Norwegian language skills are one of the most important requirements in the job market. Another common problem for international students is that many of the presentations held by companies at the university are in Norwegian. It is understandable that Norwegian students should have some priority to some extent, but at the same time international students should not be entirely excluded. This leads to demotivated students.

Resolution

- Norwegian language courses can be proposed as elective classes with zero credit and a fail or pass result. There are many examples to promote elective language courses from all around the world that engage students.
- Introduction of language course with B1 and B2 along the same prices as A1/A2