

Universitetspladsen

RUglobal



Information and debate from Roskilde University

Number 08 · 31. januar – 21. februar 2011

Forming groups is not based on academic interests alone



- ▶ Internationalisation at RU
- ▶ Søren Juul defended his “trendy” PhD thesis

The programme Public Administration will change its name to

Politics and Administration

By: *Peter Triantafyllou, Head of Studies, Department of Society and Globalisation*

Political processes, conditions and systems have always formed essential parts of the programme. Over recent years they have, however, been further strengthened through a number of programme changes for example, the courses offered in the master's programme now increasingly target issues concerning politics, governance, democracy and public management. One of RU's mandatory bachelor courses that previously looked into institutional theory now focus on different forms of political theory. Also, efforts are being made to prepare a common mandatory first module in the master's programme focusing on politics and policy analysis. Public Administration and its organisation remain essential elements of the programme. However, the programme focus already targets and will in future more explicitly target political processes, conditions and systems that the public administration and its functions form part of.

Changing the name to Politics and Administration will thus create a better coherence between the name and the contents of the programme and provide better opportunities for further developing the programme and consolidating the interrelation between political issues

surrounding power, democracy and justice and the legal, economic and sociological elements of the programme.

It is RU's ambition to create a programme which increasingly enables students to analyse the political challenges and issues of public administration and to prepare strategies for handling and solving these challenges and issues.

RU is also planning to rename the two-year MSc programme (Public Administration), but until further notice the name change only applies to the programme Public Administration.

Never reveal your password to others!

Someone is trying to trick you into revealing your RU username and password and misuse your account. Read more here:

www.ruc.dk/en/phishingattempt

The screenshot shows an email header with the Roskilde University logo and navigation links: Education, Research, Collaboration, Departments, Library, About the University, Job Opportunities, International Students. The main body of the email contains the following text:

Frontpage > About the University > Organisation > Administration > Campus-it > Guides > Never reveal your password to others

Never reveal your password to others

And never send your password by e-mail...

Someone is trying to trick you into revealing your password so that they can misuse your account. This is called Phishing.

Phishing is a known phenomenon on the internet, where swindlers try to trick unsuspecting internet users into revealing the details of their credit card or internet bank. This usually occurs by the user receiving an e-mail, whose content tries to get the user to send his/her details by e-mail or to log onto a fake internet page that resembles a bank's login page, for example.

If you receive an e-mail that appears to come from RU's administration and where you are asked to send in your username and password, you can be 100% sure that it is an attempt at fishing.

You must never send your username and password by e-mail, since an e-mail should be regarded as an open postcard that can be read by anyone and RU's administration will never ask you to do anything like that.

The best thing to do if you receive a mail like this is to forward it with the full header to [helpdesk\(at\)ruc.dk](mailto:helpdesk(at)ruc.dk). If we get the full header, we can ensure that it is impossible to reply to the mail with RU's mail system. We cannot prevent anyone from replying from e.g. a gmail account. Click here to see how to display the full header: See full headers

Navigation links on the right side of the email:

- Education
- Research
- Collaboration
- Departments
- Library
- About the University
- Job Opportunities
- International Students

Footer text:

Welcome to RU
The History of Roskilde University
A Year at RU
Organisation
> Management
> Departments
> Administration - Campus-it
About the department
News
AV Centre
Helpdesk
Academic IT
List of it-systems
It-security
Guides
Sharing folders on Akira
Electronic delivery of project...
Find person in Outlook
Hjemmeside på RUCForsk

Tips and tricks from Campus-it

Editor's Desk

Dear reader

Do you ever wonder about the group formation here at RU? As in, really, really wonder?

At first glimpse, it's really simple. Several topics are discussed and people gather around projects according to said interests. Everyone is on a level playing field – that is until you dig a little deeper.

It appears interest of discipline is really a nonfactor when choosing partners for projects. In this issue, a brain scientist and a social psychologist unveil what really determines who's in and who's out.

"We're often attracted to those who're beautiful and cool," the psychologist says. "You feel more comfortable with people that look like yourself." Read a lot more in Jakob's candid feature on group work.

From the website to the study guide, from student reforms to Strategy 2015, RU is in the midst of a major makeover.

In this issue, we bring the latest result of this change. From the fall semester, the program Public Administration is officially no more. Instead, RU now offers a degree in "Politics and Administration".

"The ambition is to create an education that prepares the students to analyze the public administration's political challenges and equip them with the competence to create strategies that to solve those challenges."

All students enrolled in the program before september 2011 will of course still get their degree in 'Public Administration'.

On a final note, since the last edition of RUGlobal, RU has experienced the first doctoral thesis defense of the year by Søren Juul from the Department of Society and Globalization. In a "trendy" topic, no less.

However, an apparent lack of empirical substance led to some tough questions from a tough doctorate panel...

Enjoy!

Philip Michael Shange



Contents

- 35 Public Administration changing its name to Politics and Administration
- 33 Forming groups is not based on academic interests alone
- 31 Søren Juul defended his "trendy" PhD thesis
- 29 Internationalisation at RU

Publishing information

RUCnyt/RUGlobal is Roskilde University's official magazine for information and debate about the organization of the university. RUGlobal is open to all employees and students at Roskilde University to debate the educational and research organizations at the university, including questioning of common interest for research and education.

Editorial staff:

Hanne Preisler (Responsible)
Anne Frida Christiansen (Editor)
Camilla Buchardt (Editor)
Jakob Bang Schmidt (Editor)
Philip Michael Shange (Editor)
Tyson Lyall (Editor)

Cover photo:

Tuala Hjørnø

Layout, print and edition:

PrinfoParitas Digital Service, 1800 copies

Paper:

Cover: 4CC 250g.
Contents: Image Business 80g.

Address: RUCnyt, Postboks 260, DK - 4000 Roskilde, Telephone 4674 2013 eller 4674 2612, e-mail: RUCnyt@ruc.dk, www.ruc.dk/ruc/RUCnyt
Notifications: rucnyt-meddelelser@ruc.dk

Opening hours: RUCnyt/RUGlobal does not have any regular office hours. To get in contact with the editorial staff please e-mail us or contact the information office, which is located in building 04.1.

Articles: need to be handed in by e-mail. Please enclose suggestions for illustrations. Discs and other material are normally not returned. The editorial staff is allowed to shorten articles and to reject articles which are not of common interest. Articles of more than 8000 characters (about 2 pages) can normally not be expected to be published un-shortened. There is no minimum length for an article to be published. Anonymous articles are not accepted.

Upcoming deadlines:

Nr.	Articles	Notices	Publication date
9	3/2	8/2	21/2
10	24/2	1/3	14/3

- at 12 noon on the assigned date

Forming groups

is not based on academic interests alone

Ideally, you should form project groups based on academic interests, but according to a brain researcher, there are many other factors that determine which groups students choose

By: Jakob Bang Schmidt, RUGlobal
Photo: Mette Nielsen

“It is the academic interest that constitutes the basis for forming groups”, Arno Ivan Kaae, educational consultant at Roskilde University wrote in the book *Problem-Oriented Project Work*. The chapter thoroughly goes through how the process *should* take place, and the book has therefore formed the basis of many of the group formations taking place at RU. However, according to Jon Sigurd Wegener, brain researcher, MSc from RU and assistant professor at Copenhagen Business School, it is naive to believe that project groups are formed according to academic interests. Over recent years, Jon Sigurd Wegener has studied brain research – among other things the connection between decision-making processes, feelings and learning. According to him, there are a lot of social processes at play when forming a group.

The social aspect

Group work is one of RU’s trademarks. There are many arguments in favour of working in groups – you develop social competencies, learn how to plan and organise a process, and at best the groups achieve a synergy. However, before the work itself can begin, groups must be formed – an annual event at RU which most students go through several times.

Martin el-Toukhy is studying his third year at RU. He believes that the social aspect is very important when forming groups. “If during the process of forming groups you realise that some people have a completely different approach to a problem, you do not want them as your group members. You have to be on the same wavelength.”

Jon Sigurd Wegener believes that it is completely natural to get together with people who resemble yourself. “To put it cynically – one should stick to one’s own class. I believe that social differences are important when forming groups. Behavioural research shows that you feel most safe around people who resemble yourself, speak the same language, have a common frame of reference, have read the same books etc.”

Appearance

Niels Holm Jensen, master of psychology and PhD student at Department of Psychology at Aarhus University has conducted research on social psychology during recent years. He stresses that in a social context, people very quickly tie specific qualities to other people based, among other things, on their appearance. He points out that clothes play an important role in evaluating others. “Clothes signal a lot of things, such as which sub-grouping we identify ourselves with in society. New, fancy clothes signal one thing, hip hop clothes another.” According to Niels



Holm Jensen, research shows that you often choose to work with people who resemble yourself. He also stresses that attraction from the opposite sex plays a role when we choose collaborative partners. “We are often attracted to people who are beautiful and cool, and research shows that humans often believe that attractive people also have better qualities.”

Ambitions

Apart from exam periods, the period of forming groups is one of the most intense times in a semester. This is when students choose who to work with during the next months. The grading is several months away, but according to Jon Sigurd Wegener, the grading can be of importance already when forming groups. “When you grade students, you give them other things to think about besides academic interests”, he said and continued: “Each student will obviously try to get in a group where they believe the other group members



When students form project groups, there are many social processes at play. Research shows that you often form a group with people who resemble yourself.

are competent. If the overall assignment is really good, the chance of getting a good grade is bigger.”

According to student Martin el-Toukhy, choosing group members takes place on the basis of the students’ level of ambition. “There are

differences also determine how groups are put together.” According to Jon Sigurd Wegener, brain research and evolutionary biology research has shown that humans are good at spotting people who will try to cut corners; an ability that he believes is fundamental for entering into social contexts.

the surface. Not all groups are formed in the meeting rooms around the houses; they are formed in the canteen, on the train on the way home, and by the cofeemaker,” he said and continued: “The contrast between ideal and reality is far too great. The idea is that the theory will form the framework for practice, but practice shows that the theory is too unrealistic. It does not take into account whether there is good chemistry between people etc.”

According to Jon Sigurd Wegener, humans’ limited self-awareness can also be of importance to how group formations are discussed. “There are probably many students who would claim that they have made their choice according to academic competence, exclusively, but sometimes you don’t know why you choose the way you do,” said Jon Sigurd Wegener. At the same time, he states that the social selection that takes place in society, also takes place at RU.

Forming groups

Forming groups at RU is dealt with differently in each basis house, and at the individual departments. Some places spend up to one week, other places only 1½ hours. At some places, the forming of groups is planned by the students, at other places it is planned by the staff.

The ideal

Tim Jensen is studying his fourth year at RU. He believes that it is important to have clear goals for how group formations should work. However, at the same time, he points out that the lack of acknowledgement of what is actually going on could mean that you feel you are doing something wrong, if you do not live up to the ideal. Martin el-Toukhy believes that the lack of acknowledgement of how the forming of groups takes place leads to secretiveness, which at times can be downright unpleasant. “You participate in the official group formation process, but there is a lot going on beneath

some students who study at RU full throttle, and some who only study at half throttle. Such

Søren Juul defended his “trendy” PhD thesis

On Friday 7 January, associate professor Søren Juul from ISG defended this year’s first PhD thesis at Roskilde University. His thesis “Solidarity – recognition, justice and good judgement” was considered important, appealing, and even trendy

By: Tyson Lyall, RUGlobal
Photo: Frank Wagner

A special thesis that may be unvarnished, but at the same time trendy. Those were some of the words that were associated with Søren

Juul’s defence of his PhD thesis – “Solidarity, recognition, justice and good judgement”.

Even though his thesis might be trendy, the conclusion at the end of the four hour long defence taking place at RU’s large auditorium was that the thesis is more than just hot air.

Recognition and criticism

Søren Juul holds an MA in history, sociology and social sciences from the University of Copenhagen. In 2001, Søren Juul was appointed associate professor at RU at the Department of Society and Globalisation, where he conducted an in-depth study of concepts such



as recognition, solidarity and justice, taking a critical approach on social sciences. This is also evident in his PhD thesis, in which he tries to develop a normative ideal of solidarity containing both recognition and justice. The basic assumption in the thesis is that solidarity is not only equality, but very much a question of recognition of diversity.

In general, Søren Juul is strongly committed to welfare policy matters, and he has previously been a member of the Danish Alternative Welfare Commission, which was formed to counter the current Danish government's welfare commission.

In his thesis, he also uses his normative ideal of solidarity to conduct critical studies of welfare policy development trends, for example, he is not afraid of having a go at the current government's political stance on the subject.

"A solidary welfare policy must build on a completely different view on humanity and society than the current one. For natural causes, the welfare policy debate should focus on how the welfare state project can be humanised and accomplished. A solidary welfare policy should not least question the 'quid pro quo' way of thinking, and the output control that characterises all parts of the current society", said Søren Juul during his defence.

Fight to the finish

On the day, Søren Juul had plenty of opportunities to clarify his critical approach to the field when he was "under fire" for more than four hours. Besides the two official thesis opponents, professor Uffe Juul Jensen from Aarhus University and senior researcher, Nanna Kildal from the Stein Rokkan Centre in Norway, Søren Juul had to answer questions from the review committee's chairman, Bent Greve from Roskilde University and from three unofficial opponents who turned up during the defence.

The day's first official opponent, Uffe Juul Jensen spent more than one hour discussing the thesis with Søren Juul, and during the long discussion, Uffe Jensen called Søren Juul's work both appealing and important, but also criticised it for being a bit unrealistic and elitist. Several times, the discussion led to laughter from the audience, for example when the opponent questioned why Karl Marx had been left out in the thesis.

Marx has not been mentioned in Søren Juul's thesis. Instead, Søren Juul has primarily relied on the modern German sociologist Axel Honneth's recognition theory. Particularly, this modern approach was the object of discussion between the two men several times.

Søren Juul made no secret of the fact that he works with modern sociological concepts.



Additionally, he was not slow to take part of the credit for the fact that the concept "recognition" ranks high on the sociological agenda.

"Among other things, it is also because of me that recognition has become so generally accepted".

A popular event

During the long defence process, it slowly thinned out in the crowd of audience that, during the beginning of the defence, filled the large auditorium to the brim. Long after the sun had set over Marbjerg Mark, Søren Juul was still in the limelight. That Friday, the official opponents and the review committee were not planning on letting him leave for an early weekend. Bent Greve, chairman of the review committee, had a good go at Søren Juul and was not slow in questioning, for example the lack of empirical foundation in the thesis.

"Is it enough to have an opinion about something?", Bent Greve asked during the defence session. He was also being sarcastic at the expense of Søren Juul:

"If it is what Søren Juul believes, this is how the world looks like."

Søren Juul did, however, not buy that, and he was generally ready to defend himself against all the opponents' criticism.

"It is based on what the aggrieved people say. It is not just Søren Juul who believes something, it is Søren Juul who believes something based on other people's information", he said as a response to Bent Greve.

An important project

Even though Søren Juul had his work cut out for him during his defence, and even though there was some strong criticism of

his work, the review committee did not have any doubts that the thesis had been defended satisfactorily.

After the many hours of discussions, it did not take Nanna Kildal and Uffe Juul Jensen more than 30 seconds to agree that Søren Juul should be honoured with this year's first PhD degree at Roskilde University. Even though the thesis is trendy and reflecting modern times, the conclusion was that it is far from a thesis written by a Mr know-all.

"When I was first handed the book, I thought it was something that could be bought in a political health food shop, but I can see now that it is not. It is so much more than that", said Uffe Juul Jensen.

Internationalisation at RU

By: *Hanne Leth Andersen, Pro-rector*

Knowledge has always crossed borders, and research and research-based education are inherently international. We can build on this in many ways. When it comes to education, the most important things are:

1. That the programme curricula have international orientation.
2. That students are offered good opportunities to study abroad for a short or long period of time, e.g. through exchange programmes or collaborations with partner universities abroad.
3. That internationalisation at RU is supported by programme modules and entire programmes in English and by attracting talented international students and staff members.

RU is sending an increasing number of students to study abroad, thus providing them with an opportunity to acquire academic input not obtainable at RU in addition to intercultural skills and language skills. A nation-wide survey conducted by the Danish Agency for International Education (2009) shows that by far the majority of students having studied abroad believe that studying abroad has added an extra dimension to their education. What is particularly highlighted in this context is experience in studying and working in a different educational environment, understanding other cultures and language skills.

For this reason, RU should continue to encourage more students to study abroad among other things by extending such opportunity to

more scientific fields and different types of students, based on promoting academic quality. At the same time, it is important to work towards internationalisation at RU. By offering a discipline or a programme in English, attracting international students to RU becomes possible. For some disciplines, this involves more international contexts in the curricula and it allows for students' specific examples and experiences to be used in lectures, thus providing a broader outlook for English-language education than for pure Danish-language education. That way, the individual programmes enable students to see their own culture in a new light and to understand cultural differences that contribute to their academic understanding.

On 3 December 2010, the Danish Evaluation Institute, EVA, published a new report on English-language university programmes. The

evaluation is generally positive, but in some instances language barriers for teachers as well as for students do lower the academic level. The report recommends that universities ensure that both groups have good English-language skills, impose clear language requirements on students applying for admission and offer courses in academic English.

To support the education strategy and educational reform, the rectorship has set up a working group for internationalisation to define what internationalisation of RU programmes should involve and to provide specific proposals for implementation. The working group consists of representatives of academic staff, students and the International Office.

Action points for developing internationalisation at RU in 2011

- International students should be integrated into RU's study environment and contribute to enhancing the awareness of language, culture, discipline and different types of learning in a global perspective.
- All students should have the opportunity to develop intercultural skills through their programme, studies abroad or collaboration with international students at RU.
- The study regulations for disciplines and programmes offered in English should be available in English.
- RU should welcome new international staff members, including PhD students, professionally and personally, and help their families settle in.
- RU should collaborate with other universities to provide general information for international staff members.
- RU should revise the existing language strategy of 2006 to ensure that it is implemented.