

2023/2024 Network report for Danish Network for Educational Development in Higher Education, DUN

By Søren S.E. Bengtsen, DUN Chairperson, April 21, 2025

DUN 30 years anniversary

DUN was founded in 1994, so last year (2024) DUN celebrated its 30 years anniversary. We decided to mark and celebrate this event with an open national webinar held in March 2025. At the event, six former DUN Chairpersons presented their views on how they have experienced the changing landscape of universities and higher education in Denmark over the last three decades, with a special focus on their own time as Chairperson and the particular challenges and opportunities DUN experienced then. The reflections were presented in chronological order and presented a very interesting view of the lived and experienced changes in the university and the higher education sector in Denmark over the last 30 years. The presentations were recorded, transcribed and edited into a critical reflection piece to be published in the *Dansk Universitetspædagogisk Tidsskrift* (DUT) (Danish Journal of Higher Education) and to be brought into an open reflection space at the upcoming DUN annual conference in May.

Scandinavian connections

DUN has further developed their collegial and collaborative connections with its sister societies in Norway and Sweden. Together with the Norwegian and Swedish societies for higher education, DUN has co-submitted an application for network funding activities to bring their three Scandinavian national societies for higher education closer together around related agendas and opportunities for collaboration. The goals are both to enhance the collaboration around knowledge sharing but also to share experiences concerning how universities in the three countries tackle and implement (and sometimes resist!) political and economic pressures and incentives coming from increasingly reform-eager political communities. DUN replied to the invitation from the Norwegian society for higher education to visit (online) one of their Board meetings and to present and discuss current hot issues in the Danish higher education sector. The DUN Chairperson participated and discussed topics around universities' societal engagement, the current university reform, and issue around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and generative artificial intelligence (GAI). DUN hopes to see further Scandinavian collaboration within the larger international collaboration and has invited colleagues in Norway and Sweden to the DUN annual conference in May.

Annual conference and SIG-activities

According to tradition, DUN's main annual event is the DUN Annual Conference, which each year attracts over 200 participants from Denmark (and beyond) with the main goals to strengthen the interconnectivity and knowledge sharing between universities in Denmark

(and to learn from international colleagues). The theme of this year's annual conference is 'Learning Objectives and Assessments' and discusses what knowledge and competences students of higher education should possess after graduation, especially in a time where goal of higher education is ever more strongly connected to diverse professional careers outside the university sector. Also, the conference continues the discussion of the role of GAI in student work and assessment. At the annual conference, the DUN Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are provided a space to host meetings separately and also more focus is given on opportunities for the SIGs to interconnect.

Associated journal

DUN's associated journal *Dansk Universitetspædagogisk Tidsskrift* (Danish Journal of Higher Education) has regained its strong momentum with a productive and innovative Editorial Board. DUT has widened their publication portfolio to both include scientific paper, practice-based reflection pieces, and debate articles focusing on a certain 'hot topic' of the day. The journal has been highly productive and has managed to attract wide attention from a range of academics working within but also beyond Danish universities. An innovative initiative include the journal's endeavours to organise webinars following the publication of an issue that brings up a few of the papers published for further community and collegial discussion. These initiatives enhances the knowledge sharing and moves discussions of higher education into wider publics.

Hot topics discussed in DUN and the DUN Board

- The ongoing (and still not settled) higher education reform focusing on creating new (supplementing) Master's Programmes of varying length (varying from 75 to 120 ECTS) and with different focus ranging from traditinal two-years MA-prgrammes to shorter professionally-oriented programmes, to MA-programmes organised in collaboration with industrial partners (co-financed). The reform is expected to impact greatly on student enrollment numbers, internal-external collaborations, and teaching and learning formats and pedagogies.
- The GAI agenda continues to impact on discussions of especially of exam and assessment procedures and how to ensure a fair and authentic student engagement, but also includes discussions of new opportunities for literature searches, meta-analyses, and student-prompted autogenerated feedback to support students in their writing processes.
- The DEI agenda also continues to influence discussions around wellbeing and inclusion and both includes discussions around fairness and equality in opportunities for studying (due to possible disabilities), and discussions around a safe and inclusive student and academic environment acknowledging and recognising and welcoming various social and cultural identities.