

## Overarching principles for the new bachelor programme

Vedtatt i IMKs programråd 7. desember 2018  
Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon, UiO

1. We teach a *BA-programme* and not a collection of ‘emner’. Successful BA-programmes have distinct identities where elements are clearly interlinked.
2. As a rule, we maintain our programme based on the *needs* of our students. The programme shall reflect the academic strengths of our staff, and have a distinct profile in relation to other Norwegian BA-programmes in media and communication. The needs of students are defined by programråd in dialogue with staff, students, employers and other stakeholders.
3. We run two *separate* programmes: the bachelor programme and the one year unit (årsenhet). The one year unit is redesigned with a separate identity.<sup>1</sup> The courses in the 80-group are only for BA-students.
4. The new BA-programme has a clear *cumulative* structure, indicating what skills and knowledge students obtain on different levels. There is a ‘rød tråd’ running through the programme from the first courses to the final bachelor thesis (bacheloroppgave).
5. We follow the principle of a full use of the semester for all teaching and courses in our BA-program.
6. Our programme should be based on a *bolder formulation of societal importance* of media and communication than is currently the case.
7. Perspectives from both the humanities and social sciences are *integrated* in major courses. The fact that our programme is interdisciplinary is an advantage and should be communicated as a precondition for understanding today’s media and communication.
8. Communication *from, within and around* our BA should be radically improved. It should be communicated more clearly what the programme is about, why it is important, what students learn, how elements are linked. Communication between teachers, between teachers and students, between leadership/programråd and teachers/students must be improved.
9. *Roles and responsibilities* in connection with the programme must be clarified: where decisions are made, what are the responsibilities of programråd, head of studies, programleder, administration and teachers (today’s programme relies too much on decisions made by shifting individuals, particularly course responsible).
10. There must be greater *continuity* in the conversation around, and monitoring of, the quality and purpose of the BA-programme (it is a common mistake to adhere to the major principles only in the early phase when the programme is re-designed).

## Relevance and skills

11. There must be a *greater emphasis on relevance* in each course taught. Relevance must be explicated more clearly in the learning outcome (læringsmål) for each course, and be improved through use of examples, guest lectures, student activities, varieties of skills taught, and types of assignments given to students. Courses must specify a minimum number of activities, for example at least 2-3 excursions, alumni, visits to the industry (bransjebesøk) in each emne.
12. The programme shall place *greater emphasis on skills*, particularly critical/academic skills and analytical skills. Some practical skills are also taught, especially in connection with third year bachelor thesis. The programme shall ensure that students learn and practice skills that will be relevant for their working life. All agree that this means particularly critical academic skills, yet we argue that students shall also learn some practical skills, for example in final course in practical and academic skills (redskapsemne) and through variations in work tasks they have to do. The practical skill includes for example presentation skills, writing a journalistic text or make a short film, find literature, using an app to take notes and read etc.
13. There should be a *greater variation in teaching methods*, with a higher emphasis on (supervised) projects, team work, oral presentations, and ‘real-life’-genres such as writing a journalistic text, make a podcast, write a film review, produce a short video etc.
14. In redesigning the programme, it is important to seek inspiration in the type of practical assignments *currently present* in these courses (strong recommendation from student panel):
  - a. [MEVIT1110 – Audiovisual Aesthetics](#),
  - b. [MEVIT1300 – Journalistikk, makt og mediebruk](#) (journalistic text as a qualification assignment)
  - c. [MEVIT2700 – Medietekster: teori og analyse](#)
  - d. BA-oppgave: [MEVIT3810 – Gruppeprosjekt - medievitenskap](#) / [MEVIT3811 – Mediestudenter i arbeidslivet: praksisplass og prosjektarbeid](#).
15. Overall there should be *fewer lectures*, moving away from a standardised norm of 50% lectures + 50% seminars. The course responsible (emneansvarlig) should be involved in seminars/activities as well as lectures.

## Curriculum and courses

16. The committee will not move existing courses around but *suggest new elements*. The exception is the bachelor thesis in industry practice/academic practice (term 6) which the

- committee wish to retain as a cornerstone of the redesigned BA-programme. (Although we wish to rename “gruppeprosjekt” til “BA-oppgave: forskningspraksis)
17. The new programme is structured along the lines of *critical skills, theory/history and analysis/projects*.
  18. The BA will use a combination of 20 pt, 10 pt and 5 pt courses to allow for *more flexibility*. Courses may run both within and across semesters.
  19. The new programme should have a strong ‘*foundation*’ course with a more in-depth introduction to media and communication theories and history (the committee will suggest a foundational course over two terms in the first year, 20 pt). The course will be a team effort and will integrate perspectives from various traditions in social science/humanities).
  20. The programme should have *a strong methodological/analytic strand* with analysis/projects in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year. It is less important that students get superficial knowledge of many methods, and more important that key methods and approaches are taught in a project setting with emphasis on *practicing* methodological and analytical skills. There should be a progression of analytical skills pointing up to the final bachelor thesis where skills will be used in industry practice/academic practice. Methods/analysis should have other titles better showing relevance.
  21. There should be *a better balance between old and new media* in the curriculum, i.e. a greater emphasis on newer media (social media, streaming, digital culture, global media). The students (rightly) expect that a media studies programme should address topical issues – and that also *histories* of newer/global media be included in the curriculum. There should be a greater emphasis on understanding current issues and challenges in media industries (here we talk about *bettering the balance*, we will main strong historical focus.)
  22. The BA-course should have some elective elements in 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> year, to improve the link to our MA’s and clarify the academic profile of our department. The committee will propose 4 courses developed for the BA-programme where students choose 2 (one in the first and one in the second year). The 4 topics should correspond to our MA-programmes and introduce students to strong research fields in the department.
  23. The norm should be that students go abroad in the fifth term and do either academic courses or an internship
  24. A major aim of the BA-reform is to keep a media studies presence through all three years, strengthen links between elements and improve programme identity among students. Collaboration between teachers in the BA-programme must be formalised, for example two coordination meetings per semester for teachers involved in each of the years 1, 2, 3, and

coordination between teachers involved in progression from one year to another. We teach more in pairs and teams to ensure coordination and quality across disciplines.

25. Exfac and exphil should both be in the first year. Exfac should be redesigned with an emphasis on fundamental critical/academic skills. Exfac is redesigned “Medievitenskapelige grunnferdigheter”, and a new sixth term course is “Medievitenskapelige profesjonsferdigheter”.
26. The syllabus requires continuous scrutiny to avoid outdated literature. The current balance between Norwegian/English literature should be kept.

## Follow-up and feedback

27. Students should to a greater extent *receive feedback* on assignments, seminar activities and presentations, as well as final essays, term papers and projects. Mandatory feedback on at least one (written or oral) assignment during the semester prior to exam. Students should be taught to give and receive feedback, and to incorporate feedback and reflections on feedback into their workflow.
  28. Students should receive *more supervision* on their work. BA-supervision groups should be continued and strengthened with some formal and mandatory aspects (for both supervisors and students). [Many support shifting teaching emphasis towards more supervision and introduce obligatory supervision elements, we need to specify this in the programme issues]
  29. End-of-term exams will be used less, *the norm will be portfolio exams, term papers, group projects with supervision, and oral presentations*. End of term school exam only in exceptional cases.
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