

Report from *programsensor* for English literature at the University of Bergen, December 2021

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Courses evaluated: ENG331, ENG332, ENG333, ENG335, ENG337 (and ENG337-L), and ENG340

Scope of evaluation: Autumn 2020 - spring 2021

1. Introduction

This report is an evaluation of the six courses that make up the MA-level offering in English literature at UiB, of which one, ENG340, is an MA thesis preparation course, and one, ENG337, has a version with different course content adapted for *lektor* students. It evaluates the versions of the courses that ran in autumn 2020 and spring 2021.

The evaluation is based on:

- Where available: course descriptions, syllabus lists, student evaluations, lecturer self-evaluations, completion percentages, grades, examiner guidances
- Three-year evaluations of ENG332, ENG337 and ENG340
- Yearly evaluations of the MA programme
- In-person meetings with faculty and student representatives from the programme in December 2021

The evaluation discusses:

- How the courses in this part of the programme relate to each other
- For each course, where information is available: course content, course structure, teaching, forms of assessment, any relevant special circumstances
- Overarching comments on the structure and execution of the MA courses
- Recommendations for elements to keep or change

A note on this last point: as I'll discuss at more length later, in this programme (and as far as I can tell at UiB in general), course codes and course descriptions are intentionally very broad in order to allow for different topics to be taught under a single course code. Topics are often changed from year to year, and there is no thematic or other relation between the topics that are taught under one course code. This means that a detailed evaluation of, for instance, the syllabus and teaching format of this year's version of ENG331 wouldn't necessarily apply to future iterations of the course, which may cover completely different ground. I will still evaluate the individual current iterations of the courses, but based on my discussions with faculty members about what kind of feedback would be most useful for their quality work, I will also include a set of more general/structural comments that apply to more than one course and to the programme as a whole.

The MA courses in the 2020/2021 academic year were, of course, affected in various ways by the corona pandemic, and as has been the case at every university, lecturers and students had to deal with teaching and learning in changing and often non-ideal

circumstances. I have commented on corona adaptations where relevant/where information exists, and have taken this external disruption into account in my evaluation. Finally, I've enjoyed getting to know this programme over the last semester, and very much appreciate the opportunity to comment on it.

2. Overarching comments

To write this section, I developed notes and questions about the programme based on my reading of the written material, and gained more insight and detail through in-person discussions with faculty members and students in the programme.

2.1 Use of generic course titles and programme cohesion

The use of generic course titles and learning outcome descriptions in this programme allows for creativity and flexibility in developing courses, and means that changes in teaching staff can be accommodated quickly, without requiring new staff members to stick to course plans created by someone else. Students don't seem to be confused by the system, and feel they receive timely information about what the course will actually entail, although this information sometimes takes a little tracking down on the web pages.

However, it also brings with it some difficulties: there is not much coordination of the topics of the courses (which is a frequent problem in institutions with fixed course codes too, but obviously more coordination is needed when they continually change), and there is a limited sense of how each individual course contributes to the overall programme goals. Faculty members report that it could be good for the programme to have a clearer profile or sense of purpose.

My sense is that it's a very good thing to allow for this amount of flexibility in what is taught, especially since this is an MA programme where teaching should be strongly research-driven. I also think, though, that it would be helpful to develop a clearer shared sense of what the programme as a whole aims to do for its students, and for those teaching the courses each year to communicate more about their individual aims during the planning phase in order to make sure that the programme aims can be achieved. Currently it seems to be the case that because the learning outcome descriptions are so general and are shared between courses, lecturers reasonably don't feel much ownership of them. A way of solving this could be to treat the generic course learning outcomes as programme learning outcomes, and for lecturers to create specific learning aims for their own iterations of the courses. Some course iterations already have these, but I think it would be useful for them to be a common practice.

Another intervention that could be worthwhile if faculty members agree is to consider giving the courses titles that are still fairly generic, but that provide an overall category that you find important to include in the programme - for instance, at NTNU one MA course (currently running as a course on Victorian crime fiction) is entitled "Spesialiseringsemne i engelskspråklig litteratur før 1900". This would make things a little less flexible, but would make it easier to ensure that the programme as a whole is doing what you want it to without having to coordinate it continuously.

Finally, the generic course titles have some implications for quality work: since the usual quality assurance processes (for instance the three-year course evaluations) rely on the idea that the basic course remains somewhat similar from year to year, they don't work as well for these courses. It could be more effective and illustrative to do three-year evaluations of all the courses under one "umbrella", rather than to write a three-year evaluation of a course that has had three completely different iterations, which I think creates a false sense of cohesion.

In other ways the structure of the programme seems to be working well; in particular, students expressed that they're happy to be able to choose between all linguistics courses, all literature courses or a mixture of the two.

2.2 The role of lektor students

Students in the lektor programme are able to take courses in this programme, but this brings with it practical problems that are currently unsolved, and that make the integration of L-students into the courses very difficult for both lecturers, L-students and other students.

The main issue is that L-students have 28 days of practice in the autumn semester and 40 days in the spring, meaning that they're in practice for the majority of any given course and are unable to participate in the teaching. Faculty members say that this is exacerbated by the fact that they receive information about when the practice weeks will be after they have already timetabled the semester. Different methods have been tried to solve this, including offering compressed courses that run two sessions a week for four weeks before practice starts (but this leads to difficulty absorbing the material for students) and offering MA courses from 2 pm, when the L-students' work at school should in theory be over (but it's still very difficult or impossible for L-students to make it to these classes). Currently one course is offered as an L-specific course where the timetable is adapted to L-students, but the three-year programme evaluation points out that this is also somewhat undesirable because it keeps L-students from being able to choose their own course options. All this means that L-students are rarely able to attend class, which is obviously bad for them but also affects the study environment negatively overall, lowering the participation rate and making it difficult for connections to form between L-students and other students.

My discussion with faculty members gave the sense that this is a clearly recognised issue that they are doing their best to accommodate, but that is difficult for them to solve on their end without more collaboration with the lektor programme. I don't have a solution either, but would like to emphasise that the current situation doesn't seem tenable to me. L-students should not be in a position where they have to either attend class during practice (which is supposed to be full-time and is a challenging and vital part of their programme) or miss out on large parts of their education. The situation also clearly creates disruption and difficulty for lecturers and other students in the programme. MA lecturers and students should not have to try to solve this problem ad hoc in each course, and fixing it should be an immediate collective priority for UiB.

2.3 Obligatory assignments

None of the courses in the programme currently have obligatory assignments/*arbeidskrav*, and both the course evaluations and the in-person discussions suggest to me that it could be a good idea to change this and at least give lecturers the option of giving obligatory assignments. Currently some students miss out on writing practice and feedback because they don't submit optional written work, often, of course, the ones who most need practice and feedback. There also seem to be no obligatory oral assignments prior to the work in progress seminar, meaning that students get limited opportunities to prepare for their oral MA defense. The students I met with noted that even in the absence of obligatory assignments, lecturers can achieve high participation through clear expectations. They mentioned an instance where students in a class were motivated to give oral presentations by being expected, but not required, to do so - as the course progressed, the high participation rate became self-sustaining, since seeing their colleagues participate made it easier for students to choose to do the same. I think this dynamic, in which it's easier to participate when others do and harder when others do not, is part of what makes obligatory work potentially useful. Making some assignments obligatory is a straightforward way, although obviously not the only way, to make them a

priority for students, which in turn can make them better prepared for assessment and (most importantly) help them to learn.

2.4 Midway evaluations

The course evaluations and discussions with students and faculty indicate that there is no standard system for midway evaluations of courses - sometimes lecturers set aside time for student representatives to gather input from the other students, sometimes student representatives are asked to share input they receive on more of an ad-hoc basis, and sometimes there's no midway evaluation. All courses have a written end-of-semester evaluation, but answer percentages here are usually low. Students were clear that lecturers are always open to and encouraging of student feedback, but also mentioned that a more uniform midway evaluation system could be helpful - many students might feel more motivated to share feedback when it benefits them directly as well as future students. I agree with this, and also think it's a good thing for the feedback process to work the same whether everything is going perfectly or whether there are more issues to raise, so that the act of giving feedback is not indicative of negative feedback in itself.

I don't think there's any need to completely standardise how midway evaluations work, but a good common practice might be to set aside time around the middle of the semester for the students to give input to student representatives, which can then be shared with the lecturer.

2.5 Contact hours and course length

As far as I can tell, courses in this programme seem to have a fairly low number of contact hours per credit relative to other institutions. At UiO (in my experience, which admittedly is a few years outdated at this point) the shortest courses in terms of direct contact time are the introductory BA courses, which are eight seminars, but supplemented with the same number of lectures. 10-credit MA courses are generally 14 seminars. At NTNU, it's not uncommon for a 7.5-credit course to have 14 seminars, and at my current workplace, USN, 15-credit courses have about 56 hours of in-class time. I think a higher number of contact hours per credit would allow courses to cover more ground in more depth. I assume that this is most likely something that is difficult for the department to change and would need to be addressed at a higher level, but still wanted to include this recommendation here. Relatedly, several courses also cover a relatively short portion of the semester, even when not adapted for L-students - for instance, there may be one course a week for seven consecutive weeks. As an alternative to increasing the number of sessions in a course, I think it could be a good idea where possible to stretch the courses over a longer period of time, perhaps with guided asynchronous work to fill in the intervals - this would give more time to read, to digest complex material, and to do individual work to consolidate learning.

3. Course evaluations

3.1 ENG331: Masteremne i engelskspråklig litteratur/kultur I

Iteration: Autumn 2020, Victorian Gothic

For this course I was able to access the lecturer evaluation of the course, the three-year evaluation, the exam paper, and the exam results.

Course structure and teaching: This is a course with ten seminars of two hours each, taught partly in person and partly online for corona reasons. The lecturer evaluation

reports that the digital classes had higher attendance, but lower rates of student participation. The course featured regular student presentations, which is a good way of creating alignment with the assessment form, as well as giving students valuable oral practice. As in many of the courses, the lecturer evaluation comments on difficulties with accommodating L-students around practice, though it is clear that the lecturer did their best to make accommodations.

Assessment: Examination in this course is a one-week home exam in which students write a 3000-word essay on one of several given topics, and a digital oral exam. This seems like an excellent examination format for a course like this one, allowing students to show both depth and breadth of learning. (It is, obviously, a very intense assessment format for the students, and my experience suggests that three-day home exams are often as productive as one-week ones - this might be a change worth considering for some courses.) The written exam questions are effective, written in a way that allows students at all levels to engage with them productively. The exam results were very good - B is the average grade and no one got less than a C, supporting the lecturer's point that students engaged well with the material. There were some dropouts, which might reflect either less engaged students leaving or L-students having trouble keeping up alongside practice, but with numbers this small it's hard to draw any conclusions about this.

Course content: Since I wasn't able to access the syllabus for this course my knowledge of the course content is limited, but the topic is very close to my heart and seems to have been rewarding for the students. My own experience suggests that this is a topic that has crossover benefits for discipline students and L-students.

Other comments: This course didn't conduct a (midway or final) student evaluation this semester, but the lecturer received positive spontaneous feedback from student representatives. Lecturers in this programme in general seem to be open to spontaneous feedback, which is a very good thing, but see above re: the value of having more of a routine for student evaluation.

3.2 ENG332: Masteremne i engelskspråklig litteratur/kultur II

Iteration: Autumn 2020, American Literature, Science, and the World System

Course structure and teaching: This is a course with eight seminars of two hours each. The lecturer self-evaluation, student evaluation, and assessment guidelines don't say anything about corona adaptations in this iteration of the course. The course featured in-class student presentations.

Assessment: The course was examined by a 4000-word term paper where students developed their own topics. To guide them in their term paper work, they also completed an annotated bibliography assignment that received extensive lecturer feedback. The bibliography assignment sounds like a very good way of helping students prepare for the final assessment, as well as to develop their research-mindedness more broadly. This also highlights my earlier point about the benefits of more communication and links between the courses: it would be useful for an assignment like this one, which fosters research and writing skills that are relevant to the programme as a whole, to be more strongly linked with what is happening in the rest of the programme - for instance, other courses might want to borrow this idea or to develop complementary assignments.

Based on the information in the assessment guidelines, there does not seem to be a formal assignment text or graded assessment criteria for the term paper; instead, as far as I've been able to tell the guidelines and topics seem to have been communicated and developed verbally. I think it's appropriate and useful for students at this level to be asked to come up

with their own research topics - this is often something students find very tricky, but it's vital to their development as researchers. The bibliography assignment seems to have been helpful in scaffolding this process for many of the students. However, I think it would be a good idea to have a written assignment text and clearer assessment criteria, partly to make external examination more reliable and partly to give students a clear and unambiguous idea of how the assignment works and how it aligns with the course content. As it is, the grade division (although, again, hard to draw conclusions from since the number of students is so small) suggests that about half the students really "got it" and half could possibly have benefited from more clarity here. (That said, the grades reported in the self-evaluation and in the collective grade report are different - in the grade report they are A, A, A, D, E, F; in the self-evaluation they are A, A, A, B, C, F.)

Course content: This is a striking course topic that offers an approach that students are unlikely to be familiar with from earlier work, something that seems to have led to both engagement and some confusion. The syllabus list includes a short introduction to and explication of the central ideas of the course, which is great, but could have been more detailed (and maybe supplemented with course-specific learning aims?). (This kind of introduction could also be done in class, and it very well might have been, although some of the student evaluation comments suggest that at least a couple of students were still confused by the overall thrust of the course.) The syllabus seems to be the right size and complexity for this level, and I think working with a single Routledge companion throughout the semester is a good way of creating cohesion and narrative.

3.3 ENG333: Masteremne i engelskspråklig litteratur/kultur III

Iteration: Autumn 2020, The Poetics of Rap and Spoken Word

Course structure and teaching: This course has 11 seminars, taught partly in person and partly online for corona reasons. Students spent some of their time collaborating in set study groups, and gave presentations. This course, too, faced problems with L-student schedules, not least because a high proportion of students were L-students.

Assessment: Assessment in this course was a four-hour written home exam (adapted from school exam for corona reasons, with one extra hour of "technical time" added), asking students to write a single 1000-1500-word essay on one of several given prompts. Graded assessment criteria are provided. The prompts are clear and effective, and the excellent grades achieved (mostly As and Bs, with C as the lowest grade) suggest that students gained a great deal from the course. It seems to be the case that assessment formats are "set" externally for each course code rather than chosen by the lecturer, which ensures that students encounter a variety of forms of assessment. That said, I don't think this course should have a school exam. My view is that written school exams are sometimes appropriate for BA-level English courses, but are not an effective use of assessment at MA level. Additionally, having such disparities between the "weight" of assessment in different courses seems unhelpful - there is just much *more* assessment in the two other autumn courses.

Course content: This course has a set of specific learning aims, which are helpful for me and, I would guess, for the students in getting a sense of the purposes and narrative of the course. The pre-exam preparation document also seems to have been useful in this regard. Students are generally very enthusiastic about the course topic and teaching, something that chimes with the high standard of exam work, and express that the topic is a good fit for both discipline students and L-students. Together, this course and the two other autumn courses offer a varied and compelling set of approaches to literature and poetics. Both the student and lecturer evaluation bear out that the main issues with the course were

that the reading load was too heavy for the number of sessions, and that there was a need for a more introductory approach to the topic initially, as well as clearer discussion questions. However, this seems to have been addressed well over the course of the semester.

3.4 ENG335: Masteremne i engelskspråklig litteratur/kultur V

Iteration: Spring 2021, Imagining Modernism

For this course I had no lecturer evaluation available, so this evaluation is based on the student evaluation, exam text, examiner guidance and result list.

Course structure and teaching: This course has seven seminars, running over seven consecutive weeks. The number of seminars per credit seems to vary from course to course in this programme, and this is one of the "shortest" courses - the evaluation material suggests that expanding the number of seminars/weeks would most likely have been helpful. There is no indication in the material that L-student scheduling was an issue in this course.

Assessment: As in ENG331, assessment in this course is a one-week home exam in which students write a 3000-word essay on one of several given topics, followed by an oral exam, with the oral exam covering both the essay and the syllabus as a whole. Again, I think this is a great exam format for a literature course at MA level, though see also my comments on ENG331. The exam has three question options, each of which requires the student to engage with two self-chosen syllabus texts - the questions themselves are quite structured, so this gives a nice balance between offering guidance and allowing students to follow their interests. I would describe the questions as challenging, but although several students reported difficulty following the course material in the student evaluation, the exam results are fairly good: of 11 candidates, five received Cs and six received Bs. My speculative interpretation of this is that the student group as a whole may have underestimated how much they learned in the course, but also that even the highest-performing students found the questions difficult (hence the lack of any A grade).

Course content: In this course, the potential problem with a lack of course-specific learning outcomes becomes clear. Although there is a brief introduction to the course topic in the syllabus, several students commented that they were unclear on what the expected learning aims were, which suggests that lecturers need to be careful to clarify course-specific learning aims and expectations in the written syllabus/course introduction, as well as in class. This is especially the case because this is a specialised and challenging class - I think it's easy to feel that more difficult courses should require less student guidance, but in my experience the reverse is often the case.

Student feedback is fairly unanimous that this course covers too much material for the number of sessions, and I tend to agree with this - while the page count is reasonable, many of the primary texts are complex enough to require more than one seminar to cover, especially alongside secondary reading. Overall, my reading of the available evaluation material indicates that this course is not completely correctly pitched for this programme: it's specific and limited enough in theme and scope that it would work better for students who have already completed an MA-level modernism course. For students who have a BA-level grounding in modernism, I think it would be a good idea to spend some more time at the start situating students in the topic, as well as making more active and guided use of the companion texts listed in the syllabus.

3.5 ENG337-L: Masteremne i engelskspråklig litteratur/kultur VII

Iteration: Spring 2021, Thinking In (and With) Literature

A grade list was not available for this course - I think it's possible that the grades were merged with those in ENG337, meaning that it's hard to make use of the data since the courses are completely different.

Course structure and teaching: This course is an iteration of ENG337 adapted to an L-student timetable, meaning that it has seven seminars over four weeks (there is no thematic or other connection to the other ENG337 course, they just share a course code). As with ENG335, seven sessions is short for a course with this number of credits, and while running the course over four weeks was obviously a non-ideal necessity to get around L-students' practice period, I think it ends up not being worth it: four weeks is just not long enough for students to process the course content. As the lecturer evaluation points out, it also means that students have very limited time to find topics for their essays and make use of lecturer guidance in developing them.

Assessment: As in ENG332, assessment in this course is a 4000-word essay where students developed their own topics. My comments on the assessment format in ENG332 also apply here. Student feedback and the lecturer evaluation both suggest that the students in this course may have been less used to this style of assignment, suggesting that more formalised guidance would have been even more useful here.

Course content: In terms of its topic and scope, this is one of several of the MA courses I would love to take myself. Like ENG335, it is obviously a quite highly specialised topic, but its implications and scope are broadly applicable enough that I think it's reasonably well-targeted for many MA students at this level. That said, I think a problem for this course was that it was designated as an L-specific course without any obvious modifications in topic, leading to a clash with student expectations. If the department wants to continue with L-courses, more work needs to be done to figure out how these courses should work in terms of content, and this needs to be clearly communicated to the students. As it is, it seems to me as if students expected this to be a much more L-adapted course, even a didactically focused one. I think the apparent student expectation that the literature in the course should be easily transferrable to the classroom was both a result of a misunderstanding, and somewhat unreasonable in itself - even pure teacher educations can't achieve their learning aims by teaching only school-suitable material. But there is something of a spectrum of courses that are more or less likely to "cross over" with L-programme learning aims, and while this is obviously subjective and different students will find different approaches useful, this course seems to be on the "less likely" end. Of the current courses I would say that Victorian Gothic, The Poetics of Rap and Spoken Word, and The Once and Future Book seem most likely to "cross over" in this way. Finally, as in ENG335, this seems to be a course that would benefit from a clearer communication of expectations and aims, and more time spent on situating students in the topic.

3.6 ENG337: Masteremne i engelskspråklig litteratur/kultur VII

Iteration: Spring 2021, The Once and Future Book

Course structure and teaching: This course has eight seminars, partly online and partly in-person, and was taught partially in collaboration with the Special Collections Library at the University of Bergen, where students participated in a digitization project related to

Charles Dickens. Many classes combined regular seminar teaching with guest lectures from professional librarians, researchers, and conservators. The classes themselves ran from early January to late March, with individual term paper supervisions at the end of the semester.

As an additional point, the course plan suggests that it's not possible to get credit for both this course and ENG337-L: "På grunn av fagleg overlapp blir studiepoenguttelljninga for ENG337 redusert med 10 studiepoeng om det blir kombinert med ENG337L." This doesn't entirely make sense to me: the two courses share a code, but have nothing else in common. If 337 and 337-L were run as the same course with two different timetables, this would obviously apply, but in semesters where this is not the case, this seems like an unnecessary limitation.

Assessment: As in ENG332 and ENG337-L, assessment in this course is a 4000-word essay where students developed their own topics. The lecturer provided a clear assignment text, including a writing resource list and a separate schedule for "scaffolding" assignments - a paper proposal, annotated bibliography, first draft, and one-on-one supervision session. This is an admirably generous and thoughtful approach to working with this kind of assessment, and based on student feedback, lecturer evaluation and the relatively high reported grades in the lecturer evaluation, students seem to have learned a great deal from it. Clear and specific assessment criteria were listed in the examiner guidance.

Course content: This is an innovative and exciting course, offering students hands-on experience with rare books digitisation and allowing them to co-create an exhibition based on their work. The collaboration with Special Collections seems to have been thoughtfully integrated into the regular teaching, and students clearly found both the guest lectures and the regular teaching engaging and challenging, but not inaccessible for their level and preexisting knowledge - this is particularly impressive because this course content is in some ways a departure from more "traditional" English literature topics. It seems to be a course that offers a great deal to students regardless of whether they were initially strongly interested in this topic and way of working. I hope this course will continue in its current form, especially once fewer corona restrictions make it more possible to run it in person.

3.7 ENG340: Førebuing til masteroppgåveskriving i engelsk litteratur og kultur

Spring 2021

For this course, I had access to the lecturer self-evaluation and the student evaluation (although since the latter only had one respondent, it's difficult to put too much weight on it), and we discussed the course in the in-person meeting.

Course structure and teaching: This is the one course that actually has a different, fairly straightforward set of learning outcome descriptions: it focuses on preparing students to write an MA in English literature and culture by giving them knowledge of central research methods in literary studies. Due to the lack of examiner guidance for this course, I'm not able to comment on the number of sessions or the semester structure.

Assessment: Assessment in this course is marked pass/fail, and comprises a portfolio of four assignments, including a draft of the MA thesis proposal. This form of assessment is well suited to this course, and marking it pass/fail makes sense, since the final assessment outcome is in the thesis itself.

Course content: Opinions are divided on this course: the lecturer self-evaluation argues that this doesn't need to be a separate course, but that elements of it could be included in the Work in Progress seminar instead, freeing up the 10 credits the course takes up. Conversely, the students I discussed the course with were strongly and spontaneously

positive about it, found it very useful, and argued that it should be available to L-students and linguistics students too. These are probably two sides of the same point: the lecturer argues that there isn't enough course material to fill 10 credits, while from a student perspective a sparser course can make it easier to engage fully with the content (although they agreed that 10 credits might be a bit much, and that this could be a five-credit course). I agree that L-students and linguistics students should also have the opportunity to get this kind of thesis preparation, and the lecturer's suggestion of integrating the most important course elements in the Work in Progress seminar seems like it may be the most practical way to make that happen. (If I had absolute power over this programme I might also consider something like making this a five-credit course and dividing the extra five credits between the two other courses the students take this semester, giving each of them some much-needed extra contact hours - but I assume this is not administratively possible.) More generally, I think it's excellent that the programme has this kind of discipline-specific methods training, and I think it's important to maintain this specificity if the course changes format.

4. Recommendations

In no particular order, my main recommendations for things I think could usefully be *changed* based on this evaluation are as follows:

- Stop using school exams for MA-level courses.
- Allow lecturers the option of setting obligatory assignments. Currently, where obligatory assignments are possible, they "transfer" to the next semester and can be completed then instead - I think it would be a good idea to remove this possibility, since it completely unmoors the assignments from their pedagogical context in a way that outweighs the benefits of flexibility and accommodation for students. I think it's a better idea to accommodate students who need it by being somewhat flexible about what counts as completing an assignment, where necessary.
- Create a generally practiced standard for carrying out midway student evaluations.
- If L-courses are continued, make a clearer plan for how their content is intended to work (ie how classroom-adapted/didactic they are intended to be), and communicate this clearly to the students ahead of time.
- Enable students to get credit for both ENG337 and ENG337-L where the courses are on different topics.
- Find opportunities to communicate a bit more across courses during the planning process, both when it comes to learning outcomes and, ideally, schedules (to avoid assignment clashes where possible, which obviously it isn't always).
- Consider giving some courses more category-specific titles. (This is a weak recommendation - I think it should only be done if the faculty agrees that it's a good idea, otherwise it's not likely to work.)
- The L-student practice situation needs a solution, although I unfortunately don't have one to offer.
- Consider increasing the number of contact hours per credit. (As mentioned above, though, this is quite possibly not something that can be changed at programme level.) Alternatively, consider stretching courses out to cover more of the semester.
- UiB clearly has a culture of independent work and discovery, which is very valuable for a research-led programme like this one. That said, not least because of the lack of inherent guidance in the course plans, I think many courses could benefit from slightly more "handholding" in the form of more thoroughgoing written communication about expectations and course parameters. There are obviously limits to how clear you can

make things (and sometimes people just don't read the information available), but ideally this would free up even more student focus for the real challenges of the course. The essay writing setup in ENG337 is a good example of giving students guidance and scaffolding at several steps in a challenging process in a way that doesn't pre-digest the material for them, but instead allows for deep learning.

Overall, as can be seen, most of my suggestions have to do with programme-level issues rather than the execution of specific courses. My impression from reading the evaluation material and my discussions with faculty and students is that the MA-level courses hold a high academic standard, and overall offer students an excellent and challenging education. Both evaluations and discussions with students suggest that lecturers are open to student feedback and are invested in developing their courses to make them work as well as possible. In all, my impression is of a very strong programme that could primarily benefit from some structural tweaks.

Programsensers rapport, Masterprogram i engelsk språkvitenskap, UiB

Følgende emner for høst 2020 og vår 2021 er evaluert: ENG339, ENG341, ENG343, ENG345, ENG349, ENG350.

I tråd med *Retningslinjer for eksterne fagfeller ved Universitetet i Bergen*, kommenterer denne rapporten først sammenhengen mellom læringsutbyttebeskrivelsene og de lærings-, undervisnings- og vurderingsformer som inngår i studieprogrammet og emnene, sammenhengen mellom de emnene som inngår i studieprogrammet, og kvalitetsutviklingsarbeidet knyttet til studieprogrammet. Deretter kommenteres noen andre forhold knyttet til studieprogrammet og emnene som inngår.

Rapporten er basert på emnebeskrivelser, studentevalueringer, egenevalueringer fra faglærere, samt møter med representanter for faglærerne og for studentene.

1. Sammenheng mellom læringsutbyttebeskrivelser og lærings-/undervisnings-/vurderingsformer

Læringsutbyttet som er formulert på programnivå ser ut til å være godt samstemt med det totale innholdet i programmet, selv om ikke alle emner har fokus på eller vurdering av alle delene av det totale læringsutbyttet.

På emnenivå er sammenhengen mellom læringsutbyttebeskrivelsene og aktiviteten i emnene derimot svakere. Alle emner på programmet har svært åpne emnebeskrivelser, og alle emnene har samme læringsutbyttebeskrivelser, mens innhold og vurderingsformer varierer mellom emnene. Det er for eksempel ikke klart hvordan læringsutbyttet "har ei særs god evne til å uttrykke akademiske idéer på [...] munnleg engelsk" vurderes i de emnene som verken har muntlig obligatorisk aktivitet eller muntlig eksamen. Dette gjelder alle emner unntatt ENG349, som har muntlig eksamen. Det anbefales at man går gjennom læringsutbyttebeskrivelsene for å samstemme dem med aktivitet og vurdering i hvert emne.

Det spesifikke faginnholdet i hvert emne tydeliggjøres i litteraturlista for emnet, som publiseres i slutten av foregående semester. Det påpekes fra studentrepresentantene at dette er vanlig praksis på UiB, slik at studenter som har sin bachelorgrad herfra, vil kjenne systemet og være i stand til å finne nødvendig informasjon. Studenter som kommer fra andre institusjoner kan derimot ha problemer med å finne ut hva neste semesters emner er, ettersom emnebeskrivelsene gir mer informasjon ved de fleste andre institusjonene. Det er derfor viktig det kommuniseres tydelig til nye studenter hvordan man finner den relevante informasjonen om neste semesters emner ved UiB.

Beskrivelsene av emneinnhold i litteraturlistene varierer også, og ikke alle beskrivelsene inneholder noen tydelig beskrivelse av hva forventet læringsutbytte er. I ett emne (ENG341) sies det eksplisitt i emnerapporten at studentene har fått tilgang til evalueringskriterier for

eksamen i god tid, mens det er ikke er klart at dette har skjedd i de andre emnene. Til sammen er det altså ikke klart om og hvordan studentene har fått en tydelig oversikt over hva det er forventet at de skal kunne ved emnets slutt. Det ville sannsynligvis være en god ide å finne et felles system for å tydeliggjøre dette, i tråd med prinsippene i Nasjonalt kvalifikasjonsrammeverk (NKR).

2. Sammenhengen mellom de emnene som inngår i studieprogrammet.

Alle emnene som inngår i programmet har åpne emnebeskrivelser, med titlene *Masteremne i engelsk lingvistikk I-VI*. Beskrivelsene gir ikke informasjon om det spesifikke innholdet i emnet for hvert semester.

På den ene siden gjør dette det vanskelig å kommentere på sammenhengen mellom emnene. Denne måten å organisere programmet på vil også kreve at fagmiljøet tenker gjennom emnene som tilbys hvert semester for å sikre en god sammenheng for studentene, og det er viktig at informasjon om emneinnhold blir tilgjengelig for studentene i god tid. På den andre siden gir denne måten å organisere emner på mulighet til å variere emneinnholdet etter ekspertisen i fagmiljøet, og å sikre at man over tid kan gi et bredt spekter av emner i programmet. Det er også tydelig at faglærere har stor autonomi i utviklingen av emner de selv underviser, som gir mulighet til å fokusere på faginnhold heller enn administrative rutiner.

Likevel kan det se ut som *noen* tydeligere formelle føringer for emnene kan være på sin plass. Dette gjelder beskrivelser av læringsutbytte, som nevnt over, men også mindre forhold der det ser ut som ikke alle nye faglærere har vært klar over forventninger. I ett tilfelle (ENG341) spesifiserer emnebeskrivelsen at oppmøte på veiledning er obligatorisk i emnet, mens faglærer i sin rapport klager over at studentene ikke faktisk møtte. At slikt oppmøte ikke har vært håndhevet som et krav for å få ta eksamen, forklares av programmets representanter med at faglærer var ny. Studentrepresentantene nevner også at ikke alle nye faglærere er klar over at de skal sørge for å få tilbakemeldinger fra studentene i løpet av semesteret. Når man har stor utskiftning av faglærere fra ett semester til et annet, kan det være fornuftig å se på rutiner for at disse får all nødvendig informasjon.

3. Kvalitetsutviklingsarbeidet knyttet til studieprogrammet.

Det foreligger emnerapporter i form av egevalueringer skrevet av faglærer for alle emnene undervist i høstsemesteret, og tre-årige egevalueringer skrevet av faglærer for emnene undervist i vårsemesteret. I den tre-årige evalueringen av ENG345 påpekes det at slik evaluering er vanskelig når emneinnholdet endres hvert år. For alle emnene unntatt ett, foreligger det også skriftlige studentevalueringer, riktignok med forholdsvis lav svarprosent.

Både faglærere og studenter rapporterer at det foretas uformelle muntlige evalueringer i emnene i løpet av semesteret, enten med alle studentene eller med studentrepresentantene. De skriftlige studentevalueringene fremhever også faglærerne som imøtekommende og lydhøre for innspill. Denne typen kvalitetsarbeid fremstår som vel så fruktbart som de skriftlige studentevalueringene på slutten av semesteret. Som nevnt over, har ikke slik evaluering alltid vært gjennomført av nye faglærere.

4. Annet

a. Felles emner med lektorprogrammet

Både studenter og faglærere fremhever utfordringene med at flere av emnene også tas av lektorstudenter, som er ute i praksis i store deler av semesteret og dermed går glipp av en stor del av undervisningen. Det er grunn til bekymring for hvordan det påvirker læringsmiljøet for masterstudentene når en stor gruppe medstudenter bare er i stand til å følge deler av undervisningen. Studentene påpeker også at læringsmiljøet bærer preg av at masterstudenter og lektorstudenter utgjør to separate grupper med liten kontakt, selv om de altså tar felles emner. Det anbefales at UiB vurderer hvordan praksis legges i lektorprogrammet slik at det i minst mulig grad går ut over studentenes undervisning i disiplinlagene, og, ikke minst, at faglærere på disiplinlagene får tidlig og tydelig informasjon om nøyaktig når lektorstudentene skal ut i praksis.

b. Obligatoriske arbeidskrav og studentenes egeninnsats

I evalueringene av masterprogrammet fra 2019 og 2020, kommenteres det at studentenes egeninnsats ikke alltid står i forhold til det som forventes. Ett foreslått tiltak er økt bruk av obligatoriske arbeidskrav. Dette fremstår som fornuftig, av flere grunner: Selv om studentrepresentantene sier at de ser nytten i ansvaret for egen læring som ligger i å *ikke* ha obligatoriske arbeidskrav, nevner de at slike krav kan virke motiverende for å komme i gang med arbeidet tidligere i studiet. Obligatorisk arbeid kan også hjelpe faglærer til å få en bedre oversikt over studentenes forståelse av emneinnholdet. Studentrepresentantene gir et spesifikt eksempel der faglærer forventet at studentene skulle stille til undervisning med diskusjonsspørsmål fra pensumteksten, noe studentene i liten grad gjorde, fordi de hadde problemer med å forstå teksten. Slik manglende aktivitet fra studentene kan for faglærer framstå som manglende innsats heller enn problemer med å forstå stoffet - hvis arbeidet er obligatorisk, vil dette lettere avdekkes. Ikke minst kan obligatoriske arbeidskrav utgjøre et element av formativ vurdering i emnene, hvor så godt som all vurdering nå er summativ. Obligatoriske arbeidskrav kan også gjøre det mulig å evaluere kompetanse som ikke vurderes til eksamen, som kan gi rom for læringsutbyttebeskrivelser ut over akkurat de kunnskapene og ferdighetene som vurderes til eksamen. Det er verdt å merke seg at obligatoriske arbeidskrav ser ut til å være normen heller enn unntaket i tilsvarende program ved andre universitet.

Et annet element som kanskje kan hjelpe studentene med å se hvilken arbeidsinnsats som kreves i emnet, er tydeligere formulerte mål for læringsutbytte, som nevnt over.

Oppsummering:

Masterprogrammet i engelsk lingvistikk ved UiB fremstår som sammensatt av et vidt spekter av emner basert på faglærernes ekspertise, som vil gi studentene dybdekunnskap om de relevante temaene. Både studentevalueringer og studentrepresentanter gir inntrykk av stor grad av tilfredshet med programmet. Det ser ikke ut til å være behov for store endringer i programmet. Imidlertid gjør endringene i emneinnhold for hvert semester at tidlig og tydelig kommunikasjon til studentene er spesielt viktig. Dessuten kan det være fornuftig å få på plass

rutiner for at emner beskrives med tydeligere mål for læringsutbytte, samt å vurdere økt grad av obligatorisk aktivitet i emnene. UiB bør også se nærmere på hvordan praksis legges i lektorprogrammet, og hvordan informasjon om dette kommuniseres til fagmiljøene, for å hindre at læringsmiljøet for både lektorstudenter og disiplinistudenter lider av kollisjoner mellom praksis og undervisning.

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