

Annual report from the programme auditor

Name of auditor: Professor Lennart Nygren

Programme auditor at University of Bergen, Faculty of Psychology,
Mastergrad in Barnevern (Child protection and welfare) og Mastergrad i Barnevernssarbeid.
Period of appointment: 2019-2023.
Period to which the report applies: 2023.

The task for the programme auditor of 2023

My task this year has been to contribute to the revision of the third semester in the two master programmes. The course MABARN 331: Kunnskapsbasert barnevernfaglig praksis på individ- og systemnivå (30 stp) will disappear and replaced by the two 15-stp-courses MABARN 431 and MABARN 435 within the programme Master i barnevern, and the two 15-stp-courses MABVA 431 and MABVA 432 in the programme Master i barnevernssarbeid.

The new courses are:

MABARN 431: Endringsarbeid, tiltak of prosjektplanlegging (15 stp)

MABARN 435: Kunnskapbasert barnevernfagleg praksis på individ- og systemnivå (15 stp)

MABVA 431: Innovasjon, tiltak of prosjektplanlegging (15 stp)

MABVA 432: Praktisk barnvernssarbeid på system- og individnivå (15 stp)

More specifically, my task has been to give an outsider's view on which parts of the MABARN 331 that are particularly important to transfer to the new courses. The two programmes Barnvern and Barnevernssarbeid can be organised with common subparts, but it is important to strive for the development of their unique profiles. However, since the courses in the third semester only correspond to one fourth of the programme, this profiling is also a task for the first two semesters of the programmes, and the fourth semester with the 30-stp-thesis can also reflect unique profiles.

- A. Parts of the MABARN 331 that seem to be particularly important to bring into the new courses MABARN 431 and 435.

The current 30 stp course has a relatively broad content. It is named "Kunnskapsbasert

barnevernfaglig praksis på individ- og systemnivå”. The expected learning outcomes cover knowledge about communication with children and families to leadership, interprofessional cooperation and application of knowledge in different aspects of practice. There are nine skills and four general competencies mentioned in the MABARN 331 programme syllabus. The translation of these intended learning outcomes is visible in the timetable and in the list of literature. As I see it, there are no obvious parts of the 331 that can be left out, given the multitude of intended learning outcomes of the new courses. When comparing 331 with the new courses I wondered where the learning outcome of 331, “Emnet skal gi studentene nødvendige ferdigheter i arbeid med samiske- og minoritetsfamilier”, has gone in the new courses?

The new courses in the master of barnevern are MABARN 431 Endringsarbeid, tiltak of prosjektplanlegging, and 435 Kunnskapbasert barnevernfagleg praksis på individ- og systemnivå. To start with **MABARN 431**, 15 stp. Since the following 15 stp MABARN435 has an emphasis on practice and project work, the more theoretical content of the old 30 stp course 331 needs to be concentrated to the 15 stp of MABARN 431. So, which parts of MABARN 331 seem to be most important to keep (and develop) as parts of MABARN 431? At a first glance it seems like all the content of MABARN 331 is important but nevertheless needs to be reduced to fit into the smaller frames (15 stp instead of 30 stp).

The focus on change/endringsarbeid is obviously important, and it will be important to keep this theme closely connected to the professional context. Looking into the timetable of the “old” course 331 there seems to be over twenty subthemes. Perhaps these could be organized in fewer but more integrated subthemes? Such as:

a. an overview of endringsarbied/tiltak and evaluation, prevention, etc. i.e. that has more to do with construction and organization of tiltak and principles for identifying target groups, defining targets and evaluating results of interventions, than with the actual practical work. Relevant theories and research.

b. The professional: power issues, professional ethics, professional roles, interprofessional work, supervision, etc., with focus on action and interaction, participation, Relevant theories and research.

c. Communication and collaboration with actors on different levels (children, families, other professions, other parts of system, cultures etc.). Focus on communication and cooperation skills. Relevant theories and research.

These are tentative ideas; the main point is to create fewer and larger themes so that the 15 stp are structured in for example four parts: except for the above (three) a fourth theme is: d. project planning. This theme that can run as a parallel to the rest, maybe by a session per week in which the students successively develop their plans for the masteroppgave.

Continuing with **MABARN 435**, a course that builds upon MABARN 431 but emphasizes the students' experiences with practical work related to children and families in socially exposed life situations. The idea is, in relation to institutions and organizations in the field of practice, give opportunities for the students to apply previous course content into practice, and that this application is to be achieved within the frames of a project work.

It appears as if this course needs to allocate most time to the project work including numerous contacts with the field of practice. At the same time the project needs to integrate the intended learning outcomes of the course, and these are quite many. This is challenging, if I have understood the course concept correctly, since there needs to be distinct activities related to the project that makes it possible to evaluate the students' achievements in relation to the learning outcomes. I will not

repeat all the skills that are mentioned in the syllabus but just give a few examples to emphasise the need for enough resources:

- ... nytte kunnskapar og ferdigheitar om eigen og andre profesjonars kompetanse og ansvarsområde til å samhandle både tverrfagleg og tverretattlig for å skape heilskapleg tilbod
- ... gode ferdigheiter i å utøve familie- og miljøterapi
- ... avanserte ferdigheiter med å samarbeide og kommunisere med barn og familiar i utsette livssituasjonar, og fremje konstruktive medverknadsprosesser, på individ- og systemnivå.
- ... utvise høy grad av sjølvstende, samarbeidskompetanse og skjønn i individretta og systemretta arbeid med utsette barn og deira familiar

A question that came to my mind (but it could also be a misunderstanding) is whether there is any connection between planning of the master thesis and the project that is the main content in MABARN 435? It could be a good idea to let the plan for the masteroppgave that is done within MABARN 431 evolve further during the project work. The project might produce insights and ideas that can be very important for the master thesis.

Additionally, there are several more learning outcomes that need to be addressed in a distinct way. I think it requires some work to find a method to help the students to carry out a project with this multi-faceted content containing both knowledge growth and giving the students experiences from practice. Some of the theoretical content can perhaps be lifted out from the project and provided in the form of lectures, but it still needs some thoughts to avoid too much stress and fragmentation for the students during the 15 stp (a half semester).

B. Parts of the MABARN 331 that seem to be particularly important to bring into the new courses MBVA 431 and 432.

The second programme, **Master in barnvernsarbeid**, is expected to have a different profile. The main difference in the first course, MABVA 431, of the third semester is in the concept “innovation” instead of “endringsarbeid” in the MABARN 431. Looking into the learning outcomes, there are many similarities, and possibilities to let the two programmes have the same content in parts. Another difference between the programmes is that the “project” in MABARN 431 is named as “praksisarbeid”, in MBVA432 but in terms of learning outcomes/skills the two courses are identical, so my comments above regarding MABARN 435 are relevant. As with the MABARN courses, also here most of the content in the old 331 is reflected in the learning outcomes of the MBVA-courses. But it seems plausible to put a little less emphasis on the individualized therapeutic interventions (some of the communications skills for example, and to focus more on organization development, evaluation and innovation), so the focus on innovation is obviously important to create a distinct profile different from MABARN and should be reflected in large parts of the course content.

Since the following 15 stp MABVA432 has an emphasis on field practice, the more theoretical content needs to be concentrated to the 15 stp of MABVA431. We can also notice that the text in the syllabus about the aims for “*praksisarbeidet*” in MBVA 432 is identical to the text about “*prosjektarbeidet*” in MABARN 435 in terms of the experiences the student is expected to get. This means (?) that the profiles MABARN vs MBVA must be visible in the choice of setting and subject for the MABARN project and the choice of setting for the practice for the MBVA students.

The **MABVA431** can have a slightly different, and broader profile than MBARN431, but I think that the need to reduce the number of subthemes is as important here. Again, this is only tentative, and there are many alternative ways to do this reduction and concentration of themes. Here, *inventions* could be a key word for the profile.

a. Organizational and contextual conditions: Themes such as organizational development, leadership,

prevention, the role of the local community, knowledge-based practice. This includes relevant theories and research.

b. The professional: communication skills, power issues, professional ethics, professional roles, inter-professional work, supervision, etc., with focus on knowledge-based practice and cooperation. Relevant theories and research.

c. Innovation and evaluation: Focus on evaluation of innovations and of social programmes/tiltak. Relevant theories and research.

In the same way as in MABARN 431) a fourth theme could be: d. project planning. This theme that can run as a parallel to the rest, maybe by a session per week in which the students successively continue to develop their plans for the masteroppgave.

The fourth course, **MABVA 432** is, since it is nearly identical to MABARN 435 in terms of intended learning outcomes, it also needs to allocate time to a well-structured "praksisarbeid" including various contacts with the field of practice. This praksisarbeid needs to integrate the large amount of learning outcomes of the course. As a parallel to MABARN 435 also here it will be relevant with distinct activities related to the practical parts of the course, that makes it possible to evaluate the students' achievements in relation to the learning outcomes. As I wrote in relation to MABARN 435 a specific theme can run as a parallel to the rest, maybe by a session per week in which the students successively develop the plans for the masteroppgave, that they produced in the previous course (MABVA 431). As in the case with the project of MABARN 435, praksisarbeid might produce insights and ideas that can be very important for the master thesis.

Comments and suggestions

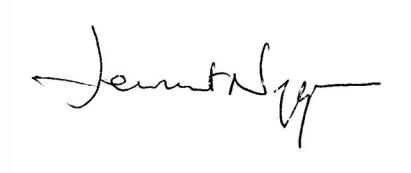
The content of the two programmes is overall advanced and ambitious. In relation to the labour market these master programmes can be expected to produce advanced and highly competent professionals. The big tasks are to become more specific when it comes to implementing the two programmes. An idea to reduce the number of themes follows from the structure of four courses instead of one large: one course per programme with more theoretical and knowledge-based content, and one course per programme that are more skills-oriented (project and practice). This means that most of the core content of the older 331 needs to be concentrated to fit into the different and smaller stp-frames of MABARN 431 and MBVA 431. So, I suggest identifying 4-5 themes out of which some can be identical for the two different programmes. For the MABARN 435 and MBVA 432 there appears to be important to identify control stations that helps the process of learning skills and getting experiences from practice and at the same time developing the "project" and the "praksisarbeid". I assume that this also can contain a further development of the plan for the master thesis that follows in the next semester.

A comment on professional identity: There are parallels in other professional educations that can serve as references. In Sweden we have for example both pedagogics and pedagogical work that have different aims and that both have their unique phd programme definitions. In social work there is a history of more theoretical profiles vs "social" or "administrative" (from the 1964 regulations). Maybe the most relevant comparison is with profiles that were introduced in Sweden around 2000 when the regions' (landstingen by then) educations in social care (social omsorg) and social pedagogy (socialpedagogik) were integrated into the socionom education. Indeed, those who studied the specialisation in social omsorg were not always welcomed to apply for all types of social work positions since their direction towards elderly care and care of the disabled was considered to contain too little of core knowledge required for social workers in the

health care system. Anyway, this is history, and today it appears as social workers with different profiles in their education can apply for any positions that require a social work/socionom degree (except for some areas where a master or equivalent degree is required)

I was also asked to suggest literature which is a bit difficult since I do not have the full overview of the literature that is used in the programmes at UiB. As an attachment to this report, I send a couple of reading lists from Stockholm and Göteborg universities, both universities that deliver master's level courses in the field of child welfare. There is some international literature (and a lot of Swedish) that can be interesting to investigate.

Umeå 12 december 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lennart Nygren', enclosed within a thin yellow rectangular border.

Lennart Nygren, programsensor
Professor emeritus i socialt arbete, Umeå universitet