



Code of Conduct concerning international students' participation in student political activities

Introduction

This code of conduct is composed in September 2019 in a collaboration between students (international and Danish) and representatives for VIA's employees and management and was updated in November 2021.

It takes a starting point in:

- *VIA's strategy 2021 – 2025*, which, among others, expresses the ambition of "creating stronger communities" and the ambition about [...] "developing our learning environments to bring the best out in everyone no matter background, geographical location or other requisites for learning. All students are co-creators of a study culture which is both ambitious and inclusive¹."
- *VIA Policy for student political work and student involvement²*, which regards student involvement as an aim in itself, as VIA as an organisation writes itself into a responsive, open and democratic educational culture and tradition.
- *Code of conduct: Guidelines for Offering Danish Higher Education Programmes to International Students³*, which obligates VIA to ensure that national and international students are treated similarly.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to formulate guiding principles as to how the student and employees together can create the best possible conditions for all students', especially internationals', participation in student political activities.

The guiding principles

VIA has about 10% international students who are taking a full professional bachelor education at one of VIA's English speaking offers. 90% of VIA's students are Danish and has Danish as their mother tongue.

The following principles are to ensure the best possible conditions for the Danish/Danish speaking and the international students to participate in student political work.

NOTE

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¹ <https://en.via.dk/-/media/VIA-EN/about-via/board-and-directors/documents/via-strategy.pdf>

² <https://www.via.dk/-/media/VIA/om-via/raad-og-udvalg/studenterraadet/studenterraadet-via-policy-for-student-political-work-and-student-involvement-uk.pdf>

³ <https://en.via.dk/-/media/VIA-EN/global-partnerships/documents/code-of-conduct.pdf>

The main principles are the following:

- *In general, the working language is Danish at meetings in VIA's student political bodies at all levels. However, students who participate in a given activity can decide otherwise at all times, for instance they can decide to have a meeting in English or agree on that it is possible to speak both Danish and English.*
- *When international students who do not master the Danish language participate in student political activities they must as a minimum be offered one of the following forms of service: that the agenda is translated into English, interpretation into English at meetings or an oral review of meeting materials at a preparatory meeting.*
- *When international students participate in a student political activity, they must have the option of expressing themselves in English.*

For VIA Student Council, the following applies:

- *The VIA Student Council is the executive student political body in VIA and it must embrace all students. Therefore, the student council is bilingual in all parts of its work which means that all agendas and minutes, as well as all communication aimed at students in VIA in general, is in both Danish and English.*
- *The chairmanship in VIA Student Council and the Student Coordinator will on an ongoing basis decide, out of regard for use of time and resources, whether appendices need to be translated.*

For the student political bodies on campus level, in campuses with English speaking programmes, the following applies:

- *All main documents (for example bylaws, rules of procedure and minutes from general meetings) must be accessible in both Danish and English.*
- *All material from the daily work (for example agendas, minutes and appendices) must be accessible in both Danish and English to the extent it is possible.*

The following applies to the student political bodies on programme level:

- *The individual programme DSR's continuously estimate whether it makes sense to work solely in Danish, in English or in a combination of both languages regarding main documents and material from the daily work.*
- *If there are international students in a programme DSR in one of VIA's Danish speaking programmes, the main principles for support apply.*

The following applies in relation to responsibility and recourses:

- *VIA's employees, leaders and students have a joint responsibility to support international students' participation in student political activities at all levels.*
- *The Danish-speaking students are responsible for showing motivation in order to find solutions that involve international students in the student political work.*
- *The international students have a responsibility to be proactive in acquiring Danish skills so that they can manage themselves in Danish. This both applies to courses which are offered by VIA and other offers.*
- *There always has to be employees who can function as a resource person with a specific attention to the international students and quality in English speaking communication at all levels in the organisation,*
- *Within the framework of Rector's Office, there is a student assistant hired with specific English-speaking skills to support the English-speaking communication about student political work to the international students at all levels. They can be contacted via mail: studenterraadet@via.dk.*

Validity

This Code of Conduct became effective in January 2020 and was updated in November 2021. It is evaluated annually in Collaboration Forum for the Executive Board and VIA Student Council – the next time at the end of 2022.

Approved by Collaboration forum for the Executive Board and VIA Student Council 17 November 2021.