



Code of conduct concerning international students' participation in student politics

1 Introduction

This code of conduct is developed in a cooperation between students (international and Danish) and representatives of VIA's employees and management. The code of conduct is based upon:

- VIA's *strategy* that regards VIA as a local and global partner of society that "(...) form(s) and educate(s) responsible world citizens, who actively participate in democratic processes and leave their own marks on the world"¹.
- VIA's *policy for student political work and student involvement*² that regards student involvement as an end in itself because VIA as an organization writes itself into a responsive, open and democratic learning culture and tradition.
- *Code of conduct: Guidelines for Offering Danish Higher Education Programmes to International Students*³, which obligates VIA to ensure that national and international students are treated similarly.

The purpose of this code of conduct is to formulate normative principles for how students and employees together can create the best possible framework for all students' participation in student politics, including international students in particular.

2 General guidelines

VIA has about 10 % international students who complete a full bachelor's degree programme in one of VIA's English-language programmes. 90 % of VIA's students are Danish and have Danish as a native language.

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

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

² www.via.dk/-/media/VIA/dk/om-via/dokumenter/organisation/raad-og-udvalg/dsr/politik-for-studenterpolitisk-arbejde-og-studerinddragelse.pdf

³ <https://en.via.dk/-/media/VIA-EN/about-via/facts/documents/code-of-conduct.pdf?la=en&hash=5D958C8BDD6BBFDB66A3D7FA4E080F8B>

2.1 The leading principles are:

- In general, the working language at meetings in VIA's student political bodies on all levels is Danish. However, students who participate in a given activity can decide otherwise at all times, for instance they can decide to hold 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 at a minimum be offered one of the following forms of service: that the agenda is translated into English, simultaneous interpreting 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.

2.2 The following applies to the student council in VIA:

- The student council in VIA 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 summaries, as well as all communication aimed at students in VIA in general, is in both Danish and English.
- The presidency of the student council in VIA 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.

2.3 The following applies to the student political bodies on campus level, on campuses with programmes in English:

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

2.4 The following applies to the student political bodies on educational level:

- The individual educational DSR continuously estimates whether it makes sense to work solely in Danish, in English or in a combination of both languages in relation to central documents and material from daily work.
- If there are international students in an educational DSR in one of VIA's Danish-language programmes, the leading principles for support apply.

2.5 The following applies in relation to responsibility and resources:

- 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 demonstrating motivation in order to find solutions that involve international students in the student political work.

- The international students are responsible for being proactive concerning the possibilities they have for acquiring knowledge of the Danish language in order for them to have a working knowledge of Danish. This includes courses offered by VIA as well as other suppliers.
- There must at all times be resource personnel on all levels in the organization who pay special attention to international students as well as the quality of VIA's communication in English.
- At the turn of the year 2019/2020, VIAs support staff function will hire a resource person in a new and temporary function (one-year project position – a student job on a trial basis) who will be responsible for strengthening VIA's communication in English concerning student politics, including translation, in order to address the international students on all levels. However, the hiring is on condition of that it is possible to finance the function in the existing budgets in VIAs support staff function or the executive board's reserve.

3 Entry into force, duration and evaluation

This code of conduct will come into force in January 2020 when VIA has hired a resource person to support the area. Thereafter, the code of conduct will be evaluated once a year in the cooperation committee for the executive board and the student council in VIA (Samarbejdsforum for direktionen og studenterrådet i VIA).

Approved by the cooperation committee for the executive board and the student council in VIA (Samarbejdsforum for direktionen og studenterrådet i VIA) on the second of September 2019.