

Developing Interdisciplinarity in PPE: An Evaluation Report

A report on strengthening interdisciplinary competence in the Bachelor's Programme in Philosophy, Politics and Economics at the University of Oslo

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Summary

This report, prepared by Mikkel Falck-Paulsen and Øyvind Hyldmo on behalf of INTED, addresses the need for increased interdisciplinarity in the Bachelor's Programme in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) at the University of Oslo (UiO). The report maps teaching practices and programme structures at international PPE institutions, including the University of Warwick, Lund University, the London School of Economics (LSE), and Brown University, as well as comparable interdisciplinary programmes at UiO, such as International Studies and Economics and Data Science.

The report identifies a key challenge in the current PPE programme: a gap in interdisciplinary training between the introductory course PPE1000 and the bachelor's thesis course PPE3090. Students experience limited opportunities to integrate perspectives from philosophy, politics, and economics throughout their studies, which weakens both the educational value of the degree and the interdisciplinary competence the programme aims to develop.

The report's main recommendation is the introduction of a new compulsory 10-credit course, PPE2000, to be offered in the fourth semester. Inspired by case-based courses such as INTER2000 and similar approaches at LSE, the course would give students practical experience in interdisciplinary integration before they begin their bachelor's thesis. To create room for PPE2000 within the programme structure, the authors propose reducing the number of elective credits from 30 to 20 and moving SVEXFAC to the final semester.

If the creation of a new course is not feasible, the report proposes an alternative referred to as the "seminar model." This model involves establishing dedicated PPE-specific seminars linked to existing compulsory courses, such as ECON1210 or SVEXFAC. These seminars would provide structured opportunities for interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration without requiring major programme revisions.

Furthermore, the report recommends retaining the overall structure of PPE1000 in order to ensure a solid disciplinary foundation during the early stages of the programme, while updating its thematic content to reflect contemporary issues and challenges. Taken together, these measures are expected to strengthen the programme's attractiveness, improve student learning outcomes, and foster a stronger academic identity among PPE students at UiO.