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To become a master in GoD: information studies looking for new horizons

Åbo Akademi University will in the future offer fewer master's programmes and new international master's programmes will start in August 2017 and Swedish-speaking ones in August 2018. The subject Information Studies that currently has an international master's programme in Information and Knowledge Management, and Information Systems that has a programme in Digital and Mobile Business, will together start a new international master's programme called Governance of Digitalization that will replace the current programmes. This programme will consist of courses representing both subjects and lead to a degree in Economics and Business Administration.

Asiasanat: Digitalisation, Governance of Digitalization, information science,
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In 2010 Åbo Akademi University reorganized its structure and the faculties were split into smaller entities, schools. Information Studies became a subject within the School of Business and Economics and as a result of this repositioning cooperation with subjects in economics started, leading to the establishment of a new minor subject in *Informationsledning* (Information and Knowledge Management, IKM) in 2012. This minor subject of 25 credits consists of courses offered by the subjects Information Studies, Organization and Management, and International Marketing. Almost immediately there were also plans to extend the education in IKM to the advanced level in the form of an international 2-year Master's Programme in IKM, and in the spring 2013 the university finally decided to start the programme the following year. A new position for a Se-

nior Lecturer in IKM was established, and Dr. Isto Huvila was appointed Senior Lecturer with the task to plan and teach within the programme. According to the web site of Åbo Akademi University the aim of this programme is to combine the "latest knowledge from information studies, organisation and management science and marketing in a unique way that gives its graduates a globally unparalleled, comprehensive cross-disciplinary competence that covers the management and use of information and knowledge in internal and external organisatory processes with a comprehensive range of stakeholder groups." (Åbo Akademi University 2016a).

Some of the courses in this programme of 120 credits are specific for students in IKM, but some, like Information Management and Information Architecture are shared with the information studies curriculum, as they are

taught in English. As minor subjects the IKM students study marketing and management and the programme gives a degree in Economics and Business Administration. As planned, the first batch of students started in this programme in 2014. The new programme attracted a good number of applicants from all over the world – around 150 – and eventually, ten students started their studies that year. The two following years the programme had around 120 applicants, making it the most attractive international master's programme at the university based on number of applications.

In the winter of 2015/2016 a discussion about a reform of all the master's programmes at the university, both the Swedish and English ones, started. The university wanted to diminish the number of programmes and form larger programmes containing more than one subject. As a result of extensive planning and many discussions Information Studies decided to start a new international master's programme together with the subject Information Systems, which has an international programme in Digital and Mobile Business. Following this decision, the current international programmes of both subjects will no longer be open for new applicants, but students can (starting from December 2016) apply to the new Master's Programme in Governance of Digitalization, GoD in short, starting in August 2017. The students currently studying IKM can of course continue to study within their current programme until they graduate. In the presentation of the new programme, digitalization is seen as a word used to denote the current fundamental change in our society. This change is enabled by transformation of data into digital format, and the focus of digitalization is increasingly on organizational level changes. New ways to organize work and to do business are enabled by digitalization and it challenges existing business models and affects some of the established organizations and industries. Organizations here include businesses, government and other organizations. The new programme combines information systems and information studies in a way that gives students a competence “that covers digitalization and how it

enables new ways to create knowledge, to create value to the customer, new ways to configure organizational processes, and new ways to organize industry level co-operation between organizations. Effective and efficient management of digital transformation is critical for the success of enterprises and organisations in the contemporary society” (Åbo Akademi University 2016b).

The Joint ACM/AIS MSIS 2016 Task Force (Topi et al., 2016) has created a list of competencies providing guidance for degree programmes in Information systems. Based on this list the Professor in Information studies Gunilla Widén, the University Teacher in IKM Radha Krishnan, and the Senior Lecturer in Information Studies Kristina Eriksson-Backa have defined eight competencies that those courses in information studies and IKM that are suitable to include in the GoD programme give:

1. Complying information professional ethics (User perspective)
2. Gaining expertise in and promoting information literacy (User perspective)
3. Comprehending information behavior (User perspective)
4. Fostering an information culture (Knowledge Management, KM)
5. Planning for information strategies (KM)
6. Implementing and managing information processes (KM)
7. Managing information resources (KM)
8. Applying informetric and user profiling methods (Analytics)

Within the new master's programmes courses are mainly grouped in modules of 20 credits, containing four courses of 5 credits each. Table 1 presents the planned structure of the GoD programme. The two subjects will be responsible for two courses each in each mandatory module of 20 credits (i.e., Digitalization and Governance), and the Master's thesis seminars are arranged together. Students can, furthermore, choose one or two optional modules offered by either subject or by Information Systems at the University of Turku because of the flexible study rights. Also one module offered by any other subject can be chosen.

The restructuring of the education at the master's level will not only affect the English language education, but the Swedish one, as well. The planned Swedish-speaking master's programmes will, however, not start until August 2018, but at that time there will no longer be any separate Master's Programme in Information Studies. Those with a Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences with a major in information studies can apply to study in the GoD programme, leading to a Master's Degree in Economics and Business Administration.

Students who wish to continue to study in Swedish – and to gain a Master's Degree in Social Sciences – can apply to the programme *Offentligt ledarskap* (Public Management) containing courses in Public Administration, Public Law, as well as advanced courses in Information Studies, and thus gain competencies needed in leading positions in, for example, a library. During this autumn teaching staff from the subjects Information Systems and Information Studies have met and discussed several times, but the new programme is still under construction, and ti-

me will tell where this new path will lead us. We are, however, sure that the skills and competencies that the students gain from this new programme will give excellent prerequisites for work in the future job market, including the field of library and information services.

Sources

Topi, H, Karsten, H, Brown S, Carvalho, JA, Donnellan, B, Shen, J, Tan, B & Thouin, M (2016). MSIS 2016: Global Competency Model for Graduate Degree Programs in Information Systems. Association for Computing Machinery & Association for Information Systems. <https://msis2016.org/> (27.12.2016)

Åbo Akademi University (2016a). Master's Programme in Information and Knowledge Management, 2016. <http://www.abo.fi/ansok/en/Content/Document/document/30065> (5.12.2016)

Åbo Akademi University (2016b). Master's Programme in Governance of Digitalization, 2016. http://www.abo.fi/fakultet/fse_digi (5.12.2016)

Mandatory modules (80 credits):

Digitalization: 20 credits (4 x 5 credits)

- Information in the Digital Age*
- Information Behaviour*
- Digital Services
- Business Analytics I

Governance: 20 credits (4 x 5 credits)

- IT Governance and Strategic Management of IT
- Business Modelling and Digital Economy
- Information Strategies*
- Knowledge Management*

Master's thesis seminars: 10 credits

Master's thesis: 30 credits

Optional modules (40 credits):

- Analytics (20 credits) and/or
- Information Studies (20 credits) and/or
- A module of courses in Information Systems at the University of Turku (20 credits)
- One module of 20 credits in any subject at the university.

*Courses where Information Studies and IKM have the main responsibility for the arrangements

Table 1. Structure of the international Master's Programme in Governance of Digitalization(120 credits).