

Universal design as part of the Bachelor study programs in planning and administration and master's in social planning and management

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Abstract. This paper overviews Volda University College's implementation of Universal Design in its Bachelor's study program in planning and administration, and Master's study program in social planning and management. It includes a four-day introduction to Universal Design from various complementary perspectives, with a study tour and a separate compendium.

Keywords. Planning, Public sector, Bachelor and master education

Introduction

The Volda University College offers interdisciplinary education in community planning and management. We provide education both on the bachelor's and master's level. Universal design is implemented as an important element in Bachelor of Planning and Management. Both Bachelor's degree in planning and management, and Master's degree in community planning and management gives a wide range of expert knowledge as a recruiter for various positions in planning and management, both in the public, private and voluntary sector. We see it as important that our students bring with them up to date and relevant knowledge on universal design out in professional life.

Universal design is today implemented as a theme at Bachelor level for the following courses Management knowledge (IPA 112) and Social sciences (IPA 111) on the first year of the bachelor's degree. We have also included Universal Design as a new topic of community planning and innovation (IPA 202) in the third year of the bachelor's degree. Universal design is also included at the master's course MEI307; life course, health and welfare.

Since the autumn of 2013 we have introduced an interdisciplinary project with universal design as a subject in the first year of the bachelor's degree. During 4 days the students get an introduction to universal design in a sociological, economic, organizational, legal, and social planning perspective under the auspices of the subjects teachers on study and hired guest teachers. One day is set aside for a study tour. The last two years the excursion have included visits to The Møre og Romsdal County Council and the Department of transportation with a focus on universal design.

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We have also made a visit to the city of Ålesund with focus on universal design of city streets in a way that handles this Art Nouveau town's distinctive character and grade II listed House. On day 3 and 4 of this interdisciplinary project the students will conduct their own surveys and analysis of universal design associate to the private and public sectors and the public rooms and presents these for fellow students and teachers. Study tour is targeting students on both the 1. and 3. year of study. A separate compendium has also been prepared for use in the interdisciplinary week.

Universal design is also a key theme in the interdisciplinary project "community analysis" as conducted each spring term for students on the first year. Here, students have the task of investigating the extent to which degree universal design are followed up in the design of both private and public buildings, infrastructure, etc. We have also introduced a "Community planning day" in conjunction with the National Research Market Days event, where students from the local community analysis is invited to make presentations of their work together with relevant master thesis.

What's new this year is that we also included a presentation of student work within the realm of universal design from the interdisciplinary project. This day is open to all. Both the interdisciplinary project, the local social analysis and social planning day enters into the National Research Market Days as annual events and has found a form that we hypothesize is well adjusted to and relevant to the academic topic of our educations. We also see that universal design in increasingly degree is the topic of bachelor-and master thesis by our students.