



FACULTY  
OF SOCIAL  
SCIENCES

STATEMENT FROM EXTERNAL  
EXPERT GROUP

Reg. No.  
STYR 2023/22

2023-06-26

## **Programme evaluation of Master of Science Programme in Human Ecology – Culture, Power and Sustainability and free standing courses: Statement from external expert group**

### **Assignment and external expert group**

The assignment of the external expert group (see composition below) has been to evaluate the Master of Science Programme in Human Ecology – Culture, Power and Sustainability and free-standing courses. The evaluation is based on Lund University's eleven criteria for quality enhancement, with support from the Faculty of Social Sciences' instructions<sup>1</sup>. The assignment includes raising the strengths, challenges and development opportunities of the learning environment and the programme/programmes.

Prior to the evaluation, the expert group were given access to LU Box with a large number of documents from the department and the faculty, including the department's self-assessment and input of students/doctoral students.

On May 24<sup>th</sup> a site visit was conducted (see the program in appendix).

---

<sup>1</sup> *Instructions and procedures for programme evaluations by external experts at the Faculty of Social Sciences (2021-02-04, reg. no STYR 2021/117) and Instructions for external experts regarding programme evaluation at the Faculty of Social Sciences (2021-02-04, reg. no STYR 2021/118)*

The external expert group:

- Frances Sprei, Chalmers University of Technology (chair of the expert group)
- Sebastian Linke, School of Global Studies, Gothenburg University

The main strengths and challenges of the programme, and the external expert group's reflections and recommendations

### **1. That the actual study results correspond to learning outcomes and qualitative targets**

The courses and educational programme at Human Ecology consist of two parts. Three freestanding courses at the bachelor level and the Master Programme in Human Ecology – Culture, Power and Sustainability (CPS).

#### **Freestanding bachelor-level courses**

There are three freestanding courses (HEKA12, HEKA22, and HEKK03) that together comprise 90 ECTS. Students that want to obtain a bachelor's degree in human ecology need to take 90 ECTS of optional courses beyond the HE courses offered.

The intention of the freestanding courses is to both to prepare students for work outside of academia as well as further studies in human ecology or related and relevant fields. The courses build on each other and expect more independent work from the students. HEKK03 ends with a bachelor thesis of 15 ECTS. Supported previously by two methods modules that introduce both qualitative and quantitative methods. The courses cover various aspects of human ecology presenting an interdisciplinary overview with insights/knowledge from natural science, different social sciences as well as humanities.

There are no overall intended learning outcomes (ILO) for all the three courses since these are intended and treated as freestanding courses. It could be worth considering if a bachelor programme should be offered. Giving students more a sense of belonging and providing even better continuity and overview of the courses. Of course, each individual course could still be offered as a freestanding course for students that do not want to enrol in the bachelor's degree.

The courses are mainly held together by two course conveners (even if there are other staff that teaches in the individual modules) which ensures that there is continuity and general overview between the courses. This seems to be working well however it does create some

vulnerability especially since one of the teachers is a professor approaching retirement.

### **Master Programme CPS**

The Master Programme in Human Ecology: Culture, Power, and Sustainability has been running since 2009. The aim is to provide students with advanced competence in Human Ecology through transdisciplinary perspectives. The idea is to provide a complement to technological and natural science perceptions of sustainability. While being interdisciplinary, it has a basis in social science, draws on critical theory, and emphasizes the links to culture and power in societal challenges.

The Master Programme is two years. There is the possibility to take a one-year degree as well, however, this is seldom chosen by the students. The first year consists of six courses starting with an introduction to the foundations of human ecology, moving to the theory of science courses and finishing with methods courses.

The ILOs of the programme are well formulated and in line with the Higher Education Ordinance requirements. They cover different aspects of learning. Possibly the verbs *understand* and *possess knowledge* could be substituted with more active and precise verbs that are easier to assess and engage in a constructive alignment approach to designing curriculum and courses. The programme is well managed from the programme coordinator and there is good communication and coordination between the courses. However, this seems to very reliant of the work of the programme coordinator and the question is how well institutionalized this is in case they would leave.

One of the challenges the programme phases is the balance between breadth and depth, which is inherent in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work. Based on the material presented to us the programme manages well this balance. There is a good progression in subjects and moving towards more independent work by the students and more societally oriented. The societal aspect is important to ensure that the programme truly is transdisciplinary and not only interdisciplinary. The internship plays an important role in this aspect. It is more questionable for the students that do not engage in this if they truly get the transdisciplinary perspective. Even if societal perspectives are introduced into courses through guest lectures, the real interaction with society and the more co-creational aspect of transdisciplinarity will be weaker. Regarding external actors as guest lectures these were perceived as few from the student representative and thus more effort could be made to improve this aspect. Also, from transdisciplinary perspective it is also important to integrate the knowledge and not leave it to only be just *guest appearances*.

The students also don't seem to be fully aware of the definition of transdisciplinarity, especially its difference to interdisciplinarity thus more effort could be made in the beginning of the programme to explain this concept and how it is integrated in the curricula. We also notice that in the methods course there is a lecture on interdisciplinary research but not transdisciplinary. Maybe this is covered in the lecture, however, from the material we have been presented this is hard to assess.

More specifically, the methods course (HEKM22) could better integrate the students' diverse backgrounds and experience with different methods. It could also better connect with the theory of science courses. Please see the next section for more specific suggestions for the course.

The master's theses show breadth in themes and approaches. Method wise they mainly rely on qualitative methods and discourse analysis seems to be a very common method. Still the methods courses seem to have less of these methods and thus the question is if they miss to provide the depth needed at master level for methodological learning.

## **2. That the programme focuses on students'/doctoral students' learning**

Our assessment is that overall, the programme focuses on the students' learning. There is a progression in learning objectives and in assessment methods leading to more independent and reflective expectations on the students. There are some courses that seem to have issues. One of them is HEKM20 where the students have reacted to how certain subjects such as feminism were presented. However, our impression is that this has been taken care of in responsible manner. The response to this issue is a good example of the responsiveness of the programme coordinator.

Another course that deserves some extra attention is the methods course HEKM22. This course does not seem to take into account the level at which the students are at this time in the programme and the level of maturity in their methods knowledge from previous education. Thus, it would be beneficial if this is better considered. Students come from different backgrounds with different methodological knowledge. Could this be made as an advantage in the course, rather than a challenge? The course also seems to be at a more meta-level not so much diving into the actual methods and letting the students use them. Could e.g., the first and second seminar be better connected? As it is now the second seminar jumps to interdisciplinarity rather than delving deeper into methods that could be useful address the research questions developed in the first seminar.

For the methods course in the freestanding courses a suggestion would be to introduce already here the mixed method approach since this is highly relevant for interdisciplinary research. We are aware of the lack of time but consider this foundational enough to deserve some time in a methods course in an interdisciplinary subject like human ecology.

Studying the Master theses and based on the self-evaluation, quantitative methods don't seem to be very popular among students. This, despite the fact that quantitative methods receive quite a lot of attention in the methods courses. But the question is how much attention do they receive in the rest of the programme? If there is really an interest in increasing the usage of these methods one should consider how quantitative methods are presented not only the methods course but throughout the programme. What methods are used in the literature of the different courses? What methods do the teachers use in their research, especially in the examples brought up in education? If the quantitative methods are mainly present in the methods course this will be too little to elicit the interest of the students.

There seems to be an overall good support structure for the student (see also point 7). However, the bachelor and free-standing course students seem to miss a sense of belonging compared to the Master students that seem very well integrated in the division. Thus, more measures could be taken to give the students more context, guidance and belonging. This might also increase the interest for the students to continue to the Master programme. As previously mentioned, it could also be worth considering having an actual bachelor programme to better give these students a context.

Regarding the assessment methods we understand that the staff are starting to consider how ChatGPT and other AI tools can affect the education and assessment methods. This is promising since it is an issue that will deserve a lot of attention, especially for assessments that are much relying on home exams and thus will need major attention. It is advisable also to look into how these tools can be integrated in the education and be used enhance the students' learning experience. This should involve all staff and be part of the continuous pedagogical training.

To improve the learning experience the use of grading rubrics could be better used in the various courses. Grading rubrics offers benefits both for the students and the grading teaching staff. The benefits for the students are among others that it clarifies expectations, helps them understand the different components of the work and supports their ability to improve in the future (Selke, 2013).

The evaluation of the courses seems to be challenging for the division since they don't have full control over the process and the questions asked. From our understanding there is an ongoing process to reform

the questionnaire. Our recommendation is to strongly push for each course convenor to be able to add relevant question to the evaluation form. From a positive side is that the informal process of getting feedback from students seems to be working well. One could consider if more could be done by e.g., having one-minute papers or own evaluations through e.g., online questionnaires such as Mentimeter at the end of each course. This tool could also be used to understand the background knowledge of the students in different subjects at the beginning of the courses/programme. This could facilitate to handle the mixed backgrounds of the students participating in the programme. Another input for evaluation would be an overall questionnaire for the whole programme to better understand the connections between the course and what might be missing overall.

Selke, M. J. G. (2013). *Rubric assessment goes to college: Objective, comprehensive evaluation of student work*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

### **3. That the programme is based on a scientific and/or artistic foundation and proven experience**

The teaching staff at human ecology have a productive research profile with a good publication record, even if this is dominated by a few researchers. There is also a good record of attracting funding for research that has the downside from an educational perspective that less time is available for teaching, while of course keeping in mind that it enhances the scientific quality and relevance of the teaching staff.

It is positive that expertise from other scholars both international and from Lund University is used in the programme. This could maybe be even more improved, and it could be clearer what interaction there is with similar programs such as LUCSUS.

As pointed out in the self-evaluation the risk of the close connection between research and teaching is that the courses may become to specialised which might make it harder for other teaching staff to take over on a quick basis if so needed. Thus, it is important to keep the balance between more general knowledge and research specific knowledge.

It is interesting and welcome the introduction of artistic practice within the programme. This strengthens the breadth of teaching methods and approaches. This can also be a novel way to interact with societal actors and thus strengthen the transdisciplinary aspect of the

programme. From speaking with the teaching staff there seems to be a good foundation for this, at least from one of the teachers. What might be more questionable is how to spread this competence this is and thus this underlying competency might be vulnerable to disruption.

#### **4. That teaching staff, including supervisors, have appropriate expertise in terms of subject, teaching and learning in higher education and subject**

The distribution of teaching staff (Table 2, p. 9 in self-evaluation report) highlights that all staff categories, from professors to doctoral students, are teaching. This mirrors a diverse teaching team, which is important for ensuring the quality and relevance of the education. It is appropriate that bachelor and master students can meet the different staff categories during their education to make use of engaging with academics at different career levels.

There is however a clear gender imbalance in the current teaching staff towards white male teachers at higher career levels (one professor and two senior lecturers), which, despite recruitment aims to the contrary, persists as a problem for the foreseeable future. Continued efforts and policies that enable the human ecology section to change the gender distribution are therefore recommended.

Furthermore, the total amount of teachers (8.4 full term equivalents) signals an understaffed situation with regard to the teaching load in both bachelor and master education. This problem was confirmed by our on-site interviews and should be addressed in all possible ways. We suggest two key strategies to address the problem of staff requirements: 1) a strategy and practice to hire additional permanent staff that includes a clear plan ahead for substituting retiring colleagues; dare to take some risks in recruitment strategies rather than accept an understaffed situation, which makes the secure provision of professional teaching vulnerable to unforeseen events like sick-leaves, parental leaves etc.; 2) apply short-term strategies to address the shortcoming of teaching personal like securing and maintaining a pool of adjuncts or teaching assistants, junior scholars or post-docs that can and want to teach; this can create win-win situations since such younger scholars may need teaching experience to gain merits for promotions/applications.

The human ecology section also seems to have rather little staff in relation to the entire department with respect to the number of students. The distribution of staff between human ecology and human geography should therefore be reconsidered accordingly at the department level with respect to whether it matches the actual teaching requirements in both subjects. In addition, the rule of all staff having to teach at least 25% seems adequate, but it is important to

properly implement and surveil it to ensure the combination of teaching and research of all staff in relation to the above requirements. This rule can be reconsidered to be changed to e.g., 30% teaching requirements if needed in order to ensure all staff is teaching and sufficiently visible in the curriculum and classrooms. A sophisticated long-term policy on how this must be implemented at the department level seems important. At the moment, due to the understaffed situation, the teaching and in particular the master's program seems to depend on a few central individuals. The strategy to combine junior and senior teachers as course-conveners is commendable and worthwhile to pursue to the extent possible. Some internal rules, like e.g., the requirement for being docent for examining a master thesis seems unattainable and may therefore need to be changed. Such changes should be thoroughly discussed to ensure the continued quality of the education program. Regarding the expertise of the teachers, while this seems still appropriate at the moment, there needs to be a strategy in place to ensure this for the future with senior staff (professors) retiring.

While it is mentioned that “teachers at the division are actively engaging in developing their skills by taking pedagogical courses”, it is however unclear how this is ensured or followed-up. The compulsory pedagogical course requirement is quite low (7.5 credits) and the list of pedagogical courses taken by the teaching staff presented to us is quite weak. A clearer plan of how to motivate teachers to pursue pedagogical education and how they may be supported (e.g., through time-compensations or merits) should be considered.

##### **5. That the programme is to be relevant for the students and doctoral students and meets the needs of society**

The CPS programme seems to be appreciated by the students and provides them with relevant knowledge both for those continuing in academia as well as work life. This also applies to the bachelor courses even if these students might need more guidance and a feeling of context. From the student's evaluation we can read that they perceive the programme to have high relevance, inspiring teachers, and a variety of input. As written in section 2 it could be beneficial to an overall programme evaluation by the students through a questionnaire to better understand how their needs are met, not only individual courses but throughout the programme. There is a good connection with the alumni from the programme and these present also a spread implying that the knowledge and skills developed during the programme have relevance for many different professions.



The CPS programme is described as transdisciplinary and thus should take into account the perspectives of actors outside of academia implying that societal needs are met or at least taken into account. Of course, the phrase “needs of society” is very broad and it can be questioned what part of society and which needs are actually addressed. In our view, the CPS programme with its focus on cultural and power aspects addresses issues that are often overlooked in the societal debate and thus represent an important voice and perspective. This gives the students and future alumni the opportunity to contribute to society in new ways. One possible critique is by relying a lot on critical theory there can be an over-emphasis on criticizing the current system without providing a constructive alternative and more problem-solving approach.

#### **6. That the students and doctoral students have an influence on planning, implementation and follow up of the programme**

Student representatives are allowed in important decision-making bodies at the department level, which seems democratic and appropriate. However, as mentioned in the self-evaluation and in our interrogations, it seems hard to fill these student representative positions and to ensure continuity in this involvement. This appears to some extent beyond the capabilities of the department leadership since it is the Social Science Student Union that is responsible to nominate and fill these positions. However, the students might be more encouraged and informed about the importance and possible benefits of such participation and how to contribute in practice.

As our on-site debriefings revealed, the most important input from students to the teaching and education development comes via direct communication and informal dialogue between students, teachers, course- and program conveners. While the latter, according to our interrogations, works very well among current teaching staff, the official course evaluations are noted as too stiff and inflexible, thus not providing the necessary or desired information that is needed for teachers to make relevant revisions. Some increased flexibility and/or options to add additional details to course evaluations e.g., more general, or open-ended questions to the official evaluation schemes seem therefore needed. A discussion with the faculty and/or university level on how to change existing course-evaluation schemes is suggested as important in order to address this shortcoming (see also section 8).

An overall strength of the bachelor education and the CPS program is the good formal and informal communication and dialogue within the department. This regards communications both between the director of studies and the program director, as well as between the program

director and the teachers and also between teachers and students. Because this appears well-working and of crucial importance, ensuring the working of continued platforms that enable this communication, like the monthly staff meetings and teachers' meetings, is important to maintain and develop.

As a problem it is mentioned that CPS students are not united anymore in the final year (due to elective courses, internships and thesis writing), which is addressed and attempted to compensate through online meetings and introductory lectures online etc. Continued discussions about and awareness of possible drawbacks of different tools for online education tools are important. Also, a sophisticated evaluation of the pros and cons of the different strategies is recommended.

From the student evaluation's perspective, it has been addressed that students in the bachelor courses could require more guidance. Bachelor students perceive themselves as "satellites" that can read the A, B, and C courses before they can get the opportunity to be enrolled in the master's program, where the perception is different, and where they finally feel part of the human ecology community. Nobody appears to "pick up" the bachelor students that really want to become human ecologists. This problem seems to root in the fact that there is no bachelor program but only freestanding courses, something that can be considered to change (i.e., establish a bachelor program). On the master level program, on the other hand, the students are very satisfied, there appears to be a good balance between breadth and depth in the program. However, there are desires voiced by students for more student-centered teaching support and opportunities to deepen the learning experiences, especially in the methods courses. Some adjustments in this direction seem worthwhile considering in the CPS program.

### **7. That an appropriate study and learning environment is available to all and includes a well-functioning support system**

The teaching is conducted mainly in the department's location where the division for human ecology is placed (Geocentrum 1). Overall, this seems to be a good and appropriate physical learning environment. However, some students mention that it is difficult to find spaces and rooms for discussion in the department, for socializing and studying. This dissipates the class when they have to go somewhere else on the campus for these purposes. It should be considered if and how this can be addressed and eventually changed, in collaboration with student representatives. There are, however, good facilities in the vicinity of the department's location.

There is good student support provided by services from LU central via e.g., Student Health Centre, Disability Support Services, and the Academic Support Centre.

Furthermore, the department provides direct support for bachelor and master education through a designated admin staff. The person currently working with the student administration is very engaged and a great help to students, both technically and emotionally, through providing deep insights into the student's problems, particularly regarding those from abroad (ca. 90% of students) and those suffering from problems like isolation during the pandemic, or those requiring special pedagogical needs. There have been various problems for students during and after the Covid19 pandemic (e.g., a 15% increase of mental problems), which appears to be taken seriously and well-addressed to the extent possible.

A strong focus exists on internationalization of the education and relevant maintaining programs such as Erasmus+ and Erasmus-traineeship.

As mentioned above, while the students' course representative function works very well and direct contacts/dialogues are helpful to address emerging problems and give immediate feedback, the student representation in the department board is challenging to ensure or even vacant. This should be continuously addressed and communicated to the student union to eventually enable this important representative function for students to participate in important decision processes at the department level.

### **8. That there is continuous follow up and development of the programme**

The external evaluation of the educational program of which this report is a part of, takes place every six years. This is a crucially important long-term strategy to ensure the qualitative development of the education in human ecology at the department. This evaluation follows the requirements of Lund University with a subsequent two-year implementation phase, which seems well-placed and appropriate.

In between the 6-year evaluations, at the department level, there is a sophisticated structure and relevant platforms in place to discuss and develop the individual courses and the overall CPS program. The department board, in which the CPS program is represented, makes decisions. The supervisor's collegium, held every month, is also an important forum for discussions and work to address teaching issues and ensure the ongoing development of the education, both at the bachelor and master program level. In addition, the education at the CPS program level is holding yearly teachers' meetings in order to coordinate the overall program, inform newly appointed teachers and

to address relevant and/or critical issues regarding the education. These platforms and meetings seem to be well-working for ongoing developments and for ensuring the quality development of the education.

Furthermore, there are yearly continuous quality dialogues with the faculty, which has a representative from the department and the education of the division is reviewed. These quality dialogues have for several years emphasized the need to work with the methods courses at the department, because they appear fragmented and have unclear learning outcomes. It is recommended to invest more work in attending to this matter to ensure improvements in the quality of the methods courses and to clarify the existing course contents (see section 2 for some more concrete recommendations).

In addition, the process of changing course syllabi is seen as difficult and time consuming, which makes short-term adaptations difficult. While this, as mentioned, lies to a large extent outside of the divisions' control, it should be considered how to find opportunities for more flexibility like minor adaptations of course contents and course literature. Careful revisions of syllabi, that enable such flexibility for short-term changes and adaptations can be a strategy to circumvent some of the existing problems.

Summing up the strengths and challenges, the multitude of platforms for follow-up and development of the program appear rather well-working and not overly complex or complicated (as might be expected). An ongoing challenge is the above-mentioned standardized course evaluations, which create problems that should be addressed as well as the necessary improvements with method courses.

### **9. That internationalisation and an international perspective is promoted in the programme**

Internationalization and international perspectives are central aspects of the education in the human ecology division. This focus on international perspectives manifests itself mainly through three aspects: 1) The content of teaching, which increasingly includes examples and cases from beyond Sweden and Europe. We suggest that this focus should be continued and in particular perspectives from the Global South should be included in the course contents and in the literature. 2) The teachers and staff at the department are part of a lively international environment with networks, with visiting scholars and guest researchers from different parts of the world. These exchanges and continued contacts appear very valuable and worthwhile to pursue on different levels (individual researchers/teachers, guest researchers teaching in courses, seminars etc.). 3) The division makes extensive use of opportunities for

exchange studies and internships, which are encouraged by teachers and supported by help from the department and the faculty level. This support seems to be comparatively well working, which is also underlined by the fact that 50% of the master's students do internships abroad. Finally, it needs to be mentioned that the CPS program is attracting international students in substantial numbers, mainly from the EU and North America (this bias is partly due to tuition fees for students from other countries). At present, this high number of international students (around 90 % of students coming from abroad) is, according to our interrogation ensured via information spreading about CPS mainly via "words of mouth" or through well-known, inspiring scholars at the section for human ecology. More active work on collaborations with other departments abroad should be considered as an option to ensure this international recruitment in the long-term.

It is welcomed that the teaching staff is increasing the representation of female scholarship in literature. However, we find that the initiative to put first names in full is quite futile and not always that enlightening. Identifying the gender from the first name is not always obvious since there are gender neutral names and might be very dependent on the cultural context.

### **10. That gender equality and equal opportunities perspectives are integrated in the programme**

The challenges regarding the integration of gender equality and equal opportunities perspectives in the education in human ecology both at the division and the broader department mirror problems that are well known from other places. Gender bias of students for example relates to a large extent to the outside world, like assumed job opportunities and expectations, which can hardly be changed by the staff responsible for education or individual teachers. However, despite this lack of immediate action for change, it is important to reflect on these problems and keep them an active topic of discussion in the education as well as among teachers. As mentioned in the self-evaluation report, especially the subject of human ecology rooted in disciplines of anthropology and sociology, which early-on focused on gender issues, appears well-suited for this topic, as being as addressed in the introductory bachelor course (HEKA12) and the master course on critical theory (HEKM21) that includes feminist and decolonial perspectives. The aim to increasingly see over and where possible include more feminist scholarship in the curriculum should be continued and broadened.

Another problem can be seen with a male-biased teaching staff in the division (table 2. p 9 in self-evaluation report): while the staff is more mixed at the junior level, at the senior level there is a clear male-bias, which as we heard continues for the foreseeable future but should be

counteracted to the extent possible. Some problems regarding issues of gender and feminist research with one particular teacher were mentioned by the students, in the student evaluation and confirmed by the coordinator. It was reassured to us that this problem was properly addressed and is now resolved, thus suggesting a proper handling of this issue.

### **11. That subject-relevant perspectives on sustainable development are promoted in the programme**

Sustainable development is at the core of human ecology so the answer to this point is kind of obvious. The strength of the CPS and human ecology freestanding courses is that they don't take a reductionist approach to sustainable development but a holistic approach that takes account of all three dimensions (environment, economy, and social), with an emphasis on the social part of the sustainability challenge, which is the dimension that has been most often overlooked. One central concept in sustainable development is justice, not only between generations but also within our generation. The focus on culture and power provides important perspectives on this. This emphasises the relevance of the programme. It is also welcomed to read that the teaching staff reflects and point to the importance of issues that go beyond sustainable development but that still have societal relevance. There is a tendency in society to group all "good" under sustainability and to forget other important issues, even regarding man's interaction with nature. We find no specific recommendations for this point more than to continue the good work and further development in the same direction.

### **Summarised views and recommendations**

First of all, we would like to emphasise that the fact that the department pursues this kind of evaluation is very positive. The self-evaluation process per se is very useful and shows a commitment to quality development. Regarding the overall evaluation process, we believe that the site visit could have been longer. We especially feel that the time devoted to talking with the teaching staff was too short. We didn't really have time to better understand what input and development needs they needed. This should be taken into consideration for future evaluations.

Summarizing we find that the strength of the human ecology education is that the courses and programmes have high societal

relevance, there is a good connection and communication between the teaching staff and between teaching staff and students, the CPS programme is well structured with good learning outcomes and progressions of skills and assessment methods. The existing focus on internationalization is a high priority for the CPS program, which is important and worthwhile to keep for future developments. The current staff of teachers and supervisors seems appropriate and have the required expertise. We also find that there are appropriate processes and procedures in place for student influence in the program.

Regarding the challenges, we find that there appears to be an ongoing capacity problem that results in a continued understaffed situation among teachers in human ecology that needs to be addressed. This impacts also the gender balance resulting in a lack of senior female staff. Some specific courses such as the method courses need further development to better take into consideration the needs of the students and bachelor students need more support and a better sense of belonging. The transdisciplinary aspect of the CPS programme can also be developed.

More specific recommendations are:

- To address the staffing situation:
  - o Mix short- and long-term strategies to compensate for understaffed teaching capacity
  - o Guarantee the professional expertise of teaching staff in human ecology in upcoming recruitments
  - o Work with eliminating the gender gap in teaching staff (in recruitments)
- For the freestanding courses:
  - o Look into the possibility to create a bachelor programme
  - o Alternatively, or in the meanwhile, create better support and guidance for the students that intend to take a bachelor in human ecology
- Strengthen transdisciplinarity by:
  - o Introducing it early in the programme

- Improve the presence of guest lecturers
  - Better coverage in the methods courses
- Improve the methods courses by
  - Integrating better the knowledge of the students, thus using the mixed background as a strength rather than a weakness
  - Connect the first two seminars in the existing course better to create continuity and an appropriate level of depth for a course at the master's level
  - Integrate transdisciplinary methods such as the co-creation of knowledge
- Aim for more flexibility in syllabi to allow adaptations by new course conveners (to do when revising course syllabi)
- If the aim is to increase the interest in quantitative methods more emphasis should be made throughout the programme to ensure that these methods are present
- To improve the student influence and learning
  - Work on balancing strategies between informal and formal communications and feedback from students
  - Find ways to ensure more flexibility in course evaluations e.g., via adding open-ended questions; to be addressed to faculty and LU central
  - Work on strategies to balance on-site and online teaching tools
  - Have an ongoing discussion on how AI-tools should be handled and integrated into the education
  - Use grading rubrics
  - Keep and continually ensure the well-working support from a skilled admin person that is in close contact with the students and guarantees that they feel well and taken care of



## Appendix: programme for site visit

### **May 23<sup>rd</sup>**

18.30 – Dinner at Mat och Destillat (Kyrkogatan 17, Lund)

### **May 24<sup>th</sup> (meetings before lunch in room 508, after lunch – room Johannesburg, Geocentrum I, Sölvegatan 10, Lund)**

9.00-9.30 – Department leadership

9.45-10.15 – Undergraduate education

10.30-11.00 – MSc in Human Ecology

11.15-12.00 – Teaching community

12.00-13.00 – Lunch

13.00-13.45 Students

14.00-14.30 Representative(s) of the admin team

14.45-15.30 Tour around Geocentrum I and Campus Paradis

15:30-16.30 Experts' independent work

16.30-17.00 Reconvening with department leadership