



Work Integrated Learning in an International Environment: The Example of Work Integrated Political Studies

Fredrik Sunnemark, University West, Sweden

Higher Education in Sweden

47 Higher Education Institutions (HEI) (divided up between 'universitet' and 'högskola'. In practice no principal difference)

With some exceptions, all HEI's offer both traditional academic and vocational education

Profiles differ

Fully follows Bologna

Three-year bachelor's exam, two years master's exam (one year "magister") and four-year doctoral exam

Some vocational programs differ

Debate on applicability, employability, Bildung, critical citizens

Debate on university ideal

University West

Approx. 25 programmes on first cycle level

20 programmes on second cycle level

Totally approx. 13 200 students

Approx. 5 200 full year students, approx. 650 on second cycle level

Approx. 80 fee-paying international full year students

High percentage of students from non-academic homes

87% of students in employment one year after exam

750 employes

Four departments: Engineering Science, Health Sciences, Social and Behavioural studies and Business & IT

University West

Over half of research externally funded

Organisation: previously three vital research environments, now two complete academic environments: Production Technology and Work Integrated Learning. In total 83 Ph.D. students within these environments (29/54 respectively).

Special governmental task to develop Work Integrated Learning since 2002

Vision : “We act and work together with society to create a more sustainable world. Together with a wide range of partners we create knowledge and strive to make it more accessible.”

Position: “Sweden’s leading university in the field of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) – creating knowledge and development in the interaction between academia and the world outside.”

Core values: Generous, Inclusive, Pro-active, ”Crazy Enough”

Work- integrated learning at University West

WIL as philosophy: Theoretical and practical knowledge is equally meaningful and dependent on each other. When practical knowledge is integrated with the theoretical new knowledge is formed. We therefore constantly look for new ways of integrating these forms of knowledge.

WIL as pedagogical model(s): To be able to integrate practical and theoretical knowledge in our educational programs, working life is a natural part of our courses. Through WIL the students learn to reflect upon their own learning and when they leave us, they are therefore well prepared for lifelong learning and lifelong development.

WIL as research subject/discipline: Studies of the learning that takes place through integration of theoretical and practical knowledge and experiences. These are collected from learning situations in higher education as well as in working life and civil society.

Work Integrated Political Studies (WIPS)

- Multidisciplinary programme in WIL, focusing on knowledge, learning and applied research methods, contextualised in a broader of political studies, connected to the society
- Integrating academic studies and applied research through collaboration with the challenges and demands in society (public sector, state organisations, NGO's, private actors)
- An international study and research environment, enhancing broader competence, and deeper knowledge and understanding for various cultural and regional contexts, from local to global level. (Students can conduct applied research with/for civil society, in Sweden as well as abroad)
- The WIL Master's degree directly connects the education to University West research school and PhD programme in WIL

MASTER'S PROGRAMME IN WORK INTEGRATED POLITICAL STUDIES

Fall Semester year 1

Elective courses with a focus on political studies. 15hp.

Theory and applied methods, advanced level. 15hp.

Spring Semester year 1

Elective courses with a focus on political studies. 15hp.

WIL in theory and practice, advanced level. 15hp.

Fall Semester year 2

Research Examination Project: Compilation thesis in work integrated learning with a focus on political studies.
Master. 45hP (22.5hp + 22.5hp)

WIL: Reflection and portfolio I, advanced level. 7,5hp.

Spring Semester year 2

WIL: Reflection and portfolio II, advanced level. 7,5hp.

A central part of the education is the research work internship, during which the student is placed at a host organisation, doing research with and for the organisation, with supervision from the programme.

WIL in theory and applied research, contextualised in a broader multi-disciplinary field political studies.

Master's Degree in Work Integrated Learning with a focus on political studies

Work Integrated Political Studies (WIPS)

Compulsory courses

- Theory and applied methods, advanced level. 15hp.
- WIL in theory and practice, advanced level. 15hp.
- WIL: Reflection and portfolio I, advanced level. 7,5hp.
- WIL: Reflection and portfolio II, advanced level. 7,5hp.
- Research Examination Project: Compilation thesis in Work Integrated Learning with a focus on political studies. Master. 45hp.

Elective courses with a focus on political studies

- Peace, conflict and security studies, 15hp.
- Political Perspectives on gender and sexuality, 15hp.
- International political economy, 15hp.
- Theoretical perspectives on race and freedom, 15hp.
- Applied comparative public policy, 15hp.
- European politics, 15hp.
- Political communication, 15hp.
- Political violence, 15hp.
- Other electives of relevance for the student.

Background

- University West – University of the Western Cape from 2015
- International Programme for Politics and Economics/Honors programme in International Politics – Department of Political Studies
- Collaboration on courses at honours level
- From this: identification of common interests and needs
- Rounds of meetings and workshops twice a year
- Start 2020



Negotiations Between Central Concepts

Applied Science: The application of existing scientific knowledge to practical applications.

Work Integrated Learning: Educational activities that integrate academic learning of a discipline with its practical application in the workplace.

Work Integrated Learning, University West: Discipline related to foremost social sciences. Defined by problems in relation to working-life, focused on competence and learning. Working-life defined broadly.

Political Studies: The analysis of political activities, political thoughts, and political behavior.



How Did That Happen I: The Interplay

- Knowledge and science is constructed by mundane processes
- Individual interests and efforts
- Collective processes
- Different backgrounds, experiences and understandings of the researchers
- The interdisciplinary, intercultural and interacademical – understandings and misunderstandings
- Coincidences

How Did That Happen II: The Contexts

- University West
- University of the Western Cape
- From national demands to small internal bureaucratic considerations
- The global WIL community and the (problems of) established language
- The national and global political science community
- Continuous development

BENEFITS

Enhance knowledge, skills and experience that:

- Improve and extend new academic competences
- Open networks and collaboration with societal actors
- Connect students to the labour market and strengthen employability
- Improve applied research with a specific WIL contextual international perspective
- Improve applied research work, related to real societal challenges
- Broaden understanding for various cultural and regional contexts, from local to global level
- Enhance possibility to apply for WIL PhD programme

CHALLENGES

Requires Time - Engagement – Patience to:

- Develop and establish WIL as a new multi-disciplinary discipline
- Build up and establish long-term international collaboration within and between academy and societal organisations
- Handle the reality of uneven resources within and between academy and societal organisations
- Handle differences in bureaucracy and management between academy and societal organisations

WELCOME TO THE INTERNATIONAL MASTER'S PROGRAMME IN WORK INTEGRATED POLITICAL STUDIES

