

IMADA Teaching Committee in Data Science

Time and place: Thursday Jun 19, 2025, at 09.00-11.00 - Imada Meetingroom Pav (Ø13-509ab-1)/Teams

Participants: Stefan Jänicke (SJ), Birgit Debrabant (BD), Tariq Yousef (TY), Søren Brolund Ulriksen (SBU), Marie Dalgaard-Jensen (MDJ)

Absent: none

Minute taker: Michael Christensen (MC)

Topics:

1.DSK802/DS802: Is it still relevant as a mandatory course, or should we consider making it an elective course? / General discussion about courses in DS/DSK.

- It is tricky, because if you want to remove it, then what could replace it? This course does not overlap with other courses in the program, but there is a slight risk, that a new one might. Initially this course was planned to be a part of the 1st semester.

SJ might see this as a constituent elective course instead of being a mandatory one.

MC will add DS802 and DSK802 to the list of courses being evaluated in the Fall 2025 and will also find the last evaluation of DS802 and send it to the TC.

- MDJ: Could there be a project for the 3rd semester as an alternative? More practical. GitHub or Latec as examples. TY says that examples of this kind of project will be available on Itslearning during the next semester. Not as a part of a specific course but as inspiration.

TY: Could an option for the 3rd semester also be a course that somehow picks up on the content of the study so far. A kind of preparation for an MSc thesis.

MDJ: 1st and 2nd semester can be a steep learning curve for certain students due to the variety of backgrounds, so introducing something totally new on the 3rd semester should be well thought out.

Perhaps it would be a great idea to introduce some more “hands on” in R or Python during the 2nd semester, also to help those entering the DS program with little to no programming experience.

In general, it seems strange that there is an introduction to Python on the first semester, and then suddenly on the 2nd semester we don’t hear about it or get to use it. Should we try to talk to the

teachers on the 2nd semester suggesting that there should be some kind of alignment between the 1st and 2nd semester in terms of Python?

- TY: Another challenging aspect is that some teachers do not always distinguish between DS- and CS-students, so that DS-students perhaps spend too much time on the theory part instead of more practical content. The two groups of students are very different in terms of their background, and what the CS and DS program is aimed at.
- TY suggests that DS804/DSK804: Data mining and machine learning is split into two courses of 5 ECTS. Other members of the TC support that idea. The deadline for changes to the curriculum/study program is December 1st and will apply for the group of students beginning in 2026.

2.Niels Svane has requested BB825 to be removed as a constituent course and replaced by BB838. Environmental DS.

- MC just informed TC that this change has already been implemented on our website.

3.Likely new master thesis rule (1st and 2nd semester must be passed, before the MSc thesis can be done).

- MC just clarified that 60 ECTS passed on the MSc before the thesis can start, does not have to be 1st and 2nd semester which was the initial message. Now it is just 60 ECTS overall, so for DS this means that the 3rd semester is included as an option for getting the necessary ECTS in time.

4.New Study Board at IMADA from 2026. Two representatives from DS? At the same time, we should also look at the Data Science Teaching Committee and try to get additional members.

- BD and TY will join the new study board in 2026 as representatives for Odense and Kolding.

For TC we would like to include Alexandra Diehl and Panagiotis Tampakis. Also, it would be great if we could have more students involved, so that we could make sure that students were represented at all the meetings. The idea could be to select two students from Odense and two from Kolding, and then they could agree on one of them being the alternate.

MDJ would like to step down from TC to make room for new student representatives.

5. Course descriptions: In the process of editing the fall courses, IMADA had quite a few descriptions sent to the study board, without the necessary changes/additions. TC must do the quality check before we reach the deadline.

- During the process of editing the Spring courses, we are testing a new format at IMADA. Instead of having every teacher editing directly in Odin, we have selected a few editors on behalf of each TC, and instead the teachers send in possible changes via a Microsoft Form.

The editor for DS is BD. We agree that it would be good to add TY due to the work with the Kolding courses. MC will ask the faculty to give TY the specific role in Odin.

6. Survey in Kolding: Study environment and well-being. What to do next? – Presented by SBU.

41% response rate almost evenly distributed between students from Denmark, EU and non-EU. Also, among the three profiles that are offered in Kolding.

Top 5 student insights:

- Teaching feels overly theoretical- needs more practical relevance and coding
- Challenging to match work/life/study balance with a fragmented weekly schedule
- Students ask for better academic support and guidance
- More inclusive and visible community-building activities are desired
- Students are ready to contribute – if initiatives are meaningful and clear

What has already been initiated

- Company visits arranged
- Tutor programme for the study start is in place
- A student reference group in place for Autumn 2025
- A Data Science lounge area on the 4th floor in Kolding

So, what's next – and what is possible?

- More student-driven events: both related to study and social
- Code Café with a social twist (a revised concept)
- Monthly sessions supporting student wellbeing, group collaboration, and exam preparation
- Create a shared identity space for our students (Science Lounge) on the 4th floor
- Continued and increased collaboration with SDU RIO to plan company visits and collaborations

Student suggestions for increased support?

- Structured exam preparation: sample exams, short videos, guided exercises
- Study groups and peer-led review sessions
- Visual aids and real-world examples to complement theory
- Coordination across courses to reinforce skills (e.g. Python, data handling)

Additional reflections:

It was also emphasized that teaching should better acknowledge the diverse academic/professional backgrounds and learning needs of students – particularly in an international and interdisciplinary setting like Kolding.

Moreover, clearer links between theory and practice are needed to enhance relevance and motivation. Finally, more explicit communication about how courses connect across semesters could help students see the bigger picture and understand their academic progression.

7. We have very few options of electives for Kolding and would like to explore possibilities to add more.

- The process of creating new elective courses for Spring, 2026 is ongoing. By June 23rd the teachers must report to MC, whether they plan to offer a new elective course in the Spring, and by August 10 all the content of the description should be sent via the Microsoft Form, that has been created for this (described under topic nr. 5)

Topics not discussed:

- 8) Action plans. Do we tend to describe what has happened during this actual running of the course, instead of also focusing on what might happen in the future? – Message from UKG: how could we make a praxis description for “a good action plan”
- 9) High number of DS applicants. How to filter out candidates in the future