

## **Operational Plan 2016**

for the Department of Asian, Middle Eastern and Turkish Studies

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this operational plan is to provide a guide to the Department's operations during 2016. The Department Board pinpoints the fields and activities that are to be given priority. In particular, the plan describes various steps that will hopefully lead to a change and improvement of its operations. A great many of the operations are routine and do not change much from year to year.

The change of name from the Department of Oriental Languages to the Department of Asian, Middle Eastern and Turkish Studies is not just a change of words; it reflects a clearer focus on "region studies" but it does not mean that the Department has stopped teaching languages. Language forms the basis for understanding the cultures and societies we study.

### **Courses at the foundation and advanced levels**

The Department provides education within two main areas: Asian languages and cultures with three lines, Chinese, Korean and Japanese; and Middle Eastern languages and cultures with two lines, Arabic and Middle Eastern and North African Studies (MENA).

A primary objective for all courses is to increase the rate of flow and recruitment of students to the advanced levels. In relation to the foundation level the Department has few students at the advanced level. Although there are large groups in the first courses, there are far too few students who continue to the advanced level. Development of the advanced level is to be given priority.

Owing to the great difficulties of learning Asian languages, five or six terms of studies are required to reach the Bachelor exam level. This means that the amount of teaching that each subject provides is much larger than for all other subjects, including other languages in the Faculty of Humanities. The Department should aim at raising the student budget figure for all language subjects at the Department.

Regarding internationalisation, the Department has created the post of International Co-ordinator. This appointment will continue and, provided that the budget allows, will be made permanent.

### **Education at the Research level**

Education at the research level has not been given priority for several years, which is reflected in the small number of doctoral dissertations at the Department. At present there are three doctoral students (one in Japanese, one in Korean and one in Arabic) in their final stages. After them, however, there is a gap, with one new post-graduate student in 2014 and two in 2015. There are also two post-graduate places announced for admission in 2016.

The Department intends to give priority to education at the research level, allocating resources over and above those that the Department has earmarked for student support.

### **Research**

Research at the Department has for a long time been neglected. With a few exceptions the Department has not received external research resources. One objective is that all teaching staff with conditional tenure in the staffing schedule shall annually hand in an application for a research grant to the Swedish Research Council and/or the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation or other important research financiers. If the budget allows, the Department shall allocate resources to enable recent PhDs to be employed for a certain period of time to compose and hand in a research application of high quality.

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Two of the Department's Lecturers will be retiring within a year. The only Research Assistant will leave the Department in autumn 2015 and there are no Assistant Lecturers (two have been promoted to Lecturer). The Department therefore intends in 2016 to initiate the recruitment of one University Lecturer of Chinese, one University Lecturer of Middle Eastern Studies, one University Lecturer of Japanese, one Assistant Lecturer of Japanese and one Assistant Lecturer of Chinese. The new lecturers should be specialised in region studies in the broadest sense rather than specifically in language.

### **Co-operation**

Co-operation is a strategic investment for the Department. Areas with high priority are embassies and strategic foundations as well as universities in the countries embraced by our studies. These contacts will lead to increased student exchange, scholarships, visiting lecturers and in certain cases to resources for research and stays abroad.

Contacts with museums, companies and organisations whose operations are directed at the Middle East, North Africa and Asia are to be given priority.

### **Alumni activities**

In 2014 the Department started a Facebook page aimed at the Department's alumni. This will continue, offering activities to establish connections between the Department and its alumni.

### **Administration**

For many years the Department has had far too large an administration as a result of the subject decentralisation that was in force previously. After finance and administration were centralised, the number of administrators decreased and at the same time certain administrative routines were taken over part-time by teaching assistants. Teaching assistant posts give students work experience and save money for the Department. The number of administrators at the Department will not increase.

### **Premises**

The Department does not have premises suited to its purpose and it is impossible to carry out the rebuilding that we planned in order to get more and smaller rooms. The landlord, Akademiska Hus, has opposed our plan. The University's estate department is at present investigating our need for premises. A rebuilding programme, if any, will not take place until 2016. The Department will continue to strive for improved premises. One aim is to give notice to leave Grindstugan and move the staff there to the main building.