



PERSPECTIVES ON STEERING

IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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1 PREFACE

In 2016 the Danish Finance Act allocated more than DKK 22 billion to universities, university colleges and business academies. Additionally, more than DKK 15 billion was allocated to the state educational grant for higher education. Taking into account the amount of funding and the higher education sector's strategic importance, it is important that the modes of governance support the educational and research goals, ensuring that state funding is administered in the best way and ensuring that the educational institutions fulfil their societal role in the best possible manner. The sector has undergone extensive changes in the areas of competence, institutional mergers and a large number of reforms in recent years, making it relevant to thoroughly examine governmental management. There is a broad political consensus that excessive steering and red tape should be avoided, so that the full potential of the institutions' self-governance and autonomy can be achieved. The question is whether political priorities are reflected in the way steering is implemented in the higher education sector. On this basis, this DEA report focuses on external management – as well as the status of rectors' and board members' experience of management.

In the final editing phase of this report, the Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education published the report, 'Kortlægning af erfaringer med og perspektiver på styring af de videregående uddannelsesinstitutioner' [mapping of experiences with and perspectives on management of the institutions of higher education] (Nextpuzzle 2016). The report is a qualitative interview study, providing the basis for the Danish Minister of Science, Innovation and Higher Education, Ulla Tørnæs' examination of the modes of governance of institutions of higher education (UFM 2016a). In many cases the results of the two analyses are the same, while there are also individual differences. The two different methodological approaches mean that the documents supplement each other and, when taken together, create a good basis for a future discussion of the modes of governance for the educational institutions.

2 SUMMARY

In this report, DEA examines the status of the experience of management at the institutions of higher education. The analysis looks at a limited part of the political steering that the institutions of higher education have in common and is directed specifically towards the general operations of the institutions. Therefore, the analysis does not include, for example, content management of profession-specific, bachelor and vocational academic study programmes for instructors and the general conditions that are stated in the Danish Public Administration Act¹. The report is based on a survey replied to by the boards and rectors of the institutions and follow-up interviews with selected respondents. The report has four focus areas:

Steering instruments

The report includes an overview of the significant steering instruments, for example, accreditation and development contracts, as well as an overview of the most important reporting and documentation requirements – for example, reports to Statistics Denmark. The steering instruments are categorised as hard or soft, and the extent to which the instruments are input, process, output or outcome-based is identified – it is a mixed picture.

¹ The report does not cover what is called the SEA scheme, through which a number of Danish universities rent their buildings from the state. Thus, the universities in question do not have full ownership of their buildings, which may make limitations on their ability to have strategic disposal in the building area.

Interaction with the ministry

The report points out that the institutions experience that the many steering instruments limit the management's freedom of action in an unfortunate manner. A number of the chairpersons (65%) and rectors (59%) find that the modes of governance required by the ministry to a small extent or do not provide suitable management freedom at all.

Development contract

The analysis indicates that the development contract plays an important role in the work of the board. However, 65% of the chairpersons asked and 44% of the managers asked reply that in their experience, the mandatory goals of the development contract make it more difficult to develop the institution in the direction that the board and management want. These replies must, however, be seen in light of the fact that the mandatory goals are exactly the state's instruments for influencing the institution in a direction that it otherwise would not have taken.

Accreditation

There is great disagreement among those asked at both the study programme accreditation and institution accreditation contribute to supporting the institutions' work quality and ensuring quality and relevance in the study programmes. However, it is experienced that the institution accreditation, and especially the study programme accreditation is disproportionately resource-demanding.

3 INTRODUCTION

In 2016, the Danish Finance Act allocated more than DKK 22 billion to universities, university colleges and business academies; DKK 1.4 billion to business academies, DKK 4.3 billion to university colleges and DKK 17.2 billion to universities. In addition, more than DKK 15 billion was allocated to the state educational grant for higher education. Education is a major item in the state budget – the latest figures from Eurostat show that in 2012, Denmark was the country in the EU which, including the state education grant (SU), uses the most money on higher education seen in relation to the country's GNP.

The size of the expense alone makes it crucial to look at the modes of governance that administer the state subsidies. Business academies, university colleges and universities are state-financed self-governing institutions. They have independent boards and have disposal of the received financing, but are, at the same time, subject to political steering:

The general goal of the political steering of self-governing institutions' financial and administrative conditions must be that the steering, to the greatest possible extent, carries out the state-financed tasks with a high level of quality and using as few resources as possible. (The Danish Ministry of Finance 2009)

Since 2002 there have been 12 major reforms in the area of higher education ([see the timeline on page 8](#)) and student admission has increased by 42.8% during the period of 2009-2016 (UFM 2016b). In April 2016, the Danish Minister of Science, Innovation and Higher Education, Ulla Tørnæs (the Liberal Party of Denmark) launched the government's plan to examine the modes of governance of educational institutions and the extent to which they 'support the government's goal of high quality and relevance in higher education', (UFM 2016a). The state must ensure efficient use of resources and

The self-governing institutions have the following in common:

- They are organisationally placed outside of the ministerial hierarchy
- A board is responsible for the institution's general business and carrying out tasks
- They are either created by the state – that is, either founded or approved pursuant to legislation – or they receive more than 50% of their finances from the state. (The Danish Ministry of Finance 2009)

good administration by limiting the freedom of action of the boards so that decisions cannot involve a disproportionately large risk that the value of the institutions is lost. At the same time, the freedom of action of the boards, and thus the feeling of responsibility to the institution, must not be undermined by political steering and regulations that are too rigid. This requires that the steering instruments that the state uses with regard to the educational institutions must be simple, goal-oriented and non-bureaucratic (the Danish Ministry of Finance 2009).

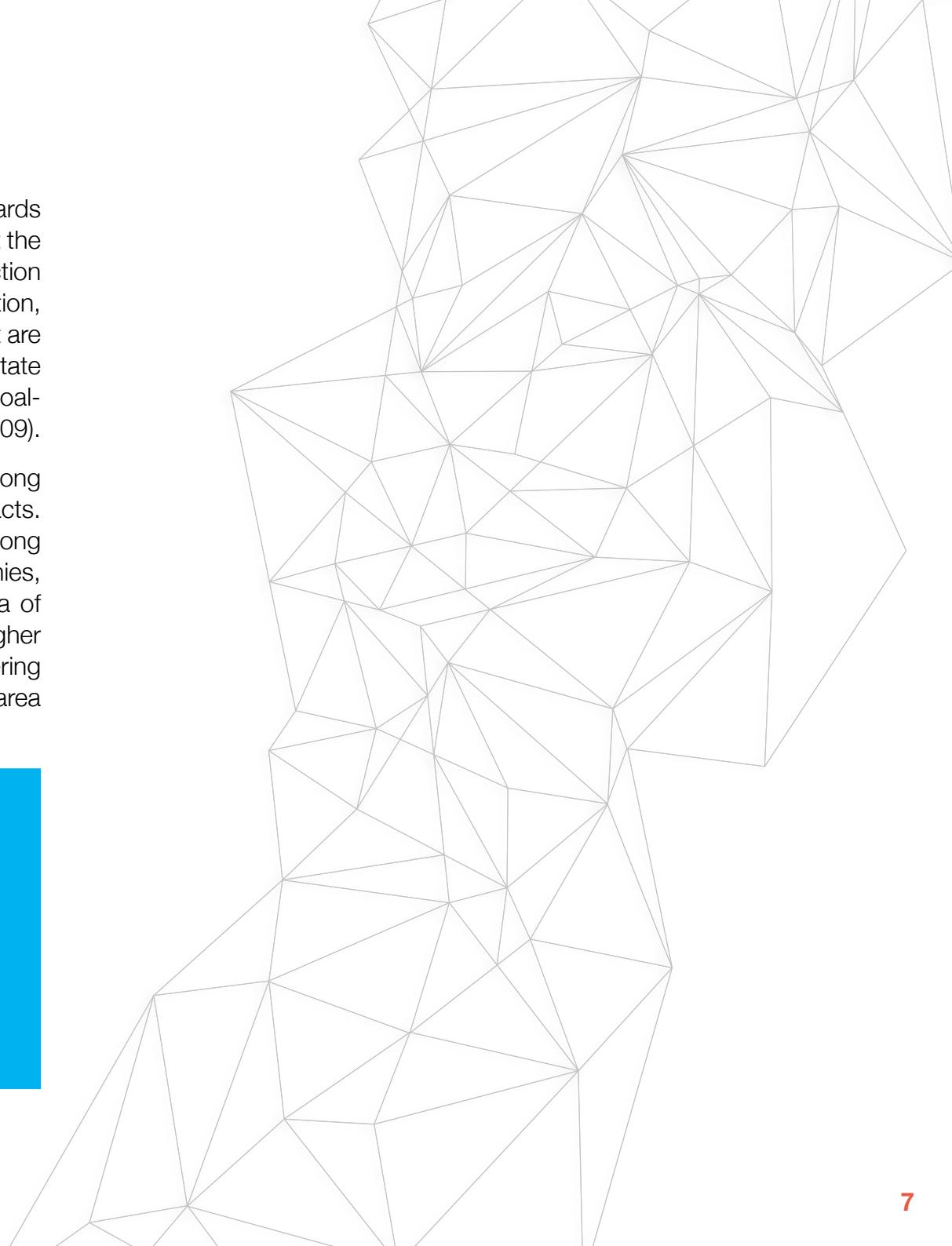
The management of higher education is complex and involves, among other things, accreditation, supervision and development contracts. This report examines the experience of management among managers and board chairpersons in Danish business academies, university colleges and universities that are included in the area of responsibility of the Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education². The report also includes an overview of selected steering instruments and a timeline of the most important reforms in the area since the university reform in 2002.

METHOD

In January 2016, DEA conducted a survey among all board members, chairpersons and rectors at business academies, university colleges and universities. The survey was further supplemented by 11 follow-up interviews.

Read more about the surveys method on [page 21](#)

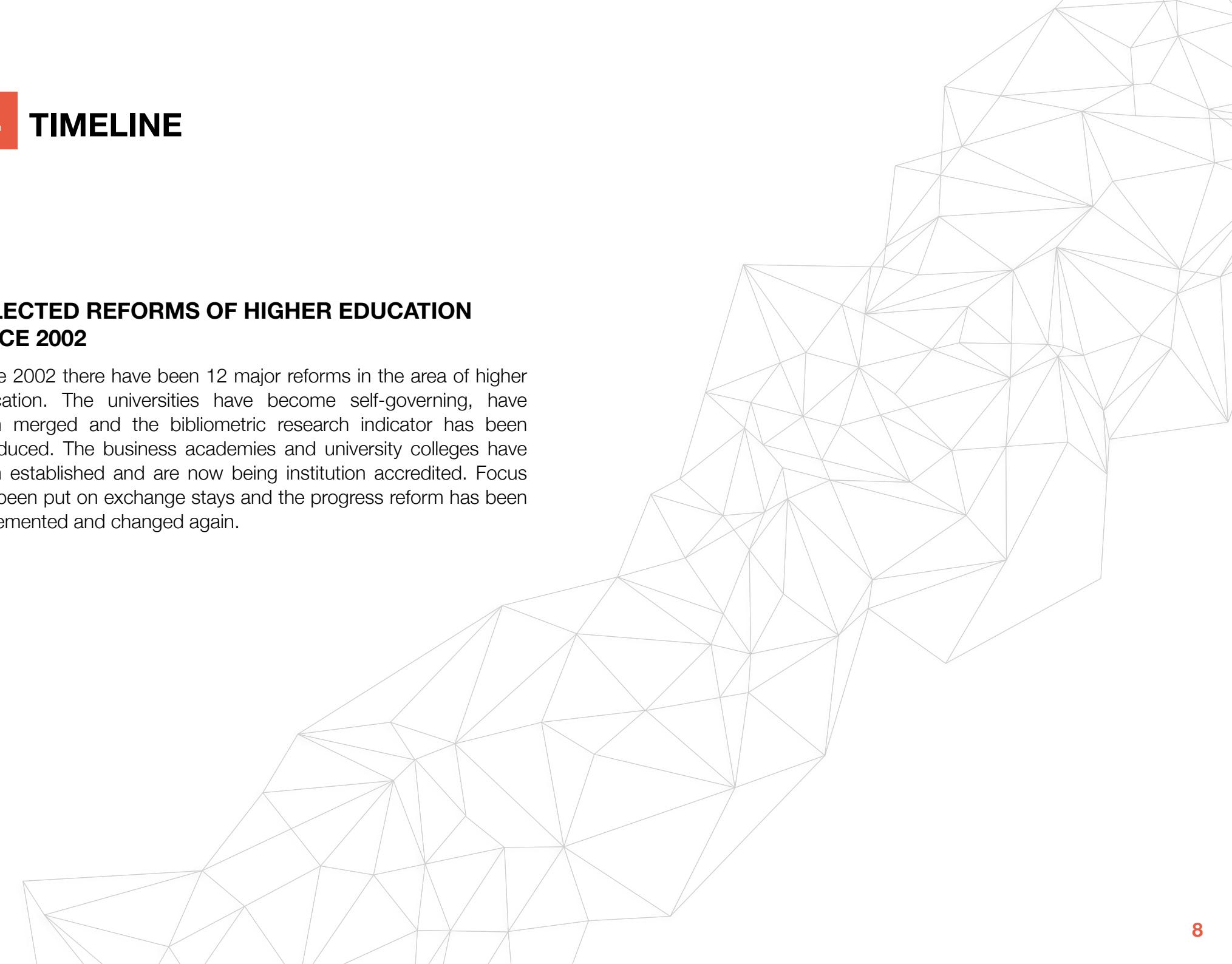
² The artistic and maritime educations are not included in the study.



4 TIMELINE

SELECTED REFORMS OF HIGHER EDUCATION SINCE 2002

Since 2002 there have been 12 major reforms in the area of higher education. The universities have become self-governing, have been merged and the bibliometric research indicator has been introduced. The business academies and university colleges have been established and are now being institution accredited. Focus has been put on exchange stays and the progress reform has been implemented and changed again.



2002: The university reform 'Time to change Denmark's universities'

The reform led to the university act in 2003, in which, among other things, self-governance was introduced – but without ownership of buildings. Focus was also put on quality development and flexibility, including simplification of rules, the 3+2+3 structure, student counselling etc. Boards with external majorities were also established, and managers should now no longer be elected, but employed.

2006: The Welfare Agreement and the Globalisation Agreement

The Globalisation Agreement was a follow-up on the Welfare Agreement and covered the establishment of university colleges and a reform of the short higher study programmes, focusing on the establishment of ACE Denmark (later Denmark's Accreditation Institution), continuing education of instructors, better counselling and elite study programmes. More people were to have the opportunity to participate in study stays abroad, the annual PhD admission was to double to 2400 up to 2010, and a goal was made of having at least half of a year group of young people to receive a higher education, while the age of completion was to be reduced.

2007: Implementation of the Globalisation Agreement: New institution landscape

In 2007 there were 25 research institutions in Denmark – they were merged into three research institutions and eight universities.

UNIVERSITIES

UNIVERSITY COLLEGES

BUSINESS ACADEMIES

2007: Study programme accreditation
Accreditation was introduced for new and existing higher education study programmes with ACE Denmark and the Danish Evaluation Institute as the operators.

2007: Implementation of the Globalisation Agreement: Business academies

The business academies took over the providing of technical-commercial business academy study programmes (short-cycle higher education), university college bachelor study programmes (medium-cycle higher education) and further adult education. The study programmes came from the centres for higher education and technical colleges.

2007: Implementation of the Globalisation Agreement: University colleges

A number of small educational institutions, which offered medium-cycle higher educational programs, such as teachers' colleges, nursing schools and colleges of building technology were merged into regional university colleges.

2009: International evaluation and introduction of supervision meetings

An independent, international university evaluation was carried out, which contributed to the preparation of the university act of 2011. In addition, supervision meetings were introduced at the universities.

2009: New model for allocating research funds

In 2009 the model for research funding was changed and the bibliometric research indicator (BFI) was introduced as a new parameter for the allocation of funds. The BFI measures the number of publications, remunerate recognised publications channels and allocates 25% of the new basic funds.

2011: Responsibility of rectors and strengthening the development contract

As a result of the act on amending the university act, the rector was given full responsibility for the organisation of the university, including any division into faculties, institutes etc. At the same time, the development contracts were strengthened by, among other things, reducing the number of goals, increasing the number of institution-specific goals and the minister was given the possibility to include mandatory goals in the development contract.

2013: Institution accreditation

In 2013 the act on institution accreditation was adopted. Here it is stated that the accreditation task must become institution accreditation. In practice, this means that the educational institution's quality assurance system will be accredited instead of accrediting the individual study programmes. At institutions with positive institution accreditation, new study programmes must go through prequalification by the Advisory Committee to Assess the Range of Higher Study Programmes Offered (RUVU). At institutions without positive institution accreditation, new study programmes must be both prequalified and accredited, while existing programmes must be accredited.

2013: OK13 and new position structure at university colleges and business academies

In OK13 it was agreed to introduce a new joint position structure and annual standard for business academies and university colleges. The new structure, which includes, among other things, the terms assistant professor, associate professor and senior associate professor went into effect on 1 August 2013.

2013: Reform of the state education grant (SU) system and the frameworks for completing study programmes

The agreement focused on getting the university students through their studies more quickly and reducing the study period by 4.3 months up to 2020, for example, by mandatory signing up for subjects and tests corresponding to 60 ECTS points (the progress reform was part of this agreement). In addition, a financial bonus was introduced for students who finish within the standard time limit and 12 months' extra state education grant (SU) for young people who start no later than two years after completing their youth educations. The agreement also focused on better transitions between bachelor and master study programmes.

2014: Dimensioning

Certain higher education study programmes and study programme groups, which are characterised by systematic excessive unemployment, calculated using retrospective reductions in employment/unemployment, are dimensioned so that the admission of students is limited.

2015: Adjusting the progress reform

The progress reform was changed so that a number of rules were cancelled, including the mandatory signing up for tests and subjects corresponding to 60 ECTS points a year. Instead, institution management can now target the instruments to the study programmes in which the students are most delayed.

5 THE MODES OF GOVERNANCE

In 2003, the universities adopted institutional self-governance and the university colleges and business academies were established as self-governing institutions during the period of 2008-2009. The intention of the transition to self-governance was to strengthen the responsibility and vigour of the institutions. However, the responses to DEA's board survey indicate that rectors, board chairpersons and board members do not think that the self-governance has the right conditions to function because external steering instruments, such as rules for how many employees may be in different salary categories and also the salary categories themselves, undermine the freedom of action of the boards.

When the universities became self-governing institutions in 2003, a crucial goal was to 'ensure the universities' self-administration and create simpler rules in areas where the rules for the state's institutions bind the universities in an appropriate manner (...), strengthen the form of steering and increase the freedom to determine internal organisation in an ordinance' (Proposal for an act on universities 2003). It was also the intention 'to, in the long term, give the universities further competences and thus degrees of freedom with regard to the minister and the rest of the state administration'.

Both the university colleges and business academies were, among other things, created by merging existing institutions, and have as such had self-governance from the start. On this basis, there are no explicit references to rule simplification in the explanatory notes on the act. It was, however, a focus area to strengthen the management layer in the large institutions and thereby give them a greater degree of financial freedom: 'With stronger management, the introduction of development contracts and efficient financial steering, there is a basis for giving the university colleges a greater degree of financial freedom' (Proposal for an act on university colleges for higher education 2007).

With self-governance, strengthened central steering instruments, the unified management structure, strengthening of professional management and external majority in the boards, the Danish institutions of higher education have also experienced a development from what Bleiklie and Kogan describe as 'republics of scholars' to become 'stakeholder organisations' (Bleiklie & Kogan 2007). The universities have previously been decentralised, the rectors were selected by the employees and institutes have had a high degree of self-governance. Today, the educational institutions have a professional management and boards with an external majority. When



the educational institutions do not live up to the state's goals and visions, reforms are often initiated and new steering instruments are put into practice – which the educational institutions can experience as unnecessary micro-management:

The challenge is that political desires are conceived that are not always well thought through - and then there is a desire to micromanage. It would be better to give the universities frameworks and avoid micro-management.

Chairperson of the board, university

The transition to the new management structure has, however, not taken place smoothly, especially when it has been in contrast to the existing cultures and traditions in the institutions. Internationally, the following dilemmas have been identified between:

1. Institutional and democratic management
2. Unified and multi-pronged management forms
3. External and internal influence on the boards of the institutions
4. Centralisation and autonomy of different units within the institutions
(Larsen, Maassen & Stensaker 2009).

In addition, there is the need for building management competences within the management layers of the institutions.

It is in this light – the transition from being an organisation that to a large extent was run by the employees to being a professionally managed organisation that is to provide measurable results and be ready for change with regard to political demands – that the expectations of professional management and the boards for self-governance and the experience of the external management must be seen.

See the description of the selected steering instruments on [page 22](#).

THE DEVELOPMENT CONTRACT

The development contracts that are entered into between the individual educational institutions (signed by the chairperson of the board) and the Danish Minister of Science, Innovation and Higher Education.

The purpose of the development contract is to promote the institution's strategic development and create visibility regarding the work of the institution on meeting societal challenges.

The Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education

The development contracts comprise one of the central steering instruments and include three to five self-chosen goals and three to five mandatory goals, which are defined by the Danish Minister of Science, Innovation and Higher Education. Only the universities have a statutory number of mandatory and self-chosen goals. For business academies and university colleges, the number is not statutory, but the board chairperson has been notified by the Minister of Science, Innovation and Higher Education in a letter dated 20 June 2014. The latest development contacts were entered into for the period from 2015-2017, but with an amendment following the government and minister change in June 2015, in which the goal of increased social mobility was replaced by increased regional knowledge cooperation. The condition that there are no remuneration or sanction possibilities in connection with fulfilling the development contract means that it is often called a 'soft' steering instrument.

ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is a method that is used for external quality assurance of higher education in Denmark. There are both accreditation of individual study programmes (study programme accreditation) and starting in 2013, accreditation of entire educational institutions (institution accreditation).

The accreditation system contributes to creating a more coherent and transparent education market in Denmark to the benefit of the students, the labour market and the institutions.

Denmark's Accreditation Institution

Institution accreditation is an external quality assurance of the institution's quality assurance system for study programmes. With institution accreditation, a higher education institution has the right to offer new study programmes that have been prequalified by the Advisory Committee to Assess the Range of Higher Study Programmes Offered (RUVU). Until the institution has been institution accredited, the quality and relevance of the institution's new and existing study programmes is assured by both prequalification and study programme accreditation. Both institution accreditation and study programme accreditation are based on the institution's fulfillment of a number of centrally determined criteria.

6 INTERACTION WITH THE MINISTRY

The following three chapters include a review of the experiences of rectors, board chairpersons and board members with the external management of the institutions of higher education. The results are based on a survey carried out by DEA in January 2016.

STEERING LIMITS MANAGEMENT FREEDOM

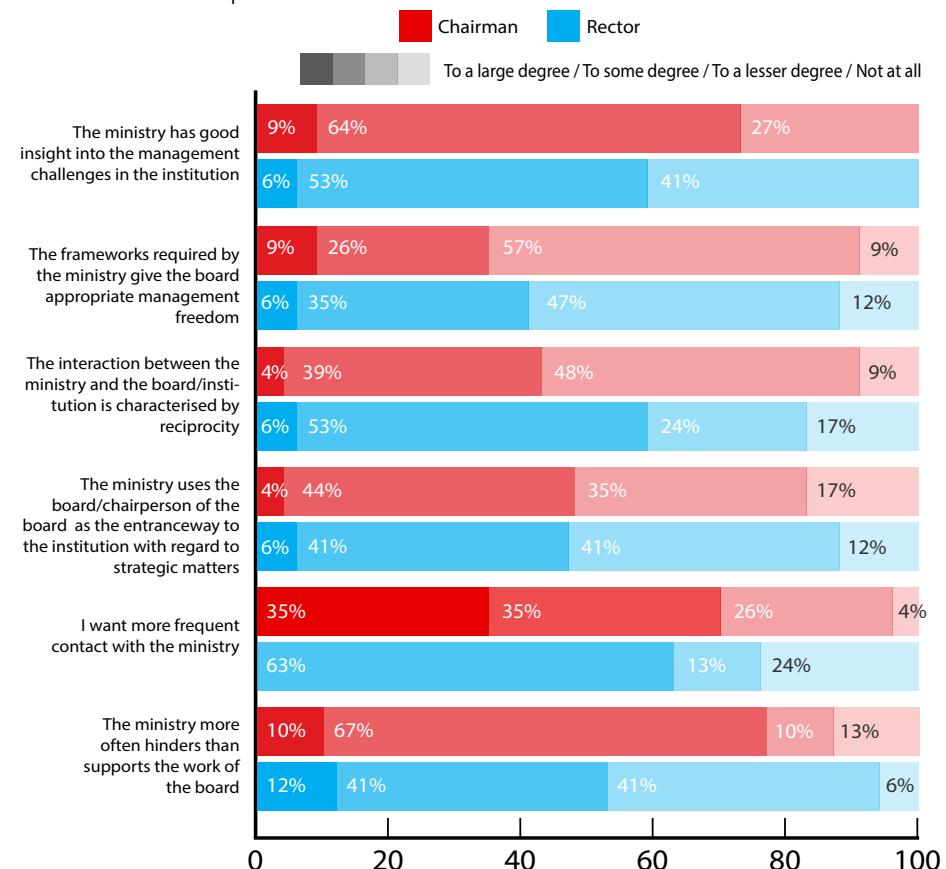
There is general satisfaction among the people interviewed with the institutions being able to act strategically in a long-term perspective. Among other things, this applies to being able to understand the financial arrangements.

A different degree of nerve is created in the work of the board when they manage finances themselves. Even though self-governance has resulted in new steering instruments, it has been good for the institution. Self-governance means that the university has financial freedom to do what is right for the institution and this is important for the future.

Chairperson of the board, university

A cornerstone in self-governance as a mode of governance is the ability of the board to act as the institution's highest authority. DEA's analysis shows, however, that self-governance is challenged in this regard. In the assessment of a majority of the chairpersons (65%) and rectors (59%), the frameworks required by the ministry give the board appropriate management freedom to a lesser degree or not at all (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1 Evaluations of the interactions with the ministry divided into the respondents' roles at the institution



Note: The figure is based on responses from 23 board chairpersons and 17 rectors

It is legitimate that the ministry, which, of course is a form of 'majority shareholder', wants to see results – but it should not get involved in the processes. This is where it limits self-governance.

Rector, business academy

In continuation hereof, it can be seen that 76% for the chairpersons and 53% of the rectors to a high degree or to some degree agree that the ministry has often hindered rather than supported the work of the board. Behind these replies lies a dissatisfaction with what is described as micro-management.

Supra-institutional regulation instruments, such as dimensioning, may be OK. It is micro-management that limits the management freedom of action for rectors and boards.

Rector, business academy

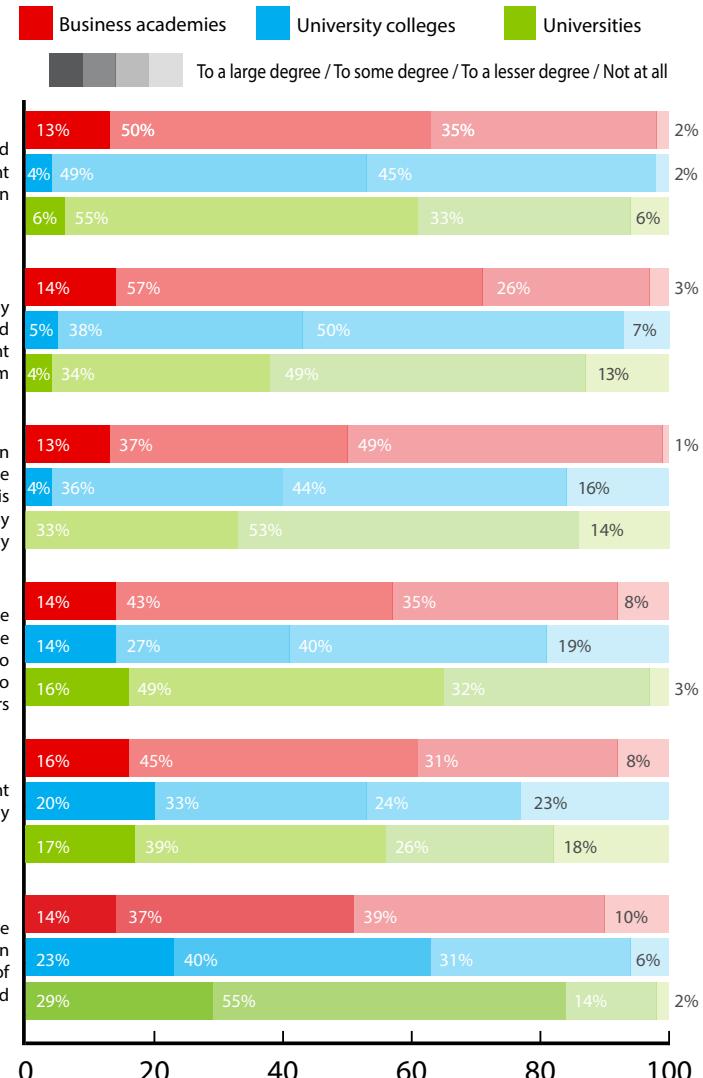
One rector mentions, for example, that the steering instruments were developed for universities that are much larger than, for example, the business academies.

The steering instruments that are used at the universities have become 'one size fits all', and they are now being introduced at business academies and university colleges, which are much smaller institutions.

Rector, business academy

Another rector mentions rules for how many employees there must be in each salary category as being inappropriate micro-management. According to the respondents, micro-management uses resources that could be used elsewhere. This limits the institutions' freedom of action.

FIGURE 2 Evaluations of the interactions with the ministry divided into institution types



Note: The figure is based on responses from 23 board chairpersons, 17 rectors and 173 ordinary board members.



With the advent of self-governance came the freedom that meant that we could be in control of our money ourselves and create the best possible quality. Now we have to report to Statistics Denmark and report the use of the manager salary structure because there are rules about how much there may be in the individual salary categories. Area after area is being limited.

Rector, university college

Figure 2 shows that it is especially the respondents from the universities (62%) and university colleges (58%) who do not think that the ministry allows the board enough management freedom (at the business academies it is 29%). With regard to the perception that the ministry more often hinders than supports, it is again especially at the universities where the respondents have been most critical (84%), followed by the university colleges (64%) and the business academies (50%). It is not surprising that it is especially at the universities where the respondents are critical. There is a long tradition for research to be given great emphasis, while the literature identifies a connection between the universities' degree of freedom and their performance⁵. A chairperson describes this as follows:

The ministry should trust both the boards and management – but in our experience, this is not the case, because otherwise, of course, we would not be managed by rules. The many steering instruments restrict our competitiveness.

Chairperson of the board, university

These results are consistent with the conclusion of the Danish Council for Research Policy's annual report for 2008: 'It is understood that the intentions of the act regarding increased self-governance of the universities have not been followed sufficiently, for which reason it is understood as being difficult for management at the universities to carry out sufficient management, including prioritisation and taking risks. The grounds for this are in two areas, in part that the intentions of university act from 2003 regarding self-governance have not been fulfilled sufficiently, including full ownership of finances, buildings etc., in part that the universities do not have sufficient trust and support from the state, which has parallel steering instruments and develops new steering instruments, the consequences of which is a limitation on the newly established boards' management possibilities and management freedom' (the Danish Council for Research Policy 2009).

A similar conclusion was also found in the university evaluation from 2009: 'The panel finds that there is an unnecessary overlap of control, which not only limits the autonomy of the universities, but also wastes resources that could be used more efficiently (...) Many of the limitations that come from outside comprise an intervention into areas of competence which should be part of the universities' area of responsibility. The limitations have reached a level that can be called micro-management, and this limits the universities' freedom of action and flexibility in their strategic decisions and positioning.' (The Danish University and Property Agency 2010)

⁵ For an international comparison of the autonomy and performance of universities, see Aghion et al. (2009)

7 DEVELOPMENT CONTRACT

INDICATORS AS WELL AS BARRIERS IN THE WORK OF THE BOARD

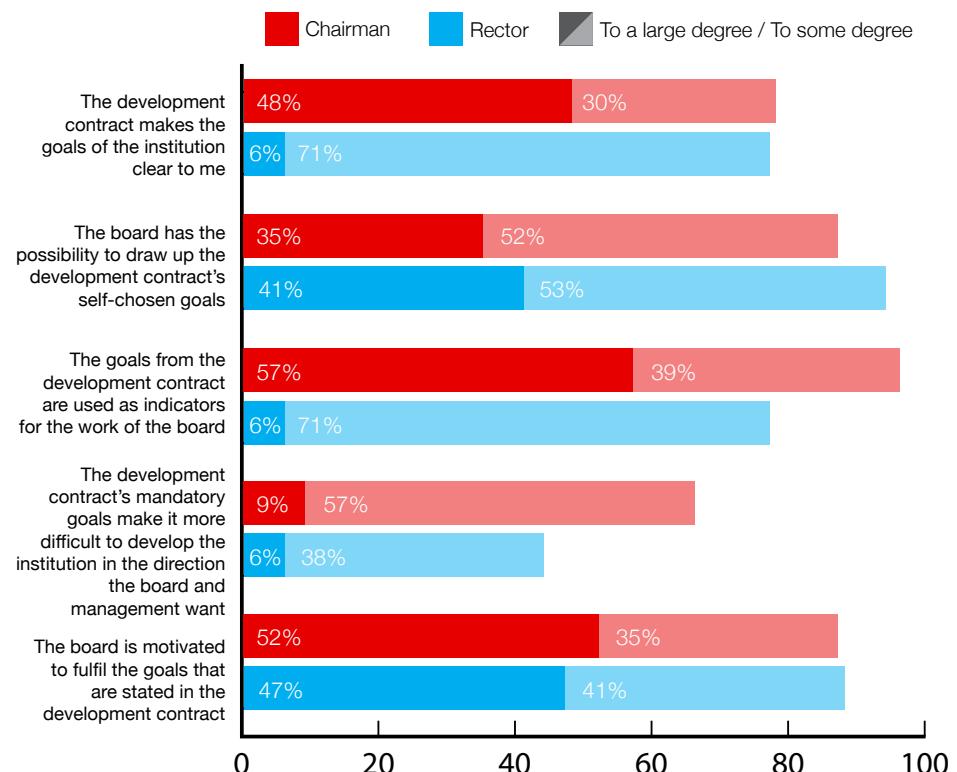
The development contract is used as an indicator for the board, but can also limit the board's possibility to develop the institution in the direction wanted.

A large majority of both chairpersons and managers – 78% and 77%, respectively – state that they agree that the development contract makes the goals of the institution clear (see Figure 3). It is also shown that the development contract's goals are central indicators of the work of the boards, which the boards are motivated to live up to – this is stated by 96% of the chairpersons and 77% of the rectors.

If we only look at 'to a high degree' replies, it is interesting to see that a much larger percentage of the chairpersons than the rectors think that the development contract makes the institution's goals more clear and that they are used as indicators.

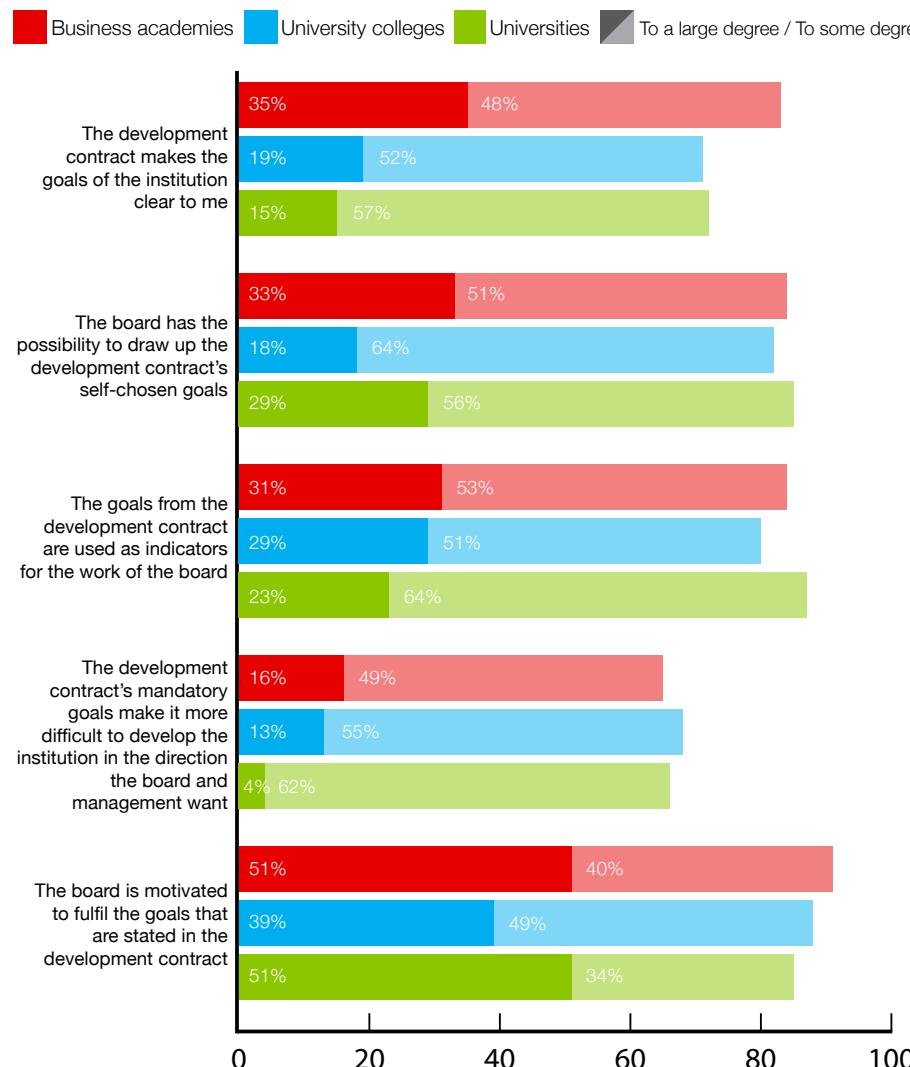
However, the respondents also reply that the mandatory goals that the development contract contains limits the strategic management freedom of the board to such a degree that it will be difficult to develop the institution in the direction that the board and management want – this is the opinion of 65% of the chairpersons and 44% of the rectors. However, there are only 9% and 6%, respectively, who think that 'to a high degree' is the case.

FIGURE 3 Evaluations of the development contracts divided into the responders' roles



Note: The figure is based on responses from 23 board chairpersons and 17 rectors.

FIGURE 4 Evaluations of the development contracts divided into the institution types



Note: The figure is based on responses from 23 board chairpersons, 17 rectors and 173 ordinary board members.

As shown in Figure 4, it is especially the respondents from the business academies who reply that the mandatory goals 'to a high degree' make it difficult for the institution to develop in the direction wanted.

These replies must, however, be seen in light of the fact that the mandatory goals are exactly the state's instruments for influencing the institution in a direction that it otherwise would not have taken. The development contract's mandatory goals are, therefore, an intentional limitation of the institution's room to manoeuvre.

When the ministry sets strategic goals (in the development contract) for the institution – what, then, is the board's role? Obviously, the ministry is carrying out the work of the board. The right of the board to make decisions must be respected – but today there are very few possibilities to really decide something.

Rector, business academy

In addition to the mandatory goals in the development contract, the institutions have the possibility to include up to five goals that they choose themselves. None of the educational institutions have, however, chosen to make use of this possibility to have five self-chosen goals: Twenty educational institutions have chosen three self-chosen goals, four have chosen four self-chosen goals and one institution has chosen two self-chosen goals (UFM 2014a).

8 ACCREDITATION

Within the area of education, accreditation is one of the most important steering instruments because it directly affects the institution's right to offer study programmes. As shown in Figure 5, 85% of the respondents replied that they to a high degree or to some degree agree that institution accreditation contributes to supporting and developing quality work at the institution. Seventy-nine per cent replied that the study programme accreditation contributes to ensuring and developing the quality and relevance of the study programmes. So the majority of respondents believe accreditation gives the educational institutions something positive.

Institution accreditation brings the soul and quality of the study programmes into the board room. The strategic management is forced to deal with the study programmes - and this is important.

Rector, business academy

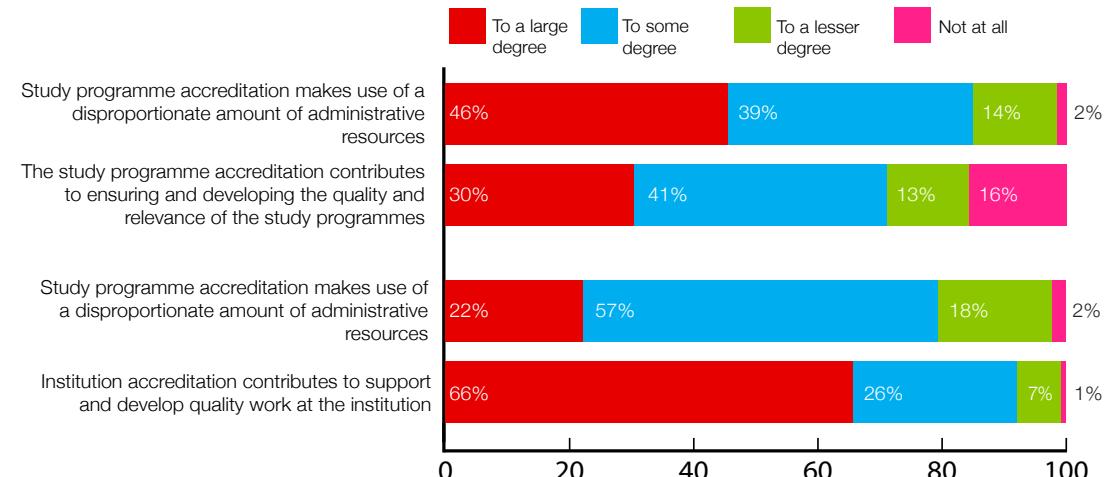
But, at the same time, the respondents believe that both institution and study programme accreditation make use of too many administrative resources (71% and 92% reply that this is the case to a high degree or to some degree, respectively). There is also general agreement that the accreditation has value as a steering instrument, but the system is considered to be administratively heavy. This is especially the case when accreditation takes place at the same time as other steering initiatives with the same focus,

for example evaluations and reports, which is considered as being problematic.

Accreditation is OK if you ensure that a lot of measurements and evaluations are to be made at the same time. Combine them in a joint system – institution and study programme accreditation – and avoid having a number of steering instruments cropping up, because you can always find arguments to introduce more red tape.

Chairperson of the board, university

FIGURE 5 Evaluations of accreditation



The questions about institution accreditation are based on replies from 76 respondents from the educational institutions that have undergone an institution accreditation. The questions about study programme accreditation are based on replies from 132 respondents from the educational institutions that have not undergone an institution accreditation.

9 METHOD

In January 2016, the think tank DEA conducted a survey among all board members, chairpersons and rectors at business academies, university colleges and universities. A more detailed review of the study's method is available in the independent method memorandum at www.dea.nu. The study's reply percentage divided into respondent and institution types are shown in the table below:

	Manager		Chairperson of the board		Member of the board	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Business academies	8	89%	9	100	70	67%
University colleges	6	75%	7	88%	60	57%
Universities	3	38%	7	88%	43	63%
Total	17	68%	24	96%	173	63%

Source: DEA's Board Survey 2016

Due to the number of possible responders among managers and chairpersons, the individual person's replies can have a great influence on the results of the analysis, even if the percentage of replies is high (as is the case in all places, except for university rectors). Therefore, the report only calculates the results divided into institution types or respondent types (that is, rectors, board chairpersons and board

members).

In Figures 1-5, 'Don't know' has been omitted. The report's annexes include tables with the survey replies, where 'Don't know' is included.

This analysis includes the survey's questions about:

- The relationship with the Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education
- The institution's development contract
- Institution and study programme accreditation

On the basis of detailed free-text responses, 11 follow-up interviews were conducted with selected respondents:

- One board chairperson and two rectors from business academies
- One board chairperson and four rectors from university colleges
- Two board chairpersons and one board member from the universities

In addition, a number of informal meetings with institution representatives, public servants and interest groups were held.

It is important to emphasise that the survey calculates the respondents' experience of management of higher education study programmes and not necessarily the factual management.

10 STEERING INSTRUMENTS

The state has developed various steering instruments to ensure quality, relevance and political priorities, among other things. The current government has started to examine management, and also in 2006 the government has focused on the self-governing institutions: Here, the finance committee of the government at that time initiated an analysis of the conditions concerning the state's self-governing institutions. A cross-ministerial workgroup was established and in the publication, 'Selvejende institutioner – styring, regulering og effektivitet' [self-governing institutions – management and efficiency] (the Danish Ministry of Finance 2009) wrote, among other things, that:

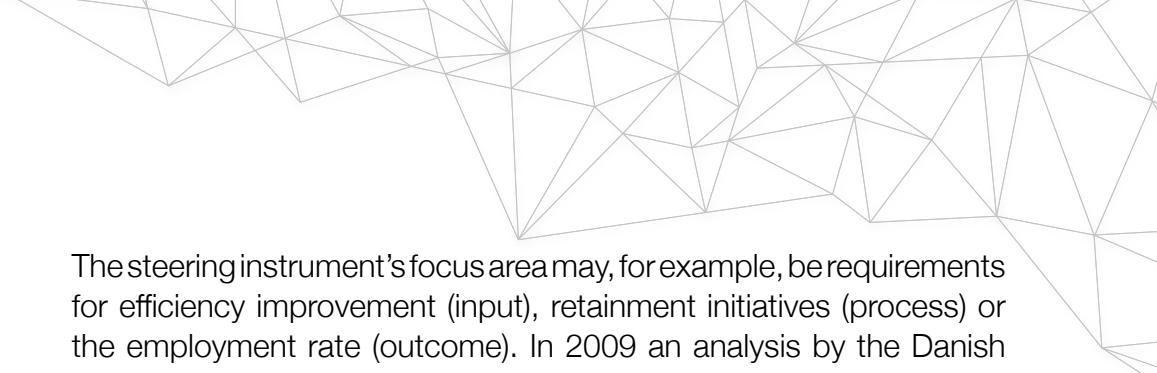
The management [must] give the self-governing institutions' boards real freedom of action to decide for themselves how the institutions' business and tasks are to be carried out. If the board's freedom of action is undermined by (too) much political steering and regulation, the board's possibility to fulfil the responsibility to the institution that the board has been charged with has been taken over. This results in the risk that the board (gradually) disclaims responsibility to the institution, so that no one has the actual responsibility, in which case a significant part of the rationale behind the use of the organisational form, 'self-governing institution' is eliminated.

Steering instruments have been, and still are, an object of attention

and a desire to simplify. The list below shows the most important rules, acts, meetings, supervision and documentation requirements that the educational institutions have to do with, as well as a categorisation that describes whether the steering instrument is soft or hard, and whether it is oriented towards input, process, output or outcome.

In addition to steering instruments as such, there are also documentation requirements; for example, the educational institutions must report to the gender equality calculations and to Statistics Denmark. These requirements are included in an independent section in the overview. The table below includes a description of

	Soft steering instruments	Hard steering instruments
Requirements for behaviour	For example, requests regarding behaviour or results.	For example, specific measurement figures or behaviour instructions.
Monitoring/ documentation requirements	For example, ad hoc follow-up.	For example, mandatory requirements for documentation and reporting of data.
Sanctions/ follow-up	For example, non-specific consequences related to noncompliance.	For example, specific consequences related to noncompliance, such as loss of autonomy, financial consequences or increased supervision.



the archetypical characteristics of soft and hard steering instruments. However, in reality, the steering instruments most often consist of both soft and hard elements. The final categorisation is, therefore, a matter of opinion (see, for example, Jacobsen & Andersen. 2013).

The purpose of hard steering instruments is to achieve a specific behaviour, for example via financial sanctions, and is often authorised by legislation – the dimensioning of higher education³ is an example of a hard steering instrument. Soft steering instruments can also be based on legislation, but also in softer forms of agreements, such as development contracts that are signed, but that do not have the possibility of sanctions; soft steering instruments often do not have any financial sanctions. Many steering instruments are complex and include both hard and soft aspects.⁴ Hard, detail-oriented steering instruments may be a sign of the sender's (the state's) lack of trust in the recipient (the educational institution) (Jacobsen and Andersen 2013). In this way, the volume and type of the steering instruments can be seen as an indicator of trust between the educational institution and the state: the more trust, the fewer and softer the steering instruments (Cerna 2014).

The steering instrument's focus area may, for example, be requirements for efficiency improvement (input), retainment initiatives (process) or the employment rate (outcome). In 2009 an analysis by the Danish Ministry of Finance concluded that it would be appropriate to go from a 'comprehensive regulation of input and of the institutions' organisation and production' to a more output-oriented mode of governance. Greve and Ejersbo (2013) formulate this as follows:

The very basic idea is to make public organisations focus on creating results. The results can be both created in the short term (output) and by achieving an effect in the long term (outcome).

The following pages provide an overview of the most important steering instruments for higher education, a categorisation of the extent to which the instrument is soft or hard and the focus of the instrument on input, process and outcome.

3 The dimensioning model is based on the authority that the Danish Minister of Science, Innovation and Higher Education has and, as such, is not directly statutory.

4 See, for example, Moos (2009), Wilkoszewski & Sundby (2014), Abbott & Snidal (2000) and Lange & Alexiadou (2007)

CONTRACTS

SUPERVISION

ACCREDITATION AND REGULATION

PERSONNEL AND HIRING

FINANCES AND AUDITS

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS AND REQUIREMENTS

RESULT CONTRACT WITH RECTORS

Frequency Annually

Sender The board/board chairperson

Type Hard – is bound to salary

Focus Varies and often contains a number of elements

DEVELOPMENT CONTRACTS

Development contracts are entered into with the Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education and the individual universities, university colleges and business academies (signed by the chairperson of the institution's board).

The contracts contain three to five obligatory goals (mandatory) and three to five individual goals.

Frequency Every other year

Sender the Minister of Science, Innovation and Higher Education

Type Soft – there are no legal or financial sanctions and the measurement selection takes place to a large extent through a dialogue between the individual institution and the ministry. The educational institutions have the liberty to choose methods for goal fulfillment themselves (UFM 2014a).

Focus Varies and often contains a number of elements

SYSTEMATIC SUPERVISION

'The systematic supervision comprises a number of procedures that are carried out periodically. A key aspect of the systematic supervision is the annual follow-up on:

- development and level in key figures (indicator-based supervision),
- goal reporting on development contracts and
- annual reports and audit protocols (financial supervision)

The annual supervision must support the dialogue with the institutions about their finances and the special items requiring attention, which the Danish Agency for Higher Education believes that the review of the key figures and the annual report give rise to.' (UFM 2016e)

SUPERVISION MEETINGS

'The purpose of supervision meetings is to have a strategic discussion between the Danish Agency for Higher Education and the three management bodies of institution with regard to the institution's key challenges and potentials' (UFM 2016c)

Frequency Annually

Sender The Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education

Type Systematic supervision is a mix of a soft and a hard steering instrument. The supervision must support the dialogue between the Danish Agency for Higher Education and the institution – which is categorised as being soft. At the same time, the Danish Agency for Higher Education assesses the extent to which institutions provide centrally determined key figures and main areas. In this way, the dialogue is characterised by the areas that are to be discussed which are centrally determined and the instrument is therefore also hard.

Focus Varies

THEMATIC SUPERVISION

The thematic supervision is a supervision that goes across a number of, or all, institutions. It focuses on selected political, professional, legal or strategic themes.

Frequency Annually, except for 2011

Sender The Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education

Type Thematic supervision is also a mix of a soft and a hard steering instrument. As is the case for the systematic supervision, it is based on dialogue. At the same time follow-ups are carried out on, for example, the implementation of new regulations and laws, which can be regarded as being a hard steering instrument.

Focus Varies

ACCREDITATION

The first accreditation act was adopted in 2006. In 2013 the act was revised so that all educational institutions must now be accredited no later than in 2017.

Institution accreditation is granted on the basis of requirements to the institution's quality assurance system. Study programme accreditation is granted on the basis of requirements for the quality and relevance of the study programmes. New study programmes must be prequalified by RUVU (and accredited if the institution is not an accredited institution).

Frequency Typically every six years

Sender Denmark's Accreditation Institution

Type Institution accreditation is also both a hard and a soft steering instrument; soft because the institutions themselves can determine a quality assurance system, but hard because the accreditation is statutory and the consequences of not being positively accredited are significant.

Focus Has parts of all elements.

PREQUALIFICATION

New study programmes must be prequalified by the minister, who has appointed a committee to provide advice about prequalification (RUVU).

Frequency Ongoing

Sender The Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education

Type Hard – if a study programme is not prequalified, it cannot be offered.

Focus Has parts of all elements

DIMENSIONING

Dimensioning is a limit on how many student places there are for specific study programmes or groups of study programmes that an institution may offer. In 2014 the Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education introduced a dimensioning model that is based on systematically excessive unemployment among the graduates of the study programmes.

Frequency Ongoing

Sender The Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education

Type Hard - a centrally adopted, binding limit on admissions to the study programmes.

Focus Has parts of all elements

POSITION STRUCTURE

The position structure for business academies, university colleges and universities is determined in executive orders.

Sender The Danish Agency for Modernisation

Type Hard - centrally determined structure with regard to employment as assistant professor, associate professor – and for the universities, professors, and for the business academies and university colleges, senior associate professor (executive order on position structures for scientific personnel at universities).

Focus Has parts of all elements.

THE STATE'S SALARY POLICY

The state's salary policy is applicable to the institutions of higher education and determines the frameworks for which salary level managers are placed on, as well as adjustment of the salary. In addition, reports are made on, for example, the number of approved associate professor schemes and absence due to illness.

Frequency Ongoing

Sender The Danish Agency for Modernisation and the Danish Agency for Higher Education

Type Hard - bound to collective agreements.

Focus Negotiated between the Danish Agency for Modernisation employee's organisations on behalf of all state employers. However, it is possible to negotiate supplements and one-time payments locally.

AUDITS, INCLUDING, E.G., ACCOUNTS AND IT

The educational institutions boards appoint a registered public accountant or a state-authorised public accountant to complete an audit of the annual report. At universities, the registered public accountant functions as an internal auditor, while Auditor General of Denmark audits the annual report.

At the business academies it is possible for the auditing tasks to be 'done in cooperation between the Auditor General of Denmark, another auditor and a body for internal auditing to be determined in detail' (section 9(2) of the Danish Auditor General Act). The same applies to the university colleges.

DOCUMENT ABOUT BUILDINGS

Applications must be submitted for new building construction, sale of property and large leases above a certain value (for example, expenses of DKK 60 million or more) by preparing a document about buildings.

Frequency

Sender The National Audit Office of Denmark, in partial cooperation with the Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education

Type Hard – the annual report is presented pursuant to the Danish Act on the Audit of the State Accounts etc.

Focus Has parts of all elements

FUNDING AND TAXI METER SYSTEM

The key activity goal is the quality of the study and the rates are determined in the Danish Finance Act.

Frequency

Sender The Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education

Type Taxi meter grants are a mix of a hard and a soft steering instrument: Hard because the system determines the financial funding that an institution receives – but soft because the institutions themselves determine how the funds are used.

Focus Output

COMPLETION BONUS

The completion bonus is a grant based on a calculation of the number of graduates. For example, the universities receive two types of completion bonuses: bachelor bonus and master bonus. When a student completes a bachelor study programme, this results in a bachelor bonus to the university if the study programme is completed within the standard time plus one year. When students complete a master study programme, this results in a master bonus if the study programme is completed within the standard time.

Frequency

Sender The Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education

Type Hard - The completion bonus is a hard steering instrument because it affects the economy.

Focus Output

REQUIREMENTS FOR EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENT IN THE DANISH FINANCE ACT

For example educational institutions are included in a re-prioritisation contribution of 2% per year.

Frequency Every year

Sender The Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education and the Danish Ministry of Finance

Type Hard - directly affects the economy

Focus Input

BIBLIOMETRIC RESEARCH INDICATOR (BFI)

Only universities

The purpose of the bibliometric research indicators is to reflect the universities' research activities by measuring the number of publications and remunerate for the publications that are published in the most recognised research channels. Has significance for the allocation of 25% of the basic funds for research.

Frequency Annually

Sender Political agreement from 2009 on a new model for allocating basic funds to the universities.

Type Hard - because it is crucial for the allocation of funds.

Focus Output and outcome

TENDERS AND PROCUREMENT

The state and municipality procurement service (SKI) handles tender obligations on behalf of the public and semi-public sector, and negotiates procurement agreements within a number of goods and services areas.

It is voluntary for the state-financed self-governing institutions to make use of SKI's agreements.

Frequency Ongoing

Sender The Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education, presenting for the Finance Committee

Type Because the use of the agreement is voluntary – except for tenders of a certain size – it is a soft steering instrument. (The National Audit Office of Denmark 2015)

Focus Process and output

REPORTS FOR THE DANISH MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Report on admissions figures to the ministry, calculation of incoming and outgoing exchange students, and years of full-time study

Frequency Ongoing

Sender The Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education

Type Soft (except in cases in which reports provide the basis for other steering instruments).

Focus Input and output

REPORT FOR STATISTICS DENMARK

Research and development activities, number of full-time students, dropout-rates and activity calculation etc. are reported to Statistics Denmark

Frequency Annually/ongoing

Sender Act on Statistics Denmark

Type Hard and soft - because it is legally bound, but without known sanctions.

Focus Input, process and output

INSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT

The instruction environment assessment must include mapping of the place of education establishment's physical and aesthetic instruction environment and any problems in this regard.

In addition, an action plan must be prepared for any problems and proposals for guidelines for following up on this action plan.

Frequency When there are changes, but at least every three years

Sender The Danish Act on the Educational Environment of Pupils and Students and the Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education

Type Soft – there is no supervision in connection with the instruction environment assessment.

Focus Process

REQUIREMENTS FOR DATA AVAILABLE ON A WEBSITE

Completion frequency, dropout-rates, core values, transition to employment etc. must be available on the institution's website

Frequency Annually/ongoing

Sender Danish Act on Transparency and Openness in Education

Type Hard and soft - because it is legally bound, but without known sanctions.

Focus Has parts of all elements

GENDER EQUALITY CALCULATIONS

All state institutions with more than 50 employees must report the gender equality calculations in odd years. The report must include any gender equality policy, the gender distribution with regard to the individual position categories (downloaded from the Danish Ministry of Finance's negotiation database) and other matters of relevance to the area of gender equality.

Frequency Every other year

Sender Section 5 of the Danish Act on Gender Equality Reporting for the Danish Ministry of Gender Equality to the Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education

Type Hard and soft - because it is legally bound, but without known sanctions.

Focus Has parts of all elements

11 ANNEXES

ACCREDITATION

	Institution accreditation contributes to support and develop quality work at the institution	Institution accreditation makes use of a disproportionate amount of administrative resources	The study programme accreditation contributes to ensuring and developing the quality and relevance of the study programmes	Study programme accreditation makes use of a disproportionate amount of administrative resources
To a large degree	39.5	30.3	21.2	62.1
To some degree	34.2	40.8	54.5	25
To a lesser degree	11.8	13.2	17.4	6.8
Not at all	1.3	15.8	2.3	0.8
Don't know	13.2	0	4.5	5.3
Total	100	100	100	100
N	76	76	132	132

INTERACTION WITH THE MINISTRY

The ministry has good insight into the management challenges in the institution			The modes of governance required by the ministry give the board appropriate management freedom			The interaction between the ministry and the board/institution is characterised by reciprocity			
	Business academies	University colleges	Universities	Business academies	University colleges	Universities	Business academies	University colleges	Universities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To a large degree	9.2	2.7	5.7	11.5	4.1	3.8	9.2	2.7	0
To some degree	34.5	34.2	50.9	47.1	34.2	34	26.4	27.4	32.1
To a lesser degree	24.1	31.5	30.2	21.8	45.2	49.1	35.6	32.9	50.9
Not at all	1.1	1.4	5.7	2.3	6.8	13.2	1.1	12.3	13.2
Don't know	31	30.1	7.5	17.2	9.6	0	27.6	24.7	3.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	87	73	53	87	73	53	87	73	53
	Chairperson	Member	Manager	Chairperson	Member	Manager	Chairperson	Member	Manager
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To a large degree	8.7	5.8	5.9	8.7	6.9	5.9	4.3	4.6	5.9
To some degree	60.9	34.1	52.9	26.1	41.6	35.3	39.1	24.3	52.9
To a lesser degree	26.1	27.2	41.2	56.5	32.9	47.1	47.8	38.7	23.5
Not at all	0	2.9	0	8.7	5.8	11.8	8.7	6.9	17.6
Don't know	4.3	30.1	0	0	12.7	0	0	25.4	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	23	173	17	23	173	17	23	173	17

INTERACTION WITH THE MINISTRY (CONTINUED)

	The ministry uses the board/chairperson of the board as the entranceway to the institution with regard to strategic matters			I want more frequent contact with the ministry			The ministry more often hinders than supports the work of the board		
	Business academies	University colleges	Universities	Business academies	University colleges	Universities	Business academies	University colleges	Universities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To a large degree	9.2	9.6	15.1	12.6	15.1	15.1	8	16.4	26.4
To some degree	28.7	19.2	43.4	34.5	24.7	34	21.8	28.8	50.9
To a lesser degree	23	28.8	30.2	24.1	17.8	22.6	23	21.9	13.2
Not at all	5.7	13.7	5.7	5.7	17.8	15.1	6.9	4.1	1.9
Don't know	33.3	28.8	5.7	23	24.7	13.2	40.2	28.8	7.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	87	73	53	87	73	53	87	73	53
Chairperson Member Manager Chairperson Member Manager Chairperson Member Manager									
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	4.3	12.1	5.9	34.8	12.7	0	8.7	16.8	11.8
	43.5	26	41.2	34.8	27.7	58.8	60.9	26.6	41.2
To a lesser degree	34.8	24.3	41.2	26.1	22	11.8	8.7	19.7	41.2
Not at all	17.4	6.9	11.8	4.3	12.1	23.5	13	3.5	5.9
Don't know	0	30.6	0	0	25.4	5.9	8.7	33.5	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	23	173	17	23	173	17	23	173	17

THE DEVELOPMENT CONTRACT

The development contract makes the goals of the institution clear to me			The board has the possibility to draw up the development contract's self-chosen goals			The goals from the development contract are used as indicators for the work of the board			
	Business academies	University colleges	Universities	Business academies	University colleges	Universities	Business academies	University colleges	Universities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To a large degree	31.7	17.8	15.1	29.3	16.4	28.3	28	27.4	22.6
To some degree	43.9	49.3	56.6	45.1	57.5	54.7	48.8	47.9	64.2
To a lesser degree	13.4	23.3	22.6	12.2	11	15.1	13.4	16.4	11.3
Not at all	2.4	4.1	5.7	1.2	5.5	0	1.2	2.7	1.9
Don't know	8.5	5.5	0	12.2	9.6	1.9	8.5	5.5	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	82	73	53	82	73	53	82	73	53
	Chairperson	Member	Manager	Chairperson	Member	Manager	Chairperson	Member	Manager
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To a large degree	47.8	20.8	5.9	34.8	21.4	41.2	56.5	24.4	5.9
To some degree	30.4	49.4	70.6	52.2	51.8	52.9	39.1	52.4	70.6
To a lesser degree	21.7	18.5	23.5	8.7	13.7	5.9	4.3	14.3	23.5
Not at all	0	4.8	0	4.3	2.4	0	0	2.4	0
Don't know	0	6.5	0	0	10.7	0	0	6.5	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	23	168	17	23	168	17	23	168	17

DEVELOPMENT CONTRACT (CONTINUED)

The development contract's mandatory goals make it more difficult to develop the institution in the direction the board and management want			The board is motivated to fulfil the goals that are stated in the development contract			
	Business academies	University colleges	Universities	Business academies	University colleges	Universities
	%	%	%	%	%	%
To a large degree	13.4	11	3.8	46.3	34.2	50.9
To some degree	40.2	46.6	62.3	36.6	43.8	34
To a lesser degree	25.6	21.9	28.3	7.3	9.6	13.2
Not at all	3.7	5.5	5.7	1.2	1.4	1.9
Don't know	17.1	15.1	0	8.5	11	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	82	73	53	82	73	53
	Chairperson	Member	Manager	Chairperson	Member	Manager
	%	%	%	%	%	%
To a large degree	8.7	10.7	5.9	52.2	41.7	47.1
To some degree	56.5	48.2	35.3	34.8	38.7	41.2
To a lesser degree	34.8	21.4	47.1	13	9.5	5.9
Not at all	0	5.4	5.9	0	1.2	5.9
Don't know	0	14.3	5.9	0	8.9	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	23	168	17	23	168	17

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'Micro-management undermines self-governance. I think that it must be goal management and then talk about it if the goals are not reached.'

Chairperson of the board, university college

'Since the reform in 2003, trust on the part of the central administration has become less.'

Rector, university college

'It is legitimate that the ministry, which, of course, is a form of 'majority shareholder', wants to see results – but it should not get involved in the processes. This is where it limits self-governance.'

Rector, business academy

'The Danish Ministry of Finance is always suspicious about what is going on. I think that the Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education is a bit better. They have greater interaction and therefore an understanding of what is going on at the institution.'

Chairperson of the board, university college

'Savings are a condition and then you have to figure out how to react within the framework. It is important that the day-to-day management has the possibility to make the decisions at a strategic level because there are a lot of actions to be taken – if micro-management is too rigorous.'

Chairperson of the board, university college

'Not everyone in the state administration has accepted the idea of a truly self-governing institution. We have lost management freedom step by step and can easily end with the worst of all worlds - both for the state and for the institutions. If they are state institutions – then run them like state institutions and have some advisory boards – instead of having a board with formal responsibility, but without real management freedom. Or make self-governance a reality again'

Rector, university college

'Trust on the part of the central administration is actually OK. Discussions can get heated, but if you disagree, you have an obligation to say what you think. It is more the number of goals that is irritating.'

Chairperson of the board, university

'The standard regulations for the business academies are so strong that they do not leave much room to maneuver at the individual institution. When you add the development contracts to this – there isn't much for a board to decide about.'

Rector, business academy

'With the advent of self-governance came the freedom that meant that we could dispose of our money ourselves and create the best possible quality. Now we have to report to Statistics Denmark and report the use of the manager salary structure because there are rules about how much there may be in the individual salary categories. We are reduced area by area.'

Rector, university college