



Guidelines for Project-Oriented Study in an External Organisation

Background and Purpose

On the third semester of the master's study programme, students have the possibility to complete their project work in a company or a public or private institution - in Denmark or abroad. The project work will normally correspond to 30 ECTS equivalent to half a year's workload. During the project-oriented study, the student must draw up a project report.

The purpose of the project-oriented study is to provide the student with work experience in solving advanced engineering tasks in a business context on a level corresponding to the third semester of the master's study programme. The project-oriented study must be of relevance for the specialisation of the master's study programme in question.

The student must contact the technical coordinator within the specialisation in question. After signing the agreement, the technical coordinator transfers the process and supervision of the project-oriented study to an AAU project supervisor. Additionally, the external organisation will appoint a supervisor with relevant professional background acting as supervisor and sparring partner during the project-oriented study period.

Within the agreed professional framework for the project work, the external organisation and the student stipulate the conditions of the project-oriented study, i.e. work organisation, etc.

If the student chooses a project-oriented study in an external organisation on the master's third semester

- The project-oriented study starts around 1 September and ends late December or at the beginning of January. However no later than the submission date of the project report in the beginning of January. The Study Board determines the deadline for submission of the report.
- The exam is evaluated according to the 7-point grading scale and is held with an internal co-examiner in the last two weeks of January.

Gratuity

Please read the [Joint Programme Regulations](#) section 2.4.1 regarding project-oriented study in an external organisation with information on e.g. salary/gratuity during the project-oriented study period. **Notice that students must not receive salary from a Danish organisation or company during the project-oriented study, regardless of whether the students receive State Education Grant (SU) or not.** A project-oriented study abroad may be paid if it is required by law in the given country. The project-oriented study abroad must comply with the same demands as a project-oriented study in Denmark.



Insurance – Safety during the Stay

Students are to mark in [Agreement on Project-Oriented Study in an External Organisation](#) whether they are covered by the insurance of the external organisation during the stay.

As a student you are under the law on worker's compensation during the project-oriented study and it is, in principle, the external organisation supervisor/employer that is liable for insurance during the project-oriented study.

Furthermore, AAU has taken out a common **accident insurance** for students that suffer an accident in relation to laboratory work during their education. This insurance also covers the student during his/her project-oriented study – see the [AAU-handbook](#).

However, the Study Board advises that students themselves take out a liability as well as an accident insurance to be covered adequately.

Assignment Format

The student submits a project report in accordance with the learning goals described in the [curriculum](#) and concludes the semester with an individual oral exam.

The project report must be made in accordance with the overall guidelines as used in project reports from previous semesters.

A description is to be made of at least one of the academic issues which the student has addressed during the project-oriented study. The issue must be relevant to the student's study programme. If relevant, the description must include theories on problem analysis, methodology, models, possible solutions, implementation of tests, conclusion, etc.

The academic issue(s) must be on a level corresponding to the third semester of the master's study programme and must describe advanced engineering tasks in practice. These tasks must be agreed upon and approved before the start of the project-oriented study period.

The student distributes a copy of the project report to the external organisation, except when other arrangements have been made.

Responsibilities of the Involved Parties

The project-oriented study involves the student, the technical coordinator of the specialisation in question and an AAU project supervisor, as well as a supervisor from the external organisation. The [Project-Oriented Study in an External Organisation](#) must be completed and submitted to the Study Board before the project-oriented study period starts, i.e. 30 June at the latest.

Responsibilities of the Student

Students are expected to establish contact with the external organisation themselves and enclose a CV. However, this must not be done without prior agreement with the technical coordinator. The student must ensure that the agreement on 'Project-Oriented Study in an External Organisation' is filled in.

A section of the agreement must include a description of advanced engineering tasks in a business context on a level corresponding to the third semester of the master's study programme.

The student is responsible for maintaining regular contact with the supervisor of the external organisation and the AAU project supervisor. The AAU project supervisor is expected to supervise equivalent to the time otherwise allocated on the third semester of the master's study programme.



The student is not allowed to use the academic software licenses during the period of the project-oriented study in an external organisation. Therefore, the student needs to make sure that the external organisation has been informed in time to provide the student with the necessary software tools.

Responsibilities of the AAU Project Supervisor

The AAU project supervisor is in continuous contact with the student and may visit the student during the project-oriented study period. The AAU project supervisor acts as a supervisor for the student. The AAU project supervisor is responsible for examination and assessment of the project work. The AAU project supervisor is assigned hours for supervision as if the student were performing a regular project, and the effort on the part of the AAU project supervisor shall therefore be the same. It is also the responsibility of the AAU project supervisor to investigate the requirement of a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) between the students and the external organisation and make sure that such a document, if needed, is in place before the project-oriented stay period starts.

The student is not allowed to use AAU's academic software licenses during the project-oriented study in an external organisation. Furthermore, most student licenses (including Ansys), which students can obtain free of charge, must not be used for work involving commercial interests. Reference is made instead to Open Source software, such as Octave, Python, Open FOAM, etc.

Responsibilities of the External Organisation Supervisor

The external organisation appoints a supervisor who is also the student's immediate superior. This person must have a skill-set appropriate for the specific specialisation of the study programme. It is the responsibility of the external organisation supervisor to make sure that the project work is successful by ensuring that the student:

- Is provided with work experience in solving advanced and relevant engineering tasks on a level corresponding to the third semester of the master's study programme and with a progression in the degree of difficulty of the tasks during the period. The type of work must allow for an academic report to be made.
- Gets access to relevant tools, such as software, hardware and data series that are necessary for the work. AAU's academic software licenses are not allowed to be used during the period of the project-oriented study in an external organisation. Therefore, the company needs to provide the student with the necessary software tools during the period of the project work.
- Has the opportunity to get an overview of the work carried out in the external organisation and the industry in general.
- Receives support and supervision. It is expected that the external organisation supervisor spends at least two hours per week on supervision. However, it should be noted that the student will also receive supervision from the university, corresponding to 21 hours including examination. This means that the responsibility for helping the student is a shared responsibility.

In addition, the external organisation supervisor shall co-sign the [Agreement on Project-Oriented Study in an External Organisation](#).

The Contract – 'Agreement on Project-Oriented Study in an External Organisation'

The student fills out the [Agreement on Project-Oriented Study in an External Organisation](#) in collaboration with the technical coordinator of the master's third semester and the external organisation. The agreement must contain a description of the subjects and extent of advanced engineering tasks in a business context. The project-oriented study must be planned so that the student meets the requirements as described in the [curriculum](#).



Non-Disclosure Agreement is not a Requirement

Primarily, the Study Board recommends students and external organisations to collaborate about projects that do not require a non-disclosure agreement (NDA), since public data is often available.

However, if an external organisation wishes to make an NDA with the student, the standard AAU agreements are used, and the agreement must be clarified no later than one week after the projected-oriented study period starts. If an NDA is made, it must be sent to the

- [Study Board of Energy in Aalborg or](#)
- [Study Board of Build, Energy, Electronics and Mechanics in Esbjerg](#)

AAU is in principle NOT a part of the agreement which is made exclusively between the student and the external organisation.

There is a link to the AAU standard agreements and Study Board's guidelines for NDA at the [Department Education website](#).

Some organisations wish to use their own agreement in relation to student projects, where they require AAU/supervisor to be part of the agreement. AAU has a series of approved standard agreements that may be used directly. These can be accessed with a personal AAU login through [SharePoint](#).

If the student receives an agreement - where AAU is a party - from an external party, which is not encompassed by the above setup, the student should contact the Study Board.

The Study Board will not grant any exemptions for repercussions caused by administrative delays, e.g. unavailability of software, hardware or data series.

The AAU programme: Internship in own Startup

The project-oriented work in the 3rd semester MSc programme can also be completed by following the AAU programme: Internship in own startup.

This programme allows students to develop their own startup idea with weekly mentoring sessions by an AAU business coach associated with the programme. The semester must be structured as an ordinary 3rd semester MSc project, where the learning objectives for the semester must be met.

The student must be preapproved for the AAU programme: Internship in own Startup before submitting the agreement template for [Project-oriented Study in an External Organisation](#). The project must adhere to the learning goals for the semester as described in the study curriculum under the option of an ordinary semester project. The business aspect of the programme is additional and must not supersede or compromise the academic requirements. The tasks and technical goals of the project should be agreed upon with the AAU technical coordinator. The project tasks and goals must be approved in due time before the project-oriented study starts, i.e. 30 June at the latest.

Students will receive guidance from both an AAU project supervisor and an AAU business coach. The AAU business coach takes the role as the company supervisor and sparring partner during the project-oriented study period.

Read more about ['Internship in own Startup'](#).



Exam

The assessment of the project-oriented study is oral and individual. The examination will be attended by the student, the AAU project supervisor (examiner), an internal co-examiner and, if possible, the external organisation supervisor, as an observer. Only the examiner (AAU project supervisor) and the internal co-examiner are allowed to take active part in the assessment.

The assessment is based on the project report as well as the oral presentation and the subsequent discussion. The assessment is an overall assessment of all elements of the examination, measured against the objectives of the [curriculum](#).

The assessment criteria are described in the [Joint Programme Regulations](#).