



Minutes of the meeting in Employer panel meeting LiD 2025 on May 23, 2025

Participants: Markus Löchtefeld, Claus Brøndgaard Madsen, Georgios Triantafyllidis, Merete Madsen, Lars Hansen, Jesper Ravn, Anne Christoffersen, Flemming Løvenhardt, Trine Dalsgaard

Unable to attend Mette Hvass, Allan Rubjerg

Item 1. Welcome and updates since last meeting.

Head of Studies Markus Löchtefeld and Head of Study Board Claus B. Madsen

Claus B. Madsen (CBM) welcomed to the employer panel meeting for Lighting Design.

Markus Löchtefeld (ML) presented updates since the last meeting in the panel. In June 2023, the government reached a broad agreement with several political parties on a reform of the master programs. It includes the introduction of new 75 ECTS master's degrees and an increased focus on professional master's programs (EKA), where students work part-time while studying. The goal for 2032 is for 20% of students to enroll in EKA programs and 10% in 75 ECTS programs.

In November 2024, it was decided that for IT educations 14% of all students admitted in 2028 should be in professional master's programs and 8% in 75 ECTS programs. Aalborg University (AAU) must also reduce the number of study places by approximately 10% due to unemployment and demographic changes. New programs such as Software (launched in 2020) and Computer Technology (launched in 2021) are not included in UFM's calculations, creating significant pressure on the available spots for master's programs.

In December 2024, a new "1+2" professional master's model was introduced: the first year at the university (60 ECTS) with student financial support (SU), followed by two years of part-time work while completing an additional 60 ECTS.

The Dean's Office has decided that all 120 ECTS master's programs must offer a professional master's option. Furthermore, six master's and two bachelor's programs will be discontinued, including Service Systems Design and Lighting Design, with the last intake in 2027.

ML points out that it is central that we keep a focus on that we still have student enrolled in the program the next 4 years.

Item 2. Presentation round

All participants introduced themselves.

Item 3) News from the study/ research

Program coordinator Georgios Trantafyllidis

Georgios Trantafyllidis (GT) reported that the evaluation of new applicants has just been completed, with more than 100 applications—a record number. The applicants come from a variety of backgrounds.

KTH from Norway will be visiting in June for inspiration regarding their course and to explore the possibility of launching a two-year program.

Regarding research, Lighting Design has joined *The Art of Darkness*, a new Horizon project that commenced in 2025.

In general, Lighting Design consists of a small group of students and staff. Currently, there is considerable frustration following the news of the program's closure, but there will be a strong focus on providing the best possible experience for the new students enrolling.

Item 4. Input for Continuing Education Activities (EVU)

Discussion of relevant topics and target audience

Merete Madsen (MM) noted that lifelong education activities (EVU) had been explored earlier. The architect association has several ongoing initiatives, and it might be worth looking into if this could be an option. When they looked into this, there was an interest in programs with a focus on a more practical, less academic approach.

MM suggested reconsidering the traditional academic structure, advocating for fewer thesis requirements and a stronger emphasis on lighting design. MM proposed to look into the possibility of not being so bound by the academic tradition, less thesis and more lighting design.

Jesper Ravn (JR) supported MM's perspective from an employer's standpoint. There is a growing need for EVU programs centered on activity and design thinking etc., rather than on subjects like project management. He emphasized the importance of returning to the core of lighting design.

MM highlighted the need to incorporate diverse backgrounds, not just architecture, which might be a restriction if managed solely within the architecture organization. EVU should welcome various educational and national backgrounds, especially because lighting design is such a small education.

JR commented that it is important to also consider different program structures—whether e.g. classes should be held weekly or in an intensive format. MM envisioned a master's program setup with one year of full-time study.

GT agreed that making education less academically rigid could be beneficial for the target groups. With a one-year program, there could be a stronger emphasis on practical lighting design, and commented that it was encouraging to hear potential interest in such a format.

CBM raised the question of whether a one-year applied master's program could be a viable option and asked who would be qualified for such a program and whether faculty had sufficient real-world experience to effectively teach it. External expertise might be needed. MM argued that practice needs research. Understanding the research needs of the field is essential—it is not a matter of choosing between practice or research but rather identifying students' needs. Integrating research into practice strengthens the discipline.

GT agreed with CBM, noting that it is a balance between research, innovation, and real-world applications. A master's program should prioritize real-world needs while encompassing all relevant domains.

CBM commented on MM's point on theses. The study board had begun reconsidering whether alternative reporting formats might be more relevant. Traditional theses serve as Ph.D. preparation, but perhaps a more applied approach is relevant.

JR emphasized that lighting design, being visual, cannot always be effectively conveyed through words alone. A balanced approach incorporating text and visual elements—such as video—would align better with modern educational needs. GT acknowledged that academia requires structured learning but suggested that thesis outcomes should be experiential rather than purely report-based. AI advancements also make alternative formats more relevant.

MM stressed the importance of moving away from lengthy papers and focusing on core concepts. The human aspect, including hand-drawn sketches and nonlinear thinking, should be integrated.

JR commented that a thesis format that combines written statements with visual components to create an experience could be relevant. Many students currently find the rigid format restrictive.

ML asked how students would structure materials for a project application and whether this could inspire a new thesis format. GT noted that many traditional theses are difficult to apply in practice. CBM suggested a potential two-part submission process, possibly introduced as a voluntary test phase to explore its feasibility.

Lars Hansen (LH) supported JR and MM's perspectives but raised concerns about language requirements, and inquired how many applicants were Danish out of the 100 applicants. Could language barriers pose challenges for students who do not speak Danish? GT responded that previous application ratios had been worse, but there were strong applicants from abroad. LH emphasized the importance of informing students that they need to work on their Danish language skills while studying. AAU could potentially offer or recommend language courses.

Item 5. Summary and conclusion

Head of Studies Markus Löchtefeld and Head of Study Board Claus B. Madsen

CBM thanked the panel for their participation and input
