

Guide for conducting an independent project at the NJ-faculty at SLU

This is a practical guide for independent projects (mainly Bachelor or Master thesis project) at the NJ-faculty at SLU. It is based on relevant syllabuses and internal governing documents for [first- and second-cycle education](#) (Part 4 contains guidelines for independent projects, at present available only in Swedish).

This guide applies to projects in the main subject areas biology, environmental science, soil science, food science, agricultural science, chemistry and technology.

All forms and other information are collected on the following web pages: <https://internt.slu.se/nj-exjobb> (Swedish) and <https://internt.slu.se/nj-msc-thesis> (English).

Time	Student	Supervisor	Examiner
Before the start of the course	<p>The student should start looking for a research topic and supervisor well in advance of the start of the course. Contact SLU departments and/or companies, authorities etc. to find a suitable project. Most SLU departments present available projects on their web pages. To find a supervisor, or to get advice on developing an individual project, contact former teachers within the intended subject area. The main supervisor must come from SLU. It is the student's responsibility to find a main supervisor from SLU, even if the project will be conducted in cooperation with an external part.</p> <p>Apply for the course at www.universityadmissions.se before Apr 15 for the autumn semester, and before Oct 15 for the spring semester.</p>	<p>The supervisor discusses the student's ideas with the student.</p> <p>The supervisor assesses whether the suggested project is feasible and compatible with the relevant course syllabus, including the extent of work and intended main subject area. Doubtful cases should be discussed with the intended examiner.</p> <p>If needed, the supervisor suggests contacts at companies/organisations/departments/etc. The supervisor should also identify co-supervisors, if appropriate.</p>	
Examiner	<p>The student should not be involved in the process of assigning an examiner for the independent project!</p>	<p>The supervisor suggests, and the examining department assigns an examiner. The examiner must belong to one of the cooperating departments for the thesis course, and must be qualified as an examiner according to SLU regulations.</p>	<p>The examiner checks whether the suggested project fits the syllabus for the course, including its main subject area.</p> <p>The examiner reads the grading criteria for the course (see web address above).</p>
Registration form	<p>Well in advance to the start of the course (preferably more than two</p>		<p>The examining depart-</p>

	<p>weeks), the student and supervisor together complete the registration form (see web address above) and give it to the director of studies at the department where the examiner is affiliated.</p>	<p>ment uses the registration form to register the student in LADOK, and fill in supervisor and examiner in the <i>Result annotations</i> in LADOK.</p> <p>After the registration, a copy of the registration form should be sent to the staff member having administrative responsibility for independent projects in the main subject area of the thesis, for handling of economy.</p>
Start of the course	<p>Preferably, the project should start on the first day of the course. However, it may start at any time of the year that fits the work plan and all people involved in the project, given that the student is admitted to the course. The 10, 20 or 40 weeks start counting when the student starts the project.</p> <p>It is not allowed to start a project without being admitted and registered.</p>	
Work plan	<p>No later than the first week of the project, the student and supervisor(s) should together design a work plan, including a time plan, for the project, using the form found on the web address above.</p> <p>Final admission to the course is conditional on the student, supervisor and examiner reaching agreement about the work plan for the project.</p> <p>The signed plan should be given to the director of studies at the examining department. The work plan should be revised during the course of the project if needed (see below).</p>	<p>The examiner reviews the work plan, including the time plan, to ensure that both are adequate and agree with the syllabus and the extent of the course (15, 30 or 60 credits).</p> <p>If the work is too extensive in relation to the number of credits, the plan must be revised before it can be approved.</p>
	<p>Supervisor and/or examiner go through the grading criteria with the student. Student, supervisor and examiner inform themselves about course syllabus, this guide document, and other relevant information about the course.</p>	
	<p>Student and supervisor discuss the student's need of developed competence and knowledge to pursue the planned project, and note in the work plan how to accomplish this.</p>	
During the course	<p>The student undertakes the project according to the work plan. The student and supervisor should maintain frequent contact during the whole project.</p> <p>Main responsibility for maintaining contact lies with the student</p>	<p>The supervisor ensures availability for supervision, and commits to answering questions as soon as possible.</p> <p>The supervisor should contact the student if the student maintains less frequent than agreed upon.</p>
Delays	<p>If the project is delayed due to circumstances beyond the control of the student, the time schedule in the work plan should be revised. This may include illness, broken equipment, etc.</p>	

Generic skills	The student is strongly advised to take part in the optional lectures in generic skills such as information search and scientific writing.	The supervisor should familiarise with the content of these optional lectures in generic skills to avoid duplication and to know what to expect from the student.	
Written report	<p>The student writes a thesis, under guidance from the supervisor.</p> <p>Early, and continuously throughout the project, the student hands in drafts of written parts to the supervisor for comments. The student uses the comments to improve the text.</p> <p>In most cases the thesis should be formatted according to the template provided by the SLU library.</p> <p>The report should include ½ page abstract, and for MSc projects also a 1-page popular-scientific summary.</p> <p>Reports written in Swedish should contain both a Swedish and an English abstract.</p>	The supervisor reviews drafts and gives feedback to the student, within the agreed time frame for response.	
Oral presentation	<p>Student, supervisor, examiner(s)* and the student opponent agree on a time for oral presentation. The oral presentation should be given when the written report is close to ready. The presentation may be given whenever it suits all people involved, or on a day particularly scheduled for oral presentations, by the supervising department (if applicable; ask the director of studies).</p> <p><i>*) In theory, the examiners of both the presenting student and the opponent should be present to examine the opposition parts. However, for practical reasons this evaluation could be done by the same person who may be one of the examiners or a deputy, but neither of the supervisors.</i></p>		
	The student prepares the oral presentation. Extent and time of the presentation should be discussed with the supervisor.	The supervisor books a room for the presentations (if not presented on one of the pre-organised days), and announces the presentation to a target audience.	
	The student gives an oral presentation.	The supervisor of the presenting student chairs the session. For procedures, see the guiding document on the web page mentioned in the header.	<p>The presenting student's examiner attends, and evaluates the oral presentation; this may be done by a deputy examiner (see above).</p> <p>The examiner should give feedback on the presentation, and on how the student answered questions and</p>

			criticism.
Opposition	<p>The student should act as opponent on a fellow student's thesis and oral presentation, and likewise have a student opponent for his/her own thesis and oral presentation (see guide for oral presentation on the web page mentioned in the header). The opposition is (1) given orally immediately after the presentation and (2) provided as a written summary of about 1 page.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the student to find an opponent, and to identify a presentation, where to act as opponent. Opposition is allowed across subject areas (courses/syllabuses) and departments. The opposition should preferably be done on a fellow student at the same level. If this is not possible cross-level oppositions are accepted.</p> <p>If students fail to arrange the opposition, the director of studies at the supervising department can give advice.</p> <p>Some departments coordinate reciprocal opposition centrally. If so, the students will be informed about this at the start of the course.</p>		The examiner (or a deputy, but not the supervisor) is present to grade and give feedback on how the opposition was performed.
Completion	The student revises the draft text according to comments from the supervisor and feedback received during the oral presentation.		
		The supervisor checks the text for plagiarism using Urkund, and delivers the result to the examiner.	The examiner has the formal responsibility to check for plagiarism. If found, report to director of studies for further measures (see Riktlinjer vid misstanke om fusk och andra disciplinära frågor inom utbildning vid SLU).

	When student and supervisor agree on the final version of the thesis, it should be given to the examiner for grading.		The examiner grades the thesis, using the version of the grading criteria current at the time the student was admitted to the course. The examiner checks with the supervisor about the contribution of the student to the work, including the student's level of engagement.
	The student is asked to fill in the on-line course evaluation for the independent project course, in the Evald system.	The supervisor and examiner complete the form for reporting a completed BSc/MSc thesis, and pass it on to the director of studies at the department of the examiner. Note that "Date when student had fulfilled all requirements to pass" is the date when the student had passed all parts of the course, not the date when the examiner finished the examination!	
	All are encouraged to take part in the "Thesis day", organised at the end of the spring semester.		
LADOK input			The examining department uses the form for reporting a completed BSc/MSc thesis to enter the grade in LADOK, according to SLU regulations.
Publication in EPSILON		The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the final version of a passed thesis is published in EPSILON. This should be handled by the responsible person at the department, not by the student.	
If not passed	The student is responsible for revising the text according to comments by supervisor, examiner and opponent.	The supervisor and examiner repeat applicable parts of the points above.	
Degree	Students who wish to get their Bachelor or Master degree after approved independent project must apply at the SLU degree office (see SLU student web). There is no automatic link between a completed independent project and degree office.		