Curriculum for the Master’s Programme in Techno-Anthropology

Aalborg University 2012
Preface

Pursuant to Act no. 985 of 21st October 2009 on Universities (The University Act) the following curriculum is stipulated. The programme also follows the Framework Provisions and the Examination Policies and Procedures for the Faculty of Engineering and Science. The curriculum is approved by the Study Board of Techno-Anthropology. The curriculum covers the Master’s programme in Techno-Anthropology in Aalborg and Copenhagen.

Aalborg University, March 2012
Tom Børksen
Head of Study Board

Approval date: 29.5.2012
Dean of Faculty of Engineering and Science
The Faculty of Engineering and Science
The Study Board for Techno-Anthropology

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Chapter 1: Legal basis of the curriculum

1.1 Basis in ministerial orders
The Master’s programme in Techno-Anthropology is organised in accordance with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation’s Ministerial Order no. 814 of June 29, 2010 on Bachelor’s and Master’s programmes at Universities (the Ministerial Order of Study Programs) and Ministerial Order no. 857 of July 1, 2010 on University Examinations (the Examination Order) with subsequent changes. Further reference is made to Ministerial Order no. 233 of March 24, 2011 (the Admission Order) and Ministerial Order no. 250 of March 15, 2007 (the Grading Scale Order) with subsequent changes.

1.2 Faculty affiliation
The Master’s programme falls under the Faculty of Engineering and Science, Aalborg University.

1.3 Study Board affiliation
The Master’s programme falls under the Study Board for Techno-Anthropology as part of the School of Engineering and Science.
Chapter 2: Admission, degree/title, programme duration and competence profile

2.1 Admission
Admission to the Master’s programme in Techno-Anthropology requires a Bachelor’s degree in Techno-Anthropology or another relevant Bachelor’s degree. A relevant Bachelor’s degree is defined as a Bachelor’s degree which contains at least 10 ECTS philosophy of science, research ethics or research design and that generates core competences within at least one of the following main areas:

- Qualitative methods for collection of empirical material
- Technology understanding, e.g. technology development or -operation.

Students with another Bachelor’s degree, upon application to the Board of Studies, will be admitted after a specific academic assessment if the applicant is deemed to have comparable educational prerequisites. The University can stipulate requirements concerning conducting additional exams prior to the start of study.

2.2 Degree / title in Danish and English
Successful completion of the Master’s programme entitles the student to use the Danish title Cand. Scient. i Teknoantropologi. The corresponding English title is: Master of Science (MSc) in Techno-Anthropology.

2.3 The programme’s specification in ECTS credits
The Master’s programme is a 2-year, research-based, full-time study programme. The programme is equivalent to 120 ECTS.

2.4 Competence profile on the diploma
The competence profile below will appear on the diploma:

A graduate of the Master’s programme has competencies acquired through an educational programme that has taken place in a research environment.

The graduate of the Master’s programme can perform highly qualified functions on the labour market on the basis of the educational programme. Moreover, the graduate has prerequisites for research (a Ph.D. programme). Compared to the Bachelor’s degree, the graduate of the Master’s programme has developed her/his academic knowledge and independence, so that the graduate can independently apply scientific theory and method in both an academic and occupational/professional context.
2.5 Competence profile of the programme
Graduates of the Master’s programme in Techno-Anthropology:

(Knowledge)
- hold knowledge of responsible technological innovation and production, anthropological study design and analysis, and technological expert cultures based on the latest international research.
- have an understanding of the philosophical and ethical basis that underpins responsible technological innovation and production, anthropological study, design and analysis, and technological expert cultures
- know how to identify interdisciplinary scientific problems within these areas.

(Skill)
- can carry out anthropological studies and analysis that link technology to its integrated/underpinning social, cultural, organisational, institutional and ethical assumptions and implications and critically evaluate such studies and analysis
- can connect technological insight and anthropological study design and analysis, and on an interdisciplinary basis establish new, responsible and innovative analysis and solutions
- can transform solutions into concrete actions
- can communicate anthropological studies and analysis of technological expert cultures and cultural conditions and effects of technology to experts, and political, administrative and economic stakeholders as well as the wider public.

(Competencies)
- can handle ethical dilemmas within the techno-anthropological field
- can manage work and development situations that are complex, unpredictable and require new or different ways of analysis and solutions
- can independently initiate and take leadership over interdisciplinary collaboration and assume professional responsibility
- can take responsibility for, and demonstrate, own professional and interdisciplinary development and specialisation.
Chapter 3: Content and organisation of the programme

The programme is structured in modules and organised as a problem-based study. A module is a programme element or a group of programme elements, which aims to give students a set of professional skills within a fixed time frame specified in ECTS, and is concluded with one or more examinations within specific exam periods that are defined in the curriculum.

The programme is based on a combination of academic, problem-oriented and interdisciplinary approaches and is organised according to the following work forms and evaluation methods that combine skills and reflection:

- lectures
- classwork
- project work
- seminars
- workshops
- study groups
- problem solving (individually and in groups)
- case studies
- peer assessment
- teacher feedback
- written activities
- oral presentations followed by dialogue
- portfolio
- field work
- e-learning
- external activities

The programme is offered in Aalborg and Copenhagen
Overview of the programme
All modules are assessed through individual grading according to the 7-point scale or Pass/Fail. All modules are assessed by external examination (external grading) or internal examination (internal grading or by assessment by the supervisor / teacher only).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>ECTS</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Expert Cultures and Responsible Technology (project)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7-point scale</td>
<td>External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organisational Culture: Expertise, Innovation and Responsibility</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible and Innovative Knowledge Production</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Anthropology-based Product Development (project)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7-point scale</td>
<td>External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Product Development: Value-sensitive Design, User-driven Innovation, Technology-based Service or Scientific Advice</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mapping Controversies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7-point scale</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd (a)*</td>
<td>Field Work (project)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7-point scale</td>
<td>External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd (b)*</td>
<td>Reflection and IT Tools Supporting Analysis of Qualitative Empirical Material**</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Pass/Fail</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Field Work (project)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7-point scale</td>
<td>External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* On the 3rd semester students are recommended to either follow semester option 3(a) or 3(b). See also section 5.1 addressing the possibilities for an individually planned 3rd semester.

** The course is only offered if a sufficient number of students sign up for the course. If the course is not offered semester option 3(b) is recommended.

Special rules for students enrolled with a Bachelor’s degree different from the Bachelor’s degree in Techno-Anthropology
For students enrolled with a relevant degree different from the Bachelor’s degree in Techno-Anthropology the following constraints exist on elective module of the 1st semester:

Students enrolled with a relevant degree that provides core competence in qualitative methods for collection of empirical material, but not in Technology understanding are required to follow the module “Cases in Technology for Bachelors in Humanities” or a similar module that deals with
development of technology, and it is required that their 1st semester project treats technology
development as a central element.

Students enrolled with a relevant degree that provides core competence in technology
understanding, but not in qualitative methods for collection of empirical material are required to
follow the module “Anthropology for Scientists, Engineers and Technical Experts” or similar module
that deals with qualitative methods, and it is required that their 1st semester project involves
qualitative methods to collect empirical material as a central element.

There are no constraints on the 1st semester’s elective and project work for students enrolled with a
relevant degree that provides core competence in technology understanding and in qualitative
methods for collection of empirical material except those that are binding for students enrolled with
a bachelor’s degree in Techno-Anthropology.

Descriptions of the modules “Cases in Technology for Bachelors in Humanities” and “Anthropology
for Scientists, Engineers and Technical Experts” are appended as Annex A1 and A2.

Electives
An elective can be a module that is offered by the Study Board for Techno-Anthropology, by another
Study Board at Aalborg University, or by another university in Denmark or abroad.

Electives must address the programme’s disciplines and research areas or a combination of these.
One must be able to relate electives to the overall competence profile of the MSc in Techno-Anthropology.

The programme maintains and communicates via its e-learning platform and the homepage of the
Study Board of Techno-Anthropology a list of approved electives offered by other Study Boards at
Aalborg University. The list of approved electives can be found at [www.ses.aau.dk](http://www.ses.aau.dk).

Students that wish to follow an elective that is not on the list of approved electives need to apply the
Study Board for approval.

Electives offered by the Study Board for Techno-Anthropology will only be set up if a sufficient
number of students sign up for them.
Module description

**First semester**

**Title:** Expert Cultures and Responsible Technology (project) / Ekspertkulturer og ansvarlig teknologi (projekt)

**Prerequisite:** Bachelor's degree.

**Goal:** Students who complete this module can:

(Knowledge)
- explain the principles and methods used in the development of a specific technology in a specific technological organisation
- explain the qualitative research methods to examine expert cultures
- describe ethical approaches

(Skills)
- develop a proposal for responsible technology design
- identify the codes and rituals of an expert culture in a selected technology context
- portray the conceptual landscape of innovation and responsibility in a chosen technology context
- investigate and analyse the drivers and barriers for responsible technological innovation, including guidelines for responsible design, corporate social responsibility and stakeholder involvement
- undertake ethical analysis of a specific technology

(Competencies)
- critically reflect on own analysis
- take individual responsibility for, and regularly document own professional and interdisciplinary development and specialisation.

**Teaching methods:** The module will be implemented as a problem-based and project-oriented work within the module's overall framework. The project work is supported by one or more supervisors.

**Assessment:** Oral examination based on a written project report and a presentation at the final project seminar.

**Evaluation criteria:** As described in the Framework Provisions.
The Faculty of Engineering and Science
The Study Board for Techno-Anthropology

The programme is offered in Aalborg and Copenhagen
Title: Organisational Culture: Expertise, Innovation and Responsibility / Organisationskulturer: ekspertise, innovation og ansvarlighed

Prerequisite: Bachelor’s degree.

Goal: Students who complete this module can:

(Knowledge)
- reproduce theoretical positions to characterise organisational cultures
- explain how organisational cultures surround and affect experts’ work with technological and / or cultural innovation
- describe the development of responsible innovative processes in organisations, including theoretical concepts such as expertise, power, learning, ethics and design as an integral part of technology development

(Skills)
- select and apply theories and concepts of organisational culture, including those regarding power, learning, ethics and design in relation to analysis, implementation and evaluation of technological and cultural innovation in organisations

(Competencies)
- independently organise technological and cultural innovations in organisations that include cultural considerations
- lead and manage technological and cultural innovation.

Teaching methods: Teaching is a combination of lectures, teacher initiated workshops and case specific study circles.

Examination: Oral examination.

Title: Responsible and Innovative Knowledge Production/ Ansvarlig og innovativ vidensproduktion

Prerequisite: Bachelor's degree.

Goal: Students who complete this module can:

(Knowledge)
- explain how discourses, institutions and professions have historically shaped the conceptual landscape of innovative and responsible knowledge production
- identify and explain different theories relevant for analysis and discussion of responsible and innovative technology
- explain the role of technological experts in innovative and responsible knowledge production

(Skills)
- draw connections between responsibility and innovation
- analyse and evaluate cases dealing with responsible and innovative knowledge production

(Competencies)
- transfer knowledge and skills achieved in the module to suggest concrete responsible and innovative solutions to different kinds of problems
- disseminate obtained knowledge to other researchers.

Teaching methods: Teaching is a combination of lectures, group assignments, individual presentations and study groups.

Examination: A module pass can be achieved through participation in at least 80% of classroom activities and a successful oral presentation of a self-chosen case in the final presentation seminar.

Second semester

Title: Anthropology-based Product Development (project)/ Antropologi baseret produktudvikling (projekt)

Prerequisite: Pass in "Expert Cultures and Responsible Technology (project)" (first semester).

Goal: Students who complete this module can:

(Knowledge)
- present theories that shed light on the interplay between product development / product evaluation and selected user groups
- explain methods and principles for development or evaluation of products
- present theories and methods for analysis of products' cultural influences
- identify and explain relevant ethnographic research methods (e.g., narrative method, phenomenological method or grounded theory) of relevance to a specific product development or product evaluation task

(Skills)
- independently develop and carry out an ethnographic study design that can contribute with knowledge relevant to the development or evaluation of a technological product
- reflect on the meaning and consequences of own ethnographic study of product development or product evaluation
- disseminate own and others’ research findings

(Competences)
- incorporate anthropological analysis through interdisciplinary collaboration in product development or evaluation
- reflect on issues of product liability and potential ethical dilemmas that arise during product development or implementation.

Teaching methods: The module will be implemented as a problem-based and project-oriented work within the module’s overall framework. The project work is supported by one or more supervisors.

Examination: Oral examination based on a scientific article with a length of max 15 pages, work sheets supporting the article (the length of the worksheets must not exceed 15 pages per student, and if the student works alone the length must not exceed 20 pages), and a presentation at the final project seminar.

The programme is offered in Aalborg and Copenhagen
Title: Product development: Value-sensitive Design, User-driven Innovation, Technology-based Service or Scientific Advice / Produktudvikling: værdifølsomt design, brugerdreven innovation, teknologibaseret service eller forskningsbaseret rådgivning

Prerequisite: Bachelor’s degree.

Goal: Students who complete this module can:

(Knowledge)
- present principles and methods for developing value-sensitive design, user-driven innovation, technology-based service or research-based advice
- explain participatory methods and theoretical schools developed to support design, innovation and consultancy within the techno-scientific field
- identify philosophy of science approaches that support critical reflections regarding value sensitive design, user-driven innovation, technology-based service or research-based consultancy

(Skills)
- problematise how to perform design, innovation or research based advice consulting for the natural and technical scientific field, taking into account uncertainty, socio-cultural categories as well as power, politics and ethics.

(Competencies)
- communicate complex problems and their potential solutions related to value sensitive design, user-driven innovation, technology-based service or research-based advice both verbally and in writing.

Teaching methods: Lectures, student presentations and written communication tasks.

Examination: Oral examination based on a written synopsis of the theoretical and methodological analysis of a problem dealing with value sensitive design, user-driven innovation, technology-based service or research-based advice.

Title: Mapping Controversies / Kortlægning af kontroverser

Prerequisite: Bachelor's degree.

Goal: Contemporary democracy frequently finds itself confronted with highly unstable forms of knowledge around which there exists no clear guide. Controversies rooted in the techno-political entanglements of science and society seem increasingly resilient to conventional political process and cannot simply be settled by 'the facts'.

How do we handle and engage with complex knowledge controversies? And what new forms of 'democratic equipment' might be of use in that enterprise? The course enables students to make practical use of a series of new web-based research tools and map out complex controversial issues in an easily accessible manner.

Students who complete this module can:

(Knowledge)
- explain theories about situations in which uncertainties are rendered more complex by the intervention of social or natural scientific knowledge
- explain theories about the intermediate stages through which scientific or technical knowledge acquires authority

(Skills)
- apply a range of digital/qualitative research tools such as web crawls or bibliometric surveys to trace out the way in which issues become controversial
- use dynamic visualisation tools to map controversies in an accessible manner
- produce a website that enables the wider public to engage with a controversy and interrogate its makeup
- work collaboratively with large amounts of heterogeneous data

(Competencies)
- approach the interplay between science and politics from a practical perspective
- adopt a pragmatist view of claims to expertise
- provide a democratic instrument to aid the public engagement with science.

Teaching methods: The course involves students in collaborative research
projects requiring them to make use of one or more digital methods to map out a controversy of their choosing. The goal is to make it available and explorable by a general public through an online platform like a webpage or a blog. Students can either bring their own case material from another course or choose one when they start (although this will have to be done from day one). The course is structured as a combination of introductory lectures, group work and a series of practicums which will introduce the students to new tools and methods while exploring controversies from the hands-on perspective of trying to map them out.

Examination: Oral examination in which visualisations of controversies (homepages) are presented and defended.

**Third semester**

**Title:** Field Work (project) / Feltstudie (projekt)

This module is offered in both a 20 ECTS and 30 ECTS version.

**Prerequisite:** Pass in Anthropology-Based Product Development (project) (second semester).

**Goal:** The goal of this module is to gain experience in anthropological field work and apply theoretical and methodological knowledge, skills and competencies, so that the anthropological field work contributes to developing a specific technological product or process, or to the evaluation of a specific technological product or process. The student has to be able to conduct the field work independently, generate knowledge from this work and demonstrate skills to disseminate the field work insights and how this could inform product / process development or product / process testing. The project has to discuss how the research approach ensures validity and reliability (in consideration of the used research methods) and demonstrate how anthropological field work is relevant to product / process development or product / process testing. The project will be based in a public, private or grassroots organisation specific to product / process development or testing.

Students who complete this module can:

**(Knowledge)**
- identify methods and theories that support design and implementation of anthropological fieldwork
- explain the methods of anthropological fieldwork, including participant observation and the use of field notes and interviews
- explain the classic and newer ideas in anthropological analysis and dissemination, including, for example various ethnographic and narrative approaches
- explain anthropological knowledge production in a theoretical perspective

**(Skills)**
- plan and carry out anthropological fieldwork
- liaise anthropological fieldwork to technological product / process development or testing
- liaise anthropological practice with theoretical insight specific to technological product / process development or testing

**(Competencies)**
• on the basis of fieldwork assess practical problems associated with technological product/process development or testing
• assess potentials and limitations of various anthropological approaches, including those related to the validity and reliability of anthropological methods as well as to the ethical dimensions of anthropological field work
• evaluate how anthropological theories and methods can help create new practices in scientific and technological research and development
• coordinate fieldwork.

Teaching methods: The module will be implemented as problem-based and project-oriented work within the module's overall framework. The project work is supported by one or more supervisors.

Examination: Oral examination based on a written project report and a presentation at the final project seminar.

Title: Reflection and IT Tools Supporting Analysis of Qualitative Empirical Material / Refleksion og IT-støttet empirihåndtering

Prerequisites: Pass in Anthropology-Based Product Development (project) (second semester)

Goal: Students who complete this module can:

(Knowledge)
• present technology-based tools and web applications appropriate to document and analysis empirical material
• explain the use of self-reflection methods and theories in research work
• explain the different theoretical and methodological approaches relevant to understanding their own role in the implementation of anthropological studies

(Skills)
• evaluate potential technology-based tools and web applications for the purpose of collecting and analysing empirical material in anthropological studies
• use technology-based tools and web applications in the analysis of a concrete anthropological study
• apply selected theories and principles - including portfolio tools - to reflect on processes of anthropological fieldwork
• apply relevant theories and theoretical positions to examine their own role in examining anthropological work

(Competencies)
• use technology-based and portfolio tools to study and document, analysis and reflect on concrete anthropological studies
• communicate findings using technology-based and portfolio tools
• reflect on their own role as investigator/researcher in all phases of the anthropological study.

Teaching methods: The module will be implemented as a lecture series at the beginning of the semester with a focus on theoretical and methodological aspects. Then it continues as a series of virtual tutorials and web-based workshops.

Examination: Written examination. The assessment is based on 1) a documentation of how empirical data was collected, analysed and presented during the fieldwork using technology-based and portfolio tools, and 2) a 5-page essay that presents and discusses the basis of theoretical perspectives in order to demonstrate the students' understanding of their own role in an anthropological study.

The programme is offered in Aalborg and Copenhagen

Remarks: The course is only offered if a sufficient number of students enroll (see also section 5.1).
Fourth semester

Title: Master's Thesis / Kandidatspeciale

Prerequisite: Pass in all prior modules.

Goal: Students who complete this module can:

(Knowledge)
- explain anthropological study design and analysis
- identify and reproduce theories of either responsible technological innovation and production or technological expert cultures
- identify and explain the link between technology and its normative assumptions and implications
- identify interdisciplinary scientific problems in the intersection between technology and culture

(Skills)
- conduct an anthropological study and analysis on the relationship between technology and its underpinning social, cultural, organisational, institutional and ethical assumptions and implications, and critically evaluate these connections
- connect technological insight and anthropological study design and analysis, and on an interdisciplinary basis design new, responsible and innovative solutions
- translate and implement solutions to concrete actions
- communicate the results of their own anthropological research and analysis to experts, political, administrative and economic stakeholders and to the general public

(Competencies)
- handle ethical dilemmas within the techno-anthropological field
- manage work and development situations that are complex, unpredictable and require new analysis and solutions
- independently initiate and lead interdisciplinary collaboration and assume professional responsibility
- independently take responsibility for, and regularly demonstrate, their own professional and interdisciplinary development and specialisation.

Teaching methods: The module will be implemented as problem-based and project-oriented work

The programme is offered in Aalborg and Copenhagen
within the module's overall framework. The project work is supported by one or more supervisors.

Examination: Oral examination based on a written project report and a presentation at the final project seminar.

Chapter 4: Entry into force, interim provisions and revision

The curriculum is approved by the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Science and enters into force as of 1 September 2012.

In accordance with the Framework Provisions and the Handbook on Quality Management for the Faculty of Engineering and Science at Aalborg University, the curriculum must be revised no later than 5 years after its entry into force.
Chapter 5: Other provisions

5.1 Third semester
On the 3rd semester, in accordance with the framework provisions section 9.4.1., the students have on their own initiative the following options instead of the recommended semester:

- Documentation of the semester project through a scientific article or report
- Transversal studies
- Relevant internship
- Design a semester consisting of modules from other Master’s programmes in Denmark or abroad
- Long dissertation (Master’s Thesis) on 3rd and 4th semester if the Master’s project is experimental in nature.

The particular wishes of the students must be approved by the study board prior to semester start.

5.2 Rules concerning written work, including the Master’s Thesis
In the assessment of all written work, regardless of the language it is written in, weight is also given to the student’s spelling and formulation ability, in addition to the academic content. Orthographic and grammatical correctness as well as stylistic proficiency are taken as a basis for the evaluation of language performance. Language performance must always be included as an independent dimension of the total evaluation. However, no examination can be assessed as ‘Pass’ on the basis of good language performance alone; similarly, an examination normally cannot be assessed as ‘Fail’ on the basis of poor language performance alone. The Study Board can grant exemption from this in special cases (e.g., dyslexia). The above applies unless other rules are stated in connection with the individual examination.

The Master’s Thesis must be written in English\(^1\) and contain a summary in Danish.\(^2\) The summary must be at least 1 page and not more than 2 pages. The summary is included in the evaluation of the project as a whole.

5.3 Rules concerning credit transfer (merit), including the possibility for choice of modules that are part of another programme at a university in Denmark or abroad
In the individual case, the study board can approve successfully completed (passed) programme elements from other Master’s programmes in lieu of programme elements in this programme (credit transfer). The study board can also approve successfully completed (passed) programme elements from another Danish programme or a programme outside of Denmark at the same level in lieu of programme elements within this curriculum. Decisions on credit transfer are made by the study

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\(^1\) Or another language upon approval from the Study Board.

\(^2\) The Study Board can grant exemption from this.

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board based on an academic assessment. See the Framework Provisions for the rules on credit transfer.

5.4 Rules for examinations
The rules for examinations are stated in the Examination Policies and Procedures published by the Faculty of Engineering and Science on their website.

5.5 Exemption
In exceptional circumstances, the study board can grant exemption from those parts of the curriculum that are not stipulated by law or ministerial order. Exemption regarding an examination applies to the immediate examination.

5.6 Additional information
The current version of the curriculum is published on the study board’s website, including more detailed information about the programme and examinations.

Completion of the Master’s programme
The Master’s programme must be completed no later than four years after it was begun.

Rules and requirements concerning the reading of texts in foreign languages
It is assumed that the student can read academic texts in modern English.