

7. Independent project (degree project)

7.1 Starting points

The Vice-Chancellor has established Guidelines for independent projects (degree projects), copyright and publicate in education at SLU ([Riktlinjer för självständiga arbeten \(examensarbeten\), upphovsrätt och publicering inom utbildning vid SLU](#)).

An independent project (a degree project) can only be classified in one subject, a double classification is never possible. At SLU one of the terms *självständigt arbete* or *examensarbete* is used with the translation *independent project* or *degree project*. The concept *master's thesis* can be used for independent projects (degree projects) at second cycle of at least 30 credits (preferably for master projects / A2E / Advanced E).

The work is often carried out individually. In certain courses, the work can be carried out in small groups and in a way that makes it possible for individual efforts to be assessed. Here, small groups are considered to normally be two, maximum three, students.

For independent project (degree project), the student's report may be written in Swedish or English, as specified in the course syllabus. The entry requirements must be adapted to the language/languages the report will be written in.

7.2 Course leader, supervisor and examiner

For independent projects (degree projects), there shall be a course leader who has comprehensive responsibility for ensuring that the work is organised, reported and followed-up. The supervisor and examiner shall not be the same person. If a student/student group has several supervisors, one of these shall be the main supervisor. The supervisor shall pass on such basis for assessment, which has been agreed within the framework of the course in question (or equivalent), to the examiner. Besides this the examiner shall make decisions regarding grades without input from the supervisor.

7.3 Clients and possible compensation

Agreements with possible external clients (outside SLU) will be managed through a separate contract, between SLU and the client. In those cases where the student has an external supervisor, there shall also be a main supervisor at SLU.

The client cannot control the process of making the independent project (degree project) public since it is in opposition to the Freedom of the Press Act and the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act. In exceptional cases, publication can be postponed, which shall be stated in the work plan. Also see section 7.5, Review and publication.

If the student receives compensation from the client (SLU or externally), this is regulated in a special order. This is then an agreement between the student and the client.

7.4 Implementation

The student is primarily responsible for ensuring that the independent project (degree project) is carried out, and SLU shall facilitate the implementation of this by creating beneficial conditions.

To facilitate implementation, SLU offers

- a. courses with a joint course start, scheduled teaching elements and joint termination,
- b. the possibility for individual projects with individual work plans.

Both alternatives shall fulfil the objectives and requirements in the current course syllabus and include a work plan.

The student will report in the work plan how the independent project (degree project) shall contribute to fulfilling the objectives and requirements that are associated with the intended qualification

(degree). More detailed instructions regarding the independent project (degree project) can be found in the supplement to the respective programme syllabus and/or the course syllabus for the independent project (degree project).

If a work plan is not adhered to, the supervisor and the student shall primarily propose a revised work plan, and secondly, inform the course leader about the problem. It is the course leader's responsibility to ensure that the old work plan is revised or that a new one is formulated.

For independent projects (degree projects), the deadline specified in the study plan counts as the first exam session. An exam session is regarded as spent if an essay/report is not handed in by the deadline specified in the study plan.

Work plan for independent project (degree project) may be revised in consultation with the supervisor responsible and be approved by the course leader (or equivalent). The effect of the revision on the possibilities of achieving a higher than pass grade (4 and 5) is specified in section 6.4. Possibilities for supplementary work after the deadline are specified in section 6.7.

Supervisors must submit assessment documentation to the examiner as agreed within the framework of each course iteration (or equivalent). In other respects the examiner must make the grading decision without any influence from the supervisor. The examiner may request that a student provides a report of his/her individual work on an independent project (degree project), if it was executed by several students.

In Ladok the date must be specified on which the student conclusively fulfilled the course requirements (usually the date on which the finished independent project (degree project) was handed in, or the date of the presentation).

Change of essay subject

If there are special reasons, a student may be allowed to change the subject of an essay (within the main field of study) during the independent project course. This is dealt with in the same way as a revision of the study plan, which is done in consultation with the supervisor responsible and must be approved by the course leader (or equivalent). Possibilities for changing essay subjects are limited by the availability of supervisors.

Change of supervisor

If there are special reasons, a student may be allowed to change supervisor. The student must submit a written request, specifying the reasons, to the course leader (or equivalent), who will decide on a possible change of supervisor, unless the head of department has issued other regulations. Possibilities for changing supervisors are limited by the availability of supervisors.

Continued supervision

A student's right to supervision during an independent project (degree project) is linked to a specific course iteration. If a student did not achieve a pass grade, continued supervision may be offered within reasonable limits, even after the end of the course. This is dealt with in the same way as a revision of the study plan, which is done in consultation with the supervisor responsible and must be approved by the course leader (or equivalent). Regardless of whether the student receives further supervision or not, he/she is entitled to a renewed final assessment.

7.5 Review and publication

Plagiarism is always wrong and can be considered as cheating if it is assessed to have been done consciously in order to mislead in the assessment of a student. (HF chapter 10, section 1). The Vice Chancellor has established the SLU policy and action plan with regard to cheating and plagiarism within higher education. All independent projects (degree projects) shall be inspected for plagiarism

(Urkund) before approval. Any work submitted by students at SLU may be sent to Urkund for scrutiny.

It is the examiner who is responsible for ensuring that a plagiarism review is carried out, but the operative implementation normally occurs in connection with the student submitting the material to the supervisor. See the instructions regarding Urkund (<https://internt.slu.se/sv/utbildning-forskning-foma/utbildning-pa-grund-och-avancerad-niva/lararstod/utbildningssystem/urkund/>) (in Swedish).

All independent projects (degree projects) shall be published in the SLU electronic archive for student projects (Epsilon) after it has been approved. In principle, independent projects (degree projects) shall be published immediately after approval. In exceptional cases publication may be delayed for six (6) months. This will be decided by the relevant department. If there are special reasons, publication may be delayed up to twelve (12) months; this requires a special decision by the faculty concerned. Any postponement of publication shall be described in the work plan. See also section 8. Copyright, publication and plagiarism.

When publishing an independent project (degree project), the SLU library's instructions for electronic publication shall be used (<http://www.slu.se/en/library/publish/studproj/>). To ensure that only fully approved work is published (from 1st January 2012), independent projects (degree projects) shall be uploaded in Epsilon by a departmental administrator with responsibility for academic registration, after the student has been reported as approved in Ladok.

7.6 Complaints

The student shall primarily turn to the supervisor, and secondly to the course leader, regarding complaints about the independent project (degree project). The student shall primarily contact the examiner regarding complaints about the assessment. Also see section 6, Assessment and grades, as well as 11, Student influence, and 12, Disciplinary measures.

7.7 Additional SLU documents

- Procedural routines in cases of suspected cheating in higher education at SLU
<https://internt.slu.se/Documents/internwebben/ledningskansliet/gur/procedural-routines-if-suspected-cheating.pdf>
- Guidelines for independent projects (degree projects), copyright and publicate in education at SLU (Riktlinjer för självständiga arbeten (examensarbeten), upphovsrätt och publicering inom utbildning vid SLU, in Swedish)
<https://internt.slu.se/Documents/internwebben/ledningskansliet/gur/riktlinjer-sjalvstandiga-arbeten-mm.pdf>
- Regulations, section
 - 6. Assessment and grades
 - 8. Copyright, publication and plagiarism
 - 12. Disciplinary measures
- SLU policy and action plan with regard to cheating and plagiarism within higher education, 2010 to 2011
<https://internt.slu.se/Documents/internwebben/ledningskansliet/gur/policy-and-action-plan-against-cheating-and-plagiarism-2010-2011.pdf>