



Minutes of the meeting in the Employer Panel, Medialogy on May 24, 2024

Participants: Claus Brøndgaard Madsen, Markus Löchtefeld, Kasper Rodil, Hendrik Knoche, Luis Emilio Bruni, Henrik Schønau Fog, Olga Timcenko, Georgios Triantafyllidis, Mette Hvass, Daniel Overholt, Amalia de Götzen, Luca Simeone, Andreas Møgelmoose, Christoffer Lund Rasmussen, Darius Adam Rohani, Merete Madsen, Jesper Ravn, Henrik Secher Jarlskov, Kasper Løvborg Jensen, Jesper Udesen, Simon Hansen, Lara Casciola, Allan Ruberg, Runa Munk Sabroe, Begum Becerman, Andreas Berre Eriksen, Flemming Løvenhardt Petersen, Anne Christoffersen (minute-taker), Trine Dalgaard (Minute-taker)

Unable to attend: Lars B. Hansen, Michael Harboe, Stefania Serafin, Bjørn Flindt Temte.

Item 1. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved.

Item 2. Welcome and presentation

Claus B. Madsen (CBM), Head of Study Board, gave a presentation on the Department of Architecture, Design and Media Technology and an overview of the study programs both in Aalborg (MED BSc and DAKI MSc) and Copenhagen (MED BSc and MSc SSD, LiD and SMC). The Study Board comprises 6 students and 6 staff and is responsible for managing the study programs.

CBM proceeded to give a short introduction of the function of the employer panel, which is an instrument to get input for the education programs. As there are very different educations under the Study Board, the employer panel for MT spans wide to cover these areas. The current employer panel was selected from a process last year where the education coordinators suggested member candidates and Linked-In profiles of companies that employ candidates were explored. The Pro Dean and the Study Board approve the panel which is constituted for a 4-year period. The current panel consists of both new members and members that have been re-appointed.

CBM emphasized that the primary purpose of today's meeting is to discuss how to optimize the use of employer panels and enhance collaboration between the panels and the Study Board.

CBM presented internal members of the panel and administrative staff. All the external participants introduced themselves and their background for being in the panel. As this is the first meeting in the panel and there are many new members, a short introduction to all studies was made.

Item 3. Introduction to studies

Medialogy (BSc and MSc), presented by Claus B. Madsen

BSc MED is offered both in Aalborg and in Copenhagen, with Danish as the teaching language. In Aalborg the intake is approximately 30-35 (dimensioned to 60, 51 from 2028), while in Copenhagen the intake is

approximately 60 (dimensioned to 70 and 60 from 2025). Alle BSc graduates have legal right of admission to MSc.

The MSc is also available both in Aalborg and in Copenhagen, with English as the teaching language. In Aalborg, the intake is 25-30, and in Copenhagen it is approx. 30-40 students. We do not know yet whether the education will be affected by the upcoming master reform. The competence profile of MSC MED is to design, implement and evaluate media technological products / prototypes for a given target application / group. Students are expected to function through the entire chain from design to evaluation and there is a significant technical aspect in the program.

The current internal focal points for MED are Retention, as there is currently 50% BSc dropout and 10% MSc drop out, external collaboration (30-40% of students have external collaboration in their thesis, and 50-70% are in internship), AI in the education and how we can adopt SMC into the education.

Sound and Music Computing, presented by Daniel Overholt

Sound and Music Computing combines engineering, design, music, and computer science. SMC is cross-disciplinary and equips students with a background where they can both use both their creative skills and their interest in technology.

The MSc programme in Sound and Music Computing consists of four semesters. In the 1st and 2nd semesters, the basic elements of sound and music technology are introduced, as well as theories and methods to put knowledge to practice. Third semester includes either a semester abroad, research courses at the university, or a project collaboration with an external party. Forth semester is the master thesis.

There is minimal unemployment among graduates and very few students drop out of the study.

Lighting Design, presented by Georgios Triantafyllidis and Mette Hvass

The program started in 2014 and the first 26 students graduates in 2016. Today, there has been more than 250 students enrolled in the programme, many of these have been international students, representing 30+ nations. The students have different backgrounds, e.g. architecture, interior design, product design, engineering, media technology and educations with humanities.

The study consists of four semesters with three research disciplines (Architecture, Design and Lighting). The students complete semester projects implementing what they have learned from the different tracks. The 9th semester includes an internship or innovation project, followed by the master thesis where the student can work with different topics.

Service System Design, presented by Amalia de Götzen

The master programme started 12 years ago, and is structured in four semesters: Service as Interaction (covering UX Design for Service Interaction, Designing Product, Service Systems, Visualizing and prototyping for services), Service as Systems (covering User Participation and Social Innovation, Perspectives in Service Design, Design Futures). The 3rd Semester offers either internship, where the students can work with a company, or a course on Business & Strategy at AAU. 4th semester consists of a 30 ECTS thesis.

The students become designers that can perform different tasks such as user research, synthesize data through visualization, facilitate workshops and codesign activities, prototype service offerings, analyse and optimize internal processes, develop a value proposition for a startup, visualize systems support communication processes, perform UX tasks, and qualitative data analysis. There are approximately 75% international students on the course. Graduates find employment in diverse areas including the public sector (municipalities etc), as freelancers, UX consultancies and so forth

DAKI, Presented by Andreas Møgelmose

DAKI (in Danish *Design og Anvendelse af Kunstig Intelligens* or in English *AI Engineering*) is a new education at AAU which started 2023, and the first students are just completing their second semester.

The aim of the program is to make engineers that understand AI and have the tools to use it. The program is structured in seven semesters. The first two semesters are about using the core of AI, the third semester adds deployment, and the fourth semester is about deployment and maintenance. The fifth semester handles the context (e.g. law, ethics and business understanding), and the sixth semester involves an internship and then the students come back for the bachelor's project. The aim is to have company collaboration from the second semester. The expectation is that there will be three groups of employers: AI consultancies and software development, larger firms with own innovation / AI department and smaller non-software firms that see the advantage of AI. In 2023, there was 23 students that enrolled in the education, and we expect more students next year.

CBM sums up the introduction and introduces the group discussion: The Study Board of MT covers a broad range of studies. The question is how to optimize the use of employer panels and enhance collaboration between the panels and the Study Board.

Item 4: How can we make best use of the employer panel?

The panel was split up in two sub-groups for the discussion (LiD/SSD and MED/SMC)

Item 4.1 Summary of group discussion from group 1 (MED/SMC)

Participants: Markus Löchtefeld (*facilitator*), Georgios Triantafyllidis, Mette Hvass, Amalia de Götzen, Luca Simeone, Merete Madsen, Jesper Ravn, Lara Casciola, Allan Ruberg, Runa Munk Sabroe, Begum Becerman, Flemming Løvenhardt Petersen, Trine Dalgaard (*Minute-taker*).

Markus Löchtefeld (ML) introduced the purpose of the discussion. The Study Board would like to discuss how we can optimize the use of the employer panel and ensure the best collaboration between the panel and the Study Board.

Jesper Ravn (JR) asks why LiD and SSD are mixed in one group? ML explains that the panel is new and the Study Board would like to do things differently, with broader discussions also between the educations of how we can optimize the use of employer panels. The next meeting will probably be education specific.

ML asks the panel what they expect to get from the panel as a member, so there is a mutual gain from the meetings. JR comments that in his experience, it has often been the same issues that have been discussed, which is mostly employability. It is important that the panel sees that what they contribute with makes a difference. JR further comments that LiD seems to be in the wrong Study Board, as there seems to be very little connection between LiD and the other studies. The representatives of LiD in the panel (Allan Ruberg, Lars Hansen, Merete Madsen and Jesper Ravn) all represent the design side of LiD, which seems to be more relevant for the A&D Study Board. Mette Hvass (MH) and George (GT) comment that they also have considered the placing of the study.

Allan Ruberg (AR) points out that there are two issues in the use of the employer panel. The first is whether the context is right, but we also must look into if the output from the meetings is valid. AR recommends that AAU could perhaps make a small sum-up of the input received from the panel, and how this input has been used since the last meeting.

GT agrees that we have to give more feedback, so the value of the meeting is clear. GT exemplifies this through the last panel meeting where a software was mentioned, and this software is now brought into the educations. Amalia de Götzen (AG) agrees that it could be organized differently, and we should be better to communicate the changes that have been made.

Lara Casciola (LC) comments that the SSD background has given her some valuable skills, and after having gained work experience in the field, she has some reflections to share and also, the panel acts as a way for her to stay in touch with the field. LC points out that it would be optimal if the panel could prepare for the meetings, e.g. by having the questions beforehand and by getting feedback on how the input from the panel has been used. This would be motivating.

Runa Sabroe (RS) agrees with that the meeting should be split into educations. It would be good to be able to discuss the difficulties in the specific education, and fine to have 1-2 pages to read beforehand. Another issue that RS points to is that we could perhaps make the meeting shorter – as it can be difficult to join 2,5 hours.

ML sums up that so far four points have been raised: shorter meetings, feedback and things to prepare (text to read or questions to reflect on) and also a wish for education specific meetings. He asks the panel whether there is anybody that wish to hear about the other educations? Nobody present at this meeting expresses this wish. ML asks the panel what is needed in terms of the information in term of length and format. The panel agrees that an email with a short recap is enough.

GT asks the LiD participants if there are any new points they would like to raise. AR reflects that the students are educated in the evidence part, which is not as important to them. MM agrees and comments that in the presentation a phenomenological approach was described, but the subject seemed more scientific. LiD is a visual subject. AR points out that strategy is important, as e.g. sustainability offers many possibilities for LiD competencies. Begum Becerman (BB) agrees that the education has to get closer to the employer. Often people don't know what the education offers.

ML asks the SSD participants: do we need to change the name and remove "design" from the title? Perhaps it is not well enough understood what the education is. RS disagrees and argues that it is the only place you can get the perspective of the designer and a focus on the system. When an employer looks at the CV, it is important to have design in the name. LC comments that the word reflects that the student have a care for aesthetics. AR agrees that people don't know what the profession holds. Architects and engines are always present, but we lack an understanding in society of what lighting designers bring. ML agrees that AR has an interesting point – SSD and LiD are not educations like architecture that are well known. The question is how can we educate society? MM all of us do a little everyday to inform other what the education is about. BG argues that organizations, such as Danish Design Center, could be involved e.g. through design conferences. AR mentions that AAU as an institution also has a role here. MM remarks that it is important to consider that it needs to be experienced, not necessarily just written.

Item 4.2 Summary of group discussion from group 2 (SSD/LiD)

Participants: Claus B. Madsen (facilitator), *External members:* MED/SMC: Kasper Løvbjerg, Jesper Udesen, Simon Hansen, Henrik Jarlskov *DAKI:* Christoffer Rasmussen, Darius Rohani, Andreas Eriksen. *Internal members:* Kasper Rodil, Hendrik Knoche, Henrik Schønau Fog, Olga Timcenko, Luis E. Bruni, Daniel Overholt, Andreas Møgelmoose, Anne Christoffersen (minute-taker)

Claus B. Madsen (CBM) sets up the group discussion and pointed out that the Study Board/Department have not been good exploiting the potential of the employer panel – e.g. with curriculum revisions. We have had many internal discussions in the Department, but not beyond that.

Luis E. Bruni (LEB) added that it is not just important to involve employees in study plan revisions but insure with them that there are contact with industry through the education.

CBM returns to Andreas Møgelmo's points from his presentation of DAKI regarding collaboration with companies and asks the members if they see themselves involved in project collaborations with students on different levels.

Kasper Løvbjerg (KL) sometimes sees a tension between research driven and industry driven parts of education and asks back if teachers are willing to open up to "chaos". It will take time, and for DAKI there is an obvious opportunity to build that culture from scratch. Of course, the students can come in and contribute to development in the companies, but it takes a lot of work. It is a two-sided coin.

Andreas Eriksen (AE) finds that the companies have a big responsibility and is obligated to interact with students.

Christoffer Rasmussen (CR) comments that the companies can give the students the industry perspective and the students provide input for development to the companies. They invest a lot of time, and is willing to do so, but that they especially want the good students and students at higher semesters. They want to have less hands-on interaction with the students. The company can come up with the framework and then the students can work within this.

Henrik Jarlskov (HJ) disagree as he wants practical feedback to students as soon as possible during the education. It can be more formalized in the project work.

Andreas Møgelmo (AM) points out three things related to the said:
DAKI is meeting a great deal of interest from companies, which is very positive.
"Chaos" – it is always a question how much you want to let loose as a teacher. Some students were given impossible projects and data to prepare a project from, but even though it was difficult, the students learned so much from it and didn't want a firmer management from the teachers.
In some situation a lot of communication between the company and students provide a large workload for the company which should be minimized.

Kasper Rodil (KR) is happy with the new employer panel. He finds it important that the panel is critical and not just pats on the back. They should look at what is taught and let us know if what is being taught is off and has no relevance to the surrounding society.

CBM told that each of the members are associated with an education and asked if it would be relevant to receive curriculum to these studies.

KL expected a link, or the entire curriculum attached, and that they should review and comment on it. At the same time, he is aware that the panel will not get full rights to implement comments in the curriculum so the Department must also agree with themselves how the panel is best used. He followed up on the previous and added there is also a question of resources in the individual companies in relation to taking on more students. It should not be the same interaction in the lower semesters as in the older semesters.

Hendrik Knoche (HK) commented that if the panel should go into detail regarding the study programs, educational meetings will be more appropriate.

CBM agreed and said that for future meetings, we will have submeetings for each programme.

KR supports the fact that we can benefit from involving the panel in curriculum development. He himself has had a concrete example of preparing a course where it would have been good.

Jesper Udesen (JU) has been a member of the panel for several years, and his experience from previous meetings is that there was a lot of talk about the education programs and there was a lot of one-way dialogue. If the goal is to get input and information, then there must be clarity about that, and concrete questions must be formulated for the panel members who can be preparatory for these meetings.

It initiated a short discussion of collection of input and knowledge from companies in relation to internship, thesis writing etc. and from censors in relation to exams. It is not something that is done systematically now.

It was also discussed that feedback from companies must be weighed carefully – everything depends on perspective and visual horizon. The companies do not have the same perspective and view of relevance for different elements in the programmes. But CBM concluded, that all perspectives are relevant and useful knowledge for the Study Board in the development of educations.

Summerized:

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- Research driven vs. industry driven parts of education – a cultural “journey”.
 - Obligated to interact with students.
 - Knowledge transfer to companies - companies are very willing to invest time and energy (maybe mainly as “frame” for lower semesters).
 - For courses: Can act as real-world examples (industry lectures).
 - Interest in actual curricula – subgroups for educations.
 - Focus meetings on externals given input/information – sending out agenda/questions in good time so externals feel they can actually give input/perspective.
 - Feedback from companies re. Internships and graduates.

Item 5: Summary and conclusion in plenary

ML sums up the discussion on LiD/SSD: One of the first things brought up was whether LiD was in the right Study Board, as some members pointed out that LiD seems to be closer to the studies of the A & D Study Board. Also, the panel has a wish for more feedback on how the Study Board works with the input given from the panel. Another point made was a wish for shorter meetings and education specific meetings. Each education was discussed in the subgroup. It was pointed out that LiD is about design, not necessarily evidence, although it is important also to have the strategic factor e.g. the importance of sustainability. For SSD it was discussed whether it was relevant to remove the word “design” from the title. There was a discussion that we should educate society about the importance of this education, and AAU as an organization could step in and support this discussion.

CBM sums up the discussion on MED/SMC: There was some overlap with the discussion in the first group. There is a clash between the research view and the more industrial focused view. Some employers feel obliged to interact with the students, also the early years. Companies are very willing to invest time and energy, it is also a knowledge transfer to companies. For courses, they can act as real-world examples (industry lectures) There is also an interest in the panel for the actual curriculum, perhaps to have the curriculum sent out beforehand, and the panel can be divided into education specific subgroups. It would be preferable to have some things to prepare in advance, e.g. questions to be discussed in the panel meeting.



ML and CBM thanked all participants for their time and input. There are many good points that have come forth in the discussion. ML asks in plenary whether there is a wish for more frequent meetings if the meetings are shorter. The panel does not express a need for more frequent meetings.
