

## External Panel meeting – Techno-Anthropology

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Date:	16.05.2023	Time:	14:00 – 16:00
Location:	Aalborg Universitet Kbh., A.C. Meyers Vænge 15, 2450 Kbh. SV, lokale ACM15 2.1.025		

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Minute taker: Janni Rise Frellsen

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Panel members	Company	Role	Participation
Anne Klærke	Microsoft	External member	Present
Jakob Heydenreich	Center for IT og Medicoteknologi, Region H	External member	Present
Dianne Østergaard Nielsen	Aalborg Kommune	External member	Absent
Line Gamrath Rasmussen	Institut for Menneskerettigheder	External member	Absent
Mischa Szpirt	LEO Pharma	External member	Absent
Lars Botin	Aalborg Universitet	TAN CPH programkoordinator	Present
Maurizio Teli	Aalborg Universitet	TAN AAL programkoordinator	Present online
Tom Børsen	Aalborg Universitet	TAN CPH Career VIP	Present
Christian Gradhandt Nøhr	Aalborg Universitet	TAN AAL Career VIP	Present online
Maj-Britt Quitzau	Aalborg Universitet	Study Board Chair	Present
Pernille Scholdan Bertelsen	Aalborg Universitet	Head of Studies	Present
Janni Rise Frellsen	Aalborg Universitet	Study Board Secretary	Present

### AGENDA

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1. New Techno-Anthropology website  
([https://www.aau.dk/uddannelser/bachelor/teknoantropologi?gad=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwge2iBhBBEiwAfXDBR56rvsEYvvG0NCu3\\_WzqHswxNcLUXMXxQ4hiJtycgT9osnGLI1Sc7RoCSbEQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.aau.dk/uddannelser/bachelor/teknoantropologi?gad=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwge2iBhBBEiwAfXDBR56rvsEYvvG0NCu3_WzqHswxNcLUXMXxQ4hiJtycgT9osnGLI1Sc7RoCSbEQAvD_BwE))
2. How do we make Techno-Anthropology more visible for companies/organisations?
3. Comments from the external members for the revised Master's programme in Techno-Anthropology 2022 curriculum (<https://studieordninger.aau.dk/2022/35/3474>)
4. How do we handle a possible cut of the Master's in Techno-Anthropology from 2 years to 1,25 years?
5. Closure of the Techno-Anthropology study programme in Copenhagen. How can we secure the existence of the study programme? Online programme or other type of programme?

## MINUTES

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Everybody was welcomed to the meeting. Unfortunately, some of the external members were not able to join the meeting, but we are very happy that Anne Klærke and Jakob Heydenreich took the time to attend and give their valuable input for the items on the agenda.

One of the external members, John Kjær from Hydrogen Valley have resigned from the panel, so we are currently looking for at least two new external members to be a part of the panel.

### 1. New Techno-Anthropology website

Aalborg University has just implemented a new website design, and prior to the meeting the external members were asked to look at the Techno-Anthropology website, as we would very much like comments and feedback on the new design, features, user-friendliness etc.

Jakob started out and mentioned that the new design is very nice, clear, and easy to read. He also really liked the video presentation of the study programme.

However, he found that it was a shame that the description of the study programme is not fully visible for the viewer on the screen without scrolling. In his opinion important text should be visible at first sight when opening the website, to avoid excessive scrolling and the viewer maybe leaving the site without being exposed to the essential information.

Anne agreed that a lot of scrolling is necessary to access the relevant information at the current website version. She found the content of the website to be both relevant and interesting, so a rearrangement or division of the website into sections could maybe be a solution. She mentioned that she liked the overview of the semesters of the study programme as it gives a nice and quick overview of the content. Like Jakob she also liked the video presentation.

Furthermore, Anne mentioned that she found the cellphone version of the website to be very good.

Maurizio, Lars, and Tom all agreed in the observations about the challenge of not being able to access important information without having to do a lot of scrolling on the website. However, as we are not able to do anything about it, as it is a condition of the new overall web design, it was agreed that we will pass on the feedback to the central communication department for them to take it to the management.

Pernille presented the 2023 application numbers for the bachelor (quota 2) and the master study programme in relation to the former years:

- Bachelor AAL: 16 (2021), 8 (2022), 3 (2023)
- Bachelor CPH: 25 (2021), 15 (2022), 11 (2023)
- Master AAL: 36 (2022), 39 (2023)
- Master CPH: 105 (2022), 83 (2023)

Maj-Britt mentioned that we had hoped that the application numbers in Aalborg would increase significantly, now that the study programme will be closing in Copenhagen, but unfortunately, they have not, even though the numbers in Copenhagen are going down. This could possibly be a sign that the study programme should be marketed differently in Aalborg.

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As a strategic goal the department of Planning has hired an employee Frederik Kobbelgaard to specifically focus and work with the recruitment of students for our study programmes. He is developing materials and activities for high schools which should be ready for the autumn. Maybe it could be beneficial to include some tech as a show case.

When choosing an education, factors such as job possibilities, location and timing are typically considered by the possible applicants.

Thus, we should maybe put even more focus on the different job opportunities for our graduates at the website, as they have a wide range of opportunities. We could move information about jobs further up at the website and add short video testimonials from employed TAN graduates.

In relation to the factor of timing Christian mentioned that most decisions about choice of education are made around Christmas where the applicants discuss the matter with their families. This means that our marketing initiatives and Frederik's planned activities should be timed according to this.

Maj-Britt added that the communication team have already made campaign directed at parents, so they are aware of the role that the family play in the choice of education.

As location also plays a role in the choice of education, we would also need to pay attention to marketing the city of Aalborg, if we wish to attract students from other cities, and of course focus on young people living in and around Aalborg. Maj-Britt added that the number of TAN graduates employed in Jutland are increasing. More graduates get employed close to where they have studied instead of relocating.

Anne added that Techno-Anthropology does not have a great reputation in the unions, where the salary is ranked very low. People also think about that when choosing an education.

Tom mentioned that we could maybe ask AAU Career to invite Danish Industry to have a dialogue about not focusing so heavily on salary. There is a great need for other graduates than engineers, so other factors should be pointed out.

Anne also emphasized that there is a huge focus on 'girls and science' which should work in favor of Techno-Anthropology, as the study programme attracts a lot of girls.

Tom pointed out that the buzz words have changed and that 'teknologisk dannelse' is really trending now so extra focus this term could be beneficial.

Pernille mentioned that unfortunately the communication field at AAU is being centralized, which will probably harm us in relation to less understanding of the study programmes at the department. However, Frederik Kobbelgaard will continue to work with recruitment at department level, so Lars and Maurizio were encouraged to pass on the above inputs to him so he can include them in his recruitment work.

Finally, Pernille mentioned that the large focus on employment in relation to the closure of TAN Copenhagen is a shame, as the numbers behind the decision are based on a group of only eight students. Also, the numbers being addressed are not reflecting the current employment situation but focused on specific quarters.

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#### **Conclusion:**

- The external members liked the new AAU web design but mentioned that a rearrangement of the content to avoid excessive scrolling could be a good idea. We will pass on the comment about the excessive scrolling to the central AAU communication department.

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- We must focus on timing, location and job opportunities when marketing the study programme. Lars and Maurizio should address recruitment employee Frederik Kobbelgaard with input for material and activities.
  - We would like AAU Career to invite Danish Industry to have a dialogue about not focusing so heavily on salary.
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## **2. How do we make Techno-Anthropology more visible for companies/organisations?**

We would like some input from the external members on how to make Techno-Anthropology more visible in the corporate world.

Pernille mentioned that Dansk Erhverv and Dansk Industri a couple of years ago made some videos about AAU. She found the video from Dansk Erhverv to be very relevant, so maybe we could try contacting the faculty to get our hands on the video. Dansk Erhverv offers relevant courses and events, so we could approach them and look into cooperating with them.

Jakob asked about how students typically find cooperation for their master's thesis project. Maurizio replied that most coordinators have network that they rely on, but that we could be better at activating these networks.

Lars added that students mostly find companies/organisations for both project-oriented studies and master's thesis cooperations themselves, and often the cooperation can turn into an employment afterwards. Anne who studied Techno-Anthropology added that she and her fellow students sent out lots of e-mails to different companies when searching for cooperation partners. She also mentioned that she ended up getting employed at Microsoft due to a contact made through a student project.

However, it can be quite challenging for students to figure out how to properly address companies and organisations. It takes some training to learn how to approach companies in the right way so maybe that is something to include in the Techno-Anthropology study programme.

Jakob added that some presentation material focusing on concretising the value and competences of the students, might help the students in the process, as companies are often not aware of what they need. Pernille agreed and mentioned that we are becoming more focused on making the cooperations more visible. The semester coordinators should make project catalogues.

Maj-Britt brought up that on AAU we are currently implementing Thirdroom; a 'LinkedIn' platform for students, which has great potential in relation to creating network, cooperation and dialogue and allowing students to show their competences to companies and organisations.

Anne also brought up mentorships, which we already have established. However, it is not mandatory, so one must make sure to sign up themselves. The mentors are typically graduates and alumnis from Techno-Anthropology. We typically use LinkedIn analytics to gain the information about where our graduates are employed. Tom is currently waiting for our employability employee Emilie Stenberdt to send him an updated report.

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**Conclusion:**

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- We should help our students with how to properly address companies and organisations, e.g., by incorporating knowledge about communication with the corporate world in the Techno-Anthropology study programme.
  - Presentation materials/project catalogues could beneficially be made to help students in communicating their skills and competences to companies and organisations and to show great examples of cooperation.
  - The new Thirdroom platform is very relevant for students for showing their competences to companies and organisations.
  - We should contact Dansk Erhverv about a possible cooperation.
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### **3. Comments for the revised master's programme in Techno-Anthropology 2022 curriculum**

The master's programme of Techno-Anthropology has recently been revised and a new curriculum entered into force on September 1, 2022.

The new curriculum has more digital focus on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> semester which already seems to be popular among the students.

Maurizio explained that technical courses, scripting, and mining have been added, and the anthropological courses have been twisted towards digital anthropology. Department of Electronic Systems is a new partner, and we need to focus on developing and strengthening the cooperation, as they are not that familiar with Techno-Anthropology yet. Maybe we should encourage the involved partners from the department to follow the e-course which is designed to give a quick introduction to and understanding of the study programme. Maurizio said that the collaboration with the department has worked very well in Aalborg. Unfortunately, the current teacher of the course will not continue.

Jakob found the update of the curriculum to be very positive as the content fits even better with his needs in terms of the students getting a better feeling with technology.

Anne mentioned that the new curriculum certainly has the right buzz words. She asked for an elaboration on how the focus has shifted to AI and digitalization.

Maurizio and Lars explained that we are trying to produce interactional experts that have some (deep) insights in the fields that they try to connect. We want the graduates to have a clearer profile and a clear fit with the faculty title. Maj-Britt added that Techno-Anthropology combines technological curiousness with humanistic studies. The ethics and political issues lie more in the projects. Also, many of the theories are ethical/normative. Maurizio added that the students get exposed to various angles/approaches, and that there is a width of options.

Anne emphasized that it is important to keep an eye on what techno-anthropologists are good at. They are not data analysts. Of course, it is good to know the basics, and understand how technology works, but they should not deep dive into these areas. She mentioned that at Microsoft they focus on how to measure trust and ensure that AI and Tech are not used in ways that is not intended.

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Maj-Britt mentioned that our intention is to change the assessment from the 7-point scale to passed/not passed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester projects, where a lot of students do project-oriented studies in external organisations. The reason for this is to allow the students to focus more on the professional experience than on the written project report. At the bachelor study programme we would like to emphasize more design thinking as a supplement to participatory design. Maybe it could be an idea to combine the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> semester projects trying to make a progression between the projects in the two semesters. We want them to be better at envisioning suggestions and solutions. Methods and tools (such as e.g., design thinking – but also a critical approach) are important for graduates.

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**Conclusion:**

- Both Anne and Jakob found the update of the master's programme curriculum to be positive. Jakob even thought that the new curriculum focusing more on technology fits even better with his needs. However, Anne emphasized that we must make sure to also keep focus on the humanistic studies and the cross disciplinarity which is what techno-anthropologists are very good at.
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#### **4. How do we handle a possible cut of the Master's in Techno-Anthropology from 2 years to 1,25 years?**

**Conclusion:**

- This item was not addressed as the discussion of the other items on the agenda was found to be of higher importance.
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#### **5. Closure of the Techno-Anthropology study programme in Copenhagen**

As a result of the demand for a cut down on the number of student places in the larger cities in Denmark it has been decided to close the bachelor's and master's programme in Techno-Anthropology in Copenhagen. The last intake at the bachelor's programme will be in 2024 and at the master's programme the last intake will be in 2029.

One of the arguments for choosing to close Techno-Anthropology is that the employability of the graduates is too low. However, the numbers are improving significantly. Thus, it is a shame that the decision to close the study programme lies on this argument.

Pernille has seriously questioned the closure of Techno-Anthropology in Copenhagen, but we do not expect the decision to be changed. Therefore, we must discuss other options to somehow keep the study programme present in Copenhagen.

A possibility could be to use the study programme in another setting such as e.g., in another study programme or as continued education. Maybe a possible format could be a one-year continued education master for bachelors. Alternatively, a similar education could be started up, or we could focus on offering courses/supplements for the more technological educations.

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An option could also be to offer online courses. However, Anne commented that foreigners living and working in Denmark might find TAN online courses interesting, but that the Danes would probably not, as taking courses would take time from their spare time (they learn at the job).

Jakob mentioned that what is important is flexibility and contact with the students. However, the field work does need to take place physically. Anne added that the Techno-Anthropology study programme taps into being a part of a hybrid world. Lars said that the hybrid model doesn't work right now, but we have some time to figure out how to make it work (we have 6 years before the last master's programme intake).

Tom suggested that students located in Copenhagen could maybe be enrolled at the Techno-Anthropology study programme in Aalborg. Then they could occasionally attend teaching seminars in Aalborg but do their project work in Copenhagen.

Pernille suggested that for the next external panel meeting we could beneficially facilitate a workshop about online or hybrid elements.

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**Conclusion:**

- There was a good discussion about different possibilities for continuing the content of Techno-Anthropology in Copenhagen in another setting such as e.g., as a one-year continued education master for bachelors, startup of a similar education, offering courses/supplements for more technological educations or online courses for employees in the corporate world.
  - For the next external panel meeting we could have a workshop about online or hybrid elements of the study programme.
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