

Independent project in landscape
architecture, 30 hp



Study Guide

Master Project in landscape architecture, 30 hp

Institutionen för landskapsarkitektur, planering och förvaltning

SLU, Alnarp

WORK PLAN (PROGRAM)

A work plan must be drawn up for the degree project. It has three important functions: it acts as a guide for completion of the work; it is an agreement between the student and Faculty (in the normal case represented by the supervisor) and it provides the foundation for examination of the completed work.

The work plan must provide clarity as regards the objectives of the work and the way in which those objectives will be achieved. During preparation of the work an active approach is developed, to the problem to be dealt with, and an analysis is made of what has to be done. A preliminary structure for the end result is also created.

A first draft of the work plan is prepared by the student. This is then developed in consultation between student and supervisor and should contain the following:

Project title – in Swedish and English. It is important to think about searchability when choosing a title.

Background – a description of the background to the choice of topic (theme) and a short explanation for the choice, with a clear description of the topic or issue to be examined. This can involve for example acquiring knowledge and skills of some type, investigating an issue or a problem, obtaining information on something – perhaps a method, or something else – or creating a discussion. In this section, students can answer questions such as - What is the state of the problem area in which the problem/task is contained? - Why have you chosen this task? – What are your motives? Particular emphasis should be placed on the boundaries of the study.

Objective – a formulation of what you wish to achieve with your work. The final examination will be based on this. Describe what you intend to do. If, for example, you intend to present a proposal for planning/designing a site, the objective of your work may be to test and describe different options and their consequences; to make suggestions for change or to formulate a programme of the overall objectives which in your opinion should direct such change. The aim of the degree project can also be to test a theory/issue in a certain situation or to describe your process from idea to proposal. Include a description of the target groups for your work.

Approach and/or method – a description of your strategy for carrying out the work. – How do you intend to achieve your objectives? Describe the approach or perspectives/theories you will employ.

Product (form of submission) – a description of how the work will be reported. The form of submission and the consequences for archiving must be discussed in the initial phase of the work. An oral presentation, in the form of a presentation seminar, must always be included.

Timetable – Describe the work process, i.e. when you intend to carry out the different component parts of the work.

State the time (year + week) you will start the work and the estimated time (year + week) of completion and submission.

The timetable must show the scope of the different components of the work spread across the 20 weeks (800 hours) available to you. Drawing up the work plan and preparations for the presentation each correspond to around one week's work.

Revisions of the work plan must be submitted in writing to the course leader. This should include a short explanation and be approved and signed by the supervisor.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

A degree project to the value of 30 hp corresponds to 20 weeks of full-time work, i.e. 800 hours of work.

Within landscape architecture, degree projects of different types can be done. This leads to the structure and the final product varying in certain ways. Boundaries are important and are established in the initial phase of the work by the student in consultation with the supervisor.

The degree project must deal with a problem within the chosen subject, with aim/objective formulation, description of methods, facts, inspirations and/or ideas (the actual work) and a reflective section.

For example, a design project of a Landscape Architecture nature can involve inventory and analysis of a site, in-depth studies of the literature and study visits to the type of place or activity to be designed, followed by reflections on the choices made during the design process. If the student has decided to work with a place, this can mean testing different approaches and methods. If the student has decided to investigate a method, this can mean testing it in different places. Reflections can comprise a concluding section or be included in different phases or parts of the work.

It is possible for two students to carry out a joint project. It is also possible e.g. to start a degree project jointly and finish it individually.

For students who are interested in continuing from undergraduate education to postgraduate, the degree project can be an initial part of their postgraduate studies. In such cases, the nature of the project must be discussed with the Faculty's Director of Studies (Fredrika Mårtensson).

In brief, the structure can consist of the following:

- Clarification of the project framework and its boundaries
- Interpretation of the task/problem
- Formulation of the question or hypothesis
- Choice of method
- Execution of the actual work
- Reflections

Discussion, reflections, conclusions

In the reflective section the student must critically examine results and methods, as well as their own work process. For example, the reflections can include:

- A discussion on the methods/theories applied and reflections on how these affected the results
- A discussion on the reasons behind the choices made and approach adopted.
- The source of the idea/s

- How the problem was identified and dealt with
- The role the student created for themselves in relation to other actors and how this affected the work carried out.

The scope of the reflections and the degree of depth should be decided in consultation with the supervisor. The reflective section must be reported in writing but can be placed separately, for example in conjunction with a plan or project report.

It is important that there is transparency as regards the main decisions.

SUPERVISION

The degree project is a major piece of work by the student that can be helped by a functioning dialogue with the supervisor.

The student is given a supervision resource that is related to the scope of the work. For a work of 30 hp at advanced level, a supervision resource of 20 hours is provided. This includes face-to-face supervision time, time for reading, etc. up to submission and examination.

The supervisor must be an employee of the LTV Faculty.

Supervision within work comprising 30 hp must be utilised within a time frame of 12 months. If the work exceeds this without the work plan having been revised, the student cannot count on continued supervision.

The supervisor helps the student during the course of the work in the way agreed by student and supervisor at the start of the work. This can for example be through regular, scheduled meetings or at the request of the student. Regardless of the model used, it is the responsibility of the student to take the initiative for supervision!

As a starting point, meetings of the following type can be recommended:

- starting meeting – often before the degree project is registered.
- planning meeting – when the work plan with boundaries, questions, methods and approach, structure and content, the end product and the timetable are discussed and formulated – often before the degree project is registered.
- review meetings – often several times during the course of the work
- structure meeting – when the work is nearing completion and is to be compiled.
- final meeting – final submission and presentation are discussed.

EXAMINATION

The student decides on the way and format in which the work will be presented, in consultation with the supervisor. Before the work is submitted, it must be approved for

examination by the supervisor. The starting point for this is that a factually and formally **complete degree project report** must be submitted. For examination, the student submits **two** printed examination copies of the work to the course leader.

The degree project is examined by one main examiner and one co-examiner, appointed by the course leader. The main examiner must hold at least a doctorate (or equivalent) within the main subject area.

The written report submitted is examined, as is the student's presentation at the seminar. The supervisor and at least one of the examiners must be present at the presentation. Examination of the work submitted and the seminar concludes with the student being awarded a grade 3, 4 or 5.

The examiners submit their statement to the course leader. The degree project in its entirety and all component parts that are required for a pass grade in the course is examined by the course leader, who then gives the statement form to the course administrator, the course administrator notifies the student of the final grade awarded.

OPPOSITION

– A SHORT GUIDE AND CHECKLIST

Aims of opposition

Opposition of a work has two aims:

- to develop the ability to analyse a work objectively and honestly
- to identify all essential strengths and weaknesses in the work.

Checklist

- Aims and boundaries
Is the title relevant? Does the author deal with the subject given in the titles? Have suitable boundaries been set? Is the research question answered?
- Author's choice of approach
Are all the essentials included in the work? Is the method reasonable and can it be used in the work?
- Structure of the work
Is the work clear? Have the different sections been given suitable space and is the order logical? Should the structure have been different and in that case, how?
- Factual content
Does the work contain facts or conclusions that are inaccurate or that can be misunderstood? Has the author interpreted the literature correctly? Is any important investigation missing? Are the conclusions adequate and correctly justified? Are the sources dealt with critically?
- Oral presentation
For example, the following points can be commented upon:
 - Suitability for the audience
 - Structure and content of the talk
 - Enthusiasm
 - Use of aids

- General impression of the presentation

Constructive opinions

Being an opponent does not mean offering only negative criticism. Positive opinions should also be given. **Constructive criticism should always be the aim.** The opponent should in the first instance keep to main lines. If certain types of error occur repeatedly in the work, it is sufficient to exemplify this by pointing out one or two.

The opponent has around 10 minutes to present his/her opposition (if 2 opponents 7 minutes each), so think carefully about what you want to say and use this time well!

The opposition must be summarised in writing and submitted to the author, and also reported (e-mail or print) to the course leader.

PRESENTATION

The degree project must be presented at a seminar. The aim of this is to give students the opportunity to talk about their work and receive opinions from other students, the opponent, lecturers, and other interested parties.

The seminar forms part of examination of the work. Two seminars are arranged per term and the student can choose which of these they will use to present their work. This is of course linked to the time when the work will be submitted for examination. The time of the seminar is around 2 weeks after the deadline for submission of the work for examination. See specific link for presentations for each year.

The seminar is planned in consultation between student and supervisor. The seminar includes an opponent process, which is scheduled by the student administrator Inga-Lill Olsson. There is no financial compensation or travel reimbursement provided for participation in the seminar.

Example of structure and content

- Introduction by supervisor (2 min)
- Presentation of work by student (20 min)
- Questions from/discussion with opponent (10 min) (if 2 opponents, ca 7 minutes each)
- The audience is given the opportunity ask questions/discuss with student (5min)
- Questions from/discussion with examiners (15 min)
- Supervisor or examiner closes the session.

PASSING REQUIREMENTS

Submission of work plan (programme) that has been approved by the supervisor

Submission and presentation of the final product, and marked by the examiners

A plagiarism check of the final product

Published in Epsilon (by the course administrator and SLU Library)

Completed and reported opposition of the degree project of a fellow student
Submission, and passed, of a popular scientific poster