

## FOR YOU WHO ARE AN ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR

There are many advantages for a student doing an essay/master thesis at a company. Collaboration leads to practical application of theory, which can provide new perspectives on knowledge. The student also gains contacts and experience prior to future employment, and the company gains channels for effective recruitment. Collaboration between industry and academia however, means that the student has to deal with two interests: the scientific perspective in the academic setting and the business benefits for the company. The challenge is in managing the different parties' interests. This is best achieved through transparency and good communication between all involved.

### To consider prior to supervising

As a supervisor for an external essay/master thesis you have a particularly important role. In addition to ensuring that the work is scientifically based, you should also have a dialogue with the contact at the company and be responsive to the company's viewpoints. For the essay/master thesis to be completed efficiently and with good results, it is important to create communication between you, the contact at the company and the student.

During the course of the work there is an ongoing dialogue between the company's contact and the student. The company contact should be accessible and should have set aside enough time for questions and feedback. All meetings should be scheduled in the initial phase of the work. As an academic supervisor it is advised that you should meet the company's proposed contact and your student at a start-up meeting and on at least one other occasion for a review.

### The principle of public access and confidentiality

Higher education institutions are authorities covered by the principle of public access, which means limited possibilities of keeping student essays/master thesis confidential. It is thus important during the planning of the essay/master thesis to consider whether it is likely to contain information that may not be disseminated. If such information is included, one possible solution is for the student to write an academic essay with de-identified information and, in addition to this, a special report for the company. If a large part of the results should not be made public at all, it is perhaps not suitable for the assignment to be carried out as an essay/master thesis.



## FOR YOU WHO REPRESENTS A COMPANY

By working together with students in writing an essay/master thesis, you have the opportunity to gain new knowledge. Experience has also shown that such collaboration can be a good method of recruiting highly skilled personnel. Let the students' skills be a resource for you and your company/organization!

### To consider prior to collaboration with students

#### List and formulate the issues

The essay/dissertation work should consist of questions or topics that your company would like to investigate. Clarify for the student what your purpose is and what you want the work to generate. When a student is interested in a proposal, you and the student will then develop the proposal into an essay or master thesis subject.

The questions/issues must then be approved by the academic supervisor. The academic supervisor is responsible for ensuring academic depth and width in the work. In order to comply with formal requirements the essay/master thesis must have a scientific nature, and therefore the student must follow the rules for essay writing in the subject area.

#### The principle of public access and confidentiality

The essay/master thesis is part of the student's degree and will be presented in writing and orally in front of an audience. Higher education institutions are authorities covered by the principle of public access, which means limited possibilities to keep student essays/master thesis confidential.

It is thus important during the planning of the essay/master thesis to consider whether it is likely to contain information that may not be disseminated. If such information is included, one possible solution is for the student to write an academic essay with de-identified information and a special report for you. If the potential results should not be made public at all, it is perhaps not suitable for the assignment to be carried out as an essay/master thesis.

#### Contact at the company

The company must designate a contact who is able to have an ongoing dialogue with the student. The contact should be accessible and should have set aside enough time for questions and feedback. It is therefore recommended that you plan continuous review meetings prior to and during the project.



## FOR YOU AS A STUDENT

By working together with a company or organization in connection with your essay/master thesis, you will gain useful knowledge about how to put theoretical knowledge into practice. At the same time you will gain insight into how the company/organization works and how your studies can be implemented with a future employer. You gain new contacts that are useful when you are looking for work after completing your studies.

### To consider prior to an external essay/master thesis

#### List and formulate the issues

Identify what the company/organization wants to investigate or what problem they need to solve. Formulate a research question or issues together with a company representative, which should then be approved by the academic supervisor. The academic supervisor is responsible for ensuring academic depth and width in the work.

In order to comply with formal requirements the essay/master thesis must have a scientific nature, and therefore you must follow the rules for essay writing in the subject area. In some cases, the paper must be supplemented with a short summary (report) tailored to the company's needs.

#### The principle of public access and confidentiality

The essay/master thesis is part of the your degree and will be presented in writing and orally at a public viva voce. Higher education institutions are authorities covered by the principle of public access, which means limited possibilities of keeping student master thesis confidential.

It is thus important during the planning of the master thesis to consider whether it may contain information that could be sensitive for the company, should not be disseminated. If you have access to information that the company/organization does not want to be made public, one possible solution could be that you write an academic essay with de-identified information and a special report for the company.

#### Contact at the company

During the course of the work there could be an ongoing dialogue between you and the company's contact. This person is responsible for ensuring that the task can be performed as smoothly as possible. The contact should be accessible and should have set aside enough time for your questions and feedback. It may therefore be useful at the beginning of the work to schedule continuous review meetings.



# CHECKLIST: STUDENT

The contact at the company must ensure that you have access to:

- working materials needed to write the essay/master thesis.
- possible interview time with employees at the company/organization.
- possibly a place to work at the company/organization.

When the academic supervisor has accepted the project proposal for the essay/master thesis you, along with the company, must define the task clearly and answer the following questions in writing:

- What will be carried out and how?
- What time-frame will the work have?
- What are your expectations of the company?
- What are the company's expectations of you?
- Who will act as the company's/organization's contact?
- What is needed to carry out the assignment - how should any costs for materials, travel, printing, mailing, etc. be distributed?
- Who owns the results?
- How will sensitive data be handled?
- How will the final report be presented at the company/organization?

Whether or not you receive any economic compensation/salary is a matter between you and the company. This is agreed upon without any involvement of the higher education institution.

# CHECKLIST: COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE

The contact at your company should ensure that students have access to:

- working materials needed to write the essay/master thesis.
- possible interview time with employees at the company.
- possibly a place to work at the company.

When the academic supervisor has accepted the project proposal of the essay/master thesis you, along with the student, must define the task clearly and answer the following questions in writing:

- What will be carried out and how?
- What time-frame will the work have?
- What are your expectations of the student?
- What are the student's expectations of you?
- Who will act as the company's/organization's contact/supervisor?
- What is needed to carry out the assignment - how should any possible costs for materials, travel, printing, mailing, etc. be distributed?
- Who owns the results?
- How will sensitive data be handled?
- How will the final report be presented at the company/organization?

Whether the student receives a salary is a matter between you and the student. This is agreed upon without any involvement of the higher education institution. It is customary that the company is responsible for any additional costs in connection with the essay/master thesis, such as data collection, postal charges, etc. This is something in which you jointly agree on before the work begins.

## CHECKLIST: ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR

- Clarify for the student what requirements the department sets for approving an essay/master thesis.
- Establish communications with the company's/organization's contact.
- Make sure that the student and the company agree on what will be carried out and how.
- Clarify what is included in the assignment of writing an essay/master thesis; for example, what work and what results are reasonable to expect of the student. What is a reasonable amount of work should be discussed together with the student and the company.
- Establish a time-frame for the work and schedule continuous review meetings with the student.
- Make sure it is clear who owns the results and how this is handled in the essay/master thesis.