



AALBORG UNIVERSITET

Institut for Arkitektur og Medieteknologi

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Dokumentansvarlig: Louise Hartmann

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Recommendations for Effective Group Formation in Project Modules

Introduction

This policy outlines comprehensive recommendations for optimizing group formation within the educational framework governed by the Study Board for Architecture & Design at the Department of Architecture and Media Technology.

Applicable to

These guidelines are intended for students, semester coordinators, and education coordinators involved in the specified programs. They serve as a blueprint for facilitating successful group dynamics during project modules.

PURPOSE AND DELIMITATION

This recommendation serves to enhance the current guidelines and offer students and coordinators a structured approach to group formation for major projects within the Architecture, Urban Design, and Industrial Design programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Specifically tailored to project modules rather than course modules involving group work, these recommendations aim to streamline the group formation process. Furthermore, they endeavor to alleviate the stress commonly associated with group formation by introducing various frameworks each semester. Through this gradual introduction, students will gain familiarity with diverse group formation methods, ultimately enhancing their well-being prior to and during the group formation process.

INTRODUCTION TO GROUP FORMATION IN STUDY PROGRAMS

To foster early development of group formation skills among students, it is proposed that guidelines and recommendations be provided at the onset of the 3rd semester. By doing so, students can familiarize themselves with effective group formation methods, thereby better preparing them for subsequent main project group formations.

The responsibility of introducing and presenting the necessary information regarding group formation should lie with the semester coordinator. It is advisable for this presentation to be conducted in person to ensure optimal transmission of information. Furthermore, to facilitate accessibility and reference, it is

suggested to establish a Moodle room under the relevant main project, housing both the presented materials and accompanying recommendations.

Content

The framework for group formation remains consistent across semesters, as detailed below. Additional methods for group formation are provided in the appendices on page 4:

Bachelor programs

1st-2nd semester: Administrative Formation.

Groups are randomly assembled by the semester coordinator and/or study secretary prior to the start of the semester.

3rd semester: Administrative Buddy Groups.

Following an IB meeting conducted by the semester coordinator, students form buddy groups (comprising two or three individuals). These buddy groups are then consolidated into full groups by the semester coordinator.

For the ID program, fully administrative groups are recommended due to the limited familiarity among students, given the program's size (often one-third the size of ARK/URB).

4th semester: Free Buddy Groups.

Students form buddy groups (consisting of two or three members) on the group formation day following an IB meeting. Subsequently, students organize themselves into full groups until all members are accounted for.

5th semester: Self-Selected Group Formation.

Students are presented with various group formation methods during their IB meeting by the semester coordinator. If a free group formation method is chosen, one to two students are designated as facilitators to oversee the process. A date for collective group formation is agreed upon during the IB meeting.

If a free group formation method is selected, students must collectively establish groups, with mandatory attendance until all groups are formed. The appointed facilitator(s) ensure(s) the appropriate execution of the group formation process.

6th Semester Bachelor Project: Self-Determined Group Formation.

After an IB meeting, students choose their preferred group formation method. If opting for a free method, one to two facilitators are selected from among the students. A date for group formation is scheduled during the IB meeting.

Should students opt for a free group formation method, they are responsible for conducting the group formation process collectively, with mandatory attendance until all groups are established. The instructor oversees the process to ensure its proper execution.

Master's degree program group formation processes:

1st semester: Administrative/Coordinated self-selected group formation method.

In scenarios with numerous external students (domestic or international), it's advisable for the semester coordinator and/or study secretary to randomly assemble groups before the semester commences. If there's a significant presence of former students from A&D, students are offered various group formation methods during their IB meeting in English by the semester coordinator. This meeting ensures returning or international students can familiarize themselves with peers before group formation. From this meeting, one to two facilitators are chosen from students, or the semester coordinator takes charge, selecting a group formation method.

2nd semester: Self-selected group formation method.

Following an IB meeting, students opt for a group formation method. If they choose a free method, one to two facilitators are selected from students to implement it. A collective group formation date is agreed upon during the IB meeting. In instances where a free grouping method is chosen, students conduct group formation collectively, ensuring international students can participate either in-person or online. Facilitators oversee the process objectively.

3rd semester: Self-selected group formation method.

After an IB meeting, students decide on a group formation method. If opting for a free method, one to two student facilitators are designated to guide the process. During the IB meeting, a joint group formation date is set. For those choosing a free group formation method, students independently conduct joint grouping, ensuring everyone's attendance until all groups are formed. Instructors oversee the process's appropriateness.

4th semester Master's thesis: Free group formation with a special procedure.

The semester coordinator organizes two meetings, typically at MSc02, encouraging students to utilize these gatherings to find potential thesis partners. These meetings consist of:

- An introductory session where the coordinator outlines the semester's structure and deadlines.
- An informal thesis meeting where topic inspirations are provided.

Group formation should occur no later than before thesis contract submission, typically due in week 48 or 50, i.e., still on MSc03. Students facing difficulties forming groups should contact the semester coordinator in advance.

ORIGIN, BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The recommendations have been formulated in response to the Study Board for Architecture and Design's request for a more robust group formation policy.

OVERALL FRAMEWORK

The recommendations pertain to both the "Group Formation Policy" and the "Group Size Policy" within the overarching framework.

CONTACT/RESPONSIBILITY

The recommendations are set by the Head of Studies and the Chair of the Board of Studies for Architecture and Design.

The Study Secretariat at the Department of Architecture and Media Technology is responsible for updating the recommendations. Please direct inquiries and questions to studies@create.aau.dk.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

IB meeting

An IB meeting (Ice Breaker meeting) serves as a rapid introduction exercise, facilitating swift connections among students. It aims to foster dialogue among peers, encouraging discussions on individual skills, professional interests, project themes, work ethics, and problem-based learning (PBL) inquiries. The primary objective is not immediate group formation but rather mutual understanding, easing the subsequent process of group selection. It's imperative to include questions pertaining to project topics or themes to ensure a comprehensive exploration of the project framework with students.

The session typically spans 45-50 minutes, during which students are evenly distributed into groups (e.g., groups 1, 2, 3, 4). Led by the semester coordinator, each group engages in partner discussions (e.g., groups 1 and 2), spending 3-5 minutes on each question posed. This rotation continues until the allocated time elapses. Questions may revolve around professional interests, project themes, work ethics, or collaborative teamwork.

NOTE: Master's students are tasked with conducting IB meetings, although the semester coordinator may oversee them by appointment.

Below are examples of potential questions:

Good	Bad
What am I good at and what do I want to get better at?	What am I good at and what am I bad at?
What energizes you in group work?	What group role do you usually have?
What drains your energy in group work?	What do you like least about group work?
What do you find exciting about "project related work"?	Which project would you prefer to work on?
How much does the subject take up for you outside of school hours?	How much time do you want to spend on project work?

APPENDIX

Forms of Group Formation:

Ensuring students are fully informed about the chosen group formation method is paramount for effective project group creation. This holds especially true for non-administrative methods. Students must have clarity on the type of group formation, its process, and timing. Group formation commences only when all students are allocated to groups.

Type 1: Random – Administrative.

Before the semester commences, the semester coordinator randomly assigns students to groups.

Type 2: Buddy Groups – Administrative.

Students have the option to form two- or three-person buddy groups, which are then combined by the semester coordinator to create full groups.

Type 3: Free - Non-administrative.

Students have the liberty to choose their group members, convening physically or online if necessary. No member may exit until all groups are finalized. Students are tasked with outlining the agenda and discussion topics.

Type 4: Free Buddy Groups - Non-administrative.

Similar to Type 3, students can form smaller groups, which are then merged into larger ones. Students collectively plan the agenda and discussion topics.

Type 5: Common Interest - Non-administrative.

Groups are formed based on shared interests such as specific works, desired tools, or focal points.

Type 6: Administrative + Free.

Initially, students are placed in group rooms administratively for individual projects. Later, during the project module, groups are formed freely according to the chosen method.

Type 7: Free - Based on Professional Intentions.

Students participate in a professional seminar to present projects and establish assignment frameworks. After brief professional interactions, groups are formed freely, potentially aligning with other formation types.

This guide, "Forms of Group Formation," was prepared by the Board of Studies for Architecture and Design and revised by the study secretariat in 2020 in conjunction with the "Policy for Group Formation."