Techno-Anthropology
2-year Master’s programme

Aalborg and Copenhagen
What is Techno-Anthropology?

The Master’s programme in Techno-Anthropology combines competence in carrying out anthropological studies of techno-science cultures with technological insight.

The programme deals with collaboration between technical experts in different settings and other stakeholder groups, e.g. consultancy firms, R&D departments at multinational companies, advisory bodies, international organisations, public institutions, think tanks, NGOs or universities.

As a student in the Techno-Anthropology programme, you work both theoretically and empirically on how such collaborations can be turned into sustainable technological innovation and responsible decision-making regarding new technologies. In addition, you use anthropological theories and methods to study how technology is used, and how it influences users.

In other words, the Techno-Anthropology programme is the perfect choice for students wanting to make a difference globally by contributing to the development of new sustainable and ethical technologies by applying the theories and methods of anthropology, and who want to study and influence the development, decision-making and uses of science and technology.

The programme presents students with theoretical accounts of knowledge production, user-driven innovation, expert cultures and social responsibility. It combines sustainable and responsible technological innovation with competence in carrying out anthropological studies of new technology as well as of the experts who develop cutting edge technology.

Students completing the Master’s programme in Techno-Anthropology are able to analyse and understand expert technology cultures and to facilitate and promote this understanding outside expert cultures.
Programme Structure

Programme structure
Techno-Anthropology is a two-year Master’s programme of 120 ECTS. Each semester consists of both courses and project work. You will follow courses approximately half of the time; in the remaining time you will do larger project work in a group.

During the first two semesters, you get an overview of different theoretical approaches to the Science/Technology - Culture/Policy/Society interface. You will get acquainted with STS (Science and Technology Studies), PNS (Post-Normal Science), organisation theory, as well as get insight into how ethical reflections can entangle concrete cultural settings (Corporate and Scientific Social Responsibility, Research-based Policy Advice, Value Sensitive Design, User-driven Innovation). You will also gain insight into new technological fields such as health-, food-, bio-, energy- and/or information technologies. Hence, the first year of the Master’s programme combines applied anthropology and applied ethics with technological innovation and science-based policy advice.

During the second year of the programme, you will conduct a major fieldwork in an organisation that works with science and/or technology (i.e. a company, a political organisation, a consultancy firm, a governmental office, a university abroad). The fieldwork can focus on cultural analysis or be rooted in action research and aim at technological innovation or expert learning.

The last semester is devoted to writing your Master’s Thesis. During this semester, you will analyse the empirical material gathered during your ethnographic fieldwork carried out during the third semester. The task is to work with an interdisciplinary problem through independent work. The groups are small – 1-3 persons.

1st semester
Project
Expert Cultures and Responsible Technology
Courses
• Organisational Culture: Expertise, Innovation and Responsibility
• Responsible and Innovational Knowledge Production
• One elective course.

2nd semester
Project
Anthropology-based Product Development
Courses
• Product Development: Value Sensitive Design, User-driven Innovation, Technology-based Service or Research-based Advice
• Mapping Controversies
• One elective course.

3rd semester
Third semester is devoted to fieldwork in an organisation that works with science and/or technology (i.e. a company, a political organisation, a consultancy firm, a governmental office, a university abroad).

4th semester
Master’s Thesis
Problem-based learning (PBL-model)
As a student at Aalborg University, you will work closely together with your fellow students by way of problem-based project work. The Aalborg Model for Problem-Based Learning (PBL) receives great interest both nationally and internationally, and UNESCO has placed its only Professorial Chair in PBL at Aalborg University.

Typically, you will be part of a group consisting of 4-5 students. Once you have formed a project group, you need to define a problem together that you want to examine. The problem forms the basis of your project, and you are to a great extent responsible for defining it yourselves within an often very broad theme frame. The group work ensures a great variety of approaches and perspectives, which results in a sound and thoroughly prepared project. Together, you are able to discuss the details thoroughly. At the same time, you are able to solve larger and more complex problems than if you were studying on an individual basis.

Each of you have the opportunity to shape the project because group work requires a contribution from everyone. If you have any academic questions, you may also discuss these with your friends in the group.

The project work is completed with an exam. While working on your project, you will also need to do individual exams in your subjects. Together with lectures, literature and cooperation with the corporate sector, the project work will help you gain a deeper insight into the subject you are examining than if you had been working on your own.

With group work, you will quickly realise that you might have different opinions about how to solve a problem. Group work means that you have to compromise, and you will learn a lot about how to cooperate. Group work is very popular in the modern labour market so both you and your future workplace will benefit from the skills in cooperation you have acquired at Aalborg University.
Job and Career

Job and career
As a Techno-Anthropologist you can combine technological knowledge with cultural understanding. This enables you to address cross-disciplinary problems as described below. Candidates who possess such skills are in high demand, and they have numerous possible career paths - both in companies, NGOs and different authorities.

As a graduate you will

- have well-developed skills in teamwork with people from different cultural, educational as well as professional backgrounds
- be able to navigate in specialist technological cultures by bridging culture gaps between scientists, the public, and political and other stakeholders
- be able to take direct part in responsible technological innovation and decision-making
- be able to act and interact professionally in cross-disciplinary and intercultural positions - combining and advancing insight into cutting edge technology with applied anthropology.

The corporate world says...
“Goodmorning Technology is a strategic design and innovation consultancy with an international impact and a focus on change. Goodmorning Technology was founded in 2003.

We are based in Copenhagen, Denmark, with a global mind-set. We help ambitious clients create businesses, increase growth, and construct innovation. We see design thinking and creative openness as a holistic whole that can merge art, culture, business, technology, man and society to accommodate the ever growing complexity in our world and to redesign, rebuild and rethink our current and our future society. We see diversity as the tool to innovate and design solutions in a complex world.

Goodmorning Technology is cooperating with Techno-Anthropologists at Aalborg University, with the intention of reaching diversity and to achieve specified knowledge to design solutions towards a better world.

We believe that Techno-Anthropology can provide technical insight, anthropological knowledge and ethical and normative assessments of technology development and implementation in a project. We believe that this interdisciplinary approach to the interaction between humans and technology is ideal in relation to the work towards a user-oriented and user-centred design solution, with focus on implementation in the right context.”
Study in Aalborg and Copenhagen

Study in Aalborg
Aalborg is Denmark’s fourth largest city and has approximately 125,000 inhabitants. As a student at Aalborg University, you can enjoy Aalborg’s many opportunities with regard to cultural experiences, sports and spare time activities.

In recent years, Aalborg has undergone a transformation from an industrial city to a city of knowledge and culture. The city’s development is particularly apparent at the harbour promenade where a lively urban and cultural life with cafes, cultural event venues and sports facilities has replaced factories and smoking chimneys. As an international student at AAU, your chances of finding accommodation in Aalborg are also great.

Accommodation in Aalborg
When you arrive in Aalborg and in order to begin your studies at AAU, Aalborg University’s International Accommodation Office (IAO) will assist you in finding a place to live. The types of accommodation offered to you by AAU’s International Accommodation Office include a single room in a private house, a room in a hall of residence rooms or a large flat shared with other students. The rent and location vary according to the type of housing.

Find more information about accommodation in Aalborg at studyguide.aau.dk

Study in Copenhagen
Aalborg University Copenhagen (AAU-Cph) is located near the centre of Copenhagen, just 15 minutes from the Central Station. At AAU-Cph, you will be part of a dynamic, international and inspiring research and study environment of approximately 2,000 students, 300 researchers and several innovative companies.

New and modern facilities
The new campus is designed to facilitate and optimise project-based learning, networking and interaction. All students at AAU-Cph have access to well-designed study spaces, newly furnished lecture halls and, for the experimental programmes, well-equipped laboratories.

Innovation and entrepreneurship
Innovation and entrepreneurship are integrated into all programmes at AAU-Cph with the purpose of stimulating and developing your innovative ideas. The new campus is home to several start-ups, and AAU Innovation is represented at AAU-Cph to support students with entrepreneurial aspirations.

Accommodation in Copenhagen
The housing market in Copenhagen is challenging, so start your search early. AAU-Cph has a limited number of rooms in residence halls for international students. Please contact Simon Clemmensen (src@adm.aau.dk) for more information.
Application and Requirements

In order to apply, you are required to have a Bachelor’s degree in Techno-Anthropology or another university Bachelor’s degree which includes:

- at least 10 ECTS points in philosophy of science or similar, and
- which provides the candidate with an understanding of technology or knowledge of qualitative methods.

A Bachelor’s degree in areas such as natural science, engineering, computer science or within health studies such as biomedical laboratory science, nursing, midwifery and radiography will normally grant access to the programme, as will a Bachelor’s degree in anthropology, sociology, pedagogy or psychology.

Furthermore, you have to meet the official language requirements for international students applying to Aalborg University. You must complete and pass one of the following:

- IELTS (academic test): 6.5
- TOEFL (paper-based): 550
- TOEFL (computer-based): 230
- TOEFL (internet-based): 80
- Cambridge ESOL: C1

Tuition-free studies

Students from EU/EEA countries are not required to pay a tuition fee. However, all students must pay all other costs related to studying in Denmark: for example costs related to books, living expenses and accommodation. With the exception of students from partner universities outside the EU/EEA, a student from a non-EU/EEA country will need to pay a tuition fee.

For more information, please see: www.apply.aau.dk/how-to-apply-postgraduate

Deadlines

Deadline for applicants requiring visa:

- 15 March, when applying for the September intake

Deadline for applicants with EU/EEA citizenship and applicants from partner/co-operating institutions:

- 1 May, when applying for the September intake
Contact information
If you have questions about how to apply or general questions about studying in Denmark and life at Aalborg University, please contact

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