

## TIME PLANNING AND ANALYSING RISKS

All projects are different, so not possible to prescribe exactly when milestones should be achieved. That being said, there are some things it can be helpful to consider when trying to figure out a time plan for your project.

- Find a supervisor/project idea quickly!
- Define your research questions as early as possible
- Try to familiarize yourself with research area, and precisely how you are going to analyse your data, before you start data collection – it is much harder to figure this out after the fact, and you may find that you don't have the data you actually need to answer your research questions.
- Don't underestimate the value of time planning (but be aware that things don't always go to plan – leave room for flexibility).
- Don't forget about ethics! You will need to create participant information sheets and consent forms prior to any data collection.
- Identify potential sources of trouble. Collaboration? Do you need to prepare stimuli? Include pilot testing? Is your project contingent on something else being done at a certain timepoint? What would you do if this didn't happen? How difficult is it likely to be to recruit participants? How long will your data analysis take? Plan ahead to minimize problems! Have a plan b (and maybe a plan c, depending on the project)! Ask your supervisors about their experiences/solutions – it is easier to prevent/fix problems that have been anticipated! **Use the risk analysis tool below to help.**
- Don't forget that writing a research report also takes a substantial amount of time.
- If things start going wrong, intervene sooner rather than later – 5 months is not a long time to complete a research project.

## RISK ANALYSIS FOR PROJECT WORK

(translated and adapted from 'Riskanalys – Projektarbete' by M. Arvola)

All projects include risks. It's important to identify these risks in order to prevent them. How much energy one should put into trying to prevent these risks depends on how likely they are to happen and how big an impact they would have if they happened. Risks within a project are defined in terms of:

- Likelihood: How likely is it that the risk will become reality? 1 indicates low risk, and 3 indicates high risk
- Impact: How big will the impact be if the risk becomes reality? 1 indicates a small effect, and 3 indicates a large effect

These two values can then be multiplied to determine a 'risk factor' for each identified risk. Risks with risk factors of 9 should be eliminated, and those with risk factors  $\geq 4$  should be eliminated, minimised or addressed. Other risks should be monitored. The table below includes some of the most common reasons that project work doesn't get completed in time – see also the list below the table, and consider whether any of these issues may be relevant to your project.

Risk Nr	Risk	Likelihood 1-3	Impact 1-3	Risk factor (Likelihood * Impact)
1	Other commitments: job, membership in societies	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Research questions too open/difficult	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Unclear goals/outcomes	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Performance anxiety	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Unclear planning/deadlines	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	
6	Lack of project idea	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	
7	Difficulty in understanding the writing/thesis process	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	
8	Lack of motivation/interest	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	
9	Conflict between academic goals and those of the external client	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	
10	Lack of social support	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	
11	Unclear requirements	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	
12	Lack of data	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	

Other possible risks to consider:

- Broken/malfunctioning equipment
- Dependence on other parties
- Lack of examples of similar reports
- Not getting started on time

- Not being used to writing longer reports
- CSN
- Prioritising
- Lack of understanding/knowledge of methods/analyses
- Mismatch between the student–subject–supervisor
- Supervisor is difficult to get hold of, or disappears
- Personal difficulties (health, life events)
- Misjudged own abilities
- Having to project lead yourself
- Unreasonable expectations from the external client
- Dealing with setbacks
- Negative group dynamics

Actions to eliminate, minimise or handle these risks can be listed below:

Risk Nr	Actions to eliminate, minimise or handle these risks
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	