First steps in a degree project supported by Canvas

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We will assume that a student (named “Quentin FakeStudent”) is interested in doing a degree project and that this student is already in the Canvas system. We will also assume that initially this student is **not** enrolled in a degree project course **nor** is the student in a Canvas course room for a degree project course.

This student fills out a form (yet to be defined) that collects some basic information that can be used by someone working in the School’s education office to determine if the student is eligible to start a degree project. If the student is not eligible they are referred to student advising. If the student is eligible, the student is added to a suitable Canvas course room for their degree project. Here we assume that there is one such course room at each school for each of 1st and 2nd cycle degree project students. In the material that follows we will assume that this student is in some degree program administered by KTH’s School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. This process is shown in Figure 1‑1.

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Figure ‑: First steps leading to student being added to Canvas course room

Once the student is added to the Canvas course room (at point A in Figure 1‑1) we can utilize Canvas to help with the rest of the degree project process as described in Section 2. However, before this point we should consider if it is possible to help with the process *before* a student is added to the Canvas course, we consider the question: How can Canvas help with this process? This processing is described in Section 1.

# Before a student is added to a Canvas course room

When the Master’s coordinator (here after simply “coordinator “) considers whether a student is eligible to start a degree project (illustrated by a diamond in Figure 1‑1), the coordinator will look in Ladok to see if the student meets a number of criteria (such as):

* The student has taken a research methodology course (such as II2202);
* The student has taken a sufficient number of points in their program; and
* When the student completes their degree project they will have met all of the requirements for a degree in the student’s program.

A key aspect to note is that to do this evaluation the coordinator needs to look into Ladok and they need to know the student’s program of study (and a specialization if one exists). Fortunately, Ladok has this information about the student’s program of study (and a specialization if one exists). Therefore, I wrote a small little program to enable the coordinator to add this data to Canvas[[1]](#footnote-1), so that others could use this data. (Specifically, the dynamic survey can make use of this data.) At some point later in time (when Ladok and Canvas synchronize) there should be an automated addition/update of this data in Canvas.

Figure 1‑1 shows the state of a number of users’ custom data. In this case, Ann, Bertil, and Karolin have program data stored. (Note that this is in a Canvas course with course\_id=2.)

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| **./custom-data-for-users-in-course.py -C 2**  using HTTP for the container environment  user name=Ann FakeStudent with id=3 and sis\_id=z1  result of getting custom data for user Ann FakeStudent is {'data': {'programs': [{'code': 'CDATE', 'name': 'Degree Programme in Computer Science and Engineering', 'major': 'Datalogi och datateknik', 'start': '2016'}]}}  user name=Bertil FakeStudent with id=4 and sis\_id=z2  result of getting custom data for user Bertil FakeStudent is {'data': {'programs': [{'code': 'CINTE', 'name': 'Degree Programme in Information and Communication Technology', 'major': 'Elektroteknik', 'track': 'IND', 'start': '2018'}]}}  user name=Cenric FakeStudent with id=5 and sis\_id=z3  result of getting custom data for user Cenric FakeStudent is []  user name=David FakeStudent with id=6 and sis\_id=z4  result of getting custom data for user David FakeStudent is []  user name=Ellen FakeStudent with id=7 and sis\_id=z5  result of getting custom data for user Ellen FakeStudent is []  user name=Fran FakeStudent with id=8 and sis\_id=z6  result of getting custom data for user Fran FakeStudent is []  user name=Gordon FakeStudent with id=9 and sis\_id=z7  result of getting custom data for user Gordon FakeStudent is []  user name=Håkan FakeStudent with id=10 and sis\_id=z8  result of getting custom data for user Håkan FakeStudent is []  user name=Ibǘy FakeStudent with id=11 and sis\_id=z9  result of getting custom data for user Ibǘy FakeStudent is []  user name=James FakeStudent with id=12 and sis\_id=z10  result of getting custom data for user James FakeStudent is []  user name=Karolin FakeStudent with id=13 and sis\_id=z11  result of getting custom data for user Karolin FakeStudent is {'data': {'programs': [{'code': 'TIVNM', 'name': "Master's Programme, ICT Innovation, 120 credits", 'major': 'Datalogi och datateknik', 'track': 'DASC', 'start': '2018'}]}}  user name=Lucy FakeStudent with id=14 and sis\_id=z12  result of getting custom data for user Lucy FakeStudent is []  … |

Figure ‑: Status of student's custom user data

A new navigation button called “AdminIT” has been added to a Canvas degree project course as shown in Figure 1‑2.

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Figure ‑: New left navigation menu with aAdmiIT button

Clicking on the AdminIT button involes an external LTI tool “adminit.rb running locally at TCP port 3598. This configuration of the app is shown in Figure 1‑3.

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Figure ‑: AdminIT app configuration

When this LTI tool is invoked[[2]](#footnote-2), the user will be shown the form in Figure 1‑4. The user enters the sis\_id (which in the case of the production Canvas system is a user’s KTHID).

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Figure ‑: '/getID' form

If we enter z3, the sis\_id for the user Cenric, we see the form shown in Figure 1‑5.

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Figure ‑: Choose Cenric's program

The coordinator can now select which program Cenric is in – from a pull-down menu as shown in Figure 1‑6. After selecting “TIVNM” the selection is displayed as in Figure 1‑7. Note that in all pull-down menus the user must make a actively make a selection – if they do not, it is as if nothing was selected.

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Figure ‑: Choose TIVNM from the menu

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Figure ‑: Selection of TIVNMhas been made

Next the coordinator is prompted to enter the year that the student started in this program. This is done by another pull-down menu as shown in Figure 1‑8. Note that the alternatives are the last 10 years.

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Figure ‑: Indicate the year the student started the program

Next the coordinator is prompted to enter the major subject for Centric, as shown in Figure 1‑9. Note that this option currently only support two alternatives; this should probably be expanded.

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Figure ‑: Indicate the major subject)

If the program has specialization/tracks the coordinator will be prompted to choose the specialization from another pull-down menu. Finally, Cenric’s custom user data is updated as shown in Figure 1‑10.

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| user name=Cenric FakeStudent with id=5 and sis\_id=z3  result of getting custom data for user Cenric FakeStudent is {'data': {'programs': [{'code': 'TIVNM', 'name': "Master's Programme, ICT Innovation, 120 credits", 'major': 'Datalogi och datateknik', 'start': '2018'}]}} |

Figure ‑: Centric's custom data has been updated

We will assume that using some mechanism the student is now added to the relevant course room for the degree project course.

Now if Cenric logs in (as shown in Figure 1‑11) and completes the dynamic survey at the bottom of the first form Cenric will see that as a TIVNM student he only has the choice of a degree project course that is graded A-F (see Figure 1‑12). After completing the form Cenric will see a page, such as that shown in Figure 1‑13.

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Figure ‑: Cenric logs in

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Figure ‑: As a TIVNM student, Note that Centric can only choose an A-F graded course

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Figure ‑: Cenric has completed the selection of the degree project course and potential examiner

As a side effect of the student completing the dynamic survey, the instructor or administrator can now see in the course’s grade book the information that Cenric entered (as shown in Figure 1‑14). Further explanation of these fields is given in the next section.

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Figure ‑: Cenric's entry in the gradebook as viewed by the teacher or administrator

# Once a student is added to a Canvas course[[3]](#footnote-3)

Once the student is added to the Canvas course room (at point A in Figure 1‑1) we can utilize Canvas to help with the rest of the degree project process. If we look in the Canvas course room at the “People” page, we can see all of the students and teachers in the course – as shown in Figure 2‑1. In this page we can see that Quentin FakeStudent is a “Student” in the course “Test course 5” (this course has the fake course code J5).

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Figure ‑: Initial people page - showing students (and teachers) in course

Now that the student being has access to the Canvas course room (which they will make use of for the rest of their degree project course) the next steps are a dynamic survey to collect some basic data about the proposed degree project and some administrative processing as shown in Figure 2‑2.

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Figure ‑: Dynamic survey and Administrative steps in Canvas

After logging into the Canvas course room, the student will take a dynamic survey that will collect the information that was previously collected by the UT-EXAR form. The details of this are described in the thesis:

Reshad Sarwar and Nathan Manzi, *More tools for Canvas : Realizing a Digital Form with Dynamically Presented Questions and Alternatives*. Stockholm, Sweden: KTH, Communication Systems, CoS, 2019, TRITA-EECS-EX-2019:93 [Online]. Available: <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn%3Anbn%3Ase%3Akth%3Adiva-251021>

The final page of the survey will confirm that the student has signed up for a given degree project course code and has selected a potential examiner (from among those that are eligible) or they have not chosen a potential examiner. In the case of Quentin FakeStudent, when he completes the dynamic survey he will see a page such as shown in Figure 2‑3.

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Figure ‑: After student is added to Canvas course room

As a side effect of the student completing the dynamic survey the student is added to two sections: "Awaiting Assignment of Examiner" and a section for their potential examiner (in this case “Anders Västberg”) (at step B in Figure 2‑2). The student’s membership in these two sections can be seen via the People page, shown in Figure 2‑4.

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Figure ‑: People page after the student has completed the dynamic survey

Additionally, the dynamic survey also updated a number of custom columns in the gradebook for the course. These columns are shown in Figure 2‑5, with a zoomed in view in Figure 2‑6.

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Figure ‑: Gradebook entry for Quentin - as viewed in the Awaiting Assignment of Examiner section

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Figure ‑: Zoomed via of gradebook entry for Quentin - as viewed in the Awaiting Assignment of Examiner section

In Figure 2‑6 we can see that the choice of potential examiner is flagged with a prefix of “⚠⚠”. Similar the course code is also prefixed in the same way so that we know that these are not the definitive values. We can also see that the fields of “Planned\_start\_date”, “Tentative\_Title”, “Prelim\_description”, “Place”, “Contact”, and “Student\_approval” (to publish full text via DiVA). The values for these fields were collected via the dynamic survey.

A potential supervisor (named “A. B. Normal”) reads the project description and if they are interested registers as the supervisor (at step C in Figure 2‑2) by entering their name in the field for “Supervisor” in the gradebook as shown in Figure 2‑7.

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Figure ‑: After adding supervisor (A. B. Normal)

The potential examiner accepts being the examiner by removing the warning symbols (at step D in Figure 2‑2) by editing the field shown in Figure 2‑8 into the value shown in Figure 2‑9.

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Figure ‑; Examiner about to accept

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Figure ‑: Examiner accepts

The course coordinator confirms the examiner, supervisor, and project (at step E in Figure 2‑2) by removing the student from the "Awaiting Assignment of Examiner" section as shown in Figure 2‑10 to produce the membership shown in Figure 2‑11. The people page now shows the updated section information shown in Figure 2‑12. This student is now longer in the "Awaiting Assignment of Examiner" section as shown in Figure 2‑13.

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Figure ‑:Section membership just before course coordinator confirms

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Figure ‑: Just after course coordinator confirms

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Figure ‑: Updated section membership information

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Figure ‑: Gradebook for "Awaiting Assignment of Examiner" section after course coordinator confirms

After registering the student in Ladok for the correct degree project course, the education office removes the two warning signs for the Course\_code (or in the worst case corrects the entry) as shown in Figure 2‑14. The resulting entry in the gradebook is now shown in Figure 2‑15.

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Figure ‑: Just before registering student in Ladok

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Figure ‑: Gradebook after student is registered in Ladok

The student can now begin to prepare the various documents to be delivered in the course of the degree project (starting at step G in Figure 2‑2).

# Using the AdminIT tool for students in multiple programs

Potentially a student might be in one or more programs. While the current prototype does not support students in programs with overlapping time lines, the AdminIT tool does let an administrator add and delete programs for a student who is already in one or more programs of study.

The following figures show the case of a student (Ibǘy) who is initially part of the CINTE program (as shown in Figure 3‑1) and then is added to the TIVNM program (as shown in Figure 3‑2). At this point the administrator deletes the student from the CINTE program (as shown in Figure 3‑3). Finally, the program data for the student is shown in Figure 3‑4.

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Figure ‑: Ibǘy is initially in the CINTE program having started in 2017

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Figure ‑: Ibǘy is added to the TIVNM program

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Figure ‑: bǘy to be delted from CINTE

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Figure ‑: Ibǘy's program data after the deletion

While (as noted earlier) the software is not really prepared to deal with students being in multiple programs, this interface does enable an administrator to correct mistakes – where a student is entered into the incorrect program, the year of starting is incorrect, etc.

1. As a technical note: This data is being stored in the user’s custom data in the name space: "se.kth.canvas-app.program\_of\_study". [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. It is only usable by a teacher, administrator, or systems administrator. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Note that the figures in this section were made in a different Canvas course room than those in the previous section. Moreover, this section was written earlier than the previous section. As a result the example student data is different. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)