

# Module Guide for Eelbrain Pipeline

Zhangwenchi Li

March 26, 2026

# 1 Revision History

---

Date	Version	Notes
Mar 9, 2026	1.0	Initial draft

---

## 2 Reference Material

This section records information for easy reference.

### 2.1 Abbreviations and Acronyms

---

<b>symbol</b>	<b>description</b>
AC	Anticipated Change
DAG	Directed Acyclic Graph
M	Module
MG	Module Guide
OS	Operating System
R	Requirement
SC	Scientific Computing
SRS	Software Requirements Specification
Eelbrain Pipeline	Explanation of program name
UC	Unlikely Change

---

# Contents

- 1 Revision History** **i**
- 2 Reference Material** **ii**
  - 2.1 Abbreviations and Acronyms . . . . . ii
- 3 Introduction** **1**
- 4 Anticipated and Unlikely Changes** **2**
  - 4.1 Anticipated Changes . . . . . 2
  - 4.2 Unlikely Changes . . . . . 2
- 5 Module Hierarchy** **2**
- 6 Connection Between Requirements and Design** **3**
- 7 Module Decomposition** **3**
  - 7.1 Hardware Hiding Module . . . . . 4
  - 7.2 Behaviour-Hiding Module . . . . . 4
    - 7.2.1 TreeModel Module (M2) . . . . . 4
    - 7.2.2 Etc. . . . . 4
  - 7.3 Software Decision Module . . . . . 4
    - 7.3.1 Pipeline Module . . . . . 5
- 8 Traceability Matrix** **5**
- 9 Use Hierarchy Between Modules** **5**
- 10 User Interfaces** **6**
- 11 Design of Communication Protocols** **6**
- 12 Database Design** **6**
- 13 Timeline** **7**

# List of Tables

- 1 Module Hierarchy . . . . . 3
- 2 Trace Between Requirements and Modules . . . . . 5
- 3 Trace Between Anticipated Changes and Modules . . . . . 5

# List of Figures

1	Use hierarchy among modules . . . . .	6
---	---------------------------------------	---

### 3 Introduction

Decomposing a system into modules is a commonly accepted approach to developing software. A module is a work assignment for a programmer or programming team (Parnas et al., 1984). We advocate a decomposition based on the principle of information hiding (Parnas, 1972). This principle supports design for change, because the “secrets” that each module hides represent likely future changes. Design for change is valuable in SC, where modifications are frequent, especially during initial development as the solution space is explored.

Our design follows the rules laid out by Parnas et al. (1984), as follows:

- System details that are likely to change independently should be the secrets of separate modules.
- Each data structure is implemented in only one module.
- Any other program that requires information stored in a module’s data structures must obtain it by calling access programs belonging to that module.

After completing the first stage of the design, the Software Requirements Specification (SRS), the Module Guide (MG) is developed (Parnas et al., 1984). The MG specifies the modular structure of the system and is intended to allow both designers and maintainers to easily identify the parts of the software. The potential readers of this document are as follows:

- New project members: This document can be a guide for a new project member to easily understand the overall structure and quickly find the relevant modules they are searching for.
- Maintainers: The hierarchical structure of the module guide improves the maintainers’ understanding when they need to make changes to the system. It is important for a maintainer to update the relevant sections of the document after changes have been made.
- Designers: Once the module guide has been written, it can be used to check for consistency, feasibility, and flexibility. Designers can verify the system in various ways, such as consistency among modules, feasibility of the decomposition, and flexibility of the design.

The rest of the document is organized as follows. Section 4 lists the anticipated and unlikely changes of the software requirements. Section 5 summarizes the module decomposition that was constructed according to the likely changes. Section 6 specifies the connections between the software requirements and the modules. Section 7 gives a detailed description of the modules. Section 8 includes two traceability matrices. One checks the completeness of the design against the requirements provided in the SRS. The other shows the relation between anticipated changes and the modules. Section 9 describes the use relation between modules.

## 4 Anticipated and Unlikely Changes

This section lists possible changes to the system. According to the likeliness of the change, the possible changes are classified into two categories. Anticipated changes are listed in Section 4.1, and unlikely changes are listed in Section 4.2.

### 4.1 Anticipated Changes

Anticipated changes are the source of the information that is to be hidden inside the modules. Ideally, changing one of the anticipated changes will only require changing the one module that hides the associated decision. The approach adapted here is called design for change.

**AC1:** The specific OS on which the software is running.

**AC2:** The specific dataset on which the pipeline is running.

**AC3:** The default parameters for each data processing step.

**AC4:** How user interacts with the pipeline (experiment subclass, state parameter).

### 4.2 Unlikely Changes

The module design should be as general as possible. However, a general system is more complex. Sometimes this complexity is not necessary. Fixing some design decisions at the system architecture stage can simplify the software design. If these decision should later need to be changed, then many parts of the design will potentially need to be modified. Hence, it is not intended that these decisions will be changed.

**UC1:** Data processing stages and their algorithms.

**UC2:** Input dataset format (BIDS).

## 5 Module Hierarchy

This section provides an overview of the module design. Modules are summarized in a hierarchy decomposed by secrets in Table 1. The modules listed below, which are leaves in the hierarchy tree, are the modules that will actually be implemented.

**M1:** Pipeline Module

**M2:** TreeModel Module

**M3:** FileTree Module

**M4:** Preprocessing Module

**M5:** Epoch Module

**M6:** Covariance Module

**M7:** MNE-Python Module

Level 1	Level 2
Hardware-Hiding	–
Behaviour-Hiding	TreeModel Module
	FileTree Module
	Preprocessing Module
	Epoch Module
	Covariance Module
	MNE-Python
Software Decision	Pipeline Module

Table 1: Module Hierarchy

## 6 Connection Between Requirements and Design

The design of the system is intended to satisfy the requirements developed in the SRS. In this stage, the system is decomposed into modules. The connection between requirements and modules is listed in Table 2.

## 7 Module Decomposition

Modules are decomposed according to the principle of “information hiding” proposed by [Parnas et al. \(1984\)](#). The *Secrets* field in a module decomposition is a brief statement of the design decision hidden by the module. The *Services* field specifies *what* the module will do without documenting *how* to do it. For each module, a suggestion for the implementing software is given under the *Implemented By* title. If the entry is *OS*, this means that the module is provided by the operating system or by standard programming language libraries. *Eelbrain Pipeline* means the module will be implemented by the Eelbrain Pipeline software.

Only the leaf modules in the hierarchy have to be implemented. If a dash (–) is shown, this means that the module is not a leaf and will not have to be implemented.

## 7.1 Hardware Hiding Module

**Secrets:** The data structure and algorithm used to implement the virtual hardware.

**Services:** Serves as a virtual hardware used by the rest of the system. This module provides the interface between the hardware and the software. So, the system can use it to display outputs or to accept inputs.

**Implemented By:** OS

## 7.2 Behaviour-Hiding Module

**Secrets:** The contents of the required behaviours.

**Services:** Includes programs that provide externally visible behaviour of the system as specified in the software requirements specification (SRS) documents. This module serves as a communication layer between the hardware-hiding module and the software decision module. The programs in this module will need to change if there are changes in the SRS.

**Implemented By:** –

### 7.2.1 TreeModel Module (M2)

**Secrets:** The format and structure of the input data.

**Services:** Converts the input data into the data structure used by the input parameters module.

**Implemented By:** Eelbrain Pipeline

**Type of Module:** Class

### 7.2.2 Etc.

## 7.3 Software Decision Module

**Secrets:** The design decision based on mathematical theorems, physical facts, or programming considerations. The secrets of this module are *not* described in the SRS.

**Services:** Includes data structure and algorithms used in the system that do not provide direct interaction with the user.

**Implemented By:** –

### 7.3.1 Pipeline Module

**Secrets:** The design decision based on mathematical theorems, physical facts, or programming considerations. The secrets of this module are *not* described in the SRS.

**Services:** Includes data structure and algorithms used in the system that do not provide direct interaction with the user.

**Implemented By:** –

## 8 Traceability Matrix

This section shows two traceability matrices: between the modules and the requirements and between the modules and the anticipated changes.

Req.	Modules
R1	M1, M4
R2	M1
R3	M1, M4, M5, M6, M7
R4	M7

Table 2: Trace Between Requirements and Modules

AC	Modules
AC1	M7
AC2	M1
AC3	M1, M4, M5, M6
AC4	M1, M2, M3

Table 3: Trace Between Anticipated Changes and Modules

## 9 Use Hierarchy Between Modules

In this section, the uses hierarchy between modules is provided. [Parnas \(1978\)](#) said of two programs A and B that A *uses* B if correct execution of B may be necessary for A to complete the task described in its specification. That is, A *uses* B if there exist situations in which the correct functioning of A depends upon the availability of a correct implementation of B. Figure 1 illustrates the use relation between the modules. It can be seen that the graph is a directed acyclic graph (DAG). Each level of the hierarchy offers a testable and usable

subset of the system, and modules in the higher level of the hierarchy are essentially simpler because they use modules from the lower levels.

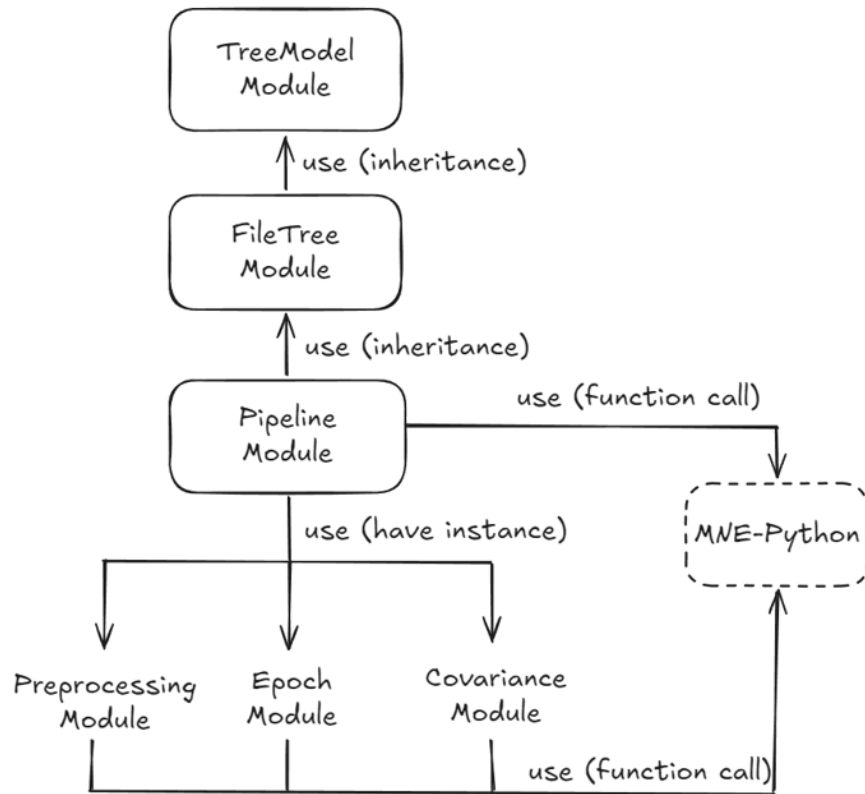


Figure 1: Use hierarchy among modules

## 10 User Interfaces

Pipeline Module serves as user interface.

## 11 Design of Communication Protocols

NA

## 12 Database Design

NA

## 13 Timeline

[Schedule of tasks and who is responsible —SS] [You can point to GitHub if this information is included there —SS]

## References

David L. Parnas. On the criteria to be used in decomposing systems into modules. *Comm. ACM*, 15(2):1053–1058, December 1972.

David L. Parnas. Designing software for ease of extension and contraction. In *ICSE '78: Proceedings of the 3rd international conference on Software engineering*, pages 264–277, Piscataway, NJ, USA, 1978. IEEE Press. ISBN none.

D.L. Parnas, P.C. Clement, and D. M. Weiss. The modular structure of complex systems. In *International Conference on Software Engineering*, pages 408–419, 1984.