

FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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# Examiner's Guidance for Master's Theses

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# 1. General information

## 2.1 About grading work

### 1.2.1 Appointment

Pursuant to section 5-2 of the Regulations relating to Studies and Examinations at the University of Stavanger, subsection 4, Grading, stipulates that there must be two examiners present, at least one of which is external, when assessing bachelor's and master's theses. When two or more examiners are used, the Regulations further state that in the event of a disagreement, the external examiner has the final word (ref. subsection 12).

### 1.2.2 Deadlines for assessment

In accordance with the Regulations relating to Studies and Examinations at the University of Stavanger, Section 5-4, subsection 3:

- Bachelor's theses: 4 weeks from the expiry of the submission deadline\*, 3 weeks for theses worth 10 ECTS (submission deadline is normally 15 May).

\*Please note that the deadline for submitting papers supporting applications for admission to master's programmes/supplementary studies at other university colleges/universities is 1 July. In the assessment of bachelor's theses, we ask that this be taken into account (this rule applies only to students applying for admission to studies at institutions other than UiS).

- Master's theses: 10 weeks from the expiry of the submission deadline. (The deadline for submission is normally 15 June.)

### 1.2.3 Confidentiality requirements

Please note that examiners for the University of Stavanger have a duty of confidentiality pursuant to Section 13 of the Public Administration Act:

*"It is the duty of any person rendering services to, or working for, an administrative agency, to prevent others from gaining access to, or obtaining knowledge of, any matter disclosed to him in the course of his duties or work including:*

- 1) an individual's personal affairs, or*
- 2) technical devices and procedures, as well as operational or business matters which for competition reasons it is important to keep secret in the interests of the person whom the information concerns."*

*The duty of secrecy shall continue to apply after the person concerned has terminated his service or work."*

### 1.2.4 Exempt from public disclosure

As a general rule, submitted master's theses at UiS are public, but some of the assignments are exempt from public disclosure, cf. The Freedom of Information Act. This may be justified by business matters that are important to keep secret or other matters that may have significance for reasons of competition. Whether an assignment is open or exempt from public disclosure is indicated by the front page of the thesis being red.

## 1.1 Remuneration

### 1.2.1 *Salary scale placement*

The University of Stavanger calculates the salary of external examiners based on the government's basic collective agreement, Table C. In essence, four alternative salary grades are used: Professor, lecturer/associate professor, senior lecturer/assistant professor, assistant professor/university teacher ( more information on salary grades and rates is available in the digital examiner appointment portal

Examiners who have their main position in the university and university college sector and who are placed higher in salary positions than the pay grades specified in the attached remuneration guide can be offered the corresponding pay grade at UiS. Placement on the pay scale must then be documented as an attachment in the digital examiner appointment.

Examiners who have not been assessed for competence in relation to an academic position in the university and university college sector will undergo an internal assessment of their level of competence in accordance with the position's qualification requirements.

### 1.2.2 *Standard time spent*

For master's theses of 30 credits, remuneration is paid for 10 hours per thesis.

For master's theses of 60 credits, remuneration is paid for 15 hours per thesis.

### 1.2.3 *Payment of salary*

if the examiners assignment has been completed, Iduring the first week of the month, the remuneration will be paid on the 12th of the following month. If the examiner's assignment is completed after this, the payment will not be paid until the 12th of the month, two months after.

## 2. Contact information

If you have any questions about the information above, please contact us at the email address: [tn-post@uis.no](mailto:tn-post@uis.no) or by telephone at 51 83 17 00.

## 3. Assessment of theses

### 3.1 Background

The National Faculty Meeting for Natural Sciences (NFmR) and the National Council for Technological Education (NRT)\* in 2012 adopted new joint grade descriptions for master's theses in mathematics, natural sciences and technology (MNT). These apply to master's theses submitted beginning from the 2014 spring semester and onward.

The grade descriptions are the documents with the following contents:

1. *Grade* description for master's work/ - theses
2. *Examiner's* assessment, which is a document for the examiner and the person with academic

responsibility that discusses the criteria related to follow-up of a master's thesis

3. *The supervisor's assessment* is a document submitted to the person with academic responsibility and the supervisor that discusses the criteria related to follow-up of a master's thesis

\*NFmR and NRT are strategic units under the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR).

### 3.2 Grade description for master's theses

The criteria to achieve the different grades are presented in the table below. (All text in italics is retrieved directly from the NFmR and NRT documents.)

<b>Graduated steps in the grade scale</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>A</b>	<i>Outstanding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Outstanding achievement that clearly excels and shows an obvious research talent and/or originality in a national context.</b></li> <li>- <i>The candidate has very good insight into the scientific theory and methods of the subject area and shows professional knowledge at a very high level. The objectives of the task are clearly defined and easy to understand.</i></li> <li>- <i>The candidate can select and use relevant professional methods in a convincing way, possesses all technical skills for the thesis, can plan and carry out very advanced experiments or calculations on their own and work very independently.</i></li> <li>- <i>The work is very extensive and/or innovative. The analysis and discussion have an outstandingly good scientific foundation and justification and are clearly linked with the issue that is addressed. The candidate demonstrates an extremely good ability to reflect critically and distinguishes clearly between their personal contribution and the contributions of others.</i></li> <li>- <i>The form, structure and language are at an extremely high level.</i></li> </ul>
<b>B</b>	<i>Very good</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Very good work that clearly distinguishes itself.</b></li> <li>- <i>The candidate has very good academic knowledge of and insight into the scientific theory and methods of the subject area. The objectives of the task are clearly defined and easy to understand.</i></li> <li>- <i>The candidate is able to select and use relevant professional methods in a solid way, possesses the vast majority of technical skills for the thesis, is able to plan and carry out advanced experiments or calculations on his/her own and works very independently.</i></li> <li>- <i>The work is very extensive and/or innovative. The analysis and discussion have a very good scientific foundation and justification and are clearly relevant to the issue that is addressed. The candidate demonstrates an extremely good ability to reflect critically and distinguishes clearly between their personal contribution and the contributions of others.</i></li> <li>- <i>The form, structure and language are at an extremely high level.</i></li> </ul>

<b>C</b>	<i>Good</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Good work.</b></li> <li>- <i>The candidate has very good academic knowledge of and insight into the scientific theory and methods of the subject area. The objectives of the thesis are mainly well defined, but may contain unclear formulations.</i></li> <li>- <i>The candidate is able to select and use relevant professional methods in a solid way, possesses the vast majority of technical skills for the thesis, is able to plan and carry out advanced experiments or calculations on his/her own and works very independently.</i></li> <li>- <i>The work is good and comprises some creative elements. The analysis and discussion have a very good scientific foundation and justification and are clearly linked with the issue that is addressed. The candidate demonstrates an extremely good ability to reflect critically and distinguishes clearly between their personal contribution and the contributions of others.</i></li> <li>- <i>The form, structure and language are at an extremely high level.</i></li> </ul>
<b>D</b>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Clearly acceptable work</b></li> <li>- <i>The candidate has adequate academic knowledge of and insight into the scientific theory and methods of the subject area. The objectives of the task may be somewhat unclear.</i></li> <li>- <i>The candidate can generally use relevant professional methods, possesses the most important technical skills for the thesis and is able to carry out experiments or calculations on his/her own. The candidate works somewhat independently, but relies on relatively close follow-up to have good academic progression and may have some difficulty utilising the research community's competence in their own work.</i></li> <li>- <i>The work is satisfactory. The analysis and discussion have a good scientific foundation and are relevant to the issue addressed, but there is a potential for improvement. The candidate demonstrates a sufficient ability to reflect critically but has problems distinguishing between their personal contribution and those of others.</i></li> <li>- <i>The form, structure and language are at an acceptable level.</i></li> </ul>
<b>E</b>	<i>Sufficient</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Work that is acceptable as it satisfies the minimum requirements.</b></li> <li>- <i>The candidate has adequate academic knowledge of and insight into the scientific theory and methods of the subject area. The objectives of the thesis are described but may be unclear.</i></li> <li>- <i>The candidate can use some relevant academic methods, possesses a minimum of technical skills for the thesis and can carry out simple experiments or calculations on his/her own, but shows limited academic</i></li> </ul>

		<p><i>progression without close follow-up and has some difficulty utilising the research community's competence in his/her own work.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>The work is a relatively limited and fragmentary contribution. The analysis and discussion have adequate scientific foundation but should have been more closely linked with the issue addressed. The candidate demonstrates a necessary ability to reflect critically, but has problems distinguishing between their personal contribution and those of others.</i></li> <li>- <i>The presentation is generally acceptable but has clear deficiencies in terms of form, structure and language.</i></li> </ul>
<b>F</b>	<i>Fail</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b><i>Work that does not meet the minimum requirements.</i></b></li> <li>- <i>The candidate has adequate academic knowledge of and insight into the scientific theory and methods of the subject area. The objectives of the thesis are unclear or are not described.</i></li> <li>- <i>The candidate shows a lack of competence with regard to the use of the subject area's methods, does not possess the desired technical skills and independence for the thesis and has to a limited extent utilised the research community's competence in their own work.</i></li> <li>- <i>The work is marginal and fragmentary. The analysis and discussion have an inadequate scientific foundation and are loosely linked with the issue addressed. The candidate does not demonstrate the necessary ability to reflect critically and distinguishes to only a small extent between their personal contribution and those of others.</i></li> <li>- <i>The presentation has significant deficiencies in terms of form, communicativeness, structure and language.</i></li> </ul>

The student can request a written justification of the assessment.

### 3.3 Examiner's assessment

*Under each point, assess the extent to which the candidate has achieved the described goals. The various objectives are included in the table in section 3.2, and the text below provides a more complete description of these (All text in italics is retrieved directly from the NFmR and NRT documents. Words and concepts that have been underlined are retrieved from the National Qualifications Framework.)*

*Under each of the points below, assess the extent to which the candidate has achieved the described goals.*

#### **Academic foundation**

*Is the theoretical and scientific basis well described so that the work is laced in the context of the field's international research?*

#### **Theoretical insight**

*Does the thesis, and in particular the introduction, document that the candidate has advanced knowledge of the general theory and methods of the field and specialized insight in a limited area of special importance for the thesis?*

#### **Description of objectives**

*Are the objectives and/or current hypotheses presented in a clear and understandable way?*

#### **Skill level**

*Does the candidate master relevant methods and use them in their own work in an appropriate and integrated manner?*

#### **Work**

*Does the work show creativity and/or contribute towards new thinking/innovation? Does the work give the impression of being particularly extensive? How is the quality and importance of new knowledge /new results generated in the work assessed?*

#### **Analysis and discussion**

*Are the analysis, interpretation/synthesis scientifically grounded and clearly linked with the issue addressed? Is the discussion at a high academic level? Can the candidate apply their knowledge and skills in new areas and place the results in a larger context?*

#### **Critical reflection**

*Does the candidate give a reasonable assessment of the significance of the results? Does the candidate critically assess various information sources? Are sources of uncertainty such as methodical error, measurement error and the like assessed and discussed? Are relevant ethical issues of an academic, professional and research nature analysed?*

#### **Own contribution/achievements**

*Is the candidate able to distinguish his/her own contribution from that of others? Does the written work contain a conclusion where the results are well summarized and include an assessment of the extent to which the objectives have been achieved? Is there a sensible and reasoned proposal for further investigations or the potential for such?*

**Structure**

*Does the written work have a stringent structure (normally "IMRaD: Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion"? Is the work generally well organized?*

**Language**

*Can the candidate present the research question and results with the necessary academic precision? Is it easily readable with high-quality communicativeness in the language used?*

**Form**

*Has a uniform style been applied to references, figures, and tables? Is the quality of figures and tables satisfactory? Does the candidate master the subject area's forms of expression?*

**3.4 Supervisor's assessment**

The supervisor's assessment is a document submitted to the person with academic responsibility and the supervisor that discusses the criteria related to follow-up of a master's thesis. These, therefore, are additional criteria that the person with academic responsibility and, when applicable, the supervisor use in assessment (All text in italics is retrieved directly from the NFmR and NRT documents. Words and concepts that have been underlined are retrieved from the National Qualifications Framework.)

*Under each of the points below, assess the extent to which the candidate has achieved the described goals.*

***Theoretical insight***

*Has the candidate himself/herself generated important elements/issues/ideas in the thesis? Does the student use relevant resources (databases etc.) to obtain current and updated literature and background knowledge for the work?*

***Skill level***

*Does the candidate master relevant methods and use them in their own work in an appropriate and integrated manner?*

***Form of work***

*Does the candidate demonstrate the ability to work methodically and according to a plan?*

***Effort***

*Does the candidate demonstrate an aptitude for a high level of work effort and solid academic commitment?*

***Independence***

*Can the candidate work and use relevant methods independently and carry out an independent research or development project under supervision? Does the candidate show personal initiative? What kind of help and supervision has the candidate received in the various phases in the work? Does the candidate have the ability to benefit from the research group's expertise in his/her own work?*

***Work***

*Does the work show creativity and/or contribute towards new thinking/innovation? Does the work give the impression of being particularly extensive?*

***Time***

*It is a prerequisite for having the work assessed that it has been submitted within the normal timeframe.*