

Supplementary regulations for degree programmes at The Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences

Passed 18/06/03, revised 14/03/07, implemented 17/10/07, last modified 17/09/08

The supplementary regulations for degree studies at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, supplement the University of Bergen overarching regulations and guidelines.

Students are encouraged to also familiarise themselves with the University of Bergen exam regulations. (See under <http://regler.uib.no/regelsamling/show.do?id=539>)

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PART 1

§1. Module scope and level

All modules offered by the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the 100 and 200 level, normally have a scope of 10 credits each. Individual modules at the 300 level normally offer 5, 10 or 15 credits.

A bachelor degree programme normally consists of modules at the 100 and 200 level. However, up to 10 credits may be obtained and included from a 300 level module at UiB. External 300 level modules can, after prior approval, be included in a Bachelor's degree.

100 level modules cannot normally be included in a Master's degree programme. If previous knowledge acquired from a 100 level module or equivalent is a requirement for a Master's degree programme, this must be specified in the Master's degree description as advertised. This is to enable potential master's students to sufficiently plan their Bachelor's degree programmes in advance.

However, up to 10 credits acquired from a 100 level module can be included in a Master's degree on the conditions that: a) the module is academically appropriate to the nature of the Master's degree and b) the application for the inclusion of the module credits in the award of the Master's degree is approved by the student's supervisor.

§2. Requirements in mathematics for bachelor level degrees

A qualification obtained from at least one introductory module in mathematics is required as an agreed part of the degree programme, in addition to existing admission requirements, in order to achieve a Bachelor's degree at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences.

The only exception to this rule is the Bachelor's degree programme in Environment and Natural Resources, (natural sciences specialisation), where there is a requirement to complete an introductory module in either mathematics or statistics.

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PART 2 – Master’s degree programmes

§3. Admission to Master’s degree programmes

Applications for admissions to Master’s degree programmes are submitted via *Søknadsweb* (*Applicationsweb*) for students with a Norwegian personal number. The admissions process is carried out at least once a year by the Programme Board in co-operation with the corresponding faculty administration. The submission deadlines for Master’s degree applications are 15th April for admission to programmes starting the following autumn term and 1st November for those beginning in the spring term. The principal uptake onto Master’s programmes occurs in the autumn term, and has an application deadline of 15th April.

The application deadline for international students (not resident in Norway) is 1st December for admission to the following academic year.

Some programmes or specialisations only have 1 admissions process per year, as advertised in the prospectus description or plan of study for that programme or specialisation. Replies for applications for admission to master’s programmes beginning in the autumn term are sent out by 15th July at the latest and have a deadline for response to the Programme Board of 31st July. Replies to applications for Master’s degree programmes beginning in the spring term are sent by 10th December at the latest and have a response deadline of 31st December.

To qualify for admission to a Master’s degree programme, the applicant must have an average grade of C or above in their Bachelor’s degree major subject (i.e. in 80-90 credits of the total degree). The Programme Board can also consider grades and qualifications of other subjects or module combinations and include these in their assessment for eligibility, where the specialisation of the Bachelor’s degree does not entirely correspond with the relevant Master’s degree. (E.g. a student with a Bachelor’s degree in physics applies for admission to a Master’s degree programme in mathematics).

To be accepted onto a Master’s degree programme, a student must have achieved a Bachelor’s degree or equivalent finished degree or higher education programme spanning a minimum of 3 years in total. An academic specialisation of at least 80 credits in total must have been achieved during this degree or higher education programme.

Students can in some circumstances be accepted if they lack up to 10 credits to make up a Bachelor’s degree. This only applies to students on a Bachelor’s degree programme at UiB. The Bachelor’s degree must be completed within a year of starting the Master’s degree programme. All students must have an approved individual education plan. The individual education plan is subject to and restricted by the type of programme the student has been admitted onto.

Only students that fulfil the formal requirements of admission will be accepted onto a Master’s degree programme. Refusal of admission may be disputed. Reasoned objections should be directed to the Programme Board.

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§4. Restrictions to Master's degree programmes

In the event that the number of qualified applicants for a Master's degree programme exceeds the number of vacancies, the students will be ranked according to the average grades of their Bachelor's degrees or equivalent basis for admission. The Programme Board can fix appropriate ranking rules that must be approved by the Faculty's Study Board.

§5. Teaching

Teaching is provided in the form of modules, special-syllabus and as individual supervision¹. Study is carried out under supervision by one or more of the faculty's scientific employees or another person with the necessary academic skills approved by the Department. The primary supervisor should always be an employee of the Institute. Potential agreements between the Institute and external supervisor/institution should be carried out at Institute level.

§6. Accreditation for dissemination of knowledge

Up to 5 credits may be awarded for the dissemination of knowledge as part of the Master's degree programme. Activities that may be accredited include:

- Courses in the dissemination of knowledge
- Participation in international conferences including a presentation of the master's student's own project results. Two credits may be awarded for such a presentation at an international conference. Credits may only be awarded for one such presentation.
- Contribution to popular science within own field. Up to two credits may be awarded per contribution, with a maximum of two credits for popular science contributions.

§7. Scope of thesis

The Master's degree programme includes an independent research project (the master's thesis), carried out under supervision. The master's thesis normally carries an award of 60 credits. The Programme Board may also decide whether a thesis worth 30 credits may be included within the scope of a degree programme. Guidelines for such possibilities must be developed and included in the relevant programmes.

§8. Selection of thesis

The Programme Board for the Master's degree programme will, in co-operation with supervisors, ensure that thesis projects are available at all times. Theses may also be developed through dialogue between the student and their supervisor. Access to the necessary experimental equipment, software and data material shall be documented, and a timetable drafted.

Full-length thesis worth 60 credits:

Students accepted onto a Master's degree programme normally select a thesis project during the first term. Students have until the end of two months into the second term to produce a draft plan for their thesis project, with information about the background and purpose of the project. The draft project plan must be approved by the supervisor. The draft project plan must be presented to the Programme Board.

¹ Further to relevant guidelines, the student may receive support towards fieldwork/data collection and participation in seminars/conferences

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Short thesis worth 30 credits:

Students embarking on a Master's degree programme with a shorter thesis normally choose a project when their theoretical syllabus is approaching completion, one month before the end of the third term at the very latest.

The Programme Board may agree to their own supplementary regulations for the production and presentation of the project draft plan, as well as deadlines for its delivery. These regulations must be approved by the Study Board.

§9. Master's degree agreement

The student must be accepted onto a programme before a Master's degree agreement can be entered with the Institute. A Master's degree agreement consists of general and supervisory sections, and a milestone plan. The agreement includes relevant rules about supervisory rights and other services to Master's students, and how long the students have a right to such benefits.

The agreement will also outline the decision on whether the student is to complete a full-length 60 credit thesis or a shorter 30 credit thesis. The theoretical syllabus will be adjusted to accommodate such a decision (60 credits for a full-length thesis and 90 credits for a shorter thesis).

The scope and variation of access to supervision and other services should be included as an agreement between the individual student and relevant Programme Board and supervisor. It is the responsibility of the Institute/Programme Board to ensure supervision is provided in the instance of prolonged supervisor absence.

The milestone plan consists of a plan for progression of study.

The Programme Board is permitted to set its own deadlines for submission of the Master's degree agreement (3 parts). With regard to course registration for the second term, it may be beneficial if the milestone plan is submitted by the end of the first term at the latest.

Reduction of the duration of the Master's degree programme

For students that choose a full-length Master's thesis, earlier education may be included so that credits gained from earlier relevant courses may replace credits from the theoretical Master's syllabus. In agreement with the student's supervisor, an individual study plan will be developed for the student. Where earlier-gained credits replace all or parts of the theoretical Master's syllabus, the duration of the Master's degree may be reduced as follows:

0-7 credits: no reduction permitted

7.5-14.5 credits: $\frac{1}{4}$ term reduction

15-22 credits: $\frac{1}{2}$ term reduction

22.5-30 credits: $\frac{3}{4}$ term reduction

30.5-37 credits: 1 term reduction

etc.

Although the autumn term is 19 weeks long and the spring term 21, both are considered 20 weeks long in the instance of calculating their reduction.

Modifications to the Master's degree agreement must be approved by the Programme Board.

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§10. Submission of thesis

A piece of work or parts of a piece of work accepted as part of an earlier Master's degree award at a Norwegian or foreign university or degree awarding college, cannot count towards the Master's degree, even where it has been reworked for submission.

The Master's thesis is as a principal rule submitted electronically via My Space to the UiB Examination Record within the deadline outlined by the institute. If the deadline is given as a date alone, it ends at midnight on that day. If the deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, public or national holiday, it will be extended until the next working day.

The electronic version of the Master's thesis submitted via My Space to the Examination Record is the valid version of the thesis. Printed versions of the thesis utilised during marking, should be identical to the version submitted electronically.

The student has the opportunity to allow electronic access of their Master's thesis via Bergen Open Research Archive (BORA) once it has been graded and passed. Open access to the thesis via BORA is strictly conditional to the consent given by the student and their supervisor.

Short theses of 30 credits shall have a deadline and be completed within the duration a single term. The initial allocation date of the thesis will be registered by The National Student Database (FS). The thesis should be submitted within a time period of one term after the initial allocation date.

Both initial allocation and submission of a short thesis will be registered by the department administering the Master's programme. Theses with a weighting of 60 credits will be registered upon submission.

Submission deadline for Master's theses worth 60 credits:

Deadline for submission of Master's theses is 1st June in the 4th term after admission, for those that began their Master's programme in the autumn term.

The submission deadline for those that began their Master's programme in the spring term is 20th November in the fourth term after admission.

The submission deadline will be adjusted accordingly in the event of earlier education and potential extensions due to leave of study or other reasons outlined in the regulations (see § 9 and § 11).

No submissions are to be made between 1st and 31st July in the summer or from 20th December until 15th January in the winter. These submission break periods are not to be taken into account when considering shortened or extended deadlines. If a student is granted a 1 month submission extension, their new deadline will become 1st July during the summer or 20th December in the winter respectively. If a student is granted a 1 ½ month extension, the new deadline will become 15th August during the summer or 31st January in the winter.

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§11. Extension of submission deadline

For theses worth 60 credits:

- a) In the event that mitigating circumstances (see § 14 section b) prevent a thesis from being submitted to deadline, an application may be made to the Programme Board for an extension of up to 3 months.
- b) An additional application for extension must be made if a thesis cannot be submitted within the extended deadline, or the student will be failed for their thesis.
- c) A student may make a maximum of 3 applications for submission extensions and the duration of these extensions must not exceed 6 months in total.

For theses worth 30 credits:

- a) In the event that mitigating circumstances (see § 14 section b) prevent a thesis from being submitted to deadline, an application may be made to the Programme Board for an extension of up to 6 weeks.
- b) Only one application may normally be made for extension.

Applications for submission extensions must be received 1 month before the submission deadline, at the latest.

Written documentation or an account of mitigating circumstances along with a plan for completion must be submitted with the application. All applications for deadline extension must be signed by both the student and their supervisor. Such an application assumes that both signatories agree on the plan of academic supervision up to the new deadline.

The Programme Board may approve or reject the application. The Programme Board can, if necessary, call a meeting between the student, their supervisor and a representative of the Board. The approved extension will not affect the assessment of the thesis.

Master's students undertaking teaching of subjects connected to the programme of study as, for example teaching assistants, have a right to extend the duration of their Master's study programme accordingly. The duration of the teaching must span a period of at least 1 month (20 working days) or more for extension to be considered. The scope of the extension will be calculated using the salary model for teaching assistance. The Institutes may grant up to 3 months extension due to teaching.

In cases of exchange programmes or placements at the University Centre in Svalbard (UNIS) taking place during the module of a Master's programme, the student may apply for up to 3 month's extension thereof.

For other grounds for extension, see § 14 section b). The Master's degree agreement must be adjusted accordingly for all extensions following this paragraph.

§12. Thesis assessment

Master's theses will be marked and graded on a scale of A-F. The grading scale will be used in accordance with the definitions and guidelines of the National Academic Council for assessment of Master's theses, with a basis in The Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institution's general grading description².

² See the circular from the department <http://odin.dep.no/kd/norsk/aktuelt/pressem/045071-110003/dok-bn.html>

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Group Master's theses are normally graded using the A-F scale and presented individually. The Programme Board can agree to rules for the use of group-work.

The extension of a thesis submission deadline for valid reasons (see § 14 section b) will not affect its grade.

Master's theses will be externally evaluated and graded. The external examiner should not be connected to UiB. The Programme Board may fix supplementary rules for the use of internal examiner(s) in addition to external examiner(s). The rules must be approved by the Study Board.

§13. Part-time study

- a) The progress of study may be reduced by 20% to 50%, from full to part-time study³, by application. The minimum accepted workload for part-time study is 50% of full-time study.
- b) Part-time study for an entire Master's programme may only be implemented if the student is to complete a thesis with a 60 credit weighting, unless alternatives with lower weightings were the only type offered for that particular programme (see §13 d).
- c) Unless the degree programme only offers theses worth 30 credits, it is not possible to combine part-time study with a 30 credit thesis. Part-time study can normally only be implemented for the taught part of the degree programme and before commencing the Master's thesis.
- d) Degree programmes that only offer theses worth 30 credits are permitted to make their own regulations for part-time study as well as for the Master's thesis. These regulations must be approved by the Study Board.
- e) The nominal length of study will be altered accordingly for part-time Master's programmes.
- f) The progress of study is to be fixed in the Master's degree agreement. The agreement is to be altered accordingly in the eventuality of further changes to the progress of study.
- g) Applications for part-time study will be accepted up to 3 months prior to the submission deadline. For example:

A part-time study application must be received by 28th February if the submission deadline is 1st June.

A part-time study application must be received by 19th August if the submission deadline is 20th November.

After this point, applications for part-time study will not be accepted.

§14. Leave of study

- a) Students may take up to a year's leave from a Master's programme without giving any reason to do so, as long as they apply before the Master's degree agreement and milestone plan is submitted. Notice of leave must normally be given before the registration deadline. Applications for leave of study in excess of a year must carry a valid reason.
- b) After submission of the Master's degree agreement and milestone plan, applications for leave of study may be made where necessary, for example: illness, partner's/spouse's

³ The student is responsible for notifying Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) of changes to study and for arranging the subsequent alterations to their funding.

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illness, illness in own/partner's/spouse's child, care of own children in instances of birth or adoption, compulsory military service, demanding commitments in student political organisations or similar or due to mitigating welfare reasons. Leave of study may also be granted for valid academic reasons, for example: employment in academically relevant work, projects, residence in another country or academically relevant studies outside of the Master's programme.

- c) Compassionate leave gives a right to the appropriate submission deadline extensions. A notification of illness extends submission deadlines for both 60 and 30 credit theses accordingly. The illness must be documented with a doctor's certificate and be submitted at least 14 days before the deadline is extended (spread out individual days cannot normally be totalled). Part-time study must be considered for chronically ill students.
- d) The Master's degree agreement should be altered accordingly for students for whom leave of study is granted. Applications for leave after submission of the Master's degree agreement and milestone plan must always be signed by the student's supervisor.
- e) The Study Board and student supervisor may consider re-assignment of the Master's thesis in cases of leave of study exceeding one year for 60 credit theses and exceeding half a year for 30 credit theses.
- f) The Study Board reserves the right to accept or reject applications for leave of study.

§15. Final Master's degree examination

- a) The final oral Master's degree examination should normally take place within the 4th term, and within a maximum of 2 months after submission of the Master's thesis.
- b) Exams for the taught part of the Master's programme must be completed and passed before the final Master's degree examination is undertaken. Exams in specialised syllabus can in some circumstances take place on the same day as the final Master's degree exam.
- c) The Master's programme is finalised by an oral Master's degree examination after the Master's thesis has been submitted and approved. This exam consists of an official presentation of around 30 minutes, where the student gives an overview of the thesis. Examiner, supervisor(s) and any internal examiner(s) named by the Institute should be present at the public presentation. The thesis should have a tentative grade before the presentation. The tentative grade should not be known by the student.
- d) An oral examination/conversation about the thesis with the examiner, supervisor(s) and any internal examiner should follow the presentation. The presentation, along with the oral examination/ conversation, may adjust the grading of the thesis. After the student has left the location, the supervisor(s) carry out their evaluations of the student and thesis. Weighting should be given to the supervisor(s) impression of the student's completion of the research project, degree of independence, understanding and maturity.
- e) After the supervisor(s) leave the locality, the external and internal examiner(s) discuss and fix the final grade. The external examiner has the final word in cases of disagreement about the final grade. The final grade is that which is made known to the candidate and which shows on their grade transcript.

§16. Failure of thesis and retaking of exams

- a) A thesis is finally failed if it is not submitted within the deadline and without a valid application for an extension. The term "finally failed" means that the thesis cannot be resubmitted in a revised or supplemented form.

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- b) A thesis that is submitted within the deadline can be awarded the grade F/Fail if it does not fulfil the minimum requirements for a Master's thesis⁴. Such a thesis may be resubmitted in a revised or supplemented form. A new deadline will be fixed for submission. The supervisor and examiner(s) must give a written evaluation of whether it is possible to rework the thesis within this new deadline.

For 60 credit theses: If the thesis can be reworked within 3 months, the student may receive a new submission deadline. If it cannot be reworked with a normal level of work effort within 3 months, it will be graded as a final fail.

For 30 credit theses: If the thesis can be reworked within 6 weeks, the student may receive a new submission deadline. If it cannot be reworked with a normal level of work effort within 6 weeks, it will be graded as a final fail.

If the revised thesis is graded as a fail, it will remain as a final fail.

- c) If a thesis is given a tentative grade F/Fail and external and potential internal examiner(s) are in agreement that this grade cannot be adjusted based on the presentation and following discussion of the thesis, the candidate will not be given the opportunity to give a final presentation of their thesis.
- d) Retakes of exams in Master's level modules and specialised syllabus should occur no earlier than the term following the first attempt.
- e) After a thesis has been finally failed, the candidate must reapply for admission to be assigned another thesis. Re-application for acceptance onto the taught part of the Master's programme must also be made.
- f) Re-assignment of a thesis may only occur once.

§17. Diploma

The original diploma for the Bachelor's degree and Master's degree, respectively, is normally only issued once. Degree diplomas are only issued in Norwegian except for diplomas for degree programmes taught only in English. A separate diploma supplement is automatically issued and describes the candidate's education and results, and explains the Norwegian higher education system in English.

§18. Supplementary regulations

The Programme Boards are permitted to create regulations supplementary to these regulations. These must be approved by the Study Board.

§19. Dispensation

The Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences may in certain circumstances give dispensation from decisions laid out in these supplementary regulations.

⁴ The minimum requirements for a Master's thesis are defined in the Regulation on requirements for Master's degrees §6 *Requirements for independent work* (Forskrift om krav til mastergrad, § 6 *Krav til selvstendig arbeid*) <http://www.lovdatab.no/cgi-wift/ldles?doc=/sf/sf/sf-20051201-1392.html>