

GUIDELINES FOR MASTER'S THESIS SUPERVISION AT THE FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (MINA)

Approved by the faculty's Teaching Committee 18.01.2017

General

All master's students at The faculty of environmental sciences and natural resource management (MINA) are entitled to an academic supervisor in relation to the implementation of the master's thesis, and are obliged to follow the guidelines that apply for thesis work at all times. Supervisors are required to provide students with professional and methodological guidance and constructive criticism of their work. The faculty must approve the choice of topic and supervisor(s) for the individual student.

It is up to the individual supervisor to adjust the number of supervised theses in relation to other teaching responsibilities, and if need be say no when the number of students who want guidance becomes disproportionately large.

For all cases students and employees should consult [NMBU's current Academic Regulations](#).

Amount of supervision

The supervisor is normally obliged to give the student:

- 40 hours of supervision including grading of theses of 30 credits.
- 80 hours of supervision including grading of theses of 60 credits.

These include all thesis-related activities, such as the preparation and planning of the project, fieldwork, laboratory work, statistics help, reading and commenting on the manuscript and general communication between student(s) and supervisor(s). A record of spent hours should be kept by both parties.

Choice of thesis, contract, project and meeting schedule

The student(s) and the main supervisor must fill out the form '*Notification of choice of thesis*' together. They must also draw up a contract in accordance with NMBU's rules and regulations (separate form). [Both forms can be found here](#), and must be submitted to *Anne Ombustvedt* at the library in Sørhellinga within the specified deadlines. The approved contract will be scanned and e-mailed to student(s), the main and co-supervisor. The student him/herself are responsible for registering for the master's thesis in StudentWeb according to the deadlines set in NMBU's academic calendar. Registration for master's theses at MINA is controlled by the faculty and will only be approved if there is a valid contract.

The main supervisor and the student must agree on the framework for supervisory conditions (work schedule, expectations for guidance, etc.) in the startup-phase. Any division of labor between supervisors and external parties should be clarified at this point. The rights to

collected data and the potential publication of these should also be discussed, ref. NMBU's [IPR policies](#).

A meeting schedule for the entire supervisory period up to the submission date must be set. The meeting plan shall be based on the contract and ensure that the set milestones are reached. A minimum of 3 meetings must be scheduled. For students who have data collection, field or laboratory work, the parties must agree on a meeting date after this period is finished, for a review of the collected data.

Deadlines

- The form *Notification for choice of thesis* must be delivered to MINA no later than March 1 in the first year of the master's program.
- The form *Contract – thesis* must be delivered to MINA no later than May 15 the same year.
- The student is responsible for registering for the master's thesis in StudentWeb according to the deadlines set in [NMBU's academic calendar](#).
- *Deadline* for submission of the master's thesis to the Student Information Centre is May 15 at 15:00 in the second year of the master's program (alternatively December 15 at 15:45).
- Grading deadline is 6 weeks (30 workdays) after the submission deadline. The main supervisor must submit the form *Examination form master's thesis* to Anne Ombustvedt at the library in Sørhellinga BEFORE the deadline expires. Anne sends the examination results to NMBU, and archives the form. The main supervisor will get a receipt via email that the grade is sent for registration. When the receipt is received, the supervisor has completed his/her supervisory duties.

In cases of delayed examination results, NMBU imposes financial sanctions on the responsible faculty (NMBU's Academic Regulations, Chapter 42).

All forms can be found on SIT's pages (['Forms and templates for students'](#), ['Forms and templates for faculties and employees'](#)).

Duties of the main supervisor

It is emphasized that the supervisory relationship is mutually binding. Both parties must know which deadlines apply to the thesis, and must follow the set deadlines.

The supervisor undertakes to motivate the student to maintain contact and continuity in the thesis work. Any breaks in supervisory conditions, research trips, sabbaticals, etc., that are important for supervisory task must be communicated to the student.

The supervisor is obliged to acquaint him-/herself with [NMBU's ethical guidelines](#) (Link in Norwegian).

The supervisor must guide the student in the design of the thesis. This also includes an awareness of ethics, methodology and other relevant ethical and legal matters. Further examples of this can be:

- Good research practice
- Publication
- Contract research
- Protection of people involved in research
- Protection of animals
- Protection of the environment
- Public disclosure and confidentiality

The supervisor is obliged to have sufficient expertise to guide the student in the necessary statistical analyzes. If the supervisor does not have such competence, the supervisor must assist in finding a co-supervisor who can help. This should be clarified in the initial stages of the work and be defined in the contract. We advise all supervisors to read SIT's "[Guidelines for supervisors for Master's theses at NMBU](#)".

Duties of the student

The student undertakes to keep a steady progression and maintain contact with the supervisor throughout the thesis period. In the event of discrepancies such as illness, leave of absence, etc, he/she must inform the main supervisor as soon as possible. If the deviations result in a new delivery date, the contract must be revised. In all cases of contract revision, a written application, for which grounds have been stated, and the supervisor's recommendations must follow. The application and a new contract must be delivered to *Anne Ombustvedt* at the library in Sørhellinga. The application and contract will only be approved according to NMBU's rules and regulations. Written documentation is required (for example sick leave) or some other form for written statement, an estimation of the need for postponement, and new a progress plan with the aim of thesis completion.

The student is obliged to acquaint him-/herself with [NMBU's ethical guidelines](#) (Link in Norwegian).

The student is obliged to familiarize him-/herself with and follow the guidelines for authorship and co-authorship that are commonly accepted in the scientific community. The student is also obliged to familiarize him-/herself with ethics, methodology and other relevant ethical and legal matters. Further examples of this can be:

- Good research practice
- Publication
- Contract research
- Protection of people involved in research
- Protection of animals
- Protection of the environment
- Public disclosure and confidentiality

The student alone - not supervisor or faculty - is responsible for the views and material and the reference use in the thesis. If there are aspects of the student's work that is in contravention of commonly accepted research ethics (e.g. plagiarism), the main supervisor must notify the head of the faculty.

Termination of supervisory relations/change of supervisor

The supervisory relationship ceases:

- When the grading of the thesis is completed
- If the contract expires without any thesis being delivered
- If the student or the main supervisor violates the contract
- If the student loses his/her study right to the master's program
- If the student relinquishes his/her place in the master's program

If the supervisor is unavailable at times or on sabbatical leave, he/she shall, in consultation with the department, arrange for how the supervisory responsibilities shall be maintained. As a general rule, for longer periods of absence, the task of supervisor shall be transferred to another professional employee at the faculty. The supervisor shall, as far as possible, inform about such periods in the thesis' initial phase, and it should be included in the contract.

In the event of a conflict or differences of opinions of a more principal nature between the student and the main supervisor, that they cannot find a solution to, the head of the teaching committee and/or the dean must be notified. In such cases, the head of the teaching committee and/or the dean may initiate a new supervisory relationship.