

Memo: Master's Theses in Computer Science

1. Preamble

The Master's thesis (MT) is the final requirement of the Master's programme. The student performs independent scientific research and/or a constructive development project and prepares a written report and oral presentation of the results. A professor from the Department of Computer Science or an [affiliated faculty member](#) supervises the MT. The thesis topic does not have to be in the chosen area of specialization.

The duration of the MT is 28 weeks (full-time), composed of 26 weeks of actual processing time and 2 weeks to compensate for public holidays, sick days, and other short-term absences. D-INFK regulations also apply if the MT is conducted at another department.

If a MT is submitted late for unfounded reasons, it will by default be graded as a "no show". In case of failure, the MT can only be repeated once, whereby a new MT topic must be chosen. The Director of Studies can extend the deadline for submission of a MT if the student has submitted a legitimate request (sickness, accident or similar reason) via the Studies Administration Office. Students who wish to work as a teaching assistant while completing their MT may do so only with the formal written consent of the supervising professor.

2. Admission to the Master's Thesis

It is strongly recommended that all course credits are acquired before the start of the MT. The minimum prerequisites for the registration are:

- Completed Bachelor's programme
- All additional requirements completed (see admission decree)
- Major (26 credits) completed, with at least 16 credits counting for Major Core Courses
- Practical work completed (8 credits)
- Two Inter Focus courses (16 credits) completed and
- in total, no more than 8 credits may be missing.

3. Registration of the Master's Thesis

- Before starting the project, electronically register the MT: **LE 263-0800-00L** in **myStudies**. The registration of the MT does not have to be completed at the beginning of a semester, but before the start of the project.
- Under “functions”, select “project/papers/theses”.
- Enter all the details (e.g. supervisor, co-supervisor, title, start date (the end date is calculated automatically)), and upload the task description.

4. External Master's Theses

The MT can be conducted externally at another university or in industry, within Switzerland or abroad. The supervision of the MT is done in collaboration by the responsible ETH professor and a local supervisor / advisor from the external institution. The D-INFK faculty member must approve the task description and is responsible for the grading of the MT. The student is responsible for continually informing the ETH professor of the progress of the research or project.

The Student Exchange Office has information on their [website](#) about external MT conducted at other universities or research institutions.

It is essential for the MT candidate to reach an agreement with the external institution regarding intellectual property rights (see below). Copies of the task description of the external MT and the intellectual property agreement must be submitted to the Director of Studies via the Studies Administration Office.

5. Grade Descriptions for Master's Theses

The MT is a graded semester performance. In order to successfully complete the MT, a grade of 4.0 or higher must be obtained. The supervisor establishes the assessment criteria beforehand. In principle, the following evaluation scale is applied:

Grade	Requirements
6.00	Work and results are publishable for international workshops
5.50	Thesis quality significantly exceeds expectations
5.00	Thesis meets expectations
4.50	Thesis partially meets expectations and has minor deficits
4.00	Thesis meets minimum quality requirements; but has major deficits and is clearly below expectations

6. Submission and Archiving of Master's Theses

An electronic version of the MT, including the signed [declaration of originality](#), must be emailed as PDF file to the [Studies Administration Office](#) and all supervisors upon completion, at the latest on the end date by 23:59h. A presentation is part of the MT and can be held before or after this final submission of the MT. The supervisor enters the grade via eDoz within 4 weeks upon completion of the MT.

The Studies Administration Office archives all MT in the D-INFK intranet (accessible for faculty). The ETH Library has information about the optional publication of the MT in the ETH [Research Collection](#).

7. Intellectual Property Rights on Master's Theses

Students writing a MT, creating models and/or writing computer programmes, are creators and authors of their work according to Swiss copyright law. D-INFK archives all MTs and is allowed to use them within the statutory regulations. It is highly recommended that the student / project collaborator and the professor responsible for the MT sign an [agreement](#) concerning intellectual property rights.

If the MT is conducted in industry, it may be compulsory to file an agreement concerning intellectual property rights (e.g. copyright protection for software) between supervisor, student, and company. ETH provides a template for a [3-party-agreement](#) that can be used as reference.

All questions related to agreements should be addressed to the [Research Contracts Group](#) (part of the Partnerships for Innovation unit of the Vice Presidency for Knowledge Transfer and Corporate Relations): research.contracts@ethz.ch

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