

Instructions for supervisors of master's students at the Department of Biosciences (IBV) and information and guidelines for supervision of new master's students at IBV

Dear Supervisors of master's students at IBV: Thank you for supervising master's students at the Department of Biosciences (IBV).

Before offering a master's project to one of our students, we would like you to read this guide, sign it, and return it to the study administration at the Department of Biosciences (IBV).

IMPORTANT: The supervision of Master's students cannot be delegated to others in your research group who have not read and accepted the terms of this document.

The master's thesis is comprised of a research project and a written summary of this project, and the thesis is assessed by an internal and an external examiner at a final examination (defense) and constitutes 60 credits out of a total of 120 credits (STP) in a master's degree. This means that within two years/four semesters, a master's student must complete a research project, analyze data, and write a thesis with supervision, while simultaneously completing and taking exams in courses equivalent to 60 STP at master's level. The courses in the master's program should be chosen together by the student and their supervisor. The master's program concludes with a final examination/defense in which the student gives a scientific lecture on the purpose and results of the research project, followed by the student being asked questions by the external and an internal examiner who determine the grade together.

The master's students at IBV are a heterogeneous group; many have received their undergraduate degree from this faculty (MN, UiO), but the proportion whose previous education is from another university in Norway or abroad has been increasing in recent years. We are now introducing general rules for admission and supervision with the aim to increase fairness, to benefit all our students, and to increase the quality of the education we provide.

A master's project requires approval from IBV or NHM before it can be offered to a student. Information about the project should be published on the master's program website so that all master's students have the same opportunity to evaluate and compare projects before applying for a master's project.

In order for external master's projects to be approved, the external supervisor must initiate contact with a prospective internal supervisor employed by IBV or NHM. This internal supervisor plays a critical role in ensuring the project's suitability as a master's project, as well as assisting the student in case of any challenges during the completion of the master's program.

A master's student is expected to work an amount which is comparable to a normal working week with courses and project work, unless there are reasonable arguments for a different schedule (e.g. field work, experiments, or other cases where longer working days may be necessary).

If significant changes in the project become necessary, the internal supervisor must be contacted and an assessment should be made as to whether it is necessary to implement measures such as switching tasks or strengthening the supervisor group with extra people. The result of the assessment must be sent to the study administration.

When a student contacts a potential supervisor or supervisor group, s/he can choose to invite them to a meeting. It is important that both parties be able to form a mutual impression of each other, and

find out whether the communication between them is good. This should not be an academic interview of the student, but an opportunity for the supervisor to inform the student more about the project so that the student can get more information before they decide on a specific master's project. Many students often contact several supervisors before deciding which project to choose.

It is permitted to ask the student for their grades, but they have no obligation to reveal this information. The master's students who are admitted to our master's program are all considered to be academically qualified, and have at least the necessary grade point average, i.e. their average grade is at minimum a C over 80 credits for the courses which are required for admission. If a master's project has been presented, a student cannot be refused on the grounds of poor grades.

The master's students are, unless otherwise agreed, also expected to be full-time students, to attend meetings when their attendance is requested, and to work regularly on their project while enrolled in the program.

The program can be structured in different ways, for example a master's student can take courses and work on their thesis in parallel for two years, or s/he can take exams in all subjects the first year and then complete the project during the last two semesters.

See also the Regulations for the master's program:

<https://www.mn.uio.no/english/studies/about/regulations/courses-grades.html#toc4>

The agreement for the master's program must be completed in full and delivered to the institute with the necessary signatures by the end of the first semester. The agreement is binding for both parties.

If the main supervisor is at another institution, the student must have a meeting with the internal supervisor and the main supervisor at some point during the program.

Rights and duties:

The student must:

- Adhere to the approved plan as it is formulated in the agreement, unless there are overriding personal or professional reasons for modifying the agreement. This applies to both the coursework and the research project.
- Carry out the project in accordance with research ethics guidelines, and comply with laws, regulations, guidelines and agreements that apply to the collection, storage and production of data, as well as any removal or transfer of data.
- If s/he is unable to attend a meeting, s/he must say so as soon as possible. The successful completion of a master's project depends on a number of factors that include financial expenses and other staff and students' time. Examples include the time spent and cost of ordering and using advanced equipment, assistance from key personnel with specialized knowledge in laboratories and fields, purchasing and storing of reagents, schedules for animal testing, and more. For master's students who have difficulty adapting to the agreed upon framework for the research project, the student may be called in to meet with supervisors, the study administration, and/or the educational leaders at IBV to discuss changes or even termination of the project. If the student declines to attend a meeting of this nature, the decision will be made by the others in attendance.

- In the event of any serious collaboration problems that cannot be solved jointly by the student and the supervisor, this must be addressed with a study administrator and/or educational leader from IBV.
- Ensure (together with their supervisors), that the master's project agreement, including the project description and risk assessment, is delivered within the deadline.
- Adhere to the department and faculty's guidelines with regards to the master's thesis and the completion of the master's program.

The supervisor must:

- Work with the student on the preparation of the project description and study plan, including HSE (HMS) aspects which are required in connection with the application, and discuss what will be ethically sound and practical to do within the specified time frame.
- Inform the student about the laws, rules and guidelines that may be relevant to their project in terms of data collection, storage and production of data, as well as any removal or transfer of data.
- Provide adequate training and guidance in the methods needed for the project, and ensure that they are implemented in accordance with current HSE (HMS) regulations and other university regulations. Be available for discussion of study design, ongoing results and further research. The supervisor must also provide guidance during the writing process, and in preparation for the oral presentation the student will hold during the examination.
- Inform the student as early as possible (even before the student chooses the project) about planned absences of longer duration during the student's enrollment, and notify them as soon as possible if the need for an unplanned absence should arise. If longer absences become a serious obstacle to the student's progress, the supervisor must notify the study administration so that the student can be appointed a new supervisor.
- In the event of any collaboration problems that cannot be solved by the student and the supervisor jointly, contact a study administrator and/or educational leader from IBV.
- Follow the ethical guidelines for supervisors at UiO.
- Complete the HSE (HMS) web form which is to be submitted with the master's thesis.
- Discuss with the master's student any results of the master's thesis that could be included in a scientific publication or published in any way, and jointly clarify how the student is to be credited for this in any future publications.

Because of strict privacy rules, a supervisor cannot disclose to anyone the grade given on the master's thesis for their former students. Ref. GDPR

Date:

Student signature:

Supervisor signature: