



**FACULTY PROCEDURES WITH REGARD TO THE MASTER'S
DISSERTATIONS IN ADDITION TO GHENT UNIVERSITY'S
EDUCATION AND EXAMINATION CODE (E&E CODE)**

**ACADEMIC YEAR 2021–2022
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURE**

MASTERS OF SCIENCE IN ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

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FOR STUDENTS WHO SELECT A MASTER'S DISSERTATION TOPIC IN 2021–2022 (TYPICALLY 1ST YEAR MASTER STUDENTS) = SELECTION YEAR

DEFINITION OF THE TOPICS

The proposals of topics for the master's dissertation are published by the supervisor (promotor) through the faculty's Plato application¹. For each master's dissertation, Plato provides a set template with the title, problem statement, objectives and standard distribution of the percentages for the final assessment. Furthermore, key words can be added, as well as a website with more information, the location where the dissertation will be written, etc.

In general, the topics for the master's dissertations are written in the language in which the dissertation will be written. Confidentiality aspects may apply (more information can be found on the faculty's website²).

The supervisors or master's dissertation coordinators indicates which master's programmes are targeted with the proposal, and clarifies that choice. The dedicated Study Programme Committee (opleidingscommissie, SPC) approves or disapproves the topic.

The Study Programme Committee will either approve or reject the topics. If a Study Programme Committee rejects a proposed topic, it must underpin its decision with respect to the content and communicate this to the supervisor.

The Study Programme Committee communicates the topics to the students.

Time schedule:

- *submitting topics by the supervisors in Plato: before 15 March³*
- *approving the topics by the Study Programme Committees in Plato: 15 March until 1 April (15 April at the latest)*
- *announcing the topics by the Study Programme Committees in Plato: from 1 April (15 April at the latest)*

STUDENTS' CHOICE

After the publication of the topics the students can obtain extra information on the proposed topics from the supervisors and/or other (external) contact persons. During this period the departments and research groups may organize all kinds of information activities to help the students with their choice.

Each student makes his choice known in Plato. This selection consists of no more than three topics, ranked in order of preference. Especially for their first-choice topic, the students are recommended to contact the supervisors personally in order to get acquainted and to clarify mutual expectations.

¹ <http://plato.ea.ugent.be>

² <http://www.ugent.be/ea/nl/faculteit/diensten/studentenadministratie/masterproef>

³ New master's dissertation topics could also be published by the coordinators after 15 March, for instance for topics from industry or companies. These topics should also be approved by the SPC before students may choose them.

Time schedule:

- *students gather information and research groups organize information sessions: as from the publication date*
- *students register their choice: between 1 May and 15 May*

DEFINE OWN TOPIC

Alternatively, students may formulate their own proposals for their master's dissertation. If this is the case, they need to look timely for a supervisor with knowledge of the subject. The supervisor will enter the proposal as a master's dissertation topic on Plato. The Study Programme Committee will either approve or reject the topics. In principal, the regular time schedule must be followed, and possible exceptions should be discussed with the Study Programme Committee or the coordinators.

ASSIGNMENT OF THE TOPICS

After all students have made their choice known, the supervisors are given the opportunity to accept a student as a master's dissertation student or not. As a rule, all students are accepted. Not accepting a master's dissertation choice is only possible with a valid content-related reason, and after consultation with the master's dissertation coordinator or the chair of the Study Programme Committee. Valid reasons are for instance when a student registers for a topic proposed by another student or if the student does not possess the required previous knowledge for the topic concerned.

If there are several candidates for the same topic, the supervisor is asked to draw up a ranking. Based on the choices of the students and the advice of the supervisors, the Study Programme Committee chairman works out an assignment proposal and submits this proposal for approval to their Study Programme Committee. The decision is published through the Plato application and in this way made known to the supervisors, the students, the Faculty Student Administration (FSA) and the Curriculum Committee.

If there are confidentiality issues, the student is asked to sign the relevant confidentiality clause at the start-up meeting between the student and the supervisor/counsellor. This document is available on the FEA website. Students who do not want to sign this document, should inform their supervisor, in which case the student may choose a new or adapted topic without confidentiality requirements.

Time schedule:

- *publication of the assignment of the topics by the Study Programme Committee chairman: between 15 May and 31 May (15 June at the latest)*

DUO MASTER'S DISSERTATION

Students who want to work together on one master's dissertation topic should contact their supervisor(s) beforehand. The supervisor will determine the specific modalities, taking into account the following guidelines:

- The group consists of 2 students at most.

- Ideally, the supervisor lays down in writing and beforehand the division of tasks in consultation with the students. For each student a time investment is determined comparable to what is usual for an individual master's dissertation.
- As is the case for an individual master's dissertation, an interim evaluation meeting is planned, where the cooperation and distribution of tasks between the students will be explicitly covered. The conclusions of this evaluation meeting are best reflected in a written report.
- In the introduction to the master's dissertation the teamwork is explicitly mentioned along with the similarities and specificities of the activities.
- It is allowed to hand in one master's dissertation (one copy) for both students.
- The viva of the master's dissertation may be joint, where each student agrees to be in charge of a comparable and proportionate share. The viva is evaluated individually.

FOR STUDENTS WRITING A MASTER'S DISSERTATION IN 2021–2022 (TYPICALLY 2ND YEAR MASTER STUDENTS) = DO YEAR

SUPERVISORS

The responsibility of the master's dissertation lies with one or more supervisors. As a general rule, maximum 2 supervisors are appointed. In exceptional cases and on condition of a thorough content-related motivation a third supervisor can be accepted. The Study Programme Committee (SPC) and Curriculum Committee (CurCom) are responsible for this.

At least one of the supervisors belongs to one of the following categories and will be responsible for administrative matters (= described as 'promotor 1' in Plato):

- Professorial staff members
- Postdoctoral assistants
- Research staff in the grade of postdoctoral staff member
- Visiting professors
- Lecturers appointed by agreement with another university or university college

It is possible to differ from these categories, for lecturers-in-charge and co-lecturers within integrating academic university college programmes who were already appointed before 1 February 2013 as lecturer-in-charge or co-lecturer (see OER 2021-2022 article 59).

SUPERVISING THE MASTER'S DISSERTATION

A dissertation advisory committee is proposed by the supervisor(s), which comprises at least two people, including the supervisor(s). This dissertation advisory committee will supervise the student during the course of the year. It is therefore important that the student is familiar with the advisory committee from the start of the academic year and can contact them. The dissertation advisory committee provides interim feedback on a regular basis.

The student reports regularly on his/her progress (report on the daily work). The manner and frequency are agreed upon in consult with the promotor. The report on the daily work is a part of the global mark, and is evaluated by the dissertation advisory committee.

The student and the dissertation advisory committee can agree to organise a trial defence in the final stages.

Time schedule:

- *announcement of the dissertation advisory committee and input in Plato by the supervisor: before the start of the academic year*

CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES

Confidentiality clauses can be a legally binding part of research contracts or serve to protect the option to submit an invention application with respect to results obtained in the master's

dissertation. The confidentiality procedures (cf. FEA website⁴) may be optional, or may be obligatory if the master's dissertation is related to research with contractual confidentiality agreements. The application of confidentiality procedures during the master's dissertation work does not prevent public disclosure of the master's dissertation in the end. This can be done by giving priority to patent protection of valorizable results of, and by extending the embargo on public availability no longer than is strictly necessary. As a rule there is no embargo without valid reasons.

RESEARCH FOR THE MASTER'S DISSERTATION IN COLLABORATION WITH A COMPANY (IN BELGIUM OR ABROAD)

Students that conduct research in collaboration with a company in the framework of their master's dissertation are responsible for the signing of a master's dissertation contract, to be downloaded from the faculty's website. The master's dissertation contract has to be drawn up in threefold and signed by all three concerned parties (following the procedures described on the website) and retained by the student, the company and the supervisor. The supervisor has to register that a master's dissertation contract is used in Plato.

If the master's dissertation is conducted in collaboration with a company abroad, a foreign research or educational institution (e.g. for fieldwork or research activities), but not via Erasmus, then the student is responsible for the registration of the exchange in Oasis (more information on the faculty's website).

SUBMITTING THE MASTER'S DISSERTATION

Time schedule (both for the submission in the second as in the resit examination period):

- *entry of the final titles (in Dutch and English), the language and period of submission by the student, on Plato: no later than 1 April*
- *approval of titles and language by the supervisor: no later than 10 April*
- *approval of the title and language by the Curriculum Committee: meeting of May*

- *submitting the master's dissertation for the second-term examination period: Thursday before the start of the examination period: 26 May 2022*
- *submitting the master's dissertation for the resit examination period: Thursday before the start of the examination period: 18 August 2022*

The Study Programme Committee may decide, for all students in the program, to postpone the submission date of the master's dissertation by a maximum of two weeks.

A. Language of the master's dissertation

The master's dissertation is written in the language of the study programme.

Exceptions are only possible in the Dutch programmes, and in the following cases:

- For students who write their master's dissertation in the context of, for example, an international exchange (incoming or outgoing students), where the supervisor(s) do

⁴ <http://www.ugent.be/ea/nl/faculteit/diensten/studentenadministratie/masterproof>

not speak Dutch, the language of the master's dissertation will be determined in consultation with the supervisor.

- In consultation with the supervisor(s) and at the student's express request, the master's dissertation in a Dutch programme can be written in a language other than Dutch. The language of the master's dissertation is indicated on Plato by the student and is approved by the Curriculum Committee.

The final language of the master's dissertation must be entered by the student on Plato by 1 April.

B. Final title of the master's dissertation

The final Dutch and English title of the master's dissertation are entered by the student by 1 April, in Plato.

In Plato, both a Dutch and English title are entered, irrespective of the language of the master's dissertation. The title of the master's dissertation will appear on the diploma supplement, which is drawn up in both languages. Translation of the title is done in consultation with the supervisor(s).

After approval by the supervisor and the Curriculum Committee, a title page will be automatically generated in Plato.

C. Format of the master's dissertation

Guidelines relating to the format, appearance, the structure and other similar aspects of the master's dissertation are available in a document on the FEA website.

A title page, generated by Plato, is added to the master's dissertation. The lay-out of the title page is determined by the language in which the master's dissertation is written (Dutch or English).

Extended abstract: The extended abstract has a standard length of minimum 2 and maximum 6 pages (see the FEA website):

- A Dutch master's dissertation is always accompanied by an English extended abstract.
- An English extended abstract, as well as a Dutch translation of the English extended abstract, is always added to the English master's dissertation in a Dutch study programme.
- An English extended abstract is always added to an English master's dissertation in an English study programme.

All master's dissertations in the engineering technology programmes have to have a sustainability reflection. This reflection describes in two to three pages whether and how attention was paid to sustainability aspects (both technological and non-technological) during the master's dissertation. This reflection can be done on the basis of the seventeen sustainable development goals (SDGs) or a comparable framework (given that sustainability initiatives are very broadly defined). The reflection could for instance address the question of where the master's thesis topic could have been more sustainable, without necessarily implementing it.

D. Submitting the master's dissertation

Students have to submit their master's dissertation on the Thursday before the start of the examination period, i.e. 26 May 2022 for the second-term examination period and 18 August 2022 for the resit examination period.

The Study Programme Committee may decide, for all students in the program, to postpone the submission date of the master's dissertation by a maximum of two weeks.

The document has to be submitted electronically in PDF format. The PDF document is uploaded in Plato.

At the supervisor's request, and it is up to the students to check this, the master's dissertations are also submitted in hard copy as a reading version, in as many copies as there are members of the assessment committee (with a maximum of three hard copies). The hard copies are submitted by the student in accordance with the principles of sustainability (e.g. printed on two sides of the page, alternatively on recycled paper, whether bound or not, as agreed with the supervisor).

E. Accessibility

All master's dissertations with a pass mark (from 10/20 onwards) are made available electronically within Ghent University through the university library. All master's dissertations with a score of 14/20 or higher are transferred to the open access system (of the university library) without prejudice to the rights of the author, Ghent University and third parties, insofar as they are not bound by confidentiality requirements. If this is the case, the supervisor will indicate in Plato which master's dissertation(s) are subject to confidentiality and from which date onwards they can be transferred to open access.

ORAL PRESENTATION

Every student is required to give an oral presentation on his/her master's dissertation. This presentation is public, insofar as there are no confidentiality requirements. The oral presentation can be organised virtually (e.g. via video conference).

The chair of the Study Programme Committee attends to the organization of the presentations. The Study Programme Committee chairman observes that the date, time and place (or if applicable, an indication of the electronic character) are posted on Plato. This information will appear automatically on the faculty's website. In principle, no exams of compulsory courses of the master's programs are scheduled on the days of the oral presentations, for the benefit of both the students and the assessment committee.

The oral presentation is done in the language in which the master's dissertation is written.

The oral presentation usually takes 30 minutes and is attended by the entire assessment committee. In the event of force majeure, the absence is announced to the chairman of the Study Programme Committee and the assessment (one page) is handed to the supervisor.

No image and/or sound recording of an oral presentation is allowed, not by the student, the observer or third parties, except if the presentation takes place via videoconferencing.

Prohibited recordings are inadmissible as evidence in administrative or legal proceedings and are also to be destroyed at the first request.

Time schedule:

- *publication of the presentation schedule of the second-term examination period and the resit examination period: one week before the presentations*
- *presentations second-term examination period: 29 June 2022 up to 1 July 2022*
- *presentations resit examination period: 7 September 2022 up to 9 September 2022⁵*

ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

For each master's dissertation, the Curriculum Committee, by delegating powers from the programme's Examination Board, appoints an assessment committee. Each master's dissertation is evaluated by an assessment committee which comprises at least three members, being one or two supervisors and one to three members of the reading committee (commissioners), by the supervisor's proposal. The assessment committee's composition differs from the advisory committee in at least one member.

At least one of the commissioners has not been involved in the master's dissertation process. This external commissioner does not have to belong to Ghent University. He or she cannot be a member of the advisory committee. This external commissioner can be a PhD student, if he or she has no link with the advisory committee.

Only in exceptional circumstances can exceptions be made, subject to a reasoned statement by the supervisor and a positive advice from the relevant Study Programme Committee. External commissioners must have expertise in the area of the master's dissertation.

Time schedule:

- *supervisor's proposal of the assessment committee: no later than 10 April*
- *appointment of assessment committee by the Curriculum Committee: meeting of May*

ASSESSMENT OF THE MASTER'S DISSERTATION

Every master's dissertation is evaluated in consensus by the assessment committee, taking into account the advice of the advisory committee. The master's dissertation is assessed by means of a standard electronic evaluation form and a rubric (example on faculty website).

There are four evaluation categories: the personal features, the practical realization, the dissertation and the oral presentation. Each category is subdivided in different sub criteria.

The assessment committee decides on the final result (the reporting process, the oral presentation, obtained results ...) while the advisory committee assesses the work itself (creativity, effort, autonomy ...).

The final score is calculated as follows (standard values):

⁵ Resit examination period academic year 2021–2022: 22 Augusts 2022 until (and including) 12 September 2021. The oral presentations could also be organized on 10 September or 12 September, provided the final score is registered on time in Oasis.

- 10% of the marks on the assessment of the personal features (creative and solution-oriented thinking, effort, critical attitude, autonomy)
- 40% of the marks on the practical realization: scientific approach, technical realization, report on the daily work, result, innovative aspect
- 30% of the marks on the dissertation: scientific quality, technical quality, structure, lay-out, language, extended abstract, reflection on sustainability
- 20% of the marks on the oral presentation: presentation (content, structure, lay-out) and presentation techniques, questions and answers

If the score on one of the four evaluation categories is 7/20 or less than 7/20, the committee can conclude, by consensus, that the student can no longer pass the entire master's dissertation.

If that is the case, and if the final mark according to the calculation percentages is 10/20 (or more), the final mark will be reduced to the highest failing mark, 9/20.

If these special conditions apply, a specific argumentation and a fair justification is required based on the final competences of the master's dissertation.

If required by the study programme, an external jury can also be appointed which evaluates a limited part (e.g. the oral presentation, the abstract/poster) of the master's dissertation. Since this jury does not evaluate the full master's dissertation, they do not form part of the assessment committee. The supervisor can, however, integrate their partial score in the assessment form.

The consensus assessment is entered by the supervisor in Plato and approved electronically by the members of the assessment committee. The chairman of the assessment committee can consult the evaluation forms electronically. All committee members have to sign the form electronically in Plato.

The supervisor is also required to submit the final score (out of 20) in Oasis.

During the deliberation, there are no compensation rules that apply to the master's dissertation.

Time schedule:

- *signing the evaluation form and submitting the final score on Oasis by the supervisor, second semester: before 3 July 2022*
- *signing the evaluation form and submitting the final score on Oasis by the supervisor, resit examination period: before 12 September 2022*

FEEDBACK

Each student is entitled to get feedback on the master's dissertation, both interim feedback, as well as feedback on the final assessment. The advisory committee is responsible for giving interim feedback. The supervisor provides feedback on the final mark.

After the announcement of the examination marks, the student can consult the assessment form. The student can consult the motivate grounds, the partial marks and the final score. The student also has the right to full access to the evaluation form.

FOR STUDENTS SUBMITTING THEIR MASTER'S DISSERTATIONS IN JANUARY 2022 = THESIS YEAR

GRADUATION AFTER THE FIRST TERM

Article 62, §2 of the Education and Examination Code (E&E 2021–2022) determines that:

“§2. Examination Boards also deliberate by 15 February 2022 at the latest in a graduation year of a Bachelor's, linking or preparatory programme, a Master's programme, Advanced Master's programme, or a postgraduate programme, for students who have taken all their examinations at that time. In doing so, article 71 is fully applicable. With the exception of the Master's dissertation and/or the work placement, first-term or full-year course units cannot be evaluated in the first term, unless the course unit is only assessed by means of continuous assessment and the lecturer agrees to have that assessment take place in the first semester.”

PLEASE BEAR IN MIND

Students who take a 'thesis year' (and are eligible to graduate after the first semester), must bear the following in mind:

- Students who continue to work on a previously chosen topic or who want to change their topic, are required to contact the Faculty Student Administration (FSA). The FSA will contact the responsible Study Programme Committee chairman and supervisor and will technically adjust Plato.
- Interim evaluation: an interim evaluation is required, the date of which will be determined in consultation with the supervisor.

TIME SCHEDULE

For students who want to make use of the possibility of graduating after the first term the following time schedule applies:

- *submitting the final title and language by the student: no later than 10 November*
- *approval of title and language by the supervisor: before mid-December*
- *approval of title and language by the Curriculum Committee: meeting of January*
- ***submitting the master's dissertation first-term examination period: Thursday before the start of the examination period: 6 January 2022***
- *announcement of presentations first-term examination period: one week beforehand*
- *presentations: 3 February 2022 up and including 5 February 2022*
- *approval of the evaluation form and entering the final result in Oasis: before 7 February 2022*

The Study Programme Committee may decide, for all students in the program, to postpone the submission date of the master's dissertation by a maximum of two weeks.

APPOINTING THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Time schedule:

- *supervisor's proposal of assessment committee: before mid-December*
- *appointment of assessment committee by the Curriculum Committee: meeting of January*

FOR STUDENTS WHO GO ON AN ERASMUS EXCHANGE AND WANT TO COMPLETE THEIR MASTER'S DISSERTATION ABROAD

Students may choose to write their master's dissertation at a university abroad in the context of e.g. the Erasmus Mobility Programme (the specific Erasmus procedures can be found on the faculty's website: 'Going on exchange during your studies').

The faculty's master dissertation regulations also apply to students who carry out their master's thesis at a university abroad.

Students should observe the following additional rules:

- The responsibility of the foreign master's dissertation rests with two supervisors: one promoter of Ghent University (responsible for administrative matters and appointed according to the FEA modalities) and one promoter of the host institution (appointed in accordance with the rules of the host institution). The UGent promoter is familiar with the partner institution and/or with the subject.
- Students indicate in Plato that they do not choose a topic at Ghent University. They register in Plato the preliminary title of the foreign master's dissertation, a short description and / or a work plan, according to the deadlines of the international office. This information must be approved by the UGent supervisor and the study programme committee. If the thesis is not carried out abroad, a UGent topic can be awarded later on via Plato, in consultation with the supervisor and the study programme committee.
- The master's thesis is submitted electronically via Plato and preferably according to the faculty modalities. In consultation with the promoters and depending on the partner institution the hand-in date may be adjusted. The UGent supervisor provides the Erasmus student with necessary extra guidelines.
- The assessment committee consists of at least the supervisory committee and an external commissioner. The external commissioner preferably has affinity with the partner institution and with the subject, but is not the promoter of the home institution, nor of the partner institution.
- The master's thesis is assessed according to the faculty's evaluation forms. The consensus assessment is submitted by the promoter in Plato (and Oasis) and electronically approved by the members of the assessment committee.
- There is at least one oral presentation, either at the host university or at UGent. The promoters determine in consensus the number and place of the presentation(s) and register this in Plato.

TIME LINE 2021–2022

MASTERS OF SCIENCE IN ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

		action to be taken by ...	deadlines SELECTION YEAR deadlines DO YEAR deadlines THESIS YEAR
September 2021	before the start of the academic year	SUPERVISOR	publishing the names of the advisory committee (in Plato)
	before the start of the academic year	SUPERVISOR	signing the confidentiality clause by non-Ghent University collaborators in the advisory committee at the start-up (if applicable)
November 2021	no later than 10 November	STUDENT	register the final title and language (in Plato)
December 2021	before mid-December	SUPERVISOR	approval of the title and language, and proposal of the assessment committee (in Plato)
January 2022	meeting of January	CURCOM	final approval of the title and the language, and the assessment committee
	6 January 2022	STUDENT	submission of the master's dissertation for the first-term examination period
February 2022	one week beforehand	SPC	publication of the presentation schedule of the first-term
	3 February until 5 February 2022 before 7 February 2022	STUDENT/SUPERVISOR RV/SPC SUPERVISOR	defence sessions signing the assessment form in Plato (assessment committee) and registration of the final score in Oasis
March 2022	until 15 March	SUPERVISOR	submitting the possible master's dissertation topics (in Plato)
April 2022	before 1 April (15 April at the latest)	SPC	approval of the master's dissertation topics and publishing the dissertation topics in Plato

	1 April no later than 10 April	STUDENT SUPERVISOR	registration of the final title and language (in Plato) approval of the title and language, and proposal of the assessment committee (in Plato)
May 2022	meeting of May mid May between 1 May and 15 May 26 May 2022 between 15 May and 31 May (15 June at the latest)	CURCOM SUPERVISOR STUDENT STUDENT SPC	final approval of the title and language and the assessment committee signing confidentiality clause by non-Ghent University committee collaborators in the assessment committee (if applicable) register the choice for the master's dissertation topic (in Plato) submitting the master's dissertation in the second-term examination period announcement of the assignment of the topics to students (in Plato)
June 2022	one week beforehand 29 June 2022 until 1 July 2022	SPC STUDENT/ SUPERV/SPC	announcement of the presentations of the second-term oral presentations second-term
July 2022	before 3 July 2022	SUPERVISOR	signing the assessment form in Plato (assessment committee) and registration of the final score in Oasis
August 2022	18 August 2022	STUDENT	submitting the master's dissertation in the resit examination period
September 2022	one week beforehand 7 September 2022 until 9 September 2022 before 12 September 2022	SPC STUDENT/ SUPERV./SPC SUPERVISOR	announcement of the presentation schedule of the resit examination period oral presentations resit examination period signing the assessment form in Plato (assessment committee) and registration of the final score in Oasis