

## Bruface Master's Thesis Jury Regulations

Last revised: 05/09/2016

The Brussels School of Engineering (ULB) and the Faculty of Engineering Sciences (VUB) agree on the following common rules to regulate the Master's Thesis Jury within Bruface:

### 0. General remarks

'Bruface' refers to the 3 master programme kinds (fully in English; Dutch and English - Dutch speaking Master; French and English - French speaking Master). References to 'the dean of the faculty', 'faculty board', 'faculty secretariat' or 'curriculum council' are currently referring to the university the student subscribed in his/her second year of the master.

#### a. Erasmus Exchange

The following regulations do not apply to Erasmus outgoing students (one year) or equivalent outgoing exchange students who will achieve and defend their master thesis at the hosting university. In this case, there will be no defense at the home university. These (Erasmus) outgoing exchange students have to fulfill the regulations of the hosting university. However, a co-supervisor of the home university, holding an academic position within one of the Bruface partners, is mandatory. Whenever possible, the co-supervisor will attend the presentation.

For Erasmus outgoing students or equivalent outgoing exchange students who will only achieve part of their master thesis at the hosting university, the learning agreement must clearly mention at which university - the hosting or the home university - the thesis will be defended. If the master thesis is defended at the home university, the following regulations do apply.

#### b. Content

Every Master's degree requires the fulfillment of a Master's thesis.

The Master's thesis consists of a personal and original manuscript demonstrating a student's ability to identify scientific or technological issues and to mobilize his/her knowledge, skills and competences into a logical and coherent scientific methodology. The Master's thesis

may be carried out jointly by two students. In this case, the manuscript and the oral presentation must allow the jury to assess individual contributions.

The Master's thesis must be written in English for the students registered in the full English Master, in Dutch or English for the students registered in the Dutch Master and in French or English for the students registered in the French Master (for exceptional circumstances, refer to point j).

The length of the main body (without appendices) must be limited to 60 pages per student. Any appendices necessary for a detailed understanding of the content can be added.

### **c. Subject, Title and Supervisor**

At the latest on Friday of the week following the proclamation of the 1<sup>st</sup> examination session of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the Master's degree, all students must submit to the Faculty Secretariat a form (hard copy), signed by the supervisor, containing the subject, the endorsement of a supervisor, and if relevant, the name of the co-supervisor.

In the unlikely event of a student not finding a subject or supervisor, he/she must inform the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering at the latest on Friday of the week following the proclamation of the 1<sup>st</sup> examination session of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the Master's degree. The Curriculum Council must then take care of providing him/her a subject and/or a supervisor.

The supervisors must hold an academic position in one of the Faculties. The co-supervisor must hold a PhD degree or an academic position.

For the best interest of the work and the student, the supervisor may designate an advisor in charge of the daily follow-up of the thesis. An advisor must hold an academic, a scientific position or a technical position. In the latter case, the person must hold a master degree or equivalent.

Minor changes to the title after its approval, must be submitted in writing for approval to the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering. A major change, in subject and/or supervisor, must be submitted to the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering before January 31<sup>st</sup> at the latest and must be approved by both Faculty Boards.

#### **d. Approval of the Master's Thesis and Composition of the Jury**

The list of subjects and supervisors, together with the Master's Thesis Jury chairpersons, must be approved by both ULB and VUB Faculty Boards before September 30<sup>th</sup>. For each master education at least one Master's Thesis chairperson (professor) must be appointed. The Master's Thesis Jury chairperson(s) shall be appointed alternately by VUB and by ULB.

A mini-jury is composed for each master thesis by the Curriculum Council, on proposal by the jury chairpersons. Each mini-jury is composed of minimum 4 voting members, including at least: the chairperson, the supervisor, the co-supervisor (if relevant), and two independent reviewers (among which preferably at least one from the other university than the supervisor).

A member of the mini-jury must hold an academic or scientific position or a PhD degree. A staff member of an external partner (industry, research institution) can be associated to the mini-jury, as a non-voting member. The composition of each mini-jury is then submitted for approval to both Faculty Boards before the first day of the blocus week (June session).

#### **e. Submission of the Master's Thesis**

The Master's thesis must be submitted at the latest at 12.00 noon:

- on the day opening the first examination period of the first session (January session), for graduating students who are going to defend their Master's Thesis in the January session;
- on Friday of the 1<sup>st</sup> week for studying<sup>1</sup>, before the opening of the second period of the first examination session (June session), for students who are going to defend their Master's Thesis in the June session;
- on the day opening the second examination session (September session) , for students who will defend their Master's Thesis in the second session.

The submission is done:

- By giving as much hard copies as there are members in the mini-jury, plus one additional hard copy (this last one being for the Faculty secretariat). Together with these hard copies, the supervisor must fill in a form stating whether there is a confidentiality clause. The student has to sign this form.

and

- By submitting an electronic version of the Master's Thesis to the Faculty Secretariat.

---

<sup>1</sup> 1<sup>ste</sup> blokweek, 1<sup>ière</sup> semaine blocus – exact dates are annually specified in the academic calendar, published on BRUFACE website.

No delay for the submission of the Master's thesis will be tolerated.

In case of failure or absence for the Master's Thesis in the January session, a resit for the Master's Thesis exam is possible only in the second session.

#### **f. Presentation of the Master's Thesis**

The Master's thesis must be presented orally in front of the Master's Thesis mini-jury during a public session, in the same language as the manuscript. The schedule is planned by the curriculum councils, during the last days of the examination sessions. The jury is organized in half-days or eventually clusters of at least three students.

The presentation should last no longer than 20 min and is followed by a question and answer session, scheduled to last at least 10 min.

#### **g. Assessment of the Master's Thesis**

The deliberations following the Master's thesis are organized privately, at the end of each halfday or cluster. The attendance of the voting members of the mini-juries of a halfday or cluster to the complete deliberation session of this halfday or cluster is mandatory.

At least the supervisor and the independent reviewers must fill in an assessment grid for the technical/scientific content and for the manuscript (48h before the oral presentation at the latest). The supervisor must also fill in an assessment grid on the student's progress, in terms of personal effort and attitude during his work. The jury fills in an assessment grid for the oral presentation. The corresponding grids are available in annex.

The final mark is determined after a discussion among the members of the jury based on the evaluation grids. In the case where an aggregation formula is used, its results remains indicative, the jury as a whole having the final responsibility of the mark. If a consensus cannot be reached, the final mark will be obtained by a majority vote among the members of the jury.

The final mark is expressed by an integer between 0 and 20, using the following scale:

| mark  | meaning  |
|-------|--|
| 20-19 | an outstanding achievement in all components of the work                           |
| 18-17 | a superior achievement in one or several components of the work                    |
| 16    | an achievement which satisfies expected quality in all components                  |
| 15-13 | an achievement which corresponds to average requirements, with few/limited critics |
| 12-10 | an achievement which barely meets the requirements (many/significant critics)      |
| 9-8   | an achievement which does not meet the requirements on key elements                |
| 7-0   | an achievement which does not at all meet the requirements                         |

If part of the master thesis presents evidence of plagiarism, the appropriate sanctions will be taken based upon the university regulations related to plagiarism.

## **h. Layout of the Master's Thesis**

The front page of the Master's thesis manuscript must include the following items:

Top: the three logos (ULB, VUB and Bruface)

Middle: the full title and the student's name (first name and family name)

Bottom left: Academic year 20XX-20XX

Bottom right: Master thesis submitted under the supervision of Prof (first name and family name), the co-supervision of Prof. (first name and family name), in order to be awarded the Master's Degree in (full English degree title).

The hard-copy must be double-sided.

Templates are made available in odf, docx and latex.

### **i. Abstract**

Each Master's thesis must start by a one-page abstract written in English and must include the following information: the student's name, the Master's degree full title, the academic year, the Master's thesis title, a list of max. 6 key words and the abstract. The latter must briefly layout the objectives, methodology, main results and conclusion.

### **j. Exemptions**

In exceptional circumstances a request for exemption from these rules can be submitted in writing to the deans of both faculties. The request must be thoroughly substantiated.

The exemptions must be approved by the Bruface Steering and Programming Committee (BSPC).

### **k. Temporary regulation for the architectural engineering curriculum**

In architectural engineering curriculum, the 2015/16 BRUFACE master thesis regulation remains in application during the academic year 2016/17 for:

- the students enrolled already to the master thesis before the academic year 2016/17
- and the students for whom the format of the MA thesis was already agreed on by the MA jury before July 2016.