



**Hochschule für Technik
und Wirtschaft Berlin**

University of Applied Sciences

Detailed description of the Master`s Thesis procedure

Construction and Real Estate Management

Joint Master Study Programme of Metropolia UAS and HTW Berlin

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1. Aim of the current document

The aim of the current document is to explain the administrative requirements as well as the student's responsibilities considering the three-semester long Master's Thesis module within the Construction and Real Estate Management (ConREM) Joint Master Study Programme.

Ultimately, students are individually responsible to successfully fulfil the following three main obligations of the Master's Thesis module within the ConREM Joint Master Study Programme:

- **Scientific content requirements:** e.g. in-depth and critical engagement with a defined question from a specialist field, utilization of logical and consistent reasoning,
- **Academic writing requirements:** e.g. consequent and academic referencing of scientific articles and books,
- **Administrative requirements:** e.g. obtaining the required administrative documents, handing in the Master's Thesis in time in the pre-defined format.

1.1. Main scientific content requirements

The Master's Thesis offers students an opportunity for in-depth, critical engagement with a defined question from their specialist field. The process of exploring this question via the completion of an extended piece of academic writing graded according to established criteria serves the principle purpose of assessing students' academic capabilities.

Completing a final thesis requires students to demonstrate their ability to **independently** apply the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies to a defined question within a set period of time. In order to answer the question, they are required to research and analyse existing academic literature. Students have already gained experience with academic writing through written assignments completed during their studies.

The formal and content-related requirements of the three-semester long Master's Thesis module are explained to them during the Master's thesis seminars. In order to further aid the equal study load allocation through this three-semester long period, the "[Recommended work phases for the Master's Thesis](#)" document shall be continuously utilized by the students.

1.2. Main academic writing requirements

For the preparation of an academic research proposal, for the structuration of the Master's Thesis as well as for guidance about academic referencing, the following books, among other recommended readings, are introduced within the Master's Thesis seminars:

- **Research methods for business students** (5th edition)
Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill (Chapter 2.5 and 14.3)
- **The Complete Guide to Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism** (1st edition)
Colin Neville (Chapter 10.)

The continuous utilization of these books is highly recommended to realize a successful Master`s Thesis! Both of the books are available via the Metropolia library, [MetCaT Finna](#), or via the [HTW Berlin library](#).

Please note that, further information can be also found in the [Master`s Thesis Template](#) about the detailed requirements of scientific content and academic writing.

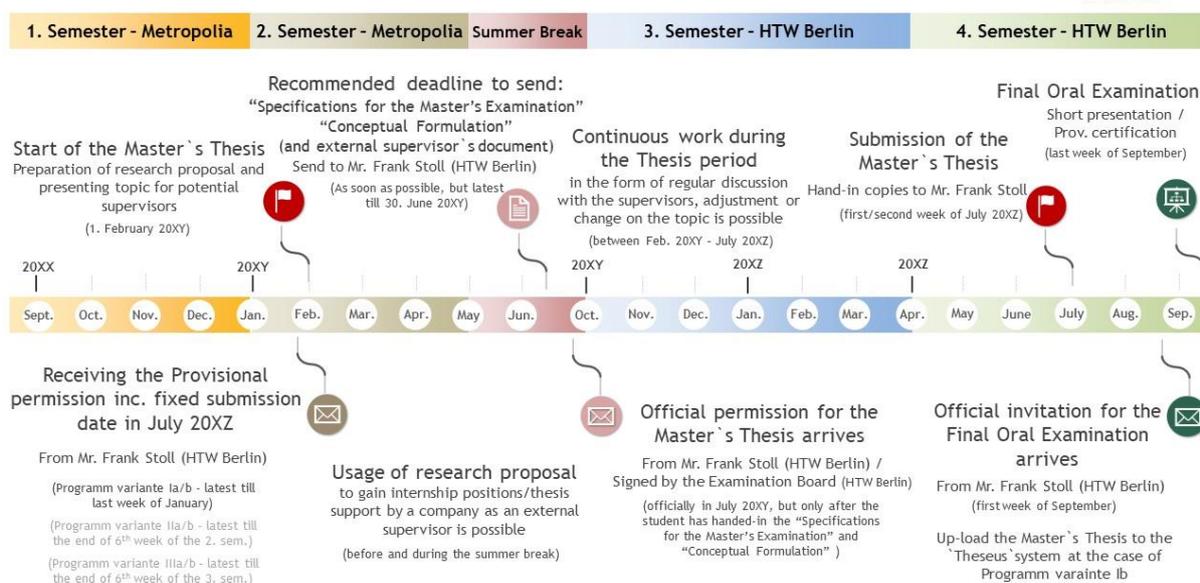
1.3. Main administrative requirements

The Master`s Thesis within the ConREM study programme must be completed over a **period of three semesters** (2., 3. and 4. Semester)! The registration for the Master`s Thesis period occurs automatically (Provisional permission), that is starting on the 1st of February (2. Semester). Within the first Master`s Thesis semester (2. Semester), students are required to gain the so-called **Official Permission**, by preparing an academic research proposal and finding **two** suitable supervisors for their defined thesis topics (solved-to-be question). **Without gaining the Official Permission, the Master`s Thesis cannot be submitted later!**

The submission of the Master`s Thesis must occur **latest till fixed submission date**, that is on the **1st or 2nd week of July** (4. Semester). **This fixed submission date only can be extended at [exceptional cases](#)!** The Master`s Thesis will be automatically graded fail, if the student does not hand in the Master`s Thesis till the fixed submission date. After handing the Master`s thesis till the fixed submission date, the thesis will be individually graded by the two supervisors. If the grading is pass, the student will be invited for the oral defence of the Master`s thesis, to the **Final Oral Examination**. If the grading of the Final Oral Examination is also at least pass, then the student can receive the degree of Master of Science.

2. Detailed timeline and regulations for the Master`s Thesis

The Master`s Thesis is completed over a period of three semesters (2., 3. and 4. Semester), that is starting on the 1st of February (2. Semester) and ending on the **1st or 2nd week of July** (4. Semester), on the **fixed submission date**. For the successful submission of the Master`s Thesis, the following deadlines and requirements must be met (at the case of Programm Variat Ia. and Ib.):



Please note that, according to the [ConREM study regulations §9\(2\)](#) and the [HTW Berlin Study and Examination Framework Regulations §19\(3\)](#), the Examination Board is responsible for decisions made in accordance with these programme regulations. Acting together with the Examinations Office, it shall ensure that the provisions set out in the programme`s examination regulations are adhered to.

All decisions of the Examination Board will be communicated through the [Faculty Administration](#) (Mr. Frank Stoll) towards the student. This communication between the Faculty Administration and the students **occurs via the official HTW student e-mail address**. Please note that, the Faculty Administration (Mr. Frank Stoll) cannot influence the decisions neither the Examination Board nor the Examination Office.

2.1. Start of the Master Thesis period - 2. Semester

For officially indicating the start of the Master`s Thesis period, on the last week of January (2. Semester) students are automatically receiving the Provisional permission for the Master`s Thesis from the HTW Berlin Faculty Administration (Mr. Frank Stoll) via e-mail. The Provisional permission contains the provisional starting date (1st of February) and **the exact and fixed submission date** (on the 1st or 2nd week of July – 4. Semester) of the Master`s Thesis. This fixed submission date only can be extended at the case of [illness or exceptional cases](#).

Starting on the 1st of February (2. Semester), students are obliged to **individually** prepare their research proposal and accordingly **find a first and a second supervisor** for their Master`s Thesis. For the preparation of the research proposal, the students have already gained knowledge during their Master`s Thesis seminars. As it was mentioned, the book of "Research methods for business students (Chapter 2.5)" is highly encouraged to be used within this phase of the Master`s Thesis module.

Finding the two supervisors is the responsibility of the students. The HTW Berlin Faculty Administrator (Mr. Frank Stoll) unfortunately cannot help you to find the two suitable supervisors for your topic.

The first supervisor is an expert with interest in the Master`s Thesis topic, provide guidance and participates in the grading procedure. By the regulations, the first supervisor must practise a full-time academic position either at the HTW Berlin or Metropolia UAS, meanwhile holding at least a Master`s Degree or a “Diplom Ingenieur”.

The second supervisor may give additional support and evaluates after the completion. **The second supervision by companies (external supervision) is also possible and highly encouraged.** However, as a minimum requirement, the second supervisor must also hold at least a Master`s Degree or a “Diplom Ingenieur”. Please note that, external supervisors **only can provide secondary supervision**, although they do have **additional responsibilities** after the [Master`s Thesis was handed in](#). As one of the requirements, **the external supervisor must be also present at the Final Oral Examination of the students.**

If you find an appropriate external supervisor, you can inform him or her about the relevant responsibilities, by sending the “[Information for external supervision](#)” document. Please note that, companies are generally offering paid internship positions for master students who are working on their theses. It means that, by preparing an appropriate research proposal, students can gain significant advantages to obtain a paid internship position within companies, who are interested in the topic of the Master`s Thesis. Consequently, use the prepared research proposal to gain paid internship position meantime secondary thesis support by companies! The recommended period for such an internship is the summer break between the 2. and the 3. semester (May till October).

2.2. Official permission for the Master`s Thesis - Summer Break

The preparation of the research proposal and the agreements of the two supervisors are highly advised to be made as early as possible (till April/May), as it significantly allows students to have more time for the thesis work (even 1-2 months extra time). Therefore, considering the research proposal and the person of the supervisors, you must **completely fill in**, including the name of the **two supervisors**, and send back the following documents to the Faculty Administration (Mr. Frank Stoll). **Without the indication of the two supervisors, the documents shall not be accepted** by the HTW Berlin Faculty Administration (Mr. Frank Stoll). The latest recommended deadline to hand in these documents is the 30th of June (2. Semester):

- [Specifications for the Master`s Examination \[DOC\]](#) – by filled out Name, Student number, Topic of the Master`s Thesis, Names of the **two** supervisors, Date and signature of the student.
- [Conceptual Formulation \[DOC\]](#) (proposal summary) agreed and signed by the first supervisor. If collaborating with a company or an external person, the second supervisor should also confirm the conceptual formulation with a signature.

- [Confirmation of the academic qualifications of external thesis supervisors \[DOC\]](#) is only needed, if the student is collaborating with a company or external person. At this case, the external supervisor, who must hold at least a Master's degree or "Diplom Ingenieur", should also send the copy of his/her most recent graduation certificate to the Faculty Administration.

After sending the required documents to the Faculty Administration (Mr. Frank Stoll), **the Examination Board audits** the topic of the Master's Thesis and the eligibility of the supervisors. If this audit is positive, the student receives the **signed** "Specifications for the Master's Examination" along with the "Conceptual Formulation" document for the Master's Thesis via e-mail from the Faculty Administration (Mr. Frank Stoll) in July (2. Semester). **These documents comprise together the Official permission** to write the Master's Thesis. However, the **Official permission** only can be received, if all the required documents are **completely filled in** and sent to the Faculty Administration (Mr. Frank Stoll). Even if the recommended deadline of 30th of June (2. Semester) is missed, **the fixed submission date of the Master's Thesis cannot be postponed**. Lastly, please also consider that, without gaining the Official permission, you will not be entitled to be considered for the [DAAD scholarship for international students](#).

The **Official permission is a legally binding document**, that contains the official starting date (Date of audition by Examination Board), the topic, the names of the supervisors as well as the exact and **fixed submission date** (on the 1st or 2nd week of July – 4. Semester) of the Master's Thesis. Please note that, this fixed submission date is the same, as it is stated in the Provisional permission. **Without the Official permission, the submission of the Master's Thesis is not possible**. At the case of a missing Official permission, the student will automatically receive a topic and assigned supervision from the Examination Board, that will not be pre-coordinated with the student's preferences!

2.3. Continuous work on the Master's Thesis - 3. Semester

During the 3. Semester, students are obliged to continuously work together with the chosen supervisors in the form of regular discussions. Regulations stipulate that students work on their Master's Thesis independently, therefore **communication with the first supervisor occurs on a limited basis, unless not agreed otherwise with the supervisors**.

The Master's Thesis should be conducted in a profound way conforming with requirements of scientific research work. In this context, the Master's Thesis must be structured logically regarding its content. Besides, it is essential that the written research work is consistent in terms of formatting and that **all applied sources are cited in a correct scientific way**.

Please find the following template for the Master's Thesis here (slight modification of the template is possible):

- [Master's Thesis Template](#) [DOC]
- [Master's Thesis Template](#) [PDF]

Slight modification of the Template is possible, but only till it fits to the commonly accepted scientific writing methods. Nevertheless, **the layout (formatting) of the Thesis` cover page is not allowed to be modified** under any circumstance. If the student agrees to publish the Master`s Thesis at the HTW Berlin library after a successful Final Oral Examination, then shall also attach [the publication consent](#) to the Master`s Thesis.

2.4. Submission of the Master`s Thesis - 4. Semester

The submission of the Masters` Thesis must occur latest till the fixed submission date (on the 1st or 2nd week of July – 4. Semester), that is stated in the **Official permission**. All student must submit the following documents till this date to the Faculty Administration (Mr. Frank Stoll):

- 3 hard copies of the Master`s Thesis (two copies for the supervisors and one copy for the library of HTW Berlin), in printed and bound form,
- Each copy must be accompanied by a CD (added in a bounded form), containing the .pdf form of the Masters` Thesis as well as the relevant digital results, that are conducted by software product(s).
- The signed declaration of authorship and the “Conceptual Formulation” must be part of the thesis (see Master`s Thesis Template).

After the submission of the Master`s Thesis, both supervisors are grading the handed in Master`s Thesis. For more information about the evaluation criteria of the Master`s Thesis, please see the “[Information for evaluating the Master's Thesis](#)” document.

3. Final Oral Examination – End of the 4. semester

After the submission of the Master`s Thesis, both supervisors are grading the handed in Master`s Thesis. If the grading is `pass` by the two supervisors independently, the student can receive the official invitation for the Final Oral Examination (Colloquium) via e-mail from the Faculty Administration (Mr. Frank Stoll). Generally, it occurs within the 1st week of September (4. Semester). **The arrangement of the Final Oral Examination occurs between the student and the first supervisor** and communicated through the invitation letter, that comes from the Faculty Administration.

If the grading is at least `pass` by the two supervisors independently, the student can upload the .pdf version of the Master`s Thesis to the Finnish [Theseus system](#) at the case of Programm variante Ib as well.

The Final Oral Examination generally takes place on the last week of September (4. Semester) in Berlin. Within the Final Oral Examination, both supervisors will be present along with a Chairperson, if necessary, to grade the Final Oral Examination.

For more information about the Final Oral Examination, please see the “[Detailed description of the Final Oral Examination](#)” document.

4. Extension and Exceptional cases

Extension

Every request for extension **the fixed submission date of the Master`s Thesis** is decided by the Examination Board. These requests can be handed in only at the following exceptional cases:

- **personal illness,**
- **pregnancy or,**
- the purposes of disadvantage compensation for **disability.**

For further information, please see the HTW Berlin regulation about [the time extension of the Final Thesis](#).

Please note that, the extension of the fixed submission date is not possible at the case of Programme Module failing.

Semester break

If you have an approved permission to take out a semester break, please contact with the Faculty Administrator (Mr. Frank Stoll). Please note, if you take out a semester break, **the fixed deadline is not postponed by a semester** (e.g. only for two weeks)!

Change of the title

Furthermore, at certain cases the topic or the title of the Master`s Thesis can turn out to be inadequate. For these cases, please use the required documentation about [changing or withdrawing the topic of your final thesis](#). By changing the title of the Master`s Thesis, you will not receive a time extension. However, within the requirements of scientific research works, the title of the Masters` Thesis must appropriately reflect the overall content of the thesis. Consequently, when it is required, students are responsible to **officially request the title change of the Masters` Thesis**.

Change of supervisor

After gaining the Official permission, it is still possible to change the supervisor(s). Nevertheless, at this case you will have to gain a **new Official permission** from the Examination board. In order to do this, please fill out again all the necessary documents to re-gain the Official permission (see: [Official permission for the Master`s Thesis](#)).

Administration of exceptional cases

At all the above-mentioned cases, after the preparation of the requested documents, please send it to the Faculty Administration (Mr. Frank Stoll) in order to gain approval from the Examination Board. Please note that, **even at the above-mentioned exceptional cases, the request can be rejected by the Examination Board**. However, if the request is approved, you will receive back the signed (approved) document from the Faculty Administration (Mr. Frank Stoll) via e-mail. **Without the approval of the Examination Board, students cannot extend the fixed submission date for the Master`s Thesis**.

5. Repetition of the Master`s Thesis and Forced Ex-matriculation

The Master`s Thesis will be graded with a "fail" (grade 5.0) if:

- **the student fails to submit the Master`s Thesis till the fixed submission date,**
- the delivered Master`s Thesis has an **inadequate content**, for instance:
 - content doesn`t meet with the requirements of scientific work,
 - content doesn`t fit to the framework of the ConREM study programme
 - content contains radical views,
- the student`s notification of inability to take an examination is not recognised (e.g. extension request was handed-in too late)

If the [Master`s Thesis is failed](#), the final examination must be repeated on a **new topic** without delay. (According to Study and Examination Frameworks regulation at the the HTW Berlin, §26.) Therefore, **the repetition of the Master`s Thesis is not an equivalent option with the extension of the Master`s Thesis**. The repetition of the Master`s Thesis on a completely new topic **is the last chance** for the student to finish up their Master`s studies, thus gaining the Master of Science Degree!

If the Master`s Thesis has to be repeated, the Examinations Office will send you a request to submit a [new topic proposal](#) for the repeated-to-be Master`s Thesis. The prepared documentation should be sent to the Faculty Administration (Mr. Frank Stoll), in order to gain approval by the Examination Board. If the approval is granted, the student will receive back the signed documentation from the Faculty Administration (Mr. Frank Stoll), thus allowing the repetition of the Master`s Thesis.

If the second submitted Master`s Thesis is also graded with a "fail" (5.0), the student **have irrevocably failed** the final thesis of **the respective study programme, meaning a second repetition is not permitted**. (According to Study and Examination Frameworks regulation at the the HTW Berlin, §24 (5)). It means that, the student will be forced ex-matriculated from the HTW Berlin and the Metropolia UAS, thus **will never have the possibility again to gain the Master of Science degree** in the ConREM programme, as well as in other related study fields.

Please note that, students from outside the EU are granted a residence permit for a specific purpose – i.e. in order to study. Upon receiving an irrevocable fail, discontinuing or de-registering from a study programme, **the residence permit will become invalid**.

6. Questions about the current procedure

Please visit the [official ConREM website](#), especially the [Frequently Asked Questions - Studying](#) or the relevant sections of the [Final Thesis site of the HTW Berlin](#). If you still have specific questions about the administrative procedure of the Master`s Thesis or of the Final Oral Examination, please contact the Faculty Administration (Mr. Frank Stoll).