Master’s Thesis in Informatics

1 Guidelines

1.1 Definition
The Master’s thesis is a written paper worth 30 ECTS credits. It must be written solely by the student undertaking the thesis. It is supervised by a professor from the Department of Informatics and should be completed in the student’s major program.

1.2 Timing
The Master’s thesis is usually written in the last semester of the Master’s level. Before starting the Master’s thesis, the Master’s project must have been completed. The maximum duration for a Master’s thesis is six months.

1.3 Interdisciplinary Master’s Theses
With the approval and participation of a professor from the Department of Informatics, it is also possible to complete the thesis in a related field, if the topic is sufficiently close to the field of informatics. In such cases, the Master's thesis may be supervised by an external supervisor.

Master’s theses may only be completed with companies as part of a joint project between a working group from the Department of Informatics and the company in question, and in agreement with the supervising professor. By approval of the supervising professor, the Master’s thesis may be completed abroad. Students have no automatic right to complete their Master's thesis with a company.

2 Procedure

2.1 Planning the Master’s thesis
Master’s theses should be completed in the student’s major program. Students intending to complete a Master's thesis in the Department of Informatics must contact the preferred professor from the Department of Informatics well in advance (approx. four to six weeks) of the planned start date of the thesis. Students have no automatic right to be supervised by a particular professor.

2.2 Project definition
Master’s theses are formally issued by the supervising professor. The thesis has formally been issued when the professor and the student sign the “Registration form for Bachelor’s and Master’s Theses in Informatics”. This registration form is subsequently submitted by the supervisor or the professor to the Informatics Department Office.

2.3 Supervision
After the subject has been agreed upon, the candidate gets to know who is responsible for the direct supervision (e.g., teaching and research assistant). Throughout the process of completing the Master’s thesis, this person will be student’s contact for discussing the project definition, the outline, and any questions or problems that may arise.
2.4 Submission of Master's thesis
The finished thesis must be submitted to the Informatics Department Office at the latest six months after the start of the work, or alternatively sent to the Informatics Department Office by registered mail (the postmark date is taken as the submission date in such cases). Master's theses submitted late are failed attempts.

2.5 Form of Master's thesis
The formal appearance of the Master's thesis must be in accordance with the fact sheet on the preparation of Bachelor's/Master's theses available on our website.

2.6 Defending a Master's thesis
At the latest after the submission of the Master's thesis, the candidate arranges a meeting with the responsible professor to defend the thesis. The defense takes place within 4 - 6 weeks after submission. The defense involves a presentation of the Master’s thesis (approx. 20 minutes), followed by questions on the subject (approx. 10 minutes).

2.7 Copyright
Students must sign the “Agreement on the rights to written works and artifacts in Informatics at the University of Zurich” before starting their thesis. All publications of the thesis must be identified as “Master's thesis completed in the Department of Informatics at the University of Zurich” on the front page.

2.8 Evaluation
The responsible professor grades the submitted thesis; the evaluation of the defense may be taken into account.

2.9 Repetition of failed theses
The Master’s thesis does not fall under the usual rules for failed examinations. It may only be repeated once, and a new topic must be selected. A different professor may be selected for the repeated Master’s thesis.

2.10 Transfer of credit
The ECTS credits are recorded by the Dean's Office in the Faculty of Business, Economics and Informatics, and are listed on the student's next transcript of records.