

Regulations for graduate studies at the Agricultural University of Iceland

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Art. 1. About the study programmes. Programme objectives.

The Agricultural University of Iceland offers graduate study programmes at master's level in the fields of natural sciences, natural resources and agricultural sciences, based on the recommendation of the Graduate Studies Committee (see Art. 2), ensuring that the necessary facilities and expertise is available, and the approval of the study programme by the faculties and the University Council.

Three main areas of graduate studies at master's level are being offered by the Agricultural University of Iceland: i) supplementary courses at master's level (diploma) in organised study programmes (Level 2.1 in a system of reference for higher education and examination degrees, regulation No. 530/2011) where the Study Programme Coordinator is responsible for the daily overall management, ii) organised 120 ECTS MSc courses (Level 2.2) where the Study Programme Coordinators are responsible for the daily overall management, and iii) individualized research-based 120 ECTS graduate studies (Level 2.2) in the fields of study offered by the Agricultural University of Iceland where the Supervisor of Graduate Studies is responsible for the daily overall management.

The goal of graduate studies at master's level at the Agricultural University of Iceland is to provide the students with a solid and comprehensive education, which will deepen the knowledge of a certain field of study and can be applied to further studies or work.

These regulations apply to all graduate studies at master's level at the university, and are based on the regulations for the Agricultural University of Iceland No. 366/2020. Supplementary regulations apply to various forms of implementations regarding individual organised study programmes, to research-based graduate studies at master's level when students have completed undergraduate studies in other discipline and they apply to the procedure for establishing study programmes or procedures for creating new degrees at the Agricultural University of Iceland. These supplementary regulations are accessible on the University's website.

Art. 2. The Graduate Studies Committee of the Agricultural University of Iceland.

The Graduate Studies Committee administers matters pertaining to graduate studies at master's level and PhD studies, under a mandate from the faculties and in accordance with the terms of reference. The role of the Committee is to develop and affect the policy and objective of the graduate studies and to oversee the application process and the process of thesis defence. In addition, the Committee has the role of securing that reasonable correspondence is maintained between master's and doctoral studies and the University's fields of study.

The Graduate Studies Committee also discusses major issues regarding individual graduate students for masters' degrees or for PhD degrees, and controversial issues that may arise in the execution of the studies. Minor issues will be dealt with by the Study Programme Coordinator (in the case of an MSc student or diploma-student), the Supervisor of Graduate Studies (in the case of an MSc student engaged in research-based studies or a PhD student), and the Head of Teaching and Learning, jointly. University rulings can be appealed to the Graduate Studies Committee, and the Committee's rulings can be appealed to the Head of Faculty.

The Graduate Studies Committee is composed of the following members:

- i. The Supervisor of Graduate Studies whose position will be up for a vote at the University Forum and who will be appointed by the Rector for a term of three years and who at the same time is the chairman,
- ii. the Head of Teaching and Learning,
- iii. the Study Programme Coordinators of MSc study programmes, and the Study Programme Coordinators of other graduate studies at master's level,
- iv. a graduate studies representative from each faculty at the University, and who are nominated by a faculty and appointed for a term of two years by the Rector. This appointment may also be an acting Study Programme Coordinator of a MSc study programme,
- v. representatives of graduate students in master's and PhD level studies, who are nominated annually by the Student Association.

The Supervisor of Graduate Studies shall in principle be an academic employee and shall at least possess the level of Associate Professor. The graduate studies' representatives from the faculties shall in principle possess a doctoral degree.

Art. 3. Admission requirements.

In order to become enrolled in a master's degree study programme at the Agricultural University of Iceland the student must have completed an accredited baccalaureate examination in the field of study upon which the graduate master's degree studies shall be based upon, or be a holder of a baccalaureate degree in a related field of study. A baccalaureate degree, which is a basic requirement for graduate master's degree studies at the Agricultural University of Iceland, must be of a first grade and must have been awarded by an accredited university.

The Graduate Studies Committee may make an exemption from the provision concerning a passing grade in order to commence MSc studies if the grade is relatively close and the student is evaluated as being otherwise a promising candidate, but in such case with the requirement that the student obtains at least a first grade in the first 30 ECTS in the course work of the graduate studies, otherwise the student shall be disallowed to continue the programme.

Further explanation of admission requirements for organised diploma and MSc study programmes can be found in their special regulations.

Art. 4. Deadline for applications.

Deadline for applications for master's degree studies is normally April 15th and October 15th. It is permitted to receive applications for master's degree studies outside these dates.

The Agricultural University of Iceland's application system does not receive general university applications, cfr. Art. 5 for certain organised diploma and MSc study programmes at the university, and in such instances deadlines for applications and the processing of applications will follow the descriptions in the special rules that apply to these.

Art. 5. Application process at the Agricultural University of Iceland.

The student applies for admission to the master's degree study programme through the Agricultural University of Iceland's website. Copies of diplomas and certificates must accompany the application as well as the applicant's CV, in addition to other attachments that are required. The student must also submit a short report on the student's learning objectives and interests.

The Supervisor of Graduate Studies and a representative of the relevant faculty on the Graduate Studies Committee will assist accepted applicants who apply to an individualized research-based master's degree study programme, with finding a competent tutor at the university. The tutor assists the student with selecting qualified courses, and with finding a competent master's thesis committee and as well as with developing the master's thesis project. The first draft of a study and research plan and proposals for a master's thesis committee, signed by the student and the tutor at the Agricultural University of Iceland must then be sent to the Supervisor of Graduate Studies no later than by the end of the first semester. In organised MSc study programmes it is the Study Programme Coordinator who assists the student, approves the elective courses that have been selected to become a part of the master's degree study programme, and accordingly the deadlines will then follow the descriptions in the special rules that apply to MSc courses. The application process for a master's degree study programme, at the Agricultural University of Iceland's is as follows:

- a. The application is registered and filed with the university Office of Teaching and Learning. The Office of Teaching and Learning will then, as the case may be, get the original data and copies of the application assessed by the evaluation office of the University of Iceland in order to confirm their origin, to assess the validity of diplomas and degrees and to confirm that the applicant's documentation meets the formal requirements.
- b. The Office of Teaching and Learning will then send an application for a master's degree study programme to the Graduate Studies Committee for deliberation and processing. Study Programme Coordinators or the Supervisor of Graduate Studies (for research-based studies) will then ascertain that the application is sufficient as to whether the applicant meets the general admission requirements, according to Article 3 of these regulations and then presents a proposal for final processing.
- c. The Graduate Studies Committee reviews the proposals for final processing and will reject an application if it does not meet quality requirements, or approves the application and announces the outcomes to the faculty, which approves the final processing.
- d. The final processing of an application shall normally have been completed and a reply issued within six weeks from when it was received. If the faculty denies entry to a student it must provide reasons for its decision. The final processing of an application by the Graduate Studies Committee and by the faculty shall in all instances be reported to the Office of Teaching and Learning.
- e. A student who has been accepted into an individualized research-based master's degree study programme shall complete a study and research plan before the end of the first semester and it must then be sent to the Supervisor of Graduate Studies and to the Graduate Studies Committee for deliberation and confirmation.

- f. Any major changes of the study and research plan at later stages of the studies are dependent upon the approval of the Study Programme Coordinator / Supervisor of Graduate Studies.

Art. 6. Number of course credits, time frame and progress of studies.

A supplementary examination at a master's degree level (Level 2.1) is based on at least a 30 ECTS study programme over a period of 6 months. A master's degree (Level 2.2) is based on 120 course credits, normally over a period of two years.

It is permissible to assume a longer term of study than two years, provided that the master degree candidate is registered in part-time learning (50% study speed) from the beginning. The maximum time limit for a master's degree shall however not exceed 50% of the planned term of study; according to what applies to other studies at the university (see Art. 26 of the Regulations for the Agricultural University of Iceland). The Graduate Studies Committee may make exemptions from the maximum term of study for master's degree studies in special cases.

It is permissible to offer a student academic progression from master's degree studies in the relevant fields of study to PhD studies with the approval of the Graduate Studies Committee if the student has not defended his or her master's thesis and if no more than two years have passed since the student's enrolment in master's degree full time studies. The student shall then in consultation with the tutor apply for such academic progression as for standard PhD studies, and the PhD studies shall then be equivalent to 240 units, i.e. be equivalent to four years of full time study at minimum and in that case there will be added 60 credits to the theoretical part of the PhD studies (see regulations on Ph.D. studies at the Agricultural University of Iceland).

Art. 7. University course structure.

When studying in organised MSc study programmes normally there is a 30 ECTS credit final project and 90 ECTS credits are in the form of obligatory and elective courses. See also more detailed implementations in the special rules that apply to the MSc courses regarding the relative proportion of obligatory and elective courses, the size of projects etc. The structure of the studies in organised courses of study for MSc is also shown in the university's curriculum.

All master's degree candidates at the university have mandatory attendance in the following courses:

07.12.01 and 08.12.01 Workshop for all master's degree candidates (2 ECTS).

An individualized research-based master's degree study programme is structured around 30 or 60 ECTS credits research projects and 60 or 90 ECTS credits in courses, workshops and reading classes. Two courses (12 ECTS) are compulsory courses for all graduate students in individualized MSc degree study programme:

07.06.03 Philosophy of science/ethics (6 ECTS).

07.07.03 Methodology in graduate studies and research (6 ECTS).

If an MSc student engaged in research-based MSc studies has not already completed courses in statistics, or other methodology on which the student's research project is based, in the student's undergraduate studies, the student is obligated to take such a course.

Students cannot obtain credits for any courses as part of the student's MSc studies that have previously appeared on diplomas for lower degrees (e.g. BSc, BA, BEd). On the other hand, the students can apply to

the Study Programme Coordinator/Supervisor of Graduate Studies to obtain credits for other graduate studies at master's level that they have taken, and use the credits as part of their master's level studies at the Agricultural University of Iceland.

Master's degree courses shall be at a master's degree level at the University or at other accredited universities. Valid courses in MSc studies are advanced courses that are specifically designated as such in the course catalogue, either as special advanced courses (BSc/MSc), MSc courses, or MSc/PhD courses. The BSc/MSc courses have minimum requirements regarding grades that are one point higher (6,0) for students who intend to use the relevant course for credits in MSc studies than for the BSc students.

It is also permissible to select up to 20 ECTS course credits from basic BSc courses at the Agricultural University of Iceland or other universities, as part of their master's level studies where e.g. requirements regarding preliminary preparation for advanced courses require this, or when the student enters from another discipline. The student must have obtained a grade of 7.0 or more in order to get such courses accredited as part of a MSc degree study programme. The student must request a special permission from the Study Programme Coordinator/Supervisor of Graduate Studies to be able to take such courses as part of the student's MSc degree study programme.

A graduate student may as a maximum take 12 ECTS credits in reading classes. A special form for supervisors/students for such courses can be found on the Agricultural University of Iceland website.

Art. 8. Links with other universities.

Graduate studies can be linked to another university inside the country or outside, e.g. in such a way that the student takes part of the studies at the university or the representative of the university is an assistant supervisor. It is permissible to award a master's degree jointly with another university. Such request shall be submitted to the Graduate Studies Committee.

One master's level joint study programme, EnCHIL Nordic Master, is offered by the Agricultural University of Iceland which graduates students with a joint MSc degree from the Agricultural University of Iceland and from Lund University, or from the Agricultural University of Iceland and Helsinki University. Regarding the implementation of the curriculum, the finishing of an MSc thesis, MSc defence and other, we refer to the special regulations concerning the curriculum.

Art. 9. Main supervisor, supervisors and master's thesis committee.

Every master's degree candidate who registers for a master's degree project at the Agricultural University of Iceland shall have a tutor from among the employees in the relevant field of study at the Agricultural University of Iceland.

Every master's degree candidate shall have a main supervisor who may be the same person as the tutor if that person is an employee of the University. That person must have completed a master's degree in the relevant field, at minimum, and be an employee of the relevant faculty where work on the project is performed, unless the Graduate Studies Committee authorises another arrangement. If that person is occupied outside the University he will have to have a master's degree, at minimum, and be an accredited specialist in the relevant field. In such cases the student must also have a tutor from the group of employees, irrespective of the size of the project, who will be together with the main supervisor on the master's thesis committee.

If the master's thesis project is 60 ECTS credits then at the same time an assistant supervisor shall be designated who may work inside or outside the university, who then compose the master's thesis committee as well as the main supervisor/tutor from the Agricultural University of Iceland.

It is permissible to appoint up to two additional specialists for each master's thesis committee. The Supervisor of Graduate Studies or Study Programme Coordinators appoint supervisors, after having obtained the permission of the faculty, and a copy of the terms of reference is archived with the student's educational career.

The function of the supervisor is to monitor that the progression of the studies is consistent with the plan of study, ensure the professional quality of the research, to manage the examination process that the student undergoes in reading classes, if applicable, and confirms the progress of study. The main supervisor/tutor shall in addition ensure that the financial responsibility for the research project is well defined.

Further regulations concerning the composition of master's thesis committees in 30 ECTS final theses in organised MSc study programmes can be found in their special regulations.

The supervisor/master's thesis committee meets with the student at least once every semester and the student writes the minutes of the meetings and sends them, after being certified by the supervisor, to the Study Programme Coordinator and/or the Supervisor of Graduate Studies indicating the progress and status of the project relative to the plan. Credits for work on the research project are registered to the student based on the information there. Satisfactory progress is the precondition for enrolment for next academic year.

A master's degree candidate can appeal disagreements with the instructor/master's thesis committee to the Graduate Studies Committee. A master's degree candidate can appeal disagreements with the Graduate Studies Committee to the Head of Faculty.

Art. 10. External examiner.

The Supervisor of Graduate Studies appoints an external examiner who as well as the main supervisor/master's thesis committee conduct an evaluation of the master's thesis. The external examiner must have completed at minimum a master's degree and be acknowledged in the relevant practice area. The external examiner must not be an employee of the Agricultural University of Iceland or of the same functional unit as the external supervisor or master's degree candidate.

Art. 11. Submission and finishing of a master's thesis.

At the same time as the student returns the completed thesis to the main supervisor/master's thesis committee typically three weeks prior to the non-public defence, the student must submit a certified summary of an educational record. The main supervisor/master's thesis committee authorises the presentation of the thesis for defence and sends recommendations for potential external examiners to the Supervisor of Graduate Studies. The student then sends a summary of the educational record and the completed thesis by electronic means to the Supervisor of Graduate Studies for a read-through, plagiarism check and approval before it is sent to the external examiner and the dates for the defence are set.

If there is doubt that the thesis measures up to professional requirements in the estimate of the Supervisor of Graduate Studies, the thesis shall be put to the Graduate Studies Committee which will then determine whether, and if so to what extent the thesis is in need of revision.

An MSc thesis must include a detailed introduction where the status of knowledge in the field of study is cited, methods must be described, conclusions must be explained and finally there must be a chapter with a detailed discussion that treats the project as a whole. A thesis shall include a statement concerning what the contribution of the masters' degree candidate was in the research, it must be stated whether or not other persons were involved in the project and what share they had in the project.

Each thesis must include an abstract in Icelandic and English, in addition to the title in each language, and this must be submitted in computer readable form for publishing on the university's website, including a press release, one week prior to the date of the defence.

Further instructions from the Office of Teaching and Learning apply regarding the finishing of theses. It must be clearly stated that the project was carried out at the Agricultural University of Iceland, supervisors must be mentioned as well as the Faculty and research institute, if such is the case, and the funds that have sponsored the project.

MSc theses at the Agricultural University of Iceland are published on www.skemman.is. The Graduate Studies Committee can authorize the thesis to remain unpublished on the Skemman website, but in that case print-out copies must then be filed with the Landsbókasafn Íslands - Háskólabókasafn libraries.

It is also permissible to base a thesis on one or more fully finished scientific articles. The manuscript for the article does not need to have been published, but the Graduate Studies Committee needs to evaluate the manuscript as being prepared and ready for publication in an accredited scientific publication. In such case the first part of a thesis is made in the same way as stated above, but both the chapters on the methodology, conclusions and on discussion are significantly shorter than in the case of a conventional thesis. The thesis itself has references to the article or articles. Articles must be set-up in accordance with the rules for the relevant scientific publication, both with respect to the bibliography or list of references and the set-up, as the set-up of the thesis shall follow the above regulations for the university.

Master's degree projects in MSc study programmes at the university may be subjected to other rules than above stated, regarding appearance, set-up and finish, and also the Study Programme Coordinators have presented special rules regarding those issues in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee and the Office of Teaching and Learning.

Upon graduation it must be demonstrated that the student had been enrolled and paid the registration fee during the entire term of study.

Art. 12. Master's thesis defence.

A Master's thesis defence is not conducted in public and it takes place in the presence of a master's thesis committee, an external examiner, and the student, in addition to the Supervisor of Graduate Studies or other representative of the Graduate Studies Committee. The student gives an oral presentation of the thesis, the external examiner then questions the student about the subject matter of the thesis, and points out suggestions for amending or changing the thesis, if needed. The external examiner provides a comment on, and grades the thesis and the answers given by the student, in addition to the performance in an open lecture (see below) in consultation with the master's thesis committee. After amendments have been made to the thesis, the student will then give a public lecture.

A public lecture shall normally take place within four weeks following the defence and it is announced with at least one week's notice. When holding the lecture the student will present the subject matter of the thesis and it is recommended that the external examiner and the supervisors participate. Other persons present may also question the student after the external examiner and the supervisors have completed their questioning. The overall grade is determined upon the completion of the presentation, taking note of the earlier grade for the thesis, but also of amendments made to the thesis, the student's replies and the student's performance at the public presentation of the project.

Art. 13. Academic title.

A Masters degree entitles the holder to carry the academic title of *magister scientiarum* and to use the abbreviation: MSc.

A supplementary master level exam does not provide a proper academic title but is referred to as a master's level diploma certificate.

Art. 14. Entry into force.

These Regulations were set by the University Council of the Agricultural University of Iceland according to Chapter III of the Act on Universities, No. 63/2006 and the Act on Public Universities No. 85/2008. The regulations have been approved by the Graduate Studies Committee of the Agricultural University of Iceland and confirmed by faculty meetings (Environmental and Forest Sciences, 4 May 2020, Agricultural Sciences, 6 May 2020, and Planning and Design 5 May 2020). These regulations enter immediately into force and thereby the unpublished regulations for the Agricultural University of Iceland concerning graduate studies that were adopted by the University Council on March 17th 2017 will lapse.

Provisional clause.

Students who are already enrolled in graduate studies when these regulations enter into force shall complete their studies in accordance with older regulations for graduate studies at the Agricultural University of Iceland from March 17th 2017, unless otherwise agreed.

*Adopted by the University Council of the Agricultural University of
Iceland on 16 December 2020.*

If there is a difference between the Icelandic and English version, the
Icelandic version is the valid.

Ragnheiður Inga Þórarinsdóttir, Rector.

B section - Date of issue: 1 February 2021