Guidelines and recommendations for students concerning
Master’s thesis work at Chalmers Architecture
**Time table**
The theses are meant to be fulfilled during one semester, either the spring semester or the autumn semester, with final presentations on fixed dates in June or January.

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1 Subject
This is a working document in the development of a consistent procedure for master thesis at Chalmers Architecture. It is based on
• Rules for master’s thesis work, “student card” for Chalmers
  (http://www.chalmers.se/en/sections/education/current_students/rules-for-master-s)
• Rules for master theses work at Chalmers Architecture (Dnr A2010/13)

The guidelines apply for theses encompassing both 30 and 60 Higher education credits (credits). The student must decide about the scope in advance.

It is not possible to accomplish two separate theses comprising 30 credits and afterwards merge them into a 60 Credits thesis.

2 Purpose and Intended Learning Outcomes of a Master’s Thesis
The overall goal of the thesis is for the student to display the knowledge and capability required for independent work as a Master of Science in Architecture/Master of Science.

The learning objectives for a thesis for a Master of Science in Architecture are for the student to demonstrate:

Knowledge and understanding
- knowledge about the scientific and artistic basis in the field of architecture
- insight into relevant research and development in the field of architecture
- familiarity with methods in the field of architecture

Capabilities
- the capability to plan, design, preserve, renew and analyse the built environment and buildings, with a holistic view and in complex contexts, taking into account a variety of needs and demands, particularly society’s goal of sustainable development
- the capability to competently employ architectural methods to critically, independently and creatively accomplish and assess qualified and creative tasks within given limits within the fields of architecture and planning
- the capability to clearly present and discuss one’s own projects and conclusions, using images and models, by speaking and in writing, in both national and international contexts
- the capability to present the knowledge and arguments that were the foundation for a project’s results and conclusions

Values and standpoints
- the capability to integrate relevant scientific, societal, aesthetic and ethical aspects into one’s assessments and decisions while accounting for the difference in needs and functional capabilities between different groups and individuals, and while accounting for the interplay between people and the physical environment in which they live.

The same formulated learning objectives apply for theses encompassing 30 and 60 credits. However, a master’s thesis for a 60-credit course must be considerably more ambitious with respect to the scientific level or technical/architectural realisation. For example, the objective could be to author a scientific article based on one’s research. Objectives for work in the field of architecture might include artistic development or a realisable architectural project.

3 Before the start on your thesis you, as a student, must
- Read Chalmers’ policies regarding open access and confidentiality when work commences in order to determine if anything must be taken into consideration in terms of planning.
• Being acquainted with the information concerning the thesis and formulating the dissertation in accordance with Chalmers’ rules for “Writing reports and theses” and for publication in Chalmers Publication Library (CPL).

4 Conditions for initiating work on a thesis
In order to begin working on a thesis, the student(s) must fulfil the necessary prerequisites listed below (for a complete list, see Rules)
• The examiner shall confirm that the proposed topic for the thesis is expected to lead to the student(s)’ developing the knowledge, capabilities and attitudes specified under the heading “Purpose and Intended Learning Outcomes of a Master’s Thesis.” (section 3)
• The examiner will evaluate and take responsibility for ensuring that the proposed topic for the thesis is on a scientific/technical/architectural level that represents a relevant degree of complexity, and a development of the student’s professional skills.
• The Master Programme Coordinator (MPC) will evaluate and certify that the proposal for a thesis that has been presented by the examiner falls within the Master’s programme’s major subject.
• The MPC can make the decision that a specific thesis belongs to the Master’s programme’s major subject even if the department in which the thesis is being written is not part of the major subject.
• Students pursuing the five-year Master of Science in Engineering/Architecture training must have accrued at least 225 Credits before beginning work on a thesis.
• Students who are only taking part in the Master’s programme must have accrued at least 45 Hec in this programme before beginning work on a thesis.

5 Initiation of the work

5.1 Group and language
• The thesis is to be conducted by a single student or two students working together.
• The language used in the thesis can be English or Swedish or both (see below, section 11, “Format of report”)

5.2 Choosing theme - contact with examiner
The staff will present suggestions for theses twice a year; in the shift between Sp 1/2 for theses during the spring semester and in the shift between Sp 3/4 for the autumn semester. Students have the right to suggest their own works.
• Contact the examiner and the MPC in order to get approval from the examiner and MPC to commence work on the thesis.
• Conduct a brief written description of the topic to be approved by the examiner and MPC as a basis for the planning report.

5.3 Planning report – elaborating the them
Before the student’s thesis is formally accepted a project plan has to be formulated. The project plan shall be written as a planning report and should contain the following:
• A preliminary title that describes the subject.
• Background to the problem, situation or project.
• Problem area and delimitations
• Aims and objectives
• Methods and theory formulations
• Work plan and time schedule
• A preliminary list of references, literature, projects and other sources of information and inspiration.
The planning report should contain about 8000 characters including spaces, together with necessary illustrations.

From the spring semester 2010 the intention is that the planning report can be written in the master’s course “Architectural leadership”.

The planning report is a working document meant for training and information. Depending on the development of the work, the final project may very well lead to unforeseen results.

- The planning report shall be presented and discussed in the midterm seminar and adjusted if necessary.
- The adjusted planning report shall be submitted to the jury as preliminary information about the thesis.
- The adjusted planning report may be included in the final exhibition

6 Registration
When the planning report is approved the student shall be registered.

- The examiner will ensure that the students meet the requirements for general and specific prerequisites for the thesis. The examiner signs the registration documentation.
- The MPC ensures that the thesis falls within the primary area of the Master’s programme
- The examiner will ensure that the planning report fulfils the criteria mentioned in section 6
- The examiner and the MPC sign the registration documentation.
- The examiner sends the registration documentation to the Student Centre.
- The Student Centre completes the registration in Ladok.

7 Supervision
The students are entitled to guidance during the course of their work. The examiner can appoint one or more advisors from the staff of Chalmers depending on the subject of the thesis. The advisor then provides support and helps the student with practical processes

8 Workplace
Students are entitled to a working place, however not a personal and permanent place.

9 Seminars

9.1 Seminar groups
Students shall be organised in seminar groups with one examiner and several supervisors. The recommended size of a group is 6 – 10 students. The MPC and the examiners are responsible for the formation of groups.

The examiner is recommended to conduct an initial seminar with student opposition about the planning reports. The examiner is chairman, advisors shall attend the seminar. Students shall take notes.

9.2 Interim report – “Mid-term seminar”
After about 10 weeks the project must undergo an assessment. The “mid-term seminar” is compulsory, in which the ongoing work shall be assessed by students, colleagues (examiners and advisors) from other seminar groups. The aims of the midterm seminar are

- An exercise in delivering credible and informative drafts from an ongoing project.
- An exercise in opposition and defence

The examiner decides about time and place for the seminars and what kind of material that shall be delivered. The recommendation is that the material shall consist of the planning report and material showing the status of the project.
Material for the seminar shall be delivered one week in advance to the examiner, the advisors(s) and the opponent.

The seminar includes
- A presentation
- An opposition from students
- Comments from examiner and advisors

After the seminar the examiner shall assess the status of the work and make a prognosis whether the student can produce a thesis within the given time. If the examiner and supervisor are doubtful concerning the time, they must recommend the student to postpone the presentation till the following occasion.

The recommendation is that for each thesis, one or two fellow students shall take notes from the discussion and give to the examinee.

After the seminar the planning report can be reviewed if necessary.

For a 60 credits thesis the recommendation is to conduct two midterm seminars, one each semester. In addition, an interim report must be submitted when the work has reached the halfway point, that is in the end of the first semester. The examiner will decide on the form for the interim report. When the interim report has been approved, 30 Credits will be registered in Ladok.

9.3 Final seminar
The final seminar with a jury is the formal and “real” assessment of the thesis. The seminar is mainly directed towards students and staff, but is open. Students are strongly recommended to attend each other’s seminars.

The seminars shall be advertised two weeks in advance

The jury shall consist of two assessors, one teacher not involved in the thesis and one external member representing a professional body within the field of architecture. The external member shall not be involved in the thesis as a client or similar.

As soon as a decision is taken about the jury seminar, the jury shall receive the planning report(s).

The jury shall be given a copy of the theses a week before the seminar

The examiner is chairman of the seminar. Advisor(s) shall be present.

The recommendation is that for each thesis, one or two fellow students shall take notes from the discussion and give to the examinee.

The jury seminar shall take approximately two hours. The student(s) shall make a presentation about 25 minutes. The floor is given to the jury that discusses the thesis with the student(s) during about one hour. The jury summarizes the discussion with recommendations (see rules) to the examiner and supervisor. The examiner then decides whether
- Whether the thesis is ready for final presentation.
- Whether adjustments shall be made, specifying the points
- Whether the thesis needs to undergo a new jury seminar

10 Final exhibition and presentation

10.1 Preparations
Immediately after the final seminar at latest, the students shall deliver a short description and selected images to the coordinator of the examination days and other material that the coordinator requires. This material will be used for information, i.e. in a catalogue for the examination days.

Between the final seminar and the final presentation the students shall produce

- Posters for the public exhibition of all theses. The allowed amount is 2 – 6 A1 posters. The minimum space is meant for theses that are mainly text based.
- The final report
- The oral presentation

### 10.2 Censors

The whole amount of theses shall be assessed by an external group of censors who shall give a judgement of the overall quality of the produced theses and give recommendations to the staff about improvements.

The censors will have the exhibited material and oral presentations as base for their judgement.

The material must be exhibited on a given time, in order to give the censors a fair chance to fulfill their work. The thesis will not be approved if material is not delivered in time and has to undergo a presentation on the following occasion.

### 10.3 Exhibition

The exhibition shall contain posters and the final report (see above section 10.1 and below, section 11).

Students are recommended to add the planning report, physical models, sketch books and other informing material from the process.

### 10.4 Oral presentations

The department decides the schedule for the presentations. The presentation shall contain

- The students’ presentation; about 25 minutes.
- The examiner review of the seminar and the adjustment made; about 10 minutes.
- Questions from the audience, preferably from the censor(s), about 5 minutes
- Summary of the session and the thesis from the examiner, about 5 minutes

### 11 Format of report

The cover of the report shall contain details as follows

- Name of students
- Project title
- Project title in English if the assignment is in Swedish
- The text *Master thesis at Chalmers Architecture* and if the work is in Swedish *Examensarbete vid Chalmers Arkitektur*
- Date (the day for the presentation)
- Name of the masters programme
- The Chalmers logo

Furthermore, the report shall contain

- An abstract in English comprised of a maximum of 300 words. Key words shall be attached to each abstract.
- If the task is in Swedish there must be an English summary with about 7000 characters including spacing.
12 Examination
For a thesis to be approved, the following stages must be completed
• An approved planning report
• An approved presentation and defence of the thesis in a mid-term seminar
• Approved opposition of another thesis in a mid-term seminar
• An approved thesis, assessed in a jury seminar
• Public presentation in an exhibition and orally.
• Delivery of two copies to the department and a digital version to CPL

13 Grades
The grading system used for Master’s thesis work is “pass” or “fail”

14 Links

Information about CPL

www.lib.chalmers.se/publish/

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