

Guidelines for the Master's Thesis at FHS

The guidelines are effective for students who begin their master's thesis from august 2025. Master's theses can be written individually or as a collaboration project between two students.

1. Objective of the Master's Thesis

The master's thesis is an independent scientific work in which the student demonstrates insight into current research, relevant theory, and methodology that are significant to the thesis's research question. The work on the master's thesis shall qualify the student for research and development work.

The thesis must reflect the learning outcomes as outlined in the study plan of the respective program, in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. Through the work on the master's thesis, the student shall carry out an independent, limited task that primarily serves as an in-depth study and specialization within their own field and subject area of the relevant master's program.

The master's thesis must adhere to scientific principles and demonstrate understanding, reflection, and sophistication.

2. Supervision

Appointment of a supervisor

The head of the academic department for the master's program assigns the supervisors.

The Thesis Portal is a tool used by students to express interest in predefined project outlines, submit their own project, get assigned their supervisor, and sign a supervision contract. Students may also request a specific supervisor. Find more information on the [Thesis Portal's website](#).

Who can be a supervisor?

As a general rule, a supervisor should be affiliated with HVL and possess first-level academic competence (associate professor). Students may also have external supervisors. If a student has multiple supervisors, the supervision agreement must specify who the main supervisor is. The main supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the project and supervision comply with the regulations on studies and examinations at HVL. Supervision shall cover academic, scientific, and practical aspects of conducting the master's thesis.

Content and scope of supervision

Each student is entitled to a maximum of 13 hours of supervision (60 minutes per session). Five of these supervision hours are mandatory and must be completed before the submission of the master's thesis.

Supervision may be provided individually, in groups, or in the form of seminars. For more details, refer to the course plan for the specific program.

Supervision is a shared responsibility between the supervisor and the master's student:

- The student is responsible for progress and must contact the supervisor to schedule supervision sessions.
- The student is responsible for the form and content of the thesis.
- The student must send supervision materials (documents) with specific questions to the supervisor no later than one week before the scheduled supervision.

The supervisor must not be a co-author of the master's thesis. The thesis is the student's own work.

If the master's work is to be published in a scientific journal after approval/passing, a separate agreement must be made regarding the supervisor's role in the publication process.

3. Topic, Research Question, and Project Plan

Students must choose a topic and research question relevant to their field and in line with the course plan. The project plan must include:

- Title
- Background and theoretical perspective
- Research question
- Methodology, including ethical considerations
- Timeline
- Reference list

The plan must be approved by the supervisor before work begins.

4. Format

Students may choose between different formats. The extent of the master's thesis is specified in the course plan. The three most common formats are briefly explained below:

Monograph

Title page, preface, table of contents, abstract, references, and appendices are in addition to the thesis's extent (word limit). The structure typically includes:

- Abstract and preface
- Introduction (background, rationale, literature review, theory)
- Purpose (hypothesis, research question)
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion (findings, methodological strengths/weaknesses)
- Conclusion
- Implications for practice and future research

Article with In-depth analysis

Includes an article following the guidelines of a relevant scientific journal, plus an extended discussion. The scientific journal is selected in consultation with the supervisor. The article must be prepared according to the journal's author guidelines. The thesis consists of title page, preface, table of contents, abstract, article with references and appendices and the extended discussion with appendices. The word limit is specified in the course plan.

The extended discussion may include:

- Critical reflections on the knowledge base
- Critical reflections on the theoretical foundation
- Critical reflections on the methodology
- Critical reflections on the results

Article Manuscript

The master's thesis can be submitted as an article draft prepared in accordance with the author guidelines of a relevant scientific journal, with the exception of the length/number of words which is specified in the course plan. The journal is selected in

consultation with the supervisor. The word/character count in the journal's author guidelines does not need to be filled in.

The article must be ready for submission to the journal in question, with regard to academic content and form. The exception is the word count, which must be revised and adjusted before submission. Other exceptions are that it is not necessary to attach a letter to the editor and that figures and tables should be inserted into the article; they should not be attached as separate files.

The supervisor should not be a co-author of the master's thesis. The master's thesis is the student's work. If the master's thesis is submitted as an article manuscript for publication in a scientific journal, the role of the supervisor in connection with the publication must be agreed separately.

The thesis should follow a systematic structure, such as IMRAD

For more details, see HVL's guidelines for [home exams and assignments](#). The thesis must follow the criteria for the chosen thesis format. For more information regarding the formatting guidelines, see HVL's info page on [technical requirements](#) (Norwegian only).

Language

Theses should primarily be written in Norwegian, with an English abstract. Some programs may allow English theses. Theses in other languages must include a Norwegian abstract. English is used for English-language master's programs.

5. Research Ethics

All research that uses personal data or health information is subject to notification and requires approval, either from Sikt, the local data protection officer, or from the regional committee for medical and health research ethics. Students must familiarize themselves with application deadlines and take responsibility for ensuring that the project is planned with regard to these deadlines. Students must be familiar with HVL's guidelines for the processing of personal data and health research data.

The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the project complies with research ethics standards. Furthermore, the supervisor must quality assure applications or notification forms before they are submitted to the relevant approval bodies. [Sikt's website](#) indicates whether the project is subject to reporting requirements.

Master's level students may participate in larger research projects together with researchers at other educational or research institutions. In such cases, the student must familiarize themselves with the relevant guidelines, and the supervisor must ensure that the research project has been properly cleared and that the necessary approvals have been obtained. In the case of research collaboration, it is the supervisor who enters into a contract with other institutions, not the student.

For more information, see HVL's website on [research ethics](#).

6. Submission

Students must have a cover page for their master's thesis even if they choose the assignment format: article with in-depth analysis. The assignment must be submitted in Wiseflow. Students must enter the number of words on the cover page in WISEflow before uploading their master's thesis. The title of the thesis must be included on the diploma, and students must register the title themselves on StudentWeb.

To have their work published in HVL Open, students can check the box for publication when submitting their thesis in Wiseflow. See more about publication under point 9.

Submission deadline

The deadline for submitting the master's thesis is May 15 for students who graduate in the spring semester, unless otherwise stated in Studentweb. The extended submission deadline is August 31. If the submission date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or other public holiday, the deadline is the first following working day. Some study programs have different deadlines, which are listed on Studentweb. If the master's thesis is not submitted by the deadline, without this having been agreed and approved by the department in advance, the thesis will be registered as “not submitted.”

7. Grading and Examination

See Chapter 13 in HVL's regulations. At least one examiner should have senior academic qualifications. Supervisors cannot be examiners. The grading deadline is six weeks.

Failed Thesis

If the thesis receives an F (fail), a revised version with substantial changes may be submitted once more. The academic coordinator sets a new submission date. Up to three hours of supervision may be granted for revisions, on discretion of the head of the academic department.

8. Publication

Assignments that have been passed can be published in HVL Open. Before submitting your master's thesis in WiseFlow, you should check with your main supervisor whether it should be published in HVL Open. If it is relevant to publish data in a scientific journal after approval of the master's thesis, it must not be ticked in WiseFlow for publication in HVL Open.

For more information about the terms and conditions for publication, please visit HVL's website on [Publication of assignments](#) and [Terms and conditions for publication in HVL Open](#). Students who have prepared their master's thesis in collaboration with specialist or municipal health services, including data registries, must tick this box in

Wiseflow under: Was the master's thesis written at a company/business in the private or public sector? The name of the institution must be entered. The university college must report collaboration on master's theses to the Ministry of Education and Research.

9. Copyright

The student holds the copyright. Supervisors must ensure ownership of data is discussed and agreed upon before the thesis begins. If the data is owned by others, different rules apply.