

# General Guideline for Master Exams at the UAS BFI Vienna

Created by:	Breinbauer
Reviewed by:	Schlattau
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## Scope of the guideline

This guideline applies to all master programmes and on-site degree programmes with a master degree (pursuant to § 9 Universities of Applied Sciences Act) at the UAS BFI Vienna, but not for online degree programmes. If degree programmes are offered in cooperation with other universities, the Academic Council can establish divergent guidelines in consultation with the provider.

## Master Exam

### 1. Contents of the Oral Master Exam

Completing a UAS master programme/on-site degree programme requires a positively evaluated master thesis and a final comprehensive exam (=Master exam) in front of a board of actual examiners. The oral Master exam consists of the following exam parts:

- Presentation of, and reflection on, the master thesis
- Oral exam which examines interrelations of the topic of the master thesis with the relevant subjects of the curriculum
- Oral exam on other curriculum-relevant contents

The **pool of potential examiners** (*Prüfungskommission*) for the final exams in the Master programmes consists of all lecturers of the respective master programme (or of a corresponding bachelor programme) at the UAS BFI Vienna. The **pool of potential examiners** for on-site degree programmes completed with a master degree consists of lecturers of the respective on-site degree programme.

The **board of actual examiners** (=Prüfungssenat; actual team of examiners for individual oral final exams) consists of the following people:

- The chair (either the degree programme director/director of the on-site degree programme or a delegated member from the examiners' pool).
- The first examiner (an expert lecturer on the subject in which the master thesis has been written, and a member of the pool of examiners).
- The second examiner (another expert lecturer of the examination pool, and also a member of the pool of examiners)

## 2. Duration and Procedure of the Master Exam

The first part of the exam consists of a brief presentation of the master thesis (10 mins max.) by the candidate. In this presentation, the research question(s), the methodology chosen, the use of AI tools if applicable, other aids, results and conclusions will be on focus. Following this, the board will critically investigate and reflect on these contents while the student will defend the thesis. In the second part of the exam, the master thesis contents will be related to other relevant subjects of the curriculum. Finally, in the third part, other curriculum-relevant contents of the degree programme will be addressed. These questions can also lead to detailing and describing solutions to research problems.

There can be time for preparation.

The exam lasts up to 60 minutes per candidate. Only one candidate at a time is examined.

The following points need to be considered in conducting the master exam:

- The degree programme director/director of the on-site degree programme informs the students at the start of the final semester about the exam dates, and the grading criteria in a suitable manner.
- In order to specify the exam contents, the candidates are given a required reading list in advance. These exam topics will serve as the basis for the oral exam about interrelations to the master thesis, and other curriculum-relevant subjects. For the exam records, the respective form (in its current version) must be used by all UAS degree programmes.

Further details regarding contents and procedures of the oral exams will be communicated by the individual degree programmes.

## 3. Overall Grading of Master Exams

The weighting of the exam parts (master thesis; presentation of, and reflection on, the master thesis; oral exam about interrelations to the master thesis; oral exam about other curriculum-relevant contents) needs to be communicated to the students before the master exams (pursuant to § 16 para. 4 Universities of Applied Sciences Act).

Grading the master examination will follow this grading scale (§17 para. 2 Universities of Applied Sciences Act):

- **Pass with distinction** (for outstanding performance; sum of weighted grades must be equal to/better than 1.5; no single grade is worse than 2)

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- **Pass with merit** (for a clearly above-average performance; sum of weighted grades not worse than 2.0; no single grade is worse than 2.5)
- **Pass** (for all other pass grades)
- **Fail** (for an insufficient performance in the master exam)

The (overall) grade will be decided on by the board (*Prüfungssenat*) jointly (under the direction of the chair) and immediately after the oral master exam. In this discussion, neither the candidate nor any people listening in on the exam will be present.

These decisions on the final grade will be based on, and informed by, the Austrian school grading system. The grades awarded for the individual exam parts will result in a final overall grade (i.e. pass with distinction, pass with merit, pass, fail).

The exam results need to be given in the **exam records**. In an attachment, the questions asked and the answers graded have to be briefly documented. The result of the oral exam has to be communicated by the board to the student immediately after the grade has been decided on.

The chair is responsible for keeping the exam records and for the joint grading process. The records need to be signed by all members of the board.

## 4. Exam and Resit Opportunities

### Resit of the exam

- If the candidate fails, the exam can be taken again only twice at the most.
- The board master exam is graded a fail if at least one exam part is a fail.
- In a resit, the complete exam needs to be retaken, and there is only one overall grade. If the master exam results in a fail, the entire exam has to be taken again.
- The resits will be taken in front of the same board if possible.
- If a student fails to show for an exam without a good reason for doing so, this will be considered equivalent to a fail.

If a student does not take the exam on the exam date, the reason for the no-show needs to be communicated in writing to the programme director/director of the on-site degree programme in advance. If the programme director/director of the on-site degree programme does not accept the explanation as satisfactory, the exam attempt will count as a valid attempt (§ 13 para. 5 Universities of Applied Sciences Act).

The exam contents are the same as those communicated for the main date unless there have been considerable changes to the curriculum in corresponding transition periods.