

School of Mathematics and Statistics

8518 Physical Oceanography

Master Project Guidelines

1 Introduction

The project is a compulsory part of any Master by coursework program and is worth 18 Units of Credit (UoC) over three consecutive terms. It involves writing a thesis, i.e., a coherent written exposition of a chosen topic. The project gives the student an opportunity to make practical use of the knowledge gained through their Master, and to learn to work independently. It prepares the student for the problem-solving and report-writing aspects of future employment, or for progression to a research degree. The thesis could include a literature survey and a critical analysis of the topic area or could be a small research project.

2 Admission

The project is normally taken over the last three consecutive terms of the program, and after completing at least 30 UoC (typically, 5 courses).

Progression to the project is subject to academic performance: students seeking to enrol in the project are required to have attained a current Weighted Average Mark (WAM) of 65* or higher in their Master program. Students who do not attain a WAM of 65 or higher have two

Students are required to submit two electronic (in pdf format) copies of their thesis through the Moodle course page, by the set deadline. A submission link (usually through Turnitin) will be provided.

6 Assessment

The thesis will be assessed for quality in four major areas, each of which is equally important:

- Exposition: structure and presentation of the thesis, including definition of the problem, organisation of the argument, clarity in terms of writing style, and illustrative materials.
- Literature coverage: sufficient introductory and summary material, position of the topic in a wider context, review, and critique of relevant literature in the field.
- Critical analysis and insight: understanding of the problem and/or model, justification and implementation of the appropriate method and techniques, quality of the discussion (analysis and interpretation), appropriateness of conclusions and recommendations.
- Originality: new contribution by way of modifying or extending earlier methods, by developing new examples, or by application to a new area.

Normally, the thesis will be assessed by two reviewers, one being the supervisor and the other being another academic member of the School. Both reviewers will provide a written assessment and mark based on the above criteria. Each mark contributes 40% toward the final mark. The reviewer's name is kept confidential from the student until the examination process is complete and the reviewer has indicated their approval to be identified.

7 Oral presentation

Typically, in the week following the submission of the thesis (Week 11, during the study period before exams), the student gives an oral presentation of 15 minutes to staff members of the School, interested visitors, and other students. A short session of questions & answers follows.

The presentation is worth 20% of the final mark. The presentation will be assessed on:

- Structure (logically organised and presented, kept to time)
- Delivery (engagement, clarity, enthusiasm)
- Visual aids (quality of figures, legibility of text, visual impact)
- Knowledge displayed (critical insight, aids understanding, response to questions).

8 Fraud and plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of the thoughts or work of another as one's own. Examples include:

- direct duplication of the thoughts or work of another, including by copying material, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report, or other written document (whether published or unpublished), composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, Internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment without appropriate acknowledgement.
- paraphrasing another person's work with very minor changes keeping the meaning,

form and/or progression of ideas of the original.

- piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole.
- presenting an assessment item as independent work when it has been produced in whole or part in collusion with other people, for example, another student or a tutor.

For the purposes of this policy, submitting an assessment item that has already been submitted for academic credit elsewhere may be considered plagiarism. Knowingly permitting your work to be copied by another student may also be plagiarism. An assessment item produced in oral, not written, form, or involving live presentation, may similarly contain plagiarised material.

The University has policies on academic honesty and plagiarism which all students should familiarise themselves with, see: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism>

The [Academic Skills](#) website is the main repository of resources for students regarding plagiarism and academic honesty. The Academic Skills Team also provides substantial educational written materials, workshops, and tutorials to aid students, for example, in correct referencing practices; paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing, and time management; appropriate use of, and attribution for, a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts. Individual assistance is available on request from the Academic Skills Team.

Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting, and the proper referencing of sources in preparing their thesis.

9 Additional information

Please refer to the School of Mathematics and Statistics website for updated information: <https://www.unsw.edu.au/science/our-schools/maths/student-life-resources/postgraduate-coursework/postgraduate-coursework-project>

Please contact

Dr. Shane Keating, Program Authority

Email: pg.MathsStats@unsw.edu.au

Please contact: Dr. Libo Li

Director of Postgraduate Studies (Coursework)

Room: H13 Anita Lawrence -1035 | Phone: (02) 9385 7025

Email: pg.MathsStats@unsw.edu.au

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