

Master thesis guidelines

FOR JOINT MASTER PROGRAMME IN MARINE BIOTECHNOLOGY

JANUARY 2026. APPROVED IN JANUARY 2026 BY EU-CONEXUS AC

JMPMB Master thesis guidelines

Index

Preamble	3
Article 1. General provisions	3
Article 2. Master thesis preparation and defence timeline.....	4
Article 3. Master thesis Supervisor and co-Supervisor	5
Article 4. Master thesis topic catalogue.....	5
Article 5. Choosing Master thesis topic.....	6
Article 6. Master thesis plan	6
Article 7. Master thesis guidelines.....	6
Article 7.1: Thesis types	6
Article 7.2: Thesis structure	7
Article 7.3: Thesis format.....	8
Article 8. Master thesis assessment	9
Article 8.1: Jury of the Master thesis.....	9
Article 8.2: Thesis assessment (manuscript and defence).....	9
Article 8.3: The defence.....	10
Article 8.4: Evaluation criteria	10
Article 8.5: Intellectual property rights	11
Article 8.6: Plagiarism	11
Article 9. Summary of Annexes	11

Preamble

The joint Master programme in Marine Biotechnology (JMPMB) is implemented by six universities: Universidad Católica de Valencia San Vicente Mártir (Spain), La Rochelle Université (France), Agricultural University of Athens (Greece), Universitatea Tehnica de Constructii Bucuresti (Romania), Klaipėdos Universitetas (Lithuania), Sveučilište u Zadru (Croatia) (hereinafter referred to as 'Partner') and all together hereinafter referred to as 'Partners' or 'Consortium of Universities'.

The Partners agree to apply the following joint guidelines for the Master thesis work in the JMPMB.

Article 1. General provisions

Master thesis is an integrated part of the joint Master programme in Marine Biotechnology with the workload of 30 ECTS. Master thesis is carried out by the student in one of Partners', Associated Partner universities or other higher education and/or research institution ('host university') according to the chosen Master thesis topic.

Before starting the Master thesis work, the student must have completed all previous courses and gained at least 90 ECTS.

During the thesis work, students are focusing on a specific subject for a certain amount of time. The students work under the supervision of a thesis Supervisor and, if necessary, a co-Supervisor at host Institution. During thesis work, students can apply the techniques and knowledge they gained during the courses in the three previous semesters. The final product of Master thesis is a written document ('Master thesis', 'thesis') stating the main scientific results. The Master thesis results are presented and defended publicly ('Master thesis defence').

During Master thesis work, all students are insured against the consequences of physical accidents and liabilities towards the third parties via the appropriate insurance.

The Programme Coordinating University will be in charge of the coordination of the Master thesis course.

Article 2. Master thesis preparation and defence timeline

	Second year of the JMPMB
Informative Seminar on the Master's Thesis	17 October at 16.00h CET by Teams
Selection of the Master thesis topic (in communication with thesis co-supervisor/s). Annex 1 <i>The student must find / suggest his/her topic and present the proposal to his/her Master Thesis coordinator, especially if the work is foreseen to be carried out at another institution, which does not belong to the Consortium of Universities or Associated Partners</i>	03 - 16 November
Validation of Master thesis topic and university/institution for the 4 th semester mobility – Internal Supervisor's assignment	17 - 30 Nov
Signature of Master Thesis training document and Master thesis plan	1 - 14 December
Training/ Trials/ Lab work/ Sampling/ Analysis of the samples. Partial Thesis writing and midterm revisions.	12 January – 29 May
Student submission of master's thesis for review by the Supervisor and Co-Supervisor/s	30 - 31 May
Review of the master's thesis by Supervisor and Co-supervisor	1 -10 June
Correction of the thesis according to the instructions of the supervisor and co-supervisor and submission of final version	11 – 18 June
Approval of master thesis for public defence by the Supervisor and Thesis submission	19 – 21 June
Review of the Master thesis by the Jury	22 June - 2 July
Master Thesis defence	6 - 10 July <i>*pending confirmation</i>
Announcement of the final grade	9 July
Thesis writing and midterm revisions by Supervisor and co-Supervisor and Thesis submission. Second resit	7 -13 September
Approval of master thesis for public defence by the Supervisor. Second resit	14 -15 September
Review of the Master thesis by the Jury - Second resit	16 - 20 September
Master thesis defence. Second resit	21 - 25 September

**In case of unforeseen conditions (medical problems, etc.), another date will be offered to the students. The Supervisor and the Jury of Master thesis will decide on the exact time*

Article 3. Master thesis Supervisor and co-Supervisor

The Master thesis is an individual work of the student under the supervision of the EU-CONEXUS professor ('Internal Supervisor') and host Institution external supervisor/s ('Co-supervisor').

Internal Supervisor hereinafter referred to as **Supervisor**, shall be teacher or research staff in one EU-CONEXUS partner University. Universitatea Tehnica de Constructii Bucuresti (UTCB), South East Technological University (SETU), and Universität Rostock, are only consider as Supervisor if they host students. The internal Supervisor may evaluate and grade the student.

Co-Supervisor (external): is a member of the host institution involved in the daily routine of the Master thesis work when the student chooses a project out of the Consortium. The Co-Supervisor may assess and grade the student.

The Master thesis Supervisor shall meet the following requirements:

- to be a teaching and/or research staff of the EU-CONEXUS partner University;
- to meet the requirements to supervise Master thesis under the host university institutional regulations.
- To have at least CEFR B2 proficiency in English or equivalent.

The Master thesis Supervisor has the following responsibilities:

- to supervise the student in the development of the thesis;
- to evaluate the performance of the student during the Master thesis work;
- to confirm if the Master thesis can be defended publicly (approval).

The Master thesis Supervisor may suggest, or the student may apply to have the Master thesis co-Supervisor. The co-Supervisor must be approved by the Supervisor.

The Master thesis co-Supervisor can be:

- a teaching and/or research staff from a host higher education institution, or research center
- an expert from industry (industrial mentor) who holds at least a Master's degree or equivalent professional experience in the field of Master thesis;

The main responsibilities of the co-Supervisor are:

- to assist the student in the development thesis;
- to follow up the performance of the student during the Master thesis work.
- to provide the student with necessary equipment and software to carry out Master thesis research.

If for any reason there is any disagreement between the Master thesis Supervisor and the student, the student has right to ask for a new Supervisor by means of an appropriately justified written request addressed to the Academic Coordinator of the JMPMB.

Article 4. Master thesis topic catalogue

A catalogue with some Research topics for Master thesis may be offered by the teaching and research staff of the Consortium of universities and Associated Partners.

Alternatively, the students may look for their own Master Thesis topic, in other higher education Institutions.

The Master thesis catalogue is published for the 2nd year students on the EU-CONEXUS Smart Campus

The Master thesis topic proposed at the catalogue must include the following information:

1. Title of Master thesis topic
2. Supervisor
3. Email of the Supervisor
4. Host university

Article 5. Choosing Master thesis topic

The student should contact the Supervisor and/or co-Supervisor to discuss the future work before applying/confirming the chosen topic.

The student will be able to choose the Master thesis topic by filling Annex 1 (**signed by the student and the co-supervisor**) and uploading this document to the Moodle platform within November 3-16. If there is a competition for the same project, the priority will be given to the student with a higher ranking (the ranking depends on the grade point average (GPA) of the previous semesters (50%), motivation letter (50%)).

The final confirmation of Master thesis topics and the host university is announced on the EU-CONEXUS Smart Campus by December 14.

Article 6. Master thesis plan

After the confirmation of the Master thesis plan (Annex 1), the student, the Master thesis Coordinator, and Co-Supervisor must sign the Master thesis training document. A copy will be stored by the Programme Coordinating University.

The Master thesis plan (see Annex 1) has to include the Master thesis research topic, timeline, the scientific problem, the goals of the Master thesis, type of thesis and the draft content.

Article 7. Master thesis guidelines

Article 7.1: Thesis types

The Master thesis must be original and contribute to scientific knowledge. It could be presented in three different formats according with the regulations of the EU-CONEXUS partners:

- a) Experimental (including analytical and numerical modelling): the expected level and quality of the thesis should be equal to a scientific publication in a peer-reviewed journal. This means that this type of thesis is not evaluated based on the number of pages but based on the quality and conciseness of the work.
- b) Project: this consists of two elements: (1) the project, a professional activity designed and executed primarily by the student as a way of solving a problem, and (2) an accompanying essay about the project.
- c) Bibliographic: the main objective of this type of research is to conduct desk research, i.e. to collect existing information on a topic or problem. The student can obtain this information from a variety of sources such as journals, scientific articles, books, archival material, and other academic works. This desk research provides an insight into the current state of the chosen topic or problem. To conduct a literature review as a quality Master thesis, it is not enough to summarise the information found. It is necessary to establish a relationship between the sources, make comparisons between them to be able to critically analyse the information gathered on the topic, and thus answer the initially proposed research question. The expected level and quality of the thesis should be equal to a scientific review publication in a peer-reviewed journal. This means that this type of thesis is not evaluated based on the number of pages but based on the quality and conciseness of the work.

Article 7.2: Thesis structure

Depending on the selected thesis type, the adequate format should be followed. The contents of each thesis structure are presented below:

a) Experimental thesis

- Executive summary (max 400 words).
- Abstract (max 200 words).
- Introduction and aims.
- Materials and methods contain the design of the research: e.g. experimental design, area description, sampling methods, analysis methods, statistical design and methods, the model, etc.
- Results: gives an overview of the most important data, both in written text, figures and tables. All the raw data have to be added in the annex and be uploaded in the submission application.
- Discussion: offers a critical analysis of the interpretation of the data, compared to the available literature.
- Conclusions.
- Acknowledgements.
- References, Mendeley Desktop or other apps accepted, can be used <http://open.mendeley.com/use-citation-style>, following the standards of the APA Publication Manual, Harvard Citation System, Vancouver Standards or Chicago Style Manual.
- Annexes.

b) Project thesis

- Executive summary (max 400 words).
- Abstract (max 200 words).
- Introduction & aims.
- Work plan.
- Project development.
- Conclusion.
- Recommendation for future development
- Acknowledgements
- References, Mendeley Desktop or other apps accepted can be used <http://open.mendeley.com/use-citation-style>, following the standards of the APA Publication Manual, Harvard Citation System, Vancouver Standards or Chicago Style Manual.
- Annexes.

c) Bibliographic thesis

- Executive summary (max 400 words).
- Abstract (max 200 words) (including 5-6 keywords).
- Introduction and aims.
- Material and methods.
- Results.
- Discussion.
- Conclusion.
- Acknowledgements.
- References, Mendeley Desktop or other apps accepted can be used <http://open.mendeley.com/use-citation-style>, following the standards of the APA Publication Manual, Harvard Citation System, Vancouver Standards or Chicago Style Manual.
- Annexes.

For the common sections of the Master thesis, the students should consider the following considerations:

- The Executive summary (400 words) contains a summary of all relevant information documented in the thesis (introduction, material and methods, results, conclusion).
- The Abstract (200 words) conforms the summary but without detailed information about methods and results.
- The Introduction should contain the state of the art of the subject, with references to relevant recent literature; when the thesis is part of a broader research project, the content of the project can be mentioned as well.
- The data have to be presented in a logical order; each table, figure, etc. must be attended by a legend which contains all necessary information to understand the table or figure
- In the Conclusions, a summary of the main findings is given.
- The Acknowledgements refer to the funding agencies, field workers.
- The Reference list is limited to the literature cited in the text

Article 7.3: Thesis format

The format requirements are as follow:

Volume. At least 16 pages are recommended excluding the title page, table of contents, abstracts, bibliography, and annexes. There is a limit of 50 pages maximum.

Font. The thesis is written in Times New Roman 12 Pt, interline 1.5.

Page format. An A4 page with a left-hand margin of 3 cm, a right-hand margin of 2.5 cm, and top and bottom margins of 3 cm each are required. Illustrations and appendices should also conform to this requirement. Illustrations, Photography, maps, diagrams, and drawings may be included on graph paper in such a way as not to be obscured when the project is bound. Preferably, small illustrations are placed in the text.

Tables and figures should be numbered and labelled following the style manual being used. Tables or figures larger than the page size (21.0 x 29.7 cm) should be folded leaving binding space on the left margin of at least 5 cm, and any folded edge should fall 1.25 cm within the corresponding edge of the project.

Page numbers. The pages of the text should be numbered with Arabic numerals. Begin page 1 following any preliminary pages.

References. Bibliographical references, tables, figures according to the standards of the APA Publication Manual, Harvard Citation System, Vancouver Standards or Chicago Style Manual.

Language. The Master thesis has to be written in English. The Abstract has to be written in English and in the language of the country of the host university/company.

The title page should include the following information (the template is as an Annex 2):

- The logos of EU-CONEXUS and members of the Consortium of Universities and of the host university, if the Master thesis were carried in another Institution
- Logo of the department*
- Title of the Master thesis
- Name and surname of the student
- Name and surname of the Supervisor(s)
- Name of the department* and the host university/company.
- Month and year of publication.
- Photo, which illustrates the Master thesis topic*

* *Not mandatory*

The second and third page must include:

- Authorisation to include the Master thesis in the EU-CONEXUS virtual library (Annex 3)

- Declaration of honest work (Annex 4)

Submission format: the Master thesis must be submitted in pdf format to the EU-CONEXUS Smart Campus.

Article 8. Master thesis assessment

A student has right to defend his/her Master thesis if only when all other courses in the programme and individual study plan have been passed and validated.

If the Supervisor indicates in the Approval of Master thesis for public defence that he/she does not recommend defending the Master thesis, the student has right to present his/her work to the Jury. The final decision will be carried out by the Jury members.

The thesis must be defended in July. If the student fails her/his thesis defence, he/she has right to defend again in the next defence term (September). In case of unforeseen conditions (medical problems, etc.), another date will be offered to the students. The Supervisor and the Jury of Master thesis will decide on the exact time.

If the student fails, the second resit a new enrolment in the course the next intake will be necessary previous approval by the Programme Board.

Article 8.1: Jury of the Master thesis

The Master thesis will be assessed by the Jury of the Master thesis ('Jury'), composed of three members from the Consortium of Universities. At least two members must belong to different institutions.

Members of the Jury:

- One Academic Member of JMPMB Programme Board.
- One JMPMB Teacher/lecturer (expert in the field of the Master thesis topic and belonging to the Consortium)
- Teacher/lecturer of– EU-CONEXUS partners.

The Master thesis Co-Supervisor will act as a guest (not giving official grades).

The final Jury of the Master thesis is composed and confirmed by the Programme Board by June. The Programme Board appoints the Chair of the Jury from the approved members. The members of the Jury should hold a doctoral degree in the field of Master thesis or similar and fulfil other requirements that Jury members must have at the hosting university.

The Jury of Master thesis shall be published in the EU-CONEXUS Smart Campus for the student's information.

The members of the Jury could be present physically or participate virtually in the public defence.

Article 8.2: Thesis assessment (manuscript and defence)

The student submits the Master thesis manuscript to EU-CONEXUS Smart Campus within the timeline indicated in the Article 2.

The Supervisor and co-supervisor evaluate the Master thesis through specific evaluation rubrics (Annex 5) and communicates the grade to the Master Thesis Coordinator/Master Officer. In case of results confidentiality, this note must be included in the review, and the Jury informed about it in advance, followed by the confidentiality disclosure concern.

The Master Thesis Coordinator sends out the Master thesis manuscript to the members of the Jury at least five working days before the public defence.

The Jury members review and evaluate the thesis based on the criteria indicated in the Article 8.4. and have individually filled in assessment table (Annex 5) for the public defence.

The final grade for the Master thesis consists of

- 1) Assessment of student performance during Training/ Trials/ Lab work/ Sampling/ Analysis of the samples, Thesis writing and midterm revisions – 10% (Co-Supervisor)
- 2) Assessment of the Master thesis manuscript – 60 % (20% Supervisor, 40% Jury)
- 3) Public defence (oral presentation) - 30%.

The average grade of the Jury for each component is evaluated as the average of all members' individual grades.

The assessment of the Master thesis manuscript and public defence by the Supervisor and each Jury member shall be collected, protocolled, and submitted to the Academic Coordinator and the Programme Coordinating University and kept for at least 2 years after the student graduates.

The Master thesis is kept in the EU-CONEXUS Smart Campus library for unlimited time.

The grade shall correspond to the grading system of the Programme Coordinating University. The final grade will be converted to the ECTS system as agreed in the Students' assessment regulations.

Article 8.3: The defence

The public defence of the Master thesis in 2026 shall take place physically at Agricultural University of Athens. Next editions will take place in a different university from the Consortium each year.

The structure of the presentation depends on the criterion of the student, but it shall include a brief description of the problem, an analysis of what has been done related to topic, results and discussion, and the conclusions.

The duration of the presentation is a maximum of 20 minutes. The Jury members can ask the questions for 10 minutes.

The defence is public to the audience. The Jury of Master thesis, Supervisor must attend the public defence physically and/or virtually.

If the Master thesis results are listed as confidential, the Supervisor must include this in his/her review and the defence is organised to respect the confidentiality.

After the presentation and questions and answers, the Jury withdraws and evaluates the defence based on the criteria indicated in the Article 8.4 (Annex 5).

If the Jury concludes that the student does not satisfy the minimum requirements for Master's qualification. The student acquires the right to defend his / her diploma thesis again in the next examination term as indicated in the Article 8.2.

Article 8.4: Evaluation criteria

Following aspects are evaluated (describes in Annex 5, including their respective weight in the score):

Master thesis manuscript:

1. Title, Abstract, Summary: 10 %
2. Introduction, Background and context: 15 %
3. Methods: 15 %
4. Results: 20 %
5. Discussion: Interpretation within the research context: 30 %

6. Layout: 10 %

Public defence:

1. Presentation and its structure: 30 %
2. Contextual awareness and critical thinking: 30 %
3. Format of the presentation: 10 %
4. Ability to answer the questions: 30 %

Article 8.1: Intellectual property rights

The Student owns author's property and moral rights for the Master thesis.

The Student provides the Consortium of Universities, for the duration of the validity of property rights, with a non-exclusive right to submit and publicly disclose study works created by the Student while fulfilling their obligations, as determined by the legislation defining the study process in the Consortium of Universities, in the intranet databases of the EU-CONEXUS Smart Campus.

Property rights to computer programmes, databases, study works, and other works created by the Student are transferred permanently to the Consortium of Universities if the works were created by using the experience gained at the University, intellectual property, financial support, equipment, or premises of the University.

Article 8.6: Plagiarism

Plagiarism is considered a form of fraud and an irregularity within the study programme. To commit plagiarism is to present (parts of) a source as original and your own, without adding any acknowledgements and or references. It can relate to different forms of production, such as texts (written, oral), images (photographs, film, graphs, diagrams, figures, etc.), databases, ideas, etc.

By submitting the Master thesis and signing them, the student confirms that the presented work is a unique result of his/her individual work, with appropriate references to other intellectual property.

When fraud is detected in the Master thesis, the Jury will discuss and decide about the consequences for the student.

Article 9. Summary of Annexes

Annex 1. Master thesis plan

Annex 2. Example of the Master thesis title page

Annex 3. Authorisation to include the Master thesis in the EU-CONEXUS virtual library

Annex 4. Declaration of honest work

Annex 5. Evaluation criteria