

MST Thesis Handbook

Master Program in Mechatronic and Sensor Systems Technology

Program handbook for thesis administration, technical writing, submission, and colloquium

Version 1.3 - Public student-facing version

Document owner	M.Sc. Le Duy Can, MST Programme Coordinator, Faculty of Engineering, VGU
Approval authority	Dean, Faculty of Engineering, VGU
Prepared date	07 Mar 2026
Effective date	07 Mar 2026
Review cycle	Annual, or earlier if regulations or official forms change
Status	Public student-facing programme handbook
Scope	All Master Thesis activities within the MST program

This handbook standardises the administrative and academic requirements for the Master Thesis in the MST program and is intended to support transparent, consistent, and auditable thesis management.

Document control

Document title	MST Thesis Handbook
Program	Master Program in Mechatronic and Sensor Systems Technology
Document type	Program handbook
Version	1.3
Status	Public student-facing version
Primary users	Students, supervisors, program administration, and examiners
Related forms	Master Thesis Application Form; General Information of Master Thesis with Colloquium; Final Evaluation of the Master Thesis with Colloquium; Colloquium Minutes; Application for Time Extension of Master Thesis
Related regulations	VGU General Examination Regulation; Specific Examination Regulation for the Master in Mechatronics and Sensor Systems Technology Program

How to use this handbook

This handbook shall be read together with the applicable VGU regulations and the official MST thesis forms. Where a conflict exists between this handbook and a binding VGU regulation, the higher-level regulation shall prevail.

Sections 9 to 12 define the MST minimum standard for thesis writing, academic integrity, submission, and colloquium administration. These sections are intended to provide a consistent program-level framework in support of quality assurance and fair thesis administration.

Contents

- 1. Purpose and scope
- 2. Regulatory framework and precedence
- 3. Core thesis facts
- 4. Eligibility to start the Master Thesis
- 5. Roles and responsibilities
- 6. Thesis topic, workplace, and supervision
- 7. Thesis registration and formal approval
- 8. Thesis period, conduct, and progress monitoring
- 9. MST minimum standard for writing and formatting
- 10. Academic integrity, plagiarism screening, and responsible use of digital tools
- 11. Submission requirements
- 12. Colloquium procedure and examination records
- 13. Extension of the thesis period
- 14. Failure, repeat, and procedural recourse
- 15. Records management, confidentiality, and data protection
- Appendix 1. Thesis registration checklist
- Appendix 2. Final submission checklist
- Appendix 3. Minimum thesis structure
- Appendix 4. Official forms and records

1. Purpose and scope

This handbook sets out the operational requirements for the Master Thesis in the MST program. **It covers eligibility, registration, supervision, writing standards, academic integrity, submission, colloquium, extension, and records management.**

The handbook applies to all students enrolled in the MST program, all academic supervisors appointed for MST theses, workplace supervisors where applicable, the program office, the Academic Coordinator, and examiners involved in the thesis and colloquium.

The purpose of the handbook is to ensure that thesis administration is transparent, consistent, and aligned with the applicable VGU regulatory framework while also providing a clear minimum standard for academic work and technical writing at program level.

2. Regulatory framework and precedence

This handbook is based on the currently available approved program documents and official thesis forms, in particular the following sources:

- Specific Examination Regulation for the Master in Mechatronics and Sensor Systems Technology Program, especially Article 7 to Article 9.
- VGU General Examination Regulation for Bachelor and Master Programs (Decision No. 20/QD-DHVD dated 21 January 2022), especially the provisions governing examination boards, retakes, appeals, the final thesis, evaluation, archive, and repetition of the final thesis.
- Master Thesis Application Form for MST.
- General Information, Final Evaluation, and Colloquium Minutes forms for the MST Master Thesis with colloquium.
- Application for Time Extension of Master Thesis.

In case of discrepancy, the applicable VGU regulation and officially issued examination documents shall prevail. This handbook operationalises the thesis process at program level and does not replace the formal authority of university regulations or decisions of the competent bodies.

Official reference for administrative use: VGU General Examination Regulation for Bachelor and Master Programs, English version, published on the official VGU website.

3. Core thesis facts

Thesis language	English
Normal thesis period	Six months from the official issue date
Earliest submission	After four months at the earliest
Maximum extension	Up to one month in exceptional cases
Permissible workplace	VGU, another university, a research institute, or a company, subject to approval
Mandatory academic control	Official thesis registration and plagiarism screening before defence
Examination sequence	Written thesis followed by a colloquium

4. Eligibility to start the Master Thesis

A student may start the Master Thesis only when all of the following conditions are fulfilled:

- All examinations of the first, second, and third semesters have been passed.

- Proof of English language proficiency of at least IELTS Academic 6.0, TOEFL iBT 60, or an equivalent qualification has been provided.
- The Industry Project has been passed.

Before the thesis is issued, the student shall confirm eligibility with the program office or the Academic Coordinator. The thesis may not begin informally and may not be back-dated. The official issue date stated on the approved registration is binding.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Student	Develops the thesis under supervision, works independently and with academic integrity, complies with the approved scope and timeline, maintains communication, and submits all required documents on time.
Academic supervisor	Provides academic guidance, approves the thesis topic and scope, supervises progress, reviews the academic quality of the work, participates in evaluation, and supports the colloquium process.
Workplace supervisor (if applicable)	Supports the practical or industrial implementation of the thesis, contributes to monitoring progress and quality, and participates in evaluation in line with the applicable regulation.
Academic Coordinator	Confirms eligibility, decides on external thesis cases, confirms or appoints academic supervision where required, determines permission to defend after plagiarism screening, and resolves conflicts in accordance with the regulation.
Program office	Maintains the official forms and records, receives administrative submissions, supports scheduling and communication, and retains the required examination documents.
Chair of the Board of Examiners or authorised signatory	Signs the official thesis registration and examination documents where required by the current administrative workflow.

6. Thesis topic, workplace, and supervision

The content of the proposed thesis shall belong to the field of study of the MST program. The thesis topic may arise from a research problem, a laboratory project, or an industrial challenge, provided that its academic level is appropriate for a Master Thesis.

The thesis may be conducted at VGU, at another university, at a research institute, or at a company. External thesis locations require the approval of the Academic Coordinator. In such cases, the MST Academic Coordinator, in consultation with the program's partner university where relevant, shall confirm or appoint the academic supervisor.

Where a workplace supervisor is involved, that person shall hold at least a Master degree in a discipline relevant to the proposed thesis.

The official thesis registration shall define the subject, key tasks, expected workload, workplace, supervisor information, official issue date, and official submission date with sufficient clarity for academic control and examination administration.

7. Thesis registration and formal approval

The thesis becomes official only after the registration has been completed on the approved form and formally authorised through the program process.

The standard registration workflow is as follows:

1. The student discusses the proposed topic with the academic supervisor and confirms that the topic lies within the scope of the MST program.
2. If the thesis is external, the workplace, workplace supervisor, and external conditions are clarified in advance.
3. The student completes the official Master Thesis Application Form.
4. The registration form states the workplace, the academic supervisor, the workplace supervisor where applicable, the subject, the key tasks, the workload, the date of issue, and the date of submission.
5. The required signatures are obtained in accordance with the current form and internal workflow.
6. The completed registration is submitted to the program office or Academic Coordinator for administrative processing and formal approval.

The approved registration governs the thesis period. Any change to the title, scope, workplace, or supervision arrangement after approval shall be reported immediately to the Academic Coordinator and may require formal amendment or renewed approval.

8. Thesis period, conduct, and progress monitoring

The normal processing time for the Master Thesis is six months from the official issue date. Early submission is permitted after four months at the earliest. In exceptional cases, the thesis period may be extended by up to one month in accordance with Section 13 of this handbook.

During the thesis period, the student shall carry out an independent research or development project. According to the program regulation, the project includes project management, project execution, and the presentation of results in interim form. The written thesis documents and analyses this work in academic form.

The student shall maintain regular communication with the supervisor or supervisors and shall follow the agreed academic supervision plan. For internal quality assurance, the program recommends that major decisions on scope, methodology, and milestones be recorded in writing.

A major delay, a material change of scope, or a change of workplace or supervisor shall be reported promptly to the Academic Coordinator.

Illustrative planning timeline

Phase	Indicative period	Typical activities
Initiation	Weeks 1 to 3	Topic confirmation, literature scoping, research plan, administrative registration.
Execution	Weeks 4 to 12	System design, implementation, experiments, data collection, or industrial development work.
Analysis	Weeks 13 to 18	Evaluation, validation, interpretation of results, refinement of analysis.
Writing and finalisation	Weeks 19 to 24	Full thesis writing, formatting, plagiarism screening, final corrections, and submission preparation.

9. MST minimum standard for writing and formatting

The written thesis shall be in English. For the MST program, the minimum requirements set out in this section shall apply to all Master Theses unless a higher-level VGU regulation or an officially issued faculty template provides otherwise.

9.1 Minimum thesis structure

- Title page
- Declaration of authorship and academic integrity, if required by VGU or the program
- Abstract
- Acknowledgements, if any
- Table of contents
- List of figures, list of tables, and list of abbreviations where applicable
- Introduction and problem statement
- Literature review or state of the art
- Methodology, design approach, or system model
- Implementation, experiments, case study, or engineering realisation
- Results and discussion
- Conclusion and outlook
- References
- Appendices where applicable

9.2 Minimum formatting requirements

- The manuscript shall be prepared on A4 paper size with consistent page numbering.
- A readable main text font of 11 pt or 12 pt shall be used consistently throughout the thesis.
- Line spacing shall be between 1.15 and 1.5 for the main text, except for captions, footnotes, tables, or code where a different spacing is justified.
- Page margins shall be sufficient for readability and binding; a minimum margin of 2.5 cm on each side is recommended.
- Headings shall follow a clear hierarchy and be used consistently.
- Figures, tables, and equations shall be numbered consistently and referred to in the text.
- Every non-original figure, table, dataset, or code excerpt shall identify its source.
- Units, symbols, abbreviations, and terminology shall be used consistently throughout the manuscript.

9.3 Referencing and citation style

For engineering-oriented theses, IEEE referencing shall be used as the default MST citation style, unless another style is expressly approved by the Academic Coordinator or required by a specific research context.

All borrowed ideas, quotations, figures, tables, datasets, software libraries, and code fragments shall be cited properly. Every source listed in the references shall be cited in the thesis, and every in-text citation shall correspond to a complete reference entry.

9.4 Technical writing quality expectations

- The thesis shall define a clear engineering or research problem and explain its relevance.
- Objectives, assumptions, methods, and limitations shall be stated clearly.
- The methodology shall be described in sufficient detail to make the work understandable and, where feasible, reproducible.
- Results shall be analysed critically and not merely reported descriptively.
- Language shall be precise, objective, and suitable for an academic engineering audience.
- The final document shall show logical structure, coherent argumentation, and evidence-based conclusions.

10. Academic integrity, plagiarism screening, and responsible use of digital tools

Academic integrity is a binding requirement of the Master Thesis. The student remains fully responsible for the originality of the work, the accuracy of citations, the integrity of data and calculations, and the lawful use of third-party material.

Before submission, every thesis shall be checked for plagiarism at the VGU library. The official plagiarism check result shall be submitted to the Academic Coordinator and the thesis supervisors in order to obtain permission for the defence.

If the plagiarism percentage is greater than 10%, the student shall revise the thesis and resubmit the plagiarism check result together with the modified thesis.

Where digital tools or AI-based tools are used for language support, coding assistance, data handling, literature screening, or idea structuring, such use shall not replace the student's own scholarly work. Any material use that affects the content, wording, coding, analysis, or presentation of results should be declared transparently in accordance with the applicable university or program requirements.

Any suspected academic misconduct shall be handled in accordance with the applicable VGU regulations and the decisions of the competent bodies.

11. Submission requirements

The thesis shall be submitted by the official submission date stated on the approved registration or, where applicable, on the approved extension decision.

At minimum, the submission package shall include the following:

- The required hard-bound copies of the final thesis for the MST program office in accordance with the currently applicable administrative instruction.
- One hard-bound copy of the final thesis for the VGU Library.
- One electronic copy of the final thesis for the MST program office and the VGU Library.
- The official plagiarism screening result together with any declaration of authorship, confidentiality statement, or additional declaration required by VGU or the program.
- The thesis submission receipt and any further administrative records required for scheduling the colloquium.

The official MST submission format is therefore both hard-bound and electronic. Any library repository deposit required by the VGU Library shall be completed in addition to, and not in place of, the required hard-bound and electronic submissions. The exact number of program-office hard-bound copies shall follow the current administrative instruction of the program.

A thesis submitted late without an approved extension is subject to the applicable university regulation and examination consequences.

After submission, the Academic Coordinator and examiners shall review whether the thesis is admissible for defence, including the plagiarism screening requirement.

12. Colloquium procedure and examination records

Following the Master Thesis, a colloquium shall be held. The colloquium forms part of the examination process and shall be administered through the official MST colloquium documents.

The colloquium file shall contain, as applicable, the following records:

- General information form for the Master Thesis with colloquium, including the thesis title, student identification, date, time, venue, and examination board.
- Final Evaluation form recording the grade of the written thesis and the grade of the colloquium, together with examiners' comments and signatures.
- Colloquium Minutes documenting the examination process and the principal points of discussion or questioning.

The examination board shall include the supervisors or examiners designated in the official colloquium documents. The official schedule, venue, and presentation instructions shall be communicated to the student in writing.

Any approved accommodation for disability, pregnancy, or other special circumstances shall be documented in accordance with university procedures. Only the minimum necessary personal information shall be collected and processed.

The final grade shall be determined in accordance with the applicable regulation and the officially approved evaluation form. Where separate grades are recorded for the written thesis and the colloquium, those grades shall be documented on the official final evaluation form.

13. Extension of the thesis period

In exceptional cases, the thesis period may be extended by up to one month.

An extension request shall be submitted on the official Application for Time Extension of Master Thesis form. The request shall state the current submission date, the requested new submission date, the duration requested, and the reasons for the request. Supporting documents should be attached where relevant.

The request shall be submitted before the official submission date and as soon as the grounds for the request become known. The decision shall be made by the authorised program representative indicated on the form and shall be retained in the official thesis record.

14. Failure, repeat, and procedural recourse

A failed thesis may be repeated once. A second repetition is not allowed. If the second attempt is evaluated as failed or regarded as failed, the thesis is finally failed and graded 5.0 (failed).

For module examinations relevant to thesis eligibility, retakes shall follow the applicable VGU General Examination Regulation. Where a module examination has reached the student's last permitted attempt, the relevant written or oral retest shall be evaluated by at least two examiners.

For procedural recourse, the student should first inspect the assessed examination and discuss any reservation with the examiner. If the student remains dissatisfied, an appeal against the assessment may be lodged with the Examination Board within four weeks after announcement of the result. In accordance with the VGU General Examination Regulation, evidence to the Examination Board shall be submitted through the Examination Office at VGU. For MST administrative handling, the student shall additionally inform the Academic Coordinator and the program office without delay so that the formal route and deadline can be observed.

15. Records management, confidentiality, and data protection

The program office shall maintain the official thesis file and retain the documents required by the current administrative process. The official thesis file should normally include the approved registration, any approved extension decision, the plagiarism check result, the colloquium information sheet, the final evaluation, and the colloquium minutes.

Where the thesis contains confidential industrial or research information, confidentiality arrangements shall be clarified at registration and handled in a manner that still permits examination, quality assurance, and record keeping.

Sensitive personal data shall be processed only where necessary for thesis administration or approved accommodation and shall be handled in accordance with applicable university procedures and data protection requirements.

Appendix 1. Thesis registration checklist

- I have passed all examinations of semesters 1 to 3.
- I have passed the Industry Project.
- I have provided the required proof of English language proficiency.
- My proposed topic belongs to the field of the MST program.
- The workplace and supervision arrangement have been clarified.
- If the thesis is external, the workplace supervisor is eligible and the case has been approved in principle.
- The official application form is complete and all required signatures have been obtained.
- The proposed title, key tasks, and workload are sufficiently clear for approval.
- I understand the official issue date and official submission date that will govern my thesis period.

Appendix 2. Final submission checklist

- The thesis is complete, proofread, and formatted according to the MST minimum standard or the currently issued template.
- All figures, tables, data sources, software elements, and borrowed material are cited properly.
- The plagiarism screening has been completed and the official result is attached.
- Any required declaration of authorship or additional program document is attached.
- The required hard-bound and electronic copies have been prepared and submitted in the officially required format.
- The colloquium file has been prepared as instructed by the program office or examiners.

Appendix 3. Minimum thesis structure

- Title page
- Declaration of authorship and academic integrity, if required by VGU or the program
- Abstract
- Acknowledgements, if any
- Table of contents
- List of figures, list of tables, and list of abbreviations where applicable
- Introduction and problem statement
- Literature review or state of the art
- Methodology, design approach, or system model
- Implementation, experiments, case study, or engineering realisation
- Results and discussion
- Conclusion and outlook
- References
- Appendices where applicable

Appendix 4. Official forms and records

The official MST thesis forms shall be used together with the applicable VGU General Examination Regulation and the Specific Examination Regulation of the MST program.

Document	Purpose	Maintained by
Master Thesis Application Form	Formal thesis registration and approval	Program office
General Information of Master Thesis with Colloquium	Administrative colloquium scheduling and identification	Program office / examiners
Final Evaluation of the Master Thesis with Colloquium	Recording of thesis grade and colloquium grade	Examiners
Colloquium Minutes	Record of examination process and discussion	Examiners
Application for Time Extension of Master Thesis	Request and decision on extension of thesis period	Program office

End of document