**Guidelines on joint thesis procedures for supervisors in AQFood Master Programmes[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**AQFood Joint Master Programme**

AQFood is a joint master programme offered by 4 Nordic Universities and is a full-time Master Degree Programme with duration of two years.

During these two years, students will study at two of the five Nordic partner universities:

• University of Iceland, Iceland (UoI)

• The Technical University of Denmark (DTU)

• Norwegian University of Life Science (NMBU)

• The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)

This joint Nordic Master Programme is designed as a double degree programme.

**Joint thesis procedure**

The thesis is usually written during the fourth (=spring) semester of the two year programme. This programme has agreed on joint supervision of thesis which means that there are always two supervisors for the thesis – one from each of the two universities. The local rules for supervision and evaluation of thesis differentiate.

Building up a joint programme across institutions is very challenging and these guidelines are prepared to support the academic and administrative staff involved in the joint thesis procedure and in order to ensure a smooth graduation process. The programme strives to fulfil the expectations of the AQFood university alliance regarding the length of the programme (2 year Master-programme) and therefore, it is a goal to complete the graduation of the students in time.

For this reason the evaluation of thesis should be completed in August at the latest.

**Supervision and Assessment**

When involved in supervision on joint thesis work, supervisors are recommended to adhere to the following principles regarding thesis supervision and assessment:

**Supervision**

The thesis will be supervised by University 1 and University 2 according to the local procedures and regulations of the respective institutions. The intention of the AQFood Master programmes is that both supervisors communicate and collaborate regularly on the supervision in order to ensure an integrated learning outcome for the student, combining learning from both the first and the second year of study.

As a general rule a member of the AQFood consortium if they are not main supervisor of the thesis must be involved as a cosupervisor on the thesis.

The student is responsible of keeping supervisors updated of the progress of the thesis. The main supervisor or the local programme coordinator is responsible of keeping the programme coordinator updated on the students’ progress. It is recommended to discuss expectations for supervision of the two supervisors and their respective roles in the process and agree on a meeting schedule before starting the project.

**Thesis agreement**

Supervisors involved in a joint thesis procedure are advised to fill in a joint thesis agreement in collaboration with the student and reach agreement on the following aspects:

*Topic and method(s) applied*

The topic and the method(s) applied must be agreed upon by both University 1 (first year of study) and University 2 (second year of study) professors as well as the Programme Board.

*Roles*

As a rule, a professor of the University 2 is the main supervisor. The students and the supervisors must discuss expectations and agree on reporting procedures and a meeting schedule.

*Timing*

The student and the supervisors must agree on at timeline for the thesis, including major milestones and deadline for submission. The thesis work should be started in January-February at the latest (second study year) and the student should submit it for assessment at the end of June/July at the latest but following always the local rules of the two universities.

**Assessment**

It is a goal that the student is given one grade for the thesis. As the thesis assessment criteria differ between the respective institutions, it is recommended that the supervisors stay in close contact and discuss the assessment criteria extensively both when designing the thesis project and during the process. In addition, the possible effect of the presentation/defense of the thesis must be taken into account. If there is a risk of a total rejection of the thesis, the student must be informed early enough so that the student has a possibility to improve the thesis before the final submission.

*Presentation of thesis*

Presentation of thesis must be done according to each partner university rules:

• UoI: a thesis defense is required and counts towards the final grade. Can be done via adobe connect.

• DTU: a thesis defense is required and counts towards the final grade. Can be done via adobe connect.

• NMBU: no presentation required

• NTNU: no presentation required

The timing of the presentation/defense must be agreed on between the two supervisors and should normally take place in June/July. In cases with compulsory thesis defense, the partner university supervisor or assessor participates must participate in this event as the grade will often also be fixed in this occasion and the defense itself will count in the overall assessment (e.g. 10%). In cases where it is not required to perform a thesis presentation, a joint presentation must be organized with the participation of both supervisors and Adobe connect is used for practical reasons.

*Assessment time*

The universities have different rules regarding timelines for thesis assessment. In order to comply with these differing rules, it is recommended to follow the shortest timeline of the two universities. The general rule is a maximum assessment time of two months after submission of the thesis, but this has recently been changed at DTU (where it is now two weeks).This means that the assessment should be completed by mid-August, but within 2 weeks after submission at DTU. It is strongly recommended that the two supervisors of the thesis communicate and collaborate regularly with each other during the assessment period in the spirit of the AQFood university alliance.

1. (Adapted from the Erasmus Mundus programme, NordSecMob, and N5T) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)