

Recommendations for the supervisors of CoDaS master's thesis 2025-2026

About the programme

Master's Programme in Communications Engineering and Data Science (CoDaS) is a full-time Master of Science degree programme with a duration of two years. During these two years, the students study at two of the five partner universities: Aalto University, Finland, Grenoble INP-UGA, France, Técnico Lisboa, Portugal, TU Braunschweig, Germany or UPC Barcelona Tech, Spain. The thesis is written during the fourth semester of the two-year course, i.e., in the spring of the second year. The students will receive a degree from each of two of the universities where they have studied, i.e. a double degree. CoDaS is one of the top-quality Erasmus Mundus master programmes selected and funded by the European Commission Erasmus+ Programme.

CoDaS programme has agreed on joint supervision of thesis, which means that there are two supervisors, one from each of the two universities which the student attends. The local rules for supervision and evaluation of thesis differ between the universities. These guidelines aim to support the academic and administrative staff involved in thesis procedure and to ensure a smooth graduation process. One goal of the joint supervision is to harmonize the institutional practices and policies among the European universities. The active collaboration between the supervisors during the thesis supervision can also lead to new research co-operation.

Thesis project

The thesis research should be done as a member of a research group at one of the partner universities, in another research institution, or in an industry R&D project team.

The thesis projects are typically related to the programme content. However, the CoDaS programme aims to educate graduates who can work in diverse roles in the IT and software industry as well as in organizations that make use of information technology. Therefore, the thesis project may be done on equally diverse research or engineering topics.

It is up to the student to find the project and to negotiate with the organization that provides it. The students are encouraged to select projects that increase their employability and career prospects after graduation. This could mean gaining industry work experience in Europe or learning specific marketable technical skills. Academic research projects are recommended to those who consider doctoral studies after graduation. When the supervisor has influence over the project, it is important to discuss the student's career plans and individual learning goals.

The work by the student may be paid or unpaid depending on the rules of the organization where the project is done. Many of the CoDaS students receive a scholarship funded by the European Commission, and if the thesis is done in an EU-funded project, the student must inform the programme coordinator to ensure that the student does not receive double EU funding.

Thesis topic and supervisors

Before starting the thesis project, the student must find two supervisors, one from both universities they have studied in, and agree on the thesis topic with both supervisors. One of the two supervisors must be named as the main supervisor. Each university has its own regulations on who (e.g., professors) is authorized to supervise theses in the programme.

As a rule, the main responsibility of the thesis supervision is where the student is physically located, i.e. at the Host University, and the supervisor of the Host University will act as the main supervisor. If the student is physically located somewhere else, the responsibility of the main supervision can also be agreed otherwise.

The purpose of having two supervisors is to ensure that the thesis meets the expectations of the two universities. The main supervisor (or person nominated by them) is responsible for day-to-day guidance of the student. The secondary supervisor is encouraged to participate in the research and provide feedback; however, the secondary supervisor's main role is to fulfil the formal role of thesis supervisor at the other university. It is recommended to organize a kick-off meeting online with both supervisors to agree common goals and to explain the academic requirements and timeline.

The topic should meet the requirements of both universities, and it should match the goals of the organization that hosts the thesis project. When the student is working in an industry R&D project, they will need the main supervisor's help in finding an academic angle (e.g., theoretical framework, research problem, and research methods) to what otherwise might be an advanced engineering project.

Supervision

The thesis will be supervised by Home and Host Universities according to the local procedures and regulations of the respective institutions.

The student is responsible for keeping both supervisors updated on the thesis progress. However, the main supervisor should be the main contact person for the student for discussing the thesis procedure and for getting advice and feedback throughout the project. The secondary supervisor is responsible for informing the student about the local administrative or academic requirements related to thesis and providing feedback when it is needed. Parallel reviews of the thesis drafts by the two supervisors should be avoided; instead, ask the student to make improvements based on the first review before starting the second review.

The most important task of the main supervisor is to monitor the thesis project and the student's progress in writing, so that the thesis is completed on time. Therefore, the main supervisor should insist on regular (e.g., monthly or weekly) meetings with the student. When the research or engineering project meets difficulties, the supervisor must help the student replan or refocus and complete the thesis regardless of schedule of the applied project. The thesis submission deadlines are determined by the thesis regulations and tuition fee rules of the two universities.

Joint thesis and university-specific requirements

The thesis is a joint component of the two degrees. Thus, the same thesis must be submitted to both universities. However, if both universities require using their thesis template, the student must make two separate versions of the document to meet the technical requirements of both universities.

One important consideration is that at some universities, the thesis may be either academic research leading to scientific results, or an advanced engineering project where the latest scientific knowledge is applied to a technical problem. Some universities, on the other hand, may require scientific research. If this is the case, the supervisors should ensure throughout the project that the thesis defines a research problem and meets other requirements for scientific work. Fortunately, the boundary between advanced engineering and scientific research in computing is not sharp, and the solution may be as simple as presenting the project as a case study where previous scientific results are confirmed or technology is evaluated in a new setting.

In some universities, the thesis is a public document and in those cases the thesis cannot have any confidential sections. If there are confidential sections, only the "visible" part of the thesis will be evaluated, and the thesis must form a coherent whole without the concealed parts.

The company or other organization that hosts the thesis project can be mentioned in the advisor affiliation, acknowledgements section, and in appropriate parts of the text. When desired, names of companies and products can be omitted from the thesis, and they may be referred to as "case company", "system under test" etc.

It is the student's responsibility to learn about the requirements of both universities and to communicate with both supervisors about them. The main supervisor is encouraged to ask about the criteria of the other university, help the student meet the criteria, and guide the student in writing the text so that it explicitly addresses any specific requirements.

Thesis presentation or defense

The student gives presentations or defends the thesis following the rules of both Home and Host Universities. It is recommended to organize the event in a way that the supervisor from other university participates online, or that the event is held fully online.

Universities requirements regarding thesis presentation/defense are listed below.

Aalto

- The thesis supervisor must be present (onsite or online) and the presentation must be completed at the latest by the deadline for submitting thesis and graduation application. No other specific requirements.

Grenoble INP-UGA

- The defense is public unless the internship host entity explicitly requests otherwise. The defense takes place within the UGA premises or remotely subject to approval by the president of the jury.
- The defense jury is composed of one of the programme directors, the thesis supervisor, the tutor (if internship in a company or outside Grenoble) and an external expert named by the supervisor.
- The defense lasts one hour: 25 minutes of presentation, 20 minutes of questions, 15 minutes of deliberations, 5 minutes to install next student.

Técnico Lisboa

- The Jury is made up of 3 to 5 members, as follows:
 - o The President of the Jury, who is a member of the MEEC Scientific Committee, appointed by the MEEC Coordinator;
 - o Representative of the advisory team (who cannot preside over the Jury);
 - o 1 to 3 national and/or foreign members who may be professors, Ph.D. researchers, specialists holding a Ph.D. degree, or up to 2 specialists of recognised merit in the area of the thesis. One of the members will assume the role of examiner.
- The public examination may not, under any circumstances, exceed the duration of 90 minutes, and it is recommended that, as current practice, they last 60 minutes. The President of the Jury is responsible for managing the duration of the public examination in accordance with the following rules:
 - o the first 20 minutes should be taken up by a presentation summarising the work by the candidate;
 - o the remaining 40 to 70 minutes should be taken up by the discussion of the scientific/technical content of the work, divided equally between the interventions of the Members of the Jury and the candidate. Portuguese and/or English may be used during the public examination.

TU Braunschweig

- Before the thesis is evaluated, the student gives a presentation lasting approximately 30 minutes, in which he or she presents the thesis. The presentation can count for up to 3 out of 30 credit points of the evaluation of the thesis, if the achievement of the qualification objectives for the selected chosen topic is meaningfully complemented by the presentation. The examiner will announce at the time the topic is given whether and to what extent the presentation will be included in the grade.

UPC

- Students who spend the 1st year at UPC as home university and do the thesis in a host university do not have to defend it at UPC. The grade obtained in the host institution will be transcribed at UPC. These students will only have to submit the thesis report following the UPC template.

- Students who do the thesis at UPC as host institution will follow the instructions presented here:
 - The evaluation committee is composed by 3 UPC professors: a President (chosen by the advisor), a Secretary (the MT advisor), and a Vocal (chosen randomly among the professors of the departments involved in the master).
 - The date and time is agreed by the members of the evaluation committee and the student.
 - The defence includes a presentation (in English) by the student (max 30 minutes) and questions from the evaluation committee (typically between 30 – 60 minutes). After the questions, the student and the public is asked to leave the room and wait outside.
 - The evaluation committee agrees on the evaluation, and it is communicated to the student. In case of extraordinary quality, a Honors distinction can be proposed, but it will be decided by the School by end of the 1st or 2nd call, as this distinction is limited to the best 5% students.

Evaluation and grading

The thesis is evaluated by both Home and Host University supervisors or evaluators, and each university awards a grade for the thesis based on its own criteria and grading scale.

A key goal of the Erasmus Mundus programmes is to harmonize practices including grading across universities. Therefore, the two supervisors should exchange views before the evaluation or defence and aim to coordinate the grading. In rare cases, it may not be possible to reach the same grade because of differences in the grading criteria or process (e.g., external evaluator or defense). One outcome of the programme is increased understanding of such differences, which will lead to more harmonized processes over time.

The CoDaS partner universities have adopted the ECTS grading scale defined in the Bologna process. The mapping of the local thesis grades to the ECTS grades is shown in the table below.

	Aalto	Grenoble INP-UGA	Técnico Lisboa	TU-BS	UPC
Excellent	5	18	18	1,0 – 1,3	9,0-10
Very good	4	16	16	1,7 – 2,0	8,0-8,9
Good	3	14	14	2,3 – 2,7	7,0-7,9
Satisfactory	2	12	12	3,0 – 3,3	6,0-6,9
Sufficient	1	10	10	3,7 – 4,0	5,0-5,9
Fail	0	0	0	4,3 – 5,0	0-4,9

If there is a risk of failure, the student must be informed early enough so that the student has the opportunity to improve the thesis before its final submission.

Timeline

The student must also follow the schedule of both universities. Each university has their own schedules, please find a summary on the table below. Delays in the start can cause major problems later, and the programme coordinator should be kept aware of any potential delays. If the delay is caused by the organization that is supposed to host the project, the supervisors should help the student make a backup plan and get started anyway.

By default, the student should submit the thesis for evaluation by the earliest to the two deadlines set by the two universities. The thesis must be submitted at the same time to both degree-awarding universities and with the same content. The student may take a day or two after the earlier deadline to edit the layout for the other university.

The supervisor should inform the student early in the process about their personal timetable for reviewing drafts and providing feedback. Otherwise, students might expect to receive feedback on short notice during the supervisor's travel or holidays.

University	Start of thesis process	Deadline for thesis submission	Deadline to finish the degree	Official graduation date	Notes
Aalto	Early January	31 July	31 July	31 July	Student may also continue the thesis to autumn semester if needed due to partner university's semester schedule. In that case, the student must apply for tuition fee waiver for the autumn semester. The student must also register as attending for autumn semester and therefore needs to pay the student union and health care fees (~68€). If student registers attending for autumn semester, the deadline for thesis submission and graduation is 31 December.
Grenoble INP	Early February	Depending on the date of the defense (two weeks before the defense)	30 September	28 /29 or 30 September	
IST	November	31 October	31 October	31 October	https://tecnico.ulisboa.pt/files/2022/03/masters-dissertation-topics-deadlines-and-procedures-2021.pdf https://tecnico.ulisboa.pt/files/2024/08/masters-dissertation-conclusion-deadlines-and-procedure-2024-2.pdf
TU-BS	No specific date - § 6 (2) Students may not register for the Master's thesis until	§6 (5) (5) The processing time from the assignment of the topic to the submission of	There is no specific deadline!	Graduation Date is the date on which the last achievement in the	

	they have successfully completed modules totalling *at least 75 credit point*s for the Master's degree programme in Computer Science.	the Master's thesis is six months. The topic can only be returned once and only within two months of its assignment. Upon reasoned request to the Board of Examiners in Computer Science, the processing time can be extended by up to two months.		degree programme was successfully completed.	
UPC	Late January-early February. Thesis topic must be assigned 48h before enrolment. Regular enrolment is during the first week of February (5th-6th, typically), although it can also be done later.	At least one week before defense. The student can defend at any time (provided her/his advisor approves the thesis submitted), before the defense deadlines: 1st call: 15th September. 2nd call: 31st October	Same as the thesis defense deadlines: 1st call: 15th September. 2nd call: 31st October Students who go to the second call usually cannot receive the honor distinction (limited to 5% of the thesis) and will have to pay a 90 euros fee (not covered by Mundus or CoDaS grants)	As soon as the student completes all the courses and the master thesis. Deadline: 31st October	

Contacts for further information

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Key academic contacts at each partner university for further information about CoDaS and the thesis procedures:

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