Research Components of Masters Programmes at ENV

Below an overview on the research components for the various Masters programmes at the School of Environment. Please distinguish between the overall programmes, which the Postgraduate (PG) Advisors are coordinating, and the research components, which the Masters Advisor coordinates, similar to a course coordinator.

Type of Masters research

The School of Environment offers several Masters programmes:

- Masters of Science (MSc) for Earth Sciences, Environmental Management, Environmental Science, Geography, and Geophysics. Programmes: 240 points. Research component: 120 points (796-labelled). MSc programmes are generally two years but for students who already have a PG qualification such as BSc (hons) or PGDip, a one-year research-only MSc is available as a programme.

- Master of Arts: Geography. Programme: 240 points. Research component: 120 points (796-labelled). Research component equivalent to that of MSc.

- Master of Engineering Geology (MEG). Programme: 180 points. Research component: 90 points (EARTHSCI 794). Martin Brook is the informal PG Advisor. There is an option for students who already have a PG qualification to be admitted into a 120-point programme with a 90-point research component.

- Master of Environmental Science (MEnvSci). Programme: 180 points. Research component: 90 points. There is an MEnvSci option with a 30-point research component that is handled similarly to a BSc (hons) thesis. There is also the option of a 240-point MSc in EnvSci (confusing!).

Students automatically get allocated initial funds for research (see table). Additional funds may be available by application to support higher research costs. Funding includes $350 for thesis binding.

Overview: Types of Masters research components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Max. thesis length (words)</th>
<th>Funding allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSc</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>$1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Geog</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>$1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEG</td>
<td>EarthSci</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEnvSci</td>
<td>EnvSci</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Key Personnel (as of Dec. 2019)**

Departmental Graduate Advisor: Michael Rowe  
Masters Advisor: Ingo Pecher; Phil Shane in 2020.  
Post-graduate Advisors (programmes):  
- EARTHSCI: Ludmila Adam  
- ENVMGNT: TBA  
- ENVSCI: Melanie Kah  
- GEOG: Michael Martin  
- GEOPHYS: Ludmila Adam  
- (MEG: Martin Brook)

Academic Services Coordinator: Mikael Johannisson-Wallman; Chris Struthers in 2020 ([env-pgadmin@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:env-pgadmin@auckland.ac.nz)).

**Timelines**

The clock starts ticking when the student is enrolled in the research component (e.g., Geog 796). It is **one year** for full-time enrolments, also for 90-point theses. Start dates are typically 1 March or 15 July. There is a possibility to start on 1 Dec. but that is rarely used. This means, full-time students in all Masters programmes who started their research component on 1 March 2019 need to submit their thesis by 28 Feb. 2020 (please check with the Academic Services Coordinator how the 29 Feb. 2020, which is a Sat., will be handled...).

Formalities (time-lines for full-time enrolment):

- Start of research: PD3A form for supervisor. The students get sent a “Welcome package” with a lot of useful information. PD3B form (finance and laboratory needs) after admission, required to access funding.  
- After ~3 months: Submit research proposal.  
- After ~6 months: Mid-term progress report.  
- After ~9 months: Student presentations. AS-512 form to be filled by supervisors: Nomination of examiners (one internal, one external, experts in the field but no conflict of interest)\(^{(1)}\).  
- 1 year: Submission of thesis\(^{(2)}\).  
- The examination process should take ~3 months (see below).

\(^{(1)}\) Conflict of interests, refer to: [https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/teaching-and-learning/postgraduate-research/examinations/guidelines-template1.html#par_pagedetails](https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/teaching-and-learning/postgraduate-research/examinations/guidelines-template1.html#par_pagedetails)

\(^{(2)}\) It is quite difficult to get an extension.
Timelines for full-time enrolments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Mid-term report</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
<th>Submission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 March</td>
<td>Early June</td>
<td>Early Sep.</td>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>28 Feb., following year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 July</td>
<td>Mid Oct.</td>
<td>Late Jan.,</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>14 June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For details refer to:

Examination process

The examination process should be completed within three months. If students have not heard anything back within that time frame, please be pushy. The process consists of the following:

- Submission of thesis
- Thesis sent out by School of Graduate Studies (SGS). Examiners given six weeks.
- Examiners reports collated. Supervisor asked to comment, only on factual inaccuracies in reports, no comments on grades (let alone suggestions), student’s circumstances, etc.
- Sent to Masters Advisor.
- Similar marks: Examination Committee\(^{(1)}\) to recommend final grade, move through system to award grade.
- Significant differences between marks\(^{(2)}\): Examination Committee asks examiners to find a compromise grade.
- If recommended grades by examiners still significantly different\(^{(2)}\), disputed-grade route (can take several weeks).
- Usually, some modifications of thesis required; usually, to the satisfaction of the supervisor.
- Once approved, supervisor sends message to SGS who then gives OK to print and submit bound version.

\(^{(1)}\) Usually, Masters Advisor and Head of Discipline.

\(^{(2)}\) Ten or more marks different or suggested grades differ across honours division boundary.