FAQ Master's Examination

This document serves as a collection of frequently asked questions about the master's examination for Data Science students.

1. Questions about the examiners

1.1 What criteria must the examiners and the chair of the examination committee fulfill?

The chair has to be someone with habilitation.

An examiner can be without habilitation if they possess a permit to hold Master's exams in Data Science. If someone does not have habilitation, you will likely have to ask them individually if they have that special permit, or whether that should be applied for through the department of the respective person.

In addition, they should be from the Data Science faculty, that is, they regularly teach courses within the Data Science curriculum.

If availability is an issue, other faculty from DAS could be contacted, but please make sure to consult with the Chair of the Data Science curriculum committee if you are looking for a "nonstandard" setup.

1.2 Does the academic supervisor of the master's thesis have to be present?

Typically, the academic supervisor is the examiner on the scientific area of the Master's thesis. However, this is not mandatory. The academic supervisor (if with habilitation) could also be chair or not at all be part of the examination committee.

1.3 Can one examiner examine two different subjects?

No.

2. Questions about the subjects

2.1 From which courses can the examined subjects be selected?

Typically, an examined subject represents an elective module, or courses from an elective module. Such elective modules can be from departments other than AIHI (most notably Computer Science, Geoinformatics, or Economics).

If you think about an examination subject that is not from an elective module, please get in touch with the Chair of the Data Science curricular committee well ahead of the planned examination date.

2.2 According to the curriculum, "the second [part of the examination] will be about the scientific area of the master's thesis". Does this mean that one subject must be a lecture related to the master's thesis' topic? What if the master's thesis was not related to any of the lectures that is allowed after 2.1?

It would be very unusual if a Master's thesis was not at all related to any of the Elective Modules - after all, it is a Master's thesis in Data Science ;) In case of doubt, please get in touch with the Chair of the Data Science curricular committee well ahead of the planned examination date.

2.3 According to the curriculum, "the third [part of the examination] will be from a different module suggested by the student and subject to approval by the curricular committee." in practice, does this really have to be from a different module? After which criteria is the subject approved/disapproved by the curricular committee?

Both examination subjects should be sufficiently advanced (absolutely not from the bridge module!), and they should not be too close to one another. Thus, the most natural choice is to select two of the three elective modules that you have finished. In most cases, one of them will be close to the scientific area of the Master's thesis.

2.4 Are subjects always examined based on the entire lecture content, or can specific topic areas be selected?

Examination topics should not just be a replay of the respective course exams that you have already passed. Therefore, it is a good idea to think beyond one course, and rather at the module level. Of course, it makes sense to then discuss with the examiners whether the material could be narrowed down somewhat, as the complete material from a full module (say, two lectures and a lab), may be too much.

Some examiners give research papers to be presented and discussed during the examination. That is also a perfectly valid alternative to course-based examinations.

3. Others

3.1 Under which circumstances is an online examination possible? Who needs to approve of it?

One of the examiners could be called in through a video conference if scheduling is otherwise impossible. However, it is preferred to have chair, examiners, and candidate all in one physical room for the examination.

Health-related reasons may require special accommodation to be discussed individually.

3.2 Are all three parts graded equally?

All three parts are weighted approximately equal. Therefore, it is a good idea to spend sufficient time on preparing an excellent presentation and to practice it before friends, thus also making sure that it will not exceed the allotted time.