



**POLITECNICO**  
MILANO 1863

**School of Design**

**GUIDE TO THE DEGREE EXAMINATION  
FOR LAUREA MAGISTRALE (EQUIVALENT TO MASTER OF SCIENCE)  
PROGRAMMES  
AT THE SCHOOL OF DESIGN  
(EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM 270/04, 509/99,  
OLD 5-YEAR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM)**

**POLITECNICO DI MILANO**

## **Table of Contents**

### **Introduction - Scope of application**

#### **Art. 1 - The Single Board (CU)**

- 1. Nature and Nomination of the Single Board**
- 1.2 Composition of the Single Board**

#### **Art. 2 - The Operational Boards (CO)**

- 2.1 – Appointment, composition and nature of Operational Boards**
- 2.2 – Obligations of the University Professors**

#### **Art.3 – Organization of work**

- 3.1 - Operational Boards**
- 3.2 – Secretary of the Degree Examination Board**

#### **Art. 4 - Final exams**

- 4.1 - Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) examination**
- 4.2 - Number of thesis authors**
- 4.3 - Thesis**

#### **Art. 5 – Supervisor**

#### **Art. 6 - Student registration for the Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) examination**

#### **Art. 7 - Thesis to be presented to the Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) examination board**

#### **Art.8 – Language of the thesis**

#### **Art. 9 - Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) examination marking**

- 9.1 - Assigning a 'with honours' qualification**

#### **Art. 10 - Taking the Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) examination and proclamation**

#### **Art. 11 - Entry into force of the guide to the Degree Examination of Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) Programmes at the School of Design**

#### **Attachment 1 - Assessment criteria**

## **Introduction - Scope of Application**

This document regulates how the Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science and hereinafter referred to as LM) examinations are held. This applies for students enrolled in LM programs with an educational system that is approved under Ministerial Decree 270/2004.

It also provides the rules for students enrolled in post graduate Master's degree programmes who are taking final examinations. Their schedule must also be approved under Ministerial Decree 509/1999. In what follows, all references to Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) can be applied to Laurea Specialistica. This document also provides rules for the degree examinations of students enrolled in the 5-year Old Educational System (pre—509/99), for which the degree score is expressed in hundredths. For these, all references to the LM applies to the five-year Laurea, and all references to scores up to one hundred and ten must be changed to hundredths.

## **Acronyms**

CCS Study Programme Board

CU Single Board

CO Operational Board

LM Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science)

## **Art. 1 - The Single Board (CU)**

### *1.1 - Nature and Nomination of the Single Board*

The CU is unique to the School of Design and includes all the Study Programme Boards (CCS) related to it. Upon proposal of the Dean, the CU is appointed by the Rector by the end of each calendar year. The Rector's decree for appointment of the CU guarantees the suitability and qualification of its members for performing certain duties.

The Rector delegates the School Dean to vary the members of the CU during the academic year if necessary for correctly managing the LM examinations.

### *1.2 - Composition of the Single Board*

The CU consists of multiple members in order to have an appropriate number of Operational Boards, as defined below, for each degree examination session.

The CU is composed of full professors (namely professors and researchers) of the University. These professors must hold (in the current academic year), or have held (in one of the previous two years) official courses of the study programmes to which the CU is referred. In addition to full professors, the CU can also include as members:

- Emeritus professors, former full professors of the University.
- Professors who have been retired for no more than five years, previously full professors of the University.
- Adjunct professors of the current academic year, or in one of the two previous years.
- Other full professors of the University.

The following can be called as members of the CU, but in a number that does not exceed the full professors by 10%:

- External experts with recognized competence, including representatives of professional and industry associations.
- Temporary research fellows

After consulting with the respective coordinators of the Study Programme Boards (CCS), the Dean proposes the annual composition of the CU to the Rector, according to the criteria mentioned previously. The Presidency Office inserts the names proposed by the Dean into a dedicated application.

After consulting with the coordinators of the CCS, the Dean appoints, from among its members, a President of the Single Board and a Vice-President who can replace him in case of an absence or impediment.

## **Art. 2 - The Operational Boards (CO)**

### *2.1 – Appointment, composition and nature of the Operational Boards*

The Operational Boards (CO) assess the final exams of graduating students enrolled in a specific Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) examination session.

A suitable number of COs, formed for each examination session by the President of the CU (or by the Vice-President in case of impediment), guarantee that the examinations are held regularly. The names are taken from among those of the CU members.

The CO has at least 7 members, a minimum of 5 are chosen from among the members of the CU. The Dean of the school (or the Vice-Dean, in case of absence or impediment), and the President of the Single Board (or the Vice-President) must be added as authorities, and will guarantee that the LM examinations are carried out regularly.

The names of the CO members are included in the dedicated application, constituting the formal appointment of the operational commission. The names of the graduating students who are to be assessed by the pertinent CO are inserted simultaneously.

### *2.2 – Obligations of the University Professors*

The University professors who hold official courses must attend the meetings of the Degree Examination Operational Boards. They must be available for all the sessions planned in the academic calendar. In case of impediment, they must present a reasoned justification for the absence, leaving enough time for it to be considered at the subsequent CO meeting.

Politecnico di Milano considers the LM examinations as extremely important, and its aim is to give a high-level image of itself to the graduating students and those who are externally related to the University. While carrying out their duties the CO members are required to exhibit an appropriate behaviour that is suitable for this important official event.

## **Art.3 – Organization of work**

### *3.1 - Operational Boards*

Each CO contains at least five members, to which the two authorities must be added. From the members, a President of the Operational Commission (CO) is selected and appointed by the President of the CU. This appointee coordinates the work, and, if deemed useful, can appoint an operational secretary of the same CO who looks after registration.

If necessary, a full professor can be part of more than one CO. In these cases however, the composition of the CO and the timetable of presentations must be organized to allow the presence of at least five members, as specified above.

The minutes of the CO deliberations list the names of the commissioners, those of the graduating students who are to take the exam (with the necessary data for their identification), and the final LM score. The minutes should be marked in the pertinent space and the commissioner should initial each page. The minutes must be signed by the graduating student, and the minutes of the work conducted by the CO must be given to the Presidency.

### *3.2 – Secretary of the Degree Examination Board*

The CU Secretarial Office is part of the School Presidency, which organizes the staff in order for them to organize and run the LM examinations. The Secretarial Office, assisted by the President of the CU, performs the following:

- sends any calling notices for the meeting to the board members.
- sends the call for the meeting to the CO members, including the names of the graduating students under examination.
- invites any external assistant supervisors of the CO to attend the session.
- prepares the documents for the CO related to each graduating student, and in particular:
  - provides details of the scores obtained in each course and the weighted average on credits of the scores obtained (pre-laurea form)
  - provides a printout of the minutes of the CO deliberations

The CU President, with the help of the Board Secretariat Office, is responsible for:

- nominating the Operational Boards along with their presidents and secretaries, making sure that the names are placed correctly in the pertinent application (formal act of nomination), and ensuring that the single graduating students are assigned to them.

- carrying out the general management and the correct verbalization of the entire meeting.
- verifying that the procedures are correct, and collaborating to correctly answer any questions that arise
- if necessary, consulting with the Dean while the examinations are being carried out.
- keeping note of the attendances and absences of the CO members.
- reporting to the Dean any breaches made by the professors.

#### **Art. 4 - Final exams**

For admission to the final Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) examination, students must have:

- obtained the 120 credits required for a Level II Laurea Magistrale, including credits relating to internships and final exams;
- written an individual thesis under the guidance of a supervisor;
- presented a request for enrollment, and completed all the administration commitments within the terms given in the academic calendar. These requests must be completed using the process indicated by the Registrar's Office.

##### *4.1 - Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) examination*

The exam consists of discussing a thesis written under the guidance of a supervisor.

The thesis is discussed in one of the COs established for the Degree programme that the student is following. When presenting the thesis, the applicant can use any effective digital media, audio/video inserts, and paper instruments that are necessary for presenting a summary of the work.

##### *4.2 - Number of thesis authors*

#### **The Thesis is strictly individual.**

Coordinated theses can be programmed with a common introduction and separate thesis volumes.

The board must always be able to identify the contribution of each applicant.

During the discussion where the examination is held, each graduating student will be called to illustrate their thesis; the supervisor will introduce the project, explaining the nature of the candidate's collaboration.

##### *4.3 - Thesis*

The project developed in the Final Synthesis Design studio is evaluated when the six month design studio ends. The final design studio exam will be aimed at ascertaining total fulfillment of project development.

While attending the FDS students can, in agreement with the design studio professors, lay out the possible theoretical or planning developments of the subject faced in the FDS, which could become the nucleus of the thesis.

In their thesis students can write about subjects other than those relating to the design studio. They can write with professors other than those of the FDS as long as they are full professors and are a part of the CCS.

In the latter case, the student will receive a Google-form from the Dicos office; the form has to be completed and the subject being addressed must be approved. This form will only be returned if the supervisor is an adjunct professor and is not part of the attended FDS.

The student will make individual appointments with the supervisor according to the thesis elaboration times. The times necessary for writing the thesis are agreed on between the student and the supervisor.

Should students have difficulty in finding a supervisor, they can contact the programme coordinator to obtain support in concluding their educational paths. They can also send a request for assistance using the "Trouble Ticketing" service in the home page of the school site.

There is a section dedicated to the publication of proposals for thesis subjects titled "Thesis Notice Board" on the school site. Students can find offers of theses for their CdLM, with an indication of the proposing professor. Students can refer to the published contacts autonomously, and should come to an agreement on the times and methods of thesis development with the professor.

The Thesis Notice Board is updated periodically.

After having viewed the material in the system, the supervisor validates the Thesis Preparation (PET) following registration for the degree exam sessions.

Should the thesis not reach the expected level, the supervisor can refuse the documentation inserted by the student (refusal causes the student to withdraw from the degree exam sessions).

#### **Art. 5 – Thesis Supervisor**

The supervisor must be a member of the CU that is pertinent to the appropriate Scientific Discipline Sector (SSD) to which the board refers, or to other SSDs explicitly indicated in the school regulations. The supervisor can work together with one or more of the assistant supervisors even if they do not belong to the CU. The supervisor can also work with experts on specific subjects, even those that are external to the school. After graduating students deliver their thesis, the supervisor (where expected and within the established deadlines) drafts a report and makes a proposal for increasing the score.

The supervisor is normally a member of the CO that judges the graduating student.

The obligations and duties of an adjunct professor and thesis supervisor end in the April session of the academic year subsequent to that in which the appointment was awarded.

The adjunct professor can continue managing the duties taken on as supervisor even after the period indicated above. This can continue as long as he/she presents, within the first degree session subsequent to term expiry, an explicit and formal request signed by the student. This request must be approved by the Dean.

A contract cannot be stipulated for this commitment, which is voluntary and does not oblige the University and the school in any manner.

#### **Art. 6 - Student registration for the Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) examination**

The request for enrollment in the Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) examination must be presented on line by the graduating student within the term published for each session.

The student registers through the University Online Services.

The Registrar's Office will verify if each student is eligible to take the final exam. Students who are not present at, and/or not admitted to the exam session, must withdraw using the pertinent section of the online services.

Withdrawal from the degree exam session is irrevocable until the next session.

The graduating student must upload the thesis files within the deadlines. After seeing the material, the supervisor can confirm that the thesis is complete, and return it to the graduating student so that small modifications can be made. The supervisor also has the ability to refuse the thesis. If refused, the request for registration in the degree exam session will be rejected).

#### **Art. 7 - Thesis to be presented to the Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) examination board**

The thesis that students present to the degree board can consist of:

1. **the development of a theoretical, planning, experimental thesis, or innovative research (research thesis);**

the thesis must:

- **explore** the technical-specialistic and/or systemic aspects of the project according to the mission and goals of the Programme. The discussion must include an in-depth theoretical/critical, methodological and/or historical dissertation and/or a detailed study of the experimental type;
- **include** a consistent introduction dedicated to the research carried out, with scientific criteria and access to the sources of scientific knowledge (databanks, scientific articles, conference reports, etc....);
- **propose** the amplification of knowledge about a theme that is not very well-established and its potential applications. It can also contain a greater contribution to the progress of knowledge with reference to a specific research area (thesis of a more theoretical nature);
- **request** a minimum completion time of 6 months;

gives right to the attribution of a maximum score of 8 points when the thesis and the relative presentation are being assessed.

2. **the development of a thesis that consolidates and perfects knowledge that has already been acquired (consolidation thesis):**

the thesis must:

- **illustrate** the project, strengthening its technical-specialistic and/or systemic aspects according to the mission and goals of the programme. The discussion must show suitable methodological reasoning, historical aspects, theoretical/critical elements;
- **concern** subjects with consolidated scientific research and project applications;
- **include** research that is functional for project development, a simple explanation of the basic assumptions and the main hypotheses on which the proposed project application is based;
- **be centered** mostly on potential planning applications;
- **require** a minimum of 2 months for its elaboration;

gives right to a maximum score of 4 points when the thesis and the relative presentation are being assessed.

Students can request attribution of the innovative research thesis, or the consolidation thesis indifferently. The request for one of the types of theses should be made (and evaluated by the supervisor) according to the minimum time needed to complete the path, and to the commitment that the student intends to give to it.

During the thesis, the supervisor can suggest that the student, given the attitude demonstrated and the related interest and emerging time requirements, convert the thesis into research thesis or consolidation thesis. It is the supervisor's duty to assess the final result and confirm whether or not the thesis is in the correct category.

The work must demonstrate the maturity and critical ability developed by the graduating student in relation to the content of the programme.

Theses are reports which contain the development phases, the objectives of the work, the bibliography and document sources, the technical tables of the project, and the physical and/or virtual model where expected. Students must make at least **2 copies of the thesis** available to the board: the copies can be collected when the discussion ends.

Project presentation must be integrated by a summary of the internship carried out in companies or professional studios.

#### **Art.8 – Language of the Thesis**

The final work is usually written in Italian or English. A thesis written in another language can be accepted if the graduating student presents a motivated request, and if their work is authorized by the President of the CU. However, in this case the presentation and discussion are still held in Italian or English. All written theses must contain an abstract written in Italian or English.

#### **Art. 9 - Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) examination marking**

The conclusive assessment considers both the student's career during the two years of the Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science), and the assessment of the thesis. The score is out of one hundred and ten (/110).

It is obtained by summing

3. the average grade obtained by the graduating student during the program (weighted on the credits). It is expressed in one hundred and tenths, and hundredths of one hundred and tenths (without considering extra activities and 'with honours' qualifications)

with

4. the increase assigned by the Operational Board. This is also expressed in one hundred and tenths and hundredths of one hundred and tenths.

This sum is rounded to the nearest whole number (0.5 rounds up to 1.00) and is limited to 110.

The CO can also assign a 'with honours' qualification

The increase has a value of:

- between **-1 and 8 points** for theoretical, planning and experimental theses, or innovative research (research thesis);
- between **-1 and 4 points** for theses involving the consolidation and perfection of already-acquired knowledge (consolidation thesis).

The minimum score for a Laurea (equivalent to Bachelor of Science) is always 66.

In the case of theses under the old educational system, the increase can be between 0 and 10 points.

When assessing and attributing scores the board uses the sheet attached to this regulation defined by the school with the CCS. The sheet gives important areas for judging the completeness of the thesis that is presented. The supervisor normally takes part in the discussion, expressing the proposed increase to be attributed to the thesis at the start of the work of the CO.

All the official members of the CO (those who sign the minutes) take part in determining the score. The President of the CO considers the proposal of the supervisor and the scores expressed by the members, and may propose increasing the score and the resulting degree score. If the proposal is approved after being discussed then the score is attributed.

#### 9.1 - *Assigning a 'with honours' qualification*

The 'with honours' qualification indicates that the CO was particularly appreciative of the preparation and maturity reached by the graduating student, was impressed with his/her brilliant academic record, and inspired by the quality and originality of the degree thesis.

The 'with honours' qualification can only be assigned if the formulated score, before being rounded, is higher than or equal to 111 (one hundred and eleven) hundred and tenths.

The 'with honours' qualification is only assigned if all the CO members agree.

The final evaluation of the commission is unquestionable; the signature on the minutes by the candidate is proof of the assessment acceptance.

#### **Art. 10 - Taking the Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to master of Science) examination and proclamation**

Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) Degree examinations are public. The public should be told to leave the room, but only at the end of the discussions in order to proceed with the score explanation.

Concerning the thesis discussion, the applicant can use digital, audio/video, or paper supports. Graduating students have approximately 20 minutes (research thesis) or 10 minutes (consolidation thesis) for the discussion, including possible questions from the board. It is the President of the Board, however, who establishes an alternative presentation time for special cases.

During the discussion and in addition to the thesis, the applicant can present a summary of the internship carried out if pertinent to the degree thesis. The discussion must always respect the maximum time limit.

The proclamation takes place when the work of each CO has ended.

The proclamation ceremony for students graduating with a Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) is held in a solemn public form to highlight the event. It must be suitable for the image that Politecnico di Milano projects outside the University. The new graduates are given their Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) certificate during the ceremony.

#### **Art. 11 - Entry into force of the Guide to the Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) Examination of the Laurea Magistrale Programmes at the School of Design**

These regulations will become current for a Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) in design from the School of Design as of September 2017

Milan, 24 March 2017

**Attachment 1 - Research thesis - Thesis assessment criteria**

<p><b>SCHOOL OF DESIGN</b>  <b>Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) Programme in Design ...</b>  <b>Operational Board 1 - President Prof. ....</b></p> <p><b>Date .....</b></p>
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**EVALUATION SHEET**

Surname	Name

Average/110:	No. with honours:	Thesis title/Notes

CRITERIA		score	score
<b>Rhetoric and representation abilities</b>	Able to talk about the research carried out and discuss the project using suitable terms, references and communicative 'direction'. Able to use all the instruments and techniques necessary to define the project and give information on it using images, drawings, schematic and synthetic representations. Able to talk through all the project process phases.	<b>from - 0.33 to 2</b>	
<b>Methodological coherence, extensive research on the project</b>	Able to build a coherent path that approaches the project objective, with appropriate analyses and research phases. The path is based on motivated and documented choices, connected with project knowledge and the placed project commitments.	<b>from - 0.33 to 3</b>	
<b>Project culture, and innovation of the project proposal</b>	Presence of interpretative, linguistic references taken from project culture. Ability to operate critical reading through an original version of the project theme, producing results that demonstrate the specific and distinctive design aptitudes of the student.	<b>from - 0.33 to 3</b>	
<i>The proposals for increase can also be expressed as fractions.</i>		<b>max. 8 pt</b>	

<b>Final score</b>	Score deliberated by the board at the end of the discussion. The possible proposal of a 'WITH HONOURS' qualification must be <u>unanimously voted</u> by the board, and can only be awarded if the formulated score, before being rounded, is higher than or equal to 111 (one hundred and eleven) one hundred and tenths	
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**Attachment 1 - Consolidation thesis - Thesis assessment criteria**

<p><b>SCHOOL OF DESIGN</b>  <b>Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to Master of Science) Programme in Design ...</b>  <b>Operational Board 1 - President Prof. ....</b></p> <p><b>Date .....</b></p>
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**EVALUATION SHEET**

Surname	Name

Average/110:	No. with honours:	Thesis title/Notes

<b>CRITERIA</b>		<b>score</b>	<b>score</b>
<b>Rhetoric and representation abilities</b>	Able to talk about the research carried out and discuss the project using suitable terms, references and communicative 'direction'. Able to use all the instruments and techniques necessary to define the project and give information on it using images, drawings, schematic and synthetic representations. Able to talk through all the project process phases.	<b>from - 0.33 to 1</b>	
<b>Methodological coherence and research quality</b>	Able to build a coherent path that approaches the project objective, with appropriate analyses and research phases. The path is based on motivated and documented choices, connected with project knowledge and the placed project commitments.	<b>from - 0.33 to 1</b>	
<b>In-depth analysis of the project and originality of the proposal</b>	Presence of interpretative, linguistic references taken from project culture. Ability to operate critical reading through an original version of the project theme, producing results that demonstrate the specific and distinctive design aptitudes of the student.	<b>from - 0.33 to 2</b>	
<i>The proposals for increase can also be expressed as fractions.</i>		<b>max. 4 pt</b>	

<b>Final score</b>	Score deliberated by the board at the end of the discussion. The possible proposal of a 'WITH HONOURS' qualification must be <u>unanimously voted</u> by the board, and can only be awarded if the formulated score, before being rounded, is higher than or equal to 111 (one hundred and eleven) one hundred and tenths.	
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