



**Háskóla  
Vestfirðna**  
University Centre  
of the Westfjords

# University Centre of the Westfjords

# Student Handbook

updated august 2023



## Useful Contact Information

### University Centre of the Westfjords

Telephone: (+354) 450 3040

Email: [info@uwestfjords.is](mailto:info@uwestfjords.is)

Address: Suðurgata 12, 400 Ísafjörður, Iceland

Kennitala: 610705-0220

Website: [www.uw.is](http://www.uw.is)

### University of Akureyri

Telephone: (+354) 460 8000

Email: [unak@unak.is](mailto:unak@unak.is)

Address: Norðurslóð 2, 600 Akureyri, Iceland

Kennitala: 520687-1229

Website: [www.unak.is](http://www.unak.is)

### Westfjords Healthcare Centre

Telephone: (+354) 450 4500

Emergency Phone: 112

Address: Torfnæs, 400 Ísafjörður, Iceland

Website: [www.hvest.is](http://www.hvest.is)

### Red Cross

Red Cross helpline: 1717, for those who need someone to talk to in confidentiality.

Email-Ísafjörður: [formadur.isafjordur@redcross.is](mailto:formadur.isafjordur@redcross.is)

Website: [www.raudikrossinn.is](http://www.raudikrossinn.is)

### Lögreglan Ísafjörður (Police)

Telephone: (+354) 444 0400

Email: [vestfiridir@logreglan.is](mailto:vestfiridir@logreglan.is)

Address: Hafnarstræti 1, 400 Ísafjörður, Iceland

Website: [www.logreglan.is](http://www.logreglan.is)

### Slokkvilid Isafjardar (Fire Service)

Telephone: (+354) 450 8200

Email: [slokkvilid@isafjordur.is](mailto:slokkvilid@isafjordur.is)

Address: Fjardarstraeti 28, 400 Isafjordur, Iceland

Website: [www.facebook.com/slokkisa/](http://www.facebook.com/slokkisa/)

### In Case of Emergency

112

This number works the same as 911 in the US or 999 in the UK. It connects directly to the emergency services: Police, Ambulance, Fire Brigade

### Píeta Association (Counselling Hotline)

Telephone: (+354) 552 2218

Email: [pieta@pieta.is](mailto:pieta@pieta.is)

Address: Baldursgata 7, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland

Website: [www.pieta.is](http://www.pieta.is)



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# 1. The University Centre of the Westfjords

## 1.1 Welcome to the University Centre of the Westfjords

The University Centre of the Westfjords (UW) is a small independent institution dedicated to providing higher education for local and international students. Established in 2005 it now runs two international master's programmes; Coastal & Marine Management (MRM) and Coastal Communities & Regional Development (MA). Both programmes are accredited through the University of Akureyri (UNAK) with students graduating through UNAK.

Moreover, UW is a hub of academic learning for Westfjords residents as it offers services for students living in the Westfjords who are enrolled in any of the Icelandic Universities. Through distance learning, Westfjords residents can access education without having to move away from home. The University Centre also arranges a variety of Icelandic language courses during the summer and provides facilities and services to visiting field schools as well as national and international researchers.

The University Centre is a member of several international partnerships and is participating in national and international research projects. UW is amongst others a member of the University of the Arctic (UARctic).

Located in the Vestrahús building in Ísafjörður, the University Centre of the Westfjords shares the premises with a number of other institutions. The organisations operating within Vestrahús include the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute, the Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority, the Snow Avalanche Centre of the Icelandic Meteorological Office, the Westfjords Regional Development Centre, among others and several organisations share common reception facilities.

This handbook has been compiled to provide relevant information to make your time at the University Centre run as smoothly as possible. Please read this handbook carefully so that your time at UW will be enjoyable. While the handbook aims to be comprehensive, do not hesitate to seek further information or advice from UW staff if you have any questions that are left unanswered. This handbook applies to all students enrolled at the University Centre of the Westfjords, including guest students.

## 1.2 The University Centre of the Westfjords Staff

 <p><b>Dr. Peter Weiss</b> Director of the University Center of the Westfjords E-mail: weiss@uw.is Phone: +354 450 3045 Mobile: +354 869 3045</p>	 <p><b>Dr. Catherine Chambers (20%)</b> Research Manager E-mail: cat@uw.is Phone: +354 4503048</p>
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 <p><b>Dr. Brack Hale</b> Academic Director of Master's programme Coastal and Marine Management E-mail: brack@uw.is Phone: +354 450 3047</p>	 <p><b>Dr. Matthias Kokorsch</b> Academic Director of Master's programme Coastal Communities and Regional Development E-mail: Matthias@uw.is Phone: +354 450 3049</p>
 <p><b>Astrid Fehling</b> Administrative Director of Education and Teaching E-mail: astrid@uw.is Phone: +354 450 3043</p>	 <p><b>Hanna Lára Jóhannsdóttir</b> Project Manager - Website, PR, marketing, recruitment E-mail: hanna@uw.is Phone: +354 450 3042</p>
<p><b>Project Manager - TBA (50%)</b> Field trips, lunch lecture, library and more</p>	



## 2. Studying at the University Centre of the Westfjords

### 2.1 The UW master's programmes

The University Centre operates two 120 ECTS international master's programmes: Coastal and Marine Management (MRM) and Coastal Communities and Regional Development (MA) which are both accredited through the University of Akureyri (UNAK), one of Iceland's four public universities. The programme in Coastal Communities and Regional Development is accredited through the School of Humanities and social science (Faculty of Social Science) and the programme in Coastal and Marine Management through the School of Business and Science (Faculty of Natural Resource Sciences). Students at the University Centre of the Westfjords are formally enrolled at the University of Akureyri and graduate with a degree from the University of Akureyri. However, studies are entirely conducted at the University Centre of the Westfjords in Ísafjörður and are wholly supervised by the University Centre of the Westfjords. The language of instruction is English.

Upon enrolment, students will be provided with a UW and a UNAK email address. The UW email address is used as a contact route by all UW instructors and staff and should be checked regularly to keep up with all announcements regarding courses and classes as well as events. The UNAK email address enables access to Ugla (student records) and to Canvas where information and materials for enrolled courses can be found.

Both programmes consist of 75 ECTS in the form of courses and 45 ECTS in the form of a thesis. All courses are taught in modules. The programme starts in the autumn semester and the first year is made up of core courses and elective courses from the teaching schedule. In order to complete 75 ECTS in one academic year, courses are taught in intensive modules from August through June. In total 85 ECTS are offered for the academic year. 34 ECTS are from compulsory courses.

Courses are weighted from 1 ECTS to 6 ECTS and range from one to three weeks in length. Each ECTS is expected to involve approximately 25-30 hours of student work. On average students take 2 ECTS a week which corresponds to no less than a 50 hour workload per week. Core subjects are taught mainly at the beginning of the programme, as they form the basis for subsequent teaching.

After the courses finish in June, students' attention moves to the 45 ECTS thesis. According to the above work time calculation, the 45 ECTS should be equivalent to 1.5 semesters' work. Students are free to choose whether or not they stay in the Westfjords to complete their theses. Theses are submitted for examination in semester 3 (details in chapter 4).

The Master's Programme Committee is the supervising body for the academic quality of the University Centre's master's programmes. It is appointed by the rector of the University of Akureyri and has three representatives from the University of Akureyri, one from the University Centre of the Westfjords and one student representative. The committee's roles and responsibilities include to review applications, to approve curricula, to approve teachers and advisors, to ensure the quality of teaching and of theses, to appoint external readers and to attend to other matters associated with the quality of the programme.

### 2.2 The Bologna Process

UW master's programmes are classified as terminal master's programmes from which students receive a master's degree from the University of Akureyri. The programmes are in cycle 2.2 of the Icelandic Ministry of Education's National Qualification Framework. The overarching aim of the Bologna Process is to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international cooperation and academic exchange. Built into the process is quality assurance in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).<sup>1</sup> The University Centre of the Westfjords has to fulfil the National Qualification framework for Iceland, so course descriptions and learning outcomes are developed according to the guidelines (the Bologna process criteria).

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.unibo.it/qualityassurance/en/AttachmentHP/Standards%20and%20Guidelines%20for%20QA%20in%20the%20European%20Higher%20Education%20Area.pdf>

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a central tool in the Bologna Process, which aims to make national education systems more comparable internationally. It helps students to move between countries and institutions and to have their academic qualifications and study periods abroad recognised. ECTS allows credits taken at one higher education institution to be counted towards a qualification studied for at another. ECTS credits represent learning, based on defined learning outcomes and associated workload.

## 2.3 Learning outcomes for Coastal and Marine Management

### Knowledge

Upon completion of the programme the student shall:

- possess knowledge of the core scientific subjects within the field of management of coastal and marine regions and resources, as well as its main past, current and future challenges, conflicts, issues and problems
- have acquired knowledge through own desktop-based and/or field-based research
- provide arguments for and defend their own findings and recommendations, as well as providing constructive criticism for other people's findings and recommendations
- place the latest knowledge in context within coastal and marine management, including best available practices and current laws and regulations
- be familiar with the most commonly used research methods within management of the coastal and marine environment and natural resources, especially those relevant within their own field of specialisation
- have knowledge of ethics in science, both in regards to human and animal subjects, and to general ethics in research principles (e.g. working with other members of the scientific community, plagiarism, and authorship).

### Skills

Upon completion of the programme the student shall:

- have adopted skills for selecting and applying relevant key instruments in the field of coastal and marine management
- be capable of analysing and communicating qualitative and quantitative data
- understand complex subjects in a professional context
- effectively apply their knowledge and understanding in their scientific and professional work, both as individuals and as members of a group
- collect, analyse and evaluate scientific data as well as evaluate the quality of published work
- apply their knowledge, understanding and proficiency in new and unfamiliar situations or in an interdisciplinary context
- develop projects and place them in context by applying methods based on scientific theories, policy instruments and management tools
- be capable of integrating knowledge, resolving complex issues and presenting an opinion based on the available information
- effectively apply relevant research methods and implement small-scale research projects
- understand research and research findings.

### Competences

Upon completion of the programme the student shall:

- have developed the necessary learning skills and independence for further studies
- initiate and lead projects within the field of management of coastal and marine environment and natural resources, and be responsible for the work of individuals and groups
- communicate complex scientific information, challenges and findings within the field of coastal and marine management to scholars as well as to a general audience



- be capable of presenting and describing scientific issues and research findings using analytical and methodological terminology
- make decisions in an independent, professional manner and defend them
- evaluate the suitability of the different methods of analysis and evaluate complex scientific issues in each case
- communicate statistical information using tables and figures in a clear and effective manner.

## 2.4 Learning outcomes for Coastal Communities and Regional Development

### Knowledge

After the completion of the programme the student will:

- understand the premises on which the development of coastal communities and regional development rests, as a field of knowledge, and have knowledge of basic principles and processes of its core subjects, including geography, planning, sociology, economics, law, political sciences, history and anthropology.
- possess knowledge of how coastal communities and coastal regions can be developed sustainably, following core principles of economics and social sciences in relation to space/region
- have acquired knowledge through their own desktop-based and/or field-based research and can place latest knowledge in the context of regional development. Understand local, regional and national administrative and governmental instruments dealing with regional policy and development and the premises they are based upon. Be familiar with present and historical policy perspectives on regional issues at key international institutions
- be familiar with the most commonly used research methods and best practices in exploring spatiality. This includes different approaches to space, e.g. from economy, society and policy making, as well as aspects of diversity and social justice at the local and regional level.
- have knowledge of ethics in science, both in regards to human and animal subjects, and to general ethics in research principles (e.g. working with other members of the scientific community, plagiarism, and authorship)

### Skills

After the completion of the programme the student will:

- be able to provide arguments for and defend their own findings and recommendations, as well as provide constructive criticism for other people's findings and recommendations
- have gained skills in locating and assessing relevant, up-to-date and reliable resources of information through multiple means
- understand complex subjects in a professional context, both as individuals and as members of a group
- understand how coastal communities and regions develop in a national context with respect to various national and international parameters, and apply their knowledge, understanding and proficiency to situations in their scientific and professional work which require the best available development strategies
- be able to target a defined problem, assess information at hand and draw inferences about how best to approach its resolution
- be able to apply administrative steering instruments, including international approaches, to a local context and evaluate their effect on a region or a local coastal community
- be capable to integrate knowledge, resolve complex issues and present an opinion based on the available information
- be able to collect, analyse and evaluate scientific data and be able to write, edit and review professional and academic reports. Understand research and research findings and can effectively apply relevant research methods and implement small-scale research projects

### Competences

After the completion of the programme the student will:

- be able to apply their knowledge and skills in a practical way in their profession, e.g. as analysts, administrators or consultants specialised in communities' or regions' development, and/or further studies, e.g. a doctoral degree
- be able to initiate and lead projects within the field of development of coastal communities, and be responsible for the work of individuals and groups
- effectively participate in public and academic discourse and communicate specific problems within the scope of coastal communities and regional development, facilitate discussions (e.g. with stakeholder audience), and deliver presentations using academic terminology and/or layman terminology
- be able to identify and interpret local circumstances and local knowledge by applying scientific methods, taking existing best available practices and relevant, available research findings into account
- be able to make decisions in an independent, professional manner and defend them
- be able to implement cross-disciplinary analysis involving mixed methods and data of different types (e.g. from economics, geography and/or social sciences) and effectively present and defend their findings and recommendations, orally and in writing, according to accepted academic standards at level 2.2

## 2.5 Registration Fee

Payment of the full registration fee for the school year (August 1 – July 31) is required for the student to be officially enrolled at UW. Payment for the second year of the programme (when students are typically undertaking thesis research) is also a requirement, as the student is enrolled and entitled to all the services of the University Centre and University of Akureyri. Contracts with thesis advisors are not made until the school fee is paid, and students may not graduate if school fees (including costs from the reception desk such as printing or coffee) are not paid. The annual fee must be paid by June 30 each year before the coming academic year begins. The annual registration fee is ISK 150.000 for Icelandic students and those from other EEA/EU countries, and for those who come from countries outside the EEA the registration is ISK 300.000. The intended length of the programmes are two years (see section 2.8). The registration fee for **every student** for further years is ISK 300.000.

## 2.6 Course Registration

The Administrative Director of Education and Teaching oversees registration for all students from admission to graduation. Students are automatically enrolled in all compulsory courses of their programme but are required to register via email for elective courses with the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching. Students at UW cannot register for courses in the Ugla information system themselves but the selection of courses is stored electronically in Ugla. With registration in a course students gain access to the course on Canvas. It is therefore important that students are always registered correctly. Registrations for autumn courses are received September 1st to 15th and registration for the spring and summer courses is open November 1st to 15th.

Students may withdraw from a course via email to the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching on the first day of the course.

A course with less than 8 students registered two months before course start, may be cancelled. In individual cases students may ask to change their registration to a different course. The student must contact the Administrative Director of Teaching and Education and registration can be dependent on course space and the permission of the instructor. Course descriptions can be found on the UW website as well as in the [course catalogue](#) of the University of Akureyri.

## 2.7 Academic Calendar

The academic year at UW runs from August to July and is divided into three teaching terms; the autumn, spring, and summer term. All students are responsible for their own studies.

**Academic Calendar 2023-2024:**

First academic year:	
August 18th & 19th	UW Orientation Days
September 1st-15th	Course registration for autumn courses
November 1st-15th	Course registration for spring and summer courses
Dec 16th - Jan 7th	Winter break
March 28th -April 14th	Spring/easter break
June 15th	Deadline to submit research proposal before summer break <sup>2</sup>
June 21st	Coursework ends
June 17th	National day and graduation ceremony
June 30th	Payment of registration fee for upcoming academic year
July	Majority of UW staff on holiday
Second year:	
August	Re-enrolment <sup>3</sup> and advisor contracts <sup>4</sup>
November	Midway evaluation (no later than 4 months after advisor contracts)
March 15th	First deadline for thesis submission
April 15th-May 10th	Defences
August 15th	Second deadline for thesis submission

<sup>2</sup> Thesis proposals can be submitted at any time throughout the year. Students who want to start their thesis related research over the summer months need to submit their proposals no later than 15th of June. We recommend to submit thesis proposals no later than the 15th of June for finishing within two years.

<sup>3</sup> Students are only enrolled after payment of registration fee.

<sup>4</sup> Advisor contracts are made after approval of the research proposal and are made for one year. If a student does not complete the thesis within the second academic year, the collaboration with the advisor needs to be renegotiated.

September 1st to 15th	Defences
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## 2.8 Length of Study

The intended length of the programmes are two years. The maximum duration of continuous enrolment is 4 years. Non-payment of registration fees in due time results in de-registration. After a duration of four years of uninterrupted registration, the student needs to apply to the Master's programme Committee to continue the enrollment. If the student wishes to extend their study, the student agrees to follow the latest programme rules and curriculum. The duration of study is extended for one school year at a time. A student is permitted to pause their studies once for one school year. This needs to be requested to the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching. The student will be re-enrolled with payment of the registration fee at the beginning of the next school year. If a student who has discontinued studies for longer than one year wishes to resume, the student must apply to the Master's Programme Committee in order to have completed courses re-approved for credit. The assessment ensures the course outcomes at the time the course was taken meet outcomes under the current course catalogue. Courses completed more than 10 years ago are not evaluated.

## 2.9 Access to facilities

The University Centre of the Westfjords has 4 classrooms at Vestrahús to accommodate multiple modules running at the same time. Students are requested to bring their own laptops and they are responsible for all software costs and updates. The University Centre recommends updating and backing up computers regularly. Students have access to the library at the University Centre as well as all library facilities and services at the University of Akureyri.

The University Centre and its facilities can be accessed freely by students from 8 – 16 on weekdays. Students can obtain a key card to access the building outside regular hours. Students need to pay a returnable deposit for key cards, which is then refunded when cards are returned at the end of their studies. The alarm system switches on automatically at midnight and switches off again at 07:00 every morning. If students anticipate needing the building at night time, they must let staff know.

Students have access to the University Centre kitchen and can store food in the fridge. Remember to label your food and other belongings. The University Centre has a coffee machine and drinks cost ISK 300 each, though a term coffee card can be bought at reception.

## 2.10 Ugla

All students at UW receive access to the Ugla information system ([www.ugla.unak.is](http://www.ugla.unak.is)), the University intranet. Students can keep track of their records through their own profile within Ugla. In order to access, students log on to Ugla with their username and password provided by the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching. In case of technical or access issues, students should contact the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching.

Students' profile pages contain personal information, information on enrolled courses, a record of courses taken, and grades. Students are asked to regularly check the accuracy of their information! If a student believes that information is wrongly recorded, or if changes need to be made, the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching is to be notified as soon as possible.

Certificates confirming attendance and academic records such as transcripts are issued by the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching.

## 2.11 Canvas and Turnitin

The University Centre learning management system Canvas is used to facilitate communication between instructors and students. Lectures, reading material and assignments are posted here for student access. The password for Canvas is provided by the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching. Through Canvas, instructors are able to send messages, emails, create a discussion forum, grade course assignments and provide feedback. All course material is under the Course Material/Modules section in each course.

Students receive an introduction to Canvas during orientation and have access to UNAK help services through the online service desk (canvas > help > online service desk). Under Settings (icelandic: Stillingar) the language (tungumál) can be changed. Instructors are asked to use the announcement function in Canvas to communicate messages to students. Students can access the Canvas app through the app-store or play-store by searching for *Canvas Student* and searching for UNAK. Some Safari versions may cause issues with the smooth performance of Canvas. Please consider using a different browser and make sure to keep it updated.

Turnitin is the plagiarism detection software used by the University Center of the Westfjords and is integrated in Canvas. Student assignments submitted to Canvas are automatically analyzed for plagiarism, including self-plagiarism.

## 2.12 Lectures and attendance

Studying at UW is characterised by lively interaction between teacher and student, opportunities for cooperative learning, and teamwork. Teaching usually takes place between 9:00 and 12:00 but instructors can schedule lectures and other sessions as needed. There is no teaching on public holidays or weekends unless otherwise specified. Such a decision has to be announced to the students at least two weeks prior to the course start.

Generally, attendance is not mandatory. However, participation can be part of the grade in a course. When courses are based on the students' participation for example in discussion sessions or hands-on sessions, attendance is required. If attendance is required, it is stated in the assignment section and/or in the syllabus provided on Canvas. If a student needs to have many days off from a course, such a request must be known to the instructor of the course and the Academic Director. This is weighed on a case-by-case basis and extracurricular activities are not valid excuses. The same applies for late assignment submissions for which instructors can subtract grade points.

## 2.13 Grading and Student Evaluation (complete grading rules in appendix A)

The evaluation of student performance at the University Centre of the Westfjords involves continuing assessment and/or final assessment. In this context continuing assessment means student evaluation that takes place while a course is in progress, through means such as written assignments, oral and written reports, journals, portfolios, and class participation. Final assessment at the end of a course may involve a final exam, a paper, a seminar presentation, or the evaluation of a practical project.

The instructor of each course decides how student evaluation will take place, in consultation with the Academic Director. Details of assignment evaluation must be available and communicated to students in writing in the course syllabus. After a class begins, changes in assignments may be made only with the agreement of all students and instructors participating in the course.

Students who request special assistance in working on assignments or taking exams must submit an evaluation/medical certificate of how their impairment or illness affects their educational needs to the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching.

Grade	Description of Grade (from University of Akureyri)	Grade point average	Classification
10	Exceptional. The student demonstrates unusually high aptitude	9,00 - 10,00	First Class with Distinction
9 - 9,5	Excellent. The student demonstrates high aptitude and the project greatly surpasses requirements		
8 - 8,5	Very good. The student surpasses requirements set for the project	7,25 - 8,99	First Class

7 - 7,5	Good. The student meets requirements set for the project		
6 - 6,5	Reasonable. Rather more than minimum requirements	6,00 - 7,24	Second Class
5 - 5,5	The project meets minimum requirements	4,75 - 5,99	Third Class
0 - 5	Unsatisfactory. Does not meet minimum requirements.	0,00 - 4,74	Failing Mark

## 2.14 Rules regarding Penalties for Plagiarism at the University Centre of the Westfjords

At the beginning of each academic year, all students sign the *University Centre's Academic Honor Pledge*. In doing so, they promise to fully respect intellectual property rights when writing their thesis, as well as in other study assignments. Handing in an assignment containing sections of plagiarized text as defined in the student's signed statement for UW will result in a failing grade. Further action may be taken by the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching in cooperation with the Program Director as well as the Master's Program Committee. Intentional plagiarism leads to immediate expulsion from the program. The rules regarding penalties for plagiarism at the University Centre of the Westfjords are as follows:

### CHAPTER I Definitions and Main Rules

#### *Article 1 Application Scope and Definitions*

- a) The term *plagiarism* refers to conduct where a student utilizes, without authorization, the creative works of others or uses them as though they were their own. This includes copying text directly or indirectly from another source or inserting such text into one's own text without proper citation.
- b) The term *creative work* refers to any tangible or intangible works of authors such as books, articles, essays, other writings, pictures, or other works both in printed or computerized form or other forms belonging to a specific rightful owner.
- c) *Self-plagiarism* is submitting a paper or assignment or parts of a paper or assignment the student has previously submitted in another context without referencing. Self-plagiarism goes against the expectation of the University Centre of the Westfjords that the work being presented is new and original.

#### *Article 2 General Prohibition on Plagiarism*

Plagiarism in any form whatsoever is strictly forbidden for students at the University Centre of the Westfjords and is subject to disciplinary action by the school. All cases of plagiarism are reported to the Master's Program Committee except as explained below.

#### *Article 3 General Duty to Refer to Sources*

- a) Anyone who makes use of the creative works of other sources in a composition of their own or in other creative work for the purpose of study at the school, must acknowledge the piece of creative work by referring to its source(s).



b)References are to be placed in the footnotes, bibliography, post textual notes or cited via other methods which are approved by the academic discipline in question. NB: While acknowledging that there are many different citation and reference styles, the University Centre uses the APA citation and reference style for all assignments.

c) The University Centre of the Westfjords instructs its students in the proper use of bibliographical sources and related rules. If a student is uncertain about the correct way to cite sources used in schoolwork, they should seek instruction from the respective instructor or Program Director.

d)Students who want to make use of their own work by submitting similar assignments in different courses need to clarify this beforehand with the instructor. The instructor can allow the submission of similar previous assignments but should request contextualization of the content to the current course. The use of own text without referencing is regarded as self-plagiarism as defined under 1c. The correct referencing and/or acknowledgement of previously submitted assignments and approval of the instructor is mandatory for not being accused of self-plagiarism.

## CHAPTER II

### Violation of Plagiarism Rules and the Consequences

#### *Article 4*

#### *Violation of Plagiarism Rules*

a) Teachers are normally to exercise supervision to prevent violations of the prohibition against plagiarism and they are to direct complaints about such alleged incidents to the Program Director.

b) Anyone who has been found guilty of unintentional plagiarism is considered to have manifested reproachable conduct, which means it is not appropriate for university students; students are expected to learn from the experience and will not be penalized for the first offense.

c)Anyone who has been found guilty of intentional plagiarism is considered to have manifested conduct unbecoming of university students and will not be tolerated.

d)The first case of self-plagiarism will be considered a serious matter and will result in a meeting with the Program Director . This meeting must be documented in written form. Such a case will not be dealt with by the Master's Program Committee. Repeated self-plagiarism will be considered unbecoming of university students and will not be tolerated.

#### *Article 5*

#### *Penalties for Plagiarism*

a) *Unintentional* plagiarism, which is equated with conduct *reproachable* to the university community, normally results in a reprimand from the Program Director and a rewriting of the assignment. If a student is found guilty of repeated cases of unintentional plagiarism, they can generally expect expulsion from the school.

b) *Intentional* plagiarism, which is equated with conduct unbecoming of university students, shall generally lead to expulsion from the school.

c)*Self-plagiarism* will result in the invalidation of the course assignment. If a student is found guilty of repeated self-plagiarism, they can generally expect expulsion from the school.

## CHAPTER III

### Charges and Case Procedure due to Alleged Plagiarism

*Article 6*  
*Master's Committee*

- a) The Master's Program Committee of the University Centre of the Westfjords has authority to make decisions on all matters relating to plagiarism. The Committee is composed of three representatives from the University of Akureyri one from the University Centre of the Westfjords, as well as a student representative from the University Centre, all appointed by the Rector of the University of Akureyri.
- b) All members of the Master's Program Committee must participate in decisions regarding cases of plagiarism.

*Article 7*  
*Reporting cases of plagiarism*

- a) Instructors have the primary responsibility to check for possible plagiarism when grading assignments. The Program Director may also carry out checks as necessary. They will always exercise caution to prevent violations of the plagiarism rules. Instructors shall notify any alleged violations to the Program Director and Administrative Director of Education and Teaching.
- b) Any allegation must be supported by an objective survey of the student's course material in question as well as any Turnitin report or similar documentation, which is to be forwarded to the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching. The Program Director will also request a statement from the student regarding the allegations.
- c) When all relevant material has been received by the Program Director and the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching, they must refer the case to the Master's Program Committee for deliberation.

*Article 8*  
*Case Procedure before the Master's Program Committee*

- a) The Master's Program Committee is to proceed as promptly as possible with an allegation involving plagiarism.
- b) The Master's Program Committee is to focus on solving cases i.e. by requesting more detailed information from the instructor, if needed. A student accused of plagiarism has the right to submit objections and explain any mitigating circumstances to the Master's Program Committee. The objections need to be in writing, addressed to the Master's Program Committee, and handed in to the Administrative Director of Teaching and Education.
- c) Having examined the case, the Master's Program Committee is to submit a written decision.

*Article 9*  
*Decisions*

- a) Obvious cases of unintentional plagiarism due to negligence are dealt with by the Program Director and the course instructor, who may consult the Master's Program Committee.
- b) In cases determined to be repeated instances of unintentional plagiarism the case is brought to the Master's Program Committee which must, in the wording of its decision, request the Director of the University Centre to communicate and execute the decision of the Master's Program Committee.

- c) In cases deemed involving an intentional infraction, the Master's Program Committee must, in the wording of its decision, request that the Director of the University Centre expels the student from the program.
- d) Cases regarding plagiarism which are referred to the Master's Program Committee are confidential and it is the Master's Committees duty not to divulge any of the related confidential information.

*Article 10*  
*Date of Taking Effect*

- a) These rules are to be revised three years after their approval or earlier if required.
- b) These rules are based on the rules related to the Penalties for Plagiarism from the University of Akureyri (no. 794/2021) but have been adapted to suit the context of the University Centre of the Westfjords. The Rules from the University of Akureyri are based on University of Akureyri's Law No. 40/1999.
- c) These rules become effective with the approval of the Master's Program Committee.

### **Statement - Plagiarism and the use of Artificial Intelligence, June 2023**

Artificial intelligence (AI), such as ChatGPT, is a new technology that has many potential uses for student work. As these have not all been identified yet, the current discussion is limited to the use of AI to generate content and to edit student prose. However, any use of AI to circumvent doing student's own work is unacceptable and akin to hiring someone to work for them. Until further notice, the following standards apply to all UW assignments, papers, and theses.

1. Any use of AI technologies in an assignment must be clearly stated and appropriately cited. Failure to do so is plagiarism and will be dealt with as such according to the rules of the University Centre of the Westfjords.
2. The use of AI to generate content for an assignment will result in a failing grade for the content portion of the grade. Students are supposed to develop the skills to extract and synthesize information from scientific and other literature.
3. Students need to acknowledge the use of external services to edit prose, including AI. Students are encouraged to communicate in their own prose. Editing services, such as the UW Writing Centre, allow students to develop their writing skills during the editing process, whereas the use of AI does not automatically do the same.
4. Any use explicitly asked for in an assignment by an instructor is exempt from points 2 and 3.

### **2.15 Credit transfer and assessment of academic work from other programmes**

Students can gain formal recognition (ECTS credits) for academic work which is not part of the UW-curriculum. The total number of credits taken from other programmes or internships may not exceed 30 ECTS. Students may take up to 12 ECTS of compulsory courses from other study programmes at the University Centre of the Westfjords as elective courses without special approval of the Master's Programme Committee, but in consultation with the Administrative Director of Teaching and Education. Students have the opportunity to enrol in modules at other affiliated institutions and contribute credits to their studies at UW. However, only courses at master level are considered and only elective courses can be replaced and students cannot be excused from compulsory courses of their study programme. All requests for approval of studies outside the University Centre of the Westfjords must be submitted to the Master's Programme Committee through the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching before the course at the other educational institution starts. An application for transferred credits must be supplemented by a detailed

course description from the university in question including learning outcomes and course assessment. Workload and learning outcomes must be verifiable and to a high degree in compliance with the UW programme. Having finished a course at another university, the student must request a certified transcript of courses completed to be presented to the home institution.

### 2.16 International student mobility

Through the University of Akureyri, UW takes part in several exchange programmes such as Nordplus (nordic and baltic cooperation), Erasmus (europe wide) and North2North (UARctic). A list of partner universities can be found [here](#). If students wish to take advantage of one the corporations either for studies or for mobility during thesis work they should contact the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching. UW does not offer scholarships to students. However, students can apply for grants through the Erasmus and Nordplus programmes.

### 2.17 Guest studies at Icelandic public universities

The University of Iceland, the University of Akureyri, the University of Agriculture in Iceland and the University of Hólar made an agreement to increase access for students to courses between universities in Iceland. The goal is to facilitate and encourage students to become guest students at other public universities. A student wishing to become a guest student for single courses at another public university in Iceland shall submit a formal *application for guest studies* to the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching no later than August 15th for the autumn semester and by December 15th for the spring semester. The application form is available in Canvas. Having finished the guest studies the student must request a certified transcript of courses completed at the receiving institution to be presented to the home institution. Courses can be found in the course catalogue of each institution.

### 2.18 Internships

Students are welcome to include internships into their curriculum and may apply to receive a maximum of 6 ECTS. Activities must be primarily academic in nature, with clearly defined learning outcomes and criteria for assessment. Students are required to pass the assessment in order to accrue the ECTS credits. Credits will not be awarded for attendance. The internship(s) may not be used to gather or analyse data that will contribute to the master's thesis. All requests for approval are evaluated by the Master's Programme Committee and each request is decided on a case by case basis in regards to its academic value and potential overlap with thesis research. A request for an internship must include a detailed description of the internship contents, internship tasks, learning outcomes, working hours and who is responsible for the internship. Regulations for workload per ECTS apply equally for internships and courses and learning outcomes must meet the criteria for master's studies. An application for credit transfer for an internship must be signed by the student and internship place. An internship is always graded as Pass/Fail, and requires a confirmation on behalf of the internship supervisor to verify the work done by the student.

### 2.19 Participation at Conferences

Students can be awarded 1 ECTS for presenting their completed thesis research at a conference. Students send an application to the Academic Director who brings the request to the Master's programme Committee before the conference. Certain conditions must be met to receive credit, e.g. that the quality and audience of the conference is appropriate, the logo of the University Centre needs to be visible on presentation slides, and if the thesis defence has not been held yet, the student's advisor shall decide whether the student's master's project results are ready to be presented.

### 2.20 Using the UW name and logo: conferences and professional networks

Students enrolled at UW have the right, and are encouraged to, use their UW affiliation in professional circles. Printing of business cards will be at the cost of the student and must be approved by UW before printing. For cover letter design and other professional usage of the logo, please refer to the rules regarding use of the UW logo at:

[http://www.uw.is/the\\_university\\_centre\\_of\\_the\\_west\\_fjords/the\\_university\\_centre\\_logo/](http://www.uw.is/the_university_centre_of_the_west_fjords/the_university_centre_logo/)

### 2.21 Evaluation of courses by students

After each course, students complete a course evaluation, anonymously. This is typically done before grades are submitted and is important for the quality of UW courses. As we are aiming to continuously improve education at the UW, it is very important that all students provide feedback for every course.

### 2.22 Printing and copying

Students can print, photocopy and scan using the University Centre printer at the reception desk. The first 70 printed pages are free of charge. After that, students may print at their own expense: black and white pages are ISK 15 per page, colour pages are ISK 25 per page.

### 2.23 Writing Service at UW and UNAK

The University Centre offers a Writing Service which provides free, one-on-one sessions to students to assist them with course writing assignments, research papers, and theses. The service aims to help students, especially those for whom English is not their native language, to think about their writing, implement an organisational strategy, and clarify their syntax.

To make an appointment, contact Dr. Laura Watt (laura@uw.is), with **“Writing Service”** in the subject line. Please indicate whether you would like a half hour or an hour appointment, the dates and times you are available to meet, and specific concerns you have with the document (i.e., grammar, structure, citations, etc.). Zoom meetings can be arranged and/or may be necessary on poor-weather days. For a long assignment or thesis, you may need to make more than one appointment. For evaluation of drafts longer than 2 pages, you must send your draft at least an hour prior to the meeting.

Policies of the Writing Service:

- The Writing Centre is not a drop-off copy-editing service. Instead, we offer to sit down one-on-one with each student, read through the material, and discuss the student’s concerns with the writing process. We do not offer line-by-line editing of entire assignments.
- In general, meetings will be scheduled Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons. Appointments (especially via Zoom) at other times are made on a case-by-case basis. Times for drop-in meetings at UW will be announced at the beginning of the school year.
- The Writing Service is not responsible for grades received on students’ assignments.
- For group projects, only the sections written by students present at the appointment can be examined.
- No input regarding content will be given. The Writing Service is here to assist with grammar, spelling, syntax, diction, and the organisational aspect of papers only.

In addition to the Writing Service at UW, the Writing Centre at the University of Akureyri is available for all students. The centre offers assistance for students who may be struggling with their research or writing and is happy to help with many aspects of academic writing. The Writing Centre is in the University of Akureyri library but appointments (for thirty minutes) can be arranged to be conducted via Zoom. Appointments can be booked via the [Writing Centres booking page](#).

### 2.24 Student counselling at UNAK

University studies are demanding and require independent work habits and analytical thinking. Student counselling can help students improve their study methods and efficiency if difficulties occur. The service is free of charge and students can book an appointment by sending an email to [radgjof@unak.is](mailto:radgjof@unak.is). Further information is available on their [website](#). If students wish support for non-study related issues they can contact the 1717 Red Cross Helpline (24/7) and/or they can contact the local health clinic to book an appointment with a general practitioner or psychologist.

### 2.25 Student Association

The Ægir Student Association represents the student community at the University Centre of the Westfjords. The association takes its name from the Norse spirit of Ægir. The student association is run entirely by

students and was formed in order to provide students a platform for activities. In recent years it has formed relationships and links with the local community through fundraising events, with these events culminating in a student run project aiming to give back to the community. For more information contact UW staff.

### 2.26 The UNAK student ID/app

There are no student-ID-cards, but the student association of the University of Akureyri (<https://www.sha.is/is>) has developed an app. To use the app, you need to register with the student association. If you want to become a member of the student association of the University of Akureyri to be able to access the app then please register with the student association for the school year 2023-2024 FOR FREE until September 15<sup>th</sup>. Afterwards the membership costs 5000 ISK for the school year and 2500 ISK for a semester. You can read about the app on the UNAK website; this is the link (Rafrænt stúdentakort SHA): <https://www.unak.is/is/samfelagid/frettasafn/frettir/rafraent-studentakort-sha>. The information on the website is only available in Icelandic but google will help you. The links where to get the app are at the bottom of the page. Once you are registered you log in with your UNAK email address and then you have to choose a photo. The app was designed to give students living in Akureyri good deals in bars and restaurants etc. <https://www.sha.is/is/afslaettir>, and this ID might not have any value internationally, but it should help you show that you are a student within Iceland.

### 2.27 Access to Office365

All enrolled students at the University of Akureyri (UNAK) with access to Uglá have also access to the Office 365 domain of UNAK. Log in with your UNAK email address and Uglá password here: <http://portal.office.com>. Find the button "Install Office" and download the package. Once installed you just need to be logged-in to access the office applications.



### 3. Ethical standards

The University Centre of the Westfjords is committed to providing a safe and respectful work environment without violations of ethical standards and free from any form of harassment. The following standards apply to all University Centre of the Westfjords staff, instructors, and advisors during their contract with the University Centre and students while they are enrolled. Penalties for violations of the ethical standards policy are taken on a case-by-case basis but can result in termination of contract.

#### Article 1 - General Standards

University Centre of the Westfjords staff, instructors, advisors and students will not discriminate between people for any reason. This includes but is not limited to relationships, circumstance, gender, race, sexual orientation and religion. The University Centre of the Westfjords does not tolerate any bullying, violence, offensive or disrespectful behaviour and harassment whether it be in direct communications or online.

University Centre of the Westfjords staff, instructors, advisors and students will respect the personal rights of UW staff and students, and show each other politeness in demeanour, speech and writing. University Centre of the Westfjords staff, instructors, advisors and students will aim to work together with integrity and avoid letting personal connections or interests influence work; respect each other's opinions and show each other tolerance; be fair in reviews, feedback and comments on others within the academic community and the public, whether it be in direct communications, by letter or online.

#### Article 2 - Handling of personal information

University Centre of the Westfjords staff, instructors and advisors will protect the sensitive personal information of students and co-workers. University Centre of the Westfjords staff, instructors and advisors take the utmost care and precision in the recording and handling of personal data, in both electronic and non-electronic form. Students will respect the privacy of fellow students and staff.

#### Article 3 - Prohibition of drugs

University Centre of the Westfjords staff, instructors and advisors will never work under the influence of alcohol or other substances that impair judgement and attention. The students will never conduct coursework on University Centre premises under the influence of alcohol or other substances that impair judgement and attention.

#### Article 4 - Prohibition of sexual relationships

The University Centre of the Westfjords does not permit romantic or sexual relationships of any nature between staff, instructors, advisors and students. Conflicts of interest and potential abuses of authority are inherent in personal relationships between students and staff, instructors and advisors. This is especially true of amorous or sexual consensual relationships between faculty, staff, or administrators and students, given the inherently unequal power dynamics between them within the programme structure. To avoid misunderstanding or inadvertently creating an uncomfortable atmosphere, the University Centre prohibits behaviour including but not limited to, sexual advances, comments with a sexual or romantic overtone, suggestive proposals or sexual jokes.

#### Article 5 - Prohibition of harassment and violence

Harassment is prohibited by law. As harassment can take many forms, definitions and additional context are provided below to assist students, staff, instructors, and advisors in identifying and preventing behaviour considered unacceptable. Any retaliation against an individual who has brought forth a complaint alleging harassment is similarly unlawful.

Harassment is defined as any unwelcome verbal or physical conduct based on race, colour, religion, sex (includes sexual harassment and discrimination based on pregnancy), disability, age, national origin, sexual orientation, and protected genetic information that is so objectively offensive as to alter the conditions of the individual's work. Harassment unreasonably interferes with an employee's or student's performance, and can create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Sexual Harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when the conduct is made as a condition of employment or student evaluation and when the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. The term violence refers to any type of behaviour which results in, or could result in, physical or psychological harm or suffering on the part of the victim; also the threat of such and coercion or arbitrary deprivation of freedom.

## Article 6 - Reporting

Anyone wishing to report an incident or offence committed against them, either ongoing or in the past, by a staff member, student, or contractor at The University Centre of the Westfjords shall contact their Programme Director or the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching.

The measures taken in investigating the matter are always taken in consultation with the alleged victim. When a report concerning an alleged offence is received, the alleged victim will be invited to a meeting with the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching where they are given the opportunity to relate the details of the case.

The alleged perpetrator will be informed of the reporting and given the opportunity to give a statement about the case orally or in written form. Following the statements with the parties to the case, a decision is made by the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching on how to proceed and parties to the case are notified. The director of the University Centre shall take any necessary decisions and measures concerning an employment relationship.

In the event of a repeated or serious violation the case will be passed on to the director of the University Centre who - possibly in consultation with the professional council (fagráð) at the University of Akureyri - decides on the case. If the alleged victim of the offence wishes to report the matter to the police at any stage of the process, the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching shall assist the person as far as possible.

Parties involved are obligated to maintain confidentiality in regard to individual cases and are not permitted to share information on cases to unauthorised parties. All documents and information concerning individual cases shall be treated in accordance with current provisions of the Act on the Protection of Privacy as regards the Processing of Personal Data.

If a student wishes to address a matter with someone outside of the University Centre of the Westfjords, the Student Counselling Service of the University of Akureyri can be contacted for advice under [radgjof@unak.is](mailto:radgjof@unak.is).

A formal complaint concerning teaching and services can be made to the University of Akureyri through Uglá. The link can be found under Administration and Services – Quality Assurance – Send a complaint to the quality manager. The complaint will be processed by the Director of Quality Management of the University of Akureyri.

## 4. Master's Thesis Directions

The following instructions are for the master's thesis in the master's programmes at the University Centre of the Westfjords.

### 4.1 Overview

#### 4.1.1 Learning outcomes for 45 ECTS master's thesis and oral defence

On completion of the thesis, a student:

- has applied knowledge of research ethics, both in regards to their own academic subject and other members of the research community (e.g. plagiarism)
- has the ability to initiate and lead projects within the field of coastal studies and place them in context by applying methods based on academic theories, policy instruments and/or management tools.
- has acquired knowledge through own desktop-based and/or field-based research and has developed the necessary learning skills and independence for future studies.
- has the ability to collect, analyse and evaluate data using analytical and methodological terminology.
- has the ability to provide arguments for and defend their own findings, as well as providing constructive criticism for findings and recommendations in other published work.
- has the ability to present data using tables and figures in a clear and effective manner.
- has the ability to communicate complex academic information, challenges and findings within the disciplines relevant to the thesis to scholars as well as to general audiences.
- has the ability to make decisions in an independent, professional manner and defend them.

#### 4.1.2 Scope

Thesis topics should have a strong relevance for the field of study of the master's programme and either a management (CMM) or development (CRD) component. A master's thesis towards a master's degree, as defined by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, earns 45 ECTS. Therefore, the research should be carried out from start to finish (meaning the final thesis document) in no less time than 1,125 hours, or 29 weeks working 40 hours a week.

#### 4.1.3 Goals

A master's thesis is the final project in the master's programmes. It is the product of independent research, must be completed individually, and can be based on primary and/or secondary data. The overall goal of the thesis is to train students to employ academic working methods in an independent way. Thereby students must fully respect intellectual property rights when writing their thesis, as well as in all other study assignments.

#### 4.1.4 Thesis Advisor

Students choose a thesis advisor in consultation with the programme director. It is recommended that the advisor is affiliated with UW and students are encouraged to contact instructors during the courses. Students may also choose an external advisor who fulfils the relevant requirements and has the necessary specialised knowledge and experience. The advisor must be approved by the Master's Programme Committee. In some cases, having two advisors may be recommended, but typically there should only be one advisor and never more than two. Students must justify the reasoning behind the request for two advisors in their research proposal.

In the case that the programme director is the student's advisor, the programme director of the other master's programme takes the role of the programme director. The programme director in charge may follow the thesis progress, resolve communication issues, nominate external readers, and organise and chair the thesis defence.

#### 4.1.5 External readers

All master's theses must be evaluated by the advisor and an external reader. The Master's Programme Committee confirms external readers after nomination by the programme director. The guideline is: If the advisor is not an UW instructor, the external reader should be an instructor at the University Centre, have been an external reader or advisor at UW before, or be an academic positioned at an Icelandic university. If the advisor does not have a PhD, the external reader should have a PhD. Both advisor and external reader should have specialised knowledge in the relevant field. External readers must have a master's or doctoral degree and have extensive experience in the subject. There may not be a conflict of interest between the external reader and advisor. Conflicts of interest include but are not limited to personal or professional power imbalances or financial interests.

The thesis is evaluated by the advisor and reader with equal weighting (50/50). If a thesis is supervised by two advisors, both of them, plus the external reader, will evaluate the thesis (25/25/50 percent).

#### 4.1.6 Programme director's supervision of master's theses

The master's programme director administers all thesis related processes from the submission of the proposal to the defence. As such, the programme director will be available to answer thesis related questions throughout the process. One of the programme director's roles is to make first contact with the student group regarding requirements, guidelines and completion of the master's thesis proposal, as well as the master's thesis itself. This is done throughout the academic year and specifically in the Applied Methodology course.

In consultation with the programme director, each student has considerable freedom to choose a topic within the field of studies. Early in the process, the programme director may present students with a list of available topics and outlines expectations regarding the thesis and related work. It is the students' responsibility to make the choice and formulate a research idea. To that end, the student takes the initiative in contacting the programme director for consultation. Students are also encouraged to identify and propose potential advisors to the programme director. It is also recommended that students contact teachers during the courses and discuss potential thesis topics.

The primary duties of the programme director regarding the master's thesis are:

- to take responsibility for the overall organisation of the master's thesis process
- to maintain a list of master's theses including the names of each student, their advisor and reader
- to inform students of the rules regarding master's theses and help students find an advisor
- to give general guidance on choosing the best working methods and ethical standards before the submission of the proposal
- to propose external readers to the Master's Programme Committee to inform advisors and readers of programme requirements, deadlines, and evaluation procedures/ criteria
- to take responsibility for organising public defence presentations in consultation with the advisor, external reader, relevant colleagues at the University Centre of the Westfjords, and the student involved
- to provide general feedback regarding thesis requirements before the thesis is sent to readers
- to resolve any matters in doubt, for example the choice of material/data or the division of duties between advisors (if there are two advisors)

If a formal or informal conflict of interest precludes the programme director from fulfilling their duties, a substitute will be found. If the programme director is the thesis advisor, the University Centre will assure that the tasks of the programme director are fulfilled.

#### 4.1.7 The Master's Programme Committee

The Master's Programme Committee is the ultimate supervising body for academic quality matters concerning the UW master's programmes. The programme director executes the committee's decisions, or ensures that they are executed. Among the Master's Programme Committee's roles is to review proposals and approve study plans, ensure the quality of the programmes, approve/suggest instructors and advisors,

nominate external reviewers for exams and theses, and deal with other issues upon request. The Master's Programme Committee decides on its own formal procedures.

## 4.2 Roles, responsibilities and relationship of thesis advisor and student

The master's thesis is the final project in the master's programme and has its own applicable learning outcomes (see 4.1.1). Upon the completion of the thesis, each student should fulfil those learning outcomes.

Although the programme director guides students towards a relevant and feasible topic until the advisor takes over, the student is always responsible for the selection of a topic as well as working on the chosen project. In some cases, with the approval of the programme director and the Master's Programme Committee, two advisors may be assigned to a student. In such cases, each advisor will contribute to the thesis process. It is important that the division of duties and rights is clear if a project has two advisors before the contract with the advisor is made. This division may change throughout the process. If so, the programme director must be informed.

### 4.2.1 The thesis advisor

Once the research proposal and advisor are approved by the Master's Programme Committee, a contract is made between the approved advisor and UW. The contract is valid for one year. The advisor gives the student encouragement, guidance, and direction in their thesis work. The advisor follows the frame of reference provided in their copy of the UW advisor handbook. The advisor's time commitment should not be less or more than 90 hours over the entire thesis process, including 10 hours for oral defence and final evaluation.

The advisor gives the student guidance on the following matters:

- deciding on the scope of the topic
- finding appropriate sources
- defining the goals, aims and research questions
- preparing a detailed research plan
- gathering, processing, and analysing research data
- presenting findings in a suitable manner and a clear style
- notifying relevant institutions when working with sensitive and/or personal data

The advisor follows the project's progress and evaluates it with respect to the student's research and study plan; they assist the student in resolving any problems which arise during the project, such as methodological issues.

The advisor communicates to the programme director if problems arise, e.g. if a student refuses to take advice, or fails to meet agreed deadlines. The advisor(s) is/are required to hand in an informal progress report via email, usually not later than four months after the contract has been signed. The advisor, along with an external reader, is responsible for the final evaluation of the thesis (by 50% against that of the external reader).

### 4.2.2 The student

The student is responsible for their studies and is expected to work independently and respect deadlines. The student is responsible for keeping contact with the programme director after the first meeting with the advisor, as well as updating the programme director regarding the progress of the work. The student prepares a detailed research plan in consultation with the thesis advisor and creates a schedule for the project and its completion. The student keeps the advisor updated about the progress of the project and any delays. The student determines what kind of guidance suits best in consultation with the thesis advisor and takes initiative in scheduling meetings with the thesis advisor. About four months after the proposal is

accepted, students will be asked to submit a midway evaluation to the programme director. The students will receive an email with instructions for this evaluation.

The student consults with the advisor and programme director regarding submission of the thesis for evaluation. The thesis can only be submitted through Canvas.

#### 4.2.3 Communication between programme director, thesis advisors and students

There is no fixed schedule of communication for the student and their advisor. The advisor and student agree when to meet and how they communicate. The advisor's time commitment should not exceed 90 hours total over the entire thesis process. This includes no less than 10 hours for oral defence and final evaluation. The remaining 80 hours are to be used for general thesis oversight and guidance. The programme director follows the progress of the student through contact with the advisor and the student. If a thesis advisor has not advised a student of the programme before, they must have a meeting with the programme director in the first weeks of the work.

#### 4.2.4 Communication difficulties

If difficulties arise in communication between a student and their thesis advisor, for example if a student feels that the advisor is not providing appropriate guidance or is treating the student unfairly, the student should inform the programme director and send a written complaint to the Master's Programme Committee. If an advisor feels that the student is not responding to advice or not respecting deadlines, the advisor should notify the programme director as soon as possible.

In both cases, the programme director should intervene as early as possible, with the aim of resolving the matter between the parties involved. If the programme director is also an advisor, the programme director for the other programme will act as a programme director in this case.

The programme director will call in a meeting with the student and the advisor with the aim to solve the communication difficulties. Students cannot change advisors unless there is a dispute regarding the project guidance. Disputes need to be justified and the reason must be related to the project guidance. If the communication difficulties are not reconciled with a meeting or other actions taken by the programme director, the advisor and the student, any of these parties must send a request to the committee with detailed information about the process.

### 4.3 First steps of thesis work: proposal and ethics permits

Students start working on their proposal for their master's thesis research during the first year, preferably after the Applied Methods course; the students will be prepared for proposal writing during the fall seminar and methods course. After consultation with the programme director, students submit their research proposals to the Master's Programme Committee for final approval. A proposal template is provided to students. A research proposal must be handed in before data collection/fieldwork starts. It may be submitted any time of the year but no later than June 15<sup>th</sup>, if students want to work on their thesis during the summer break. The proposal is evaluated by the Master's Programme Committee, mainly for its 1) topic relevance, 2) feasibility of suggested research design and 3) ethics considerations.

A student who has found a thesis advisor should provide the programme director with details and contact information. The programme director then contacts them and confirms availability and qualifications. An advisor is formally appointed by the Master's Programme Committee.



Step		Deadline	Responsibility for completion
A	Brainstorm thesis topics with programme Director and instructors > Make contact with potential advisors > write research proposal	June 15 <sup>5</sup>	Student
B	Approval (thesis and advisor) from Master's programme Committee	Before data collection/ fieldwork starts	Programme director and Master's Programme Committee
C	A master's thesis contract is signed	August 15	advisor and director for teaching and education
D	Midway evaluation of thesis progress	November/ 4 month after contract was signed	Advisor, student and programme director
E	Indication of intend to submit the thesis	February 15 (first deadline) June 15 (second deadline)	Student
F	Thesis submission	March 15 August 15	Student
G	Public defence  Students must be available during this period for defence scheduling purposes.	April 15 - May 10 Sep 1 - Sep 15	Advisor, external reader, student and programme director
H	Thesis revision, printing, Skemman entry	10 days after the defence (revision)	Student

#### 4.3.1 The research proposal for the master's thesis

Before the student may carry out the suggested research, the Master's Programme Committee must approve the research proposal as well as the suggested advisor. This is typically done at the same time.

The research proposal should include the following:

- Short description of the topic and delineation of its scope
- Scientific background and state of knowledge
- Explanation of the project's goals, aims and research question
- Explanation of the research methods that will be used, and how data will be collected, analysed and processed
- Ethical considerations, if applicable

<sup>5</sup> Thesis proposals can be submitted at any time throughout the year. Students who want to start their thesis related research over the summer months need to submit their proposals no later than 15th of June. We recommend to submit thesis proposals no later than the 15th of June for finishing within two years.

- Explanation of laboratory and field research, if applicable
- Discussion of ethical issues and mentioning of permits, if applicable
- Description of the scientific and/or practical value of the project and project limitations
- Intended project timetable
- Advisors's name and 1-2 sentences describing the suggested advisor's suitability for the project.

Proposals can include more elements if needed.

#### 4.3.3 Master's thesis contract with advisor

After a research proposal has been approved, a master's thesis contract is prepared. The contract confirms the approval of the project and the advisor, and determines the contract conditions between the advisor and the University Centre of the Westfjords. If there are two advisors, the division of duties must be clear at this point. The advisor is hired for one year. If a student does not complete the thesis within the second academic year, the collaboration with the advisor needs to be renegotiated. The contract between UW and the advisor(s) is valid for one year and covers no more or less hours than agreed on in the contract. Renewal of contracts is subject to review of the program director and the administrative director of education and teaching and only considered under specific circumstances such as external delays.

#### 4.3.4 Ethics in research

There is not a national standard of ethics in research for Icelandic universities, but guiding ethics principles are outlined by the Icelandic Data Protection Authority (Persónuvernd). The University Centre of the Westfjords has an internal set of guiding principles for conducting ethical research. These principles will be laid out to the students during the first year. Ethics clearance is part of the research proposal approval. Upon approval by the Master's Programme Committee, the student will receive a certification letter stating that the proposed research has gone under and passed an ethics review.

The general ethical principles and integrity standards of research conducted through the University Centre of the Westfjords are as follows:

- 1) Researchers must be guided by ethical norms first and scientific design requirements second.
- 2) Researchers will avoid conflicts of interest. Conflict of interest is defined as: A situation in which financial or other personal considerations have the potential to compromise or bias professional judgement and objectivity.
- 3) Researchers will make clear data ownership and authorship from the beginning of a project.
- 4) Plagiarism is never tolerated.
- 5) Researchers will not skew conclusions based on funding.
- 6) Researchers will not commit research fraud. Fraud in research comprises the outright fabrication of data, altering data, and publishing stolen work.
- 7) Researchers will not punish or damage fellow scientists and will treat their colleagues and superiors with the utmost professional courtesy. Researchers will take on the obligations as a whistle blower to report unethical activity.
- 8) Researchers will only offer advice on matters on which they are an informed and qualified professional.
- 9) Researchers will not hold on to data that should be disseminated.

Principles for human subjects research are as follows as outlined by the 1978 Belmont report:

- 1) Anonymity: Results are to be presented in a grouped, not individual manner.
- 2) Confidentiality: All personal information provided by individuals will be made anonymous whenever possible and remain confidential unless otherwise determined by the individuals.
- 3) Priority of communities involved. The communities participating will be the first to review and receive results and the first invited to provide input and feedback on the results.  
Protection of the research participants is more important than the pursuit of new knowledge.

- 4) Respect: Consideration for the communities and all the participants must be observed in all communications. The *principle of respect* recognises the capacity and rights of all individuals to make their own decisions while protecting vulnerable populations.
- 5) Human subjects will be enrolled in the study in a *just and equitable* manner. Research participants must be told very clearly that they are participating in an experimental study through the informed consent process.

Principles for ecological and animal subject research are as follows:

- 1) Do not cause undue damage to property or environment.
- 2) Do not impede on other's research or future research.
- 3) The researcher must take steps to minimise the suffering of animals used in research.
- 4) Accepted and humane procedures are to be used to terminate an animal's life, do not cause undue suffering.
- 5) When considering whether research using animal subjects should be done, researchers must prove that the benefits of the study must outweigh the costs to animal welfare.

## 4.4 Writing a master's thesis: Frame

### 4.4.1 Format

The thesis must be submitted in book form (A4 size) and have a standardised format. UW provides a template and print directions that must be used when handing in the final print copy. All theses must contain both English and Icelandic abstracts. The thesis cannot be written in languages other than English or Icelandic.

### 4.4.2 Length

There is no set length or fixed scope for the master's thesis and the advisor will guide the student towards an appropriate length and approach. The length of the thesis may depend upon many factors, such as the approach used or the amount of supporting data included. However, depending on the nature of the research, a typical 45 ECTS thesis in book form is about 60-100 pages long, based on 250-300 words per text page. Appendices and references do not count towards the number of pages.

### 4.4.3 Organisation and style

The University Centre has a standardised master's thesis template. Students must follow the outline set by the template, which includes 1) the front page, 2) the title page, abstract, contents, index of tables, index of figures, acknowledgements, list of abbreviations, etc. 3) the body of the thesis and 4) the list of references. Further details can be found in the template. Chapter numbers and sections are flexible, however, UW will not accept theses that are formatted for direct publication in journals. It is expected that students who are interested in publishing their research in an academic journal first write the thesis, and adjust the text for the specific format of the intended journal after graduation.

### 4.4.4 Source citations and references

Care and diligence is necessary in the presentation of the material, source citations, and references in a master's thesis. For citation questions and a reference list students should consult with their advisor. To ensure consistency, the APA Harvard reference style is required.

### 4.4.5 Research Diary

For some students a research diary has proven to be useful for tracking the research process, communication with the advisor and programme director. Depending on the subject matter, it should include an overview of all sources and data, including interview dates, field sampling trips, laboratory records, and so forth. The research journal is not included with the thesis, but might be an important source for confirmation and validity of a student's research work.

## 4.5 Writing a master's thesis: Contents

### 4.5.1 Introduction

The introduction is to present the research purpose and its relevance. In the introduction the student places the issue/problem/project into the context of relevant literature with a critical examination of the state of knowledge in the field including a description of local settings/issues/gaps in the literature. It is important to include the research frame, the project's aims and research question(s). Research questions need to be clear. At the end of the introduction there is a short description of the organisation and content of the paper.

### 4.5.2 Theoretical overview

In this section, the theoretical foundations of the project are discussed in depth and critically explored. It includes the definition and explanation of terms and concepts and a literature review. The state of the knowledge is outlined as well as the extent to which this research contributes to scientific and practical value.

### 4.5.3 Research methods

This section describes the premises for the research methods selected and how the research was carried out: what was done and how it was done. A detailed explanation of the methods used, why they were chosen and their limitations is a necessary part of this section. Any deviations from previously published methods should be precisely described and reasons for the deviation explained.

The goal of the methods section is to give the reader the information needed to evaluate the reliability and validity of the research results. The methods, procedures and data analysis must be thoroughly and clearly written so that they are replicable.

### 4.5.4 Results

Here the data analysis and results are presented systematically. They should be presented in the same order as stated in the introduction. The text of the paper should present the results systematically, and data and main outcomes should be presented in figures and tables<sup>6</sup>, if applicable. Any lengthy presentations of detailed data should be placed in an appendix, which allows the data to be used to confirm the accuracy of descriptions, calculations, and other observations.

### 4.5.5 Discussion/conclusions

This section discusses, evaluates and interprets the project results. Results should be discussed in reference to the research questions, regardless of whether answers to them were found or whether the goals which the researcher set were reached. It is necessary to show and describe internal relationships between the research results and highlight unexpected conclusions. It reflects its outcomes with the stated purpose in the introduction and relevant literature review. It should include practical solutions and policy recommendations. This section should also discuss further research opportunities, which problems remain and how they can be addressed.

## 4.6 Submission and graduation

### 4.6.1 Thesis draft and intentions for submission

Students can submit their master thesis either in March or August. One month prior to the deadlines, students are encouraged to submit a draft version by email to the programme director and their advisor. The draft should be formatted correctly and should be as complete as possible so critical feedback can be provided. The programme director provides a detailed checklist on the requirements that each section

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<sup>6</sup> Figures and tables should be presented independently. However, they must be referred to in the main text. Figures and tables are to be numbered sequentially and must have legends and captions (including a title). Captions should present enough information to be able to stand alone (be self-contained).

needs to fulfil, and recommends whether to submit at the next deadline. This submission is not mandatory, and the programme director's suggestions are not binding.

The students have to communicate their intention to submit their thesis at the upcoming deadline, no later than February 15th (first deadline) or June 15th (second deadline). The students have to indicate this via email to the programme director and the advisor. The mail has to include an abstract for the thesis. Students must also indicate in this email if they have any legitimate date conflicts for the defence period and support their request with adequate documentation. The programme director will then contact potential external readers and start the defence preparation.

#### 4.6.2 Thesis for examination handed in to advisor and external reader

When a student has indicated that they will enter the examination phase, an external reader is nominated by the programme director and approved by the Master's Programme Committee. If the advisor is not a UW instructor, then the external reader must be a UW instructor, former advisor, or external reader. Either the advisor or the external reader must have a PhD. The thesis must be handed in as a word file through Canvas.

The thesis is evaluated and graded by the advisor and the external reader. The final grade is the average of the two. If the student has two advisors, their evaluations jointly count as one vote of equal value to that of the external reader.

The advisor and external reader read through the thesis, evaluate it and return a written evaluation with comments and a grade breakdown. The evaluation and grading follow the guidelines provided in this document and the applicable learning outcomes for the thesis (see 4.1.1). To avoid making the oral presentation influence the grading beyond the 10% it counts for, the advisor and external reader send the completed evaluation and grading report form no later than the day before the defence, based on the quality of the written thesis itself.

Along with the written evaluation form, the student receives a grade breakdown for the thesis work within 48 hrs after the defence. The student is responsible for having access to their University Centre email account during the defence period.

#### 4.6.3 Presentation and defence: Introduction of thesis topic and findings

In order to graduate, students are obliged to give a presentation, open to the public, the advisor and the external reader, where main findings of the project are introduced. This presentation is part of the defence and is a requirement for graduation. It counts for 10% of the final thesis grade. The student is obliged to be available for presenting and defending his/her/their thesis during the thesis examination period. The presentation and defence are chaired by the programme director.

Timing and organisation of the presentation is set in cooperation with the programme director, ideally before or soon after submitting the thesis. **Students must be available during the entire defence period.** Extraordinary exceptions can be made if requests are made at the time of declaration of intent with for legitimate reasons, supported by adequate documentation. Students not available to defend on the chosen date will be postponed to the next defence period at the student's expense. The defence is held at UW, but often students, external readers, and/or advisors call in using Zoom or similar. The University Centre coordinates the event, and ensures technical matters are being taken care of at that end. The student is responsible for providing PowerPoint slides to the defence committee (the programme director, the external reader and the advisor) prior to the public presentation no later than the evening before the event.

During the presentation, the student is expected to highlight the main aspects of the project, research question(s), methods, major findings, practical value, academic value, and summary of main conclusions (including strengths and weaknesses), in a 30- 35-minute presentation supported with PowerPoint slides. The presentation must not exceed 35 minutes, otherwise the defence chair will stop the presentation. Failing to present the whole project will affect the final grade. After the presentation, the student answers

1-2 questions from the external reader and advisor, and then the public. Most questions and comments from the external reader and advisor are left for the closed part of the defence.

During the closed/private part, the student defends and discusses his/her/their theses against the overall conclusions and critique of advisor and external reader. When the defence is over, the student leaves the room/conference call. Then, the defence committee discusses the final grade and any remaining issue. In addition to the final grade, the defence committee decides whether the thesis is a conditional or unconditional pass, or a fail. The defence committee may provide a list of mandatory changes before printing.

#### 4.6.4 Last corrections and preparation for printing

If the thesis is considered conditional, requirements for revision must be laid out by the advisor, and external reader and/or programme director with clarity. The student receives comments through the evaluation form provided by the programme director via email. Not addressing the requested revisions leads to a fail.

Ten days after receiving the evaluation reports from advisor, external reader and programme director, the student provides necessary corrections and a separate document detailing the changes made to the thesis in response to the external reader and advisor. The programme director then approves the final changes and contacts the advisor and/or external reader as needed. Addressing the mandatory changes are a requirement for graduation, but they do not have a bearing on the thesis grade.

#### 4.6.5 Handing in the final copy of the thesis and completion of the programme

The final master's thesis must be submitted in PDF-format to the programme director, and must be confirmed by the printer before the given deadline. The student is required to have one copy sent to the University Centre of the Westfjords. The printing of the thesis is at the student's expense and the student is responsible for all contact with the printer.

Before graduation, a student has to submit the PDF of the approved thesis to the Skemman database. Guidelines for submission and printing are provided to the students.

A preliminary confirmation of completed 120 ECTS studies at master's level or a transcript of completed courses can be sent by the Administrative Director of Teaching and Education to students. Official degrees from the University of Akureyri are awarded on June 17th. Students who do not complete their studies in time for the official graduation in June can receive their graduation papers on the 15th of October or the 15th of February. In order for this to occur, a request for graduation must have been received before the 1st day of those specific months, given that all graduation documents are in place. Please contact the Administrative Director of Teaching for related questions. Students are responsible for the accuracy of information in Ugla as for instance the correct spelling of the student's name since documents are printed directly from Ugla.

Handing in a printed version of the thesis and the submission to the Skemman database are requirements for graduation. Students will not be able to graduate if they have any outstanding coursework or fees.

#### 4.6.6 Graduation ceremony

The University of Akureyri confers and awards the degree. Students may want to attend the graduation ceremony in Akureyri on the second Friday in June. Furthermore, the University Centre usually hosts its own graduation ceremony in the Westfjords, typically on June 17th. If a student cannot attend either ceremony, the graduation certificate is sent to the student. The University Centre has permission to charge for delivery.

#### 4.6.7 Publication

In order to graduate, students' theses must be registered on and uploaded to Skemman, the national repository of theses and dissertations in Iceland. If the thesis findings are intended for publication in a scientific journal or comparable publications, the student may ask permission from the Master's Programme

Committee to lock the PDF so that it is not available for download on Skemman for a limited time. The thesis lock request is granted for one year at a time. The University Centre does not require that students publish in academic journals. The programme director is available for consultation on the manuscript preparation process and in some cases could take on the role as a co-author on publications at the advisor's and/or student's request.

#### 4.6.8 Thesis evaluation and grading: Frame of reference

In general, students who complete a 45 ECTS final project are pursuing a research degree and their final project involves scholarly research. In these projects a lot is expected of students in terms of research ability and methodological sophistication.

The advisor and external reader evaluate the thesis, and return a written evaluation that will form a base for its final grade. In evaluating a thesis, they must consider all the aspects outlined in the weighing of the thesis, as well as the thesis's learning outcomes. In addition, the following questions reflect the general criteria for evaluating master's theses:

1. Is the thesis topic introduced at the beginning of the thesis in a satisfactory way? Is the chosen topic and its importance justified?
2. Are the goals of the project clear? Are the questions or problems that the project attempts to resolve explained clearly?
3. Is the project placed in its theoretical context (or its historical or social context if appropriate)? Is the theoretical framework of the topic explained well? Are the unresolved issues connected to the subject matter discussed?
4. Does the student explain his or her connection to the topic and the way in which his or her perspectives and position might influence the work?
5. Are sources chosen and used appropriately?
6. Does the student clearly explain the research methods used, how the research was carried out, the participants in it and how the data was processed?
7. Is the data handled and processed in a careful, analytical, and critical way? Are conclusions drawn with due caution? Does the student explain the limitations of the project?
8. Do the data analysis sections give an informative description of the research results?
9. How good is the presentation of the material? Is the thesis organised in a logical way with good transitions between sections? Does the thesis form a unified whole? Are its goals achieved and its research questions answered? Are the most important results and lessons from the research summarised in a conclusion?
10. How is the writing and layout of the thesis? Is visual information well laid out and presented, if applicable?
11. Does the student demonstrate creativity and inventiveness, or shed new light on the subject? What is the value of the project? Does it make a contribution to knowledge in the field?
12. Are ethical matters or issues discussed, if applicable?

Criteria besides those mentioned here may depend on the nature of the subject matter.

#### 4.6.9 Weighting

Structure, organization, and progression from objectives to findings	10%
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Content of thesis: topic and objectives; literature, research findings and conclusions	40%
Methods, data analysis, and results	30%
Literature and referencing	10%
Oral presentation and defence	10%

Total weighting

100%

The list above gives more detailed directions on the grading aspects and weight of each part. The external reader and the advisor submit a written evaluation of the thesis to the programme director, and provide detailed comments. If the programme director judges that master's projects have been graded in an inconsistent way, he/she/they makes suggestions in writing, explains the reasons and communicates them to the advisor and the external reader. The advisor and the external reader must reply to the programme director's suggestions in writing before the grade can be posted, regardless of whether they put them into action.

As soon as grades arrive from the advisor and external reader, the programme director calculates the average, rectifies grading if needed (in consultation with reader and advisor; usually after the public part of the defence), and seeks confirmation from the advisor and reader. Then the programme director communicates the grades to UW's Administrative Director of Education and Teaching. Finally, the programme director notifies the student of the grade. Typically, a student receives a grade for a final project within 48 hours together with the evaluation reports. Consistency in grading is very important.

## Appendices

### Appendix A - Grading and Student Evaluation Rules

#### *Article 1*

##### *Overview of student evaluation at the University Centre of the Westfjords*

The evaluation of student performance at the University Centre of the Westfjords involves continuing assessment and/or final assessment. In this context continuing assessment means student evaluation that takes place while a course is in progress, through means such as written assignments, oral and written reports, journals, portfolios, and class participation. Final assessment at the end of a course may involve a final exam, a paper, a seminar presentation, a defense, or the evaluation of a practical project.

The instructor of each course decides how student evaluation will take place, in consultation with the Program Director and/or the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching. Details of assignment evaluation must be available and communicated to students in writing in the syllabus. After a class begins, any changes in assignment evaluation may be made only with the agreement of all students and instructors participating in the course.

In evaluating student performance, reasonable consideration must be given to students with recognized special needs, e.g. in terms of submission, exam time, special equipment and location of exam. Students who request special assistance in working on assignments or taking exams must submit an evaluation/medical certificate of how their impairment or illness affects their educational needs to the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching prior to the assessment.

#### *Article 2*

##### *Role and responsibilities of instructors*

a) *Syllabus*. The instructor prepares the syllabus in agreement with the Academic Director. The syllabus needs to be available to the students in the Learning Management Platform 'Canvas' no later than ten weeks before the class starts.

b) *Preparation of the exam/final paper/project in a course*. Instructors are responsible for developing and grading their assignments, including exams and other final assessments. They should include grading rubrics as part of the syllabus.

c) *Explanation of assignments/exam questions*. Students have the right to an explanation of the wording of exam questions or a clarification of an assignment. When needed, instructors must explain the nature of each assignment. Instructors who are only present for part of a course must be available to answer student questions via email or video conferencing in a timely fashion and while the course is in progress.

d) *Processing of exam papers/written assignments/final projects in the course*. Instructors make sure that all course assignments are available in Canvas and ensure that assignments are submitted via the similarity checker (Turnitin) if applicable. All assignments are stored in Canvas. In case of a written exam, exam answers are stored with the Administrative Director of Teaching and Education for two years.

e) *Grade return*. Instructors turn in final grades to the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching or enter the course grades in the course page on Canvas no later than ten working days after the end of the course. Instructors should ensure that sufficient feedback is provided on graded assignments and evaluations. If there are multiple instructors in the course, it is their joint responsibility to submit final grades. Students must be informed if illness or other unavoidable circumstances prevent instructors from submitting grades on time.

#### *Article 3*

##### *Role and responsibilities of the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching*

The Administrative Director of Education and Teaching provides service and supervision to instructors, students, thesis advisors and thesis opponents. *The Administrative Director of Education and Teaching* makes sure that accommodations are provided to students with special needs. The Administrative Director of Education and Teaching ensures that course material is available on the respective course page in Canvas by course start and can advise instructors on student evaluation matters if needed. Final course grades are

handed in to the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching no later than ten working days after the course ends, who enters them into the UGLA information system.

*Article 4*

*External examiner*

For oral exams or grade appeals, an external examiner is appointed by the Program Director in collaboration with the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching. If the Program Director is course instructor or thesis advisor, the Master's Program Committee will appoint the external examiner. An external examiner shall have completed an accredited university degree (at least a master's or a candidate's degree) in a field related to the project/thesis which the examiner will evaluate.

*Article 5*

*Assessment - Student Absence - Fail*

Since courses are taught in one-to-three-week cycles there is no separate period for exams at the University Center of the Westfjords. By the end of each course, students should have completed all required work and be ready to begin the next course. Unless otherwise specified by the instructor, assignments are not mandatory. The instructor has to clearly specify which components of the course assessment are required to pass, including participation.

a) *Absence due to illness.* A student unable to complete assessment work for a particular course due to illness, including sickness of their child/dependent, must inform the Program Director and the course instructor immediately. A doctor's or consultant's note regarding the absence might be required and should be submitted to the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching no later than five workdays after the course finishes if requested.

i) *Assignments and evaluations* – Students can, with the agreement of the course instructor, delay the completion of an assignment or evaluation due to illness; but it must be completed in a timely manner, not exceeding two weeks after the course ends. If it is not possible to offer the same assignment/evaluations for the student after their recovery, the instructor may design an equivalent form of assessment. The instructor will ensure equality of assessment between all students.

b) *Absence for other legitimate reasons.* If a student cannot complete a scheduled assessment due to a different legitimate reason, the same rules apply as for illness. Students inform the Program Director and the instructor of their absence as quickly as possible and always before the due date of the assessment. The course instructor and the Program Director make a unanimous and binding decision on the extent and time frame of the assessment. The decision is stored in writing with the Administrative Director of Education and Teaching.

c) *Absence without a legitimate reason.* Students missing scheduled assessments or evaluations without legitimate reasons receive a 0 on the assessment without the right to redo it. If the assessment is mandatory, as stated in the syllabus, the student fails the course.

d) *Failed mandatory assignments.* If a student does not achieve the minimum pass grade, they may redo the assignment once, if they received at least a 3 on the first attempt. This has to happen within two weeks after grades have been submitted.

e) *Failed mandatory courses.* If a student fails a mandatory course, they can retake it in the following school year. If the student also fails the second attempt, they fail the program.

f) *Failed Master's Thesis* - A student who fails to obtain a 5.0 for the thesis or defense is considered to fail the thesis course CMM45/CRD45. Students who do not complete required revisions within the 10-working-day time period after the defense also fail the thesis course. The student receives a Fail in the transcript of records.

*Retry* - A thesis may be rewritten one time using the same thesis material. A public defense is held as in the first attempt. The student may replace the thesis material and/or the supervisor with the permission of the Master's Program Committee. The time frame for the second attempt is one year from the failed defense following general thesis deadlines. If a student fails to pass the thesis within this time frame, they must apply again for the program.

g) *Plagiarism and cheating in exams*. If a student is suspected of misconduct in course work or examination, the course instructor shall report the student to the Academic Director. The case is dealt with in compliance with the University Centre of the Westfjords rules regarding penalty and plagiarism (reglur Háskólaþseturs Vestfjarða um ritstuld).

### Article 6

#### Grades

a) *Final course grade*. The instructor of the course gives grades for each individual course assignment and enters them into Canvas. If an outside reviewer is brought in, the instructor and the outside reviewer each submit an independent evaluation, and the two grades are weighted equally in calculating the final grade (50% each). Generally, the completion of assignments is not mandatory unless a component of the course assessment is clearly specified as compulsory in the course syllabus. The instructor and/or the Program Director in consultation with the Master's Program Committee may decide that a course is graded pass/fail (staðið/fall); the Master's Program Committee has the final say in this. The Administrative Director of Education and Teaching is responsible for entering all final grades in UGLA.

b) *Explanations of grades*. The course instructor provides a breakdown of the course grades via Canvas. The breakdown should be according to criteria (i.e., grading rubrics) given to students in the course syllabus. Students have the right to an explanation from the instructor of the evaluation for all assignments if they request this within 15 days of a grade's posting.

c) *Nomination of an outside reviewer*. Students who do not accept an instructor's evaluation, even after receiving an explanation, may request to the Program Director in writing, no later than four weeks of the grade's posting, the appointment of an outside reviewer.

d) *Calculating grades*. Final course grades range from 0-10 and instructors are explicitly reminded to use the whole scale. Grades must be given as whole or half integers and may range from 0 to 10 as follows:

0–2,4%	means a grade of 0,0	47,5–52,4%	means a grade of 5,0
2,5–7,4%	0,5	52,5–57,4%	5,5
7,5–12,4%	1,0	57,5–62,4%	6,0
12,5–17,4%	1,5	62,5–67,4%	6,5
17,5–22,4%	2,0	67,5–72,4%	7,0
22,5–27,4%	2,5	72,5–77,4%	7,5
27,5–32,4%	3,0	77,5–82,4%	8,0
32,5–37,4%	3,5	82,5–87,4%	8,5
37,5–42,4%	4,0	87,5–92,4%	9,0

42,5–47,4%	4,5	92,5–97,4%	9,5
		97,5–100%	10,0

f) *Final program grade*. The final program grade is a weighted average of all final course grades. The final program grade is calculated to two decimal places and 9,00-10,00 is a distinguished grade, 7,25-8,99 a first-class grade, 6,00-7,24 a second-class grade and 5,00-5,99 a third-class grade.

#### *Article 7*

##### *Noncompliance with Grading and Student Evaluation Rules*

a) *Plagiarism and cheating in exams*. If a student is suspected of misconduct in course work or examination, the course instructor shall report the student to the Academic Director. The case is dealt with in compliance with the University Centre of the Westfjords rules regarding penalty and plagiarism (reglur Háskóla­seturs Vestfjarða um ritstuld). If the student does not agree with the suggested course of action, the dispute shall be referred to the Master's Program Committee. If a student has been found guilty of cheating in an exam, the exam and answers are confiscated, and the student fails the exam. If the student is found guilty of cheating twice, they are expelled from the program.

#### *Article 8*

##### *Effective date*

These rules were developed according to the student performance evaluation rules of the University of Akureyri, which in turn were set under the authority of the law on public universities, #85/2008, and the regulations of the University of Akureyri, #387/2009. These rules take effect on 1 September 2010.

Approved at a meeting of the Master's Program Committee at the University Centre of the Westfjords in Ísafjörður, September 17, 2010, revised October 2012, revised May 2020. Approved June 2020. Revised and approved June 2023.



# Avoiding Conflict

THE UNIVERSITY CENTRE OF THE WESTFJORDS EXPECTS STUDENTS TO SHOW RESPECT TO THEIR PEERS, AS WELL AS TO STAFF AND FACULTY



## COMMUNICATE

- Communicate clearly and listen respectfully
- Respect other people's needs as well as your own
- Show understanding
- Accept diversity



## NEGOTIATE & COMPROMISE

- Explore options to resolve an issue
- Collaborate to resolve the conflict
- Look for mutually satisfying agreements



## RESOLVE & RECONCILE

- Agree to disagree
- Focus on the future
- Respect agreements
- Maintain confidentiality

If an issue requires further attention do not hesitate to contact a staff member



@uwestfjords



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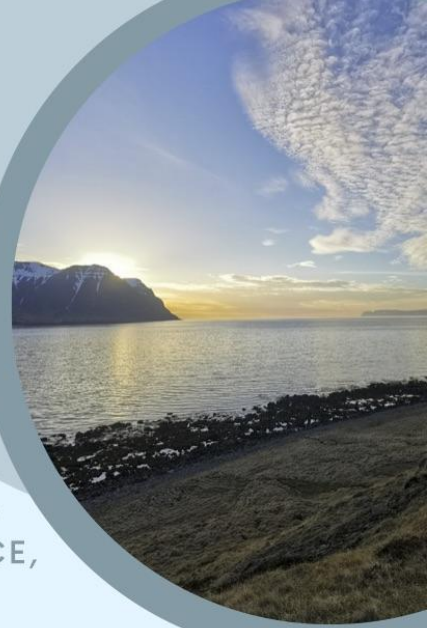




Háskólaþing  
Vestfirðinga  
University Centre  
of the Westfjords

# Reporting An Issue

THE UNIVERSITY CENTRE OF THE WESTFJORDS DOES NOT TOLERATE ANY BULLYING, VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT, OFFENSIVE OR DISRESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR WHETHER IT BE IN DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS OR ONLINE



1

## REACH OUT

- All staff members at UW are available to contact should an issue arise
- Members of staff keep conversations confidential
- Conversations with staff can be informal or placed on record if the student wishes

2

## GIVE A STATEMENT

- Reporting of an issue is handled by the Director of Education and Teaching
- The complaint is communicated to the alleged offender who is given an opportunity to disclose their side of events

3

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- The Director of Education and Teaching makes a decision on how to proceed and resolve the issue
- Serious or repeat offences are handled by the Director of UW
- Issues can also be dealt with externally by UNAK

Should students wish for a matter to be reported to the police, the Director of Education and Teaching will support them throughout the process



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