

Guidelines: Award of MSc theses with the ETH Medal and UMNW prize

Every year, the Preiskomitee evaluates MSc theses and identifies students that receive prizes for their work. This is made challenging by the excellence of our students, but also by the large diversity of topics they address. An additional challenge is that the written thesis, does not always provide insight into some critical aspects of the students work. As such, the letter you have to write for all the MSc thesis that receive a grade of 6 provides the Preiskomitee with important information.

The report addresses the following points (in addition to whatever else you'd like to tell the Preiskomitee about the student and their thesis work).

In your report, please cover the following points:

1. Briefly describe how the student was supervised, and who they worked with (in addition to you).
2. Summarize the thesis (what was it about), and its major contributions to the field. For example, describe any new fundamental knowledge gained, new protocols / methods developed, as well as translational aspects planned or already ongoing. Please especially emphasize the last point (if applicable), since one prize honors a thesis with applied relevance.
3. The Preiskomitee is interested in understanding how much independence the student demonstrated during their thesis work. Since there are many ways in which a student can demonstrate independence, please address any or all of the following points with respect to this student, ideally with specific examples.
 - Was the thesis a stand-alone project wholly or partly suggested by the student, or does it contribute to a larger project already ongoing in your group? How was the student involved in devising the study questions?
 - Did the student conduct their work using equipment or in a study system or using a model that your group does not regularly work with / in? If so, were they involved in choosing to do so (e.g. finding equipment in a different lab to use, choosing a new to your group species or study system relevant to their questions, identifying a new analytical technique modeling approach to use)?
 - As part of this thesis, were new protocols, techniques, models or analyses developed and used by the student?
 - Did the student encounter any unexpected challenges and obstacles, and if so, how did they overcome these challenges?
 - How involved were you and / or other supervisors in the writing of the thesis?
4. Finally, please mention how this thesis compares to other MSc theses (at ETH or elsewhere) you have supervised or co-supervised.