

# **Regulations concerning the procedure surrounding the research master's thesis**

## **Article 1. General terms**

The thesis is a written report of research which the student carried out under supervision by a lecturer but with a high degree of independence. In principle, the thesis must be of sufficient quality (possibly following some modifications) to be published in an academic journal in the relevant field. The thesis must demonstrate among others that the student is able to:

- a. Completely independently formulate a research question which displays insight into the methodological principles, central issues and state of the art of his or her field of research;
- b. Independently formulate a realistic research plan which fulfils the criteria set in the relevant field of research;
- c. Critically and analytically report on existing academic debates *and* propose creative solutions based on secondary literature;
- d. Apply the more complex concepts/methods of his or her field to a corpus of primary source material (whether existing or collected during the student's own research);
- e. Formulate ideas clearly and correctly.

## **Article 2. Scope**

A thesis for a 2-year research master's corresponds to a minimum of 30 ECTS and a maximum of 40 ECTS, which generally corresponds to a maximum of 30,000 words including notes, bibliography and appendices.

## **Article 3. Language**

The thesis is written in English or (depending on the circumstances) in the target language of the programme.

## **Article 4. Supervision**

1. The coordinator of the programme is responsible for putting the student in the early stages of the proceedings in contact with a lecturer who will supervise his or her thesis. This should preferably take place upon commencement of the programme. This lecturer (the supervisor) must be an expert in the field of research covering the thesis topic.
2. In consultation with the supervisor, the student formulates a thesis plan and makes this known to the Board of Examiners.
3. The Board of Examiners appoints the supervisor as first reader. Following the advice of the first reader, the Board of Examiners then appoints a second reader. Should the nature or contents of the thesis make such a step desirable, a second reader can be appointed from experts outside the Department.
4. The first reader bears primary responsibility for the supervision of the thesis writing process;
5. The second reader reads and evaluates the final version of the thesis (see below). He or she is in principle not involved in the supervision unless his or her specialised knowledge in the field of the thesis topic makes such a step desirable. Agreements concerning this must be made with the first reader/supervisor.
6. Following approval of the thesis plan, the student and the supervisor agree on the term within which the thesis will be handed in.
7. *At the very minimum*, the following communications must take place between student and supervisor:

- a. An introductory discussion concerning the choice and scope of the thesis topic, the research question, the literature, the source materials, the general approach, consultation with appropriate experts, etc.;
  - b. A discussion of the working plan for the thesis;
  - c. A discussion of one or more intermediate stages of the thesis;
  - d. A discussion of the final version of the thesis, in which the evaluation of the thesis is made known and explained.
8. If, in the course of supervision, problems should occur between the student and his or her supervisor(s), the Board of Examiners, after having heard all parties, is responsible for reaching a final decision.

### **Article 5. Assessment**

1. The student submits at least three copies of the thesis: two for the supervisors/reviewer and one for the Department.
2. A thesis must be marked within four weeks. Between 1 June and 31 August, this period is extended to a maximum of six weeks.
3. The final mark for the thesis is determined by the first reader in consultation with the second reader.
4. The thesis is assessed on at least the following aspects:
  - a. The originality of the research question and the manner in which it has been put into practice;
  - b. The critical analysis of secondary literature;
  - c. The critical analysis of source materials;
  - d. Language use, structure and style;
  - e. The degree of independence displayed during the research and supervision process.
5. If the first and second reader disagree on the final mark, the Board of Examiners determines the mark.

### **Article 6. Appeals**

The student can appeal against the assessment of his or her thesis to the Board of Examiners or the Examinations Appeal Board. For more information, please contact the coordinator of the programme.

### **Article 7. Fraud, plagiarism, copyright, archiving**

1. Fraud is understood to mean, among others:
  - a. Entirely or partially copying texts/formulations of other authors without the use of quotation marks and accurate mention of the source (plagiarism);
  - b. Commissioning others to write (parts of) a text;
  - c. Creating fictitious data.
2. Cases of fraud (or suspicion of fraud) are reported by the first reader to the Board of Examiners who – depending on the nature, scope and frequency of fraud – may decide to declare the thesis null and void. In this case, the student is expected to write an entirely new thesis.
3. Copyright for the thesis belongs to the student.
4. The Department is obliged to keep one copy of all theses for a minimum of seven years in the Department's archive or the Departmental library.