

Recommendations for Students – Master Thesis and Defensio

1. How to Register an Exposé and the Title of the Master Thesis

In general, all habilitated persons (professors, lecturers) can supervise master theses. If you want to choose a supervisor who is not habilitated, this must be clarified in advance with the Director of Studies.

Seminar instructors, for example, are potential master thesis supervisors. It is also advisable to research which scholars teach and research on your topic of interest (u: find, Google etc.).

You can find the list of submitted and completed master theses including the name of the supervisors on the department's website.

<https://ie.univie.ac.at/studium/studienangebot/masterstudium-ie/abschlussarbeiten/>

Regarding your expectations of supervision, please note that there is a difference between permanent staff and external lecturers.

Write a meaningful exposé. The length of the exposé is left to the discretion of the supervisors.

Check with your supervisor at an early stage what requirements and expectations they have regarding the master thesis. These may differ from those of the master course.

If you make changes to the exposé or the design of your work, discuss this with your supervisor beforehand.

At the beginning of the writing process, you need to submit the form "Ansuchen um Thema und Betreuung der Masterarbeit" ("submission of topic and supervision of the master thesis") to the StudienServiceStelle (StudiesServiceUnit, i. e. office at the Department of Development Studies, henceforth: department's office). In order to do this, please fill in the form "Ansuchen um Thema und Betreuung der Masterarbeit", have it signed by the supervisor and submit it together with the form "Regeln der guten wissenschaftlichen Praxis" ("rules of good scientific practice") as well as the exposé of the planned master thesis at the department's office.

<https://ie.univie.ac.at/studium/studienangebot/masterstudium-ie/abschlussarbeiten/>

2. Submission of Your Record of Examinations

Once all the courses required for the Master have been completed (including the "Auflagen", i. e. additional requirements), the record of examinations can be submitted to the department's office. Please bring along the completed record of examinations, the "Ansuchen um Ausstellung des Abschlusszeugnisses" ("request for the issuance of the certificate of completion"), if applicable, the form for the "Auflagen" (additional requirements), your "Zulassungsbescheid" (official notice of admission), any official recognition of examinations, the transcript of records and the student record sheet. (The submission of the record of examinations should not be postponed until you hand in the master thesis !!!)

3. Writing the Master Thesis

Stay in regular contact with your supervisor.

Several libraries that you can use offer introductory courses to literature research: C3-Library for International Development and University Library (also multilingual).

Keeping a research diary might be useful, especially if you are employed.

A change of title and supervisor is possible at any time.

Supervisors are NOT reviewers! It is expected that the work will meet linguistic and scientific standards. This will also be regarded for the grading. Have the master thesis edited by a “native speaker”.

4. Cover Sheet and Plagiarism Check

If the master thesis is finished and formatted (please pay attention to the correct and bilingual design of the cover sheet and other format specifications – like printed on both sides!), and with the consent of your supervisor, you have to upload the document to the “Hochschulschriftenserver” (HoPla, i. e. the University of Vienna’s plagiarism check server)

The “OK” of your supervisor does not automatically mean that the thesis is rated “excellent”. Discuss the expected grade – if possible – before uploading the thesis.

Please do not forget that the master thesis must also contain a German and English abstract, but no CV! Check beforehand whether your existing titles (e.g. a BA) are recorded, otherwise ask the admission office to register them. You may only indicate your BA on the cover sheet if the University of Vienna has the title on file (see your student record sheet). Please also note the exact spelling of the title – see your student record sheet !!!

Informally, the date for your defensio can already be discussed and reserved in the department’s office (see below).

5. Binding Your Master Thesis and Turning it in at the StudiesServiceCentre (SSC)

Within one week after plagiarism check clearance, two bound copies of the master thesis must be handed in at the SSC Social Sciences together with the signed upload confirmation.

Option 1: You receive a stamped copy and give it to your supervisor. Your supervisor will send the grading report to the SSC – in this case, please agree on a schedule with your supervisor in advance!

Option 2: Your supervisor will give you the “OK” to upload and agree with you when you will receive the grading report directly from her / him. You will then receive the report in a sealed envelope directly from your supervisor. Thus, after plagiarism check clearance, you can hand in the two bound copies together with the grading report at the SSC. This speeds up the process significantly! Beforehand, please also hand over the form “Beurteilung einer wissenschaftlichen Arbeit” (“assessment of a scientific thesis”) to your supervisor; it must be submitted together with the grading report.

6. Registration of the Defensio

Once the grading report of your supervisors is delivered to the SSC, you will be notified by e-mail, that your master thesis has been graded (“Approbation” – if you handed in the grading report together with the bound copies of your master thesis at the SSC, you receive the “Approbation” then and there). With the positive evaluation and accordingly the “Approbation”, you can arrange the date of your defensio with the department’s office. A period of at least ten days must pass between the grading of the thesis and the

date of the defensio! Thus, plan the submission of the master thesis in such a way that your supervisor has enough time to evaluate it, and that there is a sufficient time gap before the defensio!

First step: arrange the date of your defensio with the department's office.

Dates and chairpersons for defensiones can be found here:
<https://ie.univie.ac.at/studium/studienangebot/masterstudium-ie/masterdefensio-oeffentliche-terme/>

It is important to keep in mind, that the chairperson may not be the first or second examiner at the same time! Normally, the supervisor of the master thesis is also the first examiner. The second examiner must be self-organized (teaching staff of the University of Vienna with doctorate).

Second step: Register your defensio officially at least ten days before the appointment by means of the form "Anmeldung zur Defensio" ("registration to the defensio") at the department's office.

7. Defensio

At the defensio, only the presentation of your master thesis is assessed. There are no examination fields. Both the first examiner (supervisor) and the candidate can refer to criticisms from the grading report. You may use PowerPoint for the presentation. A handout may or may not be distributed. The relevance of the work for development research should also be emphasized at the defensio. The process of the defensio is as follows: the candidate has 20 minutes to present the master thesis. The questions of the examination committee follow. The presentation and question part of the defensio are open to the public, the session of the examining board is not. Take every opportunity (Jour Fixe, colleagues, etc.) to hold a trial defensio before your defensio and practice observing the time frame of 20 minutes for the presentation at your defensio.

8. Academic Degree

Finally, about four weeks after the (successfully completed) defensio, the decision about the award of the academic degree and the final certificate can be picked up at the SSC SoWi. Communication about the collection date usually takes place via e-mail.