

K.U.Leuven examination regulations

Subsection 1. Special provisions relating to the dissertation or Master's thesis

Article 167. Faculty regulations, supervisor

Article 168. Evaluation

Article 169. Disputation

http://www.kuleuven.be/education/regulations/#onderafd2_1

Faculty specific guidelines and arrangements concerning the Master's Thesis (Faculty of Arts)

The following guidelines and agreements describe the faculty specific framework of the Master's Thesis. They are not official regulations, but they provide you with a general framework of the Master's Thesis as perceived by the faculty. Within this framework the various POCs (Permanent Committees of Education) can draw up specific guidelines, which will be discussed and possibly approved by the Faculty Council.

1. Objective

The Master's Thesis is the paper a student finishes his Master's programme with. It shows the student's analytical, synthetic and problem solving abilities. The paper reflects the investigating attitude of the student and is a first product of individually performed scientific research. The student proves he is capable of individually consulting and critically analysing primary and secondary sources and justifying the used research methodology.

2. Putting into operation

These faculty specific guidelines as well as the POC specific guidelines, approved by the faculty, are applied as from the academic year 2007-2008. They are subject to changes by the Faculty Council, at the latest during the last gathering before the academic year during which the changes will be applied.

3. Positioning, choosing, registering of topic

The Master's Thesis is a component of the Master's programme. The Master's Thesis is interpreted as a year course and concerns the specialism of the programme/option the student is enrolled in.

The Master's Thesis differs from the bachelorpaper in weight, extent and finality. The Master's Thesis and the bachelorpaper have their own criteria, scientific research question and evaluation.

A Master's Thesis and internship can be integrated, but the Master's Thesis should not be a mere description of the internship efforts and assignments.

The Master's Thesis can be made individually or in group. When working in groups, it should be clearly defined which student is responsible for which content. This way, an individual evaluation remains possible.

The individual mentor is responsible for assigning the topics. The POC watches over the maximum guiding workload of every mentor, so it will not be exceeded.

Procedures concerning choosing, assigning and registering topics as well as the formal conditions are determined by the POC. The subjects are published at least one week before the start of the academic year. The student is also welcome to suggest his own topic.

The student himself registers the topic of his Master's Thesis in due time following the procedure as determined by the POC.

After registering the topic, the student can only change his topic choice after addressing a motivated request to the programme director who has to approve it.

4. Procedure elaboration

Regardless of the required report form, a Master's Thesis should be available in a written form in any case, containing a scientific framework of the research question and interest in the theoretical foundation of and critical reflection on the achieved results.

The report should obviously show that the student has interpreted the gathered information and achieved results in purpose of what is relevant regarding the research question. Various points of view should be discussed and argued so as to form an individual motivated opinion.

The Master's Thesis contains no more than 160 000 characters, excluding bibliography, illustrations and appendices. The number of characters contained in the Master's thesis should be indicated underneath the summary.

Language use, wording and format of the Master's Thesis should be carefully attended to.

The Master's Thesis is formulated in the programme language. Students enrolled in a Dutch programme have the right to write their Master's Thesis in Dutch. It is only obligatory to write the Master's Thesis in a foreign language if the topic or study object of the Master's Thesis concerns a modern foreign language or literary tradition. Students wishing to write their Master's Thesis in a foreign language (other than Dutch), have to address a motivated request to the programme director of the programme they are enrolled in.

The student adds a summary of 2500 characters to the Master's Thesis. A summary in a foreign language has to be included in a Master's Thesis in Dutch and a Dutch summary has to be included in a Master's Thesis in a foreign language. Students completing a study programme which is not taught in Dutch should include a summary in the language of instruction used in the programme.

5. Supervision

Possible supervisors of a Master's Thesis are: ZAP-members, postdoctoral assistants and other temporary (post)doctoral researchers. Besides a supervisor, a co-supervisor holding a PhD can also be assigned.

When a student is advised by a doctorate-promoter, a ZAP-member will be assigned to continue the supervision and mentoring in case the doctorate-promoter's mandate comes to an end.

A doctorate-promoter can mentor a maximum of 3 Master's Theses per year. The POC assures an equal and balanced spread of the workload.

A PhD student cannot be a supervisor, but he can take up some of the mentoring assignments and workload. However, he has to be assured that the mentoring assignments are not exceeding the maximum volume of allowed services.

Guidance for a Master's Thesis principally is an individual event. However, students doing research on related topics or themes can be guided in group.

The promoter and the student try to clearly define and describe the topic from the start and verify if the research necessary for the Master's Thesis is feasible. When the topic is approved, the promoter and student will discuss and agree on terms concerning mentoring and time schedule. The promoter warns the student about the disadvantages that come with tardiness regarding submitting the Master's Thesis and postponed graduation.

Promoter and student can report problems concerning mentoring and guidance of the Master's Thesis to the programme director or the deputy-programme director, who will further investigate and act upon the issue.

6. Submission

The Master's thesis should be submitted by the first Monday of the examination period at the latest. The deadlines have to be strictly respected. The specific deadlines for every examination period will be published on Toledo.

The student should submit one electronic copy as well as the requisite number of paper copies specified by the Programme Committee.

7. Evaluation

The evaluation of the Master's Thesis is the responsibility of a Master's Thesis committee, which is appointed by the chairman of the examination commission (if necessary after discussing possible members with the promoter) and consists of the promoter, possible co-promoter and two readers. The second reader is only consulted at the request of the supervisor or the first reader or if there is a difference of 3 or more points between the average marks awarded by the supervisor and the first reader and if consultation with the chair of the examination committee has not resolved the matter.

If there is a difference of 3 points or more between the average marks awarded by the supervisor and the first reader, the supervisor should inform the chair of the examination committee. Possible readers include all senior academic staff, postdoctoral assistants and other postdoctoral researchers.

Taking the evaluation of the Master's Theses into account, a meeting with AP-members is organised. The chairman of the examination committee will certainly attend this meeting and the authorized POC selects the other participants of this meeting.

If the internship is integrated in the Master's Thesis, the mark for the thesis and for the internship must not be awarded by the same person..

During the evaluation of the Master's Thesis the process as well as the product should be taken into account. The evaluation criteria and their application have to be transparent to the student. For this

purpose, the POC draws up an evaluation grid. This grid consists of a brief written report and serves as a guide when giving feedback to the student.

The POC can request the student to orally present and defend his Master's Thesis. If this oral report is not a part of another elementary component of the programme the student is enrolled in, the POC has to inform the student about the evaluation criteria used for the oral presentation beforehand.

Five separate marks – each out of 20 and to be divided between the supervisor (and possibly the co-supervisor) and the reader(s) – are awarded to the thesis. Each examiner can award between 1 and 3 of these 5 marks; the specific allocation of marks to be awarded is determined by the Programme Committee. During the meeting of the examination committee the evaluation is motivated and answered for by the written evaluation grid. When a supervisor or a reader evaluated the Master's Thesis as insufficient, he has to hand in an elaborated motivation to the chairman of the examination committee before the deliberation takes place.

Passing the evaluation of the Master's Thesis is a necessary condition for obtaining a Master's degree.

The result of the Master's Thesis is weighed with factor 3 in programmes with a Master Thesis of 18 credits and with factor 4 in programmes with a Master Thesis of 24 credits.

In case of a disputed result, the student can request the chairman of the examination committee and the ombudsman to be heard by the examination committee.

Leuven, 30 March 2007

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