

# Guidelines for the Master's Thesis

The master's thesis is considered the final outcome of your master project and is also the most extensive scientific work of the study. The basis is identifying an appropriate topic, which is worked on independently, based on scientific theories and methods.

Below you will find important information and related references to the Master's Framework Examination Regulations (M-RPO) regarding the individual steps before and during the preparation of a master's thesis, as well as its assessment and evaluation.

## Before Registration

Before you register your master's thesis, choose a topic that is related to your master's program and discuss it with your initial supervisor.

### Important information before registration

- **Compensation for disadvantages**

If you are unable to complete all or part of the master's thesis in the described form or within the deadline due to a chronic illness, a disability, pregnancy a/o maternity leave, you may apply for compensation for a disadvantage. Accordingly, the Master's Examination Committee may extend the processing time for examinations or the deadline (§§ 10a and 10b of the M-RPO).

For this purpose, please contact the Diversity Officer (Diversitätsbeauftragte) of the University of Erfurt, who is supported by Department 1: Study & Teaching (Dezernat 1: Studium & Lehre), or the representative for Studying with Children before proposing the topic of your master's thesis.

- **Language of the master's thesis**

The master's thesis could be written either in German or English. Should you want to write your thesis in a language other than the above mentioned, you will need to get your first supervisor's approval before issuing the topic of the master's thesis (§ 21 paragraph 6 of the M-RPO). In this case, the master's thesis must contain a short summary in German as an appendix.

- **Joint-master thesis**

The master's thesis can also be written as a group thesis if its contribution could be assessed clearly and distinguishably. Further details are regulated by § 21 paragraph 4 in conjunction with § 21 paragraph 1 of the M-RPO. § 21 paragraph 1 of the M-RPO.

- **Supervision of the master's thesis**

Any professor or other person who is authorized to conduct examinations and hold a teaching position within your master's program can supervise the master's thesis (§ 21 Para. 2 of the M-RPO).

- **External second Supervisor**

You have found a person who does not (regularly) teach at the University of Erfurt, but agrees to review your work? Then you can request the appointment of an external second supervisor. This person must have at least the university degree you are pursuing. Thus, it could be an expert from a company or another university, but their appointment must be justified and well-founded.

#### Formalities for appointing an external second Supervisor

- Clarification of the importance and advisability of appointing an external second supervisor with the first supervisor.
- Submission of a written request to the M-Examination board (M-Prüfungsausschuss) stating why this external second supervisor would perform this task to the same extent instead of a professor, or another person authorized to examine at the University of Erfurt. This written application shall be co-signed by the first supervisor.
- Submission of the application along with the contact details of the second supervisor as well as the "Application for issuing the thesis' topic".

The form "Application for issuing the thesis' topic" can be found ↓[here](#). Please use only this form for application. *A translation help is given with this → **document**.*

In principle, students who wish to peruse their degree within the standard study period (four semesters) must "apply for issuing the thesis topic with taking into account that handing in the master's thesis shall be one month before the end of the fourth semester at the latest." § 21 paragraph 3 of the M-RPO.

Please note that you should submit your application as well as a current Certificate of Enrolment to the Dean's Office by the 15th of (each) month so that your thesis topic and the start of the processing period can be scheduled for the 1st day of the following month.

The topic and the supervisors will then be approved by the Master's Examination Committee and communicated to you in an *issue letter*. This letter will be sent to you by mail a few days before the start of the master thesis' processing period.

## **During the master thesis processing period**

The deadline for submitting your master's thesis is 5 months starting from the day you will be notified with the issue letter. As a rule of thumb, the length/word count of the

master thesis should not exceed approx. 25,000 words. You should thus keep the topic appropriately brief to fit into the given word count.

The work must contain (from a purely formal point of view) the following elements:

- Title page,
- Table of contents,
- List of sources/bibliography,
- Page numbers,
- References,
- Declaration of Authenticity
- The requirements of any other scientific work apply (Research question(s), research interest, state of research, theory, results, conclusion/further research...etc.).

## Further remarks

- **Return or Change of thesis' topic**

The topic can only be returned once and only within two months after the issue of the master thesis' topic (§ 21 paragraph 3 of the M-RPO).

For this purpose, please send an informal letter with a short justification to the M-Examination Committee and submit it via the Dean's Office.

Changing the title of the thesis is only possible in justified exceptions. For this purpose, a written request with reasons must be submitted to the Master's Examination Board no later than 4 weeks before the submission deadline (final deadline). This request requires a written statement from your supervisor.

Adding an (additional) subtitle is possible at any time without an application. However, this addition will not (!) be shown on the certificate.

- **Extension of the Deadline**

### **Illness**

In case you are unable to submit on time due to an illness, you must immediately submit the sick leave notification to Department 1: Study & Teaching (Dezernat 1: Studium & Lehre). For this purpose, it is mandatory to use the given [↓form](#).

If the inability to work on the thesis is recognized, the Deadline will be extended according to the respective number of days of illness or delay. After processing the documents received by the Dean's Office for this purpose, students receive a letter with the recalculated deadline.

## **Submission of the Master's thesis**

The thesis shall be submitted in the Dean's Office in two copies, plus one digital version for the reviewers, and an additional digital version for the storage.

According to § 22 paragraph 1 of the M-RPO, a declaration that students have not used any other sources than those indicated is to be included.

In addition, a valid Certificate of enrolment is to be submitted, i.e. students must be enrolled at the University of Erfurt by the time of submission.

## **Evaluation of the Master's thesis**

After submitting your master's thesis in due time, the Dean's Office will send it to the respective supervisors. The supervisors will take approx. eight weeks to prepare the expert evaluation of your work according to § 22 paragraph 2 of the M-RPO.

The master's thesis will be reviewed by two supervisors and evaluated in accordance with § 15 paragraph 3 of the M-RPO. If the grades of both appointed supervisors differ by 2.0 or more, or if one of the two supervisors assesses the thesis as "insufficient", the thesis is to be assessed by a third examiner if (§ 22 paragraph 2 of the M-RPO).

You will receive your grade certificate by mail shortly after the receipt of both experts' reports. The Dean's Office will then automatically forward a copy to Department 1: Study & Teaching (Dezernat 1: Studium & Lehre).

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## **Re-doing/Repeating the master's thesis**

The master's thesis is deemed not to have been passed if you do not complete your thesis within the deadline of the Master Examination Board or if the two supervisors rate your work as "insufficient" (grade 5.0) (§ 23 paragraph 2 of the M-RPO).

If the master's thesis has not been passed for the first time, it can be repeated once on a different topic. A change of the topic of the master's thesis is only permitted if you did not make use of this option when writing the first master's thesis (Section 21 (3) of the M-RPO). The application is every 15th and 30th / 31st of one month (the processing time starts on the 1st or 15th of the following month).

If the master's thesis is also not passed in the second attempt, the right to be examined expires. If you lose your right to take an examination, you will be de-registered (ex-matriculated) (Section 23 (2) of the M-RPO).