

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 (paragraph 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 (paragraph 21 (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 paragraph 21 (4) in conjunction with paragraph 21 (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 (paragraph 21 (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 under <https://sul-www.uni-erfurt.de/PublicServices/PruefungsAngelegenheiten/Formulare.aspx>. Please use only this form for application.

A translation help is given with this document under https://www.uni-erfurt.de/fileadmin/fakultaet/philosophische/Dekanat/Masterarbeit/Template_Thesis_Topic_Issuance.pdf.

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." (paragraph 21 (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 the dean's office via e-mail a few days before the start of the processing period. Your confirmation of this letter is required so that the corresponding link can be activated in WISEflow and sent to you.

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 (paragraph 21 (5) of the M-RPO). 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:

- table of contents,
- list of sources/bibliography,
- page numbers,
- references.

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 (paragraph 21 (3) of the M-RPO).

For this purpose, please send an informal letter with a short justification to the M-Examination Committee (*M-Prüfungsausschuss*) 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 form "Krankheitsanzeige" (<https://sulwww.uni-erfurt.de/PublicServices/PruefungsAngelegenheiten/Krankmeldung.aspx>).

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

To verify that the **submission deadline** has been met, the **date of receipt of the digital submission** via WISEflow applies.

On the day of submission, you upload your digital master thesis as a PDF file via the platform **WISEflow**. This file must not exceed a size of **20 MB** and must (formally) contain the following:

- table of contents,
- list of sources and bibliography,
- page numbers
- references.

Please make sure that no conclusions can be drawn about your name or address here (personal data - data protection)!

In addition, **the title page**, valid **Certificate of enrolment** and the **declaration of independence signed by hand in blue must be uploaded** in WISEflow **as separate files** under "*Anhangsmaterial*"; and furthermore, additional files with attachments or appendices (video recordings, statistics files, etc.) may be uploaded here - these files together must not exceed the size of **1 GB**.

After that, you also add the automatically generated cover sheet in WISEflow.

As a last step, click on the "Click here to submit" field in WISEflow to complete the submission. After that, you can download a receipt for yourself and print it out if necessary.

If requested by your examiner(s), please submit one/two bound printed version(s) of your master thesis to the Dean's Office **no later than 3 days** after submitting your thesis in WISEflow.

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 examiners. The deadline for the evaluation procedure is based on paragraph 22 (2) of the M-RPO.

The master's thesis will be reviewed by two supervisors and evaluated in accordance with paragraph 15 (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 (paragraph 22 (2) of the M-RPO).

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

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) (paragraph 23 (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 (paragraph 21 (3) of the M-RPO). The application can be submitted by the 15th of (each) month (the processing time starts on the 1st 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) (paragraph 23 (2) of the M-RPO).