

Cand.merc./MSc in Economics and Business Administration

Rules and assessment criteria regarding Master's thesis

There is no doubt that the thesis is the most demanding part of the MSc programme. Because it constitutes 25% of the programme, it is also a very important part. This activity is extremely student-focused as most students decide to write their thesis alone. However, students are allowed to write the thesis with another student.

The aim of the thesis is to give students an opportunity – within a limited subject area – to demonstrate their independent skills within the areas of problem formulation, analysis, application of methods, critical judgement and submission of conclusions.

As the thesis is the final activity of the programme, it synthesises the qualifications and competences that students have gained in the other activities of the programme.

The Master's thesis can be written and defended in Danish if the student has been assigned an adviser who agrees.

Assessment criteria

The Master's thesis is assessed according to the 7-point grading scale by the supervisor and an external examiner. The assessment of the thesis is based on the thesis and the oral exam.

Organisation:

The thesis must be organised in a logical and appropriate manner, with a clear progression of thought from the research question through the analysis to the conclusion, and with the main weight being laid on those parts of the analysis that are crucial for answering the research question as formulated.

Research question:

The thesis must contain a clear and precise research question related to a topic which is relevant to the field of study concerned and which allows for independent analytical work, theorising, and reflection.

Delimitation:

The thesis must be delimited in such a way that the analyses and discussions are relevant, necessary and adequate to answer the research question posed. The student must demonstrate an overview of the chosen topic by giving reasons for what is included in and what is excluded from the thesis with regard to topics, theories, methods and empirical data.

Analysis:

The thesis must contain a clear and precise analysis of the research question posed, with the relevant use of the definitions, concepts, theories and methods of the academic area concerned. The premises and assumptions of the analysis must be clearly presented, and their significance for the results must be discussed. The results of the analysis must be placed in perspective through comparison with other similar studies or by relating them to other research issues in the field. The analysis must also contain substantial independent input from the student.

Relevant literature and documentation:

The research question must be analysed with reference to relevant literature in the area to the degree that is necessary for an in-depth analysis of the topic. Arguments, interpretations,

descriptions and data from other sources must be documented with precise bibliographical references to the sources.

Conclusion:

The thesis must contain clear conclusions, documented and supported by the theories and methods used in the analysis.

Format:

The thesis must be laid out clearly and in a manner that communicates well. It must be formulated in correct, clear and fluent language, and it must respect the page limits laid down.

Oral defence:

The student must be able to select the central elements of the analysis in the thesis and answer questions in a way that demonstrates an overview of the chosen topic. The student must demonstrate full command of the definitions, concepts, theories and methods of the academic area concerned, and an ability to place the results of the analysis in a larger perspective.

After having completed the thesis students will have acquired the following competences:

Analytical competences - ability to:

- Identify relevant problems and issues in a complex environment
- Evaluate different methodologies
- Work methodically with complex and comprehensive material
- Carry out analyses based on appropriate theoretical approaches

Navigational competences - ability to:

- Analyse the applicability of the latest research
- Find and select relevant knowledge
- Structure large volumes of knowledge
- Synthesise complex observations and knowledge

Innovation competences - ability to:

- Create new knowledge
- Apply scientific models to comprehensive information

Self management competences - ability to:

- Work independently
- Work disciplined
- Work structured

- Work targeted

Communication competences - ability to:

- Communicate correctly and effectively in writing
- Communicate complex issues in an understandable way
- Discuss a scientific problem

Supervisor

When students want to start the preparation of the thesis, they must contact the department responsible for their specialisation and ask for appointment/approval of a supervisor who teaches or does research within the subject area of the particular MSc specialisation. In case the subject for the thesis comprises more than one subject area, it is possible to have two supervisors.

The supervisor must approve the subject for the thesis and the problem statement. He/her is also in charge of the oral exam on the basis of the thesis.

The deadline for allocation of supervisor is 1 December.

One or two student(s)

A Master's thesis can be written by one or two students. If there are two authors, the students are not required to identify which part each group member wrote. However each author has the right to individualise their contribution by highlighting for which parts they are responsible. The grade is given individually after the oral defence of the thesis and will be based on an individual assessment of the student's performance.

Registration for the thesis and handing in of the thesis

Students will automatically be registered for the Master's thesis at the outset of the fourth semester, on 1 February, with submission on 1 June. The deadline for assessment is 1 July.

If students due to exemptions do not follow the scheduled study programme, registration for the Master's thesis will automatically happen when the student has been registered for courses equivalent to 90 ECTS, on 1 September or on 1 February, regardless of whether the student has passed these courses. In case the student has not passed all courses at the time of registration for the Master's thesis, the student will automatically be granted an exemption from the rule that the Master's thesis must constitute the concluding element on the Master's degree programme. If the student wishes to complete courses equivalent to 90 ECTS before registering for the Master's thesis, he/she must contact the studies administration. On the same occasion, the student should consult a student counsellor in order to ensure that the remaining elements on the programme are structured appropriately. Students who register for the thesis on 1 September have a deadline for allocation of supervisor on 1 July and must submit the thesis on 1 January. The deadline for assessment is 1 February.

If the date stated is a Saturday, Sunday or a holiday, the deadline is the first working day after the deadline.

Formal requirements

The maximum size allowed for the thesis (in number of characters excl. blanks) is defined by the number of students:

- 1 student = 132,000 characters excl. blanks (equivalent to roughly 60 pages)
- 2 students = 198,000 characters excl. blanks (equivalent to roughly 90 pages)

Where special circumstances are concerned, the advisor can approve that the maximum number of characters excl. blanks is 154.000 respectively 220.000 (equivalent to roughly 70 respectively 100 pages).

Note the following:

- All parts of the main thesis (front page, abstract, list of contents, footnotes, references, tables, etc.) count towards this total. Only the appendices are excluded from this total number of characters and are only for documentation and random checks of the method and calculation used in the thesis.
- Figures and illustrations count as 800 characters independent of their size.
- There are no minimum limits for the thesis so you do not have to reach the maximum limit.
- There are no formal requirements as to line spacing, margins, fonts, header or footer – as long as your thesis is readable and is within reasonable frames.

The thesis has to be written in a clear and fluent language as it is an important element in the evaluation of the thesis. It is also part of the academic qualifications that the student can organize and adjust the topic for the thesis so it fits the number of pages available and this requirement goes into the evaluation as well.

The thesis must contain an abstract of 1-2 pages in English, which will form part of the general assessment of the thesis.

Oral defence

The thesis is concluded with an oral exam (defence) based on the thesis. If the thesis has been written by two students, the defence of the thesis can be held as an oral group exam. It is, however, the supervisor who decides whether the oral defence can take place as a group exam and the students are always entitled to choose individual oral exams.

If students do not submit the thesis within the deadline

If the thesis is not handed in within the deadline stated, one examination attempt has been used. The student will then have to prepare a modified problem statement which must be approved by the supervisor. The student has a new deadline of three months to submit the thesis, starting from the original deadline.

If the student does not submit the thesis by the new deadline, he/she has used the second of the three attempts to pass the thesis. The student will again have to prepare a modified problem statement which must be approved by the supervisor. The student has one final deadline of three months to submit the thesis, starting from the second deadline.

If students fail their thesis

If students achieve the grade -3 or 00 and thereby fail the thesis, one examination attempt has been used. The student will then have to prepare a modified problem statement which must be approved by the supervisor. The student has a new deadline of three months to submit the thesis, starting from the date of assessment for the first attempt.

The same procedure will follow if the student fails the second attempt.