

Master's Thesis Guidelines: Organisational Aspects



Starting the Thesis

The earliest possible point to begin with the master's thesis:

Proof of at least 70 ECTS credits

Deadline?

There is no deadline for starting and registering for the thesis. It is up to you decide when to start with it.

What to consider when you are planning the time line of your thesis

Matriculation

You must stay matriculated until you have fulfilled all requirements of your study programme. If your last requirement is the thesis, you have to stay matriculated until the submission date of the thesis and pay the tuition fee (if applicable for you) for that semester.

Exceptions:

If you hand in your thesis within 4 weeks after the [start of lectures](#) of a particular semester and ex-matriculate immediately after submission, the tuition fee of that semester will be returned to you. You don't have to apply for the reimbursement. By handing in the ex-matriculation form the admissions office knows that you have to be reimbursed and transfers the fees back to you automatically.

If you ex-matriculate later than 4 weeks after the start of lectures, the tuition fee of that semester will not be reimbursed.

Note: You do not have to stay matriculated for awaiting the grade of your thesis and the certificate. You can [ex-matriculate](#) as soon as you have submitted the thesis, if you wish to do so.

If you do not ex-matriculate, you will stay enrolled until the end of the semester in which you submitted the thesis.

Health Insurance:

If you are not exempt from German public health insurance, you have to pay your health insurance fees until you submit the thesis, independent from where you stay during thesis writing. Even if you left Freiburg already and write the thesis abroad, you have to pay the public health insurance as it is a requirement for matriculation.

Special case:

You submit your thesis a month or two before the semester ends, but would like to stay enrolled as long as possible, preferably for the following semester. As long as your thesis is not graded, you have the right to stay enrolled.

Example: Your thesis is not graded before the registration period starts (15.01.-15.02. or 15.6.-15.7.) → if you want, you can register for the following semester. If your thesis will be graded before the semester ends (31.3. or 30.9.), but after your registration for the following semester, this will not affect your matriculation for the following semester. You will stay matriculated.

Ex-matriculation

We recommend to actively [ex-matriculate](#) by handing in a [form](#) instead of making use of the automatic ex-matriculation. Only if you submit the form, will you receive a confirmation of your ex-matriculation. You will need this confirmation in case you want to enroll again at a German university or if you want

to claim your pensions for the time of your studies. The letter will be send to you by postal mail. It is therefore important that your address in HisInOne is always current.

There are two options for submitting the ex-matriculation form:

1. If you are still in Freiburg you should hand in the form personally at the [Service Center Studium \(Studierendensekretariat\)](#) in Sedanstraße - after having gone to the university library to get a stamp to confirm that no books are checked out on your account.
 2. If you left Freiburg already you can send the form as a scan to the [Service Center Studium Student Affairs](#) and ask them if they can contact the university library to verify that you returned all books and if they can send you the letter to confirm your ex-matriculation per email as a PDF.
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Supervisors



Choosing Supervisors:

You will need a supervisor and a second examiner. Your supervisor is the one who is supervising you actively. The second examiner is just an examiner. His/her task is to grade your thesis, not to supervise it.

It is your responsibility to find a thesis topic and an appropriate supervisor and second examiner. When you look for a supervisor you can contact all professors and PDs of our faculty as well as lecturers/scientists with a PhD degree (Dr.). Some of them will have the official permission to supervise a thesis and thus be allowed to sign the thesis registration form independently. Others will need the additional signature of the professor on the form. Professor emeriti do not qualify for supervision.

Important: There cannot be an official or personal relationship of dependence between the supervisor and second examiner (e.g. a professor is the first supervisor and his assistant is the second supervisor).

Internal / external supervisors

In most cases both persons, supervisor and second examiner, will be internal, meaning they will be members of the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources.

However, when needed, an external supervisor/second examiner can be involved. It is not allowed to fill both positions with external persons.

Both, internal and external supervisors/second examiners have to be professors or lecturers with a PhD degree at a University and must be authorized to supervise a master thesis. Researchers without a position at a University are not accepted.

How to apply for an external supervisor:

In special cases you can apply for an external supervisor or second examiner (particularly no professor is involved in your particular field of research at the faculty or if the field of research is undertaken outside Freiburg).

If you want to involve an external supervisor, you and your internal thesis supervisor/second examiner have to write a letter to the Chair of the Examinations Committee. Please explain why you wish to have an external supervisor/second examiner and prove that the person has a full professorship at a university or authorization to execute a Master exam.

Registering for the thesis



Once you have chosen a topic and found an appropriate supervisor and second examiner, you can submit the thesis registration form to the Examination Office where it will be approved (see above deadlines).

Registration Form: The appropriate [form](#) can be downloaded from the [Examination Office website](#) or from the website of your MSc program.

Signatures: The registration form must be signed by you and your supervisor and must show the name of the second examiner. The registration form has to be submitted in original, scans are not accepted.

Starting Date: Together with your supervisor, you have to agree on a starting date for your thesis and record it on the registration form.

Start of Thesis Work: Any work on the thesis should not begin prior to the chosen starting date.

Submission: Please submit the original registration form with original signatures to the Examinations Office. From there it will be forwarded to the Chair of the Examinations Committee for approval.

Registration Confirmation: Once the Chair has approved your thesis registration, the Examinations Office will send you a confirmation letter and inform you of the exact submission date of your thesis.

Equipment



MAXQDA

MEG purchased 6 portable MAXQDA licenses for student use. You can borrow a license in Esther's office (02045, 2nd floor).

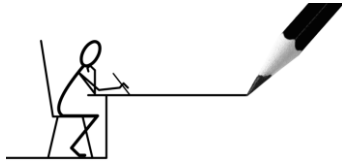
If you are not able to borrow a license because it's peak season and all licenses have been taken already you can also work with MAXQDA in the computer room on the 3rd floor (CIP3). It's installed on all computers there.

Another option is to use [QDA Miner Lite](#), a free software for qualitative data analysis, which provides almost the same functions as MAXQDA.

Voice Recorders

MEG purchased 4 voice recorders for student use. You can borrow them in Esther's office (02045, 2nd floor).

Writing the thesis



Time Frame:

You have exactly six months to complete the thesis.

Changing the Topic:

You can suspend the writing of your master's thesis only once and only during the first two months after approval. A new topic must be submitted within four weeks.

Title:

The thesis title written on the registration form is a provisional title. You are allowed to change the title slightly, as long as it is obvious from the title that you did not change the topic of your thesis. The key words should be maintained. You do not need to apply for slight changes of the title, just submit the thesis with the final title.

Extension of deadline:

An extension of a maximum four weeks is possible, but only in exceptional cases. Requests for extensions (per letter) must be submitted to the Examinations Office immediately and no later than the original submission date of the thesis. Your request has to be approved and supported by your supervisor in writing.

Illness:

Should you fall ill during the writing of your thesis you have to immediately submit a doctor's certificate to the Examinations Office. Your doctor has to attest to your illness by filling in the [Bescheinigung der Prüfungsunfähigkeit](#) **at the beginning of the illness**. If you hand in the certificate after your illness it will not be considered.

Illness Caused Deadline Extension:

An extension can only be granted for the duration of your illness (maximum of six weeks) and only for illnesses that clearly prevent you from working on your thesis.

Testimony:

The last page of your thesis must contain a signed declaration which states, "I herewith declare that I have written this paper on my own and that I have not used any other sources and materials than those indicated. I properly cited the materials I have relied upon. I have not submitted this document as a master thesis elsewhere".

Submission of the thesis



Submission Date:

The thesis must be submitted to the Examinations Office by the agreed upon submission date. You may submit your thesis earlier if you wish. The thesis can be handed in Monday to Friday from 8.00 to 12.30. You do not have to submit only during the consultation hours of the Examinations Office.

Late Submission:

If the master's thesis is submitted after the submission date, which was approved by the Examinations Office, your thesis will be graded as 'unsatisfactory' (5.0) and fail.

Number of Copies:

You have to submit three hard copies of your thesis and one CD with the electronic version of the thesis. Each copy must be bound. Spiral binding is not accepted.

Testimony:

Each hard copy must contain a testimony (see above) with an original signature.

Evaluation of the thesis



Timeframe of the Evaluation:

The thesis will be evaluated by your supervisor and the second examiner within 6 weeks after submission. The final grade of your master's thesis is the average of the two grades awarded by the two examiners.

Grade to Pass:

To pass, the master's thesis must be graded as sufficient (4.0) or better.

Further information can be found in the examination regulations
