

Research master's thesis: procedure, requirements, assessment

A. Procedure for registration and defence

This document describes the registration procedure, assessment, and defence of the research master's thesis (= article + research proposal). The web forms for registering and submitting a thesis are available on the faculty's intranet.

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1. At least one month before the intended submission date, the [thesis supervisor](#) requests the examination board to appoint a committee of examiners (CoE) [web form].
 2. The [examination board](#) appoints the CoE, consisting of the 1st examiner (also chairperson), the 2nd examiner, and the permanent examiner. Generally, the 1st examiner will be the thesis supervisor.
 3. The [thesis supervisor](#) checks the thesis for plagiarism. If plagiarism is suspected, this is reported to the examination board, and the procedure is suspended.
 4. If the supervisor considers the article/research proposal ready to be defended, it is submitted by the [supervisor](#). [web form]
 5. Within 2 weeks after submission, all [examiners](#) complete the assessment form and submit their reports to the [permanent examiner](#).
 6. If the thesis is judged unsatisfactory by one or several of the examiners, the supervisor requests the student to revise the thesis so as to meet the examiners' objections. The procedure is then resumed from step 3.
 7. If the thesis is judged satisfactory by all examiners, the [1st examiner](#) informs the student, the [student](#) consults with the examiners to determine the date of the defence.
 8. The [permanent examiner](#) determines the final mark for the thesis by averaging the individual assessments.
 9. Once the mark has been determined, the defence takes place before the [1st](#) and at least one other examiner (normally the [2nd](#) examiner).
 10. The [examiners](#) present at the defence assess the defence and complete the final assessment form.
 11. The [1st examiner](#) forwards the final assessment form to the student. The [permanent examiner](#) forwards all the forms and the thesis to STIP.
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B. Formal requirements for the thesis

- The thesis must contain a title page, an article and a research proposal.
- PDF file, A4, margins of at least 3.5 cm all around.
- Common 12 point serif font such as Times, Palatino or Garamond.
- Written in good, clear and grammatically correct English.
- The title page must specify:
 - The article's title
 - Student's name
 - Student number
 - Supervisor's name
 - Date
 - The following text:

Thesis for obtaining a "Master of arts" degree in philosophy
Radboud University Nijmegen
- Reverse of title page:

I hereby declare and assure that I, [name student], have drafted this thesis independently, that no other sources and/or means other than those mentioned have been used and that the passages of which the text content or meaning originates in other works - including electronic media - have been identified and the sources clearly stated. Place: ... date: ...
- An abstract of the article of at most 120 words.

Article

The length and structure of the journal article can vary according to the philosophical sub-discipline in which the student specialises. The article must, however, satisfy a number of criteria:

- it is written for a broad philosophical audience and should clearly define all technical terms that are used;
- it is the result of independent research;
- it makes an original contribution to the field of research;
- it responds to a clearly formulated, well circumscribed and relevant question or problem, which reflects the state of the philosophical debate;
- it displays traditional qualities of a philosophically worked-out argument such as consistency, sound analysis, coherent argumentation, etc.;
- it shows knowledge of the relevant literature;
- it contains references, quotations, appendices, and bibliographies conform to the standards of the philosophical sub-discipline in which the student specialises.

Research proposal

The research proposal must be readable by a wide academic audience and contain the following elements:

- The project title
- A summary of the theme and aim of the project (max. 200 words)

- Description of the proposed research: background/status quaestionis, aims/research questions, methods, scientific and/or social relevance of the research project (max. 2,500 words, excluding the bibliography)
- Key words
- Timetable (work schedule covering 3 to 4 years)
- Summary for non specialists (500 words)
- Bibliography
- Curriculum vitae

C. Assessment criteria and weighting

1. **Article** (60% of the final mark)

Topic and research question (30%)

demarcation of the topic; status quaestionis; originality of the contribution; formulation of the research question

Structure (20%)

structure of the article ; separation between main issues and side issues

Presentation and style (20%)

readability, clarity and conciseness ; explanation of central concepts and main premisses ; clear perspective ; critical distance

Quality of the argumentation (30%)

2. **Project proposal** (30% of the final mark)

Scientific relevance (20%)

of the proposed research; status quaestionis; delimitation of the research question

Presentation and style (30%)

readability by a wide academic audience ; clarity and conciness ; explanation of the research problem, key concepts and main premisses

Approach and methods (25%)

suitability of the approach, relative to the objectives ; feasibility of the work plan

Originality (25%)

of the objectives and/or the approach

3. **Defence** (10% of the final mark)

verbal expression; relevance ; soundness