

Philosophy 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: www.radboudnet.nl/fttr/info-onderwijs/masterscriptie-filosofie/indienen/.

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]. The **student administration** creates Turnitin assignments on Blackboard environment for the article and for the research proposal.
2. The **examination board** appoints the committee of examiners (CoE), consisting of the 1st examiner (also chairperson), the 2nd examiner, and the permanent examiner. Generally, the 1st examiner will be the thesis supervisor. The **student administration** informs the student about the CoE.
3. The **student** submits the article and the research proposal via Blackboard (see step 1). It is recommended the article is submitted first.
4. The **thesis supervisor** checks the article and the proposal with Turnitin. If plagiarism is suspected, this is reported to the examination board, and the procedure is suspended.
5. When the supervisor considers the article/research proposal ready to be defended, it is submitted by the **supervisor**. [web form] The **permanent examiner** forwards the article/research proposal to the 2nd examiner.
6. Within 2 weeks after submission, the **permanent** and the **2nd** examiner inform the 1st examiner about their assessment of the thesis.
7. 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 then restarts from step 3.
8. 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, and informs the student administration about the agreed date.
9. The **examiners** jointly agree on a bandwidth of 1 point. The mark at the defence must fall within this bandwidth.
10. Each **examiner** completes the assessment form and submit their assessments to the **permanent examiner**, who determines the final mark for the thesis by averaging the individual assessments. If the mark does not fall within the agreed bandwidth, the procedure repeats from step 9.
11. Once the mark has been determined, the defence takes place before the 1st and at least one other examiner (normally the 2nd examiner).
12. The **examiners** present at the defence assess the defence and complete the final assessment form.

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13. The **1st examiner** forwards the final assessment form to the student and the other examiners. The **permanent examiner** forwards all the forms to the student administration.
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B. Formal requirements for the thesis

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

Thesis for obtaining a "Master of arts" degree in philosophy
Radboud University Nijmegen
6. Rear 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: ...
7. A précis of the article of at most 120 words.
7. No plagiarism.

Article

The length and structure of the publishable article must reflect the norms typical of journal publications in the philosophical sub-discipline in which the student specialises. It is evident that these norms differ in the fields, say, of formal logic or the history of medieval philosophy. However, there are some obvious requirements that any publishable article has to satisfy. The article must:

- be the result of independent research;
- make an original contribution to the field of research;
- respond to a clearly formulated, well circumscribed and relevant question or problem;
- display traditional qualities of a philosophically worked-out argument such as consistency, sound analysis, coherent argumentation, etc.;
- show knowledge of the relevant literature;
- contain references, quotations, appendices, and bibliographies that reflect the state-of-the-art in the philosophical sub-discipline in which the student specialises.

Research proposal

The Research Proposal must 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

Article (60% of the final mark)

1. Overall structure (25%)
 - a. The question is clearly expressed, well defined and relevant.
 - b. The conclusion clearly follows from the argument and closely connects with the question.
2. Content, distance and own voice (25%)
 - a. The article is the result of independent research.
 - b. The author has a clear, recognisable own voice.
 - c. The use of source texts and translations is relevant and to the point.
 - d. References are functional, relevant and adequate.
3. The article is evidently original (25%)
4. Style and argumentation (25%)
 - a. The article has been set out in arguments, which among other things is clearly evident in the composition.
 - b. The arguments are concise, clear and convincing.
 - c. The text's perspective is clear at all times (summary, paraphrasing, criticism, refutation, quote, example, etc).

Research proposal (30% of the final mark)

1. Scientific relevance of the proposed research (20%)
2. Originality/innovative nature of the objectives and methodology (25%)
3. Clarity of the definition of the problem; practical opportunities for dividing into sub questions (25%)
4. Suitability of the chosen approach/methodology for the objectives identified (20%)
5. Feasibility/practicality, work plan (10%)

Defence (10% of the final mark)

1. Student is able to express himself/herself well and clearly,
2. Presents and reacts to the point,
3. With pertinent arguments and incisive criticism.