

# Philosophy research master's thesis: procedure, requirements, assessment

## A. Procedure for registration and defence

Please find below a description of 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/ptr/info-onderwijs/masterscriptie-filosofie/indienen/](http://www.radboudnet.nl/ptr/info-onderwijs/masterscriptie-filosofie/indienen/).

1. At the latest *one* month before the intended submission date, the **thesis supervisor** will request the exam committee to appoint a committee of examiners (CvE) [web form]. The **student administration** will create a Turnitin assignment in the Blackboard environment, both for the article and for the research proposal.
2. The **exam committee** will appoint the committee of examiners (CvE): 1st examiner (also chairperson), a 2nd examiner and the permanent examiner. Generally, the 1st examiner and the thesis supervisor will be the same person. The **student administration** will inform the student.
3. The **student** will submit the article and the research proposal via Blackboard (see step 1). It is recommended the article is submitted first.
4. The **thesis supervisor** will perform plagiarism checks via Turnitin. If plagiarism is suspected, this will be reported to the exam committee and the procedure will be suspended.
5. If, in the judgment of the thesis supervisor, the article/research proposal is ready, the **supervisor** will submit the thesis. [web form] The **permanent examiner** will pass the article/research proposal to the 2nd examiner.
6. Immediately the article and research proposal have been submitted, the **2nd** and the **permanent examiner** will inform the 1st examiner within 2 weeks regarding their positive or negative assessment of the thesis.
7. If the thesis is judged unsatisfactory in the opinion of one or more of the examiners, the thesis supervisor will request the student to review his/her thesis to eliminate the examiners' objections. The process will restart again from step 3.
8. If the thesis is judged satisfactory in the opinion of all examiners, the **1st examiner** will immediately inform the student. The **student** in consultation with the examiners will determine the date of the defence and inform the student administration.
9. The **examiners** will jointly agree on a bandwidth within a margin of 1 point. The final marking for the thesis will fall within this bandwidth.
10. Each **examiner** will independently complete the assessment form and submit their assessments to the **permanent examiner**, who will determine the final mark for the thesis by averaging the individual assessments. If the mark does not fall within the agreed bandwidth, the procedure will be repeated from step 9.
11. The student will defend the thesis before the 1st and at least *one* other examiner (normally the 2nd examiner).

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12. The **examiners** present at the defence will assess the defence and complete the final assessment form.
  13. The **1st examiner** will send the final assessment form to the student and the other examiners. The **permanent examiner** will submit 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, minimum margins of 3.5 cm all around.
3. Common 12 point font with serif, 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
2. 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: ...
6. A précis of the article of no more than 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 components:

- 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.