

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.

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 Information Point \(STIP\)](#) creates Turnitin assignments on Brightspace environment for the article and for the research proposal.
2. The [examination board](#) appoints the committee of examiners, consisting of the 1st examiner (also chairperson), the 2nd examiner, and the permanent examiner. Generally, the 1st examiner will be the thesis supervisor. The [STIP](#) informs the student about the committee of examiners.
3. The [student](#) submits the article and the research proposal via Brightspace (see step 1). It is recommended that the article be 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](#), who also proposes an external reviewer for the article. [web form]
6. Within 2 weeks after submission, the [permanent](#) and the [2nd](#) examiner inform the 1st examiner about their assessment of the thesis, taking into account the report by the external reviewer.
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 is then resumed 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 [STIP](#) about the agreed date.
9. The [examiners](#) jointly agree on a bandwidth of 1 point. The mark for the thesis 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 is resumed 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.
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 [STIP](#) administration.

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 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 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

Article (60% of the final mark)

- **Topic and research question** (10%)
demarcation of the research topic ; formulation of the research question
- **Structure** (15%)
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 argumentation** (20%)
- **Sources and references** (10%)
adequate and consistent use of sources, translations and references
- **Originality** (25%)

Research proposal (30% of the final mark)

- **Scientific relevance** (20%)
of the proposed research
- **Presentation and style** (30%)
readability by a wide academic audience ; clarity and conciseness ; 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

Defence (10% of the final mark)

- Verbal expression; relevance ; soundness