

Information on the procedure and formal structure of the master's thesis for the Master of Arts (M.A.) in Sociology

Examination regulations (2017):

Preparation period: As a rule, master's theses are assigned after **1 February** each year. The master's thesis is to be completed and submitted within **21 weeks** after the date of assignment. The topic and the supervision are to be adjusted accordingly.

Registration for the master's thesis

Registration for the master's thesis is done via the Student Services. The teachers of the colloquium collect the registration forms and submit them to the Student Services. The registration of the master's thesis in Portal² can only be made after the registration was processed at Student Services. Please make sure to indicate the date of the registration and the due date for the thesis in the form. The evaluator ("examiner") has to be a university teacher (professor).

Submission of the master's thesis

The thesis has to be submitted on time to the respective chair.

The submission of the master's thesis is preferably be made in electronic form as a PDF file or alternatively in printed form. You will receive more information on the submission modalities in the colloquies. Additionally, the master's thesis needs to be handed in as a PDF file at Student Services: Studienbuero-soziologie@uni-mannheim.de.

Supervisors/Examiners

According to the current examination regulations, only professors, junior professors and auxiliary professors (außerplanmäßige Professoren) can supervise master's theses. Only these persons are entitled to sign registration forms, as a rule the respective chair holder. The teachers of the colloquies, however, are responsible for supervising the students during the writing process. Attendance of a master's colloquium is mandatory.

Topic

During the first weeks of the colloquium, the objective is to find a suitable topic.

The master's thesis may not be identical with the research project. The thesis can and should, however, build on the research project by intensifying the literature analysis and by developing the empirical research project outline from there.

Language

The master's thesis must be written in English.

Extension

Upon a student's written request and in case of a valid reason, the chair of the examination committee may extend the submission deadline once for a maximum of two months (cf. section 19 of examination regulations). The request must be made immediately without delay.

Writing a master's thesis outside of the university

The master's thesis may be written at an institution other than the university if a faculty member of the University of Mannheim teaching classes in the respective field of study is appointed a second examiner. In this case, an external supervisor may be consulted. The supervisor may be named on the cover page but is not named on the transcript or certificate.

Formal structure

The content is the crucial criterion of an academic work. However, in order to make the text more readable and comprehensible, students have to comply with certain formalities. If students do not comply with the formalities, the grade will be lowered. Therefore, the following formal requirements need to be considered:

1. Cover page

- Name of the university and of the school
- Name of the supervisor and of the examiner (chair holder)
- Title
- Information on the author (name, student ID number, address, e-mail (and phone number))
- The cover page is not numbered

2. Table of contents

- The table of contents includes the titles of the individual chapters and subchapters of the master's thesis.
- The individual subchapters (in both text and table of contents) are numbered with Arabic numerals (according to the Duden dictionary without the period at the end: 1; 1.1 ; 2 ; 2.1).
- The page numbers of the subchapters are right-aligned.
- The table of contents is to be placed on a separate page that is not numbered.
- The table of contents looks more organized when the subchapters are tab-indented.

3. Page format and typesetting

- DIN A4 paper, single-sided
- 1.5-spaced (a hyphenation program might be useful)
- Please do not include a header
- Margins: left and right 3 cm, top and bottom 2.5 cm (margins for comments and corrections by supervisors and examiners)
- Font sizes: text 12-point / footnotes (and longer quotations) 10-point for Times New Roman or Garamond (sans serif fonts like Arial or monospaced fonts like Courier should be avoided)
- The pages of the master's thesis are to be numbered consecutively.
- **Total length: 10,000 words (+/- 10%).** The number of words refers to the continuous text, including the bibliography and a possible, relevant appendix, but not to the cover page, the table of contents and the list of tables and figures.
 - The number of words does not include the appendix as long as the appendix does only include material that is not relevant for the grade (e.g. a questionnaire that has been used, Stata or R Code etc.).

- If the appendix includes information (e.g. tables, charts, text/explanations etc.), which complement the content, i.e. without which the text cannot be completely understood, it is included in the number of words.

4. Citation method

Every kind of borrowing from external works has to be indicated as such with a source. Please use the so-called 'author-year method', which is the shortest and clearest option to find literature that has been used in the continuous text in the bibliography. When using the author-year method, provide the author's last name and the year of publication subsequent to the (direct or indirect) quotation (Müller 1998). When citing two authors, use both authors names (Müller/Meier 1998), when citing more than two authors, only use the first one (Schulze et al. 2001). When referring to multiple works at the same time, the respective references are to be put in parentheses and separated by a semicolon (Müller 1998; Müller/Meier 1998).

If the reference does not refer to an entire work, but to one or several pages, they have to be indicated (Schmidt 2004: 123). When citing two pages from a single source, the page number of the quote is followed by an 'f.' (Schmidt 2004: 123f.), when citing multiple pages, the page number is followed by 'ff.' (Schmidt 2004: 123ff.).

Direct (word-for-word) quotations are to be put in quotation marks. Direct quotations are a good means when they pointedly phrase complex correlations. In quotations, omissions of one word are indicated by two points in square brackets [...], omissions of several words are indicated by three points [...]. Insertions of the author are to be marked by square brackets and by the author's initials or by 'the author'. Longer direct quotations of more than five lines must be indented and separated from the remaining text.

As a rule, secondary sources are to be avoided. In case you do not have access to the primary source, you should not use the quotation. In exceptional cases, where only a secondary source is available, this source should be indicated by "quoted from" (Müller 1990, quoted from Meier 1995).

5. Footnotes and comments

Footnotes are not to be used for regular literature references. They are only supposed to provide additional information. These include, for example, further instructions, comments, supplementary literature references etc. Footnote references in the text are superscript in a smaller font size. Footnotes are numbered consecutively. Footnotes are placed at the bottom of each page (not at the end of the thesis).

6. Bibliography

In contrast to the continuous text, the bibliography usually has single-line spacing. The bibliography includes all works cited or referred to in the paper. In a bibliography, the bibliographical references are sorted according to the surname of the lead author, if necessary according to the first name and/or the surname of other authors: Scholz, Rüdiger, *next* Scholz, Thorsten; Coleman, James S., *next* Coleman, James S. and Lingxin Hao, *next* Coleman, James S., Elihu Katz and Herbert Menzel. If several works by the same author(s) are named, they are to be sorted in ascending order by year of publication; if two contributions by the same author have the same year of publication, they are supplemented by a letter: Mayer, Karl U., 1987, *next* Mayer, Karl U., 2000a then Mayer, Karl U., 2000b.

This is the recommended form for the bibliography:

Books:

Friedrichs, Jürgen, Robert Kecskes and Christof Wolf, 2002: Struktur und sozialer Wandel einer Mittelstadt. Euskirchen 1952 – 2002. Opladen: Leske + Budrich.

Barlösius, Eva and Wolfgang Ludwig-Mayerhofer (Hg.), 2001: Die Armut der Gesellschaft. Sozialstrukturanalyse Bd. 15. Opladen: Leske + Budrich.

Articles from journals:

Teckenberg, Wolfgang, 1985: Die Erwerbsstrukturkonzeption in Humankapital- und Statuszuweisungsmodellen. Einige theoretischen Alternativen, Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie 37: 431-459.

Articles from collections:

Bechmann, Gotthard, 2000: Concepts of Information Society and the Social Function of Information. p. 37-52 in: Gerhard Banse (Hg.): Towards the information society: the case of Eastern European countries. Wissenschaftsethik und Technikfolgenbeurteilung, Bd. 9. Berlin u.a.: Springer-Verlag.

7. Declaration in lieu of an oath

The master's thesis includes a dated declaration signed by the student.

"I hereby declare that the final thesis presented is my own work and that I have not called upon the help of a third party. In addition, I affirm that neither I nor anybody else has submitted this paper or parts of it to obtain credits elsewhere before. I have clearly marked and acknowledged all quotations or references that have been taken from the works of others. All secondary literature and other sources are marked and listed in the bibliography. The same applies to all charts, diagrams and illustrations as well as to all Internet resources. Moreover, I consent to my paper being electronically stored and sent anonymously in order to be checked for plagiarism. I am aware that if this declaration is not made, the thesis may not be graded."

8. Evaluation / Submission of grades

The master's thesis is assessed by the respective examiner/supervisor who writes an evaluation. The evaluation can be accessed at the Student Services after graduation.

The Student Services post the grade of the master's thesis after the evaluation is submitted.

9. Issuing of diploma and certificate

As soon as all coursework and examinations have been submitted to the Student Services, the master's degree certificate and diploma is issued automatically. If you have any questions or need a confirmation that you have completed your degree, do not hesitate to contact your advisor at the Student Services.

As at: October 2024