



Master's Thesis Protocol

Master's Programme in Asian Studies

To ensure the general quality and smooth development of MA students' research and their timely graduation, writing an MA thesis at the Department of Asian, Middle Eastern and Turkish Studies is governed by strict regulations concerning project development and supervision, submission deadlines, thesis assessment, defence, marking and graduation. All the parties concerned (students, supervisors, examiners, discussants and the Director of the MA Studies Programme (MAAS)) are requested to observe the regulations specified below.

- Roles and Responsibilities

Student:

Students are ultimately responsible for the crafting and execution of the MA research project through all of its phases including the completion of a final manuscript and a thesis defence as well as acting as discussant for another student's Master's thesis.

Supervisor:

Supervisors provide guidance and assistance for students throughout their MA thesis writing projects. Supervisors help students to develop appropriate research practice and refine research plans and ideas; to find and use relevant literature; and to understand relevant rules and regulations. The supervisor plays no formal role in the thesis defence but will be consulted regarding a student's performance by the Examiner beforehand. Supervisors are assigned by the MAAS Director in consultation with the staff available for supervision and the Director of Studies (regarding the staff's workload).

Examiner:

Examiners assess MA theses and evaluate the students' performance during thesis defences. Examiners are assigned by the MAAS Director in consultation with the Director of Studies (regarding the staff's workload). Supervisors are disqualified from examining dissertations which they have supervised.

Discussant:

The Discussant systematically discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the MA thesis at the public defence. The Discussant provides an assessment of the paper, suggests constructive ways to improve it and poses questions to the respondent. All students registered at the Master's course during the fourth semester and submitting a thesis are required to act as discussants for another student's Master's thesis.

Director of MA Asian Studies Programme (Director of MAAS):

The Director of MAAS serves as the coordinator of studies within the program. The Director acts as the liaison between the MA students, the program teaching staff and the administration. The Director of MAAS is assigned by the Head of Department. The Director of MAAS usually acts as the Course Director of the Master's course.

- Thesis content

The student is required to produce a research paper that reflects professional standards of accuracy and ethics, demonstrates extensive background reading in the research topic and methodology, and contributes to general knowledge through an analysis of original work carried out by the student. The thesis should contain the following elements: Introduction, review of relevant literature, explanation of methodology, a detailed account of the research done, the analytical conclusions, and what these conclusions contribute to our understanding of the topic under study. If the study involves interaction with human subjects either in person or in any other way, the thesis should also contain an explanation of how subjects were selected and contacted and a section explaining how the methodology accommodates ethical considerations, referring to relevant ethical requirements as laid out in one of the following protocols:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/6._h2020_ethics-soc-science-humanities_en.pdf

<https://www.allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/ALLEA-European-Code-of-Conduct-for-Research-Integrity-2017.pdf>

The methodology, including all interview questions, must be vetted and approved by the supervisor before the research is carried out. This does not absolve the student from carrying out their research with greatest care for the safety and well-being of their research subjects.

- Thesis supervision

In the second semester of the Program a student will be assigned a Supervisor, who will advise her/him on the development of her/his research project and writing an MA thesis. The Director of the MA Asian Studies Programme (Director of MAAS) will match the student's research interests with the expertise offered by the staff of the Department. After Supervisors are assigned, the students will be able to consult them on issues related to their MA thesis writing projects. At the beginning of each of the following semesters the students, together with their Supervisor, will devise the Tutorial Working Plan for the whole semester including a consultation schedule. The general rule of Tutorials is: two meetings per semester in Semesters 2 and 3 and more frequently in Semester 4 (at least 4 meetings/contact hours).

- Thesis length and format

The final version of the MA thesis should be 15,000 words +/- 10 % including footnotes and references but excluding appendices. The reference to secondary sources written in one of the languages taught at the Department is required (at least one academic text ca. 50 pages long, approved by the Supervisor). The choice of reference style (i.e. *Journal of Asian Studies*, *Monumenta Nipponica*, *The China Quarterly*) should be consulted with the Supervisor. This style should be used consistently throughout the thesis. There is no fixed layout (font, font size, margins, spacing etc.) but the text should be easily readable (ca. 250-300 words per page). The Supervisor should be consulted on the format.

- Writing the MA thesis

Semester 4 will be solely devoted to writing the MA thesis. As a part of the the Master's course, the Course Director will offer a series of seminars and individual consultations to assist students in their thesis writing process (e.g. addressing concerns, providing information on procedures and regulations etc.). Specific guidance will be offered by the Supervisors. At the beginning of the semester the students, together with their Supervisors, will devise the Tutorial Working Plans

for the whole semester including a consultation schedule and deadlines for the submission of individual chapters and the final thesis drafts.

The final draft of the thesis should be ready for the Supervisor's review by **May 1st** to secure enough time for revisions and editing. The Supervisors will offer feedback on the students' writings. The students are requested not to submit half-finished chapters/draft and to observe the deadlines. The chapters/draft not submitted on time will not be reviewed unless there are extenuating circumstances, about which the students are required to inform their Supervisors before the submission deadline. If the delay concerns the final draft, the student should also inform the Course Director and the Director of MAAS. These circumstances include personal, medical or family problems that are outside the student's control. The information provided will be in strict confidence. For more information on thesis writing, the students can refer to general guidance provided on the Stockholm University Library website.

- The MA thesis submission and assessment procedure

The MA thesis submission during the spring semester works with a two-deadline system. The Supervisors determine if the theses are ready for examination before they are submitted, and communicate their decisions to the Examiners, the Course Director and the Director of MAAS before the defences. The students submit the theses (in pdf format) via a special site on Athena. All theses submitted via Athena are automatically checked for plagiarism with the system Urkund. The Discussant will be assigned by the Course Director.

The first submission deadline is **May 25th, 10 am**. The second and final submission deadline is **August 15th, 10 am**. No thesis will be accepted after these deadlines. If a student fails to submit the thesis on time, she/he needs to wait until the next deadline. The Examiner and the Discussant will access the theses through a special folder on Athena. The Examiner is responsible for providing the Discussants with the thesis.

- The MA thesis defence

A MA thesis needs to be defended at a public examination conducted in the presence of the Examiner, the Discussant and an audience. The Supervisor plays no formal role in the thesis defence. The dates of the defence are set individually by the Director of MAAS, but they are usually scheduled two to three weeks after the thesis submission, that is around **June 15th** and **August 25th**. During the defence (ca. 60 min.) the student/Respondent will have to respond to questions and comments given by the Discussant. Afterwards, the Examiner and the members of the audience may also ask questions.

When the defence is over, the Examiner will decide upon a final mark. The mark depends on the quality of the thesis and the Respondent's performance during the defence as well as the fulfillment of the requirement of acting as a discussant for another Master's thesis. This mark will be announced by the Examiner directly after the defence but it will be conditional. The final grade will be registered in the Stockholm University student documentation system (Ladok) only after the submission of the thesis archival version, which will include final revisions specified during the defence.

- After the defence

It is common during the defence for a student to be asked to correct her/his thesis before it is finally accepted. Such corrections refer to formatting, typographical errors and minor editorial matters. The student will be responsible for editing and tidying up all possible minor errors. It is important to note that these corrections cannot extend to rewriting chapters, reorganizing material or improving the argument. The student will be given **2 weeks** to submit the corrected thesis (in pdf format). The corrected thesis should be submitted in two versions: one copy, which highlights the corrections; and a clean copy, which will be archived. Both versions should be sent by email to the Supervisor, the Examiner, the Course Director and the Director of MAAS. These revisions will be checked before the grade is registered in Ladok.

Graduation. After submitting the thesis archival version, the Examiner will register the grade in the Stockholm University students documentation system (Ladok) and inform the student. Please refer here for information about applying for a degree certificate: <https://www.su.se/english/education/qualifications-degrees/application-for-a-degree-certificate>

- Extension of the MA thesis submission deadline

If a student is unable to submit her/his thesis on time due to extenuating circumstances, she/he may apply (in writing) for an extension of the deadline. It is the student's responsibility to inform the Examiner, the Course Director, the Director of MAAS and the Director of Studies about these circumstances as soon as possible. They will consider the issue and inform the student whether or not the extension is granted and on what conditions. The information provided will be in strict confidence.

If the student is granted an extension, the additional thesis submission deadline is **November 15th, 10 am**. The Supervisor determines if the thesis is ready for examination before it is submitted, and communicates her/his decision to the Examiner, the Course Director and the Director of MAAS, before the defence. Only then the thesis can be submitted via Athena. All theses submitted via Athena are automatically checked for plagiarism with the Urkund system. The evaluation process is the same as for theses submitted by the standard deadlines.

- Plagiarism

The unacknowledged reproduction of the work, words or ideas of another person constitutes plagiarism (for Anti-plagiarism tutorials, please see <http://refero.lnu.se/english/>). Any work found to be plagiarised or to contain plagiarism must be reported to the President of Stockholm University. A student found guilty of plagiarism will fail the MA Thesis Course and could be suspended from the University.

- Help

If students need further help in writing academic papers, they are welcome to use the support provided by The Academic Writing Service at Stockholm University.

Consultations on physical and psychological health are available at Stockholm Student Health Services. All appointments are free of charge.