



KARL-FRANZENS-UNIVERSITÄT GRAZ
UNIVERSITY OF GRAZ



Master Thesis and Master Seminar - General Information

Institute of Systems Sciences, Innovation and Sustainability Research

September 2020

Step 1: Collecting Ideas

- Brainstorming: Which topics are of interest to you? What do you want to do in the future? What content from courses did you find particularly exciting?
- Conversations with friends and contacts
- Use company contacts
- Exchange ideas with fellow students
- Check if there are calls for master theses on specific topics (from our institute or others, e.g. Wegener Center)

Step 2: Preliminary literature research

- Limit ideas from step 1 to 2-3 concrete ideas
- Carrying out initial literature research in international databases (e.g. Scopus)
- Check whether there have already been master theses on this topic at the institute
 - https://online.uni-graz.at/kfu_online/wbAbs.showMaskAbsListe?pOrgNr=14202&pAutorNr=&pTyp=B&pAbsTyp=MAGARBN&pPageNr=1&pSort=
- Check whether similar topics have already been dealt with at other institutes and universities (research in the library catalogues)
- **Elaborate on possible research questions and appropriate methods to answer them**

Step 3: Contact potential supervisors

- At the SIS institute, the following people may supervise master theses:
 - Univ.-Prof. Dr. Baumgartner
 - Univ.-Prof. Dr. Füllsack
 - Univ.-Prof. Dr. Stern
 - Ao.Univ.-Prof. Dr. Posch
 - Ass.-Prof.ⁱⁿ Dr. Rauter
 - Ass.-Prof. Dr. Bruderermann
 - Ass.-Prof. Dr. Jäger
 - Dr.ⁱⁿ Gelbmann
 - Dr. Aschemann
- Co-supervision might be done by other staff with a PhD/doctoral degree (in exceptional cases also staff without doctoral degree)

Step 3: Contact potential supervisors

- If you already have an idea of the topic you would like to work on, if you have research questions in mind or a practical partner for your thesis project, contact a potential supervisor.
- The areas of research and interests of potential supervisors are at least partly known from the courses they offer. You may also check their recent publications and ongoing research projects.
- You might also look for supervisors at other institutes.
- Your main supervisor needs to have an affiliation with University of Graz.

Step 4: Research Proposal

- If your topic meets with interest, you will be asked to write a research proposal on the topic.
- The potential supervisor will decide on accepting supervision based on your research proposal and your previous academic performance
- Length of the proposal: 5-8 pages (max. 10 pages)
- Check the additional guideline on how to write a research proposal on <https://sis.uni-graz.at/en/studying/downloads/>

Step 5: Announcement of Thesis Topic and Supervisor/s

- If your proposal meets the requirements of your supervisor, you can officially announce the (working) title of the thesis.

Note: You may change the title later, but then you need to resubmit this form.

- Print and fill the form “Announcement of Master’s Thesis Topic and Supervisor/s”, sign it and let it sign by your supervisor.
- At this stage you may also nominate a second reader (might be nominated later as well, but in any case well in advance before you submit your thesis)
 - Form – see #5 at <https://urbi.uni-graz.at/en/studying/organizational/forms-geography-and-environmental-system-sciences/>

Step 5b: 2nd reader

- The second reader is from one of the partner universities – preferably from your mobility university.
- Please make up your mind on potential second readers (minimum requirement: PhD degree, affiliation with one of the universities in the consortium)
- Feel free to contact potential second readers directly, or via the academic coordinator in Graz. The second reader needs to be approved by the academic coordinator.
- The second reader is not co-supervising your thesis (unless agreed otherwise), but only assesses your thesis after submission. He/she might also comment on your research proposal when accepting to serve as second reader.

Step 6: Master Seminar

- If you have been granted supervision, please register for the Masters Seminar at the Institute.
- In the seminar you will present the proposal or the current status of your work.
- It is recommended to take the master seminar during the process of writing the thesis (usually 4th semester)
 - That means you should have a supervisor at the beginning of semester 4 to be admitted to the seminar. Otherwise the next chance is in the following winter term.
- In case you are not in Graz during your thesis project, remote participation (e.g. via Skype) is possible.
- Please check up-to-date information on UGO and Moodle.

Step 7: Writing master thesis

- In coordination with your supervisor
- Arrangements regarding schedule, process etc. are to be made individually with your supervisor – there are no institutional deadlines for thesis submission, and no fixed dates for final exams.

Step 8: Submission

- The master thesis needs to be uploaded via UGO, and approved by your supervisor.
- After approval, you need to submit **two hardcover copies** to the “Studien- and Prüfungsabteilung”. These copies need to be identical with the electronic version. Please see the details with regards to required attachments on the respective forms.
- The first possible date for the final examination is four weeks after submission of the hardcover copies.
- The thesis must be assessed positively by your main supervisor and second reader at least two weeks before the date for the final examination.
- Note: Supervisor and second reader have a maximum of eight weeks to assess your thesis.

Important

Read carefully: **hardcover copies**

- Softcover copies will not be accepted

Supervisor and second reader have 8 weeks to assess your thesis. Assessments have to be in 2 weeks before your final exam.

→ To be on the safe side, submit your thesis 10 weeks before the intended exam date.

→ This is especially important if you want to avoid paying tuition fees for an additional semester

Mind the necessary administrative steps!

- Make sure that your credits from partner universities have been recognized (UGO and study office, Mr. Mario Perner)
- Make sure to hand in the protocol “List of courses completed”
 - <https://urbi.uni-graz.at/en/studying/organizational/forms-geography-and-environmental-system-sciences/>
 - Each item (subject) in each of the four modules of the curriculum needs to be covered

Step 9: Final examination

- The exam date and the composition of the examination board has to be coordinated by the student (see respective form – “Anmeldung zur kommissionellen Masterprüfung”, see #7 [here](#)).
- Examination board:
 - 1st examiner: Your supervisor
 - 2nd examiner: Professor from University of Graz (not your second reader)
 - Head of commission: Institute staff with at least a doctoral degree
 - Note: Two of the three committee members need to be senior professors, i.e. with a habilitation degree (full professor, associate professor, PD)
- Duration of exam: 60 minutes (20 minutes presentation, 40 minutes examination – contents of the exam are up to the examiners – please check with them in advance)

Remarks and Disclaimer

- This document describes the basic procedure on a general level.
- All the information here is nonbinding. No rights and obligations arise from this, neither for you as a student nor for the staff of the institute.
- Individual deviations may occur. These can depend on the topic, the time frame, the people involved or other circumstances.
- Information on deadlines, forms, etc. can be found on the website of the URBI Dean of Studies.
- Last update: September 2020