

Master's thesis assessment matrix

The overall grade for theses is not necessarily the mathematical average of the assessed areas; rather, different areas may compensate for each other or be weighted differently. How each area is interpreted may also vary depending on the nature of the thesis concerned. For example, area 3 ('Research data and methods') is applied differently to theoretical theses compared to empirical ones and may carry less weight in the overall grade as a result. Assessment area 7 ('Work during thesis process') enables feedback on students' efforts and can also affect the overall thesis grade.

Assessment area	0 Fail	1 Passable	2 Satisfactory	3 Good	4 Very good	5 Excellent
1. Thesis objective and research questions - Clarity of thesis topic and objective - Scholarly and societal significance of topic, including its justification - Appropriate framing of research and thesis scope - Clear definition of research problem	The thesis topic and objective are unclear. The research problem and its justification remain very unclear.	The thesis topic or objective is poorly defined. The thesis is framed unclearly, too broadly or too narrowly. The research problem is unclear or otherwise deficient, and unconnected to prior research. The research problem is deficiently justified.	The thesis topic or objective is partly poorly defined. The topic is unclearly justified with respect to prior research. The thesis is slightly too broadly or narrowly framed. The research problem is described, but its justification lacks depth.	The thesis topic and objective are clear and justified with respect to prior research. The thesis is effectively framed with respect to its scope. The research problem is clear, sufficiently extensive and theoretically contextualised.	The thesis topic and objective are clearly described and justified with respect to prior research. The topic is academically or societally relevant. The perspective of the thesis is critical and independent. The thesis is effectively framed in relation to its scope. The research problem is sufficiently challenging, appropriately framed and based on a well-chosen theoretical background and key research.	The thesis topic and objective are very clearly described, insightful and justified with respect to prior research. The topic is academically or societally very relevant. The thesis is framed and its perspective justified very effectively and it draws broadly on key research. The research problem is skilfully derived from prior research and theory.
2. Scholarly framework and use of sources	Little or no research literature is used, or it is unrelated to the research problem.	The research literature is used in a limited, too extensive or very fragmented manner. The link between the research questions and	The research literature is used in a limited, too extensive or fragmented manner, but the literature	The research literature is appropriately used, including its justification. The chosen research literature	The research literature used has been commendably selected, framed and justified. The relevance of the literature to addressing the research problem	The research literature used has been excellently chosen, framed and justified. The literature is

• Critical and analytical use of research literature to justify and address the research problem • Relevance of the chosen theories, concepts and literature to addressing the research problem • Knowledge of research relevant to the topic	The concepts remain very unclear. Concepts are undefined or not used. The thesis presents no research literature related to the topic or the literature presented is haphazardly selected and irrelevant.	the research literature is deficient, and the chosen concepts are poorly suited to the research problem. The concepts used and their definitions are unclear. The concepts used are poorly suited to the thesis topic. The thesis presents very little research literature relevant to the topic. Discussion on broader elements is insufficient.	is relevant to the research problem to a certain degree. The concepts and the chosen research literature are described, but their justification lacks depth. The concepts are mostly well-suited to the thesis topic and satisfactorily defined. The thesis presents research literature that is mostly relevant to the topic. The broader elements are insufficiently discussed and the text is mostly declaratory.	is justified in terms of the research problem. The thesis contains a range of research relevant to its framing. The concepts used and their definitions are justified. The thesis presents research literature relevant to the topic. The research literature is presented in a clear but somewhat declaratory manner.	is clearly justified. The thesis concepts have been chosen and defined commendably clearly. The thesis draws knowledgeably on highly relevant research literature. The research literature is presented in a discussion-like manner and synthesised into broader thematic wholes.	critically and analytically used. The relevance of the literature to addressing the research problem demonstrates expertise. The concepts used in the thesis are excellently defined and justified. The use of research literature reflects expertise and excellent knowledge of research relevant to the topic. The research literature is insightfully and analytically presented and synthesised into broader thematic wholes.
3. Research data and methods • Quality of data and their suitability to the research problem • Comprehensive description and justification of the analysis method • Consideration of research ethics • In theoretical theses, clear definition of research questions and the	The data, if any, and methods are deficiently described. The data or methods are not suited to the research problem and the methods are deficiently used. In theoretical theses, the research questions are poorly formulated and the literature used is not defined. Research ethics have not been	The data, where applicable, and methods are described unclearly. Clear problems are apparent in the way the research problem is addressed and in the applicability of the methods. In theoretical theses, the research questions are considerably deficient and the literature used poorly defined.	The data, where applicable, and the methods are described only minimally. The justification for their applicability to the research problem lacks depth in certain key areas. The research problem is addressed ambiguously, and the suitability of the research methods for the research task is deficient in places.	The data, if any, and methods are sufficiently described and applicable to addressing the research problem. The research methods are suited to the research problem, and effectively described and justified. In theoretical theses, the research questions are effective and the literature used	The data, if any, and methods are well described, critically justified and correctly applied. The research methods are suited to the research problem and comprehensively described. The choices related to research methods are commendably justified, and the consequences of these choices are considered.	The data, where applicable, and methods are commendably described, critically justified and used insightfully with respect to the research questions, demonstrating comprehensive understanding of the consequences of the choices made. The research methods are excellently suited to addressing the research problem and expertly justified.

literature used: literature used as data and reference literature clearly distinguished	observed or taken into consideration at all.	The work illustrates the ambition to conclude an academic thesis, but its practical implementation is deficient. Research ethics are insufficiently considered.	In theoretical theses, the research questions or the literature used are unclearly defined. Some research ethics perspectives are considered, but not fully or adequately described.	for the most part clearly defined. Research ethics are sufficiently described and considered.	In theoretical theses, the research questions demonstrate a strong understanding of theoretical problems, and the literature used is defined clearly and with justification. Research ethics are versatily described and discussed.	The methodological choices are justified with respect to methodological literature or prior research. In theoretical theses, the research questions demonstrate in-depth knowledge of theoretical problems, while the literature used has been excellently chosen and presented. Research ethics aspects have been accurately identified and insightfully discussed.
4. Presentation of thesis results - Consistency and clarity in the presentation of results and argumentation - Addressing of the research problem - Correlation of the data collected with the research questions and key concepts - Illustrative presentation of results and arguments: the connection of images, figures and graphs with the text	The research results are presented or the collected data are discussed unclearly and without structure with respect to the research questions and key concepts. The presentation is inconsistent with the overall style of the thesis and with the research method. The results are not illustrated or linked to the research questions. The research problem is not addressed or the solutions are unclear.	The research results are presented or the collected data are discussed inconsistently, superficially, very scarcely or too extensively with respect to the research questions and key concepts. The presentation does not substantially match the thesis style or the research method. The illustration of results is deficient. The relevance of the results to the research problem is unclear.	The research results are presented or the collected data are discussed mainly clearly and illustratively with respect to the research questions and key concepts, but some of the results remain unclear or the observations are scarcely justified. The presentation does not entirely correspond to the thesis style or the research method. Some deficiencies are evidenced in how key findings are presented in relation to the research problem.	The research results are presented or the collected data are discussed in a consistent, clear and illustrative manner with respect to the research questions and key concepts. The presentation corresponds to the thesis style and the research method. The results address the research problem, and the observations and claims are justified.	The research results are presented or the collected data are discussed in a very consistent, clear and illustrative manner with respect to the research questions and key concepts, demonstrating an in-depth understanding of the topic. The presentation corresponds to the thesis style and the research method. The results clearly address the research problem and offer relevant knowledge for research in the field. The	The research results are presented or the collected data are discussed in a commendably consistent, clear and illustrative manner, linking consistently and insightfully to the research questions and key concepts. The presentation corresponds to the thesis style and the research methods, and the results excellently address the research problem. The thesis contributes new and relevant knowledge to research in the field.

					observations and claims are effectively justified.	The observations and claims are expertly justified.
5. Discussion and conclusions - Correlation of research results with prior research - Conclusions based on results - Thoroughness, reliability and insightfulness of conclusions - Critical and thorough examination of the research process, results and conclusions - Discussion of new research problems	The results are not correlated with prior research or their significance is not discussed. The conclusions are not based on the results. The research process is not assessed or its assessment is clearly deficient. No new research problems or application opportunities are presented, or those presented are irrelevant.	The results are deficiently interpreted and discussed. The link to prior research is unclear. The link between the conclusions and the results is unclear. The research process is assessed in a very limited or deficient manner. New research problems and application opportunities are presented inadequately.	The results are interpreted and discussed in a minimal, irrelevant or one-sided manner. The correlation of the research results with prior research is minimal. The link between the conclusions and the results is partly unclear. The research process is assessed to a degree, but there are some deficiencies in the assessment. New research problems and application opportunities are minimally presented.	The results are interpreted and discussed in an appropriate and relevant manner. The results are correlated with prior research. The conclusions are clearly based on the results. The research process is appropriately assessed. The new research problems and application opportunities presented are relevant.	The results are interpreted and discussed in a knowledgeable and versatile manner. The results are commendably correlated with prior research. The conclusions are credible, thorough and clearly based on the results. The research process, results and conclusions are critically assessed. Relevant new research problems and application opportunities are presented.	The results are insightfully interpreted and discussed. The conclusions draw on prior research to situate the argument within a broader discussion of the results. The conclusions are thorough, credible and insightful, as well as clearly based on the results. The research process, results and conclusions are critically and thoroughly assessed. The thesis convincingly discusses new research problems and application opportunities.
6. The thesis as an academic text - Clear structure - Academic writing proficiency and linguistic accuracy - Correct and consistent referencing - Thesis presentation, formatting and appendices	The thesis is fragmented and inconsistent, and does not constitute a coherent whole. The research report structure and referencing are clearly defective. The thesis contains major errors or deficiencies related to content or form, and does not represent	The thesis covers some essential aspects in a somewhat logical order, but its organisation is unclear. The elements of the thesis relevant to the research problem remain disconnected or somewhat deficient, and the argumentation is unclear. The thesis contains	The thesis constitutes an understandable whole, with a fairly consistent organisation. The text demonstrates satisfactory command of academic argumentation and writing. The thesis contains minor errors or deficiencies related to content or form, or its scope is not entirely	The thesis constitutes a clearly organised whole and demonstrates a strong command of academic writing. The thesis does not contain significant errors related to content or form. Referencing is appropriate and consistent, with only occasional deficiencies. The scope of the thesis is appropriate	The thesis constitutes a clear and consistent whole and demonstrates commendable command of academic writing. The thesis is flawless in form, with minor deficiencies in referencing. The presentation and formatting of the thesis is polished, and its scope effectively correlates with the research design.	The thesis constitutes a coherent and consistent whole, demonstrating the student's independent and development-oriented approach. Overall, the thesis demonstrates the student's scholarly maturity, critical thinking and in-depth knowledge of the topic.

	the genre of an academic thesis. The scope of the thesis does not correspond to the research design and is either too long or	errors or deficiencies related to form, or its scope does not match the research design and is either too long or too short.	proportionate to the research design.	for the research design.		Referencing is flawless. The presentation and formatting of the thesis is flawless and its scope excellently correlates with the
7. Work during thesis process - Independent work - Feedback received and relied on - Time management and systematic working	The student did not assume responsibility for their work during the thesis process. The student did not accept supervision or feedback. Time management during the thesis process was not systematic.	Independent contribution to the thesis process proved difficult for the student. The student demonstrated deficiencies in seeking, receiving or using supervision or feedback during the thesis process. Clear shortcomings were evident in time management during the thesis process.	The student's independent contribution to the thesis process was satisfactory. The student sought and used supervision and feedback during the thesis process in a satisfactory manner. The thesis process progressed fairly systematically. Deficiencies in time management were evident.	The student's independent contribution to the thesis process was sufficient. The student accepted and used supervision and feedback effectively during the thesis process. The thesis process progressed for the most part systematically, and time management was sufficient.	The student's independent contribution to the thesis process was commendable. The student was able to seek, accept and use supervision and feedback during the thesis process. Time management and systematic working during the thesis process were commendable.	The student's independent contribution to the thesis process was highly self-motivated and excellent. The student sought, accepted and used supervision and feedback excellently during the thesis process. The thesis process progressed systematically and methodically, with effective time management.