

Assessment guidelines for master's theses

To be considered in the use of the [assessment matrix](#)

- **Whenever assessing master's theses, use and base your statements on the assessment matrix.**
- The individual elements of the assessment areas (1–7) in the matrix help in drawing up the assessment. No separate grades are recorded for these elements in the E-thesis system. Only the grades for the primary assessment areas are recorded.
- If the grade for any of the assessment areas (1–7) is 0, the master's thesis will not be approved. Receiving a grade of 0 for an element of an assessment area, however, does not preclude thesis approval.
- The final grade of the thesis must be based on the assessment of the primary assessment areas. The entire assessment scale of 0 to 5 is to be applied. The assessment criteria justify a grade of 5 to theses deemed excellent, and lower grades as appropriate.
- The assessment area 'Work during the thesis process' (area 7) is assessed by the student's supervisor(s).

To be considered in the assessment

- In the assessment, it is important to pay attention to how students have familiarised themselves with background literature, how they discuss and engage with the literature, how the goals of the research are aligned with the background and the actual empirical work, and how students discuss the results obtained and consider the ethics and limitations of the research.
- Students can hold differing positions in terms of research implementation and supervision – some are involved in established research projects, receiving ample supervision and materials, while others plan the work and collect the data on their own. Assessment must therefore be based on specific criteria (see examples below).
 - Students may be provided specific goals for their theses, for example, as part of research projects. In some cases, they can come up with the topic on their own. Varying circumstances make it important that assessment is not based on the goal or topic as such, but on justification of the significance of the goal (and any gaps in research) in the thesis in relation to research literature.
 - The scope of the data as such is not the subject of assessment, as in certain cases students can be provided large ready-made datasets, while in other cases students design and collect their data on topics of their own, in which case the data may naturally be less extensive. What students do with their data is essential – how the data used match the research questions, how students analyse the data and present their results, and how they examine the scope of the data and the results.
 - At times, the data collected may be destroyed for reasons beyond students' control. It may also be that the data used do not produce any appropriate results. Neither of these reasons should affect assessment. The key is to pay attention in the assessment to how students report these issues and how they in such cases discuss related aspects and results.
- Research ethics must always be considered when conducting research. Examiners must pay attention to the reporting of ethical aspects. In other words, in assessment the focus is on how well students report and discuss research ethics in their work and consider it from various perspectives.

Drawing up statements

- The examiners write a joint assessment statement.
- Each area of assessment is graded. In addition, a verbal assessment on each assessment area must be recorded in accordance with the criteria and terminology of the assessment matrix.
- The verbal statement must be justified on the basis of the matrix criteria.
- If the grades assigned by the examiners for the areas of assessment differ by more than a single grade, the examiners can discuss the assessment under the direction of the coordinating professor before recording it.