

MA Thesis Supervision Guidelines

Dear Student,

this document outlines the structure, expectations, and responsibilities involved in the supervision of Master's theses. Please read it carefully before initiating the supervision process. Depending on the individual advisor the procedures may vary.

Sincerely,

[Chair Team](#)

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Preparation and Orientation

Step 1: MA Thesis Intention Form

- Download and complete the **MA Thesis Intention Form** from our webpage ([Link](#), to download you need the BTU credentials; or Appendix 1: MASTER'S THESIS INTENTION FORM below).
 - The form must include a **preliminary working title** of your thesis.
 - For detailed information on assessment standards, please consult the MA grading rubric (Appendix 2: MASTER'S THESIS EVALUATION RUBRIC WITH WEIGHTS).
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Step 2: Orientation Meeting (Meet 1)

- After submitting the intention form, we will schedule an **orientation meeting**.
 - This meeting usually takes place **2–3 weeks** before the planned registration date.
 - During this meeting, we will discuss:
 - Your MA thesis intention form
 - Preliminary title
 - Time frame and planning
 - Scope and type of research (theoretical, case-study-oriented, empirical)
 - We will also agree on the timeline and expectations for the supervision process.
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Step 3: Registration of the Thesis Procedure

After the orientation meeting, you are expected **officially to register your MA thesis procedure at BTU** according to the university regulations.

Consultation Period

- Between the orientation meeting and the submission of your thesis, you are entitled to **two formal supervision consultations** related to your MA thesis.
- In addition, you may send short queries by email between meetings if necessary.

Step 4: First Supervision Meeting (Meet 2)

- Schedule the meeting in advance.
- **2–3 days before the meeting**, send your supervisor:
 - The main themes or questions you would like to discuss
 - Any materials you would like feedback on

This preparation is essential to ensure an efficient and productive meeting.

During this meeting, we usually discuss:

- A preliminary table of contents
- Theoretical and methodological framing
- For empirical projects: data collection and analysis strategies

At this stage, you may also submit:

- A writing sample of **up to two pages**
- An overview of your **preliminary list of references**

Step 5: Second Supervision Meeting (Meet 3)

- This meeting takes place **close to the finalization** of your thesis.
- Schedule the face to face or online meeting in advance.
- **2–3 days before the meeting**, send:
 - The themes or questions for discussion
 - Relevant materials for feedback

During this meeting, we usually discuss:

- Final table of contents
- One sample chapter (or a substantial part of a chapter)
- Final or near-final list of references

Please note: Submitting your questions and materials in advance is mandatory. Failure to do so may put the meeting itself at risk.

Submission, Presentation, and Evaluation

Step 6: Submission of the Thesis

- Submit your MA thesis to **BTU** according to the official procedures. Please be conscious that there will be at least 6 weeks between submission and your defense date. Adjustments to the schedule can be made after individual consultation.
- This is followed by the formal **evaluation process**.

Step 7: Presentation and Evaluation of the Thesis

- The thesis presentation will be arranged in accordance with your study program.
 - For detailed information on assessment standards, please consult the **Appendix 2: MASTER'S THESIS EVALUATION RUBRIC WITH WEIGHTS**.
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Roles and Expectations

The Role of the Supervisor

- To encourage and support the development of your thesis
- To provide expert academic advice **within the realm of Chair's thematic expertise** as well as research design and methodology, literature review and scholarly argumentation, academic writing and revision strategies.

What it is Expected from You

- Committed and independent work on your MA thesis
- Serious and responsible treatment of all formal and academic requirements
- Respect for agreed timelines and supervision procedures

Formal Requirements

- Please consult the **official guidelines of your study program** regarding the MA thesis.
- This includes requirements concerning **length, formatting, fonts, citation style** (if specified in the program, otherwise consistent use of fonts and citation style), **and submission standards**.
- Compliance with these formal requirements is the student's responsibility.

Areas Outside the Scope of Supervision

- Brainstorming or topic-finding sessions

- Assigning a thesis topic
- Administrative guidance
- Motivational or emotional coaching

Please also refrain from providing detailed explanations about delays or lack of progress. We all work under time constraints, and I expect you to respect my time and investment in your academic progress.

Useful Sources

MA Thesis Intention Form, Chair Intercultural Studies <https://www.b-tu.de/fg-interkulturalitaet/downloads> (the download is available with the BTU credentials)

University Library Cottbus–Senftenberg <https://www.b-tu.de/en/bibliothek>

Other useful search databases: Google Scholar <https://scholar.google.com/> or Semantic Scholar <https://www.semanticscholar.org/>

Eco, Umberto. 2015. “How to Write a Thesis, According to Umberto Eco.” *MIT Press Reader*. Retrieved [online article] (<https://thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/umberto-eco-how-to-write-a-thesis/>).

Eco, Umberto. 2015. *How to Write a Thesis*. Translated by Caterina Mongiat Farina and Geoff Farina. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Evans, David, Paul Gruba, and Justin Zobel. 2014. *How to Write a Better Thesis*. 3rd ed. Cham, Switzerland: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-04286-2>.

Parija, Subhash Chandra, and Vikram Kate, eds. 2018. *Thesis Writing for Master's and Ph.D. Program*. Singapore: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0890-1>.

Appendix 1: MASTER'S THESIS INTENTION FORM

For Students Planning to Write Their MA Thesis with Dr. Tetiana Havlin

Please complete all fields. Maximum total length: 500 words.

This form helps you clarify your direction. A sense of irritation or uncertainty is acceptable at this stage — the structure is here to help organize your thoughts.

Personal Information

- **Name:**
- **Surname:**
- **MA Program and Current Semester:**
- **Matriculation Number:**
- **BTU Email:**
- **Other Relevant Email (if applicable):**

Academic Background

Previous Educational Background (BA or other):

Master Thesis Plan

Proposed Time Frame for the Master Thesis:

(e.g., Start: October 2025 – Submission: March 2026)

Field/Disciplinary Focus of the Master Thesis:

(e.g., Cultural Studies, Gender Studies, Heritage Studies, Migration Studies, etc.)

Preliminary Title of the Thesis:

(NOTE: When composing your title, include 4–5 key concepts central to your thesis; these will guide your argument throughout and can be refined later with your supervisor before registration.)

Preliminary Research Question:

(NOTE: We suggest that you formulate one guiding research question for your thesis that incorporates the 4–5 key concepts from your title. While the title cannot be modified after registration, the research question may be adjusted throughout the thesis process as you conduct

background research and further develop your project. Additionally to the guiding research question, subquestions are possible, please refrain to have multiple guiding research questions.)

Five Core Academic Sources Relevant to Your Topic:

(Include author + year or title + short note if needed)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Motivation – Why this topic? (2–3 sentences)**Progress – What has been done so far?** (Research, reading, outline, discussions, etc.)**Format of the Thesis:**

- ☐ Theoretical
- ☐ Empirical
- ☐ Mixed

If Empirical: What kind of research will you conduct?

(Interviews, archival work, surveys, ethnography, etc.)

What prior experience do you have with research conduct?

(Methods training, previous empirical work, etc.)

Preliminary Structure of the Thesis:

(List of chapter or section titles – short bullet points acceptable)

Geographical Range:

- ☐ Comparative
- ☐ Regional Focus (Please specify: _____)

Strong Points from Your Positionality for Studying This Topic:

(Language skills, insider knowledge, professional or cultural experiences)

Missing Points in Your Positionality You Wish to Develop Through the Thesis Work:

(Methods, theory, regional understanding, etc.)

Commentary section: Any further information relevant for the MA thesis process

Please submit the completed form as a PDF.

Master's Thesis Evaluation Form

Evaluator / Supervisor:

@b-tu.de

Chair of Intercultural Studies
Faculty 5, BTU Cottbus–Senftenberg

Student:

Topic of the MA Thesis:

Date: _____

Strengths of the Thesis

Points for Improvement

Final Evaluation Statement

Based on the evaluation outlined above and in the grading rubric, I evaluate the submitted MA thesis with the grade: _____

Appendix 2: MASTER'S THESIS EVALUATION RUBRIC WITH WEIGHTS

(German Grading System)

CATEGORY	WEIGHT	DESCRIPTION	1.0–1.3 (EXCELLENT)	1.7–2.3 (GOOD)	2.7–3.3 (SATISFACTORY)	3.7–4.0 (PASS)	5.0 (FAIL)
1. STRUCTURE & ORGANIZATION (incl. headings function in the word and cross-references)	5%	Logic, coherence, clear chapter structure	Excellent structure, strong logic	Mostly clear structure	Adequate but sometimes unclear	Weak or inconsistent structure	No recognizable structure
2. FORMATTING & FORMAL PRESENTATION	5%	Formatting, layout, language, academic style	Perfect, professional	Mostly correct	Noticeable issues	Frequent errors	Not compliant
3. REFERENCES & CITATION PRACTICES	10%	Quality of sources, citation accuracy, bibliography	Comprehensive, flawless	Good, minor issues	Adequate sources, repeated errors	Insufficient or incorrect	Major flaws or plagiarism
4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	15%	Depth, relevance, conceptual clarity	Highly sophisticated	Good and appropriate	Acceptable but superficial	Weak understanding	Incorrect or missing theory
5. LINK BETWEEN THEORY & PRACTICE	10%	Integration of concepts with practical context	Outstanding, original	Clear but with gaps	Somewhat connected	Weak connection	No link
6. EMPIRICAL/ METHODOLOGICAL PARTⁱ	20%	Method, design, execution, data analysis	Excellent and rigorous	Sound with minor issues	Adequate, several limitations	Weak or poorly executed	Invalid or missing

7. ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION	15%	Critical analysis, interpretation depth	Insightful, critical, deep	Solid and reflective	Simple, limited critique	Mostly descriptive	Misinterpreted or no analysis
8. ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION & ARGUMENTATION	10%	Independent thought, coherence of argument	Highly original, strong logic	Clear argument, some originality	Understandable but inconsistent	Weak reasoning	No coherence
9. PERSONAL REFLECTION & AUTHOR'S VOICE	5%	Reflexivity, positionality, academic voice	Strong, mature voice	Good reflection	Some reflection	Minimal reflection	None
10. RELEVANCE & IMPACT OF FINDINGS	3%	Significance of results	Strong impact	Meaningful	Adequate	Limited	Irrelevant
11. CONCLUSION & IMPLICATIONS	5%	Final synthesis, implications, future research	Excellent synthesis	Good conclusion	Acceptable	Weak	Missing
12. OVERALL CONSISTENCY & COHESION	2%	Coherence between sections	Highly consistent	Mostly coherent	Some inconsistencies	Many inconsistencies	Incoherent

ⁱ **Comment on Thesis Design:** I strongly encourage students to design their MA thesis with an **empirical foundation**, as the empirical/methodological part represents a significant portion of the evaluation (20%). Engaging with real-world data or practical research questions will not only strengthen your analysis and findings but also provide a solid basis for connecting theory and practice.

If you decide to pursue a **theoretical or case-study-based thesis** without a substantial empirical component, the evaluation weight for the empirical/methodological part will be **redistributed** proportionally to:

- **4. Theoretical Framework (15% → 25%)**
- **5. Link Between Theory & Practice (10% → 15%)**
- **7. Analysis & Interpretation (15% → 25%)**

This adjustment ensures that your work is evaluated fairly based on its design while maintaining high academic standards.