



MSc Interaction Design

# **REGULATIONS FOR MSc THESIS**

2018

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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The present document describes the procedure followed for the elaboration of an MSc thesis for the MSc in Interaction Design programme. The MSc thesis is an essential part of the curriculum of the MSc and is necessary for the successful completion of the MSc in Interaction Design programme. The thesis takes place in the context of courses MGA 683 and MGA 684. The thesis projects are guided by the assigned supervisors of the programme. In this document, the aims of the thesis, the role of the involved parties, the selection of topic, the process of the elaboration and writing of the thesis, and the evaluation of the thesis are described.

## 2 AIMS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

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The MSc thesis helps the student develop the skills needed for the execution of original research and the development of issues included in the curriculum and the research interests of those involved. MSc thesis are separated into two categories:

- 1) original research study; or
- 2) a combination of development and research.

The first category is encouraged among students who wish to follow a research direction, and follows the stages of presenting research questions, which could lead to the contribution of new knowledge, enrichment of bibliography, research design, and collection and analysis of data. The second focuses on professional direction and appeals to those who would like to research a topic related to their professional nature through development, or the important distinction of a technological environment and the sequence of the study. Unlike an undergraduate thesis, an MSc thesis should be of publishable quality and, therefore, fulfill the requirements of a good piece of research. Therefore, the student will have to isolate a viable topic for research as soon as possible – and their capability to critically analyse this topic will be assessed. The programme holds the right to provide additional guidance to students if needed.

Through the MSc thesis, the student is expected to develop skills of:

- Research Design
- Successful use of the bibliography for the enhancement of their writing
- Interconnection of knowledge, technological tools and methodologies they have been taught throughout the master program
- Collection, analysis and interpretation of data
- Critical thinking
- Oral and written presentation of their thesis work

Through the MSc thesis, students will reclaim the knowledge and skills they have developed throughout the MSc and learn to work methodically, implementing analytical and critical thinking.

## 3 THE ROLE OF THOSE INVOLVED

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For the completion of the thesis, those directly involved are the student who takes on the thesis, a supervisor and a second grader. The committee is assigned by the coordinator of the MSc thesis courses. By no later than 1st of December (in the autumn) and on 15th of April (in the spring) the student shall notify the Coordinator of MSc thesis of the intention to submit of the thesis for defence within the ongoing semester.

### 3.1 COORDINATOR OF MSC THESIS

The Coordinator of the MSc thesis is responsible for the well-ordered completion of the execution, oral defense and evaluation of the MSc thesis, as follows:

- Attends to the submission of the thesis topics the students and supervisors have suggested for final approval by making sure that
  - the initial topic of the Master's thesis is approved by student's Supervisor; and
  - the MSc thesis is submitted by the end of the semester the student has enrolled to MGA 684.
- Assigns a second grader in collaboration with the supervisor of each MSc thesis
- Handles applications for possible change of thesis topics
- Deals with the organization of the presentations for oral defense
- Coordinates the evaluation process
- Manages the submission of grades for each student

### 3.2 THE SUPERVISOR

The Supervisor plays the role of the research advisor to the student, who has selected an area of focus along the lines of the Supervisors' area of expertise. During the execution of the project, the student is expected to have regular meetings with their supervisors. In the first meetings, the Supervisors and the students are to agree on a general plan of the execution of the thesis project. The regular meetings serve the purpose of informing the Supervisors of the student's progress, the solution to possible problems or barriers, and to provide guidance to the student regarding their next steps in the project. The student is required to work according to the agreed timeline and meet deadlines when submitting progress reports.

### 3.3 THE STUDENT

The student needs to

- submit a thesis for defence within the current academic year.
- Fill the [Master Thesis registration form](https://goo.gl/cRb6wC) (link <https://goo.gl/cRb6wC>)
- Notify the Coordinator of MSc thesis (by e-mail) of of the intention to submit of the thesis for defence within the ongoing semester. This has to be done by no later than 1st of December (in the autumn) and on 15th of April (in the spring).
- Ensure that before submitting
  - the thesis is approved by the Supervisor.

- is presented in a linguistically correct form (in conformity with the APA standard).
- The student shall take into account that all defended thesis will be published on... The non-disclosure of a thesis may only be applied for with compelling reasons, by submitting an application confirmed by the representative of a party demanding the non-disclosure, explaining the request and the substantial reasons for it. The application shall be presented to the Coordinator of MSc thesis (by e-mail) for approval no later than by April 15th in a spring semester and by December 1st in an autumn semester.
- Students must request the thesis approval from their supervisors before submit.
- The thesis must be submitted by the deadline, whereby the advisor has previously agreed to allow the thesis to be defended, confirming this with a signature on the title page of the thesis paper.

## 4 THE PROCESS OF EXECUTION OF THE MSc THESIS

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The process of execution of the MSc thesis includes the following stages:

- Accepted topics and assigned supervisors
- Writing of Proposal and Timeline of duties
- Data collection and Analysis
- Thesis Writing
- Submission of thesis
- Oral Defense of thesis
- Review of MSc thesis, in case changes are requested by the committee

For more information, see “[Most Frequent General Quality Problems in the Master's Theses](#)”

### 4.1 THE SEMESTER OF PROJECT EXECUTION

The MSc thesis must be completed by the end of the semester the student has enrolled to MGA 684. Only the students who have successfully completed all previous required modules hold the right to enroll in the MGA 684 module, or in special circumstances where exception has been approved by the MSc program coordinators.

#### THE PROPOSAL

Once the student selects the topic they wish to focus on and has been assigned the selected supervisor, they are expected to write a research proposal, which will include the following:

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- The purpose of the specific study
- Research Questions
- Timeline of implementation

The research proposal must be approximately 3,000 words and must be submitted to the Coordinator of the MSc thesis Projects and is the requirement for fulfilling MGA 683. The research proposal should be submitted to the MSc thesis Coordinator by the a deadline specified by the coordinator as part of MGA 683. The Research Proposal are then evaluated by the Supervisor who bears the responsibility to provide substantial feedback to the student.

### 4.2 CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE MSc THESIS

Compulsory components of a Master’s thesis are:

- A title page – name of the university and the institute, title of the thesis, the type of the thesis, full name of a student, full name of a Supervisor, and the signatures of the Supervisor and the Head of the Institute, together with the dates of signing (approving the acceptance of the thesis for defence), date and place of submission of the thesis.

- An author's declaration, where the author of the thesis declares that the thesis concerned is the result of his/her independent research and it has not been previously submitted for a defence
- A non-exclusive licence for the reproduction and publication of the thesis
- A table of contents

## **1. INTRODUCTION:**

Summarise the context and issues at stake. Formulate the research question(s): what is the phenomenon of interest and what is its significance? What precisely is the question that you wish to examine regarding this phenomenon? Briefly present the overall structure of your MSc thesis.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW:**

How previous work has addressed similar question(s)? What does the existing scholarly literature say about the research topic and in what ways? Does it fall short of satisfactorily addressing your research question, and how?

## **3. CONCEPTUAL/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK (IF APPLICABLE):**

Expanding on point 2 (literature review), what are the core concepts, theories and/or models, hypotheses or claims that you use (or posit, make, refer to) to address your research question(s)?

## **4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA/INFORMATION:**

Describe your methodological approach (e.g. inferential scheme) and discuss the potential strengths and limitations. Present and discuss your 'data': e.g. spatial, social, economic, institutional, political, historical elements that you consider; sources; indicators; unit of analysis; sampling, etc. If relevant, present and discuss the data that you have generated through interviews, questionnaires, field research, etc.

## **5. ANALYSIS:**

Present and analyse your findings. What does the evidence suggest with regard to your hypotheses (if applicable)?

## **6. CONCLUSION AND WIDER POLICY AND/OR RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS**

## **7. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Referencing is done preferably according to the APA standard (see <http://www.apastyle.org/>)

If necessary, the following components may be included: a list of abbreviations, a list of foreign terminology, and other annexes.

## **4.3 FORMAT AND QUOTATION STYLE**



Unless otherwise stipulated in specific guidelines, MSc thesis comprise up to a maximum of 20,000 words including footnotes, but excluding bibliography and appendices.

- It must include a 150-word abstract
- Students are expected to use APA referencing
- The students must take note of avoiding any type of plagiarism
- It is advisable to: apply 1.5 line spacing and font size of no more than 12 points in the main text body; Use double-sided alignment of text. 3

#### **SOURCE AND RESEARCH ETHICS**

- The students are expected to use a range of sources: primary/secondary, quantitative/qualitative data, written/oral/audio-visual, etc.
- The use of primary sources or original data generated from own field research is not compulsory
- As for secondary sources, students are expected to conduct extensive research and thorough readings
- Students are encouraged to use documents written in various languages
- Strong research ethics are required. Ethical issues such as preserving the anonymity of interviewees, or using dubious sources should be discussed with your supervisor.

## 5 THE EVALUATION CRITERIA

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The evaluation criteria include:

- Originality, clarity and strengths of your research design; clarity in framing the issues, clarity of argumentation
- Command of the relevant literature and relevance of the context analysis
- Command and use of appropriate methodology, concepts and theories
- Analytical skills, critical and nuanced thinking
- Writing skills, capacity to synthesise complex issues, structure and format of the text
- Ability to integrate the comments of the supervisor(s) and to revise the manuscript accordingly
- Autonomy and initiative

### 5.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

A student, who has completed a Master's thesis:

- knows the requirements applicable to academic texts;
- is able to individually state an actual, executable and an adequate research question, as well as choose a proper research methodology;
- Is able to carry out an in-depth analysis of other authors' publications in the area of the posed research question, to solve the research question through applying properly the chosen research methodology, and to draw conclusions and provide suggestions, based on the results gained.

### 5.2 EVALUATION OF THE MSc THESIS

The supervisor and the second marker examine independently the thesis before the oral defense. The oral defense takes place online according to the programme as defined by the Thesis Coordinator. Every presentation lasts for approximately 40 minutes. It entails a 20-minute presentation of the project and findings from the student, followed by questions from the committee members and the public. The student is responsible for the way they present their thesis. The oral defense is public and anyone has the right to attend whether they are members of the academic community or not.

The following evaluation decision options are available:

- Successful Completion of the Project with No Corrections
- Successful Completion of the Project with Minor Corrections:
  - In this case, the student attends to the corrections within a week of the oral defense. The Supervisor is responsible for verifying the corrections and approving them. The successful completion of the MSc programme depends on the accurate corrections made on the thesis.
- Failed thesis:
  - If the student fails to submit a successful thesis, they hold the right to resubmit their improved work within a 30-day deadline. The two markers state the needed changes for resubmission and re-evaluation. In the case of a second fail, the student is expected to choose a new topic and supervisor and repeat the process from the beginning.

If there is great divergence in the grade, then the coordinator appoints a third evaluator. The final grade will be the calculated average of the two closest grades.

### **5.3 THE THESIS DEFENCE SESSION**

The defence takes place during the period defined by the academic calendar. As a rule, the thesis shall be submitted to the Master thesis coordinator by the end of the semester the student has enrolled to MGA 684. Thesis defence will happen one month after submission. The defence date is set for each semester. Master's student has 20 minutes for presenting his/her final thesis, explaining foremost the goals of his/her thesis, methods chosen for achieving these, and the main results of the research.