

Assessment criteria MA theses

20 ects: c. 20000-30000 words, figures, tables and reference list; this comes down to ca.40-60 pages,, but excludes appendices. The length of the thesis is not a norm in itself. A high quality thesis can be short; a sizable thesis is not a guarantee for success.

Objective: independent planning and execution of archaeological research under supervision, which is then presented in accordance with the scientific standards of the research field. The student must show an ability to independently collate, analyse and interpret research data (from an excavation, laboratory, or from own research), using specialist literature and theoretical perspectives which are current in the research area.

Criteria:

- form and quality of the documentation, presentation and formulation;
- concise statement of the research problem, research questions and research method; originality in research and research questions;
- treatment of the data; research methodology;
- analysis and conclusions.

1. Form of the thesis:

The thesis has to comply with the faculty standards (model thesis format).

form of the paper: technical quality of the figures and tables; correct captions and referencing of the figures, general layout, presentation of the documentary material

assessment: **Basic** quality (6-7.5): aspects of form are all in accordance with the faculty standards;

Excellent (8 or higher): consistent, good text, very readable and logical structure, good argumentation, and excellent conclusions.

2. Organisation of the research:

An MA thesis may consist of a study of material culture, a study based on fieldwork laboratory research or a study of relevant literature. However, in all cases, it will not suffice to present only a description of the studied data. The student will have to show that he/she realises how the research is positioned in a broader field, what the taphonomic and methodical problems are which may perhaps be attached to the research, and will have to go into the theoretical and/or methodical perspectives that can be linked to the research problem.

contents: A thesis begins with a sketch of the research problems in a broader perspective (the reason why one wants to investigate something); from a number of possible research questions it selects one or more that will be answered.. Subsequently, it explains how the studied data will be approached in order to answer the research questions: the research method..

assessment: **Basic** quality (6-7.5). Objective and research questions have been formulated clearly. The subject has been chosen realistically and is well delimited. The methods to answer the research questions have been adequately chosen and are well founded. The student does explain the theoretical and/or methodical aspects of the subject under investigation.

Excellent (8 or higher). The research theme is relevant to current research questions in the discipline. The research proposal is original and has been carried out with a high degree of independence. There is considerable breadth and depth in theoretical and/or methodical reflection.

3: The research (data):

The data should have been dealt with in such a way that the student demonstrates sufficient knowledge of the discipline. There should be a good balance between the description of the data and the critical analysis thereof, coupled with the use of literature relevant to the subject. A good distinction should have been made between primary sources and secondary literature (among which the internet). In general, secondary literature may only be used to a limited degree. A good selection should have been made from recent and relevant publications.

Basic quality (6-7.5).

Excellent (8 or higher). The student has independently provided him-/herself for the data and literature and examined them (this includes possible fieldwork), and has shown a sound interpretative ability and critical mind.

4: Conclusions / synthesis:

The conclusions are more than a summary of the presented data. This means that a good thesis shows that the student is aware of the theoretical, methodical and/or social aspects of the research carried out. A good degree of (self-) reflection is important for good research (what is the value of the conclusions, how are the data studied in relation to other phenomena in the problem area: feedback to the problem statement).

Basic quality (6-7.5).

Excellent (8 or higher). The student has shown an excellent grasp of the subject matter, very good analysis thereof and a vision thereon related to the theoretical and/or methodical and/or social aspects of the discipline. There is evidence of excellent perception of the own stance within the field of research. The study is an example of excellent interpretative abilities (including interdisciplinary awareness); the results are a genuine contribution to knowledge and conceptualization in the discipline. In principle, an MA thesis assessed as excellent should be publishable, in an authoritative journal of the discipline.

5. Assessment of the final grade

6: The thesis is of very basic quality. The student has dealt with the subject in a basic way. He has not used all relevant references or could have been more critical to some data.

7: The thesis is of sufficient quality. The student has shown that he can treat scientific data reasonably well, although his analyses are generally of basic quality.

8: The quality of the thesis is good. The student has a firm grasp on the subject and treats the data critically and uses all references well.

9: The quality of the thesis is excellent. The student has shown to possess an excellent grasp on the subject and has analyzed the subject very critical and innovative.

10: The quality of the thesis is beyond excellent and cannot be improved.