

Grading Guidelines for MA theses supervised at the IGN

In marking MA theses, the following criteria will be referred to:

1. Academic substance and argument

- A research problem or puzzle is clearly stated.
- The research questions are clearly articulated and related to the research problem.
- Aims and objectives are clearly stated, and the research is structured reflecting these objectives and the research questions.
- There is a well-articulated academic argument that is solidly supported from the relevant academic literature.

2. Methodology & Literature

- Relevant academic literature has been identified, incorporated, and critically engaged with.
- Appropriate research methods have been selected and applied correctly.
- The research problem has been investigated in an original manner, based on existing theoretical and empirical knowledge.

3. Coherence & Consistency

- The strategic setup of the structure is clear and the analysis and argument are developed in a logical and consistent way.
- Concepts, writing style and citation style are used in a consistent manner.
- Chapters are structured according to argumentation and are balanced in content.
- The conclusion relates back to the introduction and explicitly returns to the research problem and the questions posed in the introduction.

4. Formalities

- The thesis has been handed in on time.
- Orthography, typography and use of citations are immaculate.
- The length of thesis is in line with the word limit as specified by the respective MA programme.
- The research has been conducted autonomously and no use has been made of unfair means.
- Rules of academic integrity and plagiarism have been complied with.
- Instructions of supervisors have been incorporated.

Grading Criteria

Sehr Gut (Excellent):

The student has developed an independent and original argument which is driven by a research problem, research question(s) and hypotheses that are distinct and specific. The student has proven in-depth knowledge of the theories, debates and empirical research of the thesis topic and has applied that knowledge innovatively and constructively to the research problem. The student has applied appropriate research methods and has conducted the research autonomously. The student has proven a consistent and correct use of concepts and citation style and maintained an adequate writing style. The student has structured the thesis according to the research questions and the argument that is being presented.

Gut (Good):

The student has developed a solid argument which is driven by a research problem, research question(s) and hypotheses. The student has proven good knowledge of the theories, debates and empirical research of the thesis topic and has engaged that knowledge well with the research problem. The student has applied appropriate research methods and has conducted the research autonomously. With minor exceptions, the student has proven a consistent and correct use of concepts and citation style and maintained an adequate writing style. The student has structured the thesis according to the research questions and the argument that is being presented.

Befriedigend (Satisfying):

The student has developed a, for the most part, clear argument which is driven by a research problem, research question(s) and hypotheses. The student has proven sufficient knowledge of the theories, debates and empirical research of the thesis topic and has engaged that knowledge properly with the research problem. The student has applied (mostly) appropriate research methods and has conducted the research with additional support of the supervisors. With some exceptions, the student has proven a consistent and correct use of concepts and citation style and maintained an adequate writing style. The student has structured the thesis largely according to the research questions and the argument that is being presented.

Genügend (Sufficient):

The student has tentatively developed an academic argument which is related to a research problem. An effort has been made to specify research questions and hypotheses. The student has demonstrated basic knowledge of some theories, debates and empirical research of the thesis topic, yet has had difficulties to engage that knowledge with the research problem. The student has thought about research methods. An attempt has been made to structure the thesis according to the argument. The style of writing is by and large in line with general academic practice.

Nicht Genügend (Failed):

There is insufficient evidence that the criteria for an acceptable piece of academic work as specified above have been fulfilled. In particular, the student has not managed to identify any kind of research problem, to specify research questions and address these in a structured and efficient manner based on the relevant academic literature and drawing on relevant theories, debates and empirical research of the thesis topic.