

Department of Geosciences – Unit of Geography Grade-Related Criteria for Marking of Assignments

Our criteria matrix below:

- Has been formulated jointly across human and physical Geography.
- Shows the relationship between a grade and the criteria needed to meet the grade.
- Allows us to be consistent with our marking across the Geography programme.

We use the matrix to:

- Provide descriptions of the criteria needed to achieve each whole ECTS grade in each category.
- Facilitate "notched" grading in each category. For instance, when the piece of work satisfies all the Methods criteria for grade 5 and furthermore incorporates aspects of the criteria for grade 6, it may be awarded 5.5 for this category.
- Show how the final grade is calculated from the average of the grade awarded to each category.

Usually, each column of the matrix contributes equally to the final grade. This may vary for individual assessments - if so then your course leader will tell you in advance of assessment.

Individual assessments may supplement the matrix with specific requirements to meet the criteria. If this is the case then your course leader will tell you in advance of assessment.

	CONTENT				FORM		REFLECTION
	Scope & State-of-the-art	Methods	Results	Analysis & Synthesis	Structure & Writing	Presentation	Epistemology & Ontology
6	Scope excellently formulated. Facts are correct and up to date with excellent and wide-ranging scientific literature. Very convincingly argued. Development of critical ideas. Novel and original contribution to debate.	Appropriate methods are chosen, explained and used very clearly. There is extensive evidence of methodological innovation/creativity. Excellently justified by the literature.	Very rich set of results which are described/visualized excellently and substantiated in the context of the research question. Excellent link to methods and research question.	Very comprehensive discussion. Original and creative synthesis of a broad range of literature. Excellent argumentation and in-depth discussion. Very well related to the scope. New ideas.	Very well written, excellent use of scientific language. Clear structure, without repetitions. Arguments are clear and sustained. Excellent separation into appropriate sections.	Virtually without mistakes, presentation on an excellent level, concerning text, illustrations and figures. Citations impeccable.	Excellent theoretical grounding. Conceptual framework coherently defined and with agility. Excellent and detailed reflection on research design, results and scope.
5	Scope well defined. Facts are substantially correct, up to date, taken from broad range of scientific literature. Balanced presentation of current state of research. Some own ideas.	Appropriate methods generally clearly explained. Good justification with respect to other studies in the literature.	Good set of results, well described/visualized. Link to research question and methods transparent.	Good discussion. Relevant literature included, some evidence of synthesis. Well-related to scope but breadth of analysis and discussion somewhat narrow.	Good vocabulary and language, some lengthy and/or complicated sentences. Style good, but repetitive in places. Minor inconsistencies in the structure.	Minor grammatical errors that do not impede reading flow. Graphic and cartographic representation. Citations follow an appropriate, recognised format.	Good theoretical grounding. Concepts well defined, understood and integrated. Good reflection of research design, results and scope.
4	Scope not accurately defined. Facts are substantially correct, supported by scientific literature but perhaps not fully up to date. Mainly descriptive, without synthesis. State of research unbalanced.	Methods minimalistic but still comprehensible, substantial fraction of methods not well understood. Some methods may be inappropriate. Limited citations of scientific literature to justify methodological choice.	Only basic results seem correct, otherwise lack of clarity. Minimalistic set of results, description and visualization. Weak link to methods.	Limited discussion. No new insights; omitted to acknowledge central points of scientific literature. Relation to scope and literature not fully clear.	Frequent poor use of language makes paper incomprehensible in places. The paper is markedly too long or short, organisation is in parts illogical. Some parts may be missing.	Frequent mistakes impede reading flow; illustrations and figures rudimentary, difficult to understand or insufficiently explained. Citations often do not use a recognised format.	References to theory, but weakly integrated. Limited definition and integration of concepts. Limited reflection.
3	Scope not defined. Facts substantially incorrect. Superficial treatment of the topic. Scientific literature may be cited, but insufficiently or inappropriately used.	Methods too minimalistic and incomprehensible, and/or inappropriate. Few or no citations of scientific literature to justify methodological choice.	Results insufficient or simplistic and/or obviously wrong. Not possible to understand how they were derived, poor link to methods and research question.	Poor discussion. Poor synthesis with existing research. Unclear relation to scope, unclear use of scientific literature.	The paper is far too short or far too long, badly organised, erratic. Language generally poor, sentences often incomprehensible. Structure unclear or confusing.	Too many grammatical mistakes, making reading difficult and ambiguous; illustrations and figures largely insufficient, missing captions, citation sources incomplete or wrong.	Theoretical grounding absent or inappropriate. Concepts missing or wrongly defined. Overstatements of results due to limited reflection of research design and scope.
2	Facts are wrong. No formal scientific literature cited. The assignment has not been completed or the context has not been understood.	Methods very poor if at all present, inadequate or not related to the topic. No literature citations to justify methodological choice..	Results mostly to fully absent, unrelated to methods and focus of the study, obviously erroneous, very incomprehensible.	No synthesis with existing research. Highly inadequate use of literature, if any use at all. Lacks any critical discussion.	Unstructured stream of consciousness. Language very poor.	Grammatical mistakes make reading impossible; missing illustrations; rules of graphic or cartographic representation ignored. Citation sources are missing or quoted incorrectly.	No theoretical grounding. No engagement with concepts. Research results inappropriate due to limited reflection of research design and scope.
1	Clear evidence of deliberate plagiarism						

MASTER THESIS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Version 04.12.2023

Deadlines & thesis registration

Steps

1. Evaluating potential MSc thesis topics and supervisor (**usually during 1st semester**)
2. Choice of topic & supervisor
3. **Official registration** – establish the date for the preliminary seminar, the deadline for the first version and the deadline for the final version (**usually by the beginning of 2nd semester**)
4. Preliminary seminar (**usually by end of 2nd semester**)
5. Submit the first version of MSc thesis; confirm the deadline for the final version (usually by the beginning of 4th semester)
6. Submit final version; establish date for MSc defence (usually by the end of 4th semester)

Deadlines

The thesis can be submitted at all times as long as the agreed deadlines between supervisor and student are fulfilled. However, please note that there are no guarantees for evaluation until a certain date (or a specific date for the defence) outside of the regular deadlines defined below:

Speed version: Regular deadline DEEM/LDM (teacher formation) spring semester (SS)

1 February: submission of first version

1 May: submission of final version

Defence to be scheduled before 15th June

Regular deadline Spring Semester (SS)

1 April: submission of first version

1 July: submission of final version

Defence to be scheduled at the latest during the first weeks of the following Autumn Semester

Regular deadline Autumn Semester (AS)

1 October: submission of first version

31 December: submission of final version

Defence to be scheduled at the latest during the first weeks of the following Spring Semester

Evaluation process

1. Use Master thesis evaluation form (Evaluation-Master-Thesis-Geography) including:
 - ½ page report of supervisor
 - Marks for the thesis using the Graded Related Criteria matrix (MSc_TP_Criteria_EN_2022_v1.6).
 - Marks for presentation according to the following criteria, each of out 6:
 1. Structure and clarity of argumentation
 2. Response to critical questions
 3. Visual aspects of presentation
 4. Oral skills
 - From these sub-marks the average will be used as final evaluation mark.
2. Supervisor and second examiner agree on proposed marks for the thesis
3. Thesis, Master thesis evaluation form and proposed date for defence circulate 1-2 weeks (and/or are available at secretariat)
 - If no objections: proceed to defence
4. Defence & short discussion of final mark by teaching staff

The evaluation criteria reflect the basic steps of academic research, including understanding and defining the research question, designing an adequate research strategy to tackle the problem, gathering necessary data, correctly interpreting these data and relating them to the research question, correctly reporting the whole scientific endeavor. These criteria may further be qualified according to the standards and repertoires of supervisors and research groups.

Penalties

If no first version is submitted at the agreed-upon deadline or the first version is completely unacceptable according to the evaluation criteria given above, then the supervisor is not obliged to continue the supervision. The student has then to change the topic and/or the supervisor.

The final version is graded – if it is not acceptable the mark will be chosen correspondingly

If the student fails to submit the final version on time, the Master Thesis is not passed and the student has to redo a full thesis.

In case of a justified cause for delay, an extension of the thesis deadline can be requested via the coordination meeting of the Geography unit (see MSc regulations).