

# Master thesis: Evaluation & Deadlines

(version 12. Nov 2018)

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## EVALUATION PROCESS

1. Use **Master thesis evaluation form** (Evaluation-Master-Thesis-Geography.docx) including:
  - ½ page report of supervisor
  - Marks for the thesis and oral presentation using an individual mark for the following **criteria**:
    1. Research question .../6
    2. Research design and methodological rigour .../6
    3. Analytical rigour .../6
    4. Reporting quality .../6
    5. Work and learning process .../6
    6. Oral presentation .../6

From these sub-marks the average will be used as final evaluation mark

2. Process of evaluation
  - Supervisor and second examiner agree on proposed marks for the thesis
  - Supervisor writes ½ page report
  - Thesis, Master thesis evaluation form and proposed date for defence circulate 1-2 weeks (and/or are available at secretariat)
  - If no objections: → defence
  - Defence & short discussion of final mark by teaching staff

## EXPLANATION OF THE EVALUATION CRITERIA

### Explanation of the proposed criteria

The criteria follow the basic steps of academic research (see figure 1) moving from 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. On top of that, a separate criterion evaluates the learning and work process of the student him or herself. These criteria can further be qualified according to the standards and repertoires of supervisors and research groups. Underneath, a non-limitative list of qualifications is provided.

#### 1) Research question:

How innovative is the research topic?

How well is the research question related to the state of the art in the literature?

How precise is the object of research described and conceptualized?

Is the theoretical framework chosen relevant for and adapted to the research?

**2) Research design and methodological rigour:**

Is the chosen research design adequate to tackle the research question?

To what extent does the student master the chosen techniques?

Does the student critically evaluate their own position during the research and take into account any ethical issues that could arise?

**3) Analytical rigour:**

How well does the student understand the data obtained?

How well does the student relate these data to the existing literature/theories?

**4) Reporting quality:**

Is the overall argument well-written and does it follow the rules of scientific reporting?

What is the quality of figures and maps?

**5) Work and learning process**

How did the student react to feedback?

How independent was the student and how did the student function in a collaborative context (if relevant)?

How steep was the learning curve of the student?

**6) Oral presentation**

How structured and clear was the argumentation?

To what extent was the student able to respond to critical questions?

How well-designed was the visual aspect of the presentation?

How good were the rhetorical skills ?

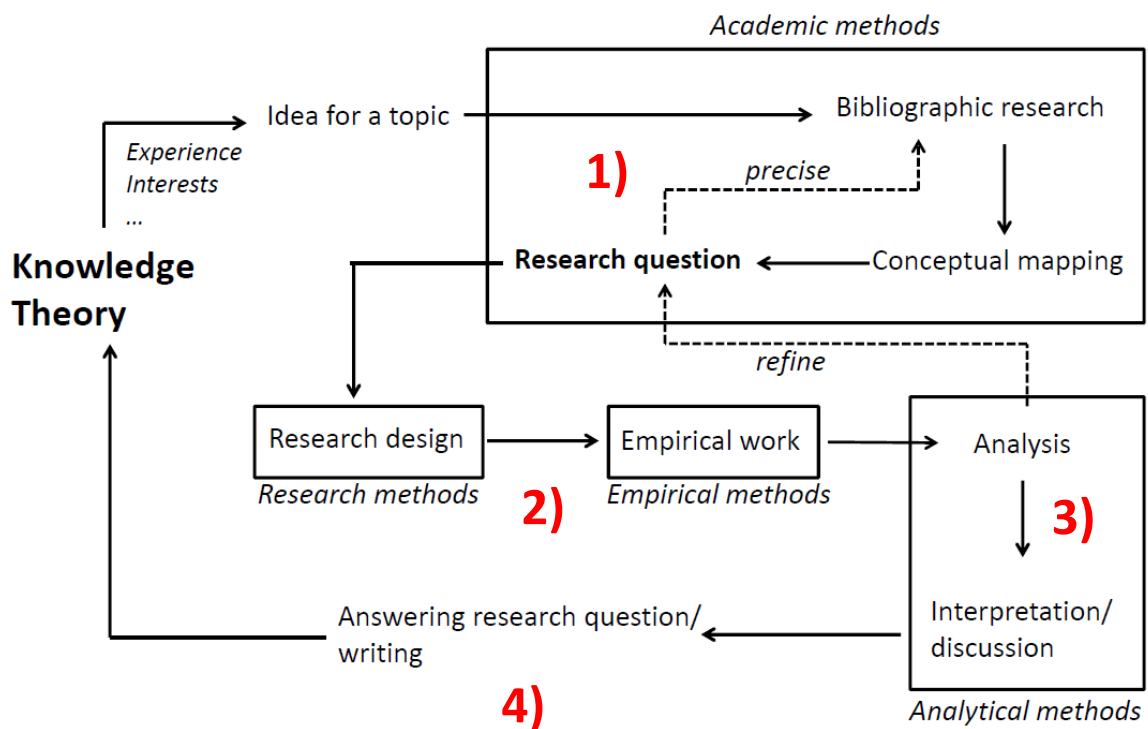


Figure 1 : Criteria of evaluation based on steps of academic research

## DEADLINES & THESIS REGISTRATION

### Steps:

1. Evaluating potential MSc thesis topics and supervisor (**usually during 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> semester**)
4. *Preliminary seminar* (**usually by end of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester**)
5. Submit the *first version* of MSc thesis; confirm the deadline for the *final version* (**usually by the beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> semester**)
6. Submit *final version*; establish date for *MSc defence* (**usually by the end of 4<sup>th</sup> semester**)

### Regular deadlines:

#### General

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 15<sup>th</sup> 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

**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 BSc regulations).