

Master's Thesis

A Master's Thesis is required in order to complete the studies of the International, Interinstitutional and Interdepartmental Postgraduate Programme of Studies (I.I.I.P.P.S.): "Sustainable Tourism Development: Heritage, Environment, Society".

Before taking over the Master's Thesis, a student shall have successfully completed all compulsory courses of the winter semester, with the exemption of two (2) at most.

The Master's Thesis is submitted and graded after the completion of all learning obligations of the students. The Master's Thesis corresponds to ten (10) Credits (ECTS), which represent a workload of two (2) full-time courses.

The maximum number of Master's Thesis that each instructor can supervise per academic year of the I.I.I.P.P.S. is set to three (3). The relevant decision is taken by the Special Inter-institutional Committee (S.I.C.).

At the beginning of the spring semester and within a time period that is announced by the Secretariat, students submit electronically to the Secretariat of the I.I.I.P.P.S. a proposal with the subject of their Master's Thesis, following communication and consultation with their instructors and after having received their assent. The Secretariat of the I.I.I.P.P.S., in due time, communicates the list of declared Master's Thesis topics to students and instructors. The instructors examine all topics that concern them and, since they agree, they suggest two additional instructors in order to set up the Three-Member Examining Committee for the evaluation of the Master's Thesis. In case of disagreement among the instructors (e.g., concerning the formulation of the topic of the Master's Thesis etc.), students shall be informed in due time by e-mail and any change that may occur shall be announced to the Coordinating Committee (C.C.). The C.C., considering the final list of declared Master's Thesis topics, appoints the supervisor of the Thesis, who is a member of Teaching and Research University staff/researcher from the cooperating institutions and instructor at the I.I.I.P.P.S. and sets up the Three-Member Examining Committee in charge of the evaluation of the Thesis; the supervisor of the Thesis is also member of that Committee. The topics of Master's Thesis, as well as the Three-Member Examining Committees are announced and approved by the S.I.C. A student has to defend his/her Master's Thesis before the Examining Committee in order to get evaluated.

In addition to the supervisor, the following instructors of I.I.I.P.P.S. can participate in the Three-Member Examining Committee:

- [1] members of Teaching and Research University staff/researchers of cooperating institutions,
- [2] researchers of A, B or C grade of recognized Research Centers or Institutions in Greece or abroad, since they hold a PhD Degree and their work is scientifically recognized,
- [3] members of Laboratory Teaching Staff of the cooperating Departments,
- [4] instructors holding a PhD Degree

Generally, a supervising professor systematically monitors the progress of the elaboration and completion of a student's Master's Thesis and guides him/her with specific remarks, comments, suggestions and corrections in order to achieve a result of better quality. If a student does not cooperate consistently with the supervisor, the latter may apply to the Secretariat of the I.I.I.P.P.S. for termination of his/her cooperation with that student. In this case, the student shall find another supervising professor to collaborate with.

The public defense of all Master's Thesis takes place three (3) times per year, at the end of examination periods: in the end of June, in early October and in early March. The day and time of evaluation of the Master's Thesis is determined by the Secretariat, in cooperation with the student and the Three-Member Examining Committee.

In order to organize the defense and evaluation of the Master's Thesis each student shall have previously consulted with his/her supervising teacher. After receiving the approval of the supervisor and informing the Secretariat, the Master's Thesis defense process may be launched.

The public defense of the Master's Thesis lasts thirty (30) minutes and takes place on a scheduled day and time in the presence of the Three-Member Examining Committee, which submits to the Secretariat the final grade of the Thesis.

In case of rejection of the Master's Thesis, a new evaluation date is set by the C.C., at least three (3) months after the first judgment. During this period the student has to make any corrections requested by the Three-Member Examining Committee.

In case of a new rejection of the Master's Thesis, the postgraduate student loses his/her student status and is expelled from the I.I.I.P.P.S. It is noted that only in case of severe health problems - and once the student has submitted the relevant document(s) to the C.C. of the I.I.I.P.P.S. - it is possible for the C.C. to suggest a further extension of one (1) additional academic semester for the student concerned. After the expiration of the above-mentioned extension and in case of unsuccessful completion and evaluation of the Master's Thesis, the postgraduate student loses his/her student status and is deleted from the I.I.I.P.P.S.

Following the successful public defense of the Master's Thesis the student has to submit his/her Thesis in electronic form to the Institutional Repository of the University Library. Students must follow the template created by the Library and the Information Center of the Institution in order to write their thesis. Instructions on how to write and submit the Thesis are provided by the Library during its user training seminars, and are also available on its website. The I.I.I.P.P.S. reserves the right to publish the Master's Thesis of students on the Department's website and / or on online accessible repositories of digital documents in which the Department participates.

The intellectual property rights deriving from the elaboration of a Master's Thesis belong jointly and equally to the postgraduate student, the supervisor, the cooperating Departments and IREST, unless otherwise provided, in case the research has been funded by research programs of the Institution. It is taken for granted that the Master's Thesis is an original work of the candidate, who submits it for review to the competent evaluation Committees of the I.I.I.P.P.S.

Qualitative criteria for the assessment of a Master's Thesis

The qualitative criteria used for the assessment of a Master's Thesis are posted on the website of the I.I.I.P.P.S. and are related to:

- i. the completeness and quality of the content of the thesis,
- ii. the level of understanding of a topic and corresponding to its requirements,
- iii. its position in relation to international literature,
- iv. the successful public defense and examination.

In particular, the Master's Thesis shall:

- [1] be bibliographically documented and methodologically accurate,
- [2] clearly outline its objectives and research questions,
- [3] be distinguished by expressive clarity and logical structure,
- [4] produce methodologically sound research findings and comparative conclusions with respect to those of the international scientific community,
- [5] be an interesting study for the academic community, with scientific proposals useful in the professional area of the author,
- [6] produce a scientific work to be published in reputable scientific journals and/or to be presented in international and national scientific conferences,
- [7] create scientific and research conditions for further study and research on the issue under negotiation.

Types of Master's Theses and Writing Guidelines

The Master's Thesis is an individual work and constitutes an independent scientific and systematic approach and analysis of a topic, it is based on the available technology and existing literature and exploits the knowledge and skills acquired during the study period. More specifically, the Master's Thesis is a scientific endeavor of academic standards that offers the postgraduate student the opportunity to highlight and promote his/her scientific, writing and research skills, which he/she has developed during his/her studies at the I.I.I.P.P.S. under the guidance of his/her professors, in particular the supervising professor and the Three-Member Examining Committee.

The Master's Thesis shall be written in English, including an extensive abstract in Greek.

The Master's Thesis, depending on the researcher's scientific questions and on the research methodology to be followed, may belong to one of the following categories:

- [1] **Literature review.** It focuses on a research question with the view to critical analysis, evaluation, collection and synthesis of high-quality published research findings and arguments related to this question. The process of designing and completing a literature review requires a series of complex cognitive processes and skills such as understanding, implementation, analysis, evaluation, synthesis and creative-critical thinking. Key qualitative characteristics of this type of Master's Thesis are the definition of the purpose and scope of the review, the definition of bibliographic research procedures and sources (e.g., basic terms of literature research, online scientific databases), studies related to the purpose of the review, assessment of the relevance of published researches to the research question under study, collection, synthesis and discussion of the results, formulation of proposals for further research. It is evident that Master's Thesis of this category that do not meet the above qualitative criteria and are limited only to descriptive collection of literature and/or research data are not accepted for examination.
- [2] **Empirical research.** This type of Master's Thesis aims to answer research questions through thorough theoretical documentation and use of quantitative or qualitative or mixed methodological research design. The process of designing and completing an empirical research involves an understanding of the parameters associated with it, such as the perception of reality, the objective, the study of the phenomenon under consideration, the sample, the form and the analysis of data, the creative stage of the research, the role of participants, the degree of

researcher's involvement in the results, the process of conducting research and its maximum contribution. Key qualitative criteria of this category of Master's Thesis are the existence of theoretical documentation, the formulation of a research purpose, the description of the data collection method, the reliability of research tools, the presentation and discussion of results and the contribution of the research to science.

The Master's Thesis shall meet the basic rules of presentation of a scientific article. A Thesis shall indicatively be from 12,000 to 17,000 words, including the final literature references and tables, but excluding the appendices. Detailed information about the structure and the final form of the Thesis can be found on the website of the Library of Harokopio University.

Grading scale of a Master's Thesis

The grade of the Master's Thesis is the average of the grades of the three examiners and is an integer or decimal number that is rounded to the nearest half unit. The scores of the three examiners are integers or decimals rounded to the nearest half unit. The examination is successful if the final grade is higher than or equal to six (6).

In particular, the grading scale for the evaluation of a Master's Thesis is as follows:

- **09 to 10:** Excellent work with scientifically sound theoretical background, sufficient literature, methodological excellence, interesting research findings and elements of originality. It fulfills the requirements for an immediate publication in a reputable Greek or foreign scientific journal or a presentation in a Greek or international scientific conference.
- **07 to 08:** Good or even very good work of high quality with satisfactory literature documentation, methodological adequacy, interesting research findings. It could be published on a Greek or foreign scientific journal or be presented at a Greek or international scientific conference with additional literature documentation and, possibly, further research.
- **06:** Work of average quality. Although it shows scientific foundation, it presents structural deficiencies and/or deficiencies in form, literature gaps and methodological limitations. Consequently, the Thesis covers to a moderate extent the requirements of a publishable scientific work.
- **<06:** Work of unsatisfactory quality with problems in literature documentation and methodological approach. It presents structural gaps, poor conceptual coherence and ambiguity or deficiencies in its research findings. An additional, thorough and substantial processing is required, as well as its re-submission for re-evaluation by the Three-Member Examining Committee.

Upon completion of the examination, the Three-Member Examining Committee convenes to decide whether:

- [1] The candidate may immediately obtain his/her Degree certificate without need for any corrective feedback.
- [2] The candidate may obtain his/her Degree certificate after following the limited corrections-improvement proposals indicated by the Three-Member Examining Committee.
- [3] The candidate may obtain his/her Degree certificate provided that he/she will firstly proceed to all extensive changes – corrections, suggested by the Three-Member Examining Committee

concerning his/her Thesis and that he/she will get the assent and final approval of all members of the Three-Member Examining Committee.

- [4] The candidate may not immediately obtain his/her Degree certificate, as he/she will have to resubmit his/her Thesis during the next examination period in order to re-defend it before the Three-Member Examining Committee. In case of rejection of the Master's Thesis, a new date of examination is set by the C.C. in cooperation with the Examining Committee.

The grade obtained after the assessment of the Master's Thesis may be announced to the student on the same day provided that all three members of the Committee are present and after a closed (private) meeting among them.

In case of absence of one of the three members of the Examining Committee, the grade may not be announced to the student on the same day, but after obtaining a signature by the third member.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism when writing a scientific work, such as a Master's Thesis, is a serious moral and legal misconduct. Plagiarism occurs in various forms, and mainly means copying phrases, opinions and ideas of other scholars-scientists without reference to their work and their names. It is a *moral misconduct* as the author arrogates other's literary material and presents it as his/her own by using in his/her own work set of phrases, ideas, suggestions, conclusions, research tools, figures etc. It is also a serious *legal misconduct* because it is an intellectual property theft, which results in severe criminal sanctions if detected. The student with his/her *signed solemn declaration*, which will be embedded at the beginning of the Master's Thesis, certifies that the work he/she has submitted for examination is exclusively written by him/her and that he/she fully assumes all the consequences of law if it is proved, over time, that his/her entire work or part of it does not belong to himself/herself but is the product of plagiarism of other's intellectual property. It is highlighted that in case of detection of plagiarism in a Master's Thesis, the Three-Member Examining Committee have to award a zero for the Master's Thesis.