

1. Generalities

As part of their MSc degree in International Management, students may opt to write a 6-Credit thesis of no less than 15,000 words and ideally less than 25,000 words.

This thesis, probably the first sustained piece of research that a student has undertaken, will demonstrate mastery of a specific subject area within the parameters of the degree. It will also demonstrate knowledge of the research currently being undertaken in the relevant field(s) and published in the English language.

Important objectives of the MA thesis are the endowment of students with intellectual autonomy and the reinforcement of their research skills as they work through concepts and ideas to a new depth.

2. Time frame and deadlines

Preparation and completion time for the thesis is flexible and must be discussed with the student's chosen thesis advisor. It will vary according to the route taken by a given student through the degree:

- Students aiming to complete the MSc degree in **one academic year** (three semesters, including summer), must declare their intention to follow the thesis route in their first semester of coursework, at the latest, and must complete the thesis within one academic year after their thesis is registered.
- Students aiming to complete the MSc degree over **one and a half academic years**, (i.e. autumn, spring, summer and autumn semesters, must register for the thesis no

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later than the beginning of pre-registration their second semester in the program and must submit the thesis within one academic year. It is generally the case that students wishing to take the extended program timeline are doing so because they will also complete a zero-credit internship as a part of their program work and thesis research.

Students are registered into their thesis during the semester after submission of their thesis proposal and are offered two extensions without additional fees (Thesis Extension A & Thesis Extension B) in the subsequent two semesters, including summer semester. Students taking additional thesis extensions (Thesis Extension C) will be required to pay a fee for additional administrative and supervision costs.

In some cases, students may request a leave of absence for medical or personal reasons prior to a thesis extension semester. Thesis advisors are not expected to actively supervise the thesis work during the leave of absence period.

3. Choice of Topic and Thesis Advisor

Prior to choosing a topic, students are encouraged to discuss options informally with program faculty and their peer group. Students may choose their advisor from any graduate program faculty member (provided that the advisor also agrees). Please note that a list of the areas of faculty research expertise is available on the AUP website. Students may choose their own topic. However, the choice of topic is ultimately subject to approval by the MSc Program Director and the Graduate Programs Office. Any major change of topic must be vetted and approved by both the thesis advisor and the Program Director.

Students in the NGO and Mission-Based Management Track or the Sustainability Systems Track must undertake a thesis consistent with the concentration of their degree track.

4. Registration

Students must submit a completed registration form and thesis project note to their advisor and the director of the graduate program concerned. The project note should not be less than 1,500 words and not more than 2000 words, and will provide the working title, area(s) of substantive interest and the literature to be consulted. The project note will also mention the methods the student initially intends to use and the forms of data to be compiled or consulted. Project notes are filed in the department and all potential thesis students are able to consult them. A list of registered thesis projects is published on the department website. Note that students wishing to significantly change their topic and / or advisor must submit a new project note and have this approved (see above, section 3)

5. Objectives and Criteria

The purpose of the thesis is to offer MSc students an opportunity to explore complex management problems within their interest and program focus areas. Likewise, the following program objectives should be represented in the thesis topic and in its execution:

- Demonstrate an ability to apply management know-how in practical business situations.
- Offer a broad base of management and business knowledge, effectively deploying concepts, frameworks and critical approaches perceptively and with thoughtfulness.
- Demonstrate skills in interdisciplinary analysis, drawing upon a wide variety empirical and theoretical sources, analytical frameworks, and sub-disciplines within management studies.
- Demonstrate an ability to conduct methodological research into management problems, showing familiarity with a range of data, research sources and appropriate quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

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- Be able to communicate effectively and convincingly on a factual and conceptual basis, in writing and orally.
- Show a high level of professional reliability, with an ability to work under self-direction and in teams, with a high-level personal development competency.

As a student in a Masters of Science degree program, the use and analysis of empirical evidence to support assertions and plans around a management topic is absolutely critical. Likewise, the thesis should offer a methodologically sound approach to the topic and research design.

6. Progress: supervision, expectations and monitoring

It is essential that regular contact be maintained between student and advisor – and that evidence of regular meetings and consultations be kept by both parties in the form of electronic communication and / or signed notes. In the final analysis, the impact of failing to complete a thesis is heavier for a student than for an advisor, so the student is expected to be proactive in their work.

Students should keep thesis diaries that will be discussed with advisors from time to time.

As students advance in their research, thesis advisors will expect to see work that is more than merely rough sketches or outlines. They will also expect students to attend regular meetings and thesis-related workshops and symposia, as organized by the MSc program.

Generally, up to three submissions for advisor review are accepted: (1) an edited and cited working draft, (2) an edited and cited rough draft, and (3) the final draft intended for submission for the defense. Advisors may agree to review additional materials, but a student should not expect to submit excessive drafts to receive their desired grade. Advisors do have the right to limit the number of drafts they are expected to review.

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Likewise, students should clearly summarize the changes that have been made from one draft to the next.

Students should expect their advisors to be available for regular meetings and to read work in a timely manner, providing relevant advice on substantive and theoretical aspects of the work. Advisors do have the right to limit the number of meetings and to refuse meetings if the student is not adequately prepared or has not progressed sufficiently in their independent research.

To maintain the independence of the second reader's evaluation and to ensure consistency and fairness for the thesis defense, second readers are discouraged from offering feedback on written text and drafts prior to the final submission of the thesis. However, students may consult the second reader for general advice and insights about their topic.

As they work on their theses, it is important that students not under or overestimate the nature of the work to be undertaken and submitted. An MSc thesis is a form of training in research, heightening students' awareness of the nature of academic research preparing them to move on to professional management positions or a doctoral program. Students will typically be expected to work with a high degree of autonomy, devoting a significant amount of time and effort to thinking through a series of concepts and debates related to a given area. It is possible that students will become frustrated with their topic. Nevertheless, every effort must be made to complete ON TIME and the advisor is responsible for providing timely and appropriate encouragement, support and practical advice. The student is responsible for completing their work in a timely manner, making significant progress between meetings with their advisor, and submitting work of adequate quality and depth for meaningful feedback.

7. Formatting and final submission

Students must consult the formatting guidelines available from the library in the document “Guidelines for the Presentation of Master’s Thesis.” For the MSc program, students must use either APA or MLA citation style. The chosen style must be consistent through the entire thesis. The thesis advisor can help the student decide which is the most appropriate for their topic.

Students may work with the thesis advisor to ensure that the end result offers clear and relevant outcomes for professional development and career advancement. Professional formats and forms of presentation are highly encouraged to accompany the academically required thesis. Students are expected to develop their thesis in a way that contributes to a coherent professional or academic portfolio.

8. Evaluation

The thesis will be examined by the end of the semester during which it is submitted. The Graduate Programs Office will communicate the deadlines to thesis students each semester of their registration to ensure timely completion.

The thesis advisor must approve the thesis prior to the defense, and the thesis will then be submitted to the second reader and the MSc Program Director by the thesis advisor. The advisor and second reader shall then evaluate it. Please The thesis should be submitted in its final form, including all charts, graphics, captions, bibliography, references, etc., at least two weeks before the date of the defense, which should be arranged with the advisor and the second reader, as well as with the program director.

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The thesis must be defended and presented in person. Should circumstances warrant, the defense may be conducted through digital connection in real time, or, in extremely rare cases, other arrangements may be possible with the recommendation of the advisor. Upon completion of the defense, students will be awarded a grade (which may be provisional and/or contingent on recommendations of revision suggested by the examiners). Thus, four outcomes are possible:

1. Pass, with the final grade being the average of those awarded by the examiners;
2. Pass subject to minor corrections. In this case, the examination committee requests that minor corrections and alterations be made to the typescript. The grade will be awarded once these have been made to the advisor and degree chair's satisfaction;
3. Pass with major corrections. The examination committee requests major changes be made in terms of content. These changes are to be made on the basis of further work undertaken by the student with the advisor's advice and the thesis is to be resubmitted within one calendar month for the committee to re-evaluate;
4. Fail. The student has clearly misunderstood the nature of the work required for an MA thesis and may not resubmit the same material. If the student intends to complete the program with another thesis topic, a new thesis must be registered and approved.

After the defense is completed and final revisions have been incorporated, two copies of the final document must be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs and one copy with the MSc Program administrator within one month of the date of the defense, at which time the final grade will be submitted to Academic Affairs.

9. Complaints

Complaints regarding thesis examination – or indeed any other aspect of the thesis process - must be made in writing to the director of the degree program and the Office of Academic Affairs. In particular, complaints regarding assessment must be made in writing within three weeks of the official release of the thesis grade. Complaints will be communicated by the Graduate Programs Office to all those concerned. Students will be informed in writing of decisions taken.

10. Plagiarism

All work submitted for the MSc in International Management must be original. Moreover, if the student is using prior work, either from the program or from other or writing as a part of their thesis, then they should cite this as previous work rather than simply presenting it as original work. In the event of plagiarism in an MSc thesis, the MSc Program Director may request one or more members to look into the question. The program director may request that the student establish their authorship of the thesis by submitting articles cited along with the notes, drafts and data on which the final document is based. They may also interview the student about their work. This verification procedure is undertaken under the aegis of the AUP's Graduate Program Review Board (GPRB).