

Status: 22 January 2025

## Guidelines for Writing Final Theses

### 1. Timeline

From the initial thematic idea to the refinement of the research question, the development of the exposé, and the completion of the final thesis, including its possible defence, the process requires sufficient time. Therefore, it is essential to begin conceptualising your thesis at an early stage—at the latest, one semester before your planned graduation.

### 2. Topic Selection

Final theses in the field of International Politics should align thematically with the [teaching and research focus of the chair](#). Please refer to the webpages of individual chair members for guidance. Contacting us as a potential supervisor should only be considered once you have developed preliminary ideas for possible topics. Without specifying the intended topic, we cannot guarantee supervision.

### 3. Refinement of the Research Question

In a subsequent step, you should refine your broad topic into a focused, problem-oriented research question that can be effectively addressed within the available resources and methodological constraints. This process requires time and an in-depth engagement with the existing academic literature.

### 4. Exposé

Next, you should draft an exposé of your planned thesis. The exposé should be approximately five pages long (excluding references) and outline the research problem, the research question, the state of the art in the field, and the intended methodological approach. Additionally, it should include a proposed structure and a timeline (see further [guidelines](#)).

### 5. Registration of the Thesis

Once your supervisor has approved your exposé, you may register your thesis with the [examination office](#), depending on your degree programme.

### 6. Supervision

Your primary supervisor from the Chair of International Politics will guide you through the process of developing your thesis. Typically, we schedule three to four consultation meetings. The first meeting focuses on topic selection and clarifying fundamental questions. The second meeting is dedicated to refining your research question. The third meeting discusses the exposé and the research colloquium. A fourth meeting may be arranged during the writing process to address emerging methodological or conceptual questions. Due to the high number of theses supervised by the department, we are unable to provide repeated, detailed feedback beyond these scheduled meetings.

The consultation meetings will be most effective if you are well prepared. It is beneficial for both you and us if you provide brief written notes in advance. Before the first consultation, please submit a short outline of your thematic ideas (one paragraph to one page). Before the second meeting, in which we discuss your research question, please send us a draft of potential research questions (up to one page). For the third meeting, you should submit your exposé (maximum six pages).

### **7. Research Colloquium**

If you are writing an MA thesis within the MA International Relations programme, you are required to present your exposé in the research colloquium and will receive detailed feedback from chair's members and fellow students. If you are enrolled in a different degree programme, you may present your exposé if there are available presentation slots. The presentation schedule is determined during the first colloquium session of the semester. Please note that MA International Relations students may only register for the colloquium after receiving supervision approval from our department, discussing the topic and research question with their primary supervisor (i.e. having attended at least two consultation meetings), and having commenced work on their exposé.

### **8. Submission and Evaluation**

We generally provide evaluations of final theses within ten weeks. If the thesis is submitted during the semester break, this period may be extended by up to four weeks. Please take this into account when planning your timeline.

### **9. Oral Defence**

If your study regulations require an oral defence, a date can be arranged once both evaluations have been completed. If only an explanation of the thesis is required, the presentation of the exposé in the research colloquium will be considered as fulfilling this requirement.

### **10. FAQ**

Answers to frequently asked questions can be found on the department's [website](#).