

## **THESIS CONTRACT & THESIS GUIDELINES for Applied Economics**

*This short document is meant to explain the motivation and content of Master thesis contracts for the department Applied Economics (TE). Appendix A contains a text for such contract, Appendix B presents some general guidelines. The document can be used to inform students who consider writing their thesis under TE-supervision.*

*Applied Economics* provides supervisors for Master theses on topics that fit in the disciplinary fields covered by the department. Students who choose such a topic should ask an *Applied Economics* lecturer to act as supervisor. They can approach the chosen lecturer directly, or first apply at the secretariat for a supervisor to be found. The secretariat has a list of topics (with the supervisor's name).

Preferably, the student presents a preliminary thesis proposal at the first meeting with the lecturer. In this proposal the student describes the subject matter of the research, formulates a research question and specifies the relevant literature.

More formal information on the Master thesis can be found in: [http://www.eur.nl/ese/english/information\\_for/students/additional\\_information\\_for\\_students/thesis\\_website/](http://www.eur.nl/ese/english/information_for/students/additional_information_for_students/thesis_website/).

The project starts when the lecturer agrees to be the thesis supervisor. He/she has to approve the thesis proposal, and therefore instructs the student to do the following:

- to write and submit a definitive thesis proposal, and
- to register as a Master thesis student at the TE-secretariat.

The *definitive thesis proposal* contains

- the research question and an explanation of its relevance,
- a brief elaboration of the relevant theory/theories,
- an explanation of the data and the method to be used,
- an outline of the thesis,
- a detailed schedule for the complete period of the thesis supervision.

The TE-secretariat supplies forms for the formal *registration* of Master thesis students. Attached to this form is the 'thesis contract', to be filled in by both the supervisor and the student (Appendix A). The secretariat also keeps a list of all current theses under supervision for each lecturer.

Some general guidelines for writing a Master thesis can be found in Appendix B. These guidelines are not applicable to each research type. Exactly for this reason they are called 'guidelines'.

## APPENDIX A

### **Thesis contract**

*Applied Economics* uses ‘thesis contracts’ to specify the rights and obligations of both the student and the supervisor. The contract refers to \* the starting procedure, \* the actual supervision, and \* the completion of the thesis project.

The *starting procedure* is explained above and is applicable to each Master thesis.

The *actual supervision* is specified in the contract as the number of hours of student-supervisor contacts. The ESE-standard for the supervision of a Master thesis is 30 hours, exam and administration included. Since reading manuscripts takes more time than discussing the texts with the student, at most [...] **hours** are available for student-teacher contacts.<sup>1</sup> These contact hours need to be allocated for the total period of the thesis supervision.

The total thesis period will not exceed [...] **months**.<sup>2</sup> If the student exceeds the agreed period without the supervisor’s consent, he/she has to finish the thesis without further support from the supervisor.

An important issue of the thesis supervision is the supervisor’s reaction time after receiving a text from the student. This period should not exceed 14 days, except for special circumstances.

The *completion of the project* comprises, in sequential order,

- the submission of a hard copy of the final version of the thesis to both the supervisor and the ‘co-reader’,
- the submission of the digital version to the supervisor for testing on fraud (plagiarism) in ‘Safe Assignments’,
- the formal approval of the thesis by filling in the Exam form by both the supervisor and the ‘co-reader’,
- the submission of the definitive digital version of the thesis at the TE secretariat by the supervisor,
- the registration of the thesis in the RePub system of the EUR by the secretariat, and
- the submission of three hard copies to the Exam administration by the student.

To pass the Master Exam, the student needs a satisfactory result for the Master thesis (i.e. a grade of 5.5 or higher). The grade will be given after the thesis defense during the Master Exam.

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<sup>1</sup> To be filled in by the supervisor after consulting the student. The default setting is **8** hours.

<sup>2</sup> To be filled in by the supervisor after consulting the student. The default setting is **4** months.

### **Conflicts or complaints**

In case of a conflict between the supervisor and the student, or in case of complaints by the student (or the supervisor), both parties may turn to the department's director. After hearing both parties, the director will decide on the conflict or the complaint at issue. He/she will inform both parties by means of a written statement.

Rotterdam, [.....    .....] <sup>3</sup>

[Signatures] <sup>4</sup>

Supervisor

Student

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<sup>3</sup> The date to be filled in by the supervisor.

<sup>4</sup> The supervisor decides whether he/she wants to make the contract more formal by signing it. The default setting is: both student and supervisor **sign** the contract.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Thesis guidelines**

According to ESE-rules a Master thesis comprises of 50-75 A4-pages. In many cases the thesis contains the following parts:

- An Introduction in which the research question is formulated and its (theoretical and societal) relevance is explained. The first data can be presented here to indicate the actuality of the topic under discussion. An outline explains the thesis structure.
- A chapter presenting and discussing the relevant theory/theories.
- A chapter that discusses data and method.
- A chapter on the analyses and the results.
- A chapter with conclusions, some discussion and research and/or policy recommendations.
- A reference list (see APA-instructions).

Chapters start on a new page with margins left and right approx. 3 cm (font size 12 pt, line spacing 1,5).

Students should pay careful attention to the adequate reference of their sources.

The Master thesis starts with a Title page (see the next page). The title should be concise and informative. The Table of Contents may be preceded by a Preface, in which the student expresses some personal thoughts, and an Executive summary.

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*Title page:*

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**ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM**

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**Erasmus School of Economics**

**Master Thesis**

**[Thesis Title]**

[Name:]

[Student number:]

[Supervisor's name]

Rotterdam, [date]