

10 Steps to successfully mastering your Bachelor theses

Guidelines and suggestions

STARTING THE THESIS

Before beginning the work on your thesis, you must select a thesis supervisor who will be responsible to support you, starting with the thesis proposal (also known as exposé) up to the final examination. Basically, you can choose a supervisor in two different ways: If you have a topic that is interesting to you, have a look at the website www.sfu.ac.at/english (our staff pages, and the research pages) and see where your topic fits. Another way of decision-making here is that you actually pick your personal preference in the supervisor. To make the choice easier for you, we put together a list of all available supervisors (with their main interest topics), which you can find online ,Supervisor pdf'.



Choose a supervisor and a second examiner

The person selected as supervisor will be your consultant for writing the thesis, and will also perform the function of first examiner for the final examination. The second examiner must be selected by you separately. This person will be only present during the exam and discuss with you a second topic that you decide on prior to the exam. To choose a second examination topic and a second examiner please refer to the list of “Examination topics” which is online as well.

If there is a valid reason for which you wish to select an external supervisor this selection must be approved by the Dean via the English Language Programme. This is possible and in has some cases proven fruitful and productive for our students. If you do so, an official first examiner from SFU staff has to be selected additionally. Then Step 1 is modified to Step 1b here: STEP 1b: Choose an external supervisor, an official 1st examiner and a 2nd examiner



Thesis proposal

Before you are officially registered as thesis student, you must hand in a thesis proposal (also see the proposal guidelines online). The thesis proposal gives an overview of your idea and method for the project, and you work on this with your supervisor already.

The supervisor and the 2nd examiner must indicate their approval by signing the thesis proposal form. The approval of the submitted proposal by the head of the department marks the official beginning of the thesis project. Any changes of topic, supervisors or examiners, must be made known immediately. All such changes require permission of the head of the department, so please inform the English Programme Office as soon as possible.

Step 3 Ethics approval for empirical studies

The faculty of psychotherapy science made the decision that your supervisor is the first to decide whether or not there are ethical problems with your data collection. If the supervisor decides that there are no ethical limitations to your data gathering process, you are allowed to start it. If your supervisor does see problems and/or your results are planned to be published, your supervisor has to appeal to the SFU ethics committee.

Step 4 Writing the thesis

At this point you are ready to start the thesis work which includes literature review (using scientific databases like EBSCO, searching in our in-house library and visiting the University of Vienna library) and/or empirical research (Interviewing, Questionnaires, Field Research). You can either (1) do an empirical, qualitative or quantitative, thesis (includes empirical data collection and analysis), but you are also free to (2) do a solely theoretical thesis (where your focus is reviewing literature and then conceptualizing a new model). Both ways of thesis work take time and might become very complex at times, so please, at all times, discuss the steps of your thesis work with the assigned supervisor who will support you in this.

SUBMITTING THE THESIS

Once you think you are ready to finish, check the format of your thesis once again (title page, declaration, bibliography, referencing, and have a native English speaker look over your thesis in the end). Then:

Step 5 Check with supervisor if you are ready for examination

If you have an external supervisor who has been approved by the head of the English Programme previously, follow STEP 5b: Check with your supervisor AND with the officially assigned first examiner (from SFU staff) if you are ready for examination.

Step 6 Submit the thesis

After completion of the thesis, 1 bound copy of the work, as well as an electronic copy, must be submitted to the English Programme Office. Your thesis will be checked for plagiarism (what is done by your supervisor and the English Programme Office). Once you get all green lights (1st green light: you successfully passed the plagiarizing check, 2nd green light: you have all classwork together and paid all your fees) you will receive an official examination approval by the English Programme. It is obligatory that you submit the bound copy of your thesis one week before the examination takes place.

FINAL EXAMINATION

Step 7 Make sure you have your second examination topic prepared

The topic you choose for your second examination topic should be from a different field than the field you write your thesis in (for topics refer to the “Examination list” pdf online). You should prepare for this 1 or 2 months in advance (for BA), or 2 to 4 months in advance (for MA). For this, discuss with your 2nd examiner what specific literature they advise you to read and which will be the basis of the examination.

Step 8 Choose an examination date

After you will have received the examination approval from the office, the final examination will be held on a predetermined date. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange a final examination date with the examiners, and to inform the English Office about it. Examination is led by two examiners: The first examiner is usually your thesis supervisor, the second examiner was chosen by you as well.

Step 8b: If you have chosen an external lecturer to be your thesis supervisor, an additional first examiner (from internal staff) has been assigned to you.

Examinations are public and we encourage university members, students and interested staff members to attend. You can also invite people to join the public part of the defence (this is more common in MA and PHD defences). If you plan to invite people, please let the office know, so we can reserve an appropriate room.

The examination will consist of two parts: (1) the defence of the thesis, and (2) an oral examination on a topic to be selected from the list of “Examination list” you can find online.

Step 9 Examination part 1 - Present and defend your thesis

As first part of the examination, you will defend your thesis in front of the examiners. For Bachelor theses, the defence should be between 10-15 minutes, for Master theses 25-30 minutes.

Step 10 Examination part 2 - Discuss the second examination topic

The second examiner will ask specific questions about the topic you have chosen. This part might also take 10-15 minutes for Bachelor examinations and 20-30 minutes for Master examinations, depending on the participating discussants.

The first supervisor grades your written work and the discussion to your thesis, the second examiner will give an additional grade to the 2nd examination topic. Both will consense on

the final grade (usually a mean value of both). During this grading process, you and all visitors have to leave the room. Once the examiners have decided for a grade, they will invite you back into the room and initiate you as Bakkalaureus/Bakkalaurea, or Magister / Magistra of Psychotherapy Sciences.

We wish you good luck in the thesis process,
Your English Programme Staff