



UNIVERSITÄT
HOHENHEIM

Winter semester 2023/24

M.SC. THESIS INFORMATION MEETING

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THE MASTER'S THESIS



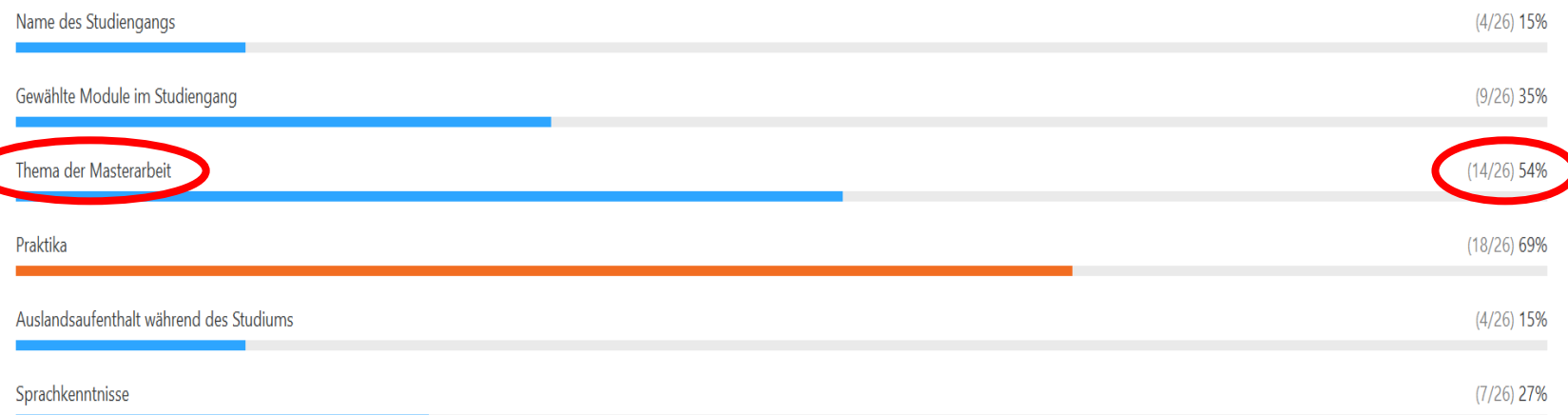
- is the first official document which gets you in the status of being a **researcher**
- shall contribute to knowledge with a **new and unique piece of science**
- proves your ability to **work independently** and to solve a scientific problem on your own (of course with some help from your supervisor/s) **within a fixed period of time** by applying **scientific methods**.
- is the starting point for your career after your M.Sc. course

(Fangmeier, 2006, „How to write a thesis“)

ROLE OF THE THESIS IN CAREER PLANNING

- Try to find a topic that you find exciting!
- Consider your professional career ambitions when deciding on your M.Sc. Thesis
- Employers pay attention to your M.Sc. Thesis!
-> See below the results of a survey among employers

1. Welche zwei der nachfolgenden Kriterien sind für Sie die wichtigsten für die Auswahl der Personen, die Sie zum Vorstellungsgespräch einladen? (Multiple Choice) (Mehrfachauswahl)



FINDING A THESIS TOPIC

- Topic suggestions are published
 - on the departments' websites
 - on the information boards in the departments
 - in specific information meetings
 - in ILIAS
 - or sent out by the coordinators

Some professors may invite you to their regular team meetings or institute colloquiums to get an idea about ongoing research topics in their institute.
-> ask for it!

- Contact the professor you want to work with and ask for an appointment to find a suitable topic in their working group

FINDING A THESIS TOPIC

For example Department for Agricultural Markets, Prof. Hess:

<https://marktlehre.uni-hohenheim.de/en/proposed-topics>

Department of Agricultural Markets

Institute About Us Courses Publication | Media

Startpage > Courses > Student research projects > Proposed topics

Proposed Topics

Prof. Dr. Sebastian Hess

- > Untersuchung der Einsatzbereiche ausgewählter Pflanzenöle in Deutschland (supported by Industrieverband)
- > Granger causality of price formation in the milk industry (together with Prof. Jung, description is available on request from Prof. Hess)
- > [Masterarbeit im Bereich strategischer Verkauf Schwein](#) (in cooperation with feed company)
- > [Job offer for unpaid compulsory internship - Bundesanstalt für Landwirtschaft und Ernährung \(BLE\)](#)
- > Economic factors in food waste behavior
- > Dietary inequality
- > Consumption of meat and meat alternatives

Students should visit Prof. Hess during the consultation (office) hours (Thursday 2-4 pm) with proposed topics of their own.

You are welcome to send your own topics to Prof. Hess in advance [by email](#). During the consultation hour, the topics will be narrowed down.

[Thesis Guidelines](#)

Your own topic proposals are welcome!

includes Thesis Guidelines!

DEVELOP YOUR OWN THESIS TOPIC PROPOSAL

Before you approach potential supervisors

- Do your own research first!
What type of research is done by potential supervisors? Where is the best fit with my interest?
- Talk to potential supervisors in class or write an email
Offer required / useful information (e.g., as stated on the potential supervisor's website)
- Emphasize what you can bring to the team and to research agenda
(This is similar to a job application!)
- Follow-up (most supervisors are busy, there is no harm in sending a friendly reminder)

Approach staff members

- Post-docs are often a good link to a potential supervisor

EXTERNAL THESIS TOPICS

Often external organizations or companies, or other universities, offer thesis projects for Hohenheim students.

Before accepting such an offer you need to **find a suitable supervisor in Hohenheim!**

FiBL



THESIS SUPERVISOR

You need two supervisors

- The **first supervisor** has to be a professor or research associate from the University of Hohenheim with the right to examine
 - signs the registration form
 - needs to agree on second supervisor, especially if second supervisor is an external person
- The **second supervisor** can be an external expert / professor from another university, company or organization, in case you do your thesis off campus
 - has to be named upon submission of the thesis at latest
 - needs to hold at least an M.Sc. degree
 - you need to indicate the postal address, in case it is an external person (the examinations office will send the thesis to them by post)

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM YOUR SUPERVISOR?

- Keep in mind:
Your M.Sc. degree qualifies you for you for a leadership position!
-> You are expected to conduct research independently!
- **The type of supervision offered differs considerably across supervisors!**
... and may be offered according to specific rules, on demand, dependent of post-docs, project circumstances, etc.
- **Clarify at the beginning** what type of supervision is offered!
- Do not hesitate to contact your supervisor or his/her staff when needed
- Do not hesitate to follow-up – but always remain professional and polite!

FUNDING FOR THESIS PROJECTS



Funding for final theses by the [Landwirtschaftlicher Rentenverein e.V.](#)
(€ 500, and the best thesis will get an additional € 1000)

- For any thesis in the area of agricultural sciences
- Motivation letter and proposal have to be submitted in German language, but the thesis can be written in English.

FUNDING FOR THESIS PROJECTS

Funding of thesis projects abroad

- [Dr. Hermann Eiselen Foundation](#) (fiat panis):

For thesis projects in developing countries with a focus on poverty reduction and food security. Should not be carried out in the home country of the applicant!

- STUBE ([BSPA](#)):

For thesis projects in the home country of the applicant, if coming from a developing country. Prior attendance in several seminars of STUBE is required.

FUNDING FOR THESIS PROJECTS

Funding of thesis projects abroad

- [Helmut Aurenz scholarships](#):
For thesis projects in Europe, application deadline 31 March every year.
- [Herzog Carl scholarships](#):
For thesis projects abroad, application deadline 31 March every year.
- For Crop Sciences students: [Jeff Schell Fellowship](#) for Agricultural Science
Funding for international placements or research activities, up to € 10.000

FUNDING FOR INTERNSHIPS AND / OR THESIS PROJECTS ABROAD

- Erasmus+ for internships abroad
- PROMOS Individualstipendium for stays abroad (outside the EU) of at least one month.

For both internships see [website](#) of the international office.

For question write to outgoing@uni-hohenheim.de

FUNDING FOR INTERNSHIPS AND / OR THESIS PROJECTS ABROAD

[ATSAF Junior Scientists Program](#)

ATSAF (Council for Tropical and Subtropical Agricultural Research) offers funding for or 6 months internship including the thesis project at one of the CGIAR centers worldwide.

Students have to establish the contact with a [CGIAR](#) center (IFPRI, ILRI, IITA, ICRISAT, ICIPE, etc.) and need to be accepted for the internship before they can apply. However, Hohenheim professors can help with this.



TYPICAL CHALLENGES – AND HOW TO MANAGE THEM

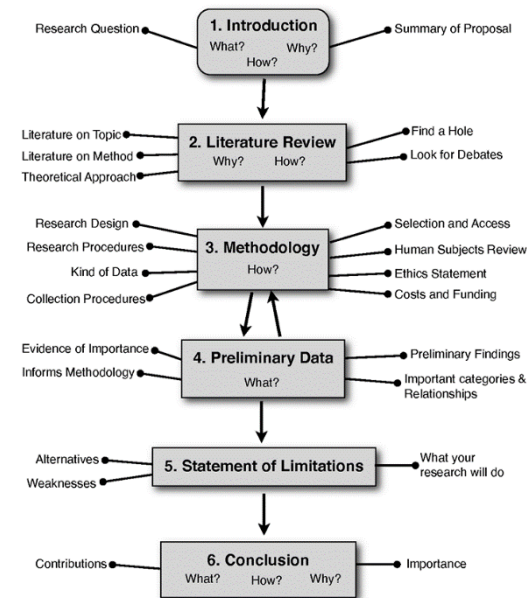
When developing a proposal:

- Oh ... I thought this topic is very innovative, but so much research has been done on it already...
 - > Find the knowledge gap!
 - > Think about innovative methods!

When doing field work:

- Oh .. nothing works as expected...
 - > It is your task is to manage the situation and to find a solution!
 - > Be creative! Mobilize resources. Find people who can help you. Use social networks.
 - > Always prepare for the worst and hope for the best!
 - > Always remain a positive attitude! Never feel sorry for yourself!

Research Proposal Flow Chart



TYPICAL CHALLENGES – AND HOW TO MANAGE THEM

When analyzing your results:

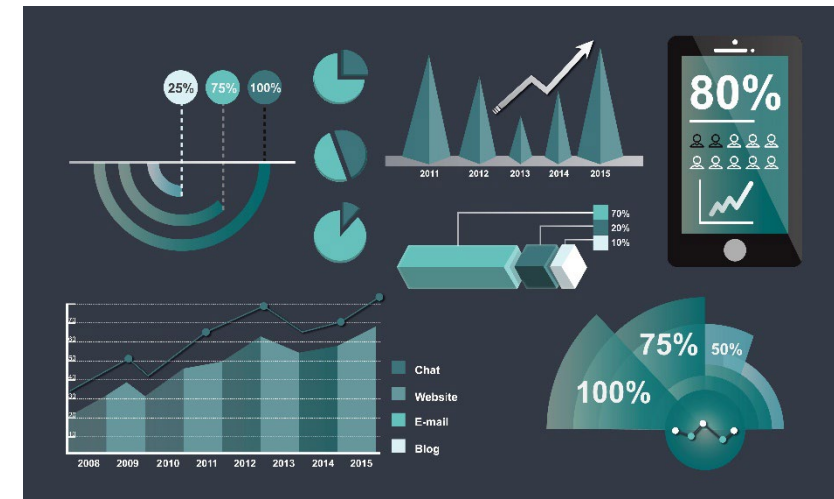
Swamped with data, you may feel overwhelmed, frustrated or bored ...

- Planning your analysis should already be part of your proposal!
- Start analyzing your results as soon as possible (perhaps even while you are in the field)
- Don't hesitate to request help early on when needed
- Make a time table and follow it! Set deadlines for yourself.

When writing up your results:

You may face the “writers block”, even the most brilliant writers do.

- Force yourself to start writing, you can always edit your text later.
- Use tools that facilitate writing, such as mind-maps



SUBMITTING AND DEFENDING YOUR THESIS

Submitting your thesis

Check with your supervisor whether he/she wants to offer you advice prior to submission

- If so, do not miss this opportunity!
- Make sure you consider it in your time planning.

Defending your thesis

- Offer to organize the timing of your defense
- Cross-check the requirements of your defense with your supervisor
- Prepare the presentation of your defense very well
- Do a rehearsal with a friend!
- Think of possible questions that the supervisors may ask.
- Attend other M.Sc. defenses for preparation (this is possible!)

ACADEMIC WRITING

Have a look on our website with Academic Writing Aids:

https://agrar.uni-hohenheim.de/academic_writing_aid

You will find a compilation of useful hints and tips for good academic writing there!

You can also consult our academic writing tutor, by appointment only!

Email address: agriwritingaid@uni-hohenheim.de

A FEW WORDS ON PLAGIARISM

If plagiarism is evidenced in a thesis... → “fail”

- Guidelines on how to avoid plagiarism and software to check for unintentional plagiarism are available abundantly (search online for „plagiarism check“)
- Recommended example: “Avoiding Plagiarism” from the University of Technology Sydney
- Check our academic writing material

FORMALITIES...

Thesis Language

In general the Master thesis has to be written in **English or German**.

Only in exceptional cases and upon formal request to the examinations office, and with the agreement of the supervisors, the language of the written part of the thesis can be a different one.

FORMALITIES...

Thesis Registration

- Recommendation: register at the beginning of the 4th semester
- **Absolute deadline : beginning of the 7th subject related semester***
(end of the 1st month of the 7th semester)
- Otherwise -> „fail“ of the first attempt!

* “Urlaubssemester” (academic leave of absence) does not count as “subject related semester” but as “study semester”. So they do not count here.

FORMALITIES...

Time Frame

- Regular time frame: **6 months**. If you don't submit by the deadline -> „fail“
- Extension only possible in exceptional cases upon a formal application to the examination board (handed in to the SIZ or examinations office).
- **Maximum extension period: 3 months**

For **objective reasons**: e.g. delayed harvest, adverse weather conditions, technical problems, other unforeseeable obstacles...

Approval of supervisor is required, application to the examination board **latest 2 weeks before the submission deadline!**

FORMALITIES...

Time Frame - continuation

Extension for **personal reasons** (usually health problems): application for extension and the proof for the reason (e.g. health certificate, use the form on the exams office's website) need to be submitted to the examinations office **immediately when it occurs**.

In case the health problem lasts longer than 3 months the student can withdraw from the topic and register a new one when the health conditions allow it.

FORMALITIES...

Withdrawal of Thesis Topic

- Withdrawal from the chosen topic after registration:
 - just once
 - needs to be done **within the first two months after registration**
 - reasons must be given
- Registration of a new topic within 6 weeks after withdrawal
- In case you do not find a new topic you can apply for allocation of a topic within 4 weeks after the withdrawal. Application has to be directed to the examinations board, handed in at the SIZ or examinations office.
 - > you have no influence on the topic and you have to take what you get!

FORMALITIES...

Thesis Format

- Different requirements on the format at every department
- Therefore check format requirements:
 - > with the supervisor
 - > at the department's website
 - > older theses in the department's library

FORMALITIES...

Thesis Submission

The thesis can be submitted to the examinations electronically or in paper version.

-> ask your supervisors what they prefer!

Electronic copy has to be sent by email to the examinations office **latest until 14:00** on the day of the submission deadline.

Paper copies (2 copies) have to reach the examinations office **latest by 23:59** on the day of the submission deadline.

FORMALITIES...

Thesis Submission

A declaration has to be added to the thesis, that it has been prepared independently, solely with the support of the listed literature references, and that no information has been presented that has not been officially acknowledged.

The form sheet and further information about the submission of the thesis is available here:

<https://www.uni-hohenheim.de/en/examinations-office-final-thesis>

Erklärung

Hiermit erkläre ich,

Name, Vorname

Matrikelnummer

dass ich bei der vorliegenden

Bachelor-Arbeit Master-Thesis/Master-Arbeit

Seminararbeit

die Regeln guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis eingehalten habe. Ich habe diese Arbeit selbständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt und die wörtlich oder inhaltlich übernommenen Stellen als solche kenntlich gemacht.

Prüfer:in /
Erstgutachter:in

Thema der Arbeit

Semester

Ich erkläre weiterhin, dass ein unverschlüsseltes digitales Textdokument der Arbeit übermittelt wurde. Ich bin damit einverstanden, dass diese elektronische Form anhand einer Analyse-Software auf Plagiate überprüft wird.

Weiter erkläre ich, dass ich zur Kenntnis genommen haben, dass die beim Prüfungsamt zuerst eingereichte Abschlussarbeit die finale Version ist. Ich habe verstanden, dass ich keine Korrektur nachreichen kann.

Ort, Datum, Unterschrift

FORMALITIES...

Thesis Defense

- The grading of the written part of the thesis should be done within 4 weeks after submission
- Latest 3 month after the evaluation of the written part of the thesis has been announced, the oral defense has to take place
- Students can request a defense appointment within a time frame of 3 weeks after announcement of grade
- Both supervisors have to be present during the defense, at least via video link
- Duration of defense: 30 - 45 minutes
- The grade has to be announced immediately after the defense has taken place
- The grade of the oral defense counts 25%, the grade of the written part counts 75% of the total grade of the thesis

FORMALITIES...

„Failing“ a Thesis

A „fail“ can be given for

- exceeding the registration or submission deadlines
- plagiarism
- falsification of results, or
- poor quality of the scientific work

In case your thesis is graded with a „fail“ you have to register a **new topic within six weeks** after the „fail“ was announced.

You will again have six months time to hand in the new thesis.

You get only one more chance, a third attempt is not possible!

FORMALITIES...

Be informed!

Read the information on the website of the examination office!

<https://www.uni-hohenheim.de/en/examination>

All information and required forms are available here.

For questions:

Phone: 0711 459 - 24211

E-Mail: pa-an@verwaltung.uni-hohenheim.de