Faculty of Humanities

*Version June 2023*

**RMA Thesis evaluation form**

The RMA thesis supervisor acts as the first evaluator and is responsible for the communication between evaluators, the completion of the evaluation forms, the registration of the final grade in Osiris.

The RMA thesis evaluation process consists of four stages:

(1) The first and second evaluator assess the thesis independently of one another; each fills out an evaluation form in Osiris Case and determines a **provisional grade**.

(2) The first and second evaluator determine the **final grade** jointly on the initiative of the first evaluator within **10 working days** of receipt of the thesis by the first evaluator. In certain circumstances a third evaluator may be consulted (see third evaluator form), in which case the final grade will be determined within **20 working days** of receipt by the first evaluator; the student should be informed of this fact by the first evaluator.

(3) After the evaluators have reached a judgment, the first evaluator fills in the final assessment form. The substantiation of the assessment includes the findings of all the evaluators involved. Once the assessment is completed in Osiris Case, the final assessment form is available to the student.

(4) The first evaluator registers the final grade in Osiris.

**Evaluation Form RMA Thesis**

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| --- |
| Student information |
| Name: |
| Student number: |
| Degree programme: |
| ECTS: |
| Title of thesis: |
| Date submitted: |
| Supervisor/1st evaluator information |
| Name: |
| Department: |
| 2nd evaluator information (not involved in supervising the student) |
| Name: |
| Department: |
| Evaluation by:  Supervisor  2nd Evaluator |
| Provisional grade:  Final grade (jointly determined by supervisor and 2nd evaluator): |
| Date: |

**formal preconditions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Preconditions | Assessment | Comments |
| Correct use of language (sentence structure, spelling, punctuation) | met  not met |  |
| Table of contents and summary | met  not met |  |
| Notation and list of sources in accordance with formal rules in the field | met  not met |  |
| Design and layout in accordance with degree programme guidelines | met  not met |  |
| The extent of the thesis is in accordance with the program guidelines (see program book) | met  not met |  |

*Note: If one of these formal preconditions has not been met, the supervisor may decide not to evaluate the content of the thesis. The student will be given one opportunity to make corrections. The standards for meeting/not meeting the preconditions are determined by the degree programme (e.g. number of language mistakes tolerated).*

**Evaluation of the content**

The evaluator first gives an assessment of each of the nine categories below, and then uses the “Substantiation” section to support the proposed grade by commenting on relevant strong and weak points of the thesis.

Categories 1 to 10 *must* all be assessed pass when handing out a passing or higher grade (category 10 only if applicable).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Research Question | fail  pass |
| 2. Theoretical framework & academic relevance | fail  pass |
| 3. Method | fail  pass |
| 4. Analysis | fail  pass |
| 5. Conclusion | fail  pass |
| 6. Use & citation of sources | fail  pass |
| 7. Structure of the argument | fail  pass |
| 8. Composition & style | fail  pass |
| 9. Initiative (to be filled in by the supervisor) | fail  pass |
| 10. Defense (if applicable) | fail  pass |

**Substantiation**

Please substantiate your proposed grade by commenting on relevant strong and weak points of the thesis, in particular those that address the first six assessment categories listed above.

|  |
| --- |
| Substantiation |
| *(Research question)*  *(Theoretical framework & academic relevance)*  *(Method)*  *(Analysis)*  *(Conclusion)*  *(Use & citation of sources)*  *(Structure of the argument)*  *(Composition & style)*  *(Initiative)*  *(Defense)*  *(Additional remarks)* |

*Note: In commenting on the quality with which the student has demonstrated her/his academic abilities, please consider answering one or more of the following questions:*

*1. Research question: Is the research question developed according to the applicable academic standard in the research field? Was the research question formulated clearly? Were the sub-topics logically derived from the main topic? Was the research topic sufficiently focused, and was the reasoning behind this focus explained in the paper? Is it made sufficiently clear how the research contributes to the field in an original way?*

*2. Theoretical framework & academic relevance: Is the academic relevance of the research clearly stated? Are the sources relevant, representative and of sufficient academic quality? Does the research position itself critically/ in relation to the existing sources? Are the chosen theories and/or analytical concepts pertinent to the research question? Are the main concepts/terms clearly defined?*

*3. Accountability to the method: Are the research methods used adequate to address the research question? Are they used in the correct manner? Is the reflection on the chosen research and analysis method adequate? Is the method used to collect data described and justified in detail? Are the central concepts/terms clearly defined?*

*4. Results/Analysis: Are the results described clearly and systematically? Does the analysis correspond to the described method? Is there a sound balance between description and analysis? Is the knowledge of the field sufficient and used adequately?*

*5. Conclusion: Does the conclusion answer the main question? Is the conclusion more than just a summary? Does the student reflect critically on her/his own approach? Is there sufficient cross-referencing between the student’s own (empirical) research results and the literature/theory? Does the student convincingly demonstrate the innovative character of the research, its impact on the research field and the resulting suggestions for further research?*

*6. Use & citation of sources: Is the choice of source material (primary and secondary) appropriate and of sufficient quality? Is there a sufficient distinction in the analysis of primary and secondary sources? Is the distinction between own analysis and work of others clearly indicated? Is the citation of sources adequate and accurate? Are citations used correctly?*

*7. Structure of the argument: is the information presented in a professional and logical way? Is there a clear division into chapters and paragraphs? Is the argumentation clear and coherent? Are the paragraphs and sections coherent and sufficiently limited in scope? Is the reflection on the structure and form of presentation of sufficient quality?*

*8. Composition and style: Is the thesis written in an appealing and understandable manner? Is terminology used adequately and accurately? Is the English grammatically and stylistically correct?*

*9. Initiative: Is the development of the student in becoming an independent researcher of sufficient quality? Is there a sufficiently independent way of thinking? Has the student carefully utilised the feedback provided? Did the student respect agreements and deadlines? Did the student need much help during the process? If so, on which points (e.g. formulating a research question, familiarisation with the literature, structure of the argument, composition, language)?*

*10. Defense (if applicable)*

**Detailed grade description**

*Deficient* (5):

The thesis does not have a central research question. It shows poor knowledge of the scholarly context and little evidence of independent thought. The research is superficial, unsystematic, and shows little effort. The argument lacks structure and the writing is vague or incorrect (the expression is poor at best, incoherent at worst.) It makes inadequate use of primary and secondary sources, and/or does not use or produce relevant data. The presentation does not meet professional standards.

*Pass* (6)

A 6 is awarded to a thesis that meets (but does not reach beyond)

the accepted standards in the field in terms of soundness of methods and argumentation.

The thesis has a central question and provides an answer. The presentation of sources meets professional standards and the argument shows knowledge of the academic context. The thesis shows evidence of independent research in the relevant field, using appropriate methods. At the same time, its grasp of the issues involved does not reach beyond the basic requirements of the field. The writing does not exceed the basic requirements of correctness and clarity.

*Good (*7)

A 7 is awarded to a thesis that meets these standards and also makes available interesting and original results that merit attention (for instance in the form of being cited in scientific publications).

The thesis formulates and attempts to answer a central research question in a satisfactory way. It demonstrates a good basic understanding of the topic and of its complexities. It shows a good knowledge of the relevant academic context. It demonstrates solid coverage of the relevant data and of secondary and primary sources, using appropriate methods. The presentation and discussion of the data and sources is generally professional. The language is correct and the main points are made explicitly and in a structured way. However, the analysis may be derivative and lacking in discrimination. It exhibits some problems of relevance and structure. The evidence presented does not fully support conclusions, and it lacks detail and nuance. Expression may exhibit some deficiencies. It shows little evidence of independent thought or of critical reflection on methods and theories.

*Very good* (8):

An 8 can be awarded to a thesis that makes a contribution to the field that in principle merits publication, though not necessarily in the form of an independent publication (this presupposes sufficient originality, and soundness of the research carried out).

The thesis formulates a research question clearly and provides a convincing answer to it. It demonstrates a sound understanding of the topic and the issues involved in it. It shows a broad understanding of the academic context. It demonstrates extensive independent research, using appropriate methods. It is coherently structured and argued. The conclusions are supported by detailed evidence. It is well expressed. The analyses are more solid than original. There is limited evidence of critical reflection on methods and theories.

*Excellent (*9):

A 9 can be awarded to a thesis that makes a contribution to the field that is so original and convincing that it merits being brought to the attention of the international forum as part of a contribution in an A-level journal, and/or immediately qualifies the student for being admitted to further study at the PhD level.

The central question is very clearly formulated. It is very clearly situated in the relevant scholarly discussions and the writer shows an above average level of familiarity with the relevant scholarly context. It addresses all aspects of the topic and demonstrates careful and systematic research on appropriately selected sources or independently gathered data. It demonstrates critical reflection on methods and theories. It shows evidence of independent thought, knowledge of the field, and high-level insight and powers of analysis. The argument is balanced, well structured and effectively expressed, with specific, detailed and accurate use of evidence. It is scrupulous in its citation of primary and secondary sources and its adherence to bibliographic conventions.

*Outstanding* (10):

A 10 can be awarded a thesis that makes a highly original and important contribution to the field and qualifies for acceptance in an international A-level journal.

The question is innovative and sharply formulated. It is shown to have considerable relevance to the scholarly discussions in the field. The thesis demonstrates a full command of the topic and the debates in the field. It shows evidence of original and independent thought but also of systematic, broad-ranging and thorough research in the field using appropriate methods. It shows exceptional insight and powers of analysis which fully reflect the complexity of the topic. It demonstrates an engagement with and critical approach to the scholarly debate. The argumentation is thorough, the examples are always precise and relevant, and the selection and synthesis of secondary literature are polished. The handling of bibliography and footnoting is up to professional standard and the style is precise, correct, and highly readable.