

## RMA MAPS Thesis: Program Guidelines

Your program will conclude with a thesis (30 EC) in which you apply the skills, knowledge and insights that you have acquired during the Research MA. In the thesis trajectory, you will conduct independent research and write an academic research thesis. The Research MA thesis is a scholarly research project that takes the form of a well-researched thesis project within the discipline of Media, Art and Performance Studies, written individually and on a relevant subject chosen by the student and agreed upon with the supervisor.

### Thesis requirements

The central research question should be clearly formulated at the beginning and its relevance to scholarly discussions within the discipline set out. The body of the text should show how you went about trying to answer this question, why you proceeded the way you did, and what your findings were. In your conclusion you should analyse your findings in the light of your original question and explain the broader implications of your conclusions.

The thesis should be written in correct and clear English. The thesis should be a minimum of 25,000 words and may be no longer than 30,000 words (including notes but excluding bibliography). In agreement with your supervisor, you can choose your own style of referencing, as long as it is an official system and you use it in a consistent manner. Two styles that are often used within the Humanities are Chicago and MLA.

### Format of the thesis

The final structure should be agreed upon with the main supervisor, but the thesis must include the following:

- A title page that includes the following information: Title of the thesis, name of the student, student number, names of the main supervisor and the second reader, name of the institution and department where the thesis is to be submitted, date of submission, UU logo, word count.
- An abstract of 300 words that summarizes your research and findings. Your abstract does not count towards your total wordcount.
- Acknowledgments (optional and not included in wordcount)
- Table of Contents
- Introduction
- Chapters
- Core of the thesis (result/discussion), divided into relevant (theoretical/methodological/literature review) chapters and subsections
- Conclusion
- References
- Appendices (optional, not included in the word count).

### Thesis assessment criteria

In commenting on the quality with which the student has demonstrated their academic abilities, thesis assessors review the following elements:

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)?

## Supervision

You always write your thesis under the supervision of a member of the academic staff in your chosen field of study, i.e. someone who possesses relevant expertise to guide you and provides constructive comments on your work. The supervisor appointed to you will also supervise your thesis. However, while researching and writing the thesis, you always remain responsible for your own progress. In addition, the coordinator of the program assigns a second reader who will assess

your Thesis Plan and final thesis. Either your supervisor or your second reader needs to be a MAPS teaching staff member.

During the thesis writing phase in block 3 and block 4 you will regularly consult with your thesis supervisor. It is advised to plan these meetings well in advance. As a basic guideline you are entitled to have five of these sessions with your supervisor. Please find suggestions for the structure of these meetings below. You are expected *to take the initiative* for arranging these meetings. Make sure you schedule these meetings with plenty of notice. Check with your supervisor the best way to contact them. Note that thesis supervision only available in Block 3 and Block 4.

Second semester: Block 3 and Block 4	Aim of supervision meetings
Meeting 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussing feedback from both supervisor and second reader on your Thesis Plan (Block 3 - Week 1).</li> <li>• In case revision is needed, a new deadline will be set.</li> <li>• In case the proposal is approved: upload the Thesis Proposal to Osiris via Cases &gt; My Cases</li> </ul>
Meeting 2	Handing in and receiving feedback on a draft chapter on theoretical framework and methodology
Meeting 3	Handing in and receiving feedback on a draft chapter
Meeting 4	Handing in and receiving feedback on a draft chapter
Meeting 5	Handing in complete draft thesis, including the introduction, conclusion, and abstract, and receiving detailed commentary

### Thesis trajectory and deadlines

- The deadline for the MAPS Thesis is **15 June**. Even if the work is not finished by then, the student has to hand in work to be entitled to a resit (reparation) if necessary.
- Students who receive a final grade between 4.0 and 5.5 can repair it. Students receive feedback from their supervisor so that they know what elements are insufficient and need to be repaired. The resit/reparation deadline is **15 August**. Note that no thesis supervision is available from 1 July - 15 August.
- MAPS Thesis supervision is only available during Block 3 and Block 4. If a student fails the thesis (even after resit), the student can only continue with the thesis in Block 3 in the following academic year.

### Personal circumstances

A student who fails to meet the first deadline due to personal circumstances/force majeure may request a later deadline. The student contacts the study advisor, who gives a recommendation to the thesis supervisor and thesis coordinator. The supervisor and coordinator make a decision. The

extended deadline is no later than 15 August (in order to register the assessment by 31 August). No thesis supervision takes place during the summer period (1 July - 15 August). If the student submits the work on time, it counts as the first chance. Students can still resit this.