

TU Ilmenau, Media and Communication Management Group (06/2016)

Information sheet on the thesis process

The regulations in this document apply to bachelor and master theses that are overseen by members of the department of Media and Communication Management at the IfMK. Beware, that other departments might have other regulations for evaluation. The following content supplements and concretizes the examination procedures of the TU Ilmenau – in any case the general regulations are binding.

1. General conditions

In order to earn your Bachelor in 'Applied Media and Communication Studies' or Master degree in 'Media and Communication Science' at the Technische Universität Ilmenau, you need to submit and defend a thesis, which needs to be approved by two supervisors, of whom at least one must be titled Professor or Dr. habil. The thesis process requires a proposal, the thesis itself and the defense. These three elements together correspond to 16 credit points (bachelor) resp. 30 credit points (master).

Co-operation with external partners like e.g. companies, NGOs or administrative institutes as e.g. source of inspiration or funders are possible. However, students should be aware, that this could increase the effort and might lead to contradicting research aims between the university and the external institution.

2. Application and registration

The department of Media and Communication Management generally receives many requests of candidates that plan to write a thesis, but unfortunately its members cannot oversee every thesis project. They decide on the basis of the written proposal (exposé) whether to accept or not. Besides the quality of the proposal, another criterion for selection is the topic that should correspond with the research fields of the department.

If you are interested in writing your thesis in the department Media and Communication Management, please follow these steps:

2.1 Find a supervisor and get in contact:

If you have a topic in mind, send an e-mail with your initial ideas properly written down in a short abstract and time schedule to the department member that you think is a good match for your topic. He or she will either arrange a meeting with you or advise you to contact another person/department that could be a better match for your topic.

If you do not have a topic yet, you might find some suggestions on the Media and Communication Management website.

2.2 Hand in a proposal (Exposé)

After the initial talk with your potential supervisor, you need to structure your proposal. Based on the proposal, your potential supervisor will decide, whether or not supervision will be executed. You have a period of about six weeks to work on it, i.e., specifying the topic, developing research questions and if applicable hypotheses, defining methods, and planning your timeline.

The written proposal should be of 5-10 pages (Bachelor) resp. 10-15 pages (Master) and cover the following aspects:

- (1) Aim of research
- (2) Theoretical basis and state of research

- (3) Planned empirical design
- (4) Planned structure
- (5) Timetable

During this period you are encouraged to exchange ideas with and get feedback from your potential supervisor. Maybe you will have to work on several drafts of your proposal until you and your supervisor agree on the final version. In case you fail to deliver a satisfactory one within six weeks, you will be asked either to find a new topic and/or to find another department.

The proposal will have a good chance on being accepted, if the topic is located within a research field of the department, if the formal requirements are met, if the research question is relevant and if the way to answer it is described in a logical and convincing manner.

2.3 Register your topic

When your proposal has been accepted, you need to register your topic at the exam office. For that, you need to fill out and sign a form. For any administrative issues regarding the exam process please contact the exam office!

3. Writing process and submittance

3.1 Writing the thesis

From the day you register, you have six months to submit your thesis. You will receive an e-mail from the exam office informing you about the deadline.

During this period you are conducting your research and writing your thesis. The thesis should amount to 30 - 50 pages (Bachelor) resp. 50 to 100 pages (Master).

3.2 Supervision and Advice

Contact your supervisor in case of questions. Discuss with your supervisor the main steps of your work, especially the design of your instrument(s). It is recommended to have a talk at the following stages:

- Constructing the theoretical framework
- Structuring the content of the thesis
- Designing the research method
- Evaluating the results
- Finalizing the thesis

3.3 Candidates' colloquia

Furthermore you have to participate in the candidates' colloquia, where you report at least once on your work. In order to get all relevant information about time and place of the colloquia please enroll for it by e-mail to the department's secretary: Manuela Dienemann (mkm-wm@tu-ilmeneau.de).

To get more information please download the info sheet on candidates' colloquia from the guideline box on the department's website.

4. Submitting the thesis

To complete your thesis submission, you need to deliver the following documents to the exam office:

- Three printed copies of the thesis (hard cover) including abstracts, signed declaration of autonomy and digital appendix in each copy (regarding the required format of the digital version/appendix please ask your supervisor!)
- Printed e-mail-confirmation from the university library concerning the upload of the abstract of the thesis in the university bibliography

5. Evaluation criteria

The final grade of your thesis will be calculated as the average of the first supervisor's grading of the written thesis, the second supervisor's grading of the written thesis and the grading of the oral defence.

Major evaluation criteria are relevance, accuracy and intelligibility:

- *Relevance:*
The research question should be of theoretical and (if applicable) practical relevance; original and innovative issues are welcome – these might be issues that are novel in the field of media- and communication science, issues that require an interdisciplinary approach or questions that have not been asked yet in media practices. In addition, the results should be of importance, in so far that they provide new insights, can be classified or even generalized. Meaningful conclusion incl. innovative future prospects supplement the thesis' relevance.
- *Accuracy:*
The thesis shall show accuracy especially with regard to the theoretical as well as methodological processing. The theoretical frame should be sufficient and appropriate. A comprehensive illustration of the research state is required. Relevant (international, up-to-date) literature should be critically reflected. The empirical design must be described properly and correspond with the research question as well as the theoretical frame. A balance of theory and empirical design as well as description and explanation should be given. Data basis should be appropriate; data evaluation should be precise and relevant – interpretation of results must not be too cautious neither too excessive. Finally, formal requirements such as logical structure of content as well as correct citation, orthography and grammar should be met.
- *Intelligibility:*
The process of investigation as well as the results shall be described in a legible and scientific style. A line of arguments should be reflected already in the thesis' structure. Each step within the research process shall be documented for intersubjective traceability. Arguments and results should be illustrated in an appealing way, as well by means of visualization.

6. Defending the thesis

Each thesis project ends with the defence of the thesis. For this, you will receive a letter from the exam office informing you about the time and place of your defense. The final grade of your thesis will be calculated as the average of the first supervisor's grading of the written thesis, the second supervisor's grading of the written thesis and the grading of the oral defence.

One week before the defense takes place, you will receive the thesis review from your supervisor via e-mail. In the reviews deficits of your work will be mentioned and improvements will be demanded. In the defense you should respond to these critiques, e.g. by providing additional analysis, information, critical thoughts etc.

On the scheduled day and time, you should hold a 15-minute presentation about your work. Afterwards, the supervisors will confront you with additional questions related to your work and/or to your presentation.