

The Thesis Process

In order to earn your master's degree in Media and Communication Science at TU Ilmenau, you need to submit and defend a thesis. The thesis needs to be approved by two supervisors (one of them must be a Professor or a Dr. habil.). You will need to submit a thesis exposé, followed by the thesis itself and finally a defense presentation. These three elements together are 30 credit points and complete your requirements for the Master of Arts degree.

1. Find a Supervisor

If you have a topic in mind, try to elaborate research questions and draft your ideas. Send an email with your initial ideas to the lecturer that you think is a good match to your topic of interest.

The lecturer will either schedule a meeting with you or advise you to contact another person/department that could be a better match to your proposal.

If you do not have a topic yet, consult a list of the topics suggested by the departments. After you find a topic of interest, contact the responsible lecturer.

2. Write an Exposé

After the initial talk with your potential supervisor, you need to structure your proposal. Most of the research groups have published on their homepage a short guide how to write an structure an exposé.

You have a period of **six weeks** to work on your proposal, specifying the topic, developing research questions/hypotheses, defining methods, and planning your timeline. During this period you are encouraged to exchange ideas with and get feedback from your potential supervisor(s).

It is likely that you will have to work on several drafts of your exposé till you and your supervisors agree on a final version. We advise that you hand in a first draft of your exposé soon after your first talk with your supervisor.

At the end of the six weeks, you are required to register your topic at the Examination Office. In case you fail to deliver a satisfactory expose in six weeks, you will be requested either to find a new topic and/or to find another department.

3. Register the Topic

You must register your topic at the examination office. You will need a specific [form](#), filled out and signed by both you and your main supervisor.

Starting the day you register, you will have **six months** to submit your thesis. You will receive an email from the Examination Office informing notifying you of your deadline.

4. Write the Thesis

During this six month period, you should be conducting your research and writing your thesis. In case you have any questions, feel free to contact your supervisor(s).

We recommend that you discuss all major steps with your supervisor, like the design of your instrument, theoretical frameworks, etc.

Most research groups have issued a guideline for the thesis structure here.

Additionally, you have to participate in the candidates' colloquia and to present at least once your work during the six months. The colloquia are usually held once a month.

Ask your supervisor(s) or department secretary when the upcoming ones are. Even if not presenting, we advise attending colloquia to learn from other students who are further along in their thesis process.

5. Submit the Thesis

To complete your thesis submission, you need to deliver the following documents to the Examination Office:

- Three printed, hardcover copies of your thesis.
- A signed declaration of autonomy with every copy
- A USB stick with the digital version of the thesis (PDF or word document) and any other necessary digital content.
- Printed confirmation mail from the university library concerning the upload of the abstract of the thesis: <http://www.tu-ilmenau.de/ilmedia/hsb/>

6. Defend Your Thesis

You will receive a letter from the Examination Office with an appointment for your defense.

One week before the defense, you will receive the review of your work from your supervisors via email. In the review, criticisms of your work will be mentioned and improvements will be requested. Responding to these critiques, such as providing additional analysis, information, theoretical thoughts, etc., should be prioritized in your defense.

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