



MA Theses Guidelines

When Should I Write my MA Thesis?

You should write your MA thesis during your final two semesters at MA level. That means you have to contact potential supervisors the semester before you plan on starting to write the MA thesis (see below).

How Do I Choose a Topic for My MA Thesis?

Your MA thesis is your chance to engage in depth with a topic of your choosing. You should pick a topic that will hold your interest for two semesters and that fits the scope of an MA thesis. You may want to further develop a topic you encountered in one of the research seminars. However, you **cannot** write a Master thesis on exactly the same topics as a previous paper.

How Do I Choose a Supervisor for My MA Thesis?

- The Master's Thesis is usually supervised by a professor.
- Other members of staff holding a PhD degree are also allowed to supervise Master's Theses. Note, however, that they are not obliged to do so.
- To find out **what types of topics individual instructors may be interested in supervising**, you can consult their homepages. You can find links to all instructors' homepages via the UZH English Department's [Staff List](#).

When Should I Contact My Supervisor for the First Time?

Contact potential supervisors the semester before you want to write your Master's Thesis.

You should, at the very least, have a relatively clear idea about the topic of your Master's Thesis before contacting potential supervisors. Ideally, you will proceed as follows:

- prepare a brief proposal
- contact a supervisor regarding writing the Master's Thesis with them

Please note that supervisors are not obliged to take on any supervision as they might already have reached their maximum capacity or might not feel like they are the right person to supervise your chosen topic. Therefore, it might take you some time to find a supervisor, meaning you should **not leave it to the last minute**.

Do not contact several supervisors at the same time.

What Kind of Support Can I Expect from My Supervisor?

You are expected to conduct most of your research for the MA Thesis independently. However, supervisors will of course be happy to provide a certain level of guidance.

- You can expect a minimum of two discussions of content, argument, structure, research, etc.
- You can expect feedback on your outline and optionally on a sample passage from your thesis (ca. 10% of the total)

At the start of the supervision process, you should discuss the mode of supervision with your supervisor (e.g. Will there be regular meetings? How often are you allowed/supposed to contact your supervisor?)

Should you encounter any major problems, then please make sure to get in touch with your supervisor as early as possible!

What Do I Do If I Do Not Hear Back from My Supervisor?

Supervisors at the UZH English Department will try to respond to emails as soon as possible.

Should you **not** hear back from your supervisor after one week, please send them a short reminder. If you still do not hear back from your supervisor a week after your second message, you should contact the study advisor at englishstudies@es.uzh.ch.

Please take into consideration that during the semester break instructors may be away from their desk, so it might take longer for them to answer.

How and When Do I Book the MA Thesis?

You book the Master's thesis module during the regular booking period via the module booking tool.

Do **not book** the module unless a supervisor has agreed to take you on!

If an instructor agreed to supervise you, but you cannot find their name in the module booking tool, contact englishstudies@es.uzh.ch and cc your supervisor in the email.

Once the module booking period is over, you will receive an e-mail asking you to indicate your supervisor and the preliminary title of your thesis in the thesis tool.

How Long Does the MA Thesis Have to Be?

The Master's Thesis is between 20'000 and 30'000 words (not counting the bibliography).

When Is the Deadline for Submitting the MA Thesis?

- in the fall semester: December 1
- in the spring semester: June 1

In Which Form Does the MA Thesis Have to Be Submitted?

The thesis must be handed in as PDF version to your supervisor **and to** englishstudies@es.uzh.ch. Your instructor may additionally request a Word version and/or print copy.

Make sure to use the [MA Thesis Template Cover](#).

Additionally, you will receive an e-mail asking you to submit your thesis to the thesis tool and confirm your finalized title.

August 2026