

Requirements for Master's Thesis and the Defence Thereof UT "Folkloristics and Applied Heritage Studies" Master's Programme

The master's (MA) thesis (HVKU.04.013, 30 ECTS) in "Folkloristics and Applied Heritage Studies" is independent academic study in which students demonstrate the knowledge and skills obtained during their master's studies. The author of an MA thesis is capable of formulating a research problem and defining the scope of the study, of choosing appropriate research methods and collecting, systematising and analysing data, of drawing conclusions and of writing up results in the form of an academic text.

1. Formulation of the topic of the MA thesis and supervision

1.1. Students formulate a preliminary topic of the MA thesis by the end of the first semester.

1.2. Students choose a supervisor or supervisors by the end of the second semester at the latest. This is done in collaboration with faculty members and the programme director. At least one of the supervisors must be a UT faculty member with a doctorate or a research master's degree, or a doctoral student.

1.3. Students in collaboration with supervisors formulate the topic of the MA thesis by the end of the second semester at the latest.

1.4. The formulation of the topic and completion of the MA thesis is further supported by the courses P2VK.01.182 Project Management (3 EAP) and HVKU.03.015 Internship/Fieldwork (9 EAP), and by the MA seminars I-IV (12 ECTS):

- Part I: "Project Design and Research Proposal" – students present on their initial MA thesis plans;
- Part II: a course on academic writing and study skills or, upon agreement, an alternative course aimed at developing research and/or writing skills;
- Part III: "Thesis Writing and Peer Feedback" – development of the structure of the MA thesis and drafting the first chapter(s);
- Part IV: MA seminar with supervisor(s).

1.5. The supervisor assists the student in formulating the topic and scope of the thesis, composing research questions, planning research, and choosing and applying methods and relevant theoretical literature.

1.6. During the writing process, the supervisor draws attention to factual and logic errors, shortcomings in analysis and writing, and other problems pertaining to contents or form. The supervisor points out typical stylistic and spelling mistakes, but is neither the editor nor co-author of the text.

1.7. The supervisor may step down if the student fails to abide by agreed upon arrangements without a sound reason. The supervisor may be dismissed based on failure to properly supervise the thesis if so proven by the student in a reasoned written request.

2. Structure and contents of the MA thesis

2.1. The thesis consists of a title page, table of contents, introduction, chapters dedicated to theoretical and methodological matters and analysis, conclusion, reference list, a résumé in the Estonian language, and (optional) annexes. The author may include an additional résumé in a language other than English or Estonian.

2.2. In the introduction, the author explains the choice of topic, its novelty and relevance, and the aims of the research, formulates research questions and gives a short overview of the theoretical-methodological framework, data and the structure of the thesis.

2.3. The theoretical part focusses on key terms and concepts, theoretical starting points of the study and earlier research relevant to the thesis. The author demonstrates the ability to create

connections between the works of different scholars and her/his own research topic and questions.

2.4. The empirical section introduces data explored in the thesis and the methods used to create and analyse it. The author reflects critically on the data creation process, methodological choices and on her/his own role as a researcher, as well as paying attention to ethical aspects.

2.5. One or several chapters are dedicated to data analysis with the help of concepts and approaches discussed in theoretical and empirical parts of the thesis, keeping in mind the aims and research questions formulated in the introduction.

2.6. The conclusion reiterates the main results of earlier chapters and provides a general discussion of the study as a whole. The author formulates the main results of the research, reflects on them in the light of goals and problems identified at the outset, and may also propose suggestions for future studies.

2.7. The Estonian-language résumé (one to two pages) discusses in a comprehensive manner the thesis in its entirety (choice of topic, goals, research questions, theory, empirical base and main conclusions). The title of the thesis must be translated into Estonian.

2.8. The reference list must contain information on all sources referenced in the text (see # 3.3.). The list may be divided into subsections, such as referenced literature, websites, archival sources etc.

2.9. Annexes are numbered and titled. Annexes may include interview questions, questionnaires, tables providing overviews of interviews or other data analysed in the study, photographs, charts, excerpts from the research diary etc.

3. Format of the MA thesis

3.1. The length of the theoretical-methodological written part exclusive of annexes is 40-60 pages (one page = 1,800 characters without spaces); font Times New Roman, font size 12, line spacing 1.5. Margins: 3 cm on the right and left sides, 2.54 cm from top and bottom.

3.2. The same principles of referencing and formatting must be used consistently throughout the text. Referencing may be modelled on the referencing style used in the *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics* (<https://www.jef.ee/>).

3.3. Every source used in the text must be properly referenced in the text and in the list of references. Authors must reference their own prior work (e.g. a bachelor's thesis). The author's own ideas and contributions must be clearly distinguished from those of others. The beginning and end of a citation must be clearly marked.

3.4. The title page contains the following information:

University of Tartu
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Institute of Cultural Research OR Viljandi Culture Academy
Author's full name
TITLE
Master's Thesis
Supervisor(s): position/degree full name
Place of defence (Tartu OR Viljandi), year

3.5. Chapters are numbered and titled and divided into numbered and titled subchapters. (Sub)chapters consisting of only a couple of short paragraphs should be avoided. Each new chapter begins on a new page. A subchapter begins on a new page if there is room for only a couple of lines on the previous page.

3.6. Tables and figures (e.g. photographs, drawings and maps) must be enumerated (e.g. Table 1, Figure 8 or Photograph 10), provided with short titles and, if needed, explanations, as well as with information about the author and/or source.

4. Pre-defence

4.1. As a rule, a pre-defence takes place up to five weeks prior to the expected final defence. The draft presented for the pre-defence must constitute at least 2/3 of the final version submitted for the final defence (incl. title page and full table of contents).

4.2. The draft must include versions of all chapters and enable readers to follow the development of the arguments the author is making. The author may include comments and clarifications on missing parts to be included in the final version.

4.3. The supervisor must approve the draft before it may be submitted for pre-defence.

5. Submission of the MA thesis and the defence thereof

5.1. The MA thesis is submitted at least two weeks prior to the defence electronically in PDF format, as well as in two bound hard copies.

5.2. The supervisor must confirm in writing that the thesis may be submitted for defence.

5.3. Students must complete the curriculum before being allowed to defend. The completion of the curriculum is confirmed by Specialists of Academic Affairs.

5.4. The MA thesis is assigned a reviewer and assessed at an oral defence. Defences are public unless the committee decides otherwise. The student and the supervisor may request the vice dean for academic affairs to declare the defence closed to the public by completing the form “Application for Establishing Restrictions on the Publishing of Graduation Thesis, and Declaring Defence Private” (<https://ut.ee/en/admission-and-studies-0>)

5.5. The reviewer submits a written review of the MA thesis to the defence committee and the student before the defence.

5.6. The defence shall proceed as follows:

1. Opening words by the head of the defence committee.
2. Presentation by the author of the MA thesis (up to 15 minutes), in which the author explains the research question, aims of the thesis, reasons for choosing this topic, methodological and theoretical choices made, and its main results.
3. Discussion of the thesis by the reviewer along with academic discussion between the reviewer and the author.
4. Academic discussion between the author, members of the defence committee and the audience.
5. Supervisor’s comments.
6. Closing words by the author.

6. Assessment of the MA thesis

6.1. Assessment of the MA thesis is differentiating (A, B, C, D, E, F, not present).

6.2. The MA thesis is assessed by the defence committee, taking into account the study submitted for defence, evaluations by the reviewer and supervisor and the course of the defence. Assessment is decided upon at a closed meeting and the result is announced thereafter.

6.3. Criteria for assessing the MA thesis include:

- scholarly and broader societal relevance of the topic;
- compatibility of research question(s) and goals of the study;
- the logicity of the structure;
- the author’s ability to discuss relevant previous scholarship and to connect it to the approach developed in the thesis;

- the author’s ability to develop a relevant theoretical framework and to define the key terms and concepts clearly, as well as to apply these tools to empirical data analysed in the thesis;
- the author’s ability to explain the methods used to create and analyse data, to apply these tools, and the suitability of this methodological framework for addressing the research problems and goals identified at the outset;
- analysis of data with the help of the theoretical and methodological framework developed in the thesis and the originality of the author’s input;
- the author’s ability to reflect critically on the entire research process, on the appropriateness and application of chosen methods and on ethical issues;
- correctness of spelling and grammar, and consistency of formatting and referencing.
- the author’s ability to present the gist of the thesis succinctly during the oral defence of the thesis;
- responses given by the author during the academic discussion.

7. Publishing of the MA thesis

7.1. The thesis submitted for the final defence must include a non-exclusive license with which the author grants the university the right to reproduce the thesis for the purpose of preservation and making available to the public via the web environment of the university. The form “Non-exclusive Licence to Reproduce Thesis and Make Thesis Public” is found at: <https://humanitaarteadused.ut.ee/en/content/studies>

7.2. If publishing the written part of the MA thesis is not possible, the author in collaboration with the supervisor must submit a reasoned request to set restrictions on the publication of the study. This must be done prior to the defence. The forms of this request are found at: <https://humanitaarteadused.ut.ee/en/content/studies>

7.3. The successfully defended thesis will be published electronically in DSpace (<http://dspace.utlib.ee/dspace/>), the digital archive of the University of Tartu, within three months after the defence.

Relevant documents:

Study Regulations: <https://ut.ee/en/admission-and-studies-0>

Requirements for Graduation Thesis and the Defence Procedure in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Tartu: <https://humanitaarteadused.ut.ee/en/node/97739>

Procedure for Processing Cases of Academic Fraud and Improper Behaviour in the UT Faculty of Arts and Humanities: <https://humanitaarteadused.ut.ee/en/node/97739>