

Guidebook for Graduation

your guide to successful and stress-free graduation!



Dear students, the following pages should help you to complete your master's degree without delay! It might seem like a lot of bureaucracy, but do not worry. You will be doing everything one step at a time and there are always University administrators to help you and clarify your questions. However, if you read this guide carefully, you might not have any questions left :)

The process usually takes about one semester. Feel free to take as much time as you need and plan your graduation journey with this graduation guide.

First of all, check [this page](#) which has a lot of useful links and up-to-date information.

Through the graduation process your contact person from the Master's program in Communication Science is **Sonja Weisz**:

Department of Communication, University of Vienna
Kolingasse 14, Room 06.08, 1090 Vienna, Austria
Availability by phone Thursday, Office hours by appointment by mail
commscience@univie.ac.at
Tel: +43-1-4277-49190
<https://commscience.univie.ac.at>



Further you will find:

The step-by-step guide!	3
1. Finding your supervisor	3
2. Registration of the subject of the Master thesis	3
3. Examination pass	3
4. Registration for the Master's examination:	4
5. Write your thesis	4
6. Submit the completed Master's thesis	4
Required documents for submission of printed copies of the Master's thesis	5
HOPLA version	6
Printed version	6
7. The master's examination/defensio:	7
Master's thesis formal requirements	8
Basic Formal Requirements and Quality Criteria	8
Grading Criteria	9
2nd examiner ("Zweitprüfer")	14

Overview of the Second Examiner Topics	14
Prof. Boomgaarden	14
Prof. Einwiller	15
Prof. Hanusch	15
Prof. Lecheler	15
Prof. Matthes	16
Prof. Sarikakis	16
Prof. Waldherr	17

The step-by-step guide!

1. Finding your supervisor

In the Master seminar in your third semester, you prepare a Master's thesis proposal. The next step is to find your supervisor. You can approach [any professor who teaches at our Department](#). The ones who have taught you in the program are preferred, but you can also approach those who did not teach you directly.

Please note that the professors might not be available to supervise in the semester you need it. Therefore, make sure to find a supervisor soon enough.

2. Registration of the subject of the Master thesis

As soon as you have your grade from the Master seminar and your supervisor approved the topic, you can register your subject of the master thesis.

Print [this form](#) two times and sign both sheets. Your supervisor also has to sign both sheets.

Please submit both copies of the form, together with a document [called "Regulations relating to good scientific practice"](#) to Sonja Weisz via email: commscience@univie.ac.at.

3. Examination pass

As soon as all your grades are registered you can apply to Sonja Weisz (commscience@univie.ac.at) for your examination pass. For this you only need to send her a transcript of records (print out in [U:space](#)). Everything else she does for you.

4. Registration for the Master's examination:

In order to register for the final oral exam, you need to have:

- the chair of the committee (they will be assigned, your help is not needed),
- the first examiner (your supervisor),
- the second examiner (you need to find yourself).

The second examiner will test you on two topics of your choice. All professors who teach or have taught in the English Master can be asked to be your second examiner. They have different topics they examine. The quickest way to find out if they still take students and what their topics are is to write an email to their study assistants. Usually, they provide you with a list of topics. Each topic includes five academic papers that you will need to carefully study to be able to answer the exam questions. You need to choose two topics and agree your choice with the second examiner.

Below (page 14) we provide a list of topics that were used by professors in the past who taught regularly in the three introductory theoretical classes and method classes of the "Communication Science" master's program. This is meant for you to get a quick overview on the professors and their topics. To be sure that you have the complete and up-to-date list, please double check with the professors or their study assistants.

Once you found a second examiner, register for the oral exam. Use the ["Registration for master's examination" form to register](#). In this document you have to fill out who your examiners are going to be. Submit the form to Sonja Weisz (commscience@univie.ac.at).

5. Write your thesis

Basic formal requirements and the grading criteria are presented on page 7.

Check with your supervisor, when they need the thesis so that they have enough time to grade you before the grades have to be submitted to The Study Service Center.

Official deadlines [can be found at this page](#), if your supervisor is unsure about them.

6. Submit the completed Master's thesis

University of Vienna uses the online HOPLA submission system to accept and check the theses on formal requirements and plagiarism. Keep in mind that the HOPLA process has to be finished before you can give your thesis to your supervisor (plan around 1 week).

Upload your data and thesis on HOPLA (<https://hopla.univie.ac.at/>). [Detailed requirements are available in German.](#)

- Make sure your title page is correct. Check the [template](#) (also attached below) and read [the instructions page](#) carefully. Check if your Bachelor degree or other degrees are in the SSC database (write an email to the SSC to clarify it). Usually, if your degree was obtained outside of the EU, you cannot use your academic title on the Master's thesis title page. Note: if you have a mistake on your title page, this will require a resubmission and, therefore, a delay.
- You will receive a confirmation of upload in the HOPLA interface. They do not send a confirmation email.
- You cannot re-upload a different version while the evaluation is taking place.
- Make sure that it is exactly the same document that you use for printing your thesis – therefore, take note of the blank pages if needed.
- The plagiarism assessment needs from 1 day to 1 week.
- When the analysis is done, you receive an email.
- Now StudienServiceCenter will send your thesis to your supervisor along with the feedback forms.
- Submit the printed master's thesis at StudienServiceCenter personally:

STUDIENSERVICECENTER Social Sciences (SSC)

Universitätsstraße 7 (NIG)

6th floor, main stairs, room A628

A- 1010 Vienna

T: Daniele Lipp: +43-1-4277-48204

T: Petra Fritsch: +43-1-4277-49194

opening hours: Tuesday 10-12 am, Thursday 2-4 pm

Required documents for submission of printed copies of the Master's thesis

[Read this instruction page carefully.](#)

1. Master's thesis (two copies):

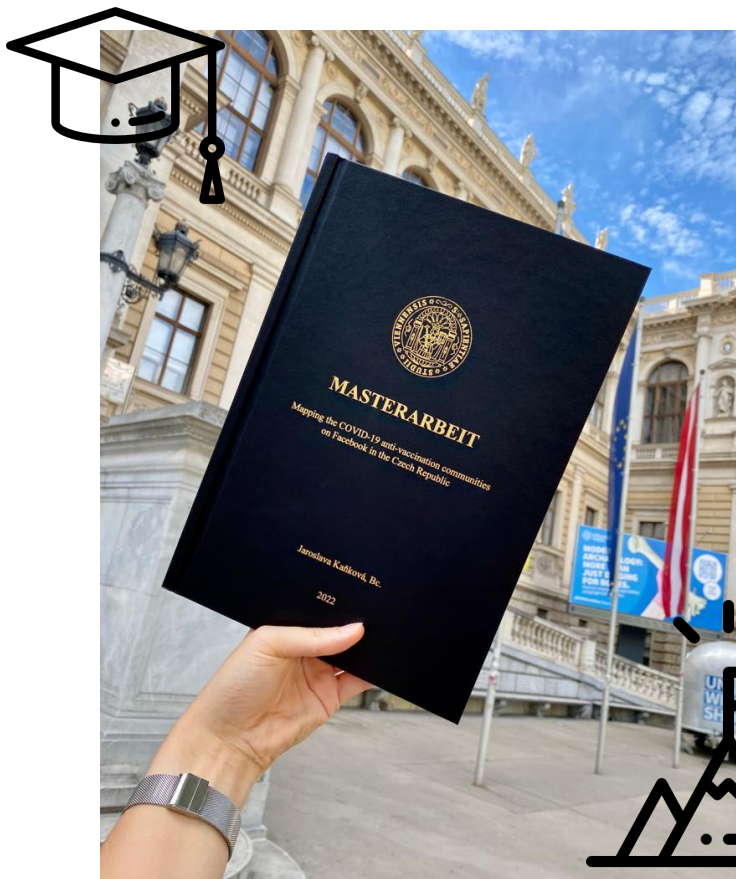
- pages are to be printed on both sides, therefore, include blank pages in the PDF file if needed (use the same document you have submitted to HOPLA),

- hardcover bound (black, embossing optional – not obligatory)
 - You need to attach an abstract in English and German (1-2 pages) at the END of the document.
 - No CV – due to data protection
2. Filled form [“Master’s thesis submission”](#)
 3. Signed confirmation for uploading the thesis on HOPLA (plagiarism assessment)

The University will publish your work online. This is common practice. However, if you have reasons not to publish your thesis online, you have [to fill out the document "Blockage of the thesis" to postpone publication](#) for up to five years. Explain in the form why you choose not to publish and have it signed by your supervisor. Please note that there are only [several reasons for blocking the thesis](#).

HOPLA version

- PDF, one document only
- If there are some supplements which cannot be uploaded (videos etc.) or if your file is more than 40 MB write to: e-theses.ub@univie.ac.at
- Use at least PDF Version 1.4. If you do not have the current version: pdf.zid@univie.ac.at will do it for you
- Also make sure that everything worked out with the font and formats, there is no possibility to change it after submission
- From page 7 on no personal data (no name or Matrikelnummer, no CV, no name in the header, no name in the info to the document, no name in the title of the uploaded document)



Printed version

- A4, printed on both sides
- Page margins set wider, so that printing is not a problem
- 2 hardcover bound copies
- Have to be exactly the same as the document uploaded to HOPLA (use same document)
- Hand in to SSC not later than 10 days after uploading to HOPLA

FYI: [u:thesis](#) lists all academic theses that have been positively assessed at the University of Vienna since 2008. Most of the theses are freely available online.

7. The master's examination/defensio:

You will get an email indicating your exact time and place of the exam approximately 10 days before the exam. The exam takes 30 minutes:

- 5 min spot-on presentation of your thesis: research questions, social/scientific relevance, theory, method, main findings, implications. PowerPoint presentation is generally NOT needed and NOT wanted (however, clarify with your supervisor),
- 10 – 15 min questions from your supervisor on the thesis,
- 10 – 15 min questions from your second examiner on your chosen topics.

After that you will have to wait outside for a short time while professors decide on a grade. You will get called back in and told if you passed the exam.

When SSC will be processing your grade, they will send you an email and ask to fill in statistical data on study-related stays abroad (Statistics Austria, to be filled in even if no stay abroad was made) <https://www.statistik.at/uhstat/uhstat2/>. After completing, send SSC a PDF confirmation from the website.

Within 4 weeks you will receive a PDF version of your diploma with the date of the defensio stated as the date of your graduation.

If you want to order a physical copy of your diploma, find information here:

<https://event.univie.ac.at/en/ceremonies-and-celebrations/ceremonies-celebrations/certificates/>

If you want a graduation ceremony, visit this page:

<https://event.univie.ac.at/en/ceremonies-and-celebrations/ceremonies-celebrations/>



Master's thesis formal requirements



Basic Formal Requirements and Quality Criteria

With the master's thesis you demonstrate that you are able to independently address a research question at an advanced scientific level and to appropriately present, contextualize and document the results, thereby generating new knowledge relating to the problem studied. The use of empirical methods (qualitative or quantitative) is encouraged. Equally important is the correct and solid foundation of your research in the relevant literature.

Regarding the **format and length of the thesis**, there are two options. Please consult with your supervisor about which option to choose:

- a) **Monograph:** In this case, the thesis should comprise roughly 25,000 words (approximately 60 pages), excluding title page, abstract, references, figures, tables, and/or (methodological) appendices.
- b) **Journal Article:** This option is only to be chosen in agreement with your supervisor. The aim is to write a manuscript, which is ready for submission to an academic journal and will eventually get published. In this case, the manuscript should be of a length of 8,000 to 10,000 words, excluding title page, abstract, references, figures, tables, and/or (methodological) appendices. The manuscript should comply with the submission guidelines/style guide of the chosen journal (e.g., APA format). Please consult with your supervisor about a thematically fitting journal in the field.

Central quality criteria of a Master's thesis are:

- **Relevance:** The chosen research question has to be of scientific/social relevance. It has to be clear how your research theoretically, methodologically and/or empirically adds to the body of knowledge. Original empirical research is particularly appreciated, but (systematic) literature reviews, meta analyses, secondary data analyses, replications of existing studies, are also encouraged. Relevance is also assessed with regard to the results – whether new insights have

been gained and are sufficiently differentiated. To be clear, also negative results, null results, and replications count as new insights.

Rigor: The research should adhere to the highest scientific standards – theoretically and methodologically. The state of research should be reviewed sufficiently in breadth and depth, and the relevant literature should be critically discussed. The theoretical and methodological approaches chosen should be suitable for addressing the research question. The measures and procedures should be appropriate to the complexity of the subject matter and well documented in order to be fully traceable and reproducible. The thesis should comply with the [ethical guidelines of the department](#). If you prepare a journal article, please consult with your supervisor whether approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is needed. We also strongly encourage following [Open Science principles](#).

Clarity: The approach and the results should be presented in an understandable and comprehensible way. A line of argumentation should be clearly developed and reflected in the structure of the paper. The individual steps of the research process should be presented in an intersubjectively comprehensible manner. A fluent style, correct spelling, clear layout and functional visualizations are basic requirements.



Grading Criteria

Master's theses serve to demonstrate the ability to work independently on a social science topic and to do so in a comprehensible and methodologically correct manner. The topic of the thesis is determined in agreement between the student and the supervisor. The task must be designed in such a way that it is possible and reasonable for the student to complete it within six months (assuming full-time study, cf. Statutes § 14 Para. 1). The topic of the master's thesis must be oriented towards the objectives and focal points of the degree programme.

The assessment is usually carried out by the supervisor. According to the university's statutes, the deadline for the assessment is a maximum of two months from submission.

A written report of 1 to a maximum of 3 pages must be prepared for the assessment. The report serves to justify the grade and should address the following points:

1. Research question, positioning within the current state of research, independence

- Are the research question, objective, and guiding research interest clearly stated?
- Is the state of research presented appropriately and critically?
- Is the relevance of the topic to the field of research made clear?
- Did the student work on the research topic adequately and independently?

2. Theory, methodology, research design

- Is the research design described clearly and consistently?
- Are the theoretical foundations (clarity of terminology, theoretical concepts and perspectives, etc.) adequately elaborated?
- Can the goal of the work be achieved with the chosen methodology?
- Do methods of data collection and data analysis match?

3. Significance and quality of the selection of sources or the empirical work

- Is the empirical material used or the corpus of sources processed appropriately with regard to the research question?
- Is the procedure (work with sources, collection and analysis of the material/data) presented in a comprehensible way?
- Is the methodology applied correctly and adequately?

4. Presentation of the results and their significance for the research area

- Are the results produced, described, analyzed and interpreted conclusively and according to scientific standards?
- Do the discussion of the results and conclusions link back to the state of research and current debates in the subject area?
- Are theoretical implications of the research discussed?
- Are limitations of the study addressed?

5. Ethics and reflexivity

- Does the candidate follow a non-discriminatory and gender-inclusive stance at the level of content and language?
- Does the author sufficiently reflect their own position in the research process?
- Are ethical challenges addressed and reflected in the research design as well as in the implementation?
- Are ethical research standards sufficiently taken into account?

6. Good scientific practice, structure of the work, and formal aspects

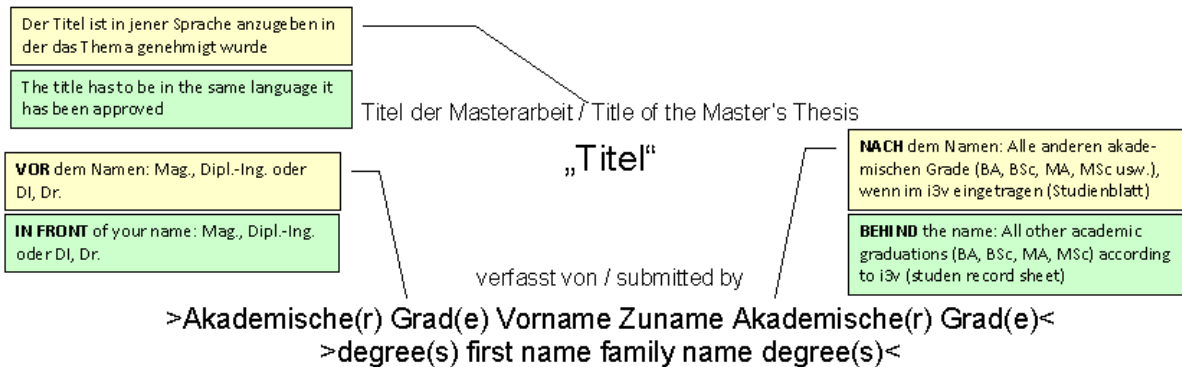
- Does the thesis adhere to guidelines of good scientific practice?

- Is the master's thesis comprehensible, coherent and balanced in the relationship of the individual parts?
- Is the use of literature appropriate (type, number and topicality of the publications used, uniform and correct citation)?
- Does the work formally meet the requirements of scientific work (including consistent use of non-discriminatory and gender-inclusive writing)?
- Does the work meet the requirements for linguistic accuracy and comprehensibility (correct spelling, punctuation, grammar; clarity, and precision of language)?

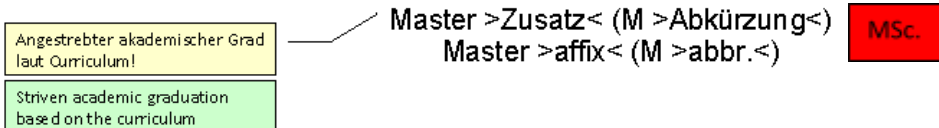
Das Design darf **nicht** verändert werden,
alle Platzhalter (> / <) entfernen

Do **not** alter the design and
remove all placeholders (> / <)

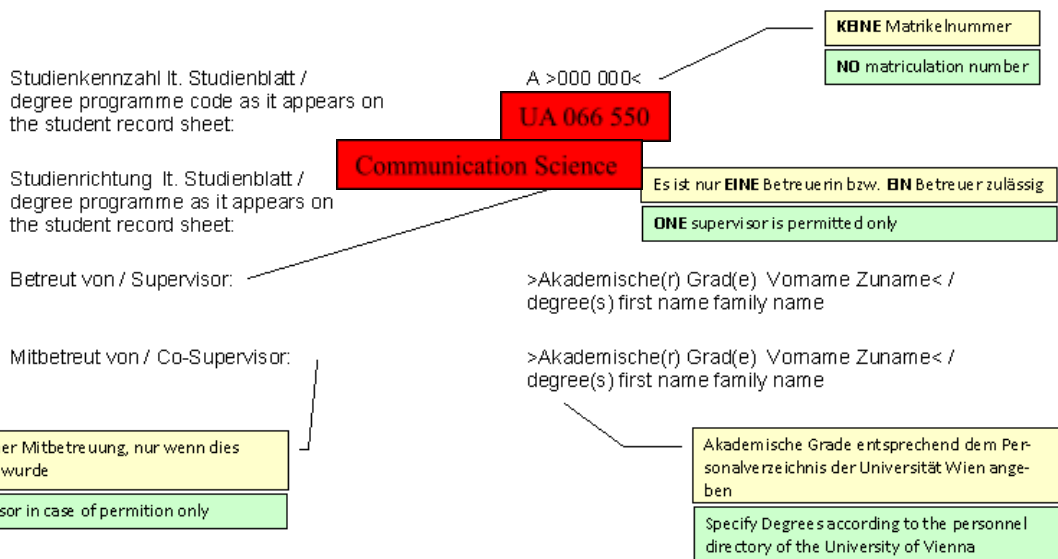
MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS



angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of



Wien, >Jahr< / Vienna >Year<



Eingelangt am:

Protokollnummer:



Registration for master's examination (Defensio)

Personal details

Student ID number:

Degree program code (as it appears on the student record sheet "Studienalt"): **A**

Family name:

First name:

Academic degree(s):

Phone:

E-Mail:

Specifications concerning the examination /suggested date

Examination date (weekday, date, time):

Location of examination:

Examination committee / suggestion

Head:

Examiner:

Defensio:

Examiner:

Examination Subject:

Examiner:

Examination Subject:

Examiner:

Examination Subject:

Signature of the candidate

I am aware that this application form has to be handed in at the responsible examination unit (StudienServiceStelle) on time.

Date

Signature

2nd examiner (“Zweitprüfer”)

Below is a list of the topics for the oral exam of the professors of our department regularly teaching in the MSc program. This is meant to give you a quick overview on the topics. To get the full examination modalities and corresponding literature lists of a professor, please contact their teaching assistant. You can find contacts of the assistants in the [professor's profile](#) or in the [list of the current teaching assistants](#). If there is no assistant, contact the professor directly.

For choosing the exam topics, the following general rules apply:

- You must choose **two topics**, both of which must be from the same examiner. For example, Political Advertising and Eye-Tracking from section Advertising Research (Prof. Matthes).
- You do **not** need to search for additional literature, only the texts that you agree upon with your examiner are relevant for the exam. Most of the literature can be accessed via [UNIVIE client](#) and via [u:search](#).
- **Attention:** Please send an email to your second examiner **after** you have chosen your topics and **before** you start to study for your exam. You will receive a short notification, informing you if your choice of second examiner and topics is approved.
- When choosing the two topics, please be mindful of the fact that you are **not allowed** to choose texts that are directly related to the topic of your Master's thesis. If in doubt, please consult with your second examiner.

Overview of the Second Examiner Topics

Prof. Boomgaarden

Political Communication

- Media, political knowledge and political participation
- Election campaigning in the media and its effect
- Soft news and humor in political communication
- Political advertising
- Visual political communication
- Mis- and disinformation in political communication

Methods

- Experimental methods
- Content/ text analysis
- Implicit measurement in communication studies

Prof. Einwiller

Public Relations Research

- Corporate Reputation and Identity
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Crisis Communication
- Internal Communication
- Native Advertising

Prof. Hanusch

Journalism and Society

- Methods in Journalism Studies
- Role conceptions
- Comparative journalism cultures
- Lifestyle journalism
- Journalism and culture

Prof. Lecheler

Journalism and Society

- Emotion in Journalism
- Political Journalism & News Reporting
- Data, Algorithmic & Computational Journalism
- Audience-Centered Journalism
- Journalistic Sourcing in a Digital Age

Prof. Matthes

Please note: professor Matthes is on sabbatical in summer semester 2023. He does not take any students as second examiner.

Persuasion and Effects Research

- Agenda Setting
- Spiral of Silence
- Framing & Framing Effects
- Hostile Media Phenomenon
- Humor in Political Communication
- Political Advertising
- Green Advertising
- Right-Wing Populist Campaigns
- Advertising & Children

Methods

- Content Analysis
- Experimental Research & Methods
- Implicit Measurement of Attitudes
- Qualitative and Quantitative Research Logic
- Sloppy Science
- Citizen Science
- Eye-Tracking

Prof. Sarikakis

Media and Politics Research

- Social Media, digital rights and children/youth
- European integration issues related to media & culture
- Communication and Social change as governance from below
- Communication Rights as human rights: Privacy, freedom of speech, Informational rights
- Gender and the Media
- Hate speech, gender and intersectional markers
- Globalisation and Media Regulation
- International Development Communication issues

Communication Theories and Methods

- European Integration and Media Research
- Development Communication
- Media Governance Theories
- New Media and Social Change
- Ethnography; focus groups; interviews
- institutional research methods
- International Communication

Prof. Waldherr

Methods

- Content Analysis/ Text Analysis
- Network Analysis
- Surveys
- Comparative Empirical Communication Research
- Computational Communication Science