

Assessment form Master's thesis in African Studies

Information

Name student:

Title of the thesis:

Reviewer:

Date:

Knock-out criteria: freedom of plagiarism and academic writing skills

Is the thesis absolutely free of plagiarism? Does the thesis testify to a sound command of academic writing skills? Is the language use correct in terms of spelling and grammar?

Statement by the reviewer:

...

Assessment parameter 1. Research topic, justification and purpose

Possible questions: How is the research theme delimited? Does the thesis have a clear research question, problem statement or academic goal? How are the choices for theme and research question, problem statement or academic goal justified? Is the relevance of the theme and the research question, problem statement or academic goal explicated in the thesis? Is the research question, problem statement or academic goal original and thought-provocative?

...

Indicative evaluation for this parameter:

Excellent / Very good / Good / Average / Below average / Insufficient

Assessment parameter 2. Knowledge of the research field and use of the relevant literature

Possible questions: Does the thesis contain a status quaestionis? Does this review include all relevant literature? Is the literature presented and synthesised meaningfully? Is the literature critically assessed? Is any hiatus in the literature adequately identified and a perspective developed to address this hiatus?

...

Indicative evaluation for this parameter:

Excellent / Very good / Good / Average / Below average / Insufficient

Assessment parameter 3. Explanation and use of relevant concepts and theories as well as methodological aspects

Possible questions: *Does the thesis provide a clear roadmap of the steps that are needed to address the research question, problem statement or academic goal? What theories, concepts and methods were selected to address the research question, problem statement or academic goal of the thesis? Are all theories, concepts and methods clearly and concisely explained? Are the meaning potentials attached to theories, concepts and methods clear, conform their use in the discipline, and/or are they accompanied by well-argued alternative definitions? Are the theories, concepts and methods critically and evaluatively assessed? Are the choices for the theories, concepts and methods justified? Has the literature discussed in the status quaestionis effectively been used in terms of theories, concepts and methods? Is there any reflection on the researcher's position and research ethics?*

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Indicative evaluation for this parameter:

Excellent / Very good / Good / Average / Below average / Insufficient

Assessment parameter 4. Process of gathering and quality of the data

Possible questions: *What sources/data form the basis of the thesis? Does the thesis rest on primary or secondary sources/data? How have these been gathered? In how far did the data collection process require extra dedication and engagement from the candidate (i.e., in the case of fieldwork, visits to archives, etc.)? Are the sources/data sufficiently critically assessed? Are the sources/data used in the thesis of sufficient quality and number to address the research question, problem statement or academic goal of the thesis? (In case) Exceptional scientific contribution: Has the researcher collected unique data potentially advancing the discipline?*

...

Indicative evaluation for this parameter:

Excellent / Very good / Good / Average / Below average / Insufficient

Assessment parameter 5. Research results and argumentation

Possible questions: *Are the research results clearly and logically reported? Are the theories, concepts and methods that are explained in the introduction actually used for the analysis/interpretation? Are the arguments in the thesis well-founded and do the presented sources/data adequately underpin the propositions/answers put forward? Are the arguments framed in the existing literature on the theme and the research question, problem statement or academic goal? Are the arguments coherently formulated and do they clearly relate to the theme and the research question, problem statement, or academic goal? (In case) Exceptional scientific contribution: Has the researcher developed a unique analysis of the data potentially advancing the discipline? (In case) Are the relations between the text and any images, diagrams and tables explained?*

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Indicative evaluation for this parameter:

Excellent / Very good / Good / Average / Below average / Insufficient

Assessment parameter 6. Drawing conclusions

Possible questions: *Is there a coherent relation between introduction, arguments and conclusion? Are the conclusions logical and justified? Does the thesis testify to an analytical and interpretative approach? Does the thesis testify to a critical, constructive view? Does the thesis testify to a creative, innovative interpretation? Is the relationship between the research results and previous research spelled out? Is the reliability of the conclusions assessed? Do the conclusions identify new research problems? (In case) Do the conclusions consider opportunities for applications?*

...

Indicative evaluation for this parameter:

Excellent / Very good / Good / Average / Below average / Insufficient

Assessment parameter 7. Style, annotation and general polish of the thesis

Possible questions: *Does the candidate distinguish clearly between his/her interpretations and those presented in the sources/data or the literature used? Are all citations in order and properly referenced? (In case) Are sources/data gathered during fieldwork or in archives appropriately and consistently documented? Has the thesis been written in an accessible, readable style? Is the lay-out appropriate? Are annotation and bibliography consistent, complete, correct and flawless?*

...

Indicative evaluation for this parameter:

Excellent / Very good / Good / Average / Below average / Insufficient

Assessment parameter 8. The thesis writing process (for the supervisor(s) only)

Possible questions: *How did the process of thesis-writing evolve: did the candidate work independently or did s/he require excessive supervision? Did the candidate adequately adapt to circumstances and creatively solve any problems at hand? What was the candidate's reaction to feedback: did the candidate's attitude testify to open-mindedness and did s/he critically integrate any feedback offered? Did the candidate's attitude testify to a sufficient level of self-discipline? Was the thesis completed in line with the scheduled timetable? Does the final result of the thesis writing process reflect the candidate's dedication and engagement?*

...

Indicative evaluation for this parameter:

Excellent / Very good / Good / Average / Below average / Insufficient

Summary assessment and further comments (in case)

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[On the day of the oral defence, the exam committee as a whole also deliberates on the following assessment parameter, and this after having heard all presentations, and thus armed with a comparative perspective.]

Assessment parameter 9. Oral presentation and debate

Possible questions: *Is the thesis adequately summarised during the oral presentation? Is the presentation style lively and convincing? Does the presentation testify to a sound command of academic oral communication skills? Does the candidate meaningfully react to questions and suggestions from the audience during the discussion of the thesis?*