

**Procedures for the Master’s Thesis and Research Report in the  
Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies Master’s Program (GSAM) under the  
AY2014 Curriculum (Revised January 2024)**

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## **1. Master's Thesis Committee**

A Master's Thesis Committee is established within GSA to administer the procedures for examination and evaluation of Master's Theses and Research Reports.

## **2. Master's Thesis Committee Structure**

The Master's Thesis Committee shall consist of one chairperson and two members nominated by the Dean and approved by the GSA Faculty Council. The Associate Dean of GSA will chair the Master's Thesis Committee and members will be appointed from each Major. The term of appointment is one (1) year and members can be reappointed.

## **3. Master's Thesis or Research Report**

Students are required to submit a Master's Thesis or Research Report and pass the screening and examination to obtain a Master's Degree in GSA. A faculty member within the Major and Division to which the Master's student is affiliated will become the student's supervisor. The length of a Master's Thesis/Research Report shall be approximately 15,000 words long, not counting the bibliography and any appendices. However, the length may vary depending on the discipline and may be set by the Division. In the case of Japanese language, the length shall be equivalent to the standards set for English language Master's Theses and Research Reports.

## **4. Master's Thesis/Research Report Language**

The Master's Thesis or Research Report should normally be presented in English and, as a general rule, each submitted Master's Thesis or Research Report should include an abstract in English. However, in the case that it is to the advantage of the student to present his/her Master's Thesis/Research Report in Japanese due to the original data and research materials being mostly found in Japanese sources, etc., the student may be allowed to do so upon approval by the Dean. In such cases, an extended abstract in English must be provided.

## **5. Joint Research Presentations**

Joint Research Presentations within each Division will be held every quarter. In these presentations, students will present the main points and current progress of their research to the faculty members and students affiliated with their Division for feedback. As a rule, all students are required to give a presentation at least once before the submission of the Master's Thesis/Research Report.

## **6. Research Proposal Approval**

Students are required to submit a Research Proposal approved by their supervisor to the Academic Office for examination by the Division as stipulated in Clause 14, Table 1.

## **7. Master's Thesis/Research Report Submission**

### **7-1. Notification of Intent to Submit a Master's Thesis/Research Report**

Students must submit a Notification of Intent to Submit a Master's Thesis/Research Report, describing the type and outline of the Master's Thesis/Research Report, to the Academic Office at least one month before the submission deadline specified in Clause 14, Table 2.

### **7-2. Changing type of Final Written Outcome**

Even after submission of the Notification of Intent to Submit a Master's Thesis/Research Report, the type of Final Written Outcome may be changed until the submission deadline specified in Clause 14, Table 2. Students who wish to change the type of Final Written Outcome must apply for the change with the approval of their supervisor, after which it will be authorized by the Dean. However, under no circumstances is a change in the type of Final Written Outcome permitted after it has been submitted for screening and examination.

### **7-3. Submission**

Students must submit one soft copy of their Master's Thesis/Research Report to the Academic Office as stipulated in Clause 14, Table 2. As a rule, all students are required to give a presentation at least once before the submission of the Master's Thesis/Research Report.

### **7-4. Re-submission**

Students who have passed the oral examination as per 11-1, and have made all corrections as detailed in the evaluation report per 11-3, must submit one soft copy of their Master's Thesis/Research Report to the Academic Office by the due date as stipulated in Clause 14, Table 2.

## **8. Master's Thesis/Research Report Format**

In principle, a Master's Thesis/Research Report should contain the following:

1. Title Page, 2. Table of Contents (should describe the contents in sufficient detail), 3. Certification Page (that the Master's Thesis/Research Report contains only original and/or properly referenced material), 4. Acknowledgements (for any support and advice given), 5. Abstract, 6. Main Text, 7. Conclusions, 8. References, 9. Appendices (supporting material in addition to the main text)

## **9. Examiners**

(1) Two (2) faculty members will examine the Master's Thesis/Research Report. The supervisor will be one of the examiners and the other examiner will be appointed by the Division Head from within the Division. However, examiners from different Divisions may also be selected.

(2) If it is beneficial in light of the content of the Master's Thesis/Research Report, and the Division Head and supervisor propose so, the Dean may approve the appointment of a faculty member without graduate school qualifications.

(3) In the case that the Division Head is the student's supervisor, the Dean or the Associate Dean of GSA

shall appoint the second examiner for them. The examiners will be advised of each other's names.

## **10. Screening and Examination Criteria of Master's Thesis/Research Report**

The Master's Thesis/Research Report should achieve or exceed the quality of research of peers working in the same field at the graduate level. The research project is assessed based on the following criteria, among others.

### **10-1. Master's Thesis**

#### **1) Originality**

The Master's Thesis provides original knowledge in terms of theories, methods, or empirical findings for academics, practitioners, or society.

#### **2) Research Question/Topic**

The research question/topic is well-thought-out in its field's standard and is defined within the discipline's current paradigm and context of academic literature.

#### **3) Literature Review**

The literature referenced in the Master's Thesis is extensive, encompassing a broad range of sources and has the context to fully cover the necessary academic and other material to define and defend the research project's originality and significance.

#### **4) Methodology**

The Master's Thesis is grounded in objectively appropriate theory and uses well-considered methodologies to determine results.

#### **5) Structure**

The Master's Thesis structure allows for precise and logical communication of information to the audience.

#### **6) Analysis**

The Master's Thesis provides sufficient data and reasons that lead to the findings and conclusions.

#### **7) Implication**

The Master's Thesis has implications for academics, practitioners, or society.

#### **8) Writing**

The text is clear and concise without unnecessary repetition and is written in the format of an argument with substantial evidence and claims. The writing adheres to standard research practices for citations and works cited without any instances of plagiarism.

### **10-2. Research Report**

#### **1) Research Objective/Topic**

The research purpose/topic is appropriate and is defined within the relevant field's current argument and context of academic literature

#### **2) Literature Review**

The Research Report must include a review of previous studies related to the research task.

#### **3) Structure**

The structure of the Research Report allows for precise and logical communication of information to the audience.

#### 4) Discussion

The Research Report provides solid/sound reasons for its conclusions.

#### 5) Writing

The text is clear and concise without unnecessary repetition and is written in the format of an argument with substantial evidence and claims. The writing adheres to standard research practices for citations and works cited without any instances of plagiarism.

### 10-3. Oral Examination

- 1) The oral examination will be based on the content of the submitted Master's Thesis/Research Report, and through questions on its content, will determine if the student's knowledge of the subject, specialized field, and compliance with research ethics is sufficient to award them with a Master's Degree.
- 2) The oral examination is not an opportunity for the student to give a presentation. It is not permitted to submit new materials or request to give a presentation.

## 11. Screening/Examination Process

### 11-1. The Oral Examination

Examiners shall conduct an oral examination of the submitted Master's Theses/Research Reports. However, examiners may deem it necessary for students to undergo an additional written, oral, or practical examination. The examiners shall submit only one mutually agreed upon evaluation result to the Master's Thesis Committee from among the following possible results:

- 1) Pass (Meets the standard for a Master's Thesis/Research Report. May include points that need correction and can be revised by the resubmission due date, such as formatting or typographical errors and requests for small amendments or expansions of data or text).
- 2) Fail (Does not meet the standard for a Master's Thesis/Research Report)

In addition to the mutually agreed upon evaluation result, each examiner shall submit an individual evaluation report to be presented to the student.

### 11-2. Determining the Oral Examination Results

The examination evaluation given by the examiners shall be deliberated and approved by the Master's Thesis Committee. The approved results shall be reported to the Dean or the Associate Dean of GSA for determining the examination results.

In cases where the results from the examiners are judged to be incongruent, the Master's Thesis Committee will deliberate on how to handle the cases individually and the final result of such cases will be determined in consultation with the Dean.

### 11-3. Notifying Students of the Oral Examination Results

Students shall receive notification of the examination results, the names of the examiners, and copies of the examiners' evaluation reports.

#### 11-4. Screening

The examiners will screen the Master's Thesis/Research Report upon re-submission by the student after the Oral Examination. However, examiners may deem it necessary for students to undergo an additional written, oral, or practical examination. The examiners shall again submit only one mutually agreed upon evaluation result to the Master's Thesis Committee from among the following possible results:

- 1) Pass
- 2) Fail

In addition to the mutually agreed upon evaluation result, each examiner shall submit an individual evaluation report to be presented to the student.

#### 11-5. Determining the Screening Results

The screening evaluation given by the examiners shall be deliberated and approved by the Master's Thesis Committee. The approved result shall be reported to the Dean or the Associate Dean of GSA for determining the screening results.

In cases where the results from the examiners are judged to be incongruent, the Master's Thesis Committee will deliberate on how to handle the cases individually and the final result of such cases will be determined in consultation with the Dean.

#### 11-6. Notifying Students of the Screening Results

Students shall receive notification of the screening results, the names of the examiners, and copies of the examiners' evaluation reports.

### **12. Overall Evaluation for the Final Research Project**

Supervisors shall evaluate the overall grade for the Final Research Project based on the Master's Thesis Committee's final decision regarding the Master's Thesis/Research Report.

### **13. Appeal Procedures**

A student whose result as determined by the Master's Thesis Committee is "Fail" may appeal that decision.

A student who wishes to appeal must submit a written appeal to the Academic Office addressed to the Master's Thesis Committee within one (1) week of the announcement of the examination results. The submission must clearly [in a detailed and precise manner] state the grounds on which the appeal is based. The Master's Thesis Committee in consultation with the Dean will review the submission and decide whether or not to accept the appeal for evaluation. If an appeal has been accepted for evaluation, an Appeals Committee shall be established consisting of the Chair of the Master's Thesis Committee, the Dean, and one other person who has recognized expertise in the area of the student's Master's Thesis/Research Report, but who has neither previously examined the Master's Thesis/Research Report nor supervised the student. In the case that the Chair of the Master's Thesis Committee and/or the Dean is the student's supervisor, a third person shall be appointed as a member of this Committee instead. The Appeals Committee will decide how to conduct the appeal and whether to require the student to present further evidence in written or oral form

to substantiate the grounds of the appeal as stated in the original submission. After review and careful consideration of all related materials and documents, the Appeals Committee will determine the final evaluation of the case as follows:

- 1) Reject the appeal, the result originally announced to the student remains unchanged.
- 2) Accept the appeal, the result originally announced to the students will be changed to “Pass”.

However, if in the process of evaluating the appeal new evidence of plagiarism, research misconduct, etc. is uncovered, the Master’s Thesis/Research Report will be failed.

The final result of the appeal accompanied by appropriate feedback will be announced to the student, barring any unavoidable circumstances, by the day of the Graduation Ceremony for that semester.

#### 14. Time Schedule for All Programs for Completion

Table 1 Research Proposal Examination Schedule

	Spring Semester	Fall Semester
Submission	June 30	January 10
Notification of the Examination Results	August 5	February 10

※Submission period: 1-year program completion: 1<sup>st</sup> semester of enrollment  
1.5 & 2-year program completion: 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of enrollment

**Note:** If the deadline falls on a weekend or a holiday, or a day when the office is closed, the deadline will move to the immediately preceding working day.

Table 2 Master’s Thesis/Research Report Screening and Examination Schedule

	Spring Semester	Fall Semester
Submission	June 5	December 5
Notification of the Oral Examination Results	June 25	December 25
Resubmission	July 15	January 15
Notification of the Screening Results	July 31	January 31

**Note:** If the deadline falls on a weekend or a holiday, or a day when the office is closed, the deadline will move to the immediately preceding working day.

#### 15. Preservation and Publication of Master’s Theses and Research Reports

After successful examination, students are required to submit a finalized soft copy of their Master’s Thesis or Research Report for permanent binding by the University. Bound Master’s Theses and Research Reports will be forwarded to the University Library, where they will be catalogued for APU Library users.

The University does not normally publish Master’s Theses or Research Reports; however, if desired, students may undertake publication at their own expense.