

**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 September 2020)**

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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**

A 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**

A Master's Thesis or Research Report is required for 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 shall 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 15, Table 1.

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

Students must submit one soft copy of their Master's Thesis/Research Report to the Academic Office as stipulated in Clause 15, 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.

## **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. Summary of Main Arguments, 6. Main Text, 7. Conclusions, 8. References, 9. Appendices (supporting material in addition to the main text)

## **9. Examiners**

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. In the case that the Division Head is the student's supervisor, the Dean or the Associate Dean shall appoint the second examiner for them. The examiners will be advised of each other's names.

## **10. Examination Standards**

All Master's Theses and Research Reports shall be submitted and examined by the same deadline and according to the same procedures.

Master's Theses/Research Reports submitted should be of the appropriate quality and quantity, content, and should meet the standards for a Master's Thesis/Research Report in GSA below.

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

- 1) Specific analytical frameworks with extensive literature review, research questions, and hypotheses as well as explicit methodology that is common to a given academic field.
- 2) The empirical findings contain originality and provide new knowledge for academics, practitioners, or society.

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

- 1) Research background and research objectives are clearly indicated. It is recommended that analytical frameworks be set up; however, this is not compulsory.
- 2) Collecting sufficient data and evidence to attain research objectives and analysis of this data in a logical manner towards reaching certain conclusions is required. It is not mandatory to contribute anything new to the existing academic field.

## **11. Examination Process**

### **11-1. The Examination**

Examiners shall conduct the 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 (No revisions are necessary, the Master's Thesis/Research Report passes as it is written)
- 2) Minor Revision (Revisions for typos, formatting text, or changing a small amount of the text in the Master's Thesis/Research Report. Revisions of this type should take no more than a few hours)
- 3) Major Revision (Revisions for adding data, explanation, or extensive changes on entire sections or rewrites for any part of the Master's Thesis/Research Report. Revisions of this type can take anywhere from a few hours to two weeks)
- 4) Fail (Revisions required of the Master's Thesis/Research Report to pass exceed two weeks of work)

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 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 for determining the examination results.

The Master's Thesis Committee will confirm the appropriateness of the mutually agreed upon results from the examiners and approve them. In case the results from the examiners are not judged to be appropriate, the Master's Thesis Committee will deliberate on how to handle cases individually and the final result of such cases will be determined in consultation with the Dean.

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

Students shall receive notification of the examination results.

Students shall receive copies of the examiners' evaluation reports. However, an examiner may request that his/her name or certain parts of the evaluation report not be disclosed to the student. If preservation of anonymity is not requested it shall not normally be preserved.

## **12. Re-Examination Process**

### **12-1. Master's Thesis/Research Report Revision**

When a student is required by the Master's Thesis Committee to revise a Master's Thesis/Research Report, the supervisor shall coordinate the process unless the Dean and/or Chair of the Master's Thesis Committee require another person(s) to assist in the coordination of the resubmission.

### **12-2. Re-Examination**

In the event of a student being required to undertake "2) Minor revision" or "3) Major revision", the original examiners will re-examine the Master's Thesis/Research Report upon re-submission by the student. 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.

### **12-3. Determining the Re-examination Results**

The re-examination 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 for determining the re-examination results.

The Master's Thesis Committee will confirm the appropriateness of the mutually agreed upon results from the examiners and approve them. In case the results from the examiners are not judged to be appropriate, the Master's Thesis Committee will deliberate on how to handle cases individually and the final result of such cases will be determined in consultation with the Dean.

### **12-4. Notifying Students of the Re-examination Results**

Students shall receive notification of the re-examination results.

Students shall receive copies of the examiners' evaluation reports. However, an examiner may request that his/her name or certain parts of the evaluation report not be disclosed to the student. If preservation of anonymity is not requested it shall not normally be preserved.

## **13. 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.

## **14. Appeal Procedures**

A student whose examination result 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 ideally has neither previously examined nor supervised the Master's Thesis/Research Report. 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, in which case the result originally announced to the student remains unchanged.

2) Accept the appeal, in which case 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.

## 15. 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 Submission Schedule

	Spring Semester	Fall Semester
Submission	June 15	December 5
Notification of the Examination Results	July 5	December 25
Resubmission:	July 25	January 15
Notification of the Final Results	August 5	January 30

**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.

## 16. 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.