

**GUIDELINES FOR GRADING:**  
**GEOG3910 - MASTER'S THESIS IN MSc IN GLOBALISATION AND  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**Department of Geography**

**(22.04.2022)**

**I. An interdisciplinary Master's program**

The MSc in Globalisation and Sustainable Development (MSGLOPOL) is an interdisciplinary program. Admission to the programme requires a Bachelor degree in Humanities or Social Sciences with a specialisation of minimum 80 ECTS credits in one of the following disciplines:

Development studies	Political science
European Studies	Social anthropology
Geography	Social economics
History	Social work
International relations	Sociology

Given the interdisciplinary nature of the programme, students may have a different disciplinary background than the field in which they write their thesis. This must be considered in the assessment and grading of the thesis.

The contents of the thesis should correspond to an academic level appropriate for a master's level course and should relate to the interdisciplinary character of the master's program as reflected in the combination of core courses. For more information of the programme and the course description for the master's thesis, see the course description and programme webpage.

**II. Formal requirements**

Content: The MSGLOPOL master's thesis is a 30-credit thesis and should be 17 500 – 24 500 words in length (approximately 50-70 pages), excluding the summary, preface, table of contents, figures, and tables lists, references/literature lists, and appendixes.

The title page should be followed by a summary in English, maximum 1 page.

Style and references formatting: The thesis should be typed in 12 pt Times New Roman font, left-aligned with 1.5-line spacing. Alternatively, Verdana, 10 points, left-aligned, 1.15 line spacing is also acceptable.

The reference style depend on the candidate's field of study and should be clarified with the supervisor. If the field of study do not use a specific style, the candidate should choose one style and use this consistently. The following reference styles are recommended: American Psychological Association (APA), Chicago and Harvard.

Assessment: After the thesis has been submitted the candidate will be allotted a date and time for an up to 60-minute oral examination based on the thesis. At the beginning of the oral examination the candidate must give a 10-minute oral presentation of the thesis where choice of topic, research objectives, methodological choice and findings are explained.

The candidate must have the master's thesis available during the oral exam, and they can also bring notes.

After the oral examination the examiners will meet alone briefly to finalize the overall grade based on the master's thesis and the oral examination. The student will then be informed of the grade, and provided with an explanation of the grading.

Justification of grading: The candidate will be given an explanation of the grade awarded following the completion of the oral examination.

Examiners: The Department will appoint two examiners for the assessment of the thesis, one of whom will be an external examiner (Act Relating to Universities and University Colleges §3-9(2)). The external examiner cannot have been employed in a full-time position or an additional position (bistilling) at NTNU in the past year or had a part-time teaching engagement in the relevant course for the group taking the examination (Academic Regulations for the NTNU §5-11(3)). In cases of disagreement regarding grading, the external examiner will make the final decision on the grade to be awarded (Academic Regulations for the NTNU §5-11(8)).

Supervisor's role and censorship: If necessary, the examiners may contact the candidate's supervisor(s) to obtain a brief account of the candidate's work before the oral examination (Academic Regulations for the NTNU § 5-11(6)).

Appeals: A candidate has the right to appeal against the grade they have been awarded. The appeal form can be found at NTNU's 'Explanation of grades and appeals' website. The deadline for an appeal is three weeks from the date when the grade is announced (i.e. the oral exam date). In cases where the grade is based on both the written part and the oral exam, and the assessment of the written part (i.e. master's thesis) is subsequently changed, a new oral exam will be held to determine the grade (Act Relating to Universities and University Colleges 3-9 (5)). If the appeals committee reaches the same conclusion as the original examiners regarding the master's thesis (based on evaluation of both the thesis and the

original oral exam), the Department will not be under any obligation to arrange a new oral exam on the basis of the appeal.

If the appeals committee decides on a grade on the master's thesis itself that deviates by two or more grades from the original grading, a further assessment must be made before the final grade is determined (Act relating to Universities and University Colleges Act §5-3 (6)).

A candidate may appeal against procedural errors. Such an appeal should be within three weeks of the candidate finding out about a matter that gives them reason to appeal.

Fail/F: If the master thesis is given a failing (F) grade, a new or reworked thesis with significant changes can be submitted for examination (Academic Regulations for the NTNU §5-9(1)).

A substantially revised/modified thesis involves:

- asking and answering new research questions, and/or
- collects new empirical material/data, and/or
- substantially revised/modified analysis and interpretation

Plagiarism/copying is considered cheating. In cases of suspected plagiarism or copying, a grade will not be awarded to the candidate, and the case will be handled in accordance with the Department of Geography's guidelines for dealing with cheating or attempted cheating.

### **III. Grading scale**

The grading scale used in conjunction with the exam for evaluation of the thesis ranges from A (highest grade) to F (failed). Please note that a thesis in MSGLOPOL is a 30-credit thesis.

*A*: An exceptionally well-written thesis that is well organized, has well-defined research objectives, advanced theory and methodology, and especially well-performed analysis with very well formulated conclusions or recommendations. The candidate demonstrates exceptional reflective and analytical ability, and an outstanding degree of academic maturity and independence.

*B*: A very well written thesis that is well organized, has well-defined research objectives, adequate theory and methodology, and a good analysis with well-formulated conclusions or recommendations. The candidate demonstrates very good reflective and analytical ability, and a high degree of academic maturity and independence.

*C*: A well written thesis, which is good in most parts, is clear and concise, has adequate theory and methodology, a good analysis, and well-formulated conclusions or recommendations. The candidate demonstrates a certain reflective and/or analytical ability

and a certain degree of academic maturity and independence. Minor deficiencies can be accepted.

Alternatively, a thesis with a more original research objective and/or higher theoretical and methodological aims, but where certain theoretical and/or methodological weaknesses are found.

*D:* The work indicates little independence and limited ability in formulating clear approaches to one or more of the following: Problem formulation, theory, methodology, analysis, presentation of findings and/or conclusion and recommendations. Treatment of research problems and presentation of results are characterised by serious theoretical and methodological errors. The candidate demonstrates a low degree of reflective and/or analytical ability and a low degree of academic maturity and independence.

*E:* The thesis is characterised by a lack of understanding of approaches to research, has weak scientific treatment of problems and is presented poorly. The candidate demonstrates a lack of reflective and/or analytical ability and a very low degree of academic maturity and independence.

*F:* The work is characterised by such serious errors and shortcomings in theory, methods, analysis and presentation of findings that the thesis cannot be approved.

### **III. Checklist**

Grading of master's theses should be based on the following guidelines (not in any order of priority). The candidate's ability to:

- a) Develop precise research problems and thoroughly investigate a research topic.
- b) Develop an overview of a topic and familiarise themselves with theoretical and empirical research within the selected field.
- c) Construct independent theoretical, methodological and analytical contributions to a field
- d) Apply methodologies and use appropriate methods for the proposed research
- e) Structure and present their work, including conforming to current standards for contributions to scientific publications, e.g.scientific referencing.