

Thesis Report

Institution: Joint program component

Year: Year 1

Course type: Core program component: research component

Assessment: 100% assignments (report of 6000 words)

ECTS: 10

Brief description (including learning outcomes):

Mundus MAPP includes a significant research training and independent research component, preparing students for further studies and/or jobs requiring research skills following graduation.

Work on the student's research project starts with a short statement of thesis topic, submitted to ISS/CEU by March of year one, stating a preference for a supervisor at the first year institution, who will act as primary supervisor in academic year one. In the following month, a second supervisor from York/IBEI will be allocated to the student, with this faculty member taking over primary supervisory responsibilities from the ISS/CEU supervisors when students progress from year 1 to 2. The two supervisors will collaborate and jointly advise the student during the two years of the program until the thesis is submitted.

The thesis report should be written after coursework finishes in the first academic year. The report serves as an advanced thesis proposal which already covers considerable ground for the thesis itself, to be written in year two. The report will be a paper of 6,000 words (including all references, footnotes, bibliography, appendices, and abstract), which includes a problem specification (research question/ rationale), initial literature review, methods and, where appropriate, hypotheses and case study selection; as well as work plan detailing deadlines the student intends to observe for writing up the different parts of the thesis. The topic of the thesis report (and by extension the thesis) should be relevant to the student's mobility track.

The report is due by August 31 of year one, and is jointly graded by the two supervisors, each contributing half the final grade. Students receive detailed comments from the graders, and a single grade allocated in the ISS/CEU grading scheme.

Learning objectives

With the report the student demonstrates the capacity to:

- identify a research topic
- formulate research questions
- undertake an initial literature review
- choose an adequate method to research the problem
- presented a convincing proposal for the final thesis including a statement regarding the objectives of the research, the research question, a short review of the relevant theoretical background and a statement on the methodology.

The thesis report should achieve the following:

1. Lead us into the general, then the specific topic.
2. Indicate that there is a gap, an area or puzzle that is unanswered or unresolved.
3. State the research question (as a question, where methodologically appropriate).
4. Indicate briefly how this question will be answered (i.e. what methods you have chosen).
5. Point to the value of this research, either practical (how it will benefit policy) or academic (how it will advance our knowledge).
6. Provide a review of relevant literature and indicate how it will help you deal with the chosen topic.
7. Provide a work plan with deadlines and deliverables up to the end of the thesis writing period.

The thesis report will be marked in the ISS or CEU marking system, using the following assessment criteria:

- Problem specification: Is the research question to be pursued in the thesis clear and suitable?

- Does the thesis report provide a convincing rationale for pursuing the proposed research?
- Presentation of concepts / theory: Does the report identify a suitable approach/theoretical framework/key concepts that will guide the thesis?
- Literature review: does the report identify relevant body/bodies of literature? Does it show a good understanding of appropriate/relevant literature? Is the literature competently reviewed, and its relevance for the thesis well established?
- Research design and methods: Is the report explicit about the research design of the planned thesis, including, where appropriate, hypotheses and case study selection? Does it provide a good discussion of planned data collection and analysis, of sources and methods that will be used? Are the chosen method/s well justified?
- Referencing: Is the use of literature and sources competent? Is referencing in line with good scholarly standards?
- General presentation: Is the report neatly presented and clearly structured? Is the language clear and correct? Is the report within (and not significantly shorter than) the expected 6,000 words?
- Quality of work plan: Does the thesis report include a realistic work plan and time table towards completion of the thesis, of the major milestones and deliverables?