

Joint Master “Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security“ (M.Sc.)

Master’s Thesis FAQs

Most Relevant Resources

- this Master’s Thesis FAQ & the [eCampus](#) folder (Joint Master GeoRisk » Master Thesis, PW: MsGeoRisk).
- the Examination Regulations ([here](#))
- the Joint Master’s Examination Office ([here](#))

General

When should I start to think about my master’s thesis?

You should keep your master’s thesis in mind from the beginning of your studies. It is advisable to keep a list where you note down any thesis ideas you come across during your studies, or in connection to your previous academic work (e.g. your bachelor’s thesis). You should aim to have some ideas by the beginning of your 3rd semester.

When should I write my master’s thesis?

The Master’s thesis is usually written following your internship at the end of your studies. The usual writing period is April until September, i.e. during the fourth semester, in accordance with the expected regular study time of 2 years. The thesis may however be started earlier if the formal preconditions are met (see below).

What are the requirements for starting the master’s thesis?

You can register your master’s thesis after acquiring at least 60 ECTS. Also, you must be a matriculated student throughout the registration, writing and submission of your thesis.



Do I need to stay enrolled while I write my thesis?

Yes. You need to re-register for each new semester and pay the semester fees until you submit your thesis. It is not allowed to be on a leave of absence during your thesis. You may only exmatriculate *after* submitting your thesis, if all other examinations *including* the internship have been completed. Please also refer to §19 & §20 of the Rules & Regulations (Prüfungsordnung).

Which important formalities should I generally keep in mind?

For an overview about the most relevant formalities, kindly have a look at the following page by the Joint Master Examination Office [here](#).

Topic & Supervision

How do I determine my thesis research topic?

Determining your thesis topic is a joint process between you and your supervisor. However, it is your responsibility to come up with an articulated basis for discussion of your thesis idea first before approaching any potential supervisor. Your envisaged research topic should then be discussed with your intended supervisor, leading up to a formal written research proposal. Once the supervisor has accepted your proposal, you can register your master's thesis at the GIUB Joint Master's Examination Office (see below).

Who will assess my thesis?

Your thesis will be assessed and graded by two examiners. The first examiner is your supervisor. The second examiner will be determined by the Examination Office after your thesis submission.

What's the difference between the two examiners?

Your first examiner (i.e. your thesis supervisor) is your contact to discuss the scientific conduct of your thesis both before and during your thesis writing period. The second assessor's role is however only to conduct a second evaluation and grading of your submitted thesis after submission.

Who can supervise my thesis?

Your thesis supervisor must be an approved lecturer from the Uni Bonn or UNU-EHS. A regularly updated list of potential thesis supervisors can be found in eCampus.

How do I find a supervisor?

After having gained a better idea about your potential thesis topic(s), you should identify one or more potential supervisors from the thesis supervisor list provided in eCampus whose academic expertise relates most to your envisaged thesis topic(s). You should then proceed to establish contact with the most closely related researcher via email.

Important: Please **do not** contact multiple potential supervisors at once. Please contact the – apparently – most suited person first, and then proceed to the next one if the first one is unable or not suited to take on your supervision.

Can I suggest a second examiner myself?

Yes. You may indicate a preferred second thesis examiner when registering your thesis, or afterwards in coordination with the Examination Office. Please note, the second examiner will finally be defined by the Academic Board.

Can an external person supervise my thesis?

An external person (i.e. a person not lecturing at UNU-EHS or the Uni Bonn) may only act as an advisor to your thesis. This person may however not eventually examine (i.e. grade) your thesis. Any such involvement of a third entity must be discussed and agreed upon with your supervisor.

Registration

How and where do I register?

To register your thesis, please follow the detailed information provided by the Examination Office for the Joint Master [here](#).

Who is the responsible contact person?

The responsible contact person is Ms. Yvonne Hilger, yhilger@uni-bonn.de; tel. (0)228 73-4291. All further contact information can be found [here](#).

How long is the writing period?

The writing period is 6 months, starting with the registration date of your thesis. You must submit your completed thesis within this time frame. Any submission after the officially assigned submission date will cause the thesis to be considered *failed*.

How do I submit my thesis?

The master's thesis has to be submitted to the Examination Office (see above) both as hardcopies as well as on a digital medium as explained [here](#). You are also welcome to send your thesis via registered post mail (*Einschreiben*). Please then make sure to hand it in at the post office on your due date at the latest and keep the confirmation slip for your files.

Can I submit my thesis from abroad?

Yes, but this must be coordinated with Ms. Hilger at the GIUB Examination Office in advance.

Do I have to submit a Turnitin report along with my thesis?

No, you do not have to submit a Turnitin report along with your thesis submission. However, it is highly encouraged that you make use of the Turnitin platform to have your thesis work checked prior to your submission in your own interest. Also, thesis supervisors may request to be provided with a Turnitin report on a given thesis submission via the Education Unit.

Data Collection

When should I collect the data for my thesis research?

The data collection is part of the thesis writing period. It is thus principally *not* allowed to utilize data collected outside the writing period, e.g. during your internship (see also below).

Is there an official consent form template that can be used for conducting field research?

No, there is no such template. Any such documentation should be discussed and created by the student in coordination with his/her supervisor.

Can I be given an official letter to support my research project vis-à-vis e.g. governmental or federal authorities?

Yes, such a supporting letter can be issued upon request to master-georisk@ehs.unu.edu.

Internship

Can I write my thesis first instead and do the internship afterwards?

Yes, this is possible, if the formal preconditions are met (see above). The usual writing period would be January until June in this case. Please be aware that you need to have determined a topic and a supervisor much earlier in this case.

Could the idea for my thesis result from my internship?

Yes, it is very welcome if thesis ideas are developed as a result of/in connection to your internship. Please however note the hint below in this regard.

Could I utilize data gathered during my internship for my master's thesis later on so to »skip« the separate data collection in order to save time?

No, it is not allowed to »combine« any internship and thesis research in this fashion.

Can I register my thesis in parallel to my internship and conduct my field research at the same hosting organization?

Yes, it is possible to register your thesis in parallel to your internship and to conduct your thesis field research at the same organization that hosts you for your internship. Nevertheless, it is crucial that any research conducted as part of your internship is clearly distinguished from your »thesis work« at the hosting organization (see again above).

Grading & Assessment

Which criteria are applied for the assessment of my thesis after submission?

For an overview of potential criteria suggested by the Department of Geography, kindly have a look at the chart below. Please also be aware that the weight and detail dedicated to individual criteria is up to the discretion of the respective examiner.

Content-related conduct

- Comprehensible structure of the work
- Relevance/stringency of the question / problem
- Relation to topic, precise argumentation
- Appropriate technical terminology and subject-related level of knowledge
- Theoretical foundation, display of relevant theories on the subject
- Technically adequate conduct in the context of the thesis objective(s)
- Independent scientific reflection
- Results and conclusions related to the question / problem

Methodology

- Targeted selection and processing of relevant literature
- Reflection on the general literature / data situation
- Selection and justification of appropriate methods in case of own empirical work
Reflection on quality of gathered data
- Reflection on the performance of chosen methods
- Well-founded and understandable selection of the examination unit / region
- Transparent / traceable data collection & processing in case of own empirical data
- Adherence to precise argumentation

Presentation and form

- Linguistic form (expression, spelling, grammar, etc.)
- Visualization (graphics, charts, etc.)
- Layout
- Citation style and in-text references
- Referencing of figures, tables, etc.
- Uniform and complete bibliography
- Uniformity of other directories

Final overall assessment

- Defects, deficits, weaknesses
- Strengths, self-dependent conduct, originality