

Manual Master Thesis Philosophy Tilburg University



Manual for the MA thesis in philosophy at Tilburg University

Full time & part time

EBO: Ethiek van Bedrijf & Organisatie

PCC: Philosophy of Contemporary Challenges

PHC: Philosophy of Humanity & Culture

PMP: Philosophy of Mind & Psychology

PDD: Philosophy of Data and Digital Society

Version: 14-09-2023

CONTENTS

1. Introduction – p. 4
2. Flow chart of the thesis procedure – p. 5
3. Thesis timeline – p. 9
4. Phase 1: writing a thesis plan & filling in the thesis registration form – p. 12
5. Phase 2: writing the MA thesis – p. 14
6. Explication of terms used – p. 21

1. INTRODUCTION

The MA thesis is an autonomously written philosophical investigation. The student must take the lead in executing the project. The supervisor only gives advice. The way to go must be figured out by the student themselves.

MA students are supposed to be able to perform philosophical research autonomously. They can expound philosophical problems on an advanced academic level and apply their knowledge to problems in society.

The department will try to accommodate each student's personal interest in doing the investigation. The student has a definitive say in choosing their own supervisor (given the availability constraints of the supervisor and their endorsement of the student's project) and supervision is a one-on-one interaction between student and supervisor.

The *learning goals* are defined as follows. In the MA thesis, the student shows the ability:

- to formulate a philosophically relevant research question. (PLO 2.2)
- to find, analyze and synthesize academic literature relevant to the research question comprehensively. (PLO 5.1)
- to select, justify, and execute a proper argumentative strategy. (PLO 3.1)
- to draw correct conclusions from philosophical arguments and to identify and process possible objections to these conclusions. (PLO 3.1)
- to present the final findings in a clear, focused, and nuanced way. (PLO 3.1)
- to structure an academic text in a clear, well-balanced and coherent way. (PLO 5.1)
- to use language at an academic level and follow guidelines about lay-out and referencing. (PLO 5.1)
- to provide an original contribution to the philosophical debates relevant to the research question. (PLO 4.1)

(For the formal criteria of the MA thesis, see appendices 3 & 4: the MA thesis assessment forms.)

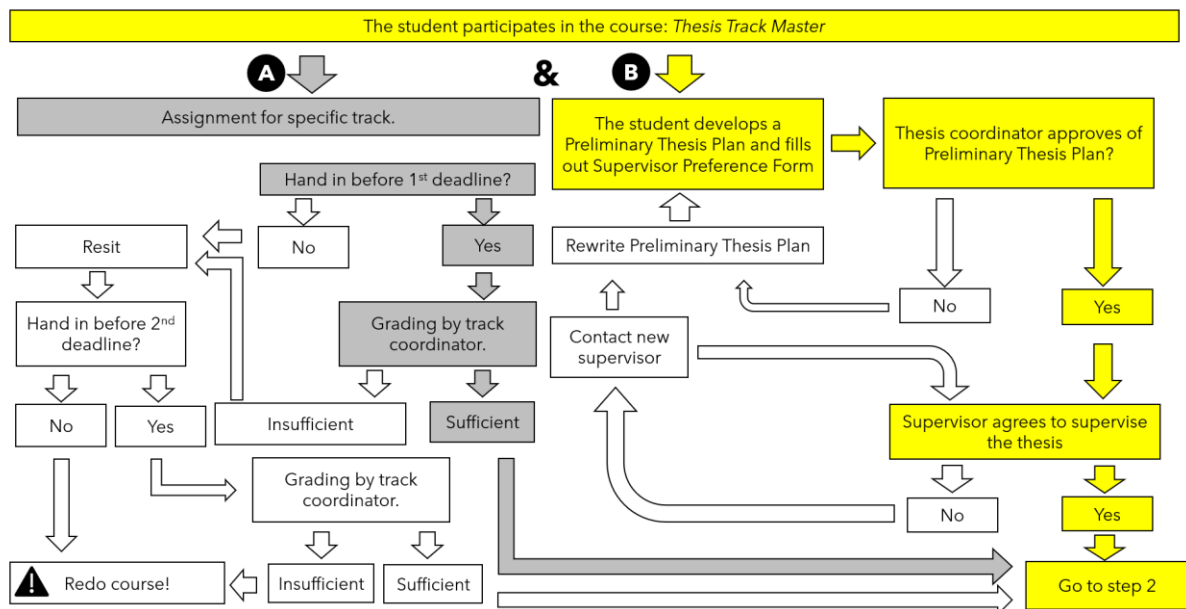


2. FLOW CHART OF THE THESIS PROCEDURE

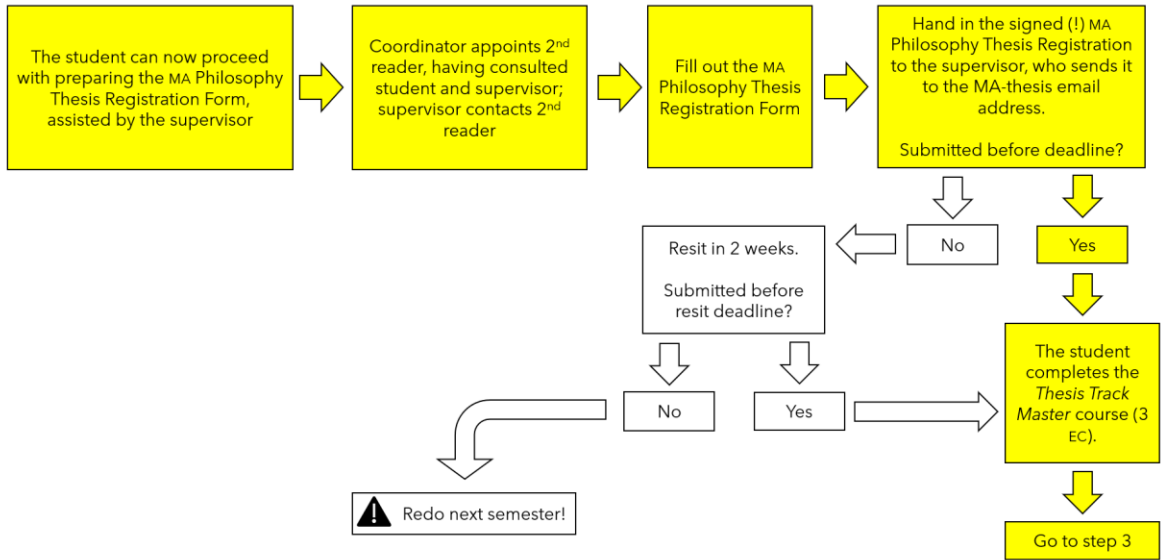
This MA thesis procedure was instated on September 1, 2018. In this procedure strict deadlines were introduced, so a tight planning is needed. In order to be able to write a philosophy MA thesis the student should be aware that the thesis is *not a life achievement*, but should be considered to be a large paper – it is just one more academic test – though of course, an important one. So, students are strongly advised to keep it feasible and limited.

Below the procedure is presented in different steps using a flow chart. In this flow chart, the routes in gray and yellow are the routes that lead to a finished MA thesis. A description of the procedure can be found in sections 4 and 5 of this manual.

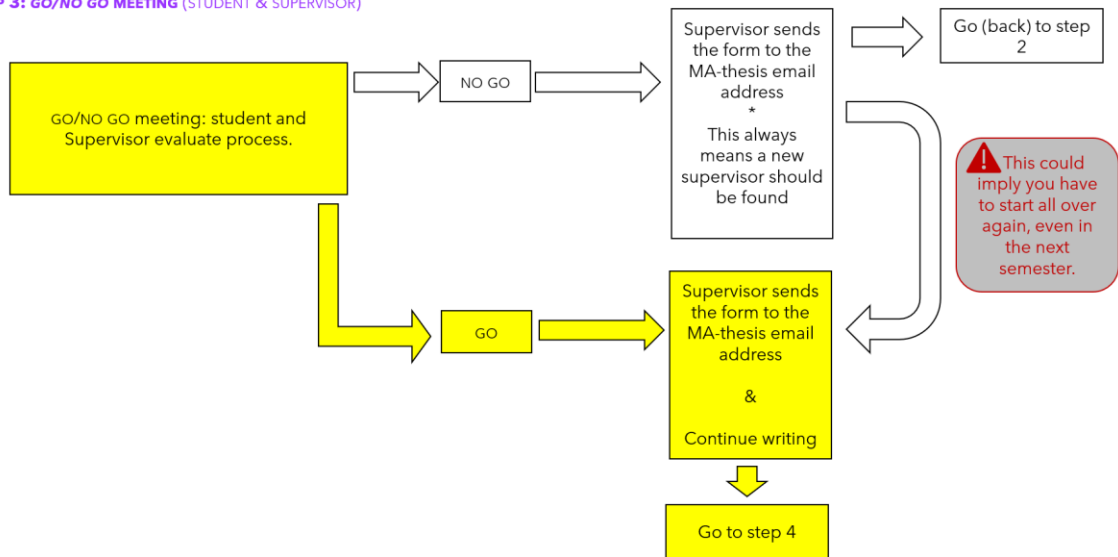
STEP 1: PRELIMINARY THESIS PLAN (STUDENT & THESIS COORDINATOR)



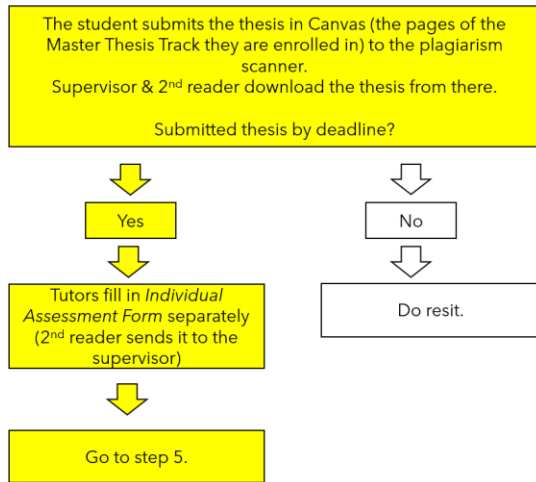
STEP 2: THE THESIS REGISTRATION FORM (STUDENT, SUPERVISOR & SECOND READER)



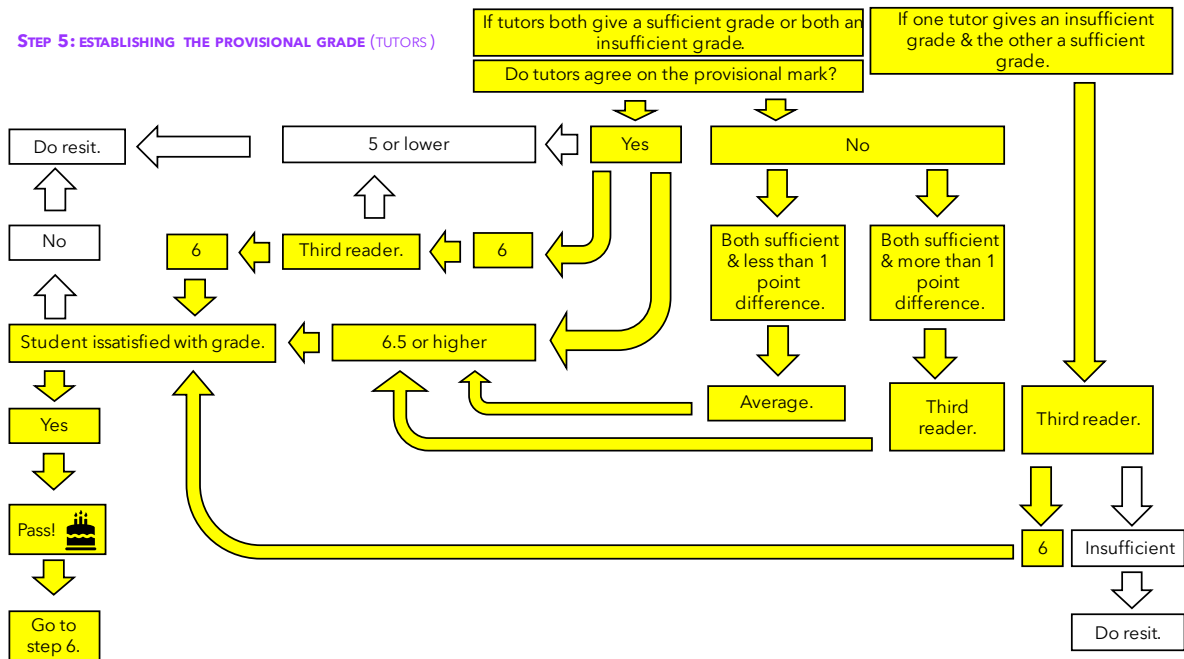
STEP 3: GO/NO GO MEETING (STUDENT & SUPERVISOR)



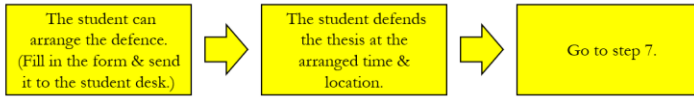
STEP 4: SUBMITTING THE THESIS (STUDENT) & INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENTS TUTORS (SUPERVISOR & SECOND READER)



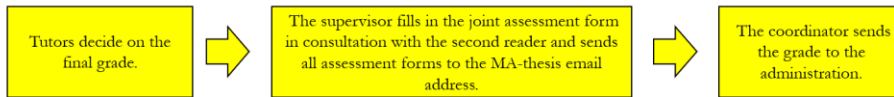
STEP 5: ESTABLISHING THE PROVISIONAL GRADE (TUTORS)



STEP 6: ARRANGING THE DEFENCE (STUDENT) & THE DEFENCE (STUDENT, TUTORS)

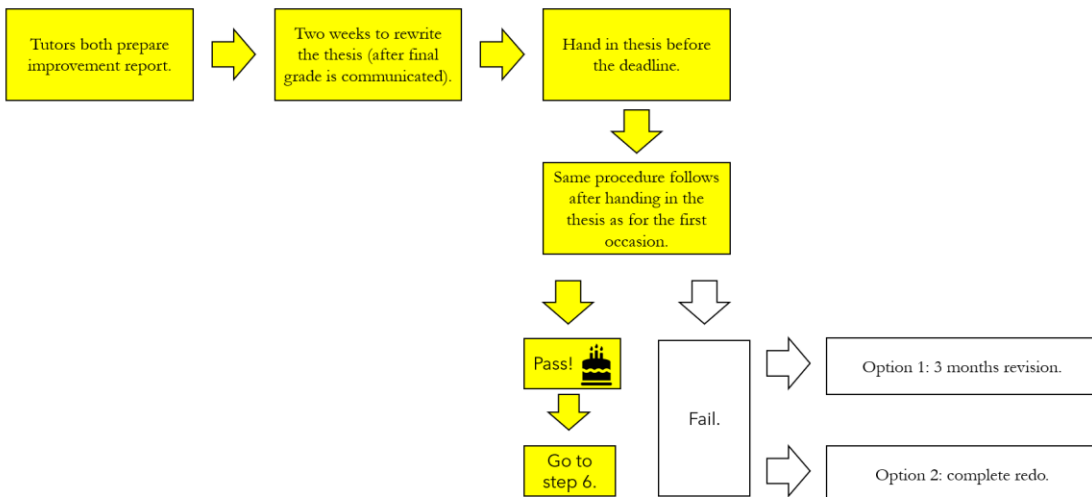


STEP 7: AFTER THE DEFENCE (TUTORS & COORDINATOR)



Do not expect that you automatically get the +0.5.
This happens only in exceptional circumstances.

RESIT (THE RESIT IS NOT A COMPLETE REDO; TUTORS & STUDENT)



3. THESIS TIMELINE

The timeline for writing a thesis takes up two entire semesters. For fulltime students this means they start with the *Master's Thesis Track* (*Scriptietraject Master*, course code 799403-M-3) in the semester they start their master. Parttime students have two years, but also have to write their thesis in one year. This means that they can start in principle in their first, second, or third semester. In any case they have to finish their MA thesis in the semester following the one in which they start. We strongly recommend parttime students to start with the *Master's Thesis Track* in the third semester and to plan their MA program in such a way that they have no courses during the fourth and last semester, so they can spend all that time on the writing of the thesis.

This means that there are two timelines. An A4 with the exact deadlines can be found on Canvas. Below are the two general timelines for starting in the fall semester (the first semester of the academic year), or the spring semester (the second semester of the academic year).

In the student's 1st semester¹ they do the required course: *Master's Thesis Track* (*Scriptietraject Master*).

- The course code is: 799403-M-3.
- In 2021-2022 a track-specific assignment was added to the course. More information will be provided by the thesis coordinator.
- If the student succeeds in this course, this results in a [1] a pass for the assignment & [2] signed *MA Philosophy Thesis Registration Form*.
- If successful, the student gets 3 EC for this course.
- If the student fails the course, the student has to take the resit next semester.
- (There is a resit both for the assignment and the Thesis Registration Form.)

In the students' 2nd semester² they do the required course: *Master Thesis Philosophy* (*Masterscriptie Filosofie*).

- The course code for all tracks is: 799402-M-12.
- The amount of EC awarded when successful is: 12 EC.³

¹ For parttime students this can also be the second or third semester of their programme.

² For parttime students this is the semester immediately following the semester in which they did the course: *Master's Thesis Track*.

³ Unless a student started their programme prior to the academic year 2021-2022, then it could be the case that the code and EC are different.

Timelines

Below you'll find the general timelines (with week numbers). See Canvas for the specific dates & times of the timeline for your thesis. Practicals can be scheduled slightly different if they conflict with other parts of the master track.

Timeline fall semester (the first semester of the academic year)

Week (day)	Activity
38 (Thursday)	Practical 1.
41 (Thursday)	Practical 2.
43 (Wednesday)	Hand in Preliminary Thesis Plan to master thesis coordinator.
44 (Monday)	Fill out Supervisor Preference Form.
45 (Thursday)	Practical 3.
46 (Thursday)	Handing in Summary Assignment to track coordinator.
49 (Thursday)	Practical 4.
49 (Friday)	Resit handing in Summary Assignment to track coordinator.
2 (Friday)	Deadline submitting Thesis Registration Form (strict deadline).
4 (Friday)	Deadline submitting resit Thesis Registration Form (strict deadline).
8	Go / no go meeting & decision (talk in this week; strict deadline handing in of the form on Friday).
24 (Monday)	Submitting thesis before 23:59. (Otherwise resit.)
25 (Thursday)	Deadline assessment, preliminary mark established & communicated to coordinator.
26 (Monday)	(If needed: strict deadline assessment third reader). & Deadline assessment communicated to student.
28 (Monday)	Deadline submitting resit thesis before 23:59 (reworked version; strict deadline).
34 (Monday)	Deadline assessment resit, preliminary mark established & communicated to coordinator.
34 (Wednesday)	(If needed: strict deadline assessment resit third reader). & Deadline assessment resit communicated to student.
35	31-08: deadline defense (not a strict but preferred deadline).

Timeline spring semester (the second semester of the academic year)

Week (day)	Activity
8 (Thursday)	Practical 1.
11 (Thursday)	Practical 2.
12 (Wednesday)	Hand in Preliminary Thesis Plan to master thesis coordinator.
13 (Monday)	Fill out supervisor preference form.
15 (Thursday)	Practical 3.
16 (Thursday)	Handing in Summary Assignment to track coordinator (strict deadline).
19	Practical 4.
19 (Friday)	Handing in resit Summary Assignment to track coordinator (strict deadline).
24 (Friday)	Deadline submitting Thesis Registration Form (strict deadline).
26 (Friday)	Deadline submitting resit Thesis Registration Form (strict deadline).
35	Go / no go meeting & decision (talk in this week; strict deadline handing in of the form on Friday).
49 (Monday)	Submitting thesis before 23:59. (Otherwise resit.)
50 (Thursday)	Deadline assessment, preliminary mark established & communicated to coordinator.
51 (Monday)	(If needed: strict deadline assessment third reader). & Deadline assessment communicated to student.
2 (Monday)	Deadline submitting resit thesis before 23:59 (reworked version; strict deadline).
3 (Thursday)	Deadline assessment resit, preliminary mark established & communicated to coordinator.
4 (Monday)	(If needed: strict deadline assessment resit third reader). & Deadline assessment resit communicated to student.
5	31-01: deadline defense (not a strict but preferred deadline).



4. PHASE 1: MAKING A TRACK-SPECIFIC SUMMARY ASSIGNMENT, WRITING A THESIS PLAN & FILLING IN THE THESIS REGISTRATION FORM

Required course: Master's Thesis Track (Scriptietraject Master, 799403-M-3)

[1] The student participates in the course *Master's Thesis Track (Scriptietraject Master)*, given by the thesis coordinator Hans Dooremalen. Full time students start in the first semester of their MA program, part time students have the option of starting in the first, second, or third semester of their program. We strongly recommend parttime students to start in the third semester, unless the student has permission of the Examination Board, part-time students that start in semester x with the *Master Thesis Track*, have to write their *Master Thesis Philosophy* in semester x+1.

[2] The *Master's Thesis Track* is organized as a student self-help course under the guidance of the thesis coordinator. The course is a practical ('practicum'). Attendance is a strict requirement.

[3] During this course, the student [a] makes a track-specific Summary Assignment & [b] works out a *Preliminary Thesis Plan*. The plan defines the subject. In the plan, the student must also formulate a (preliminary) research question and reflect on methodology (i.e., the how of the research and the core literature about it). They also formulate the reasons why it is important to answer this question, both in terms of philosophical and societal relevance.

[4] An appropriate supervisor is allocated to the student in light of the student's submitted preferences, supervisor availability, and subject fit. Supervisor allocation can always be discussed with the thesis coordinator and adjusted if needed. The student and supervisor will confirm the selected topic for the thesis together in a one-time meeting.

[5] The thesis coordinator assesses the Preliminary Thesis Plan in terms of formal criteria (the presence of a research question, method, literature, indication of relevance). After the thesis coordinator has approved of the Preliminary Thesis Plan, the Thesis Plan is sent to the supervisor for approval.

[6] The student can now proceed with preparing the MA Philosophy Thesis Registration Form: the student transforms / works out the Preliminary Thesis plan into the (final) Thesis Plan. (Finalizing the Thesis Plan results in filling in the MA Philosophy Thesis Registration Form.)

[7] The thesis coordinator appoints a second reader, after consultation with the student and the supervisor. The supervisor contacts the second reader.

[8] The MA Philosophy Thesis Registration Form is ready when it is approved of and signed by the student, the supervisor, and the second reader.

[9] The MA Philosophy Thesis Registration Form must be handed in by the student to the supervisor, and then by the supervisor to the MA-thesis email address.

[10] The deadline for submitting the MA Philosophy Thesis Registration Form is *Friday of calendar week 2* (fall-version), and *Friday of calendar week 24* (spring-version). The resit for submitting the MA Philosophy Thesis Registration Form is respectively *Friday of calendar week 4* and *Friday of week 26*.

[11] By handing in the MA Philosophy Thesis Registration Form, the student completes the course 799403-M-3 *Master's Thesis Track / Scriptietraject Master*. If the student also had a pass for the track specific assignment, then the thesis coordinator writes out a pass sheet or an Excel sheet of all passed students and sends it to the student administration.

Failing the course

Failing the second deadline means the student fails the course and must redo the course in the next semester.



5. PHASE 2: WRITING THE MA THESIS

Required course: Master Thesis Philosophy (Masterscriptie Filosofie, 799402-M-12)

Students that do the EBO-track are allowed to write their thesis in either Dutch or English. It is strongly advised to write this thesis in Dutch. All other students must write their thesis in English.

[1] Students have to start writing their thesis in January if they started the process in the fall and in June (and have to work on it for four weeks in July & August) if they started in the spring.

[2] Go / no go meeting: In week 8 (fall-version) and in week 35 (spring-version), student and supervisor have a meeting and evaluate the process. The supervisor gives his or her honest opinion on the progress and the chances the student has on completing the task (on time). This decision is based on the following criteria:

- Did the student find, read and analyze enough of the relevant literature?
- Did the student develop the thesis plan into a preliminary introduction and table of contents?
- Did the student start writing at least one of the chapters?
- Did the student comply with appointments made with the supervisor?

For the student this may be a wake-up call and a last chance to switch supervisor (while leaving intact as much as possible of the Thesis Plan). For the supervisors this is a formal point at which they can express concern. No-go implies that the student must find a new supervisor and must submit a new thesis registration form (deadlines attached to the nearest thesis registration deadline will apply). The supervisor sends a short joint report of this meeting to the MA thesis coordinator. Alternatively, the student can also send in a separate report.

This means: if the supervisor gives a no-go, the student *always has to find a new supervisor*. The new deadlines are *de facto* the deadlines of the next semester. Handing in a thesis before the new deadlines of course is possible. The student has to come up with a new plan (or a revised version of the original plan) and fill in a new Thesis Registration Form. The student can do this on their own or redo the first *Master's Thesis Track* course. In any way the deadlines apply for the total redo of the thesis, but of course the student is allowed to hand in the thesis at an earlier date. Hence, a no go possibly implies a delay, but not necessarily so. Handing in before a deadline does not automatically imply the tutors will be able to grade the thesis within fifteen working days, because they might have other duties.

[3] The student must submit the thesis on Monday of week 24 (fall-version) or week 49 (spring-version). The student uploads the thesis in Canvas to the plagiarism

scanner. The format has to be Microsoft Word – not a pdf or any other format. The student sends an email to the tutors to tell that the theses has been handed in. The supervisor and second reader download the thesis from Canvas. If the student does not submit the thesis by this deadline, they automatically enter the resit phase. Students are allowed to hand in their thesis at an earlier date of course.

The default is that the thesis will be published (be available in the library after the defense), because it is research. There have to be good reasons (e.g. privacy of data used in the thesis) not to make it publicly available. (So, not liking that the thesis is made public, is no good reason.) If there are good reasons not to publish the thesis, the student has to contact the thesis coordinator about this.

[4] The tutors each assess the thesis within eight working days. Each assesses the thesis separately by means of the Individual Tutor's MA Thesis Assessment Form (which can be found on Canvas). Each assessment is expressed in a mark. Lecturers should give a grade on their Individual Assessment Form as if this were the final grade. This means that the grade should be either a whole grade (like, 4 or 7) or a grade with a halve (like 4.5 or 7.5). Of course, 5.5 should not be given. So, grades like 6.3 or 4.7 should not be on the individual assessment form. Also, it should be just one grade: lecturers should not provide a range (like 7.5 to 8). The supervisor sends the forms to the MA-thesis email address, when the supervisor and the second reader have established the provisional grade. In this way the thesis coordinator can doublecheck whether a third reader is required. The provisional grade is put on Canvas by the supervisor. All provisional grades will be communicated at the same time to the students via Canvas.

If one assessor gives an insufficient grade and the other gives a sufficient grade: there is no discussion on a provisional grade. Instead, a third reader is appointed by the thesis coordinator. See 5b. (This implies that the mark will be a 6 at best.) The third reader has the final say. The deadline is Thursday of week 25 for the fall-version and week 50 for the spring version.

Otherwise: supervisor and second reader *discuss and agree* on a provisional mark. They do not communicate this mark with the student until at least ten days after the submission of the thesis, to allow time for a possible '6-procedure'.⁴

[5a] If *the provisional mark is minimally a 6.5*, and the student is satisfied with the mark, the supervisor, second reader and the student can pick a date for the defense, by mutual agreement. This date must not be later than August 31st (fall-version) / January 31st (spring-version). (Continue with point 6-9.)

⁴ When a student submits earlier, tutors may agree to (communicate the) grade earlier. The resit deadline for the student concerned must then be changed accordingly (to guarantee an equal timespan). Tutors inform the thesis coordinator about such an agreement.

[5b] If *the provisional mark is a 6*, the thesis coordinator must appoint a third reader whose sole task is to determine whether the thesis is either sufficient or insufficient. The third reader assesses the thesis independently (i.e. does not consult with the first or second readers, nor their assessment forms). The third reader has two working days to complete their task: the deadline for the third reader is Monday of week 26 (fall-version) or week 51 (spring-version). On this date the assessment is communicated to the student via Canvas. If the thesis is deemed sufficient, the mark is a 6. The student can now pick a date for the defense, by mutual agreement with the supervisor and the second reader. This date must not be later than August 31st (fall-version) / January 31st (spring-version). (Continue with point 6-9.) If the thesis is deemed insufficient, the mark is a 5. (Continue with 10-12.)

[5c] If *the provisional mark is below 6*, or the student is not satisfied with the mark, the student will do the resit (continue with 10-12). NB: the student does not run a risk, because the highest mark will be the definitive one.

[5d] If the tutors *after discussion*⁵ cannot agree on the final mark, because of conflicting views on the quality of the thesis

- If both give a sufficient mark and the difference is less than, or equal to, one point, then they split the difference. (TSHD rounding rules apply.) This means that the mark is always 6.5 or higher, so no ‘6-procedure’ will apply. (Continue with point 6-9.)
- If both give a sufficient mark but the difference is greater than one point (and they cannot come to an agreement), a third reader is appointed by the thesis coordinator, who determines the mark. The third reader assesses the thesis without knowing the assessments of the other tutors, and without knowing the grades the tutors gave. After the third reader gives their assessment, the tutors and third reader look at all the individual assessments and decide on the grade. If there still is disagreement, then the third reader decides the grade (which cannot be lower than the lowest and not be higher than the highest grade given by the tutors).

The highest possible mark is the mark given by either the supervisor or the second reader. The lowest possible mark is the mark given by the supervisor or the second reader. The third reader has two working days to complete their task. The student can now pick a date for the defense, by mutual agreement with the supervisor and the second reader. This date should not be later than August 31st (fall-version) / January 31st (spring-version). (Continue with point 6-9.)

⁵ Note that this is about the tutors not agreeing after discussion. It could be the case that the supervisor gives a 7 and the second reader an 8.5. After discussion the tutors might agree on e.g. a 7.5. Then there is no need for a third reader.

If the student has passed the course ([6]-[9]):

[6] Student and tutors arrange a date for the defense. The student is responsible for booking a room for the defense, by submitting an online form to the Student Desk (<https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/form/contact-form-student-desk>).

Alternatively, the supervisor sets up a Zoom-link, in case the defense will take place online.

The defense consists of five to ten minutes for the presentation, and at least 30 minutes of questions by the tutors. Usually, the defense starts with the supervisor welcoming everyone present, explaining what is going to happen, and then gives the floor to the student. The student's presentation usually is done with the help of a PowerPoint Presentation (on average 1 slide equals 1 minute). The student briefly presents and explains the research question and then continues to tell the audience how this was answered. After the presentation the student gives the floor back to the supervisor. The supervisor then can give the floor to the second reader, so they can ask their questions, and after that asks their own questions (or the other way 'round). After the questions have been answered the student and audience (if present) leave the room, so the supervisor and second reader can deliberate on the grade (making the preliminary grade the final grade, or adding half a point to that). The supervisor calls the student and audience back in. Usually, some words of praise are spoken, the grade is announced, usually with a small justification for it.

Since, at the defense both the supervisor and the second reader are present, there is no need to make a recording. The defense has to be done in English, with the exception for the EBO-track.

The supervisor and the second reader decide, after the defense, the final mark and tell the student about their marks and comments on the two individual Tutor's MA Thesis Assessment Forms. N.B.: The final mark can be at best 0.5 point higher than the previously agreed provisional point (the final mark cannot be lower). No other changes to this previously agreed point are allowed. Also note that the additional 0.5 will only be allocated in exceptional circumstances

[7] The supervisor fills in the joint MA Thesis Assessment Form in consultation with the second reader. If the supervisor and the second reader can agree on the final mark, but have principal disagreements on the reasons why the mark fits, the supervisor fills in the MA Joint Thesis Assessment Form and the second reader explains their deviating view in an appendix. If it applies: The motivation of an additional 0.5 point should be given in the Joint Assessment Form. The supervisor sends the Joint Assessment Form to the MA thesis email address. The coordinator sends all the final grades to the administration.

[8] If the student has passed all other courses as well, they can now officially apply for the degree certificate. In case the student wants to participate in the graduation ceremony, the deadline to do this is three weeks before the ceremony.

Doing the resit ([10]-[12])

[10] If the student is going to do the resit, the supervisor and second reader prepare a (written) improvement report (see appendix 5) which is communicated to the student and the thesis coordinator by the supervisor by the end of the assessment week, or after the third reader has handed in their assessment. The student has two weeks for improvement of the thesis. The deadline is Monday of week 28 (fall-version), or week 2 (spring-version).

[11] The student uploads the thesis in Canvas to the plagiarism scanner. The format has to be Microsoft Word – not a pdf or any other format. The supervisor and second reader download the thesis from Canvas. If the thesis is resubmitted before the deadline, then the supervisor and the second reader assess the thesis separately by means of the Individual Tutor's MA Thesis Assessment Form. Each assessment is expressed in a mark.

The grading procedure is the same for non-resit theses (see above).

The deadline for the resit assessment is eight days (plus four weeks summer holiday for the fall-version). The deadline for this assessment is Monday of week 34 (fall-version; allowing for the summer holiday) or Thursday of week 3 (spring-version).

[12a] If *the provisional mark is minimally a 6.5*, and the student is satisfied with the mark, the supervisor, second reader and the student can pick a date for the defense, by mutual agreement. This date should not be later than August 31st (fall-version) / January 31st (spring-version). (Continue with point 6-9.)

[12b] If *the provisional mark is a 6*, the thesis coordinator must appoint a third reader whose sole task is to determine whether the thesis is either sufficient or insufficient. The third reader assesses the thesis independently (i.e. does not consult with the first or second readers, nor their assessment forms). The third reader has two working days to complete their task: the deadline for the third reader is Wednesday of week 34 (fall-version) or Monday of week 4 (spring-version). On this date the assessment is communicated to the student via Canvas. If the thesis is deemed sufficient, the mark is a 6. The student can now pick a date for the defense, by mutual agreement with the supervisor and the second reader. This date should not be later than August 31st (fall-version) / January 31st (spring-version). (Continue with point 6-9.) If the thesis is deemed insufficient, the mark is a 5. (Continue with 10-12.)

[12c] If *the provisional mark is below 6*, or the student is not satisfied with the mark, the student will do the resit (continue with 10-12). NB: the student does not run a risk, because the highest mark will be the definitive one.

[12d] If the tutors *after discussion*⁶ cannot agree on the final mark, because of conflicting views on the quality of the thesis

- If both give a sufficient mark and the difference is less than, or equal to, one point, then they split the difference. (TSHD rounding rules apply.) This means that the mark is always 6.5 or higher, so no ‘6-procedure’ will apply. (Continue with point 6-9.)
- If both give a sufficient mark but the difference is greater than one point (and they cannot come to an agreement), a third reader is appointed by the thesis coordinator, who determines the mark. The third reader assesses the thesis without knowing the assessments of the other tutors, and without knowing the grades the tutors gave. After the third reader gives their assessment, the tutors and third reader look at all the individual assessments and decide on the grade. If there still is disagreement, then the third reader decides the grade (which cannot be lower than the lowest and not be higher than the highest grade given by the tutors).

The highest possible mark is the mark given by either the supervisor or the second reader. The lowest possible mark is the mark given by the supervisor or the second reader. The third reader has two working days to complete their task. The student can now pick a date for the defense, by mutual agreement with the supervisor and the second reader. This date should not be later than August 31st (fall-version) / January 31st (spring-version). (Continue with point 6-9.)

Failing the course

When a student fails the course *Master Thesis Philosophy (Masterscriptie Filosofie, 799402-M-12)* after the *resit*, they fail the course.

The student now has the option of either taking the opportunity to make use of [1] a 3-month extended revision period, or [2] doing a complete redo of the master thesis.

Option 1: the 3-month extended revision period

This period starts the first day after receiving the report on the insufficient thesis. (In cases where students did not hand in anything for the resit, the 3-month

⁶ Note that this is about the tutors not agreeing after discussion. It could be the case that the supervisor gives a 7 and the second reader an 8.5. After discussion the tutors might agree on e.g. a 7.5. Then there is no need for a third reader.

extension period starts at the deadline for providing students with the assessment of the resit of the thesis.) During this period, the student is given a final opportunity to rework the thesis. The student must take care that they are registered at the university. The thesis can be submitted before the end of the semester, but will not be marked before the beginning of the new semester.

During the 3-month extended revision period, the student is given one opportunity to get feedback from the supervisor on an improved version of the thesis. Not later than 3 months after the start of this period, the student submits the improved thesis to both the supervisor and the second reader. For the rest of the procedure: see points 11-12. (See also: ‘redoing the course’ in appendix 5.)

Option 2: a complete redo

If the student chooses to do a complete redo of the course, then a new supervisor and second reader should be found and a new thesis topic. The student must renew their registration with the university to make use of this possibility. If – e.g. – the student starts the new thesis on September 1st all the deadlines of the fall timeline apply, if the student starts the new thesis on February 1st all the deadlines of the spring semester apply. (The student is allowed, of course, to hand in the thesis prior to the deadlines. So, a complete redo does not necessarily have to entail that the student graduates a year later than originally planned.)

The student is allowed to join the practicals of the course *Master’s Thesis Track* (*Scriptietraject Master*, 799403-M-3), but this is not compulsory. The 3 EC the student got for passing that course, will remain on the student’s list of credits.



6. EXPLICATION OF TERMS USED

Extended Revision Period

The extended revision period is a 3-month period after the resit. During this period, the student is given the opportunity to rework the thesis and gain a sufficient mark. The period starts the day after receiving the report from the supervisor in which the insufficient mark for the re-sit is explained. Theses submitted during this period will only be marked after the start of the new semester. Students have the right to one meeting with their thesis supervisor during this period.

Failing the course

When a student obtains an insufficient mark for the required course 799402 *Masterscriptie Filosofie* after the resit, they fail the course. The student may decide to redo the course but they will also be given the opportunity to make use of a 3-month period, beginning the first day after receiving the report on the insufficient thesis, in which the student is given a final opportunity to rework the thesis. During this period, students are given 1 opportunity to get feedback from the supervisor on an improved version of the paper. Not later than 3 months after the start of this period, the student submits the improved thesis to both the supervisor and the second reader. For the rest of the procedure: see phase 2, point 4-point 8, with the exception that there is no possibility to redo the course (see also ‘redoing the course’).

Individual Tutor’s MA Thesis Assessment Form

The Individual Tutor’s Thesis Assessment Form is a form filled in and signed by both the supervisor and the second reader, separately. It is a standardized form that includes all the relevant criteria for assessing the thesis. In terms of these criteria, it is identical to the Thesis Assessment Form. Procedurally it is a different form as the individual tutor’s thesis form is filled in separately by both the supervisor and the second reader.

The Individual Tutor’s Thesis Assessment Form is the basis for filling in the Joint Tutor’s Thesis Assessment Form. This is done by the supervisor and the second reader together.

Joint Tutors’ MA Thesis Assessment Form

The Joint Tutors’ MA Thesis Assessment Form is a form filled in and signed by both the supervisor and the second reader, jointly. It is a standardized form that includes all the relevant criteria for assessing the thesis. In the Joint Tutors’ MA Thesis Assessment Form, the final mark is determined on the basis of the assessment. The two individual tutors’ thesis forms are the basis for filling in the thesis assessment form.

In terms of criteria, the thesis assessment form is identical to the individual MA Tutor’s Thesis Form. Procedurally, it holds a different position as it determines the final mark and is filled in jointly by the supervisor and the second reader.

Redoing the course

‘Redoing the course’ is different from ‘failing the course’. When a student must *redo* either the required course 799403-M-3 *Scriptietraject Master* (3 EC) or the required course 799402 *Masterscriptie Filosofie* (12 EC), they cannot simply do it again. The provision is that the student is neither allowed to choose the same subject nor the same supervisor (also see ‘failing the course’.) The student submits a new thesis registration form and track-specific Summary Assignment. Deadlines attached to the nearest thesis registration deadline will apply.

Preliminary Thesis Plan

The preliminary thesis plan is a preliminary outline of the thesis, worked out in the self-help preparatory course 799403-M-3 *Scriptietraject Master* (3 EC). It contains the subject, the (main) research question and the methodology (i.e., way to go about). It also contains an explication of the research question, both in terms of its philosophical and societal meaningfulness as well as a justification of the methodology.

The thesis coordinator assesses the Preliminary Thesis Plan in terms of formal criteria (the presence of a research question, method, literature, indication of relevance).

Second reader

The main task of the ‘second reader’ is to assess the quality of the completed thesis as an independent expert. Their voice has equal weight in terms of assessing the quality of the thesis. They give a full assessment of the thesis, by filling in the Individual Tutor’s MA Thesis Assessment Form. Together with the supervisor, they fill out the Joint Tutors’ MA Thesis Assessment Form and on that basis, determine the final mark of the thesis.

The second reader also approves of and signs the Thesis Registration Form and by doing so, commits himself or herself to the project.

Supervisor

The supervisor supports the student in their autonomously executed philosophical investigation. In the preparatory course 799403-M-3 *Scriptietraject Master* (3 EC) they help the student to work out the Thesis Registration Plan, on the basis of the Preliminary Thesis Plan. In the course 799402 *Masterscriptie Filosofie* the supervisor is the principal companion of the student. They advise the student without ever losing sight of the fact that the principal agent of the project is the student himself or herself.

The supervisor holds about 7 meetings with the student (leaving exceptions aside). The supervisor communicates to the student when the thesis is sufficient but gives the student the opportunity to work on the thesis until the deadline for submission; however, if the student is satisfied with a sufficient mark, the completed thesis can be submitted before the deadline.

The supervisor assesses the thesis by filling in the Individual Tutor's MA Assessment Form. Together with the second reader, they fill out the Joint Tutors' MA Thesis Assessment Form and on that basis, determine the final mark of the thesis. The supervisor is also responsible for submitting the grade to the student administration and for submitting all required documents (thesis registration form, go/no go-form, thesis, (2 or 3) individual assessment forms, joint assessment form, (and if applicable improvement report) to the MA thesis email address.

Thesis coordinator

The thesis coordinator guides the thesis projects of all MA students (in a given academic year). They are the tutor of the preparatory course 799403-M-3 *Scriptietraject Master* and makes sure that each student knows the Ma thesis procedure. The thesis coordinator examines and approves of the Preliminary Thesis Form. After consultation, they assign the supervisor, the second reader, and if necessary, the third reader. They are also responsible for the administrative completion of the thesis project. The supervisor must send their report to the thesis coordinator who processes them.

The thesis coordinator is also the first person the supervisor must contact if they have any concerns that a student's Ma thesis project may go awry. The thesis coordinator will assist the student and the supervisor to get the project back on track. This may involve replacing the supervisor. Students may also contact the Thesis Coordinator but they can also contact the confidential advisor of Tilburg School of Humanities.

Thesis Registration Form

The Thesis Registration Form is the final product of the preparatory course *Master Thesis Track* and the basis for the project undertaken in the course *Master Thesis Philosophy*. It contains (the improved and) final version of the preliminary thesis plan which includes more thorough treatment of the main issue and question, and indicates (most of) the literature to be used in the thesis. It also lays down details of the process of making the thesis, including information on how student and supervisor will interact. In that sense, the Thesis Registration Form is a contract, binding both student and tutor.

The Thesis Registration Form must be approved upon and signed by the student, the supervisor and the second reader. It must be sent to ma.thesis.phil@tilburguniversity.edu

Third reader

The third reader is called in when the supervisor and the second reader determine the final mark to be a 6. It is the task of the third reader to double-check whether the quality of the thesis is sufficient. The third reader only passes a sufficient / not sufficient judgement. The third reader reports to the thesis coordinator and also communicates their findings to the supervisor and the second reader. The third

reader is appointed by the thesis coordinator, after consultation with the supervisor and the second reader.

The third reader is also called in when the supervisor and the second reader cannot agree upon a final mark for the thesis. In this case, the third reader's task is a little bit different, as they determine the mark, not (merely) verify it. See the procedure, point 7f.

Tutors

Name used for the combination of supervisor and the second reader.

