

## Master Thesis CIS/CIW - TSHD - Tilburg University (2023-24)

### 1. The Master thesis in your study program

The Master thesis is the final part of your study program. In your thesis, you show the skills and knowledge you have acquired during your studies. For the thesis, 18 EC have been allocated, which represent (18\*28 =) 504 hours, about 13 full weeks of work. You must complete this work within one semester.

#### 1.1 Learning goals

After successful completion of a Master's thesis, students are able to:

1. Formulate a well-defined and adequate research question to study a scientifically relevant and clearly delineated problem within the field of Communication and Information Sciences and introduce this research question in an analytically skilled way.
2. Construct a theoretical framework for their research question based on a critical analysis of relevant theoretical and empirical scientific literature.
3. Design and carry out a suitable research set-up to answer their research question and report the methods and procedures used in a clear and justified manner.
4. Perform in-depth qualitative or quantitative data analysis using suitable analysis techniques and report the results in a clear and orderly fashion.
5. Describe and explain the main findings from their data analysis and identify new relevant insights that emerged from these findings in relation to the problem under study.
6. Report about the set-up, execution and results of their own research in a clear, systematic, critical and well-argued way.

### 2. The planning of your thesis

You write your thesis in the second part of your Master program. In case of conditional admission to the program, having passed the required courses is a prerequisite for starting to work on your thesis, i.e., you must have finished your pre-Master's program and passed any deficiency modules you were assigned (if applicable). We recommend doing the thesis in the final semester of your Master's program.

You can only start your thesis two times a year: at the beginning of the fall (September) or the spring (February) semester. Only start with your thesis if you are seriously planning and able to finish it within one semester. If this is not the case, wait one semester or ask advice from the academic counselor.

The timeline presented below is only a guideline. The final submission deadlines for each semester are fixed, but the intermediate dates need to be agreed upon by you and your supervisor. You need to finish the thesis within one semester. That means you need to have your grade by the end of the semester (end of January/end of August); this excludes the time you might need for a possible resit. Work back from the final deadline to set section deadlines for yourself.

## 2.2 Thesisdossier

We make use of [Thesisdossier](#) for the thesis process. Your progress document (“Go/NoGo document”) and the final thesis need to be handed in via the system. The thesis coordinator will open the dossiers for all students. You should not open a dossier yourself.

### 2.1 Timeline master thesis

Week <sup>1</sup>	Prior to start of the semester
April (Fall) October (Spring)	An information session about the thesis procedure takes place. You are invited through announcements on the general Master CIS and the ‘Masterthesis CIS’ Canvas pages at the beginning of each semester.
<b>External thesis proposal deadline:</b>  June 1 (Fall) December 1 (Spring)	If you want to write an external thesis, email your proposal to the thesis coordinator by the end of the respective day.  <i>Note: you do <u>not</u> have to wait for the publication of the thematic clusters to submit your proposal. External thesis proposals are independent of the CIS-internal themes. (see Section 3.1)</i>
Early June / December	An overview of all thematic clusters for the following semester becomes available on Canvas (see Section 3)
June/December	You fill out the online theme selection form, indicating your top-5 theme preferences (see Section 3)
Week before the semester starts	You receive an email with the assigned theme.
Week	Start of the semester (fall = last week of August, spring = last week of January)
First week of Block 1 (fall)/ Block 3 (spring)	First meeting. Student and supervisor discuss specific interests and plans; intermediate deadlines are scheduled and the overall procedure is discussed.
6-7	The thesis coordinator assigns second readers and opens dossiers on Thesisdossier.
Approx. 8	You hand in your progress document (“Go/NoGo document”) in Thesisdossier. The supervisor and second reader assess your progress.
10 (approx. midterm break)	Go/NoGo: the supervisor informs you about whether you can proceed with the thesis. If the progress is not sufficient in its current form, you have to revise it (see Section 5)

<sup>1</sup> The exact (calendar) week may differ from semester to semester as it is linked to the start and end of classes as well as national holidays. You will receive reminders about hard deadlines and important changes via Canvas announcements.

<p><b>Thesis deadline:</b></p> <p><b>January 15 (Fall)</b></p> <p><b>June 20 (Spring)</b></p>	<p>Hand in the final thesis in Thesisdossier. Mark it as ‘final version’. If applicable: send your (raw) data, experimental material and script to your supervisor.</p> <p>The supervisor and student can agree on a delayed deadline due to objectively comprehensible reasons (e.g., illness), but they should do so well in advance and <u>only upon explicit mutual agreement</u>. Additionally, the academic counselor and the thesis coordinator must be consulted before the deadline can be officially adjusted if the delay concerns more than two weeks. If you fail to meet the submission deadline, you forgo the examination attempt, and your thesis will not be graded. You can still submit your thesis before the final resit deadline, which constitutes the final attempt.</p>
<p>Up to 24</p>	<p>Supervisor and second reader take a maximum of 15 working days to evaluate the thesis independently and then jointly discuss the grade.</p>
<p>23<sup>2</sup>-24</p>	<p>The supervisor informs you about the assessment. If the thesis is not a pass in its current form, you will have to revise and resubmit it. (see Section 6)</p>
<p>23-24</p>	<p>Fill out the “<u>request graduation</u>” form at the latest 5 calendar weeks before the graduation ceremony if you are planning to attend. Your final grade must be registered at the latest 3 weeks before the ceremony for your diploma to be ready in time for the ceremony.</p>
<p><b>Resit:</b></p> <p><b>February 19 (Fall)</b></p> <p><b>August 10 (Spring)</b></p>	<p>If you did not submit your thesis for the first attempt before the deadline or if you failed your first attempt and had to revise the thesis, these are the final resit deadlines.</p> <p>If you submit a resit because your first attempt was insufficient, please note that the resit should generally be completed within approx. two weeks of receiving the assessment of the first attempt from your supervisor and second reader. Your supervisor will inform you of the final deadline.</p> <p>These deadlines represent the final submission deadlines. If you miss them and have not received an official extension, you are not entitled to a third attempt.</p> <p><i>Note: the resit deadline in the Fall semester lies after the start of the following Spring semester. This means that students who (have to) opt for this deadline have to extend their enrollment as a student, as grades cannot be registered for students who are not enrolled.<sup>3</sup></i></p> <p><b>For more details about the resit, see Section 6.</b></p>
<p>Mar / Oct</p>	<p>Graduation ceremony (see Section 7)</p>

<sup>2</sup> Since there is no break between the fall and the spring semester, there is slightly less time for assessors’ first evaluations. In the fall, the supervisor and second reader will always try to submit final grades by the end of the semester. This does not apply in case of a resit.

<sup>3</sup> Students would have to submit their first attempt in the begin of December to ensure that both first and second attempt can be assessed within the Fall semester. Since this is generally not feasible for most students, the official final deadlines have been moved to January and February.

### 3. How to develop your thesis topic

Staff members of the department form thematic clusters every semester. These are groups of available supervisors with overlapping research interests, who propose general research themes in accordance with their expertise, current lines of research, and the time available for thesis supervision. In any semester, some staff members may not supervise any students, while others supervise a number of students. Every semester, there will be some changes in the thematic clusters depending on supervisors' availability and changing research foci. Supervisors may also include more specific example topics within the themes.

Around the start of your first semester, you receive an announcement email with an invitation from the thesis coordinator to an information session (either via the general or the Master thesis CIS Canvas page). This session takes place every semester, in April if you start your thesis in Block 1 and in October/November if you start your thesis in Block 3.

About 1 to 2 months after the information session, two online documents become available:

1. An overview of the available thematic clusters, covering all study tracks and main research areas of the department.
2. The theme selection form, in which you can indicate your preference for five thematic clusters as well as your motivations for making this specific selection and your own preliminary ideas about the research you would like to conduct within each theme.

You fill out the online theme selection form before the announced deadline (i.e., approx. beginning of January for the spring semester and beginning of July for the fall semester). You will be asked to provide a motivation for each of your theme choices. In these motivations, you can specify your reasons for choosing the specific themes and which specific topics you would like to explore within the themes. Please keep in mind that you are not expected to write complete research proposals at this point. The motivations mainly help us with determining the match between you and the themes as well as supervisors within the themes.

Based on your preferences, study track, your motivations, and the capacity within thematic clusters, the thesis coordinator assigns you to a theme. Within the first (group) meetings, roughly until the thesis coordinator opens the Thesisdossiers, you might still change supervisors within your thematic cluster according to whose expertise matches your more specific and increasingly more developed thesis project best.

#### 3.1 External theses

**We do not offer support for matchmaking between students and external companies/ organizations or for writing an external thesis proposal.** Our theses need to meet academic standards, and often, this does not match the interests of commercial parties (well). Sometimes, supervisors offer students to work on thesis projects that are based on their own existing collaborations with external parties. This will be mentioned either in the thematic cluster descriptions or in the first meetings.

**We offer the opportunity to write a proposal for an external thesis.** Proposals for external theses are independent of the thematic clusters offered internally. You are free to fully develop your own idea, for which you need to find a company yourself. However, you should also check if an internal supervisor would be willing to supervise you on your proposed project. The guidelines for such a proposal can be found on Canvas. The thesis coordinator and the respective track coordinator evaluate the proposal on its fit with the curriculum, its academic potential, and its feasibility. Please note that most proposals are declined based on these criteria. The deadlines for this proposal are four weeks before the theme selection form deadline. This ensures that you can sign up for the regular thematic clusters if your proposal is declined.

#### 4. What can you expect from your supervisor?

A Master thesis is always supervised by a staff member of the program's department or faculty. PhDs can also co-supervise theses, but in most cases only under the responsibility of a senior staff member. As a general rule of thumb, you can expect **detailed feedback on each section of your thesis twice**: once on each section individually and once on the complete draft version of your thesis. Your supervisor can provide this detailed feedback either in-text (comments or tracked changes) or holistically based on assessment criteria, pointing out both minor and major issues in each section. Note, however, that feedback does not mean that your supervisor corrects and revises your work. They are likely to point out general issues and local comments which you are expected to check and, where relevant, apply to the entire thesis.

Your supervisor is supposed to spend **no more than 35 hours supervision time** on your thesis. This includes everything, from preparing thesis topics to sending the grade of your thesis to the Student Administration.

Within the timeline presented in 2.1, together with your supervisor, you are responsible for making clear agreements about the supervision. **Make sure your expectations about these points match those of your supervisor**:

1. What do they expect from you when?
2. When and how often do you meet (a) individually or in thematic groups with your supervisor and (b) face-to-face or otherwise (via email, Zoom, Teams, Skype, etc.)?
3. When and how do you have to send in your draft chapters?
4. When and how do you receive your supervisor's comments?
5. What happens when these agreements are not respected (e.g., meetings although you did not send in your draft; delays because you did not adhere to an intermediate deadline)?

## 5. The progress document (also: “Go/NoGo moment”)

Halfway through the semester, just before the start of Block 2 (Fall) and 4 (Spring), you will have to hand in a progress document to your supervisor and second reader via [Thesisdossier](#), showing the progress of your thesis work. The so-called “Go/NoGo” document should contain the following aspects:

- What do you want to study? (concise research question)
- Why do you want to study this? (introduction)
- How do you want to study this? (proposed method)

When you submit your progress document, you are expected to also have a first draft of the theoretical framework. You may include it in the proposal, but it will not be part of the official assessment. The summative assessment of the progress document is based on sections 1 and 3 of the Master thesis grading rubric:

### 1. Research question (including full introduction)

- 1.1. The subject is clearly delineated.*
- 1.2. The central research question is introduced in a clear and analytically skilled way.*
- 1.3. The research question is formulated clearly and succinctly.*
- 1.4. The concepts used are formulated and defined clearly.*
- 1.5. The societal and scientific relevance of the research question is argued / demonstrated adequately.*
- 1.6. Adequate justification is given for the choices made in formulating the research question.*

### 3. Method (plan)

- 3.1. The description of the method(s) is clear and adequate.*
- 3.2. A justification is given of the choice of research method as well as concomitant methodological choices (design, operationalization, sampling, etc.).*
- 3.3. The research set-up is valid and sufficiently specific to be replicable.*
- 3.4. The design is suitable to study the research question.*

While not all descriptors of rubric sections 1 and 3 have to be sufficient yet, the progress needs to be sufficient overall for a ‘pass’. As Section 3 only concerns a method plan, not an executed method, at this point, the supervisor and second reader will focus on the adequacy of the method for the proposed research question and its feasibility within the given time for a Master thesis in their assessments. In line with evaluation criteria 6 and 7 of the final thesis, the language and structure of the progress document are expected to be of sufficient quality. You cannot fail your progress document due to writing and structure issues alone. However, if one or both of these criteria are not met, this will be pointed out to you and you will be expected to fix any writing and structure issues in the final version of the thesis.

After deliberation with the second reader, the supervisor will inform you whether you have a:

1. **Pass:** the progress is sufficient; the proposed study is relevant and feasible. You will usually not receive any additional feedback from the second reader unless they have minor concerns that are still easily fixable.
2. **Fail:** the progress is insufficient. There are serious concerns about the relevance of the proposed study, the study is not suitable to address the RQ or feasible in one semester, or the student shows insufficient understanding of their topic. (Almost) all descriptors of the relevant rubric sections 1 and 3 are not sufficiently developed. You will receive explanatory feedback together with the decision in this case. You can either submit a revised version of your progress document as a resit within two weeks after receiving the evaluation or you can contact the thesis coordinator to terminate your current project and sign up for a new thesis in the next semester. If the resit also results in a fail, you will have to sign up for a new thesis in the following semester to complete the program.

### **5.1 While you wait...**

- Develop your theoretical framework and materials further.
- Discuss with your supervisor whether the study you want to carry out needs ethical clearance. You can use [the REDC Talksheet](#) as a guideline for the discussion. If your study needs ethical clearance, you can use the information from the progress document to fill in the required form. You can find more information on the procedure and the form [here](#).
- Also, consider the option to preregister your study, for example, on [www.aspredicted.org](http://www.aspredicted.org) or [www.osf.io](http://www.osf.io). Doing so contributes to good science and helps you with structuring your project.



## 6. Thesis assessment and grading

Your thesis should be written in correct English or Dutch and appropriate for an academic text, including the use of proper APA formatting and citations. At any point during the supervision, your supervisor may indicate that the writing is of insufficient quality. You are responsible yourself to solve this problem. You can contact the Scriptorium or find another solution (e.g., peer feedback).

At the latest on January 15 (fall semester) or June 20 (spring semester), you have to send your thesis to the supervisor and the second reader via Thesisdossier. You can submit your thesis earlier than the official deadline, but just like for regular exams, submitting later means that you forgo your first attempt. Under special circumstances (e.g., sickness or personal problems), you can agree on a later deadline with your supervisor. However, this has to be done well in advance and only upon explicit mutual agreement. Additionally, the academic counselor and the thesis coordinator must be consulted before the deadline can be officially adjusted if the requested extension exceeds two weeks. The supervisor and second reader then assess your thesis on each of the grading criteria that can be found in Section 10 and on Canvas (see “Master thesis assessment form CIS with level descriptors”).

Within the next two to three weeks (latest after 15 working days), you will hear from your supervisor. Your thesis will be graded independently by your supervisor and the second reader. After their independent assessment, they will discuss and calibrate the grades and feedback.

If they cannot agree on a joint assessment, they contact the thesis coordinator, who will assign a third reader. The third reader neither has access to the initial assessments nor do they know who is involved (names of student, supervisor, or second reader). Additionally, they are not informed about the nature of the disagreement (e.g., pass/fail or specific grades). Only after they have finished their evaluation, they are added to the your dossier and calibrate the joint assessment with the other examiners. In a pass/fail disagreement, the third examiner’s assessment is used to resolve the overall issue: if two out of three examiners agree that the thesis is a pass or a fail, that is the final decision for the rubric section(s) in question. If a thesis is ruled a pass, examiners usually average all evaluations to determine the final grades, i.e., the third reader does not determine the final grade by themselves.

The supervisor fills out the final grade and partial grades, and includes written comments for each of the partial grades in the thesis dossier. There are two possible outcomes:

1. **Pass:** your thesis is at least sufficient. The thesis is a pass *if and only if* all partial grades (i.e., the grades for each of the rubric grading criteria) are graded 6.0. If you are not satisfied with your grade and want to aim for a higher grade (i.e., resit a thesis that is already a pass), you need to write a new thesis on a new topic.
2. **Fail:** one or more of the rubric grading criteria is / are graded lower than 6.0. You have the option of a resit. The resit should generally be completed within approx. two weeks of receiving the assessment of the first attempt from your supervisor and second reader. Your supervisor will inform you of the final deadline. You will receive the individual scores of and feedback about all rubric criteria, and you can ask for one

meeting to discuss the assessment with your supervisor. Based on this, you will have to revise your thesis. You will not receive another round of feedback, additional meetings with or help from your supervisor during the resit.

The grades of the revised rubric criteria (i.e., the sections that were graded lower than 5.5) cannot be higher than a 6.0. However, the thesis overall can still receive a grade higher than 6.0 across all criteria. In Thesisdossier, you submit an improved version of your thesis after two weeks, which is then assessed again to be given either a final passing or failing grade. If one or more of the grading criteria remain(s) insufficient, the thesis is graded with an official fail.

If the thesis is a fail, the supervisor informs you and the thesis coordinator. You can sign up for a new thesis in the following semester.

## **7. How to prepare for graduation**

Once your thesis is a pass and you have completed all of your courses, you can request graduation. You do this by filling in the Student Administration's online graduation request form. You can find the link in the module 'Graduating' on Canvas. Handing in the form must be done in any case to receive your diploma, and at least five weeks before the graduation ceremony if you want to attend.

The supervisor has to fill in a grade form ('tentamenbriefje') and submit it to the Student Administration at least three weeks before the graduation ceremony for your diploma to be ready in time. Graduation ceremonies are organized twice a year, in March and October. More about this can be found on Canvas under 'Graduation'.

While we do recommend you to attend the graduation ceremony to celebrate the great achievement of your Master's diploma, this is not compulsory. You can also choose to pick up your diploma at the Student Desk. Lastly, do not forget to unenroll on Studielink, which you can do on a monthly basis, i.e., you do not have to stay enrolled for a whole semester. If you are not sure how this works, please contact the Student Desk.

## **8. What to do in case of problems**

### **Student**

- If the thesis process is not going well due to personal circumstances, please contact the academic counselor, who will suggest appropriate measures.
- In the case of problems with the writing process, you can contact the Scriptorium.
- If the problems lay in the match between you and your supervisor, please contact the confidential counselor, dr. Ini Vanweesenbeeck.
- If you have a complaint about (the quantity and/or quality of) the supervision, please contact the thesis coordinator, academic counselor, or the confidential counselor. They can contact the thesis coordinator and/or director of studies if needed.

### **Supervisor**

- Your supervisor might stop your project after eight weeks if they are not satisfied with your progress (see Section 5). If your supervisor's and the second reader's concerns are not adequately addressed in the revised progress document, you have to sign up for a new topic in the following semester.
- Even after the research proposal, your supervisor can decide to take measures because the progress is not as expected and agreed upon. For example, they may decide to stop any further supervision, and only read and assess the final thesis if the supervision takes more time than the available 35 hours. The supervisor should always give you a warning and announce these measures clearly and explicitly so that they do not come as a surprise to you.
- If the supervisor and second reader do not agree on a grade, they will inform the thesis coordinator, who will then take appropriate action (e.g., by assigning an independent third reader).

## 9. Content and form requirements

The thesis is an individually written product. If more students are writing a thesis on a similar topic, part of the supervision can be in small groups, and you may collaborate in designing and executing your research. In your thesis, you should explicitly state the extent of the collaboration and give specifications. You can find examples on Canvas on how to report this.

In line with the TSHD Examination Regulations, the thesis must reflect your own work. A thesis consists of a number of paragraphs or chapters (e.g., introduction; theory and background literature; research question; method; results; discussion and conclusion) which, taken together, should result in a text of preferably no more than 10,000 words, excluding table of contents, abstract, references, and appendices. **Please note that examiners have the right to reject theses that are substantially longer than 10,000 words (excluding table of contents, abstract, reference list, in-text examples, and appendices) if there is a severe mismatch between content and size of a thesis.**

Your thesis contains a report on data that you have analyzed yourself. Often, you will also collect your own data (but not always, e.g., when you perform complex further analyses on video-taped data, eye-tracking data, a previously compiled corpus, etc. or when you do a systematic literature review). The choice of method (e.g., experiment, survey, computational model, or more qualitatively oriented data collection methods) must be well argued, especially when you select less-common methods. When collecting data for quantitative analysis, aim to collect sufficient data to be able to use statistical testing.

You can arrange to write your thesis in the shape of (i.e., following the template of) a journal article with your supervisor. It is up to the supervisor to decide whether this is a feasible option for your particular topic and to give you more details about how to do this. Write your thesis in Dutch or English, using an appropriate academic register, correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Your supervisor and second reader will not pass theses insufficient regarding this criterion.

Additionally:

- Follow the fixed template for the title page of your thesis as provided on Canvas.
- Follow the conventions used in the field (e.g., method sections in experimental research).
- Follow the current APA guidelines for references and reporting of (statistical) results.

Please be aware that your thesis will be uploaded in the publicly available thesis database of the TiU Library. Make sure that your final version does not contain any identifiable personal information of any other persons than yourself (e.g., also images) unless you have received their explicit consent. Include your own contact information only if you are comfortable with them being in the database. In some cases, only metadata about a thesis may be published or the thesis may only become available after an embargo (e.g., after one year). You can indicate this in your Thesisdossier. If you suspect that this may apply to your thesis, please discuss the options with your supervisor, who will then communicate the final decision to the TiU Library via Thesisdossier.

## 9.1 Use of technology and other resources

In accordance with the TSHD Education and Examination, the thesis must be your own work, i.e., your own intellectual property. You may discuss your ideas with other people or AI assistants, such as ChatGPT, but you should not include anything in your thesis that was not written by you without proper citation. You should never copy text from existing sources or AI output without marking such text passages as quotes (including quotation marks and sources). If you build on or paraphrase others' ideas, including AI assistants, you still have to refer to the original source.

**After the cover page, please briefly address the questions of the following technology statement in your thesis after the title page:**

1. Did you use any tools or services to paraphrase text from other sources (for example, a thesaurus or the Academic Phrasebank)? Please name them.
2. Did you use any tools or services to check spelling or grammar? Please name them.
3. Did you use any tools or services to typeset the given text? Please name them.
4. Did you use any tools or services to generate part of the text? If so, please name them.
5. Did you use any generative AI tools or software for other aspects of your thesis? If so, please name them.

By submitting your final thesis for assessment, you confirm that:

- the thesis is your own intellectual property and that ideas as well as language from other sources have been properly cited. All quotes and sourced information must be properly identifiable as such.
- you have disclosed any technology that you may have used in the writing process.

Your thesis will be checked for plagiarism. If a supervisor suspects fraud, they contact the TSHD Examination Board, following the standard procedure. You can find more information about this procedure in the [TSHD Education and Examination Regulations \(EER\)](#).

## **10. Evaluation criteria (Final thesis)**

### **1. Research question**

- 1.1. The subject is clearly delineated.*
- 1.2. The central research question is introduced in a clear and analytically skilled way.*
- 1.3. The research question is formulated clearly and succinctly.*
- 1.4. The concepts used are formulated and defined clearly.*
- 1.5. The societal and scientific relevance of the research question is argued / demonstrated adequately.*
- 1.6. Adequate justification is given for the choices made in formulating the research question.*

### **2. Theory and literature**

- 2.1. The literature dealt with is relevant in the framework of the research question.*
- 2.2. The literature dealt with reflects the state of the art.*
- 2.3. The central ideas, concepts, terms, and theories are sufficiently developed.*
- 2.4. A critical attitude is taken in processing the literature (identifying relationships, contradictions, gaps, or inconsistencies in the literature).*
- 2.5. If applicable: the component questions link up well with the central research question.*
- 2.6. If applicable: the hypotheses are well-formulated and testable.*

### **3. Method**

- 3.1. The description of the method(s) is clear and adequate.*
- 3.2. A justification is given of the choice of research method as well as concomitant methodological choices (design, operationalization, sampling, etc.).*
- 3.3. The research set-up is valid and sufficiently specific to be replicable.*
- 3.4. The design is suitable to study the research question.*
- 3.5. Data collection is performed adequately and ethically (operationalization of concepts, instrumentation, research techniques, choice of the empirical field, informed consent, etc.).*

### **4. Results**

- 4.1. The results – qualitative or quantitative – are presented in an orderly fashion, according to an ordering principle properly specified.*
- 4.2. Tables, figures, diagrams or overviews are used in a well-considered way.*
- 4.3. The data are analyzed further using qualitative and/or quantitative analyzing techniques that fit the research method(s) chosen.*
- 4.4. There is a certain originality of the methodology applied in the candidate's own research.*
- 4.5. The research is not merely descriptive but also involves an in-depth analysis.*

### **5. Conclusion and discussion**

- 5.1. The conclusions are clear and well-founded.*
- 5.2. The results and the conclusions link up well with the research question.*
- 5.3. Clear and appropriate feedback to the literature is given.*
- 5.4. Cross-connections are well-made.*
- 5.5. The conclusions provide a clear answer to the various (component) questions and hypotheses.*
- 5.6. It is clearly explained to what extent the thesis yields new scientific and societal insights.*

- 5.7. Attention is paid to the generalizability of the results, the practical and theoretical implications, as well as the limitations of the conclusions.
- 5.8. Relevant suggestions for further research and new research questions are formulated.

## **6. Structure**

- 6.1. The thesis and its (sub)sections are structured clearly and logically.
- 6.2. There is clear cohesion on the micro- (i.e., between sentences and paragraphs) and macro-level (i.e., between sections and subsections).
- 6.3. The text is easy to follow and skimmable (e.g., frequent and correct use of explicit cohesive devices and sign-posting).
- 6.4. Main issues are clearly separated from side issues.
- 6.5. The thesis is coherent, i.e., it is conceived independently and is not merely a collection of unconnected studies, quotations, or ideas.

## **7. Form and presentation**

- 7.1. The size fits the content.
- 7.2. The quality of the written language is high (i.e., style fits the register, correct grammar, no spelling or punctuation errors, consistent use of technical terminology, etc.).
- 7.3. Notes and/or appendices are adequately used.
- 7.4. Quotations, in-text references, and the reference list are correct, complete, and properly formatted according to the most recent edition of the current APA style.
- 7.5. The quality of the abstract is sufficient.

### **Working process (only assessed by the supervisor/s)**

The supervisor(s) evaluate criteria 1-7 by taking the student's conduct during the thesis project into account:

- The student displayed initiative, contributed substantially, and showed considerable independence in carrying out the various parts of the thesis (research question, method and approach, data collection and analysis).
- The student finished intermediate tasks adequately and at a proper pace.
- The work that has been done is substantial.