

Cologne Center for Comparative Politics: Master Thesis Guidelines



Cologne Center for
Comparative Politics

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The Master thesis in political science is an original research project in which students demonstrate the ability to apply the knowledge acquired during the courses. The master thesis is supervised by a supervisor. In case you plan to write your thesis under the supervision of a member of the CCCP, please take the following guidelines into consideration:

1. Discuss your initial project idea with one of the academic staff members of the CCCP during office hours. This can be a professor, a post-doctoral researcher, or a doctoral researcher. It is strongly recommended that you have attended a course with this CCCP member. It is advisable to contact a team member whose fields of expertise and interest fit to your project idea. For information refer to <http://www.cccp.uni-koeln.de/de/team>.
2. On the basis of the first discussion, work out a short draft research design (exposé), which necessarily must include the following items (around 3-5 pages):
 - Working title
 - Research Question: Which central question or research puzzle do you want to answer in your thesis?
 - A brief description of the state of the art
 - Theoretical framework, including working hypotheses
 - Proposed methods and techniques
 - Description of the data needed for implementation and explanation of its availability
3. On the basis of this draft research design, it is your responsibility to solicit a supervisor. A supervisor may be one of the professors of the CCCP. Please take into consideration the fit with your research interests as well as the respective methodological

expertise. Discuss your draft research design subsequently in the respective office hours. Send your draft at least a week before consultation appointment via email.

4. During the consultation with the prospective supervisor, it is a matter of clarifying whether the project seems feasible. Please note that the professors remain free to determine whether or not they are able to supervise the thesis. If there is a consensus and supervision is agreed, you will be enrolled into the CCCP Research Seminar.
5. Registration for the CCCP Research Seminar works as follows: You send an [email to Prof. Ingo Rohlfing](#) stating that you want to present in the seminar. When he confirms the receipt of the email, you are registered. BEFORE you do this, we expect that you have talked to one of the professors at the CCCP ([Basu, Kaiser, Proksch, Rohlfing, Trampusch](#)) about supervising your Master thesis and that one of them agreed to be the supervisor. Your email to Prof. Rohlfing should then include information on the working title and possible dates on which you want to present (and, possibly, dates you absolutely cannot present). Slots are allocated on a first come, first served basis. As a next step, you can register in Klips for the course “Kolloquium Politikwissenschaft: CCCP Research Seminar” of your supervisor.
6. Regular participation in the CCCP Research Seminar as well as the presentation of your project in this framework are required. The final thesis title must be registered with the examination office (see below). You will then have 6 months to complete your research.

Requirements:

- Please note the admission requirements as well as the processing deadlines in the respective examination regulations for [WiSo 2015 students](#)
- Your political science topic addresses a question that fits in with the priorities of your supervisor
- You participated in lectures or seminars of the CCCP

Registration of the MA thesis at the examination office:

After the explicit confirmation by the supervising team member, the master thesis has to be registered with the corresponding examination office.

For this, a form issued by the CCCP must be signed. Please contact the [CCCP office](#) for issuing the form and please provide the following information: Name, Matrikelnr., topic of thesis, first and second supervisor. The form is sent to the examination office by the CCCP.

From the moment of registration of the master thesis begins the processing period, the expiration of which will be communicated to you in writing by the examination office.

Important:

When you have registered the thesis, the title cannot be changed (!) You should not sign in until you are sure you can master the topic profitably.

Submission of the MA thesis:

The finished master thesis has to be submitted on time (!) to the [examination office](#) as one, bound (fixed glued and NOT in ring binding!) copy and as a file for plagiarism check on a CD / DVD as a .doc or .pdf document.

Writing the thesis / Formalities:

Always inform yourself on the pages of your examination office and in your study regulations about the exact form. Information from the WiSo Examination Office on final theses including an updated sample declaration of consent can be found [here](#).

Other formalia are:

- 1.5-fold line spacing
- 12-Point Font (Calibri)
 - right margin: 3 cm
 - left margin: 2 cm

The work must also contain:

- a list of tools used (bibliography)
- an affidavit ([Eidesstattliche Erklärung](#)) signed by you which you can find on the pages of the examination office.

In line with exam regulations, there is no binding minimum or maximum page limit. As the length of a thesis depends on the research design chosen, the CCCP provides no general recommendation in that regard. As a non-binding orientation mark: MA theses at the CCCP are often around 60 pages long, but feel free to discuss alternative plans with your supervisor.

For more information on formalities, citation and an introduction to the literature search, see the document [Recommendations on Scientific Working Techniques](#) of the Political Institute ([Techniken des wissenschaftlichen Arbeitens](#)).

Evaluation:

You can find a list of criteria for the evaluation of your thesis [here](#).