



Instructions and rules for the MSc research thesis in Clinical Psychology

1. Introduction

The research thesis amounts to 30 ECTS and work on the thesis is carried out under supervision. The thesis is completed over the course of three semesters and work begins in the 2nd semester. At the end of each semester, the relevant part of the thesis is submitted. A grade is not awarded for the thesis but rather a pass/fail for each individual part. The thesis consists in a research in the field of clinical psychology. It is preferable that the student himself/herself collects data, but an exemption can be granted if data has already been collected. The thesis is formulated and initiated in the 2nd semester, thesis data collection is completed in the 3rd semester, and data analysis and write-up are completed in the 4th semester.

The Director of the MSc in Clinical Psychology, or a special employee of the programme, oversees research theses on behalf of the programme. Oversight consists in communicating with supervisors and monitoring the progress of research theses. The overseer can ask students to submit information on the status of their thesis at any time during the study period. Submission of such information is carried out through the learning management system of the University or, depending on circumstances, via email to the overseer.

2. Individual project

The research thesis is an individual project, but in exceptional cases, two students can apply for permission to work on the thesis together. In such instances, an exemption must be applied for to the Curriculum Committee of the Department of Psychology. If two students work on the research thesis together, the thesis shall be expanded in scope accordingly. In this way, students can work together on data collection but must separately submit their data processing, analysis and manuscript of a scientific article.

3. Supervisors

Choice of supervisor is subject to the approval of the overseer of research theses. If the supervisor is neither a permanent employee nor a part-time instructor at the Department of Psychology, a secondary supervisor shall be appointed from the group of employees or part-time instructors. The role of the secondary supervisor is to serve as a contact to the Department of Psychology and ensure that rules and guidelines concerning the research thesis are followed.



4. Description of the thesis process

4.1 First part, 2nd semester (6 ECTS) - Research methods and design

Selection of research thesis and supervisor begins at the end of the 1st semester and the student must have decided on a thesis and come to an agreement with a supervisor at the start of the 2nd semester. A thesis proposal shall be in place at the end of January. The proposal consists in a short summary of the thesis (a maximum of 500 words), which is composed of a very short introduction that includes an aim, hypotheses or research questions and a general method description. The student submits the proposal in English through the learning management system of the University. The supervisor and overseer must approve the proposal before the student can begin work on the preparation of the thesis.

In preparing the thesis, the student writes a detailed ethics committee application where the state of the art in the subject is described in 3000–5000 words, as well as a thorough research plan in English. The student submits these two documents at the end of the 2nd semester via Turnitin and through the learning management system of RU. The student also submits an ethics committee application to the appropriate ethics committee (National Bioethics Committee, Ethics Committee of Landspítali - University Hospital etc., if applicable).

In cases where the student works on the thesis based on an existing data collection, where all permissions are in place, the student shall nonetheless prepare and submit a complete ethics committee application at the end of the 2nd semester via *Turnitin* and through the learning management system of RU.

It shall be assumed that all permissions for the research thesis (such as an ethics committee permission and permissions from supervisors of institutions/departments where the research is to be carried out) are in place at the start of the 3rd semester so that it is possible to begin data collection.

4.2 Second part, 3rd semester (6 ECTS) – Implementation and data collection

In the 3rd semester, alongside data collection, the student writes a method chapter in English, acceptable for publication in an international scientific journal in the same field as the research thesis, in consultation with his/her supervisor. The student submits the chapter via *Turnitin* and through the learning management system of RU.

4.3 Third part, 4th semester (18 ECTS) – Analysis, interpretation and write-up

In the 4th and final semester of the programme, the student processes the data and writes a complete manuscript of a scientific article in English, which is fit for publication in an international scientific journal. The student submits a manuscript of the article via



Turnitin, through the learning management system of RU and to Skemman (online institutional repository of Icelandic university libraries).

5. Role of supervisor and communication between student and supervisor

As a general rule, the supervisor and/or secondary supervisor shall hold a Master's degree in clinical psychology (Cand.Psych. or MSc) or a higher degree in psychology, but exemptions to this can be granted by the Curriculum Committee of the Department of Psychology. The supervisor is responsible for the research thesis, such as to licences, and supervises the project and provides regular guidance to the student. It is assumed that supervisors will meet with students at a minimum once or twice during each semester and will respond to emails from students no later than three days after receiving the email. Students shall be moderate in the extent of email communication with their supervisor (and secondary supervisor) in consultation with the supervisor. It is assumed that supervisors will read a draft of each chapter of the article once and the complete draft once.

The supervisor (and secondary supervisor when applicable) is co-author of published articles that result from the thesis, on the condition that the supervisor has contributed to the thesis with his/her supervision and other contribution. It is generally assumed that the student is first author of at least one scientific article, which forms his/her research thesis, if there are more than one article. If two students work on the research thesis together and submit two different scientific articles, both of the students can be listed as authors, that is, one as first author and the other as co-author.

The supervisor and secondary supervisor, when applicable, evaluate the research thesis (manuscript of scientific article as well as abstract) along with an external examiner appointed by the Curriculum Committee of the Department of Psychology. The thesis is graded as pass/fail.

6. Submission and presentation of research thesis

By the end of the 4th semester, the student submits a manuscript of a scientific article along with a short abstract or summary (500–800 words) on the research, its premises and execution to the supervisor (and secondary supervisor when applicable). The abstract or summary shall specify that the article is part of a Master's research thesis, what tasks were carried out during the three semesters and what projects were submitted. Furthermore, the information shall state whether the thesis is part of another research project, what theoretical basis was used, who served as supervisor(s), where the work was carried out and who should be thanked for facilities and participation. If the article is to be submitted for publication in an international scientific journal, the co-authors of the published article shall be listed.

The APA standard shall be used for the style and format of the research thesis unless a decision has been made as to which journal the article will appear in; in such cases, the standard of the respective journal shall be used.



If supervisors deem the work to be satisfactory, the student submits the thesis via Turnitin and through the learning management system myschool. Following this, and if nothing is revealed that needs attention, the thesis is sent to the external examiner who has two weeks to review the work. The external examiner and supervisor/supervisors award a grade to the student, but if there is disagreement on the grade between the supervisor/supervisors and external examiner, the matter is put to the Curriculum Committee of the Department of Psychology for resolution. When the grade has been approved, the student shall submit the thesis to Skemman with instructions on open or closed access depending on circumstances.

When the due date for the submission of the research thesis draws near (for example, in the month of April), the Science Day is held at RU where all graduates in the Master's programme in Clinical Psychology present their theses and publicly defend them. The Science Day is attended by supervisors, secondary supervisors and external examiners, as well as all interested teachers and students at RU and other guests who are specially invited, for example, members of the Icelandic Psychological Association and students and teachers from other universities in Iceland.