

**Thesis guide for the Master's thesis in Law, Tax
Law, Notarial Law and Child Law**

Version 2024/2025

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1 What is expected of you when writing a thesis?

1.1 Introduction

This manual is intended to get you started in writing your master's thesis, so that you have an idea of what to expect in advance. The manual to the legal master's programmes (Law, Child Law, Notarial Law, Tax Law). For the bachelor's thesis, please refer to the procedure announced each year via the faculty website and Brightspace. The Criminology programme has its own thesis manual.

In this manual, you will find advice on the research and writing process as well as information on the course of thesis supervision and assessment. In addition to this manual, most departments have a separate thesis guideline which details the practical details of the master's thesis process in the relevant department. Within the framework outlined in this manual, the details of the master's thesis may differ between programmes, majors and departments, depending on the field of law, the number of students involved, the size and organisation of the department responsible and the structure and scheduling of the programme of the relevant major. In some graduate programmes, for example, there is now a set path, with fixed interim deadlines, for writing the master's thesis. **What is said in this manual about thesis supervision and assessment applies to master's theses of all legal programmes.**

1.2 The function of the master's thesis

The master's thesis is intended not only as a learning process, but also as a test of whether you have sufficient legal knowledge and skills and whether you are capable of applying these knowledge and skills in an independent assignment. In writing the master's thesis, you must therefore show that - under supervision - you are able to recognise a legal problem, formulate it, analyse it and arrive at a using literature and case law you have found yourself. And you should then reflect this process in a clear argument. The final qualifications of the master's thesis - the knowledge and skills you should master after completing it - are included as an appendix to this guide.

1.3 The level of the thesis

The master's thesis is set at level 600¹, the highest level according to the Leiden Register of Education. This implies that you should make a more or less independent contribution to scientific research by an as yet unsolved problem. In doing so, you should address the most up-to-date academic literature and state-of-the-art research. The readership you should keep in mind while writing is the advanced law student or the newly graduated lawyer.

¹ For a more detailed description of these level designations, see the so-called 'abstract structure' developed by the university as a model to objectify the level requirements of education per academic year. The abstract structure is laid down in the [Leiden Register of Programmes](#).

1.4 The length of the thesis

The master's thesis has a study load of 10 ECs, equivalent to about 280 study hours. Within this, you should write a thesis of at least 10,000 and at most 15,000 words (including notes and excluding bibliography). When it comes to assessment, quality comes before quantity! If you submit a master's thesis that is significantly longer than 15,000 words, your thesis supervisor will ask you to compress it. Try to avoid this at all times, as shortening takes time and thus leads to delays.

Art. 4.7.2 [R&R](#) states that **for each master's/graduate programme**, a student writes **an independent thesis** that fits within the field of law of that master's/graduate programme. The article leaves room for the possibility to write a combined master's thesis for 20 EC. Please refer to that provision for further rules on this.

2 The structure, writing and completion the master's thesis

2.1 Topic selection

2.1.1 Finding a topic

Finding a thesis topic is not always easy. But thinking about and finding a suitable thesis topic is also part of the nature of academic study. How do you come up with an idea for a topic? Here are some suggestions. Inquire further with the department where you are writing your thesis about the procedures around choosing the thesis topic. At the kick-off meeting at the beginning of the thesis programme, information on this subject is usually provided as well.

- Draw inspiration from topics that have been covered in (elective) courses, practica, *privatissima* and/or seminars you have taken (note: the overlap should only be very limited, your master's thesis should not be an extended version of a previous *privatissima* assignment!);
- Choose a subject that has caught your interest while doing an internship;
- consult the lists of thesis topics of the department you are graduating from via the internet, if available;
- approach a teacher who is known to be working on a research project in which students can participate by, for example, investigating (partial) problems and reporting on them in a thesis;
- look through the most recent volumes of, for instance, *Rechtsgeleerd Magazijn Themis*, *Advocatenblad*, *Nederlands Juristenblad* and *Ars Aequi*, or legal journals specialised in your field of study for current issues that arouse your interest;
- Take inspiration from websites such as www.rechtspraak.nl, www.overheid.nl and www.recht.nl.

2.1.2 Approval of the topic

Once you have found a topic, the next question is whether that topic is a suitable thesis topic. This requires that it:

- can be dealt with succinctly, within a maximum of 15,000 words;
- can be examined and worked out within a period of three to four months;
- is sufficiently legal. A purely descriptive thesis is not allowed: you will have to show something of the development of law and your own stance in your thesis.

If you have concluded that the topic could a suitable thesis subject, you will contact the thesis coordinator of the relevant department about it. The thesis coordinator will then assign a supervisor. In some departments, the role of the thesis coordinator goes even further, see under 2.2.1. You inform your thesis supervisor by e-mail (some departments have a form for this) about the topic you want to research and give a brief explanation of your choice. During the intake meeting with your thesis supervisor that will take place in response to your e-mail, the question of the of your topic will be addressed.

If necessary, the thesis supervisor can then guide you how to narrow or expand the topic. Furthermore, the thesis supervisor can make suggestions for your (literature) research during this meeting. During this conversation, agreements should also be made about the further course and time planning of the thesis (see also under 2.2.).

2.2 Supervision

2.2.1 The thesis coordinator

Each department has a thesis coordinator who ensures the assignment of lecturer supervisors based on topic, research question possibly the draft outline¹ provided by the student. Who the thesis coordinator is, is usually listed on the website of the respective department. The thesis coordinator is also the point of contact for (serious) problems or complaints that may occur during the writing and/or supervision of the thesis. The actual supervision is in the hands of the tutor supervisor (the thesis supervisor).

2.2.2 The role of the thesis supervisor

After you have submitted a thesis topic - possibly already developed into a draft outline - to the thesis coordinator, you will be assigned a lecturer by the thesis coordinator as the thesis supervisor (see 2.1.3 above). As the thesis student, you must comply with the supervisor's instructions; the supervisor, for his part, must provide clarity on the conditions the must meet. Good supervision requires that both parties keep to the agreements made.

Writing a thesis, as already described in 1.2, has a dual function and this is reflected in the role of the supervisor. First, it is a *learning process*. This means that, in consultation your supervisor, you determine the topic, the research question, the outline and the bibliography. In consultation with the supervisor, you determine the timeline to be followed by you and the supervisor in writing and assessing the thesis. During the writing process, the supervisor will give you feedback on interim products.

In addition, the thesis is an *examination*. This means that the tutor's task also involves assessing the thesis as a final product. In addition, a second tutor carries out an independent assessment of the thesis. The procedure for assessing the final thesis is further described in 2.5.2 and 2.5.3.

2.2.3 The intake

The intake, the first meeting you have with your supervisor, is an important moment. This is because it is very important that you make clear agreements with your supervisor at the beginning of the thesis process and that you and your supervisor know what to expect from each other. It is advisable to put these arrangements in writing. And before the interview, think about things that are important for your supervisor to know, such as periods of absence.

During the interview, your supervisor will first pay attention to the requirements the thesis must meet (as shown in the online thesis assessment form, see the appendix for a schematic representation) and topics such as the length of the thesis (10,000 - 15,000 words), the use of language, literature references, plagiarism, etc. He/she will pay attention to what you can expect from him/her in terms of feedback and guidance. You can indicate what your own ambitions are with regard to the thesis. In addition, it is advisable to pay attention to the following points with a view to practical planning:

- Circumstances that may affect the thesis process (e.g. which subjects you still need to complete, a second course or (side) job).

¹ I.e. an introduction outlining reason and problem statement, main question based on the problem statement, sub-questions for answering the main question, preliminary table of contents and bibliography.

- The target date for graduation, including setting the deadline for applying for graduation. Here <https://www.student.universiteitleiden.nl/studie-en-study/study/graduation/application-graduation/law-llm?cf=law-llm&cd=law-llm#tab-2> you can read what you need to arrange in order to graduate and which deadlines you need to take into account.
- The target date for handing in the final version of the thesis (counting back from the desired graduation date), incl. the schedule for meeting this date and the interim steps to be taken to this end.
- Agreements on how and when 'interim products' are handed in and commented on.
- The deadline by which the final version is checked and assessed by thesis supervisor and second reader (see 2.5.3).
- Any details that may affect the schedule, such as:
 - periods in which the supervisor is absent or you yourself are absent due to holidays, for example, and any possibilities of contact by e-mail during this period;
 - periods when no or limited supervision is possible (Christmas recess, the months of July and August);
 - periods when different review periods apply (at least summer and Christmas recess).

Sometimes at the intake, the first version of the outline is also discussed.

2.2.4 The supervision process

In addition to the intake and the final meeting, the counselling process consists of at least two further counselling meetings. After the intake interview, the following counselling sessions generally take place:

- discussion following the (more detailed or improved version of the) outline or draft of the first chapter(s);
- the discussion of the draft version of the entire thesis. You should consider this draft version to be the final version yourself. Using feedback from the supervisor, you can make limited changes to the draft version if necessary. The final version you subsequently submit remains the final version and cannot be modified again (except by way of a resit, see further 2.5.5).

This is a global description; no two thesis projects are exactly the same. Sometimes the thesis supervisor needs to give feedback on the draft several times before it can be approved. Sometimes, after their outline has been approved, a student submits the draft thesis in one go (instead of first submitting another draft version of one or more chapters) and feedback is given again on this draft version if necessary. However, supervision should always take place; you cannot just hand in a finished thesis to a lecturer 'out of the blue'. Your supervisor can only give an informed assessment of the final product if they are aware of how it was created.

2.2.5 Problems with writing your thesis

When writing a thesis, you depend on your thesis supervisor. As a rule, students are very satisfied with their supervision on the master's thesis (in the master's exit survey, average scores for this are higher

than four on a scale of one to five for all programmes and majors). Nevertheless, you may encounter problems. Always try to raise this with the supervisor himself or herself first. In most cases, he or she will come to a solution with you. If that fails, you can turn to the thesis coordinator of the department where you are writing your thesis. If that does not lead to a solution either, the student advisor can make another mediation attempt. The student advisers can also give you advice if, for personal reasons, you do not manage to complete your thesis on schedule. In case of disagreement about the grade, you can submit a formal appeal to the Examination Board. Above all, do not wait too long to raise difficulties. It is unwise to hang around with them for long.

2.3 Literature and outline

After the supervisor approves your topic, you will start creating an outline and compiling a bibliography. The two parts cannot be separated: based on your thesis topic and preliminary and global outline, you will select the literature, while the literature consulted will help you further develop the outline.

2.3.1 Scientific literature search

The university libraries' catalogue

The catalogue allows you to search the collections of University's libraries, including the Law Library collection. You can find the catalogue on the library's website:

<http://bibliotheek.leidenuniv.nl/rechtsgeleerdheid/>.

With one search, you can search for books and journals, both printed and online, as well as for journal articles available online. However, the catalogue contains few Dutch-language (legal) journal articles. The best way to search for these is with the Legal Intelligence search service, in PiCarta or in legal databases.

Through the library, you can also access many (legal) databases. You can find these databases under the *Find Databases* tab in the catalogue.

Legal Intelligence

You can also find Legal Intelligence via the *Find Databases* tab. You must first log in to Legal Intelligence. You will then see your name at the top right of the search screen.

Legal Intelligence is a search service that allows you to simultaneously search legal information made available free of charge on the Internet by the government (case law, laws and regulations and jurisprudence) as well as scientific information from legal publishers. However, not all legal information can be searched with Legal Intelligence!

Need help?

Master students starting their thesis can make an appointment with one of the Law Library's subject referees for initial help with the search process. You can obtain information about this from the Law Library desk, or contact the subject expert directly. The contact details of the subject librarians can be found on the library website (under 'contact'). Always consult the library's website for opening hours.²

² <https://www.bibliotheek.universiteit leiden.nl/bezoek-en-gebruik>

In addition, you can take advantage of the range of [online tutorials](#) such as:

- Working with the [Catalogue](#)
- [Scientific information](#) search
- Start a [thesis](#)

Internet

The Internet is of course an indispensable source for looking up information. But not every site provides reliable c.q. uncoloured information (think of sites of interest groups, political parties, but also of law firms).

You are therefore advised to use only official sites of the European Union, the House of Representatives, ministries and other official bodies. This is of course different if, on the contrary, you wish to the point of view of, say, an interest group.

A dedicated search engine is Google Scholar. Google Scholar provides an easy way to locate scientific publications from various fields: articles, dissertations, books, abstracts and publications, as well as research reports from universities and other scientific organisations. Google Scholar's links make it easy to identify where the complete article is located in the library or on the web.

Other internet sites and search engines are best used only to facilitate the search for reliable sites and information.

When you have enough information, you place the material you have selected in a bibliography. Rank the material you have found according to the alphabetical order of the authors' names. When making the bibliography, also take into account the hierarchy of the various legal sources. If you involve a lot of case law in your thesis, it is advisable to draw up a separate case law list as early as the drafting stage. For the way the literature should be presented in the bibliography, please refer to the Guideline for legal authors, which can be downloaded free of charge from Kluwer Inview (www.kluwer.nl/leidraad).³

2.3.2 The problem statement and outline

In addition to a bibliography, you should formulate a problem statement and an outline for your thesis. These should be submitted to your supervisor or, in some departments, to the thesis coordinator for approval.

Problem statement

The problem statement articulates the actual question or problem the thesis is about. It is one of the most fascinating but often most difficult parts of the thesis. The problem statement must be precise on the one hand and concise on the other, and it often requires long thinking to both requirements at the same time.

If necessary, formulate sub-questions as well.

- The problem statement should be *precise*: the question or problem should be formulated in such a way that it is clear what is being investigated in the thesis. A problem statement that is too broad (vague) gives too little information about the limitations you have imposed on the research and is then applicable to many possible theses on the same topic. Thus, the problem

³ Guide for legal authors 2022: Please observe the 2022 'Guide for legal authors'. No copy is yet open access, but a pdf can be found via legal intelligence or [Kluwer Inview](http://www.kluwer.nl/leidraad).

statement is not the same as the subject of the thesis, but the representation of what you want to know about that subject, how you will do so, the constraints by time, place, target group, etc.

- The problem statement should be *concise*: the problem statement should be limited to the essential aspects of your research. Anything that does not contribute substantially to a better understanding of your research distracts from the main point and makes it less clear what your research is ultimately about. A good test is whether you can formulate in one sentence what you want to investigate.

The outline (table of contents)

A good outline is the basis of the entire thesis and will make working on it considerably easier. That outline is reflected in a good table of contents.

- A good table of contents, as complete as possible, will make your writing task more manageable by breaking down the parts of your research into small manageable sections in the outline.
- The table of contents helps you put the different parts of the thesis in a logical relationship with each other.
- The table of contents makes it easier to start: you can start with the simplest or most interesting section.
- It is a good idea to put a provisional number of pages; this will also give you something to hold on to.

The purpose of the table of contents is for the supervisor to understand the approach you have in mind so that he can comment meaningfully on it. The outline should at least include a delineation and formulation of the problem statement, a briefly explained chapter outline of the assigned topic and an overview of the literature to be used. Never start writing at random; then your thesis will end up in a water main.

2.4 Writing the thesis

Once your outline and reading list are approved by your supervisor, you can start the actual writing work.

2.4.1 The title

You choose a title that covers the content. The title initially acts as a 'working title'; it is often only at the end of the thesis what is the most appropriate title and/or subtitle.

2.4.2 The structure

It is likely that once the table of contents has been prepared, the structure is largely fixed. If this is not yet the case, we recommend putting this in order as early as possible. As mentioned, a good (detailed) structure forms a good guide for writing the thesis. There are various ways to a good further structure of your thesis. One example is the card system, in which the various topics and subtopics are written on separate cards.

2.4.3. Language and style

Some tips on writing style:

- Write in clear, non-complicated sentences as much as possible;
- Avoid archaic or weighty language;
- Avoid overusing the suffering form;
- Avoid vague qualifiers (often, sometimes, significantly, partly, mostly);
- Be sparing with abbreviations and underscores and make precise use of punctuation;
- Use inverted commas where necessary;
- Check for style and typing errors. Make use of your PC's spelling checker. Feel free to have others read the drafts you hand in beforehand.

Every student a thesis is expected to write flawless Dutch (or English, in case of theses for English-language majors). A poorly written text does not convince in terms of content either.

The language of the thesis is therefore Dutch or English. Art. 4.7.3 of the [Rules and Guidelines Master Examinations and Examinations](#) states that a student following a Dutch-language programme or programme direction may request the examination committee to be allowed to write the thesis in English. The examination committee will grant permission only if:

- a. the student has a demonstrable interest in writing a thesis in English;
- b. he plausibly demonstrates a sufficient command of English;
- c. the subject lends itself to it in the opinion of the examiner; and
- d. the examiner gives permission.

2.4.4 Quotations and plagiarism

Be economical with quotations. Place quotes between inverted commas. Only use a quote if it expresses the author's or authority's main idea. If you quote, the quote should preferably be short. Every quotation should be further justified (in note/literature list).

It will go without saying for a law student that copying passages verbatim outside the case you are quoting is never allowed. The thesis should be a piece of work of your own making and not a concatenation of other people's pieces. Hugo de Groot's time-honoured motto applies here: 'Groot is den Schand van 't Plaghiaet met eene Academiegraad!' What Hugo de Groot did not yet have, and the faculty does today, is a computer programme that checks all theses for plagiarism. For the method of citation, please refer to the Guide for Jurists (see above).

Article 6.1 [R&R](#) of the is the definition of **fraud**. It contains a general description and then lists a number of examples of fraud.

The definition of the term '**plagiarism**' has been clarified with effect from 2018/2019 by adding some examples of what the examination board understands plagiarism to be in any case. In R&R 24/25, the definition is as follows:

- a. using or copying someone else's texts, data or ideas without full and proper acknowledgement of the source;*
- b. failure to indicate clearly in the text, for example through inverted commas or a particular design, that text has been taken verbatim from another author's work, even if a correct source citation is included;*
- c. paraphrasing the content of other people's texts without sufficient source references;*
- d. submitting a previously submitted or similar text for assignments of other examinations;*
- e. copying work from fellow students and passing it off as one's own;*

f. submitting papers written by someone else, whether for payment or not."

If plagiarism is found, your supervisor will grade your thesis with a 1. Your supervisor will also report the plagiarism to the examination board.

2.4.5 Notes

The notes should preferably be placed at the foot of the page.

Avoid too many digressions in the note. Only elaborate when a digression in the regular text would interfere with the fluency of your argument. For how you refer to consulted literature in the note, see above.

2.4.6 Bibliography, table of contents and list of case law

a list of literature consulted after the thesis, arranged alphabetically by the authors' names. Give full of each work. Precede your thesis with a table of contents. Give the corresponding page number for chapters and paragraphs. If you include a lot of case law in your thesis, a separate case law list is desirable.

2.4.7 Care and layout

A piece that is not well-crafted will be read with less benevolence. It is therefore important that your thesis looks accessible.

On the inside of the first page at the bottom, include your name, student number, e- mail address, study programme and date (month and year), as well as the name of your thesis supervisor and the number of pages of your thesis.

The text of the thesis has a line spacing of 1½, a left margin of ± 3½ cm and a font of reasonable size (11 or 12 pnt).

2.5 The conclusion

2.5.1 Submitting the thesis

In any case, you should submit an electronic version of the thesis for plagiarism control purposes.

The thesis should also state the word count. What you submit as a final version remains the final version, you have already submitted drafts during the supervision process (see also 2.2.4). Only if the result is insufficient, in some cases you will be given the opportunity to revise the final version, but then by way of a resit (see also 2.5.5). During the thesis interview, you must have your own copy of the thesis.

After submission, you will agree with your supervisor when the thesis (final) interview will take place.

2.5.2 The review

Six criteria are distinguished in the assessment of theses:

- question
- structure of the argument
- quality of argumentation
- use of the relevant literature

- design and presentation
- independence

The criteria have not been given any 'weight'. An arithmetic approach would yield only sham accuracy. For each sub-aspect, the way in which a rating can be determined is described, but this still no more than an indication. Therefore, it cannot be ruled out that a piece that scores a six on all criteria may still be assessed as unsatisfactory.

The independence criterion requires some clarification. It is definitely not the case that as the number of meetings increases, the grade for independence becomes lower. What matters is the character of the guidance and how you processes the feedback. Does it show your own thinking, are you able to do something with the counsellor's advice? Or do you blindly adopt your supervisor's words without showing that you have understood?

Assessment scheme master thesis (included in digital thesis assessment form)

	Question	Structure of the argument	Quality of argumentation	Use of relevant literature	Design and presentation, readability	Independence
	<i>Is there a clear, workable and well-motivated set of questions developed into sub-questions and is there an appropriate assessment framework?</i>	<i>Does the argument develop the question in a meaningful and coherent way; is the conclusion consistent with the question; does it address new questions that have arisen?</i>	<i>Does an independent and adequate inventory of relevant arguments and viewpoints take place; are arguments weighed up against each other in plausible (intermediate) conclusions; are concepts, arguments, etc. adequately manner?</i>	<i>Has the obviously relevant literature and case law been incorporated in a way that does justice to the content; have new sources of information been found through own research?</i>	<i>Is the piece easy to read by including: - clear chapter and paragraph headings for the argument; - adequate literature review; readable style without language errors?</i>	<i>Is the thesis through a 'independent learning process' established come? It is not from the number of interviews but from the nature of the counselling that an independent attitude is evident, partly because: - scribe asks questions only after his own preliminary work; - scribe incorporated instructions given independently and in his own words; scribe independently according to the stated schedule works.</i>
6	Elaboration and justification of the	The relationship demand/ argument/	Usually accurate and relevant, but hesitantly,	However, the most relevant literature and	Following the argument	Lots of help and instructions needed had (at each stage

	questions do not entirely convince.	conclusion, while sufficient to follow, is not entirely convincing.	little problematisd, stays close to the literature and/or case law used.	case law consulted; little or no further own research; use of literature and case law is not incorrect but remains superficial.	requires effort from the reader because the format of the argument, the source reference and/or style and language use leave something to be desired.	writing process); limited independent preparation/development of questions and/or interim work submitted; instructions given processed with limited own thinking (supervisor sometimes checks 'own work'), and/or instructions not always followed properly; also a lot of planning guidance necessary revealed.
7	Clear question with appropriate assessment framework	Leads via followable intermediate steps n to an informed conclusion	Some own thinking done, attention to opposing views in literature and case law used, but further academic depth is lacking.	Did consult most relevant literature and case law; some further own research; use of literature and case law is adequate.	The argument is a good read, but would still clearly have benefited from proper final editing	Degree and nature of guidance in line with 'independent learning process'; reasonably independent attitude due to sufficient preparation/elaboration of questions and/or interim work handed in; instructions processed independently and correctly. Limited planning guidance required.
8	Clear, well-reasoned question paper with interesting assessment cadres	Leads via contiguous intermediate step n to a well-founded conclusion placed in a broader framework.	Good, representative description of diverse arguments, thorough consideration in self-formulated conclusions; a first taste of academic research.	Well documented d piece based on own research on information sources and, including law, legal historical e and/or international sources; information used has been thoroughly utilised.	A nicely designed, well-crafted story with adequate source reference, without style and language errors.	Degree and nature of guidance in line with 'independent learning process'; independent attitude through thorough and proper preparation/elaboration of questions and/or interim work handed in, directions no more than directional and these are independently and correctly processed. Little to no planning guidance required.

9/ 10	Clear, well-reasoned question paper with interesting assessment framework. Original and innovative subject.	A compelling argument that fascinates and persuades from the question to the conclusion or leads to interesting discussions.	New viewpoints, arguments and/or considerations make the paper a good basis for scientific publication.	High documenting value in that hard-to-access or unusual sources of information have been exploited in a way that does complete justice to the contents.	(Also) in terms of its design, it is definitely publishable.	Degree and nature of supervision in line with 'independent learning'; attitude of an independent researcher; supervisor acts mainly as 'sparring partner' and sounding board.
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2.5.3 The determination of the grade by the first and second readers and the thesis interview

In addition to your thesis supervisor, a second assessor independently conducts an assessment of your thesis.

Your thesis supervisor and the second assessor agree on the final grade. According to the Education and Examination Regulations, this should be done within 15 working days. However, there are exceptions: firstly, this may be deviated from during the summer period (1 July - 31 August), in addition to the period of the Christmas break (not only the holidays but also the days between Christmas and New Year, and possibly the first days of January, do not count as working days - for information on the current academic year, see the annual calendar on the faculty website). In addition, special circumstances may come into play - such as a foreign stay of your thesis supervisor - which may prevent them from assessing your thesis within 15 working days. It is therefore important to make clear agreements with your thesis supervisor about the assessment period in advance.

The second assessor also fills in an assessment form, which is largely the same as the above except that the criterion 'independence' is missing. After all, only your thesis supervisor can pass judgment on this aspect.

The thesis grade is generally communicated to you during the final interview. At this point, the grade is already fixed, so the thesis interview is not a 'defence' that affects your grade. During the thesis interview, the thesis supervisor motivates his/her assessment on the basis of the thesis assessment form. The grade will be forwarded to the Education Information Centre by your thesis supervisor.

2.5.4 The exit survey

At the end of the thesis process, your thesis supervisor will ask you complete the digital exit survey, if possible on site at a free computer, otherwise by sending you a link by e-mail to the survey. This is a survey with questions about the thesis guidance and questions about the programme that were not addressed during the individual course evaluations. These surveys provide important information for programmes and faculty. The more students complete this survey, the more representative and thus useful the results will be.

2.5.5 Retake

Of course, a master's thesis can also be assessed as unsatisfactory. This can be done under the conditions below, which concern not only the quality of the thesis but also the supervision:

- a final version has been submitted which thesis supervisor and second reader judge does not meet the minimum requirements for a six (see the assessment form);
- the student has had at least three conversations/'guidance moments' with the thesis supervisor, excluding the final interview;
- the student has had the opportunity to submit drafts, with the basic principle being that feedback was given once on each part of the thesis (see 2.2.4).

If the above conditions relating to supervision are not met, the thesis submitted by the student cannot be regarded as a final version, and the student will be given the opportunity to revise it again.

Since a thesis is not only a form of test, but certainly also a learning process, a failing grade can be **repaired or resit**.

Repair

Repair involves a revision of the original thesis, possibly under the conditions that:

- the thesis supervisor and the departmental thesis coordinator are of the opinion that the research underlying the unsatisfactory thesis does not need to be repeated and
- the student wants to make use of this possibility and
- (Brief) guidance is given by the (new) supervisor (first or second reader can take on this task) and
- a maximum of a six can be obtained as the final mark for the revised version and this is also recorded as such in the e-Study Guide.

Retake

Writing an entirely new thesis (retake) is possible under the conditions that:

- the student starts all over again with a new subject and
- he is assigned a new supervisor, preferably from another department if the subject allows. Finding a new thesis supervisor is done in consultation with the thesis coordinator(s) of the department(s) concerned;
- any final grade is possible, depending on the result of the new thesis. These, in

short, are the two options for recovering an unsatisfactory result.

2.5.6 Maximum duration of thesis guidance

No maximum deadline has been set by the faculty for the supervision of master's theses. However, every graduation department has some form of thesis supervision process so that - if the deadlines mentioned in the process are met - timely graduation can be guaranteed by the department. In that, the duration of the guidance is usually limited. In addition, students may be recommended to write the thesis within a certain deadline in connection with the risk of lapsing of already passed courses. Indeed, the examination committee (see [Art. 4.7](#)) may decide that successfully completed master's examinations lose their validity if they were taken more than three years ago and the subjects are demonstrably out of date.

2.5.7 In conclusion

For more tips on writing your thesis, consult:

- [T.C. Borman et al, *Guidance for legal authors. References to literature, regulations and case law in footnotes and bibliography*, Deventer: Wolters Kluwer 2022.](#)
- A.J. van Dijk (ed), W.H. Hiemstra (co-ed), E.M. Kampstra and H. Conijn, *Arguing for lawyers*. Groningen: Noordhoff Publishers, 2020.
- R. Geel, *How do I put my thoughts on paper*, Bussum: Coutinho 1991. (Advice on essay and scientific).
- H.A.J.M. Lamers, *How to write a scientific text*, Bussum: Coutinho 1993. (A manual for writing theses, reports, dissertations, reports and notes).
- P. Nederhoed, *Clear reporting* (2011), Houten: Bohn Stafleu Van Loghum 2015. (A guide to writing reports, theses, notes and scientific articles).
- J. Renkema, *Writing guide*, Amsterdam: Boom Publishers 2020.
- [M. Snel, *The 'good' research design as a success factor for the legal thesis in: Ars Aequi*, September 2017, pp 748-754.](#)

We wish you every success in writing your thesis!

Annex 1

Academic and other skills

"Academic and other skills

4. Masters Organisation and Management will be able to analyse and interpret more complex problems - in the form of concrete cases or abstract questions - related to the subfield mentioned in 2. in depth and in mutual connection, involving social, political and legal-historical aspects, asking critical questions and proposing original and creative legal solutions. Furthermore, the master is able to present this clearly both orally and in writing, both for colleagues and for non-lawyers. *(application of knowledge and insight, formation of judgement, communication)*

5. Masters will be able to independently form an opinion on legal-social issues on the basis of scientifically sound facts and data and on the basis of reasoned, justified and verifiable considerations. *(application of knowledge and insight, forming judgements)*

6. The master is able follow, understand and participate in scientific debates in the relevant subfield mentioned in. *(application of knowledge and insight, communication)*

7. Masters will have an understanding of legal-scientific research methods and be able apply them with a view to an independent legal-scientific research project of any size at an academic level (such as formulating a problem, collecting information, interpreting data, drawing conclusions, evaluating and making recommendations and suggestions for further research). *(application of knowledge and insight, judgment, communication)* "

