

Guidelines for the Defensio of a Master's Thesis at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna

comes into effect on 1 October 2021

The Defensio is the final examination performance assessment of a Master's course at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna. It is held in the form of a presentation followed by a technical discussion on the corresponding Master's thesis, and supervised by a committee. This comprises three university lecturers with high teaching credentials. The Chair must belong to a different department from that associated with the Master's thesis and is responsible for ensuring an orderly procedure of the Defensio and writing the protocol. Upon completion of the Defensio, the committee assesses the achievements of the candidate according to the criteria of the appraisal sheet for a Defensio at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna.

Preparation

The student arranges in advance a date and time for the Defensio with two university lecturers with high teaching credentials. The person who supervised the thesis is usually part of the committee, but may not chair it. The Chair is appointed by the Study Services. The student has the option to nominate a candidate for the Chair. The candidate must belong to a different department from that associated with the Master's thesis.

The registration for the Defensio and all necessary documents for graduation must be submitted to the Study Services no later than three weeks before the arranged date of the Defensio.

Procedure

As a public event, the goal is to hold the Defensio in an appropriate setting. In relation to the topic and the investigation of the Master's thesis, it serves the professional exchange and aside from the commission and co-supervisors it should also reach a wider audience of interested people.

The candidate holds a *presentation* within the scope of the Defensio about the written Master's thesis and introduces the scientific knowledge gained in it. The topic, the objective and research questions, the theoretical framework, the methods used and the corresponding results with the resulting scientific knowledge and the appropriate conclusions are presented. The lecture will be held within a time frame of a maximum of 20 minutes.

Following this, a *technical discussion* takes place in which questions on the topic of the Master's thesis, as well as relevant and adjacent areas of scientific expertise in a practically-applied environment, are included. At the end of the Defensio, the entire auditorium can add their questions to those raised by the committee.

The total duration of the Defensio should be 45 minutes.

Evaluation

The final assessment of the Defensio, is carried out by both evaluators and corresponds to the evaluation sheet as follows:

- Presentation skills
- Ability to explain one's own work
- Existing core subject knowledge
- Existing knowledge in associated subject areas
- Responses to the questions
- Argumentation in the discussion
- Knowledge transfer of own research results
- Practical relevance
- Subject relevance

The above points are evaluated in writing in a descriptive form. A final overall evaluation of the Defensio is summarised with a numeric grade from 1 to 5.

After proclamation of the total score, which consists of assessing the Master's thesis (70%) and the Defensio (30%), where both parts must be completed successfully, the completed evaluation sheets are forwarded internally to the Study Services.