

MA Thesis and Exmatriculation

MA Thesis and Completion of Studies

On this page, you will find a collection of FAQs regarding registering and writing your MA thesis and completing your studies in the MA Global History.

Please read this guide carefully before planning the final stretch of your Master's.

Please be aware that the examination office (Prüfungsbüro) is responsible for your final degree (Studienabschluss), the final transcript and the registration of the MA thesis, and not the Global History team.

You can download this page as a pdf [here](#).

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Schedule

- **When should I start thinking about my thesis?**

Ideally, you will have started thinking about possible topics for your MA thesis while writing your fourth (and last) research paper and have also started getting in touch with potential supervisors. We advise you to use the papers you write throughout your studies as stepping stones for potential thesis topics, i.e. to find a focus within your studies in a field, period or region. To find potential supervisors who will guide you through should be one of the first steps and not the last!

- **When do I attend the Colloquium?**

The MA Colloquium Global History is offered during summer and winter terms. Ideally, you take the colloquium parallel to writing your thesis to benefit most from it, as it involves you presenting and discussing your schedule and the preliminary findings of your thesis.

- **How do I find a topic for my thesis?**

Think about which topic interests you most, which class did you enjoy in particular, what paper ignited your interest the most, with whom did you feel most comfortable taking classes and discussing your papers? It is entirely acceptable to arrive at very specific thesis ideas on your own and discuss these with a supervisor, just as much as it is to only come up with a hunch or gut feeling that, following a discussion with your supervisor, can be turned into a solid topic and research question for your MA thesis. Theoretically, every historical topic is possible, as long as you find an *eligible* (see below) supervisor for your idea.

It is of course possible to develop a topic independent of any class you have taken. Also, you can approach a supervisor you would prefer without having taken a class with her/him.

Having said this, professors are more likely to work with students they have met in class before. Maybe this is also something to consider while you choose the courses for your last semester with course work.

After finding a primary and secondary supervisor, you must register your thesis by submitting an [application](#) in which you state the topic you have agreed upon with your supervisors. This topic has to feature one part of the M.A. thesis title. However, it is still possible to add a second title line with submission.

- **How do I find a supervisor for my thesis?**

Approach a lecturer eligible to supervise your thesis generally professors (see below for more details).

Please be aware: often students have very exact and precise ideas for the MA thesis and then look for a supervisors that has the exact same interests in their research profile. This is – because of the diversity of themes in Global History – even in a university city like Berlin, not always possible (“I’m looking for someone that works with masculinity as a category in the war photography of WW1 in Ukraine”). The university professors with eligibility for supervision (full professors) have at their disposal, however, enough knowledge and experience in the supervision of theses, that often only regions, thematic focuses and time periods may suffice.

In case you develop a topic, but do not know who might be best suited to supervise this topic, contact the program coordinator via globalhistory@fu-berlin.de for help.

- **Why do I need a second supervisor?**

In order to guarantee an impartial and fair evaluation of your thesis, regulations require a second opinion and grade on your thesis. This second opinion will count for 50 per cent of the grade of the thesis. You are free to choose who you prefer as your second supervisor.

- **Who is eligible to be my first and second supervisor?**

Both supervisors must be eligible to supervise ([prüfungsberechtigt](#)) your thesis.

Generally, *Hochschullehrer*innen/ Prof. Dr.* are eligible. This category refers to full professors, junior professors and temporary/ honorary professors. The non-tenured academic staff – research associates; Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter*innen (Dr.) - are not eligible to supervise your thesis, despite being authorized to teach classes and supervise and grade research papers.

For the MA Global History, history professors from the history department and the departments cooperating with our program at the Freie Universität as well as the cooperating departments at Humboldt-Universität are eligible supervisors.

If you specify a lecturer who is not eligible to supervise your thesis in your application, the examination office must reject your application and you will have to look anew. Therefore, please make sure that the teacher is eligible to supervise beforehand.

Despite generally not being eligible or tasked to supervise theses, postdoctoral members of the academic staff as well as lecturers can apply for the authorization to supervise individual MA theses as secondary supervisors according to the stipulations of the *Prüfungsbüro*. However, this should be an exception since the supervision of theses is not part of the job requirements for Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter*innen. This application includes two parts; authorization for the specific lecturer to supervise theses, which should confirm the qualification of the potential supervisor and which needs to be approved by a full professor of the department, and authorization reasoning why this lecturer would be the best supervisor for a particular thesis. Please see [here](#) for more details (in German).

External supervisors from other subjects or universities must be authorized as eligible supervisors but are generally permitted only as secondary supervisors. They must submit the application for authorization. Please defer from asking international scholars to be your supervisor.

In case both supervisors of a thesis are not eligible professors from Global History or our cooperating departments, the student writing the thesis has to submit an additional letter reasoning why no equally qualified eligible supervisors were available.

Please note: all of these exceptions come with considerable bureaucracy. The Global History team cannot carry out any legwork or support in any way. The students must clear this with the Prüfungsbüro and the supervisors in question themselves. Please understand if we do not reply to any inquiries related to this or help further.

- **When and where do I register my MA thesis and submit my topic application?**

You can register your MA thesis any time during the office hours of the [examination office](#) or by post. All necessary documents can be found [here](#).

- **Do I need to be enrolled when writing the MA thesis**

- No, you do not need to be enrolled in the semester when you hand in your MA thesis. You can exmatriculate and thereby give up your student status when you have completed all coursework and the only examinations remaining for you are in order to complete the degree. However, you will not have access to Campus Management anymore, so you must make sure that your Campus Management is well organized, all documentation is complete and that it reflects your completed coursework.

What is required in order to register an MA thesis?

Requirements for the registration of an MA thesis include:

1. Proof of enrollment at the Freie Universität Berlin as per the examination regulations. Since being enrolled you may not have taken up a different study program.
2. Successful completion of modules 1 (Global Spaces), 2 (Global Histories), and 3 (Global Configurations) and 60 ECTS credits in total.
3. The signatures of both eligible supervisors on the [application form](#) indicating their readiness to evaluate the MA thesis. When you email your thesis registration to the Prüfungsbüro, you should copy both of your supervisors into the email so that their signatures can be verified more quickly.

- **How much time do I have to work on my thesis?**

After the confirmation of your thesis application you will have 22 weeks allotted to work on your MA thesis. The deadline is legally binding. The submission date for your MA thesis cannot be extended; in the case of health issues, a medical certificate is required. The examination period will then be extended by the duration of the sick leave.

- **When does the allotted time begin?**

It takes about four weeks to process the application and get approval by the examination board of your MA thesis topic. The time allotted to write the MA thesis begins with the date the registration letter is sent to you. However, you should be ready to begin writing at the time of application.

Master's Thesis

The master's thesis should demonstrate that the student is able to independently work upon a specific topic in the field of global history at an advanced research level, and present, document, and analyze relevant findings.

- **How long (how comprehensive) should the MA thesis be?**

The MA thesis should be ca. 70 pages in length (with 300 words per page). There are no additional binding stipulations about the format. If in doubt, you should communicate any questions about the format or length with your primary supervisor.

- **What should I do if I notice that I am not making progress on my topic?**

Your topic can be changed once within the first 4 weeks, without it counting against you. However, if you prepare the topic well and discuss it thoroughly with your supervisor, this is highly unlikely to happen.

- **Where and how do I submit my MA thesis?**

The MA thesis must be submitted to the [examination office](#) of the 'Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften' Department during their office hours after you have been notified of the confirmation of your MA thesis application and before the 22 weeks have expired. If the MA thesis is sent per mail, the package must be postmarked by that date.

You must provide three bound copies as well as one read-only electronic version saved as a PDF on a CD. Upon submission, you must state in writing that your thesis was independently written and that you have not made use of any unnamed sources or aid. This statement must be included in the bound MA thesis as the last page. You will receive a template of the cover page and the plagiarism statement with the confirmation of your thesis by post.

- **How long does it take for my thesis to be graded?**

The *Prüfungsbüro* then forwards the MA thesis to your supervisors. You of course have the option to, after submission to the *Prüfungsbüro*, personally deliver it to your supervisors after having presented the copies to be stamped. The supervisors then have 4 weeks to evaluate the MA thesis, as stipulated by the *Prüfungsbüro*.

- **What happens if the supervisors suggest differing grades for the MA thesis?**

As per the general study and examination guidelines of the Free University Berlin (*FUMitteilungen* 32/2013 from 22 Aug. 2013), the arithmetic average will then be taken as the grade.

- **What happens if the MA thesis does not receive a satisfactory mark?**

Your MA thesis must meet at least the ‘satisfactory’ (4,0) mark to be considered passing. Constant and intensive contact with your supervisor in the preparation and writing stages helps prevent an unsatisfactory mark!

Reevaluation and Reexamination

An examination is deemed satisfactory if the grade is at least a 4,0; if not, the examination may be retaken once. Marks of 4,0 or better may not be made-up.

Earning Your Degree and Completion of Studies

- **How is the MA thesis weighted for the final grade?**

The MA thesis is weighted as 30 credits of your MA. The grade of your MA thesis makes up a third of your final grade (30 of 90 **graded** ECTS credits)

- **How do I complete my MA?**

Your diploma certificate can be obtained by [applying for completion of your university degree](#) (*Antrag auf Studienabschluss im Master Studiengang*). To do so, you must present proof of having completed all 120 approved credit points according to the examination guidelines. All course and examination points should be documented completely in SLCM (formerly Campus Management). Processing takes ca. 4 weeks, and the documents will thereafter be sent to you via post. The application for degree completion is available online and must be submitted within 4 weeks after having handed in your final examination. If this final examination is your MA thesis, it is recommended to hand in the application for the completion of studies, as well as an [exmatriculation application](#) together with the thesis.

When am I exmatriculated and therefore not a student anymore?

You cease being a student with your exmatriculation. The exmatriculation is treated separately from the application for the completion of studies. You can plan your own exmatriculation by [requesting](#) it for the end of the semester in which you hand in your MA thesis. Alternatively, you can demand it to take immediate effect. On a quarterly basis, the examination office automatically exmatriculates students whose completion of studies has been confirmed. With your exmatriculation you lose your status as a student.

MA Degree

Students will receive an examination certificate as well as an MA diploma certificate. Additionally, they will receive a diploma supplement, which includes a description of their studies, as well as an explanation of the academic and professional qualifications that the student has gained upon completion of their degree. Furthermore, a document with

descriptions of the individual modules and their constitutive parts will be included. Upon request, English versions of the diploma certificate and diploma supplemental material as well as the transcript information can be made. Please speak to the Prüfungsbüro about this and not the Global History team.

Whom can I contact if I have further questions?

For further inquiries concerning your MA thesis, please contact either the [Prüfungsbüro](#) for the *Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften* department, or the Global History MA program at globalhistory@fu-berlin.de.