

- 1) In the Czech Republic, the Master thesis is part of what is called the State Exam. The State Exam is organised at the end of the MA studies and focuses on the key issues covered during the entire period of study. MARS has a written exam (a paper) and the MA thesis, which also has an oral defence. In order to graduate, students need to pass all parts. The State Exam is organised at particular moments (see below). In case students fail one of the parts of the State Exam, they can attempt to pass it again when the next round of State Exams takes place. There is a maximum of three attempts in total to pass each part of the State Exam.
- 2) **The first step**, for all students who are starting their studies, is to familiarize themselves with all documents related to the theses:
 - The Dean's provision 16/2018² and the Dean's instruction 18/2017.³ These documents explain how the thesis should look like, in relation to its content, form, and layout; they also explain the submission procedure, the procedure for publishing the electronic version and the templates to be used;
 - The Study Regulations at FSV UK;⁴
 - The Academic Calendar;⁵
 - The Instructions for SIS.
- 3) **Thesis proposal.** Students can use two strategies for selecting their thesis topic.
 - a. The teachers announce suggested thesis topics in SIS. If a student finds an interesting topic, it is possible to apply for this topic via SIS. Then, it is necessary to contact the teacher about the thesis proposal, and to discuss the concrete proposal with him/her.
 - b. The other (more common) option is that student approaches the teacher with their own research topic, and the teacher then evaluates the suitability of that proposed topic. In case the topic is deemed suitable and the teacher is willing to act as a thesis supervisor, the student can develop the thesis proposal itself, under the guidance of the supervisor.

Keep in mind that a teacher can refuse to be a thesis supervisor for a particular topic and/or student. The suggested research topic might not be in his/her field, or s/he may be already supervising too many theses. (Students can check in SIS whether a supervisor has reached his/her limit). In such case, the teacher may (but doesn't have to) suggest another suitable supervisor. It is also possible to ask teachers external to ICJS or IIS, or PhD students teaching at ICJS or IIS. **It is the student's responsibility to find a supervisor.** A thesis proposal cannot be submitted without the signature of a thesis supervisor. Moreover, the thesis proposal need to be formulated by the student, in interaction and consultation with the supervisor, with the former receiving the latter's explicit approval. It is not the supervisor that writes the thesis proposal, though.

¹https://iksz.fsv.cuni.cz/sites/default/files/uploads/files/Bakala%CC%81r%CC%8Cske%CC%81%20a%20magister%CC%81%20za%CC%81ve%CC%8Crec%CC%8Cne%CC%81%20pra%CC%81ce_1.pdf (in Czech)

² <https://fsv.cuni.cz/opatreni-dekanky-c-16/2018aj> (in English)

³ <https://fsv.cuni.cz/deans-provision-no-18/2017> (in English)

⁴ <https://fsv.cuni.cz/en/academics/forms-and-regulations/study-regulations> (in English)

⁵ <https://fsv.cuni.cz/en/academics/degree-students/academic-calendar> (in English)

Students should get in touch with the supervisor **at least one month before the deadline** for the research proposal submission. The deadlines are announced by the ICSJ Head of Institute. They are around mid-January for the September defence, mid-March for the following January defence, and early September for the following June defence. Students who are late in dealing with this issue risk not finding a supervisor.

Teachers can refuse to discuss proposals if these are submitted less than one month before the proposal submission deadline. This is to prevent last minute situations. Supervisors will sign only proposal they are sure they can support, which requires sufficient time to discuss it with them.

After finding a supervisor and reaching an agreement on the exact topic with the supervisor, students should fill out the **thesis proposal form** [\[LINK\]](#). There are different forms for BA and MA research proposals, so please be careful to use the correct one.

There is a direct link between the timing of the research proposal approval and the thesis defence: **The thesis defence will take place minimally 8 months after the research proposal has been approved**, which happens typically within 2 weeks after the submission deadline.

- 4) **The submission and approval of research proposals.** Students have to fill out the research proposal submission form, print and sign two copies, get their supervisor's signatures on both of them and submit them at the **Hollar Post Room** (Room 005, behind the reception). After that, the MARS guarantor (Jakub Končelík) will either approve the proposal, or he will return it, requesting changes. **The decision is announced on the website.** Students will not get individual emails informing them about the result. If changes to the proposal are required, the research proposal has to be submitted again, using a new submission form which needs to be signed again by the supervisor. Approved proposals, with dr. Končelík's signature and the "APPROVED" stamp, are stored by the Department of Media Studies secretary, Ms. Gabriela Skalicka, who also uploads the approved research proposals to SIS (indicating that it is an approved thesis topic).
- 5) **Consultations.** It is assumed that students will regularly consult with their supervisors about their theses. It is not a good idea to keep your supervisor in the dark when it comes to your thesis. The supervisor should inform the students about their consultation availabilities, at the beginning of the semester. With each student, a supervisor will create a consultation timetable. It is not reasonable to expect consultations to happen every week, though.

The student remains the author of the theses. Students should not expect their supervisor to read numerous drafts of their thesis. The common practice is that the supervisor answers questions during consultations but does not read individual draft chapters. Students who wish to consult with their supervisors during summer should plan this in June, as teachers usually go on holidays in July and/or August.

If the students want the supervisor to read a full draft of the thesis, s/he should submit it to the supervisor at least 3 weeks before the deadline, otherwise it will not be read. Students that send a full draft thesis to their supervisor make sure that the thesis respects the rules and conventions of academic writing, and has a correct use of grammar and spelling. **It is not acceptable to send a draft which has grammatical errors and spelling mistakes.** Supervisors will not read drafts that have language problems.

- 6) **Length of the thesis.** According to the FSV UK rules, a BA thesis must have at least 30 standard pages (54 thousand characters, including spaces) without annotation and appendixes, and the MA thesis must have at least 60 standard pages (108 thousands characters). **MA theses in English must have at least 50 standard pages (90 thousands characters).** MARS students are strongly recommended **not** to have the length of their thesis **exceed 100 standard pages (180 thousands characters)**. Abstract, appendixes and the reference list are not included in this count.
- 7) **A - Formal requirements.** The Dean's regulation 18/2017 stipulates the requirements and contains the thesis template. The version for MARS can be found at this [\[LINK\]](#).

B – Submitted theses need to include the approved research proposal. Students can ask the Department of Media Studies secretary, Ms. Skalicka, to scan and email them their submitted and approved research proposal. In the thesis, the approved research proposal is placed at the end, after the reference list.

C – Abstract. Students should include an abstract both in English and in Czech. In the thesis, the abstracts is placed right after the title pages. In SIS, both abstracts need to be uploaded, as separate files. Students should not forget to include them in the thesis itself as well.

D – On one of the first pages, students must state the **length of the thesis** (the number of characters, spaces included, and the number of pages). The Dean's instruction 18/2017 explains how to count the number of pages. Basically, you should not count the abstracts, appendixes and the reference list. You should then divide the number of characters (spaces included) by 1800 (number of characters on one standard page). You state both the number of characters and the number of pages, which should be more than 90 thousand characters / 50 standard pages.

E – Declaration of authorship. This has to be done exactly as is explained in Dean's instruction 18/2017: The author has to declare that s/he is the sole author of the thesis (e.g., that nobody else has written the thesis or parts of thesis) and that s/he has quoted all sources properly (and thus, has not committed plagiarism). The e-version submitted to SIS should not be signed. In practice, please do not change this part of the thesis template.

F – Words of thanks. Students can thank whoever they want. They can thank their supervisor or other teachers, if they wish. They should only do this if the supervisor has been consulted. Sometimes, students who do not consult with their supervisor, nevertheless thank their supervisor in the thesis, hoping that it might influence his or her evaluation. This practice is not recommended as it creates the false impression that the supervisor approves of the thesis. If the supervisor has not been consulted, s/he might turn out to be critical about the submitted thesis, and translate these critiques into questions during the thesis defence. Words of thanks will not mitigate her/his critical stance.

- 8) **Plagiarism.** We sincerely hope that students never would actively consider committing plagiarism. But even non-intentional plagiarism is plagiarism. We use software to check every submitted thesis, and supervisors and opponents are well-trained in spotting plagiarism. The detection of plagiarism by the supervisor, opponent or software, results in a report sent to the disciplinary committee. **Students risk being expelled** from the study program when plagiarism is discovered.

- 9) **Quotations.** In-text references and reference lists should use a format that is established in social sciences (e.g., APA style, ...). Students can choose their referencing systems, as long as it uses an in-text (parenthetical) references. Referencing systems that use footnotes are not allowed. Whatever referencing style is chosen, it should be applied rigorously and consistently.
- 10) **Style.** In case of serious problems with grammar, spelling or style, the thesis will not be allowed to be defended. Spelling errors are not acceptable. Remember that we are a university, not a secondary school.
- 11) **Submitting the thesis.** Currently, students no longer need to print their theses, but have to upload them to SIS in a PDF format. Instructions are on the Charles University website [[LINK1](#) and [LINK2](#)], in the Dean's instruction 18/2017 and in SIS. In case of problems, students can contact Mr. Pavel Kot or Mr. Vojtech Brazda.

Uploading documents into SIS is not difficult. It cannot be done by a student whose studies has been interrupted, though. The interruption then has to be cancelled at the International Office and only then can it be uploaded. For this reason, it is important that students who have their studies interrupted contact with International Office in advance.

During the upload, students will have to fill in additional information (e.g., keywords, references etc.). This additional information has to be copied from the research proposal, even if this information has changed later.

- 12) **Students need to apply for a State exam via SIS.** The dates for the State exam are announced in SIS. Students need to make sure that they apply for every part of the State exam. The procedure is explained on the Faculty website [[LINK](#)].

The deadline for the application for the State exam is the same as the deadline for submitting the thesis, e.g. mid-May and end of July. Students should first print out their so-called "Transcript of Records"⁶ and submit it to the program coordinator (Jan Miessler). The guarantor (Jakub Končelík) will sign them, so that they can be submitted to the Student Services officer. The exact dates and deadlines are announced on the ICSJ website in the News section. The Faculty does not send individual invitations for the state exam.

- 13) Only those who submit their thesis **before 23:59 of the deadline day** will be allowed to defend it. The system shows the day and time of submission. It is not possible to move the deadline.
- 14) The program guarantor, dr. Jakub Končelík, chooses an opponent for each submitted thesis. Students will see the names of their opponents in SIS. **The thesis supervisor and opponent upload their evaluations (as a PDF) at least 5 working days before the defence in SIS**, where students can read them. The study programs / departments announce the schedule of the defences on ICSJ website.

⁶ The Transcript of Records (ToR) is a list of all courses, credits and grades that the student obtained during her/his studies. To apply for the State Exam, the ToR should show that the student has passed all required classes and collected sufficient credits – see Karolinka [[LINK](#)] for all the details. This is the path to generate the ToR in SIS > Exam Results browsing > icon of Print Transcript of Obligations or State Final Examination> Print> Print Transcript.

If both evaluations suggest an “F” grade, the student can decide not to defend the thesis. This has to be communicated no later than 3 days before the defence would take place, in a document where the student acknowledges that he/she has read the evaluations, agrees with their criticism, and s/he feels that the thesis needs to be improved, based on this criticism. This document needs to be delivered by email to the supervisor and the MARS director and the MARS coordinator, three days before the defence, at the latest. This will lead to a “Failed”, as the result of the defence.

The final version of the thesis will be available publicly and permanently at the university’s digital repository.

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