

MARS programme - State examination

The MARS state examination consists of two parts: The Master's thesis evaluation and defence (50 %), and the oral examination on theories of media and area studies (50 %). The state examination committee, which is appointed by the MARS guarantor and is composed of minimally three members, evaluates both components of the examination. Both components of the examination take place on the same day, one after the other.

These guidelines concern the oral examination on theories of media and area studies.

Oral examination

Selection of oral examination literature

The supervisor suggests 5 key scholarly works pertaining to the MA thesis topic, for the oral examination.

The suggested literature is expected to address main theories, issues, debates and approaches pertaining to the student's MA thesis.

The suggested literature can be part of the MA thesis literature.

These publications can be academic monographs or academic articles.

Up to 2 academic articles may be included in the suggested literature (if any).

The suggested literature needs to be available at the Faculty's/ University's libraries and/or databases.

Before the oral examination

The supervisor communicates their literature suggestions to the programme coordinator, Jan Miessler, at the latest when the MA thesis is submitted (on the same day or the day after). The supervisor may also submit their literature suggestions prior to the MA thesis submission (1-2 months prior to the expected submission of the MA thesis).

The chairperson of the examination committee or the MARS programme guarantor approves the literature or communicates with the supervisor for modifications (if, e.g., some of the literature is not relevant to the final/submitted version of the MA thesis).

Once the oral examination literature is finalized and approved, it is communicated to the MA student, by the programme coordinator Jan Miessler.

The communication of the oral examination literature to the student is expected within one week after the MA thesis submission.

When the state examination committee is formed, the chairperson of the examination committee informs the committee members about the oral examination literature list.

During the examination

The oral examination takes place prior to the Master's thesis defence. The duration of the oral examination is not expected to exceed 40 minutes.

The chairperson of the examination committee introduces the student and decides on the order in which the examination committee members ask questions.

The committee members take turns and ask the student questions related to the contents, theories, issues, debates and approaches of the selected literature. The student responds orally to each question.

Some of the questions may address the relevance of these works for the student's MA thesis.

Students are evaluated based on:

- thoroughness and completeness of responses
- comprehension of the discussed theory/debate/issue/approach
- ability to critically evaluate the discussed theory/debate/issue/approach
- ability to reflect on or apply the discussed theory/debate/issue/approach in broader contexts

When the examination ends, the student will be asked to leave the room and the examination committee will deliberate on the student's performance and grade. The committee will decide upon a grade, using the A-F scale. If consensus about the grade cannot be reached, the chairperson's vote is decisive. The oral examination grade contributes 50% to the state examination overall grade. The state examination grade, which is composite of the two examination parts, is announced after the MA thesis defence.