

Typical Criteria of Master's Thesis Grades:

Here are described typical features of Master's thesis by grade. They are based on the descriptions used by University of Jyväskylä Faculty of Social sciences' Department of social sciences and philosophy, which have been altered in some amount.

The goal is to help grading between the different major subjects of the Faculty to fall between approximately same guidelines. The emphasis may however differ between majors and different types of thesis. Often thesis that receives the same grade has differences, and the differences at the limits of different grades are often subtle, contributing to the importance of overall impression. No thesis is perfect, and shortcomings on one area can be compensated by success in another.

The goal is to indicate to the student how the grade of a thesis is determined.

When grading a thesis, the inspectors pay attention to the following areas of expertise:

- question forming, and consistent realisation
- mastering the subject matter
- the adequacy and relevance of source literature, and source critique
- the applying of theoretical and analytical concepts.
- mastering of the methods of research material gathering and analysis
- the significance and presentation of research results
- innovative thinking
- research ethics
- use of scientific terminology, language and presentation

A Master's thesis is graded on a seven-step scale from laudatur (highest) to approbatur (weakest). Each department can provide more accurate information on the major-specific criteria of thesis grading. The typical features of different grades are generic and can be applied in a way suitable for each major.

Laudatur

The thesis clearly and explicitly has significance in the respective field and other related fields. The background of the research and the research itself are skilfully connected, and the comprehensive scientific literature, Finnish and foreign, on which the study is based is relevant to the research and more extensive than usual. The knowledge of previous research and theoretical discussion is exceptional, the concepts relevant and derived skilfully from prior scientific discourse. Question forming is innovative, and material handled in an exhaustive manner. Analysis methods are relevant and they have been developed and evaluated independently. Comprehensive and skilful contemplation of all relevant factors demonstrates ability to familiarise oneself with, analyze, report on and actualise scientific research. The language of the thesis confirms to the standards of high quality scientific text, and the thesis fulfils the ethic principles set for scientific research.

The thesis demonstrates an independent, critical and innovative research attitude. Due to scientific merits, the thesis could be published as such or as an abridged edition in a scientific journal or series of publications of the field.

Eximia cum laude approbatur

The thesis demonstrates the author's deep familiarisation with the scientific discourse on the subject area both on a national and international level. The analysis and synthesis of theory and earlier research has been accomplished in a way that creates new points of view on the subject. The research goals, concepts and terminology and research problems are well-determined and skilfully combined into the existing theoretical framework. Overall, the work indicates the author's independent, critical and innovative research method, ability to analyze theoretically substantial bodies of knowledge and problems, and the skill to implement even practically challenging research assignments to solve skilfully set problems. The methodology chosen for the research is well chosen and argued, and the gathering and analysis of material has been done with insight. Questions of research ethics have been accounted for. The research goals, question forming, and the possibilities for use of the results have been assessed accurately and the results compared to previous research. The form and style of writing fulfil the formal criteria of scientific writing.

Due to its merits, the thesis could be revised and published in a scientific journal or series of publications of the field.

Magna cum laude approbatur

The chosen point of view is interesting. The research assignment has been determined accurately and is in relation to the theoretical framework presented. The concepts used have been formed and introduced clearly. The introduction, the theoretical framework and the research question forming all attest to the author's familiarisation with the chosen research area. The thesis uses sources central to the subject matter. The subject area has been widely studied from both domestic and foreign literature. Source choosing and discourse in regard to them attest to a critical research attitude. The methods chosen for material gathering and analysis, and the reasons given for using them, indicate control in using those methods. Interpretation of the results and the conclusions drawn from them are consistent and well argued. The research ethical questions have been taken into account and discussed. The scientific conventions of report forming, formal criteria, outlook and language are respected.

Cum laude approbatur

The thesis forms a good, functioning whole. The approach chosen may be conventional. The scientific background of the research area has been well studied, and the central research on the area is known. The thesis work's relation to the chosen scientific background has been observed and proven. The chosen sources are relevant to the research problem and cover also international research adequately. The theoretical framework of the research, and the deriving of the research from previous research, has been accounted for. The methodical choices have been accounted for, if only narrowly. The conclusions presented are consistent, and the reliability of the results has been estimated. In the deliberation of the results the connections to the chosen research question and theoretical background are explained. Research ethical questions have been taken into account. The research is formally flawless and the language used is good.

Non sine laude approbatur

Theories and research results related to the research subject have been discussed in the description of the background of the thesis work, but on the whole the approach is too mechanical, merely listing the relevant research base. The scientific background may be either too narrow or badly delimited. The initial assumptions and research assignment have been considered, and an attempt to connect with previous research has been made, but some flaws exist. The sources are not all relevant, or essential sources are missing. The research method is understood and used relatively well, but methodical choices are accounted for mainly by referring to methodological literature instead of attaching them to your own research. The results are presented in a rather schematic fashion and their interpretation is left mainly for the reader. The connection of the results to the background is insufficient, as is the critical appraisal of the results. The language used is fairly good.

Lubenter approbatur

The scientific background of the research is either too narrow and unilateral, or then too wide and lacking in cohesion. The scientific background has been somewhat considered, but the relationship to former research done on the area is left unclear. The research and theories referred to are left detached and are only loosely connected to the chosen research problem. Analysis of the material is incomplete and the presentation of the results is either superficial in nature or logically flawed. The conclusion is mainly a summary of the thesis. The language used has flaws.

Approbatur

There are shortcomings on several aspects of the thesis work, some of them serious. The approach on the whole is not successful. The work does not significantly present related research and scientific discourse. The scientific background is based on a few randomly chosen domestic sources, used in a referring manner. The sources consist mainly of sources not qualified for academic research, such as schoolbooks, committee papers and professional texts. Both the research goal and the terminology used are left unclear. The research assignment has been expressed in a non-coherent fashion and without argumentation. The methodological choices and the analysis of the materials have obvious shortcomings. Source marking, source indexing and the structure of the research report have insufficiencies.