



**The European Graduate School**  
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## PhD Thesis Guidelines — Division of Philosophy, Art and Critical Thought

This statement outlines procedures and expectations relating to the process of completing the requirement of a PhD thesis in the PACT Division. We also recommend that students avail themselves of the opportunity of attending a thesis-writing workshop.

Students are given orientation and supervision by the Dean and/or Assistant Dean of the PACT Division at the outset of their PhD study. They may also consult with EGS fellows for questions relating to their seminar study and individual research. However, when they complete their seminar work, they will advance to supervised study for the composition of their PhD thesis.

Students are qualified to proceed to the stage of writing their thesis after two sessions of seminar study at the EGS. This study will normally be undertaken in two successive years (in Saas Fee, Malta, or both). Leaves of absence require the Dean's permission.

Some students will identify a suitable supervisor for the PhD study before the end of their second session of seminar study and secure their agreement to function in that role. They will enter formal supervision one month after the completion of their coursework. If a student does not have such an arrangement in place by the end of their second session of study, the Dean and Assistant Dean will aid them in arranging supervision. In consultation with the Dean and/or Assistant Dean, they should identify a suitable topic and compose an initial proposal that will then be presented to professors who might serve as supervisors. Formal supervision begins once this period of consultation is underway. The Dean and/or Assistant Dean will seek to find a supervisor of the student's preference and also advise the student on suitable choices. Should a situation arise where no member of the EGS faculty is suitable or available for research in a particular area, it is possible for the EGS to turn to an outside supervisor. However, the Dean and Assistant Dean will make every effort to find someone from within the EGS faculty, and both of them may also serve as supervisors. There is only one formal supervisor for a PhD thesis. Students may seek informal feedback from other individuals, and are actually encouraged to do so. But supervision is undertaken by only one EGS professor.

The thesis proposal will define the topic and provide a provisional approach to this topic in

no less than a page. A student should show in their proposal that they have a sufficient grasp of their field to construct a question or problematic that will form the basis of an original contribution to this field of study. ("Field" is conceived here in broad terms since the EGS promotes work of a strong cross-disciplinary character.) Some professors may require a more developed proposal.

At the outset of the thesis project, the student will establish with their supervisor an understanding concerning expectations, which includes a calendar (however approximate) for submission of work. It will be up to the student and supervisor to define what is required at each stage.

Some supervisors may require an outline of chapters, while others will look for a more expository document. Some will request a literature review along with a relevant bibliography at the outset of the project. The understanding reached between the student and supervisor should be in some written form that can be kept as a record, but should not be conceived as a form of contract. It should be a working document serving to orient the progress of the student.

Students should understand that there is no fixed form of supervisory relation. Some supervisors will expect frequent contact (by Skype or other means) and have a firm idea of the appropriate steps leading to completion. Other supervisors will give greater independence to their students, requiring less in the way or frequency of reporting (though ongoing contact is expected and essential). Students may find that the most suitable thesis supervisor is not the most famous person in the field among the faculty present at the EGS. Students will have an opportunity in the course of their seminar work to determine the advisor who might best suit them. The standard supervision period for the PhD thesis is two to three years. Students will pay a supervision fee in each year until the time of their thesis defense. Monitoring of the supervisor/student relationship will be undertaken by the Dean and the Assistant Dean, and will be conducted on a yearly basis.

The thesis should be roughly 250 pages in length (roughly 75,000 words), and include a table of contents, introduction, conclusion, and bibliography. It should conform to an established style (Chicago, MLA, etc.) of the student's preference, but it must adhere to that style in a consistent manner. Thesis must be presented in English in accordance with MFHEA regulations.

The work will show strong scholarly qualities in that it will provide a thorough definition of the field within which the research is situated and the problematic under examination. It will cite the relevant primary materials and all prominent secondary materials relevant to this problematic.

It should be written in a scholarly fashion and of a quality and style that will make it publishable after editing designed to bring it into conformity with the expectations of a publisher in the chosen format (articles or monograph). The work presented in a PhD thesis must demonstrate that a student commands a field of research and is capable of situating their work within that field. The work itself should be of an original character and rep-

resent a contribution to the identified field. Any intentional plagiarism will constitute grounds for refusal of the thesis.

The PACT Division does not accept practice-based work for the PhD thesis. If a student wishes to make some artistic or literary work a part of their thesis, they must give it a proper critical presentation in scholarly form, treating in a substantive way the work's contribution or significance.

The supervisor will determine when the thesis is ready for submission and should signal this fact to the PACT administration. Doctoral defenses are normally held during EGS sessions, but can also be arranged in other locations and times with the agreement of the Dean if members of the committee are not available in Saas Fee or Malta, or the candidate is prevented from being there. The defense will be held within 7 months of the date of submission.

A PhD committee of three members will be present at the defense, with a member other than the supervisor serving as chair (the supervisor can be one of the three examiners). Examiners will hold PhDs and at least two of these must be affiliated with the EGS. The composition of the committee will be determined by the Dean. The defense may also be attended by observers (who will not participate in the defense unless invited to speak by the chair). The defense will last for at least one hour, but may be extended to a longer period at the discretion of the chair of the defense and in accordance with the availability of the committee members. The student should be prepared to give a 20 minute presentation of their work, describing the salient points of the argument and suggesting what they feel they have accomplished. Each examiner will have at least 10 minutes for questions and remarks.

The committee will determine at the conclusion of the defense (in private) whether the PhD thesis meets the required level of quality and whether honours are appropriate. The PACT Division of the EGS has three level of honours: Summa cum Laude, Magna cum Laude, and cum Laude. A committee may deem that a thesis is only of "passing" quality and not assign honours.

Students will submit electronic copies of their completed thesis (in full form) to the members of the Committee at least one month in advance of the defense. They should also send an electronic copy to the Registrar of the European Graduate School ([admissions@egs.edu](mailto:admissions@egs.edu)) which contains a one-page abstract, as well as an extra sheet with the following signed and dated Affidavit: "I hereby attest that my PhD thesis, entitled "XYZ" was written independently, that the text does not infringe in any copyright laws and is free of plagiarism, and that editorial and other personal assistance is acknowledged by name."The maximum time allowed for the com