



**The European Graduate School**  
**EST. 1994**

### MA Thesis Guidelines — Division of Philosophy, Art and Critical Thought

The MA thesis is undertaken after the student's second session of study in the PACT Division of the EGS. Students will normally undertake these sessions in successive years. Leaves of absence are discouraged between the first and second years of seminar work, but a formal request may be made to the Dean.

The thesis should be a scholarly piece of writing of approximately 25,000 words reflecting research in an area of the student's choice. It will contain an introduction and conclusion, in addition to the principal exposition, and will also have a bibliography. It may be formatted in any established style (Chicago, MLA, etc.), but it should conform fully and consistently to this style. All citations and references must be fully documented (plagiarism will constitute grounds for refusal).

The thesis will demonstrate the student's broad grasp of the field in which they situate their specific project. It should show a distinctive approach to a well-defined set of questions (the problematic), and thereby approach a standard required for publication. It should be noted that the PACT Division does not accept practice based MA projects. If a student wishes to add some creative element to their thesis, they must fully contextualize this work within the larger critical and theoretical discussion. The EGS seeks to encourage creative approaches to its areas of enquiry, but also seeks to maintain high scholarly standards. Thus, while the MA thesis allows the student to pursue their specific interests in an independent fashion, it should demonstrate the student's capacity to meet academic expectations.

The topic for the thesis will be determined in consultation with the Dean and/or Assistant Dean by the end of the second year of study and recorded by the Division administration. It should normally be submitted for evaluation in completed form by the end of the summer session of the student's third year. (Students who seek to move on to PhD study in their third year must submit the thesis before commencing seminar work in that third year.)

Students should submit a request for an extension to the Division administration if they cannot meet this deadline for some reason.

For advice in pursuing the research required for the thesis, students may turn to the EGS Fellows of the PACT Division. Their role is generally to help students pursue their specific interests in an independent capacity. They will help students isolate a suitable and manageable topic, and help orient them in the research process. It is hoped that students will freely avail themselves of the services provided by the Fellows. The Dean is the de facto advisor of MA students, and can also advise them if they meet any difficulties. However, a student should seek to establish a relation with a Fellow who can be available to them as they undertake their thesis project. They may also consult with faculty who are prepared to serve in an advisory role; the student should notify the Dean and Assistant Dean of any arrangement made with a faculty member in this respect. (Faculty are not required to serve as MA thesis advisors.)

The reader for an MA thesis is normally an EGS Fellow, though faculty can also serve in this role. The Dean of the PACT Division will formally assign the reader for the thesis (in consultation with the student, Fellows, or relevant faculty—an individual who has assumed the role of advisor will normally be assigned as the reader). The Dean may also serve in this function.

Students will submit electronic copy of their completed thesis (in full form) to the designated reader no later than September in the year they wish to graduate. They should also send an electronic copy to the Registrar of the European Graduate School ([admissions@egs.edu](mailto:admissions@egs.edu)) after their thesis is approved by the reader. The electronic copy should contain a one-page abstract, as well as an extra sheet with the following signed and dated Affidavit: "I hereby attest that my MA 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 length of time allowed for completion of the work required for the MA is five years.