
REGULATIONS FOR THE MASTER IN
POLITICAL SCIENCE DISSERTATION IN ENGLISH
(60 credits)
ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024

PRINCIPLE AND OBJECTIVE of the DISSERTATION

When preparing a dissertation, political science students must demonstrate their ability to use the knowledge built up over their studies in the context of a piece of thorough, personal research on a limited subject. This must be a creative piece of work rather than a simple compilation. Students must demonstrate critical reasoning, originality and analytical skills.

DISSERTATION PREPARATION SEMINAR

As part of the Master in Political Science programme, the *Dissertation preparation seminar* is a **pre-requisite for the dissertation**. This seminar aims to help students during the various stages of the dissertation. It is evaluated in two ways. Firstly, continuous assessment takes into account the students' attendance at the seminar and their active participation. Secondly, the scientific nature of the dissertation plan (Article 1.1) is assessed. The dissertation itself also includes preparatory sessions which form an integral part of the evaluation.

Specific provisions for in-person attendance will be planned with students taking part in Erasmus or internships abroad.

DISSERTATION GUIDE

A dissertation guide has been prepared by the Department of Political Science. It aims to help students through the various stages of the dissertation. It is available on the Department of Political Science website.

ARTICLE 1 – Submitting the plan

1.1 Students must submit their dissertation plan during the year they are registered for the Masters, as part of their registration for the *Dissertation Preparation Seminar*, no later than **31 December**. The dissertation plan is a document containing:

- a presentation of the issue and an initial research question;
- a proposed methodological approach;
- a plan of your work for the rest of the year of the Master;
- a bibliographical review on the theme of the dissertation.

1.2 To be considered valid, the dissertation plan must be accompanied by the written agreement of the potential promoter, who must be a member of the University teaching staff, a doctor holding a research doctorate, or a teacher in one of the programmes organised by the Department of Political Science.

The dissertation plan and written agreement should be sent electronically to the Secretariat of the Department of Political Science. Failing this, the dissertation plan will not be considered by the Jury, which meets no later than **20 January**.

1.3 Upon request, the teacher of the *Political Science Dissertation Preparation Seminar* will provide feedback to the students on their plan.

ARTICLE 2 – Submitting the plan

2.1 When the plan has been approved, students who have included the dissertation in their curriculum are asked to make contact with their promoter **before 15 February**.

2.2 Students must have electronically submitted a draft plan, signed by the promoter, to the Secretariat of the Department of Political Science, **no later than 31 December**.

2.3 If, on this date, submission of a dissertation plan appears premature, the student should submit a progress report on their research, which must also be signed by their promoter, who thus attests to the legitimacy of this exception.

2.4 If the dissertation plan or its content are changed significantly during the course of their research, students must inform the Jury.

2.5 The dissertation must be drafted in English.

ARTICLE 3 – Definitive approval of the dissertation plan and composition of the review panel.

3.1 The definitive approval of the dissertation plan and the composition of the review panel for Political Science Master students, will be discussed at a Jury meeting held no later than **20**

January. The Jury will publish a summary list of dissertations and dissertation review panels (sponsor and review panel) on the Department of Political Science website.

3.2 In addition to the promoter, the review panel must include at least two reviewers. This forms the dissertation review panel.

3.3 Reviewers from outside the University must have recognised expertise in the field in question. Overly direct involvement of bodies who are the subject of the dissertation is to be avoided.

ARTICLE 4 – Supervision

4.1 The role of the promoter is to help the student define their dissertation plan and, subsequently, provide guidance on the overall direction.

The promoter advises the student throughout their work, helping them find the central theme of the dissertation and the plan. The promoter provides the student with any useful information (bibliographical ideas, elements to reflect upon, information about people likely to be able to help the student with their research, etc.) and potentially introduces them to key resource people. They provide their opinion on any preliminary texts.

4.2 The role of the reviewer is to assist the student in their research, within the framework of the directions agreed between the student and the sponsor. The reviewer provides the student with any useful information (bibliographical ideas, elements to be reflected upon, information on people likely to be able to help the student with their research etc.).

Students are required to meet with their sponsors and other members of the review panel at least once before **31 March**.

ARTICLE 5 – Submission of the dissertation

5.1 Students must **submit their dissertation on the MatheO platform** no later than:

- the first day of the January session¹, for June 1² for the first session
- for the first day following August 15 at the latest for the second session.

Submission in the January session is only permitted if the student's annual programme now includes, at most, only one course from the first four-month period and the dissertation (i.e. a total of 15 ECTS).

The platform provides for the on-line conclusion of a licence agreement. The version submitted on-line and the date of the on-line submission are considered proof of submission.

Students must agree with their promoters and reviewers as to how a bound, printed copy should be submitted.

¹ This concerns the students who are expected to be deliberated, in advance, at the end of January session.

² Or for the first working day following June 1, if the date is a public holiday or a weekend.

The quality of a dissertation is not connected to its volume. The publication must consist of 20,000 words, +/- 2,000 words excluding footnotes, in A4 format, excluding any bibliography or annexes.

If students fail their dissertation, they can submit and defend it again in September or January, as appropriate, of the following academic year.

ARTICLE 6 – Oral defence of the dissertation

6.1 The dissertation is defended orally and takes place in English. The Jury, with the approval of the promoter and the agreement of the reviewers, may agree that the oral defence can take place in French. This request must be made no later than the date of submission of the dissertation.

6.2 The defence is oral and public, except where the student requests otherwise and receives the approval of the Jury. It lasts approximately 45 minutes.

Students must first make a presentation lasting approximately ten minutes explaining to the review panel their motivations, the choice of subject, the limitations of the work, the methodology used, and the difficulties encountered. It is strongly recommended to focus on the personal input to the problem being studied. Under no circumstances should the student mechanically repeat the content of their dissertation.

The members of the review committee then ask the student questions; clear and concise answers are expected.

6.3 The promoter must be present during the oral defence. If one or more of the reviewers are absent, the promoter should request their written opinion in advance and submit it to the review panel. The promoter should discuss with the reviewers and reach a grade.

6.4 Reviewers who cannot attend the oral defence must submit, in advance, their detailed opinion to the promoter, who will mention this during the defence.

However, this may only ever be an indicative observation for the attention of the other members of the review panel.

6.5 The oral defence of the dissertation may not take place unless at least two of the jury members are present. In the event of cancellation, the dissertation promoter sets a new date.

ARTICLE 7 – Evaluation

7.1 In the Master cycle, the grade for the dissertation amounts to **25%** of the average grade for the cycle.

7.2 The evaluation of the dissertation consists of the grading of the written text and the oral defence, on the basis of the criteria set out in the dissertation guide.

7.3 Pursuant to the regulations on courses and exams, any fraud or plagiarism will result in a grade of 0, which will be communicated to the author and the president of the Jury as soon as the cheating is uncovered. If need be, disciplinary action may be taken (admonition, suspension of the right to attend classes and seminars for one month, suspension of the right to attend the university, exclusion).

ARTICLE 8 – Sanctions

8.1 The documents referred to in Articles 1, 2 and 3 are considered valid only if they are submitted to the Secretariat of the Department of Political Science within the timescales and in the format required by the Secretariat. The Secretariat is responsible for the administrative management of information regarding timescales and communicates them to the teacher of the Dissertation Preparation Seminar. When a deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday, the deadline is moved to the next working day directly following it. Failure to participate in the Dissertation Preparation seminars which are part of the evaluation and/or failure to comply with the requirements set out in Articles 1, 2 and 3 without written agreement, may be sanctioned by the deduction of 2 points from the overall grade.

8.2 Non-compliance with the deadlines or format set out in Article 5 regarding submission of the dissertation is, notwithstanding the justified, written agreement of the president of the Jury, sanctioned by a grade of 'absent'.

8.3 The dissertation forms an integral part of the Master programme and, as such, is subject to the regulations in force for examinations.

ARTICLE 9 – Miscellaneous provisions

9.1 This regulation enters into force the day it is adopted by the Faculty Council.

9.2 Dissertations receiving a grade equal to or higher than 14/20 may, with the agreement of the student and promoter, be made available in open access on the MatheO platform.

9.3 Any exceptions to these regulations must be agreed by the Jury.