

# Planning and Starting your Master Thesis

for students of the M. Sc. /Cand. Merc. in  
Marketing, Globalization and Communication  
Brand Management and Marketing Communication

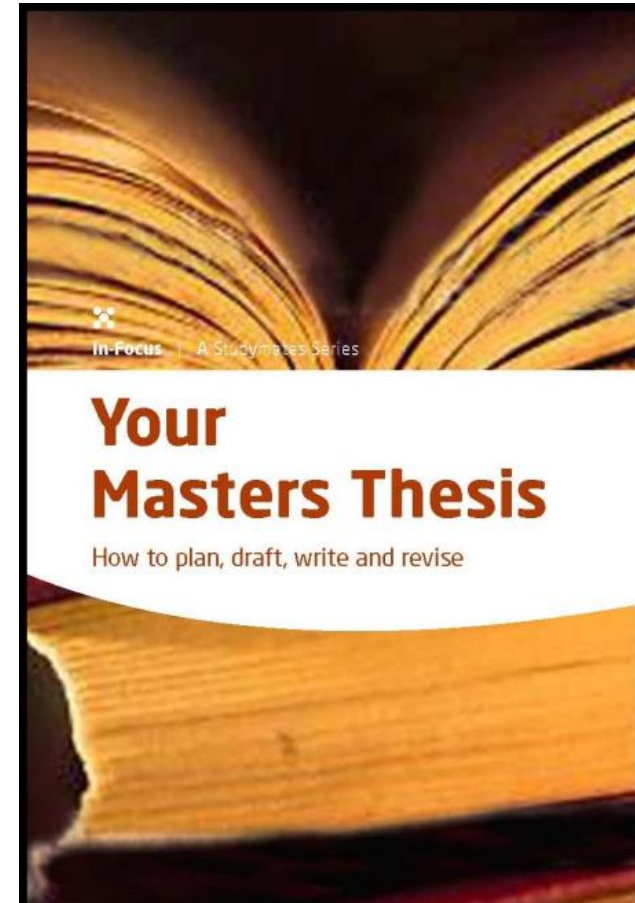
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Consumption, Culture & Commerce

# The master thesis

- Your chance to go deep-diving
- You design, implement and describe an **independent scientific work**.
- Finding a suitable topic and supervisor is your task (I can assist)
- Start thinking about your thesis early enough!  
(mid 3<sup>rd</sup> semester the latest!)



# 30 ECTS

- half a year of study = 30 ECTS = 825 working hours.
- “The work must be done within the time set aside for one semester corresponding to 5 months (22 weeks of approx. 37.5 hours per week).”

# **RULES & FORMAL REQUIREMENTS**

# Info on the website

[http://www.sdu.dk/en/Information\\_til/Studerende\\_ved\\_SDU/Din\\_uddannels\\_e/Kandidat/Cand\\_merc\\_Odense/Speciale](http://www.sdu.dk/en/Information_til/Studerende_ved_SDU/Din_uddannels_e/Kandidat/Cand_merc_Odense/Speciale)

The screenshot shows the website interface for the M.Sc. in Economics and Business Administration in Odense. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for PROGRAMMES, LIFELONG LEARNING, RESEARCH, NEWS, COOPERATION, LIBRARY, ABOUT SDU, and INFORMATION FOR... The INFORMATION FOR... dropdown menu is open, showing options like International Staff, International Students, Current students, Staff (SDUnet), Alumni, Business and Industry, and Press. The 'Current students' option is highlighted. Below the navigation bar, there is a breadcrumb trail: You are here : University of Southern Denmark → Information for... → Current students → Your Programme → Master Business Administration in Odense. The main content area features a large image of a building and a large egg sculpture. Below the image, there is a 'Go to' section with links to Programmes and Faculty of Business and Social Sciences. A welcome message reads: 'Welcome to the M.Sc. in Economics and Business Administration in Odense'. On the left side, there is a vertical menu with various links, including Notice Board, Timetable, Exam, Master's Thesis, Application Forms, Learning Outcome, Job Opportunities, Study Board, Academic Student Advisors, Student Information Point, Study Periods Abroad, Project and Trainee Period, Supervisor Agreements, Profile Responsible, Study Start, and Practical Information. The 'Exam' and 'Master's Thesis' links are circled in red. At the bottom, there is a red banner with the text: 'Please note that this programme is offered in English only'. Social media icons for Facebook, Email, Print, and Accessibility are visible. A footer banner for 'VEJLEDNINGSCENTRET' is also present.

# Main points

- Supervision contract between 1 (max 2) students(s) and 1 supervisor
- 30 ECTS = 825 working hours
- Formulating a research topic is the task of the student
- No babysitting
- Course description (formal rules):

[http://fagbesk.sam.sdu.dk/study/fagbasen/fagbesk.shtml?fag\\_id=26617](http://fagbesk.sam.sdu.dk/study/fagbasen/fagbesk.shtml?fag_id=26617)

# Basic steps

1. Write a proposal
2. Find a supervisor
3. Sign supervision agreement
4. Writing & supervision meetings
5. Hand-in (after ~5 months)
6. Oral defense (max 8 weeks after hand-in)



Master of Science

# Process **deadlines** in **Fall/Spring 14/15**

10 <sup>th</sup> of December - 15 <sup>th</sup> of January	15 <sup>th</sup> of January	15 <sup>th</sup> of January- 15 <sup>th</sup> of February	15 <sup>th</sup> of Feb
Proposals will be collected <b>by profile responsible</b> and assigned after Jan 15th	Last Hand-in date Proposals	Allocation of supervisors; first meeting between student & supervisor	Agreements must be signed
Feb-June	July	15 <sup>th</sup> of July	August
Supervision process	No supervision to be expected by students	Last hand-in date <b>can be earlier depending on the day of sign-up</b>	Defense



# Handing in a proposal

- Hand in your proposal at [niki@sam.sdu.dk](mailto:niki@sam.sdu.dk) between 10.12 and 15.12 **only** if you are in BMMC or MGC
- You can ask supervisors questions about your ideas or proposals before handing them in; but they usually only have **limited time** to answer you
- Proposals **must** contain: 1. topic, 2. research question, 3. methodology incl. type of data, and 4. a theory/perspective you want to use. Be precise.
- If something is missing, you can be rejected and have to re-submit
- 1.-4. **can be changed later** during the supervision! You are only suggesting **a concrete idea**, not defining exactly what you will write!

# Typical mistakes in proposals

- Too broad: “I will write about the internet.”
- Nothing new: “I want to find out if social media are important to consumers.”
- The question cannot be answered using the data you plan to collect: “I will study the sub-consciousness of consumers by reading newspaper articles.”
- Only basic Bachelor-level theories are suggested; not content from the master courses
- Too similar to a thesis that has already been written by someone else. (We check this!)
- Theory or methodology are missing

# The supervision agreement

- The online form must be used
- All content *must* be discussed with the supervisor (*not* the profile responsible) before filling out
- All necessary field must be filled
- The problem statement must mention the methodology
- A work plan must be attached. It shows when the main steps of the thesis will be finished. (e.g. interviews done by March 15<sup>th</sup>, transcription by April 10<sup>th</sup>, etc.)
- Supervisor and Profile Responsible then check & approve the argeement, problem formulation, and time plan
- After approval is given (you get an email), you are signed up

# The problem statement

- The problem statement should cover the following points:
  1. The preliminary research question(s)
  2. The empirical case (if any)
  3. The method and type of data (if any)
  4. The basic theoretical perspective/stream of literature that will be the starting point.
- It should be a **short** description. 3-4 sentence are enough!

# Registration

“When the supervisor agreement is signed, the student is automatically **registered for the exam**. The supervisor agreement must contain a problem statement which is sufficiently elaborate for an evaluation of whether the problem statement can allow the student to demonstrate ability to produce knowledge at a high level.

The master thesis report must be handed-in **5 months** after the supervisor agreement is signed. The oral exam will at the latest take place **8 weeks after the hand-in** of the master thesis report. The month of **July is not included** in the 8 week period.”

# 3 attempts

- If failed (00) or not handed in (-3), 1 attempt has been used.
- “A new deadline for the second attempt will automatically become effective according to the following formula: **3 weeks (after the oral defense)** to formulation and approval of a revised problem statement and **3 months** to work on the master’s thesis.”
- “The revised problem statement must be within the same subject field.”
- “3. attempt: If the thesis report is not handed in within the new deadline or the thesis fails after the oral exam, a 3. Attempt is given according to the same rules as attempt number 2.”

# **FINDING A TOPIC & SUPERVISOR**

# Scope

- “A problem that is relevant for the profile by applying theories and methods that are characteristic of the profile.”
- The thesis must use “theory that builds on or extends the knowledge which the student has attained in compulsory courses” of the profile.



# Scope

- a concrete **research** problem
  - Has theoretical relevance (practical relevance is *not* a must)
  - Can be connected to the research literature (theory)
  - Can be answered using scientific methods
- That is relevant for the profile
  - The method & theory used can be connected to the mandatory courses of your profiles (electives might be ok)
  - a supervisor is available to supervise it

# What you **cannot** do

- Work for a company and write a report
- Write (only) a business or marketing plan
- Write an opinion piece
- Only collect and present data without a theory-laden interpretation
- Use **only** Bachelor-level literature (4P, SWOT, etc.)
- Use theories or methods that your supervisor cannot understand

# Finding a topic

Possible starting points:

- An idea or phenomenon
- A supervisor & his/her research
- A text or theory
- A data set

# The Research Group

## Consumption Culture and Commerce



Usually, your supervisor will be from this group. Supervisors from other groups, or external SDU supervisors can be used if the topic/expertise demands it.

Research interests of the group members:

[http://www.sdu.dk/en/Om\\_SDU/Institutter\\_centre/I\\_marketing/Forskning/Forskningsenheder/Forbrugsstudier/Profiler](http://www.sdu.dk/en/Om_SDU/Institutter_centre/I_marketing/Forskning/Forskningsenheder/Forbrugsstudier/Profiler)

# The course Syllabi are a perfect starting point for your literature search

## 14. SDL: Towards a new marketing paradigm?

### *Readings:*

Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2004). Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 68(1), 1–17.

Peñaloza, L., Toulouse, N., & Visconti, L. M. (2012). Marketing Management: A Cultural Perspective. London: Taylor & Francis, chapter 12. Head, Schau & Thompson (collaborative production / SDL discussion)

Peñaloza, L., Toulouse, N., & Visconti, L. M. (2012). Marketing Management: A Cultural Perspective. London: Taylor & Francis, chapter 21. Odou, Djelassi & Collin-Lachard (sales promotion, SDL)

### *Supplementary readings:*

Layton, R. A. (2008). The Search for a Dominant Logic. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 28(2), 215–227.

Comor, E. (2011). Contextualizing and Critiquing the Fantastic Prosumer: Power, Alienation and Hegemony. *Critical Sociology*, 37(3), 309–327.

Ritzer, G., & Jurgenson, N. (2010). Production, Consumption, Prosumption: The nature of capitalism in the age of the digital „prosumer“. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 10(1)

Cova, B., Ford, D., & Salle, R. (August). Academic brands and their impact on scientific endeavour: The case of business market research and researchers. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 38(6), 570–576.

# Asking a supervisor by e-Mail

- If you want to talk in person or on the phone, email professors first to set up a date
- Be precise & short!
- Allow about a week for a response
- Send a reminder after a week
- Only say it is urgent if it really is urgent – give a reason
- Don't over-interpret short replies

# Writing with a company

- Generally a great idea & many do it successfully
- But also an additional challenge
- Be aware that supervisors and companies look for different things in a thesis (e.g. theory vs. practical suggestions)
- Remember to stay in touch with your supervisor if e.g. the company's plans/needs change (they often do)
- It can be a good idea to prepare a final presentation/report for the company and write the thesis as a separate document
- Make sure **in advance** that you will have enough time to actually write the thesis!
- Make sure in advance that you will have access to the data (e.g. interview partners) you will need

# **SUGGESTED FIELDS OF INVESTIGATION**



# Suggested fields of investigation

- These are only suggestions, **many** other topics will be supervised!
- The suggested fields of investigation are intentionally broad
- The student must still work out **his/her own topic** within this field! (Select a case, methodology, and theory)!
- **Only a few** students can use these suggestions – the supervisor will decide based on the quality of the proposal
- Thus, following **your own interests and ideas** is always the best strategy
- You can ask the supervisors directly if you have questions or ideas

# Suggested fields of investigation

- Eric Arnould:

“alternative agricultural/food systems; demand side energy projects; would love to supervise a project on older women's hair”

- Dannie Kjeldgaard

“Nordic Market Contexts, The Arctic/Greenland”

- Jessica Chelekis

“I would be interested in supervising a project broadly looking into interactions of public policies with businesses and markets.”

# Suggested fields of investigation

- Erika Kuever:

“fakes and counterfeits, either in China or exported elsewhere”

- Niklas Woermann

“eSport, Online Livestreams, Augmented Reality;

instruction as a service and consumer skill acquisition, e.g. in driving/sailing/diving/etc. schools;

Style & Taste formation and expertise;

Lifestyle & extreme sports, historical evolution of sport markets;

Household automation & everyday consumption practices”

# Suggested fields of investigation

- Lars Pynt Andersen:  
“Nordic CCT, glocalized consumption of cute/kawai culture”
- Domen Bajde  
“Crowdfunding from the perspective of the “crowd”; Lending to the poor: The case of Danish MyC4”
- Jan Møller Jensen  
“Students may consider topics such as a) Backpacker motivations and personality, b) Consumers use of online reviews, c) Place branding with focus on destination marketing”

# Suggested fields of investigation

- Dorthe Brogård Kristensen

“I am particularly interesting in thesis dealing with a) the private health market e.g. gadgets for self- tracking, products for slimming etc. b) the consumption of health messages in the marketplace, e.g. consumers perception and use of keyhole, organic label c) health, brands and the food industry, more specifically the role of brands, branding and the food industry for public health d) consumers’ pathologies, e.g. addictions /shopping, exercise.“

# Suggested fields of investigation

- Matthias Bode

“Realism (based on Linda Scott’s work with visuals) applied in a music context; Storage rooms and ownership/possession etc (maybe also music collection); Mobilities research: the soundscapes of mobility/moving in time and space; Immobility; Political dimensions of self-branding / brand me; Ideological frames for place branding; Critical take on Information overload; Self imposed consumption restrictions; Brand hijacking; Fake brands”

# Suggested fields of investigation

## ■ Julie Emontspool

- Consumer xenophobia: How do consumers experiencing xenophobia tackle the globalized marketplace? Method: Qualitative study (interviews and observations) of consumers who experience fear of other (foreign) cultures. Note: findings these respondents might not be easy, but a very interesting opportunity.
- Consumer globalization in rural environments: How do consumers living in rural contexts live a cosmopolitan lifestyle? Method: Qualitative study (interviews and observations), investigating whether cosmopolitanism is really mainly an urban trend
- Constructing images of entrepreneurs: How are (ethnic) entrepreneurs represented in Danish and/or international press? Method: Content analysis of a selection of media, Danish, foreign or international This thesis can be addressed from the entrepreneurship, or the communication perspective
- Orientalism in international entrepreneurship: How are differentiations between ethnic and other international entrepreneurs established in existing entrepreneurship research? Method: Content analysis of (selected) existing research publications This thesis can be addressed from the entrepreneurship, or the communication perspective

# **SOME BASICS OF WRITING**



# Preparing the writing process

- Learn from your colleagues; ask your supervisor for example theses they supervised
- There are many books, websites, etc. with strategies and tips for writing an academic thesis. Use them!
- Think about forming a writing/support group with your colleagues
- If you have other obligations (job, family, etc.) make sure you have time blocs that are completely free for writing. Usually these should be **full days**
- Plan in time for revision, spell checking, proof reading, etc.

# Writing Formalities

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN DENMARK

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PROGRAMMES LIFELONG LEARNING RESEARCH NEWS COOPERATION LIBRARY ABOUT SDU INFORMATION FOR...

You are here : University of Southern Denmark → Information for... → Current students → Your Programme → Master → M.Sc. in Economics and Business Administration in Odense → Supervisor Agreements

## M.Sc. in Economics and Business Administration in Odense

- Notice Board
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- Student Information Point
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- Project and Trainee Period
- Supervisor Agreements**
- Profile Responsible
- Study Start
- Practical Information

## Supervisor Agreements

Are you looking for a certain supervisor agreement? - Please check the below-stated agreements.

- Supervisor agreement for the Short Seminar in Business Economics (5 ECTS)
- Supervisor agreement for the Seminar in Business Economics (10 ECTS)
- Supervisor agreement for the Project and trainee period
- Declaration of title and authorship
- Formalities for written assignments applying to programmes in economics and business administration (updated 20/8-2014)

If you are looking for the supervisor agreement for the Master Thesis please check the menu "Master's Thesis".

<http://static.sdu.dk/mediafiles//9/5/C/%7B95CFDD5A-2C51-4565-AEE0-8B64D796ECF8%7DFormalia%20for%20skriftlige%20opgavebesvarelser%20p%C3%A5%20erhvervs%C3%B8konomiske%20uddannelser%20ny%20190814.pdf>

# There are explicit rules for:

- Text size & type
- Page margins and spacing
- Elements of the report
- Reference formats (→ important!)
- Front page
- Abstract

# Handing in

- “The thesis report shall be submitted in **three hard copies** to the study administration and in **one electronic version through SDUassignment** in blackboard before the deadline.”
- Appendix: attach a USB, or print, ask supervisor if it should be sent by email.

# Plagiarism



# Oral defense

- Can only take place if all credits have been earned
- A censor from the Danish Board of Censors in Business Studies will be assigned.
- Max. 8 weeks after hand-in (expect min. 4 weeks, max 8)
- 1 hour in total (incl. grading)
- Starts with max 15 min presentation, then questions
- → be critical of your own work!
- Guest can be brought, but cannot speak
- Thesis and defense **together** account for the grade
- Date of thesis = final exam = day the study program ends

**... the next morning, you are no longer a student**



# Still questions?

## → Academic student Advisors

Telephone: 6550 3191 (only during office hours)

Fax: 6550 5692

**Collective email inbox:** [vejledning.merc.od@sam.sdu.dk](mailto:vejledning.merc.od@sam.sdu.dk)

You can find your Academic Student Advisors behind the counter at [the Student Information Point](#).

Academic Student Advisor	Office hours	Area of expertise
Katja Kirkegaard <a href="mailto:fvl46@samnet.sdu.dk">fvl46@samnet.sdu.dk</a>	Friday 10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•BSc in Economics and Business Administration</li><li>•MSc in Economics and Business Administration</li><li>•MSc in Business Economics and Auditing</li></ul>
Morten Vestergaard Dam <a href="mailto:fvl37@samnet.sdu.dk">fvl37@samnet.sdu.dk</a>	Monday 10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•BSc in Economics and Business Administration</li><li>•MSc in Economics and Business Administration</li><li>•Marketing, Branding &amp; Communication</li></ul>
Nicole Christiansen <a href="mailto:fvl51@sam.sdu.dk">fvl51@sam.sdu.dk</a>	Wednesday 10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•BSc in Economics and Business Administration</li><li>•Business Management</li><li>•MSc in Economics and Business Administration</li></ul>
Klaus Kristiansen <a href="mailto:fvl50@sam.sdu.dk">fvl50@sam.sdu.dk</a>	Thursday 12-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•BSc in Economics and Business Administration</li><li>•MSc in Economics and Business Administration</li><li>•International students</li></ul>



**... AND DON'T FORGET TO  
HAVE FUN!**