MSM-MM Master's Thesis Guide 2023-2024

For the MSM-MM study programme at SBE

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1. Introduction

The MSM-MM Master's Thesis Guide contains the rules and procedures for the Master's Thesis process of the MSM-MM study programme. These guidelines implement the rules for the Master's Thesis as outlined in the MSM-MBA and MSM-MM Education and Examination Rules 2023-2024 (MSM-MBA/MM-EER 2023-2024). It is the purpose of the MSM Master's Thesis Guidelines to establish clear and explicit mutual expectations, and to minimize the risks and problems of personal difficulties, inadequate supervision or unsatisfactory student performance. It will be provided to all academic staff and students who should familiarize themselves with the provisions of this MSM-MM Master's Thesis Guide.

2. The Master's Thesis

The Master's Thesis is an individual final project which allows students to apply and demonstrate their control over concepts, tools and competencies as acquired and trained throughout the MSM-MM study programme.

Within the overall MSM-MM programme design, the Master's Thesis forms a large and fundamental part of the methodological approach to learning. The development of the Master's Thesis is the final point of the programme, which allows mobilizing knowledge, attitudes and competencies within the framework of business management. It is the most important indicator of progress and achievement for our students.

Projects are supposed to meet a high level of ambition and complexity. Any chosen project must be of sufficient size and scope to be acceptable. In principle, there are no geographical limitations to any of the project types, just as long as this doesn't impede the carrying out of the required thorough relevant research to justify the project and the proposed approaches and solutions (desk research, market research, interviews, etc.). Feasibility is essential. If a student does not have access to the necessary resources to carry out the study, a different topic should be considered.

2.1 Learning goals

The general objective of the Master's Thesis is to carry out a piece of original work. In particular, it aims at achieving the following learning goals:

- Detect and exploit an organizational or societal challenge by conducting academic research.
- Integrate the knowledge acquired throughout the year in the MSM-MM study programme in the different areas.

- Contribute to the further development of a set of specific competencies planned for the MSM-MM study programme, such as:
  - Developing knowledge and understanding of a specific business, industry or academic area or research
  - Being able to apply different tools, techniques and theories to solving business and academic issues.
  - Formulating strategic decisions, making recommendations and drawing conclusions on research findings
  - Writing and presenting complex ideas clearly and effectively
  - Being able to find and select relevant information for the needs of the project

The specific learning goals and competencies as well as the applicable assessment criteria can be found in Appendix I.

3. The MSM-MM Master's thesis (final project)

The starting point for the final project is that it should deal with a particular subject in the field of business and/or management, which is discussed from a theoretical or theoretical and practical point of view, at a graduate academic level.

Within the MSM-MM study programme students will write an Academic Research Paper as Master's thesis that deals with practical problems or opportunities organizations are confronted with ("research dilemma"[1]). In the thesis, the research dilemma will be examined from a theoretical perspective and in a rigorous manner. Students are expected to develop a theoretical framework that guides their empirical study on the research dilemma, using qualitative or quantitative research methods.

The general structure of the MSM-MM Master's comprises five chapters:

1. Introduction
2. Literature Review
3. Methods
4. Findings
5. Discussion and Conclusions

The development of the Academic Research Paper comprises the stages listed below:

Stage	Academic Research Paper Goal: to make an original contribution to academic research
Problem Statement	**Introduction:** Identification of gaps in research
Frameworks	**Literature:** Literature required to build the framework needed to analyse the problem statement
Methodology	**Methodology:** Description and justification of the methodological approach needed to test the research question: i.e. qualitative, quantitative methods.
Application	**Findings:** Application of research tools to evaluate the proposed framework.
Evaluation and recommendation	**Discussion:** Discussion of the findings, evaluating the results, as well as reflections for future research.

The checklist in Appendix II provides more detail on the steps and actions a student should take and complete when writing the Master's Thesis.

Please also refer to the Master's Thesis evaluation form (Appendix I) for more information.

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[1] Please refer to chapter 2 in: Blumberg, B., Cooper, D. & Schindler, S. (2011). *Business research methods* (3rd European ed.). London, England: McGraw-Hill.

4. Steps in the process

The Master's Thesis project involves different steps and milestones as summarized in Figure 1.
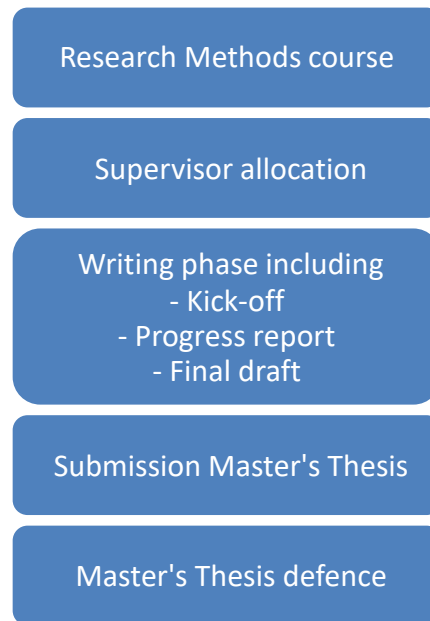
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Figure 1: Overview of the Master's Thesis process and milestones

4.1 Step 1: Research Methods Course

In order to support students in developing their Master's Thesis, the course *Research Methods* is part of the core courses of the MSM-MM study programme. Students are required to successfully complete this course before starting to write their Master's Thesis.

The course will give students the opportunity to develop their initial ideas on their thesis project culminating in a final project proposal. Students will also be familiarized with the main research techniques in thesis research (i.e. semi-structured interviews and textual analysis in qualitative research and survey design).

Please refer to the syllabus of the *Research Methods* course for the specific content, requirements and examinations of the course.

4.2 Step 2: Supervisor allocation

After the *Research Methods* course MSM appoints a supervisor to the student. In doing so, MSM aims to find a perfect match between a student and supervisor in terms of business, theoretical, methodological, and empirical interests and expertise.

4.3   Step 3: Writing phase

During the writing phase there are three milestones: the kick-off meeting, the progress report meeting, and the final draft meeting. Before each meeting the student should upload the required documents in Moodle/Canvas, and after the meeting write a short summary of the meeting including the feedback the student received and an (adjusted) timeline and upload it to Moodle/Canvas.

4.3.1   Kick-off meeting

Right after the supervisor allocation the kick-off meeting will take place during which the supervisor will give feedback on the research proposal and the proposed timeline is discussed.

1. At least one week before the meeting, the student uploads the research proposal and a timeline to Moodle/Canvas.
2. Meeting takes place with oral feedback from the MSM supervisor.
3. Student writes summary of meeting including (adjusted) timeline for the writing phase and uploads to Moodle/Canvas.

4.3.2   Progress report meeting

Halfway during the writing phase (approximately three months before the submission deadline) the progress report meeting will take place where the student presents a short progress report (PowerPoint presentation) to the MSM supervisor. The student should present the current status of the thesis, elements of the thesis that still need to be completed, and areas where the student is facing problems. The progress report is not graded but presentation is mandatory. The presentation should last 15 minutes, followed by a Q&A session of 15 minutes by the MSM supervisor.

1. At least one week before the meeting, the student uploads the draft thesis and progress report presentation to Moodle/Canvas.
2. Meeting takes place with oral feedback from the MSM supervisor.
3. Students writes summary of meeting including (adjusted) timeline and uploads to Moodle/Canvas.

4.3.3   Final draft meeting

For the full-time variant of the MSM-MM programme the final draft meeting will take place approximately two weeks before the submission deadline. For the part-time variants this meeting will take place approximately four weeks before the deadline.

1. At least one week before the meeting, the student uploads the final draft of the thesis to Moodle/Canvas.
2. Meeting takes place with oral feedback from the MSM supervisor.
3. Based on the feedback the student will finalise the Master's thesis.

4.3.4 Complaints during writing phase

Should any difficulties emerge between the supervisor and the student during the writing phase, the supervisor and/or student will inform the MSM education office, as soon as this occurs.

The MSM education officer will consider the matter and propose and implement a solution after consulting with the supervisor and/or student and if applicable the Academic Coordinator of the MSM-MM study programme. This process has been set up in order to detect and resolve any difficulties during the writing process in an early stage.

4.4 Step 4: Submission Master's Thesis

Please carefully read chapter 5 which describes the specific requirements of the Master's Thesis.

The submission deadline for the final version of the Master's Thesis is communicated by the MSM education office. The student is required to upload the Master's Thesis to Moodle/Canvas before the submission deadline.

In case a student is not able to submit the Master's Thesis before the deadline due to personal circumstances, the student can request an extension. Please refer to chapter 10.8 of the MSM-MBA and MSM-MM Education and Examination Regulations 2023-2024.

Students who miss the submission deadline are not allowed to defend and will receive a "No Grade" for the Master's Thesis. Regarding resit opportunities, please refer to chapter 10.2 of the MSM-MBA and MSM-MM Education and Examination Regulations 2023-2024.

Upon submitting the Master's Thesis, a student is required to sign a declaration stating that the Master's Thesis is original work by the student and is free of any kind of irregularities (including fraud, plagiarism, forgery and academic outsourcing), and upload the completed and signed declaration together with the Master's Thesis to Moodle/Canvas (see Appendix III).

4.5 Step 5: Master's Thesis defence

This is the last stage in the final project process and involves presenting, defending and assessing the Master's Thesis. Defence sessions are organized at the end of each MSM-MM study programme. Dates for defence sessions for students who have been granted extension and/or who have not passed the first sit will be communicated by the MSM education office.

The evaluation panel consists of two evaluators (the MSM supervisor and an additional evaluator).

The defence is a public ceremony except for the assessment discussion by the evaluators.

The defence of the Master's Thesis will take approximately 40 minutes in total and consists of:

1. Oral presentation of the Master's Thesis by the student   15 minutes

2. Q&A session where the evaluators will ask questions (the actual defence of the Master's Thesis)   15-20 minutes

3. Assessment discussion in which the evaluators will determine the student's final grade   5 minutes

4. Debriefing of the student by the evaluators on a "pass" or "fail" outcome   5 minutes

4.5.1   Assessment of the Master's Thesis

The Master's Thesis shall be assessed through the completion of the Master's Thesis evaluation form by the evaluators as included in Appendix I. Both evaluators need to complete each criterion of the Master's Thesis evaluation form with a specific grade.

If the average grade of both evaluators for one or more competencies (Dublin Descriptors) is below 5.5, the Master's Thesis is failed and the student need to take a resit.

If the average grade of both evaluators for all competencies (Dublin Descriptors) is at least a 5.5 and the difference of the final grades of both evaluators does not exceed 1.5, the total final grade of the Master's thesis is the average of the final grades of both evaluators and rounded to a whole or half grade except for grades between 5.25 and 5.49 that are rounded to 5.0.

In case the difference of the final grades of both evaluators exceeds 1.5, the Academic Coordinator of the MSM-MM study programme will appoint a third evaluator. The third evaluator will assess the Master's Thesis based on the Master's Thesis evaluation form and will provide partial grades for each criterion except the criteria that are related to the defence:

- The presentation presents a persuasive case for the proposed dissertation research (i.e. well-structured presentation, clear explanation, well-timed).
- Careful listening and understanding of questions and arguments is shown and clear and convincing answers are provided. Student displays mastery of the subject.
- Student has made good use of media (slides, video) in the presentation.

The total final grade of the Master's thesis in this case is calculated by the average grades of all three evaluators except the criteria that are related to the defence for which the average of the first two evaluators is taken. The total final grade is rounded to a whole or half grade except for grades between 5.25 and 5.49 that are rounded to 5.0.

Please refer to Appendix 1 of this MSM-MM Master's Thesis Guide for more details on grading and grade determination.

After the defence, the evaluators will submit the completed Master's Thesis evaluation form to the MSM education office. The final grades will only be released by the MSM education office.

4.5.2 Specific procedural rules regarding the defence

Once the Master's Thesis is submitted on time a student is obliged to defend the Master's Thesis at the scheduled defence session date of the applicable study programme or within three (3) months counting from the day the Master's Thesis was submitted. The same applies for re-submission of the Master's Thesis.

A student obliged to defend, who does not show up at the defence without compelling reason and informing the MSM education office before the defence, or who is not willing to defend the Master's Thesis, will receive a "No Grade" for the Master's Thesis.

It is not allowed to re-submit a Master's Thesis when the student has already obtained a passing final grade for the Master's Thesis.

4.5.3 Resit of the Master's Thesis

If the evaluation of the Master's thesis or the defence thereof results in an insufficient grade or a "No Grade", a student gets a resit opportunity. Please refer to chapter 10.2 of the MSM-MBA and MSM-MM Education and Examination Regulations 2023-2024.

5. Requirements Master's Thesis

5.1 Format

- The written document should include an Executive Summary of a maximum of two pages (no more than 1000 words).
- For the MSM-MM Master's Thesis, a paper of approximately 20.000 words (approx. 40 pages) is expected. This excludes appendices and the bibliography.
- For the Master's Thesis (including drafts) MSM requires students to use the writing and referencing style prescribed by the American Psychological Association (APA), including the bibliographic reference system of APA, except for the line spacing which should be single (1.0).

5.2 Irregularities

MSM has a zero-tolerance policy on irregularities such as fraud, plagiarism, forgery and academic outsourcing. All final submissions of the Master's Thesis are checked for plagiarism. In case any irregularity is detected, it will be reported to the Board of Examiners who may take appropriate measures/impose sanctions to the student. Please also refer to chapter 8 of the MSM-MBA and MSM-MM Education and Examination Regulations 2023-2024.

5.3   Confidentiality

If a student promises confidentiality to (survey) respondents – usually a good idea for most kinds of research questions – their identities or personal details should not be revealed in the Master's Thesis (including drafts). However, students must keep this information in their file of research notes, and maintain this file in a safe place in case MSM officials may need to question a student about the specific procedures that led to a student's research claims.

5.4   Non-disclosure agreement (NDA)

In the case of a confidential Master's Thesis, a company or student may request that an agreement is signed between the student and MSM to assure that no confidential information is disclosed to a third party. A standard NDA can be requested from the MSM education office. MSM will not sign any other agreements besides the standard NDA provided. In case an NDA is required, a student should organize this as early as possible in the process. This NDA needs to be included as appendix to the Master's Thesis.

6.   Support

In order to help students in successfully complete their Master's Thesis, support is provided in various forms.

6.1   Supervisor

The supervisor gives feedback and advice on how to improve a student's work. It is the students' responsibility to initiate the contact with the allocated supervisor. The supervisor can never be responsible for the content, form and presentation of the Master's Thesis. This remains under the students' responsibility. Students are expected to work independently while taking into account the advice of the supervisor. Issues arising in supervision should be communicated to the MSM education office.

6.2   Library services

Students can make use of all library facilities of MSM and Maastricht University. For more information, please visit https://www.msm.nl/information-for/current-students/information-center/intro.

6.3   Master's Thesis section in Moodle/Canvas

In the Master's Thesis section in Moodle/Canvas students have access to a collection of resources (articles, presentations, templates, videos, guidelines, etc.) to help them to write their Master's Thesis.

7. Role and responsibilities of the supervisor

MSM aims to find a perfect match between a student and supervisor in terms of business, theoretical, methodological, and empirical interests and expertise. Supervisors are meant to guide students, not do the work for them. This means their role is to support the process of the thesis, not the content. Although we would all like students to graduate with high grades, this is dependent on the ability and the dedication of each student. The supervisor's job is to bring the best out of the student. However, at the same time, supervisors need to be honest and clear in their feedback and communication with the student.

7.1 Meetings with the student

The first meeting with the student is to review the Research proposal. The supervisor needs to establish if and how the proposed project needs to be fine-tuned. Are the objectives clear, do they make sense, are they of value? Is the project feasible? Does the student have access to information and data? Is the student able to carry out the task?

During the other meetings the supervisor should give feedback and guidance in order to help the student to finish the Master's Thesis before the indicated deadline.

The steps and milestones of the Master's Thesis process are outlined in chapter 4.

7.2 Planning

The final project is a huge undertaking for the student, and it requires great discipline and motivation to keep focused. A clear planning will help to keep the project moving along. The planning is not fixed in stone and can be adjusted.

Therefore, during each meeting the planning should be reviewed. Adjustments should be made to fit both the student and the supervisor's schedule.

7.3 Feedback

It is essential to provide students with clear feedback at every step. Supervisors tasks are as follows:

- To provide focus and feedback to the paper
- To discuss the planning
- To advise on the choice of literature
- To advise on the research methods and data collection tools
- To ensure the paper meets academic standards

7.4   Supervision challenges and how to handle them

Supervisors may face several challenges. Below some of those challenges are listed and suggestions how to handle them are provided.

- **Dormant students:** These are students who have not had contact with their supervisor. These students never send emails, rarely meet with their supervisor and/or claim to be too busy to concentrate fully on their final project.
  If attempts to stimulate students to work on their project fail, please contact the MSM education office.

- **Non-performing/Overly dependent students:** These are students that are continuously asking their supervisor what they should do even after receiving helpful comments that should allow them to advance their paper. They lack any self-management skills and just do not seem to know what they need to do to make appropriate progress with their project even after putting in significant effort.
  Also in this case, please contact the MSM education office.

- **Irregularities:** It can happen that a supervisor detects irregularities such as fraud, plagiarism, forgery and academic outsourcing.
  MSM has a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism and other kinds of irregularities. Supervisors should check chapter submissions using Ephorus. If any irregularity is detected, students should be reprimanded.
  All final submissions of the Master's Thesis are checked on plagiarism. In case plagiarism, academic outsourcing, or any other irregularity is detected, it will be reported to the Board of Examiners.

Appendix I: Master's Thesis evaluation form

The following table shows the Master's Thesis evaluation form which indicates the specific learning goals (competencies) and assessment criteria of the MSM-MM Master's Thesis.

The required competencies are clustered into the five Dublin Descriptor (DD) and are associated with one or more learning goals. Each learning goal is split into several assessment criteria.

Each criterion receives a grade and is assessed according to the following schema:

Assessment	Corresponding grade
Outstanding	10
Good	8
Satisfactory	6
Unsatisfactory	4
Poor	2

The grade of each DD is calculated by the average of the assessment criteria of the respective DD. Each criterion within one DD is weighted equally.

The final grade of each evaluator is calculated as follows:

DD	Weighting
DD1	20%
DD2	30%
DD3	30%
DD4	10%
DD5	10%

Master's Thesis evaluation form – Academic Research Paper

Dublin Descriptors & General learning goals MSM-MM programme	Learning goals	Assessment criteria
Chapter 1: Introduction		
DD1: Knowledge and understanding Students are able to demonstrate their advanced knowledge and comprehension of the various management-related disciplines.	Student is able to **demonstrate** understanding of the management/societal problem s/he want to examine.	Student clearly identifies and describes the management/societal problem s/he wants to investigate and convincingly explains the need to address this problem. *(Chapter 1: Introduction)*
D2: Applying knowledge and understanding Students are able to apply principles, theories and models pertaining to the management discipline in the context of 21st century organizations that are active in or for global, emerging markets.	Student is able to correctly **apply** the appropriate theoretical approach to the identified management/societal problem.	Student understands how this management/societal problem can be examined from a theoretical perspective, evident in the problem statement that comprises major and minor research questions that are consistent with one another. *(Chapter 1: Introduction)*
Chapter 2: Literature review		
DD1: Knowledge and understanding Students are able to demonstrate their advanced knowledge and comprehension of the various management-related disciplines.	Students is able to **demonstrate** understanding of the theoretical approaches to conceptualize this identified management/societal problem.	Student identifies and discusses the relevant theoretical literature related to this problem statement. The literature used is of sufficient quality and adds appropriate theoretical depth to the dissertation. *(Chapter 2: Theory - overall)*
DD2: Applying knowledge and understanding Students are able to apply principles, theories and models pertaining to the management discipline in the context of 21st century organizations that are active in or for global, emerging markets.	Student is able to correctly **apply** the appropriate theoretical approach to the identified management/societal problem.	The literature review displays a dialogue with the literature. *(Chapter 2: Theory - overall)*
DD3: Making Judgements Students are able to propose appropriate solutions for fundamental management challenges of sustainable organizations.	Student is able to critically assess and judge scholarly work to **propose** a conceptual model to guide the study on the identified management/societal problem.	The dependent and independent variables (and possibly other variables) are well-defined and discussed (i.e. their dimensions and relations between variables). *(Chapter 2: Theory – variables)*
		Student designs an original and properly operationalized conceptual framework from the literature to guide the investigation on the identified management/societal problem. *(Chapter 2: Theory –conceptual model)*
Chapter 3: Methods		
DD1: Knowledge and understanding Students are able to demonstrate their advanced knowledge and comprehension of the various management-related disciplines.	Student is able to **demonstrate** understanding of the management/societal problem s/he want to examine.	Student presents a clear description of the research context (i.e. industry, organization), including data on recent developments. *(Chapter 3: Methods – Research context // separate empirical setting chapter // Chapter 1's rationale of the research)*
	Students is able to **demonstrate** understanding of the methodological approaches necessary for carrying out appropriate research on the identified management/societal problem.	Student draws on relevant methodological literature (e.g., use of methods textbooks, reference is made to other articles) in developing the action plan towards research on the identified management/societal problem. *(Chapter 3: Methods - overall)*
DD3: Making Judgements Students are able to propose appropriate solutions for fundamental management challenges of sustainable organizations.	Student is able to critically assess and judge methodological approaches to **propose** a suitable research strategy for studying the identified management/societal problem.	Student justifies why the chosen investigation method is suitable for addressing the problem statement. There is thus consistency between problem statement and research approach. *(Chapter 3: Methods – Research Strategy)*
DD2: Applying knowledge and understanding		Student clearly describes the data sources collected and motivates why the selected data sources are relevant to answer the problem statement. **(Chapter 3: Methods – data sources)**

Students are able to apply principles, theories and models pertaining to the management discipline in the context of 21st century organizations that are active in or for global, emerging markets.	Student is able to correctly **apply** the appropriate methodological approach to study the identified management/societal problem.	Student clearly describes how the data sources have been analysed (i.e. different stages in data-analysis, use of different analytical/statistical methods discussed). *(Chapter 3: Methods – data analysis)*
DD3: Making Judgements Students are able to propose appropriate solutions for fundamental management challenges of sustainable organizations.	Student is able to critically assess and judge methodological approaches to **propose** a suitable research strategy for studying the identified management/societal problem.	Student displays researcher reflexivity towards the strengths and weaknesses of the research approach and convincingly describes what measures have been taken to address these weaknesses. *(Chapter 3: Methods – validity & reliability)*
		Student designed a research strategy that demonstrates awareness of ethical obligations and cultural sensitivity. *(Chapter 3: Methods – research ethics)*
Chapter 4: Findings		
DD2: Applying knowledge and understanding Students are able to apply principles, theories and models pertaining to the management discipline in the context of 21st century organizations that are active in or for global, emerging markets.	Student is able to correctly **apply** the appropriate methodological approach to study the identified management/societal problem and correctly interpret the results of the analysis.	Findings are analytically sound in that complete (thus methods are correctly applied) and convincing meaning is given to the findings. *(Chapter 4: Findings)*
		Findings are discussed in that alternative explanations are identified and judged. *(Chapter 4: Findings)*
		Findings are convincingly presented, using sufficient and relevant evidence in the form of tables, graphs and/or illustrative quotations as well as presented in a structured and clear fashion. *(Chapter 4: Findings)*
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion		
DD3: Making judgements Students are able to propose appropriate solutions for fundamental management challenges of sustainable organizations.	Student is able to draw conclusions on the research carried out on the identified management/societal problem in relation to the conceptual model and to propose what the theoretical and managerial implications of the student's study are.	Student accurately evaluates the results of the analysis, relating them to the literature and indicating how the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge. *(Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion)*
		Student critically examines and evaluates the limitations of the research and provides recommendations for future research. *(Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion)*
		Student indicates how the findings contribute to a better understanding of the management/societal problem studied, also evident in practical and relevant recommendations for the different stakeholders of the research. *(Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion)*
Overall thesis (all chapters) and defence		
DD4: Communication Students are able to present and defend views effectively through a variety of oral and written communication modes.	Student is able to write in a clear academic style and **present and defend** the thesis (proposal) convincingly.	Student demonstrates an academic style of writing, making use of correct grammar and vocabulary. There is clarity of writing and expression.
		The paper is correctly (APA) referenced, clearly acknowledging the work of others.
		The paper is clearly structured, making it easy for the evaluator to read.
		The presentation presents a persuasive case for the proposed dissertation research (i.e. well-structured presentation, clear explanation, well-timed).
		Careful listening and understanding of questions and arguments is shown and clear and convincing answers are provided. Student displays mastery of the subject.
		Student has made good use of media (slides, video) in the presentation.
DD5: Learning Skills Students are able to reflect on their own learning & professional development.	Student is able to identify relevant theoretical, empirical and methodological literature that is relevant for the thesis project in an independent manner.	The literature used is of sufficient quality (i.e. peer-reviewed journals, books from renowned publishers and reports from authoritative institutes), up-to-date and in sufficient quantity.

Appendix II: Checklist MSM-MM Master's Thesis

Academic Research Paper MM
Introduction
☐ Rationale of the study
☐ Problem Statement
☐ Outline of the document
Literature Review
☐ Review of the relevant academic literature – Discuss and make links between the relevant literature related to your topic.
☐ Ensure a dialog with the literature. You need to explain why one tool has been selected and another not.
☐ Conceptual framework – Describe the conceptual framework you need to analyse the problem. If you develop your own framework, ensure that it is carefully embedded in the academic literature.
Methodology
☐ Describe of the type of research that will be carried out.
☐ Explain why this method is most appropriate.
☐ Did you use references to literature on research methodology?
☐ Quantitative – if quantitative then:
☐ Explain where the data comes from (i.e. industry reports, market studies, socio-demographical data, etc.)
☐ Explain why is this an appropriate source of data?
☐ Explain how many observations you have and why this is sufficient for your research.
☐ Explain the gathering process:
☐ Questionnaire – if you used a questionnaire:
☐ Explain how you formulated the questions (always use the questions of previous research when possible)
☐ Explain how the questions are related to your research question.
☐ Explain how you ensure that ethical concerns are taken care of in creating your questionnaire.
☐ Describe the analytical techniques you will use (correlation, regression etc.).
☐ Explain why these techniques are appropriate
☐ Qualitative – if qualitative then:
☐ Explain who you will interview
☐ Explain why this is an appropriate source of information
☐ Explain how many people you will interview and why this is sufficient for your research.
☐ Explain the gathering process:
☐ Interview questions:
☐ Explain how you formulated the questions (always use the questions of previous research when possible)
☐ Explain how the questions are related to your research question.
☐ Explain how you ensure that ethical concerns are taken care of in creating your questionnaire.
☐ Describe how you will code the interviews.
☐ Explain why coding is important.
Findings
☐ Recap on the conceptual framework you are using.
☐ Explain the data you collected (how many data points did you finally get, how many interviews finally took place).
☐ Analyse you research material – showing areas of interest in the results.
☐ Relate the results to your conceptual framework.
Discussion
☐ Explain the outcome of your findings.
☐ Interpret the results in relation to your conceptual framework.
☐ Relate your findings to other areas of the academic literature
☐ Describe the limitations of the research. What could you have done better?
Communication
☐ English grammar and spelling is correct.
☐ Ensure the paper has the required formatting (consistency in fonts for headings, paragraphs etc.)
☐ Tables, Figures are clearly labelled and referenced in the text.
☐ APA referencing is consistent throughout the paper.
☐ You have a clear bibliography using the APA style.

Appendix III: Declaration Master's Thesis

By signing this statement, I hereby acknowledge the submitted Master's Thesis titled

....

to be produced independently by me, without external help.

Wherever I paraphrase or cite literally, a reference to the original source (journal, book, report, internet, etc.) is provided.

By signing this statement, I explicitly declare that I am aware of the fraud sanctions as stated in the MSM-MBA and MSM-MM Education and Examination Regulations (MSM-MBA/MM-EER 2023-2024) of SBE, Maastricht University.

Place: ....

Date: ....

First and last name: ....

Study programme: ....

ID number: ....

Signature: ....

*Please complete this page and add it as an appendix to your Master's Thesis on the last page.