

Checklist for the assessment of theses

In Art. 12 and 16 of the Thesis Regulations the criteria for the assessment of theses are listed. The given assessment must be conveyed to the student in writing (Art. 19 and 24).

In consultation with the lecturers of the major subjects a checklist has been established as tool to be used for the assessment and marking of theses. This list has no official status, but is recommended in order to provide transparency regarding the assessments of theses. Students can use the list as a checklist while completing their thesis.

In this checklist the nine categories from the Final Attainment Levels of Academic Education are made concrete in a number of items; we have adapted the order of the categories in such a way that the most important factors come first.

Working with a checklist can give the impression that an instant, uniform score will be the outcome. That is not the case. In the various phases, the lecturer's or assessor's estimation will still contain a subjective element. However, the checklist helps to carry out the assessment specifically and explicitly, and, in doing so, diminishes the so-called *Halo Effect*. Moreover, in the event of differences of opinion within an assessment committee, clearer insight can be gained as to where the difference is to be found. In this checklist the emphasis does not lie on the substance of the thesis content, but on the academic level demonstrated by the student. It regards the manner in which, and quality with which, the substance of the content is formed and presented.

The checklist may be used as follows:

1. One mark is awarded for each main category, on the basis of the sub-aspects listed below. NB: you must be able to justify the awarded mark by the sub-aspects! In category 2, a mark is given for each of the clusters a. up until f., and the average of these marks is the total mark for this category. You are free to determine the degree of exactness (whole - half - quarter or decimals) yourself;
2. The main categories numbered 1- 4 and 6 must be sufficient, at the least; if not, the thesis cannot be accepted;
3. The total mark for the thesis is obtained from the weighed average of the marks for the main categories; A category which has been declared to be non-applicable, is left out of consideration. The mark obtained in this manner, can be adjusted up or down on the basis of factors such as tempo, originality/creativity, reformed quality, in so far as these have not been sufficiently weighed in the preceding assessment. In the assessment these factors must be justified separately.
NB: the normal scores lie between 4 and 8; it is however, in exceptional cases, possible to award a lower or higher mark.

1. Academic attitude

- critical awareness
- integrity
- reflection
- self-directive capacity
- originality
- creativity
- innovative orientation

2. Academic process and product

- a. the forming of an opinion

- independent forming of an opinion
- honest, explicit formation of judgement
- constructive input in the problem field
- b. collaboration and operation
 - academic cooperation and communication
- c. attitude
 - self-criticism
 - respect for those who form the academic and non-academic context of the research
 - insight into the specific nature and position of theology
 - the intention to serve the church and society
- d. presentation of research questions
 - knowledge of the state of the art
 - relevant research questions (practical/theoretical)
 - well-formulated research questions
 - research questions/propositions well-suited to research
- d. method of research
 - adequate and effective method of research
 - methodological justification
- e. argument/point of view
 - consistent line of reasoning
 - convincing argumentation
 - distinction between main issues and side issues
 - main points made explicit
 - description, analysis, comparison, assessment connect well
 - conclusions answer the research questions
 - positioning within broader research/perspective with regard to continuation
- f. language use, design
 - clear formulation
 - captivating language use
 - academic language level
 - correct style with attention to detail
 - application of adequate means of presentation
- 3. Application of literature
 - justified choice
 - sources in foreign languages included
 - correct reproduction of sources
 - correct manner of documentation
 - independent processing
 - good exploitation of secondary interpretations
 - honest and balanced assessment
- 4. Employment of theological terms etc.
 - good definition of used terms
 - consistent use of terms
 - good interpretation of described theories
 - analysis of the relevant points
 - notion of paradigms
- 5. Input from other sciences
 - correct choice of material from other disciplines

- sufficient orientation on whole of the subject
- input placed within theological framework
- critical reflection on input
- input made productive for own point of view

6. Reformed tradition

- appropriate and convincing use of the Bible
- confrontation with the reformed tradition (faith)
- contribution to development of reformed Theology
- determining of own position
- integration of theology and faith

7. Practical relevance

- awareness of the questions of church and society
- adequate linking of theology and practice
- constructive contribution to praxis