

ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI
FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Master of Science in “MEDICAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY”

MSc THESIS HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Overview	4
Registration	5
Format	7
Template for front cover	9
Template for title page	10
Thesis contents	11
Research ethics	12
Submission	13
Grading	14
Grading criteria	15

INTRODUCTION

The MSc thesis is an important part of postgraduate studies. It offers students an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of all material taught in the MSc and their competence in applying this knowledge. The MSc thesis is a work that requires substantial effort and planning; hence, students need to aim for a realistic and achievable target.

This handbook provides information and guidance for the MSc thesis. It sets out the objectives of the thesis, assessment methods, and additional practical information.

OVERVIEW

You will be required to produce a project of 8,000 - 10,000 words approximately.

The MSc thesis should demonstrate:

- Thorough knowledge of the topic area
- Ability to identify a problem and to address it satisfactorily in the available timeframe
- Awareness of relevant methodological issues
- Competence in data analysis
- Reporting according to relevant guidelines (<https://www.equator-network.org>)
- Use of an acceptable style of referencing and bibliography (**Harvard or Vancouver**)
- Proficient use of the English language

REGISTRATION

The registration of a thesis is a time-consuming process triggered by every individual candidate and approved by the MSc Coordinating Committee and the Medical School General Assembly. It involves the appointment of a supervisor and an examination committee and registration of a topic/title chosen in consultation with the supervisor.

Appointment of supervisor and examination committee

The appointment of a thesis supervisor is based on the request of every individual student. Choice of a thesis supervisor should be made based on content-area expertise for a given topic and methodological background in each study design. The supervisor should be a **permanent faculty member** of the Medical School of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. In cases deemed necessary, the MSc Coordination Committee and the Medical School General Assembly may approve the appointment of an external faculty member as **co-supervisor**.

The examination committee consists of the supervisor and two (2) additional members appointed based on the supervisor's suggestion. They can be **faculty members** or **non-faculty MRM MSc teaching staff with a PhD**. However, at least two (2) of the three (3) members of the examination committee must be Aristotle University Medical School faculty members.

Registration of topic/title

The title should reflect and succinctly report the key elements of the research question the thesis is addressing. This task should be achieved by formulating the research question in a standardized format using an appropriate acronym (e.g., PICOT, PECOT). As such, in case of an intervention study or a systematic review of intervention trials, the title should explicitly present the following:

- Population/patient
- Intervention
- Comparator
- Outcome (main)
- Type of study

For example: *“Effect of sodium-glucose cotransporter inhibitors on cardiorenal outcomes based on presence of type 2 diabetes, heart failure or chronic kidney disease: a systematic review and meta-analysis”*.

In the case of a case-control or cohort study, the title should explicitly present the following:

- Population/patient
- Exposure
- Comparator/control
- Outcome (main)
- Type of study

In the case of a cross-sectional study (e.g., a survey):

- Population/problem
- Observation (main)
- Type of study

Timing

Registration and approval of the supervisor, examination committee and title of the thesis is a time-consuming process that involves multiple regulatory bodies. Applicants are therefore advised to apply **no later than six (6) months before the planned submission** of the completed thesis to allow for timely approval (i.e., submit the registration of title, supervisor, and examination committee no later than beginning June if planning to submit thesis beginning of December).

FORMAT

A thesis submitted for the award of an MSc in Medical Research Methodology should comply with the following instructions.

General presentation

- The thesis must be written in English.
- The thesis should be presented in a typed form on A4 size paper with 1.5 line spacing. Single spacing is acceptable ONLY when quoting from sources or reference material or using footnotes. Where quoting from sources or reference material, please indent the text.
- A font size of no more than 12 points and no less than 10 points should be used. Recommended fonts include Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial.
- Margins should be 25.4 mm on all sides.
- All pages should be numbered consecutively, except for the front cover.
- A table of contents and appropriate headings should be included in your submission.

Word count

The word count must be 8,000 – 10,000 words approximately. Marks will be deducted if the word count does not comply with the specified recommendations. Please note that the total word count does not include Abstract, Tables, Figures, References or Appendices.

Front cover

The thesis front cover should have the following details (See Template for front cover on page 9):

- The name of the institution “Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Faculty of Health Sciences, School of Medicine”
- The name of the student
- The full title of the thesis
- The degree for which the thesis was submitted (i.e., MSc in Medical Research Methodology)
- The location (Thessaloniki) and date of submission (month and year of submission)

Title page

The title page should have the following information (See Template for the title page on page 10):

- The full title of the MSc thesis
- The name of the student
- The name of the Faculty “Faculty of Health Sciences, School of Medicine”
- The name(s) of the supervisor(s)
- The location (Thessaloniki) and date of submission (month and year of submission)
- Word count (as specified in the previous section)

TEMPLATE FOR FRONT COVER

ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI

FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

<Title of the MSc thesis>

A thesis submitted in fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Medical Research Methodology

By

<Name of the student>

<Thessaloniki>, <Month>, <Year of Submission Date>

TEMPLATE FOR TITLE PAGE

<Title of the MSc thesis>

An MSc thesis submitted in fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Medical Research Methodology

At

The Faculty of Health Sciences
School of Medicine
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

By

<Name of the student>

<Thessaloniki>, <Month>, <Year of Submission>

<Name(s) of Supervisor(s)>

Word count

THESIS CONTENTS

The thesis should include a table of contents, a table of abbreviations, an abstract, the main write-up, relevant figures and tables, a reference list, and an appendix (if applicable).

The abstract should be no more than **300 words** and should briefly summarize the background and aims, methods used, key results and main conclusions.

All sections in the main write-up of the thesis (including but not limited to Background, Objectives, Methods, Results, Discussion) should be presented clearly and in accordance with scientific standards, academic standards and appropriate reporting guidelines (according to the type of study and respective reporting guidelines (available at the website of the Equator Network – <https://www.equator-network.org>)).

All literature sources used in the thesis should be cited and referenced appropriately, using a consistent referencing style throughout the text. A list of references must be included at the end of the main write-up (and before the appendices).

RESEARCH ETHICS

Students must avoid using unfair means when preparing and submitting their thesis, which is considered a serious academic offense. Forms of unfair means include:

- Plagiarism
- Double submission or self-plagiarism
- Submitting commissioned or purchased work
- Collusion
- Fabrication of findings

If applicable, for research involving human subjects or animals, students should seek ethical approval of the research protocol by an independent ethics committee and/or other competent institutional review boards as required by local legislation.

SUBMISSION

The deadline for submission is the first Wednesday of December at 14:00 (Athens Time).

MSc theses are submitted **solely** through the e-learning electronic platform.

Students can submit their MSc thesis only once. Last-minute submissions should be avoided, as technical problems may be encountered.

Strict adherence to submission deadlines is essential. If students anticipate delays up to two (2) weeks, they must contact the MSc secretariat via email (info-mrm@auth.gr) **at least one (1) week** before the submission deadline. Extensions will be considered only in exceptional personal or extenuating circumstances or certified illness. However, only students who submit their thesis until the original deadline (first Wednesday of December, 14:00 Athens time) will be considered eligible for a scholarship of excellence. Failure to submit on time **for any other reason** (after a 2-week extension) denotes that the student will have to submit their thesis and graduate in a future instance.

To promote clear reporting of methods and results, we ask that all theses submitted are written according to the appropriate reporting guideline. In particular, the thesis should include an **appropriate reporting guideline checklist** (<https://www.equator-network.org>) showing on which page of the thesis each checklist item appears, which should be submitted as a supplemental file. No thesis submission is considered complete unless the respective reporting guideline checklist has also been submitted.

GRADING

The three-member examination committee (EC), comprising the supervisor and two (2) other members, will grade the MSc thesis. In cases where the supervisor is unable to grade the thesis, a new supervisor will be assigned by the General Assembly of the School of Medicine. It is at the discretion of the examination committee to ask the candidate to attend a *viva voce* examination following submission of the thesis.

Grading policy

Each thesis is graded independently by the three (3) members of the EC, and a final provisional grade is agreed upon following discussion among them. We aim to inform students about their provisional grades within four (4) weeks of the submission date.

Module pass mark

The minimum pass mark is six (6).

GRADING CRITERIA

Grade 9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an excellent understanding of all major key issues • Relevant literature fully researched and critically reviewed • Sophisticated ability to integrate theory and practice concerns (where appropriate) • Highly informative interpretation of findings with a critical self-awareness of strengths and limitations • Excellent use of tables and figures • Appropriate and up-to-date references used at appropriate points • Complete and well formatted bibliography • Outstandingly organized and well-written thesis
Grade 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the important issues • Adequately researched and critically reviewed the literature • Insightful ability to integrate theory and practice concerns (where appropriate) • All or common major issues required for the question set or topic identified and addressed • No substantial errors of fact or interpretation • Clear and effective use of appropriate tables and figures • Appropriate and up-to-date references used at appropriate points; complete and well-formatted bibliography • Clear and well-organized logical structure to the whole thesis. Within word limits
Grade 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an adequate understanding of the important issues with some gaps or inadequacies • The literature was researched to an acceptable level but not beyond this • Satisfactory ability to relate research and practice concerns (where appropriate) • Some major issues required for the question set or topic identified and addressed • Few errors of fact or interpretation suggesting misunderstandings of the literature • Tables and figures, appropriate for most instances • Suitable references use with occasional omissions and acceptably formatted bibliography • Logical structure with occasional inconsistencies. Within word limits.
Grade 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates less than adequate understanding of the important issues • Partly researched the literature but left significant gaps • Limited ability to relate research and practice concerns (where appropriate) • Few major issues required for the question set or topic identified and presented • Some serious errors of fact or interpretation indicative of misunderstandings of key material • Inappropriate or incomplete use of tables and figures • Inappropriate or incomplete referencing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation, pagination, title, margins, and paragraphs not as specified in the handbook
Grade 5-1 (no pass)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates poor understanding of the important issues • Inadequately researched literature highlighting knowledge gaps • Very limited ability to relate research and practice concerns (where appropriate) • Few, if any, of the significant issues required of the question set or topic identified and presented • Serious errors in fact or interpretation of key material • Inappropriate or incomplete use of tables and figures • Inappropriate or incomplete referencing • Unacceptable presentation. Pagination, title, margins, & paragraphs need attention.
Grade 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work not submitted