

# GUIDE FOR THE EVALUATION OF A MASTER PROGRAM (MSC) THESIS

## GUIDELINE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR A MASTER OF SCIENCE (MSC) THESIS

The thesis is a mandatory synthesis activity that counts for 24 credits in the Master of Science (MSc) Program (45 credits). It consists in undertaking a structured and rigorous research project in a particular field that enables the student to improve her knowledge in a specific field in business. The thesis can be devoted to a theoretical or applied subject. It is intended to enable the student to demonstrate the ability to apply a scientific approach to conceptualizing both theoretical and applied problems, as well as the application of critical thinking skills to this process. The student should also demonstrate the ability to write a quality document to communicate research findings. These requirements meet the learning objectives of the program<sup>1</sup>.

## REMINDER OF THE MAIN PRINCIPLES OF RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH<sup>2</sup>

### Ethics (A) and integrity (B) in research

- A.1. To guarantee the anonymity of participants in research requiring data collection.
- A.2. To respect, treat fairly and protect participants in research requiring data collection.
- A.3. To ensure that consent is given voluntarily and knowingly and to protect participants from risks linked to the research.
- A.4. To guarantee confidentiality and to handle private and/or sensible data correctly.
- B.1. To show thoroughness in the analysis and the diffusion of the research results: To not commit any violations (fraud, cheating, plagiarism) by carrying out research data collection, analysis, and presentation in a rigorous and transparent manner.
- B.2. To respect the standards and rules of intellectual property by citing sources in an appropriate manner.

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<sup>1</sup> To learn more about the learning objectives of the program please click on this link: [https://www.hec.ca/en/students/my-program/msc/documents-en-us/msc\\_learning\\_objectives\\_competencies.pdf](https://www.hec.ca/en/students/my-program/msc/documents-en-us/msc_learning_objectives_competencies.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the Tri-Agency Framework on Responsible Conduct of Research (2016) <https://rcr.ethics.gc.ca/eng/framework-cadre.html> and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 (2018) [https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique\\_tcps2-eptc2\\_2018.html](https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2018.html)

FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM					
Criteria	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Clarity in the stated research problem	The problem under study is perfectly formulated.	The problem under study is very well formulated.	The problem under study is adequately formulated.	The problem under study is sufficiently well formulated.	The problem under study is poorly formulated.
Consistency between the research problem and the objectives	There is perfect consistency between the problem and the research objectives/questions.	There is very good consistency between the problem and the research objectives/questions.	There is good consistency between the problem and the research objectives/questions.	There is a lack of consistency between the problem and the research objectives/questions.	There is no consistency between the problem and the research objectives/questions.
LITERATURE REVIEW					
Criteria	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Relevance of references	All the references used are perfectly adequate for conceptualizing and/or solving the research problem.	Most of the references used are very adequate for conceptualizing and/or solving the research problem.	Most of the references used are adequate for conceptualizing and/or solving the research problem.	Some references used are not adequate for conceptualizing and/or solving the problem studied.	Most of the references used are inadequate for conceptualizing and/or solving the research problem.
Scope of the literature review	All key references in the existing literature have been identified.	Most key references in the existing literature have been identified.	Sufficient key references in the existing literature have been identified.	Some key references in the existing literature have been identified.	Most key references in the existing literature have not been identified.
Appropriate use of literature	All links have been fully established between the references used and the research problem.	Most links have been very well established between the references used and the research problem.	Most links have been well established between the references used and the research problem.	Some links between the references used and the research problem must be improved.	Most links between the references used and the research problem are missing.
Ability to position and demonstrate the relevance of the research problem with respect to existing literature	The positioning and the relevance of the research problem are perfectly demonstrated.	The positioning and the relevance of the research problem are demonstrated in a very good manner.	The positioning and the relevance of the research problem are demonstrated in a good manner.	The positioning and the relevance of the research problem must be improved.	The positioning and the relevance of the research problem are not demonstrated.
METHODOLOGY					
Criteria	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
	All the selected methods are very appropriate, and	Most of the selected methods are appropriate,	Most of the selected methods are appropriate,	Most of the selected methods are appropriate,	Most of the selected methods are not

Relevance of the methods chosen and justification of choices	their use is very well justified.	and their use is very well justified.	and their use is well justified, but a few changes must be made.	and their use is well justified, but many changes must be made.	appropriate and their use is not well justified.
Rigour in data collection and analysis	All the methods used to collect and analyse data are applied with the utmost rigour.	Most of the methods used to collect and analyse data are applied with a very high level of rigour.	Most of the methods used to collect and analyse data are applied with a high rigour.	Most of the methods used to collect and analyse data are applied with an acceptable level of rigour.	Most of the methods used to collect and analyse data are applied without much rigour.
<b>ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS</b>					
Criteria	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Depth of results analysis	The depth of the analysis exceeds expectations.	The depth of the analysis largely meets expectations.	The depth of the analysis moderately meets expectations.	The depth of the analysis hardly meets expectations.	The depth of the analysis does not meet expectations.
Results interpretation accuracy	All results are accurately interpreted.	The majority of results are accurately interpreted. There are very few interpretation errors.	Most results are accurately interpreted, but there are several interpretation errors.	There are as many accurately interpreted results as there are interpretation errors.	The majority of results are poorly interpreted.
Ability to meet the research objectives and answer all stated research questions	The analysis addresses entirely the problem by providing answers to all the research questions.	The analysis addresses the problem in a very satisfactory manner by providing answers to most of the research questions.	The analysis addresses the problem in a satisfactory manner but do not provide answers to few research questions.	The analysis addresses the problem fairly but do not provide answers to many research questions.	The analysis does not address the problem and do not provide answers to the research questions.
Ability to take a critical look at the research and discuss its limitations and implications	All the limitations and implications of the research are identified and discussed.	The majority of limitations and implications of the research are identified and discussed.	A good part of the limitations and implications of the research are identified and discussed, but some aspects could be improved.	Part of the limitations and implications of the research are identified and discussed, but some aspects could be improved.	The limitations and implications of the research are not identified or discussed.
<b>QUALITY OF THE WRITING</b>					
Criteria	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Clarity in presenting results	The presentation of the results is extremely clear.	The presentation of the results is very clear.	The presentation of the results is clear.	The presentation of the results lacks clarity. Minor changes are required.	The presentation of the results is not clear. Major changes are required.

Grasp of the language used in the field of specialization	The document demonstrates a perfect grasp of language used in the field of specialization.	The document demonstrates a very good grasp of the language used in the field of specialization.	The document demonstrates a good grasp of the language used in the field of specialization.	The document demonstrates a fair grasp of the language used in the field of specialization.	The document demonstrates a poor grasp of the language used in the field of specialization.
Structure and conciseness in writing the report	The document is excellent in terms of structure and conciseness.	The document has very few weaknesses involving either the structure or conciseness criteria.	The document has few weaknesses involving both the structure and conciseness criteria.	The document has several weaknesses involving either the structure or conciseness criteria.	The document has many weaknesses involving both the structure and conciseness criteria.
Adherence to the rules of writing an academic work (spelling, syntax, layout, etc.).	All the rules for writing an academic work (spelling, syntax, layout, etc.) are scrupulously adhered to.	All the rules for writing an academic work (spelling, syntax, layout, etc.) are adhered to, but there are a few minor errors.	All the rules for writing an academic work (spelling, syntax, layout, etc.) are adhered to, but there are several minor errors.	Most of the rules for writing an academic work (spelling, syntax, layout, etc.) are adhered to, but there are a few significant errors.	There are significant shortcomings in adherence to the rules for writing an academic work (spelling, syntax, layout, etc.).
Adherence to citation and bibliographic standards	All citation and bibliographic rules are scrupulously adhered to.	All citation and bibliographic rules are adhered to, but there are a few minor errors.	All citation and bibliographic rules are adhered to, but there are several minor errors.	The majority of citation and bibliographic rules are adhered to, but there are a few significant errors.	There are significant shortcomings in adherence to citation and bibliographic rules.
<b>AUTONOMY</b>					
Criteria	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
Adherence to the established timeline	The student established a timeline to complete the project and consistently adhered to it.	The student established a timeline to complete the project and adhered to it most of the time.	The student needed establishing a timeline to complete the project and adhered to it most of the time.	The student needed help establishing a timeline to complete the project but did not adhere to it most of the time.	The student needed help establishing a timeline for completing the project but never adhered to it.
Initiative taken to do what is necessary to complete the thesis	The student always showed initiative to do what was necessary to complete the thesis.	The student often showed initiative to do what was necessary to complete the thesis.	The student needed a little help to do what was necessary to complete the thesis.	The student showed little initiative to do what was necessary to complete the thesis.	The student showed no initiative to do what was necessary to complete the thesis.
<b>GRADE</b>					
	A+/A	A-/B+	B/B-	C+/C	E

**Potential of the thesis according to the jury:**

Please check the boxes that best reflect the jury's assessment of how well the thesis demonstrates the following characteristics:

- Presence of innovative elements (an unstudied or little studied phenomenon, original theoretical approach, original methodology, etc.)  
 Major     Average     Minor
  
- Contribution to knowledge in the discipline  
 Major     Average     Minor
  
- Relevance for society and organizations  
 Major     Average     Minor

HEC Montréal's MSc program offers a scholarship through its [Best Thesis Award](#) program. Only MSc program theses that have received an A+ grade are eligible. Other criteria considered in this competition are thesis originality, theoretical and/or practical contributions, and current or potential impact.

Please select Yes or No to indicate whether the jury unanimously recommends this thesis for the MSc program's Best Thesis Award.

Yes     No