

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR THE MASTER IN INTERNATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (MINT) THESIS

The objective of these guidelines is to provide students enrolled in the Master in International and Development Studies (MINT) at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (hereinafter: “the Institute”) with a **specific framework** for the preparation of their Master thesis.

These guidelines provide specific instructions about the distinct **purpose, content and structure** of the Master thesis for MINT students. As such, they **complete** the general *Guidelines for Master Thesis*. They must be read in conjunction with the rules governing the awarding of the Institute’s Master Degrees, including, but not limited to:

- a. *Master’s Degree Programmes Academic Regulations*
- b. *Master Programme: Implementation Guidelines for the Academic Regulations*
- c. *Directive on Academic Integrity*
- d. *Code of Conduct and its Implementation Guidelines*
- e. *Guidelines for Master Thesis*

These documents can be found on the following link: graduateinstitute.ch/discover-institute/reglements-directives-politiques

1) Purpose of the MINT Master thesis

The Master thesis is a **personal and original piece of research**, written in French or in English under the **supervision of a faculty member of the Institute**. It addresses a (set of) research question(s). Students are expected to demonstrate their command of the relevant literature, as well as of the relevant concepts and methods to address the research question(s). The thesis is the culmination of the two-year Master programme, and can further be of direct use to students in their forthcoming academic or professional activities.

The thesis is worth 30 ECTS (1/4 of the Master programme). There is no oral defence.

The **subject and / or relevant literature of the MINT thesis should in principle be drawn from more than one discipline**. The MINT thesis may likely be more directly related to real world issues than a disciplinary Master thesis, however it is not meant to be a policy or consultancy report.

2) Content and structure of the MINT Master thesis

*Please note that the following structure and content are merely indicative: **they should be discussed by students with their supervisors** and can be adapted as deemed appropriate.*

The MINT Master thesis typically comprise the following elements:

1. Abstract

The abstract should state the thesis topic, briefly describe the methods used, and highlight the main findings and / or conclusions. It must be 150 words maximum.

2. Table of contents

The table of contents lists the main sections and chapters included in the body of the thesis.

3. List of figures, illustrations and tables (optional)

The list provides the titles / descriptions and page numbers for each figure, illustration or table, in a similar format to a table of contents, to assist readers in locating the items within the thesis.

4. Introduction

This section provides an overview of the context and key issues addressed in the study, and typically answers the following questions:

- a. What is the research question of the study?
- b. How does the research question address current issues on global affairs and / or international development?
- c. What is the specific contribution that the thesis seeks to make to ongoing academic and policy debates?
- d. What is the overall structure of the thesis?

5. Literature review

This section situates the topic within the general literature written in the thesis's domain. Students should demonstrate that (i) they possess advanced knowledge of the subject; (ii) they have knowledge and awareness of scholarly bodies of literature in related disciplines; and (iii) they are able to pose and adequately address a specific, substantial and feasible research question relating to the subject, from a perspective suitably grounded in the literature.

This section should typically address the following questions:

- a. How is the research question addressed by existing scholarly literature, and specifically by different disciplines in social sciences?
- b. How does the thesis's contribution relate to the existing literature?

6. Conceptual / theoretical framework

This section builds on the literature review to provide working definitions of the core concepts used in the formulation of the research topic, reflecting on what debates there might be surrounding the use and understanding of certain terminologies. It should refer to a set of theoretical debates, conceptual frameworks or hypotheses that will guide the empirical analysis.

7. Methodology

This section describes and justifies the methodological approach(es) chosen for data collection and analysis. It includes a brief discussion of the potential strengths and limitations of the methods. It presents and discusses the forms of primary and secondary data collected through the research process, and how they relate to broader issues of case selection, sampling and levels of analysis. Data sources, units of analysis, sampling, etc. should be carefully explained and documented in the text, footnotes or appendix. If relevant, the data generated through interviews, questionnaires, field research, etc. is also presented and discussed.

8. Analysis

This section constitutes the heart of the thesis: it develops a detailed analysis of the primary and secondary data collected during the research process, and embeds the findings in the existing literature. Key issues addressed include:

- a. What does the evidence suggest with regard to the specific research questions posed and hypotheses (if applicable)?
- b. What challenges (practical or conceptual) were encountered during the research process, and what bearing did they have on the analysis offered?
- c. How do the findings relate to the conceptual framework of the thesis, existing literature and on-going scholarly debates?

9. Conclusion

Based on the findings elaborated in the previous section, this part reflects on the overall contribution of the thesis, in terms of furthering academic debate, suggesting avenues for future research, and possible applications for policy and practice (if relevant).

10. Bibliography

This section includes all the primary and secondary sources generated and / or consulted for the thesis. The bibliography presentation should match the citation style adopted in the thesis (for more information, see the Library Libguides on citing sources).

11. Appendix (optional)

This section may include additional documents drawn on during the research process, such as lists of interviews or data.