

Registering your MA Thesis: HowTo

1) Where do I go to do this?

Registration happens with Frau Cheng at the examinations office. You don't have to go in person, but it makes things easier in case something is missing. Make sure you go during the office hours!

2) Is there a time period during which I have to register?

No. You can register at any time you wish, whether it is during the semester or in the term break.

3) Is there a registration form?

Yes. The Prüfungsbüro (examinations office) provides a form on their website which you should use, as it guarantees that you will have all the relevant data included. You can download it here (the link is in the top right corner):

http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/administration/fachbereichsverwaltung/pruefungen/monika_cheng/index.html

You don't have to worry about the "Schwerpunktsetzung" - that is only for the MA Sprachen Europas, so you can skip that point.

Your Thema (topic) can be a working title or a description of what you are planning to do. You are allowed to write a longer text, but it is not necessary. If you opt for a working title, it is not set in stone. You can still change it in the final version of your thesis. Your diploma will show the topic of your thesis, not the title, so if the two are not identical, you should make a note of **both** on your thesis when you hand it in!

Make sure both your supervisors sign the form. If one of your supervisors is not a professor, and thus not "prüfungsberechtigt", i.e. generally not allowed to be your supervisor, you will have to write a request (Antrag auf Prüfungsberechtigung) for an exception. In it, you will have to explain that no other suitable person could be found for the job, and give sound reasons why this teacher should be your supervisor. You also need the current head of the English department to sign the request for you. One of your supervisors **must** be a professor!

4) Do I have to be done with all of my modules?

No. In order to be allowed to register your thesis, you must have completed at least two core modules and one language module, so you should print out a transcript from Campus Management and bring it with you when you go to the examinations office.

5) How do I find my supervisors?

Any professor at the department is eligible to be your supervisor. Any lecturer who is not a professor will need a special permit (see 2). Ideally, your supervisor should be a professor whose interests would include the field you want to work in. Your second examiner will usually not be as closely involved in your writing process. Sometimes the first supervisor will suggest someone, but it is ultimately your choice.

6) How much time do I have to write my thesis?

After you have registered, the examination board (Prüfungsausschuss) will confirm your topic and you will receive a letter which gives you your deadline, among other things. You have 23 weeks to complete your thesis and hand it in. The letter might take two to three weeks to arrive, so don't worry if you don't hear anything for a couple of days.

By the way: unfortunately, all of the official forms come only in German. If you feel that you would like some help filling them in, your student counsellors are happy to assist you.

7) What about formatting, binding, etc.?

The letter you get from the examinations office will tell you how many copies you have to submit and in which kind of binding this should happen. All formal matters that aren't addressed in the letter should be negotiated between you and your supervisor.

The last page of your thesis should be the "Selbstständigkeitserklärung", which should look like this:

"Selbstständigkeitserklärung:

Ich erkläre hiermit, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit ohne fremde Hilfe selbständig verfasst und keine anderen als die im Quellenverzeichnis angegebenen Hilfsmittel verwendet habe."

Don't forget to sign this!

You also need to include your thesis as a .pdf on a disc in a paper envelope, which should be attached to the last page.

8) Do I have to be enrolled in order to register/hand in my thesis?

No. You only need to be enrolled if you are still taking classes. When you exmatriculate yourself, your teachers can still put grades into Campus Management, and you can register and complete your thesis just as if you were still enrolled.

Attention: You yourself will not be able to access Campus Management any more once you are no longer enrolled, so make sure you know what is in there. The examinations office can still print you a transcript, but it's good not to be dependent on that.

When you register, you need to provide proof that you were enrolled at the FU in the previous semesters, so bring your two latest Immatrikulationsbescheinigungen.

9) Do I have to defend my thesis? Do I need to take a research colloquium module?

This depends on which set of study regulations is yours. If you have started earlier than 2013, you are studying under the old regulations, and you have to do both the colloquium and a defense/viva. Otherwise, you need not do either.

It is allowed (and endorsed by the department staff) to transfer to the new regulations. You can request this at the examinations office. There is no official form for this: just write a letter which includes your name, address, student ID number, email address, name of your degree programme, and state the set of regulations you are currently in as well as the one you wish to transfer to.

10) What happens once I've handed in?

Once you are done with absolutely everything and are only waiting for your thesis to be assessed, you can and should hand in your "Antrag auf Studienabschluss" to the examinations office. The form for it can be obtained during office hours or via email. With this form, you are letting the uni know that you would like to complete your studies and be given your diploma.

Once the diploma is signed and ready, you will be notified.

Attention: If you want an English version of your diploma and your final record, you need to request this with a signed letter (not email!). If you are leaving Berlin, you should give someone written authority to collect your diploma for you. If you want the documents to be sent to you instead, you should provide the examinations office with a B4 envelope that has your address on it (it need not be stamped).

11) I'm Still Confused.

That's all right. We all are sometimes.

If you have questions concerning formalities, registration, deadlines, etc., you probably want to direct them to the Prüfungsbüro.

http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/administration/fachbereichsverwaltung/pruefungen/monika_chen_g/index.html

If it's about your topic, how many books you should read/quote, what kind of theoretical background you should take into account, etc., you should talk to your supervisor.

If you aren't sure which category your question falls into, or you just want to talk to someone who will tell you that it's fine, you are a very smart person and a brilliant academic, and you are absolutely going to survive this, please feel free to contact your student counsellor:

http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/en/we06/institut/service_fuer_studierende/beratung_fuer_studierende/studentische_studienberatung/index.html

Take breaks. Don't panic.

All the best!