

# Additional Guidelines for Thesis Supervision

Etienne Wijler

Academic Year: 2023-2024

This document contains additional details on the thesis supervision process, and serves as a complement to the general guidelines that you can download [here](#). Given the large number of students writing their master thesis, a structured approach towards the supervision process is of the utmost importance to increase its efficiency and, consequently, the quality of supervision itself.

From the commencement of your thesis, which would be the first of March/September for the spring/fall cycle, you are personally responsible for developing your thesis into a valuable academic and societal contribution. As your supervisor, I am there to support you in this task, all the way from the development of a prospective topic to the polishing of the final draft. Note, however, that the writing of a master thesis serves to demonstrate your ability to conduct high-quality *independent* research. Hence, while you should never be afraid to ask questions when you are stuck with your research, you will be expected to have addressed the problem from different angles prior to reaching out. The feedback that you will receive from me comes from two sources: (1) supervisor meetings and (2) a final draft review.

## Supervisor Meetings

All students under my supervision, have the opportunity to schedule a 30 minute online meeting each Tuesday anywhere between **14:00-17:00**. For the first introductory meeting, I would like you to send me your preferred theme to work on and some suggestions for specific topics in this direction (if you have any). For all subsequent meetings, I expect you to send me a short bullet-style overview that contains both the **progress** since our previous meeting and the **questions** that you would like to discuss in the upcoming meeting at least 24 hours in advance. This allows me to prepare for the meeting as well, such that we can make the most out of our half hour. Note that these supervisor meetings are always optional. Some students may feel the need to meet each week, whereas others prefer to work more independently and only seek guidance at the beginning and the end. The optimal frequency typically lies somewhere in between these two cases, but varies on an individual basis. In the end, you are responsible for ensuring that you obtain sufficient guidance.

To schedule a meeting, you can invite me for a new event via your VU webmail account. If you are using the Outlook interface of the webmail, you can do this by clicking on the calendar on the left, then “new event” and then insert my e-mail [e.j.j.wijler@vu.nl](mailto:e.j.j.wijler@vu.nl) at the attendees section. Name the event “Thesis Supervision (Insert First and Last Name)” and make sure that you choose a half hour slot for which the calendar indicates that I am available. After I have read and approved your invitation, you will receive a confirmation and the meeting will appear definitively in your online calendar. In the event that no time slots are available, please send me an e-mail to find a possible timeslot on a different day. The meetings will always take place via Teams through the following link: [Teams Meeting](#)

## **Final Draft Review**

Towards the end of your thesis, you have the opportunity to obtain feedback on the final draft of your thesis. You can request this feedback by simply sending me your final draft as a pdf file that is named “Final Draft (Insert First and Last Name)” by e-mail. It will then take me at most two weeks to read your final draft in detail. An annotated version of your draft will then be returned to you, in which I highlight errors, provide suggestions for improvement and an informal assessment of the quality of the work thus far. Since, as previously mentioned, the master thesis is largely an independent work, I will only highlight errors and not correct them for you. When the error seems particularly difficult to solve, e.g. a technical error in the proof of a result for which no immediately available resolution exists, I will provide suggestions on literature that may contain the answers you need. Once you managed to successfully process the feedback, you can send me the final thesis version and ask for approval to defend and to submit the thesis on Canvas for the plagiarism check.

I look forward to working with you towards a successful completion of your thesis. Good luck!