

# **Rural Development & Natural Resources Management Master's Programme, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala Sweden**

**Course leader:** Harry Fischer: [harry.fischer@slu.se](mailto:harry.fischer@slu.se)

**Vice-course leader:** Örjan Bartholdson [Orjan.Bartholdson@slu.se](mailto:Orjan.Bartholdson@slu.se)

## **Thesis Guidelines for Students**

The master thesis is a 30 credit point's module, equaling 20 weeks of full time work, where the student demonstrates that s/he can carry out an integrated task, solve it in a set time period and adequately report the results both at a seminar and as a written report. It is mandatory for the student to have regular contacts with the supervisor so that the supervisor is able to follow the student's work process to secure the progress and the quality of the work. In the text below you will find instructions for what should be the general scope and structure of the thesis as well as guidance for proceeding.

## **Thesis Topic and Research Design**

The student shall, together with the supervisor, design a research problem and research questions that are focused on a *specific* problem. The thesis should ideally reflect an inter-disciplinary awareness by placing the research within the framework of several scientific fields, but have a social science perspective, and a focus on rural development and/or natural resource management. It is important that the thesis reflects that the student has studied the RDNRM program and gained the knowledge and skills (including adequate theoretical and methodological approaches) taught within the program. Furthermore, the thesis should engage with issues related to long-term sustainability and show insights into theoretical and practical issues that have an impact on rural development and/or natural resource management.

Please take the time to discuss these issues with your supervisor and other scholars working within your subject area. Before embarking on the execution of your thesis, it is essential to develop a clear research design with your supervisor in order facilitate a timely completion of your studies.

## **Supervision**

An RDNRM student must conduct the thesis against a strict time deadline. Therefore, we urge the students to take responsibility for their own work progress and also to live up to the demands of their supervision accordingly. Please meet with your supervisor to jointly set up a work plan until April, which includes delivery dates for drafts at regular intervals.

**Please refer to the deadlines in the timetable for the course. It is very important that you follow these suggested dates to stay on track for the final defense.** If you are unable to follow them for any reason, please contact your supervisor and the course leader to devise a plan that can ensure timely completion.

The student must have an advanced draft of the thesis to participate in the spring defense. The supervisor will make a recommendation on whether the student's thesis is at a level where it is likely to pass the examination. If it is not likely to pass, the student may be encouraged to keep working on the thesis and defend it at a later date.

From the final thesis submission deadline, until the defense, the student has two weeks to prepare a presentation.

## **Final draft of the thesis**

**The final draft of the thesis that the student must deliver no later than Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 16.00** consists of:

1. **A thesis report of *maximum 50 pages of text*.** Figures, references, and appendices do not have to be included within the 50 pages. Font must be Helvetica or Times Roman, font size 12 pt. The space between the lines should amount to line space 1, 5 p.  
  
Margins: 2 cm on each side and 3 cm on top and 2.5 at the bottom. **An overshoot of the 50 pages of text will not be accepted.**
2. **The reference material in a form that is easily accessible to the examiner and opponent.**
  - a. for any book referred to, which is **not** available through SLU Libraries or Libris: a copy of the title page(s) with all the bibliographic information;
  - b. for any article referred to which is not easily accessible on the internet or available through [eresurser@bibul.slu.se](mailto:eresurser@bibul.slu.se): a copy of the article.

The thesis work will culminate in

3. **The thesis defense during 60 minutes** with the

- a. Defense of the thesis with two opponents; one of your fellow students and one opponent selected by the Department who is normally a researcher/university teacher, but she/he could also be someone from the outside or a PhD-candidate. The opponents and the student are expected to have a dialogue during 30-40 minutes. During the last 10 minutes there will be a general discussion with the audience.

Followed by:

- b. Preliminary grading. The student might get a conditional pass, which means that the student will have to make revisions before getting a pass mark.

For a passing grade the student must (a) have pass marks on the individual thesis; (b) make an acceptable oral presentation of the thesis; (c) perform an acceptable defense of the thesis; (d) have made it possible for the supervisor to follow the progress of the thesis.

### **Submission**

After the defense, the student will have the opportunity to make final revisions to the thesis based on the examiner's input. Your examiner must approve the final version before submission. It is therefore important to coordinate with your examiner to ensure timely approval of your final thesis.

For the final thesis formatting, please follow the most recent SLU template.

All submitted thesis will be published electronically and be available on the website of the University, labeled Epsilon. Visit Epsilon to get some idea of what a SOL published thesis should look like.

**Note that any student that has not passed the pre-requisite courses and/or not following these procedures will not pass the program.**

### **Thesis Day**

Please also consider participating in SLU's thesis day to display your work. Participation is voluntary! See more details here:

<https://student.slu.se/en/studies/degree-projects/thesis-day/>

*Good luck*

# EX 0889 Master thesis in Rural Development and Natural Resource Management

17<sup>th</sup> January – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022

## SCHEDULE AND DEADLINES

Course Leaders:

Harry Fischer: [harry.fischer@slu.se](mailto:harry.fischer@slu.se)

Örjan Bartholdson: [Orjan.Bartholdson@slu.se](mailto:Orjan.Bartholdson@slu.se)

In advance of the course start date, it is to your advantage to work with your supervisor to define a clear, actionable project for your thesis. That way, you can ‘hit the ground running’ when the course begins.

Below is a schedule for writing during the course period. It is very important to keep this schedule as best as you can to ensure that you make timely progress toward the completion of your thesis. If you are unable to meet these deadlines for any reason, please contact your supervisor and course leader to make a plan for how you can stay on track.

### Week 3

Monday 17<sup>st</sup> January 2022: Officially the course begins

(But we hope you have already started on the research for your thesis!)

### Week 4

Friday, January 28, 2022: 16:00

*Submission deadline:* Research problem, methodology and synopsis (summary of the main points to developed in the thesis). To be submitted to course leaders (on canvas) and supervisor.

### Week 6

Friday, 11 February 2022, 16:00

*Submission deadline:* Background. To be submitted to course leaders (on canvas) and supervisor.

## **Week 9**

Friday 4 March 2022, 16:00

*Submission deadline:* Key points of the empirical material / outline. To be submitted to course leaders (on canvas) and supervisor.

## **Week 13**

Friday 1 April 2022, 16:00

*Submission deadline:* Full preliminary draft of empirical material. To be submitted to course leaders (on canvas) and supervisor.

NOTE: This should be viewed as a work in progress, and not the final draft of the empirics. Try to get as much on paper as you can to get feedback from your supervisor and peers, in order to be on track to finalize the thesis by the submission date.

During this phase of writing, please get regular feedback from your supervisor and peers.

## **Week 14**

*Midterm presentations:* Every student will have the opportunity to present their empirical findings and preliminary contributions of the thesis!

TBA, tentatively:

Monday 4 April 2022, 13:00 - 17:00

Tuesday 5 April 2022, 13:00 - 17:00

## **Week 18**

Friday 06<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 16:00

*Submission deadline:* Full draft of the thesis. To be submitted to supervisors (on canvas) and course leaders.

Note: please coordinate with your supervisor beforehand to ensure that you get timely feedback on your thesis for a final round of revisions before final submission.

## **Week 20**

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 16:00

*Submission deadline:* Final draft. To be submitted to supervisor and course leaders.

**Week 22**

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2022: 09:00 - 16:00

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020, 09:00 - 16:00

*Defence of master theses*

\*We will add one more day for defences if we need to.