

## **SUPERVISION OF MASTERS THESES - 2024**

This document is intended to describe the guidance that I can offer, and how I generally approach my task as a supervisor. All supervisors and students are unique and it is therefore important that you understand my view of the supervision process and that we agree on what we might expect from each other before deciding to work together.

### **My philosophy**

My starting point as a supervisor is the belief that you hold primary responsibility for driving the thesis project and that the final product is yours, not mine. In addition to generating new content-specific knowledge on your thesis topic, I expect that you will take an active role in developing transferrable skills in relation to:

- Critical analysis of a complex topic
- Effective academic writing
- Working independently and in groups to prepare and execute a project within a set timeframe

I view my role as supportive, with the primary aim of helping you to develop the above skills. I can make suggestions about how you may enhance the quality, content, and form of your work, but my starting point is that you are ultimately responsible for the process and the final product. I also believe that your fellow students can be a great resource and that you can learn a lot from each other. To the extent that it is meaningful, some of your supervision time might therefore take place in groups together with other thesis students working on their projects at the same time.

### **What I can supervise**

My specific expertise lies in the fields of criminology and the social psychology of crime and punishment. Unless your thesis topic falls within my area of knowledge, my ability to provide field-specific guidance will be limited; however, I can provide more general process-supervision for all topics. Responsibility for choosing a research focus is in your hands - I will not give you a topic. My role is to help you refine and limit your own area of interest, to ensure that you can realistically complete your thesis within the time frame and word-limits allowed. I will help you to consider which theories, literature, and methods might be best suited to examining your topic of interest, but assume that you will become the "expert" in your specific field based on your reading of the literature, collection of empirical data, etc. With respect to process-supervision, you can expect guidance in relation to problem formulation, argument construction, and thesis structure. I supervise both literature-based and empirical theses. In the latter case, I will offer methodological guidance, but am generally unable to provide you with secondary data for analysis and will not do any concrete analyses of your empirical materials. If you choose to write your thesis in English, I will also provide some feedback in relation to writing style and language. If you are writing in a Nordic language, I expect that you will seek evt. guidance on your writing style from native-speakers of those languages. I try to tailor my supervision to the individual student's project. This means that we may focus on structure, theoretical content, methods or writing process to a greater or lesser extent based on an assessment of your specific needs. As part of the process, I will encourage you to reflect on where your strengths and weaknesses lie.

### **How I structure the process**

The supervision time you are entitled to includes my preparation time, e-mails, and actual supervision meetings. Typically, you can expect 6-7 meetings of 1 hours' duration, which can be held online or in person. Before our first meeting, I expect that you:

- have familiarized yourself with the formal requirements of your thesis as outlined on the psychology department homepage. This applies to ensuring that you know about the forms that

need to be submitted, word limits, submission procedures, etc. I also expect you to have familiarized yourself with the criteria for evaluation of the thesis.

- do some initial brainstorming regarding topics you might like to write about. Although it is natural that the details of your problem formulation may change during the project, I will ask you to reflect on several key questions before our first meeting, by completing a form I will send to you in advance.

Our first meeting usually takes place at the end of the semester just before you start and will focus on discussing the special process and any preliminary ideas you have regarding a topic. The expected outcomes of our first meeting will be:

- An agreement regarding mutual expectations for supervision and how we will proceed with the process, including a pre-set supervision schedule.
- A plan and timeline for refining your topic choice and submission of your initial problem formulation.
- A short supervision summary sent to me by email within 1 week of our meeting, outlining the main topics we discussed at the meeting and goals to meet for the next meeting. You will be responsible for writing similar summaries after each of our subsequent meetings. These summaries will provide a roadmap of our progress and will ensure that we are on the same page after each supervision.

For all other meetings, I am willing to read a maximum of 7 pages sent to me ahead of time as agreed in our supervision schedule. Whenever you send me text to read, you should also tell me what you would like me to comment on specifically (e.g., theoretical interpretation, flow of writing, quality of arguments, etc). Some students also find it useful to send a short list of questions that they would like to discuss. Sending me materials/discussion questions in advance of our meetings will enhance what you get out of our sessions, as I will have had an opportunity to prepare. As noted above, after each supervision, I expect you to send me a short summary by email.

Finalizing the written thesis product is a central part of the independent work expected at the graduate-level. As such, I will *not* read a last draft of your whole thesis before you submit it. However, I will do my best to guide you throughout the writing process by commenting on several sections of your thesis along the way. As a general rule, I avoid reading the same material twice, unless a particular need arises.

### **Examination**

Once you have submitted your thesis, my role as supervisor is changed to that of evaluator. Your evaluation will be based on the final thesis product only. You should therefore feel confident in submitting rough drafts during the supervision process without worrying that the content or form of those drafts will negatively impact your final grade. At your request, I will be happy to provide some feedback on your grade based on my discussions with the external censor.

### **Contacting Me**

The easiest way to contact me is by email at [vanmastrigt@psy.au.dk](mailto:vanmastrigt@psy.au.dk). If you need to cancel a supervision, please let me know ASAP and be aware that it might not be possible to reschedule. I generally try to respond to emails within 24 hours, but not on weekends/holidays.

If you have questions regarding the information outlined above, you are more than welcome to get in touch.