

## **Thesis Study Guide QVE Group**

### **Starting**

In the first week of the thesis research the student reports the start of the research to the secretariat and an appointment will be made to go through a checklist for registration. In this checklist information about all aspects students have to deal with during a thesis are given, such as a pass for the experimental facilities, laboratory rules, access to the printer, thesis agreement etc.

### **Research proposal & thesis agreement**

After 2-3 weeks: hand in (by e-mail) concept proposal and thesis agreement with your supervisor and make an appointment to discuss these. Proposal should consist of maximum 2 pages A4 (margins 2 cm, font 11 pt, line spacing single or 1.5 lines), including affiliations with your name, reg.nr., course code, introduction (based on scientific literature ending with your specific objective of the study), M&M as far as possible, time table with both number of weeks necessary per part and expected dates for sub-products, planned holidays, other exams and courses. N.B. each ECTS has a workload of 28 working hours. This implies about 26 weeks for a thesis of 36 ECTS. This period does not include other courses and exams, holidays or other free days (e.g. Christmas, Easter etc.). In case you follow other courses or have planned vacation add these to your planning.

In general, concept (parts of) manuscripts will be commented within 3 weeks after delivery. Be aware that in summer (July and August) supervisors are on holidays. If you plan to graduate in September, this implies that before July a complete manuscript already needs to be discussed with your supervisor and a final version needs to be approved at least by Mid-August. This needs to be mentioned in your thesis agreement.

The proposal should contain the following elements:

- Title.
- **Background and significance**: presentation of the problem. Provide a literature review that sketches current knowledge of the topic. Evaluate knowledge gaps, which your project could fill. State concisely the importance of the research describes in the protocol.
- **Specific aims and scope**: main and secondary objectives. Which hypothesis or research questions is/are to be tested in this research.
- Research design and methods: describe carefully the research design in relation to the following points:
  - Relate the design to your hypothesis
  - An appropriate statement should be included, describing which variables are measured, and how and where they are to be analyzed (strategy for statistical analysis, tests and presentations, software and person(s) in charge).
- All activities, including dates for presentations and handing in the final thesis report are stated in a detailed time schedule.
- Reference list: *on a third page*.

### **Colloquia**

Every first Tuesday of each month colloquia are held in which students present their QVE thesis. Note that in July and August other dates are scheduled due to holidays. QVE MSc thesis students have to attend several QVE colloquia according to the following rule: 6x for 24-27 ECTS: 8x for 30-33 ECTS, 10x for 36-39 ECTS. See for more detailed regulations the document on QVE colloquia.

### **Report**

The thesis manuscript is written in English. Often this is in the format of a scientific paper according to the author guidelines of a relevant journal. You discuss this with your supervisor and include this in the thesis agreement form.

Manuscripts should, in general, be organized in the following order:

- *Cover*. Title (should be clear, descriptive and short), name student, date, Quantitative Veterinary Epidemiology Group and Wageningen University. For the layout there are no rules.
- *Title page*. Name of the author, registration number, course name and code, and number of ECTS, name of supervisor(s), date, Quantitative Veterinary Epidemiology Group, Wageningen University.
- *Abstract/summary* (should be clear, descriptive and is about 5% of the length of the thesis; or the number of words given in the author guidelines of the chosen journal (this abstract is not your colloquium summary).
- *Introduction* of the research incl. literature, research problem and aim of the study (max. 2 pages).
- *Literature (if necessary, discuss with your supervisor)*: A literature review considering the scientific background of the thesis subject.
- *Materials and methods* should contain a detailed description of the materials studies, area description, research methodology, techniques and way of (data) processing.
- *Results* reporting and interpretation gained from the research.
- *Discussion & Conclusions* a scientific and critical evaluation of the results of the research, evaluating the objectives from the introduction, ending with conclusions.
- *References* according to the guidelines of the chosen journal. Otherwise, an alphabetical range on cited references. The whole report must be carefully checked to ensure that the spelling of author names and year of publication are correct and similar in the text and reference list.
- *Appendices*.

#### **N.B. Plagiarism is totally forbidden!!!**

After approval of the thesis by the supervisor, a copy of the final version is sent to the secretary, supervisor and examiner by e-mail. The final version will be archived at the secretary. The secretary makes one copy for the student if requested. Otherwise, paper copies will not be made.

#### **Final examination**

The final examination is a discussion about the content of the thesis, in which knowledge, understanding, insight, but also creativity and scientific attitude are evaluated. The final examination will be held by Prof. dr. M.C.M. de Jong or his representative and the supervisor(s) of the student. The final version of the thesis needs to be approved by your supervisor(s). Your final thesis needs to be submitted to the secretary, supervisor(s) and Prof. dr. M.C.M. de Jong at least 2 weeks prior the planned examination date, otherwise the examination date will be rescheduled (beware that professors have a very full time table).

The final mark of the thesis will be based on several criteria including:

- 1) Research competence – 45%
- 2) Thesis report – 40%
- 3) Colloquium – 5%
- 4) Examination – 10%

Further questions can be addressed to the QVE education contact persons Klaas Frankena ([klaas.frankena@wur.nl](mailto:klaas.frankena@wur.nl)) or Lisette Graat ([lisette.graat@wur.nl](mailto:lisette.graat@wur.nl))

More information: <http://www.wageningenur.nl/qve>