



## Thesis Assessment Form

Please complete this assessment form within four weeks and send it to the chair of the assessment committee.

### Personal information assessor

Title / Full name:

Affiliation(s):

Date of assessment:

Please only include your personal information on this page, so that the assessment form can be anonymised easily.

An extensive guideline for the use of this form, and an explanation of the procedure is given in the annex. The main points of the procedure are:

- It is **not allowed for members to discuss** the assessment of the thesis among each other, or to have any communication regarding the thesis. It is only allowed to communicate about the assessment with the chair of the assessment committee.
- Each member of the assessment committee fills out this form and sends it back within **four weeks** after receiving the thesis to the chair of the assessment committee.
- Each member **approves or disapproves** of the thesis. This is equivalent to the formulation whether the candidate is **admissible** to the defence of the thesis.
- **Approval** can be either *unconditional* or *conditional*. In case of **conditional approval**, the doctoral candidate has to make minor adaptations to the thesis under the guidance of the supervisor. After these adaptations are made, the thesis will **not** be assessed again by the assessment committee.
- The **committee approves the thesis** when at most one member disapproves the thesis.
- The chair of the assessment committee informs the supervisor of the final assessment of the committee (approval or disapproval). On that occasion, the **anonymized** assessment forms of all members of the committee will be shared with the supervisor, who is entitled to share the anonymized forms with the doctoral candidate. The non anonymized forms will only be shared with the UM PhD Office.
- The **Chair of the committee informs** the Board of Deans of the outcome of the assessment.
- The **supervisor informs** the doctoral candidate of the outcome of the assessment.
- In **case of disapproval of the thesis** by the assessment committee, the chair contacts the supervisor(s) to discuss the follow-up. The candidate is entitled to resubmit the thesis within six months after the decision was taken. The same assessment committee will assess the improved version of the thesis.
- Any member of the committee who considers the thesis eligible for **the designation cum laude (with distinction)** should contact the chair, who will ask all members for their judgment (via a separate assessment form). Please note that the distinction *Cum Laude* is only given to theses of exceptional quality. As an indication, a *Cum Laude* is applicable to the top 5% of all theses.

The full 'Regulations for obtaining the doctoral degree' of Maastricht University can be downloaded on <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/support/phds>

## Assessment of the thesis

### *Thesis information*

Name of the doctoral candidate:

Title of the thesis:

### *Conclusion (tick the box of your judgement)*

I **unconditionally approve** of the doctoral thesis and consider the doctoral candidate can be admitted to defend the thesis.

I **conditionally approve** of the doctoral thesis. The doctoral candidate can be admitted to defend the thesis upon adaptation of the **minor improvements** as indicated in the motivation.

I **disapprove** of the doctoral thesis and I do not consider the doctoral candidate can be admitted to defend the thesis.

### *Motivation*

Please give a short motivation (approximately 300 words) explaining your decision whether or not the doctoral candidate can be admitted to defend the thesis, considering the thesis guidelines and requirements of Maastricht University. Here you can also include minor points of improvements that the candidate has to address, but that will not be assessed by the assessment committee anymore. The supervisor should see to the improvements.

The anonymized assessment form will be sent to the doctoral candidate's supervisor(s) by the chair of the assessment committee.

## Annex: Assessment Guidelines

### *Thesis guidelines*

The thesis comprises either an academic treatise on a specific subject, or a number of separate academic papers which demonstrate sufficient coherence. According to the 'Regulations for obtaining the doctoral degree' of Maastricht University, the thesis that is assessed by the assessment committee comprises:

- a) an introduction, indicating the position of the research compared with other related research in a national or international context;
- b) the academic treatise on a specific subject, or a number of separate academic papers which demonstrate sufficient coherence;
- c) a general discussion, which includes a reasoned representation of the doctoral candidate's point of view in relation to the main topic, or the most important topics of the thesis;
- d) a summary of the thesis;
- e) a reflection, in layman's terms, on the scientific impact of the research, as well as, if applicable, the social impact anticipated or already achieved (i.e. impact-paragraph).

### *Assessment criteria*

According to the 'Regulations for obtaining the doctoral degree' of Maastricht University, the assessment committee shall give the chair a reasoned opinion about whether the thesis provides sufficient evidence of the candidate being competent to carry out independent academic work. Only in that case the thesis can be accepted as a doctoral thesis and the candidate can be admitted to the degree ceremony.

According to the 'Regulations for obtaining the doctoral degree' of Maastricht University, the assessment of the thesis is based on the following criteria:

- a) the contribution to academic knowledge and the impact of the research;
- b) the importance of a clear formulation of the problem;
- c) the originality of the approach;
- d) the scientific level of the arrangement, analysis and processing of the material;
- e) the purity of the methodology followed when analysing the material;
- f) the derivation of new insights and new views from the analysis of the material;
- g) a critical confrontation of the doctoral candidate's conclusions with existing theories or views;
- h) a creative approach of the scientific area covered in the thesis;
- i) balance in the structure of the thesis and clarity of style; and
- j) restraint on text size.

If applicable, the chair will inform the members of the assessment committee about Faculty or School specific norms.

### **What is expected from the assessment committee?**

Each member of the assessment committee receives an assessment form from the chair of the assessment committee. The members of the assessment committee (including the chair) are requested to use this form to assess the thesis within four weeks of receipt of the thesis. The completed assessment form must be returned to the chair.

Members of the assessment committee are not allowed to have contact with each other regarding the assessment. The communication regarding the assessment between the chair and the members of the assessment committee shall take place on an individual basis.

The decision to allow the doctoral candidate to defend the thesis is taken if a majority of the assessment committee, with no more than one vote against, approves the thesis.

The chair shall send the approval of the assessment committee and the anonymized assessment forms to the supervisor. The (first) supervisor subsequently informs the Board of Deans and the doctoral candidate of the decision of the Assessment committee. The supervisor(s) are entitled to share the anonymised assessment forms with the doctoral candidate.

If the assessment committee decides to refuse admission to defend the thesis, the chair shall consult with the supervisor(s) and ask that the thesis be improved. The composition of the assessment committee for assessing the revised version of the thesis must be the same as for the original assessment.

#### ***Criteria for the distinction Cum Laude***

A thesis may be awarded the designation *Cum Laude* if it belongs to the top 5% of theses defended at Maastricht University per year.

- The procedure to reward a thesis the distinction *Cum Laude* includes the following steps:
- Any member of the assessment committee (including the chair) may **propose** that the thesis is eligible for a *Cum Laude* to the chair of this committee.
- The chair **consults** all members of the committee about their judgement. To that end, all members of the assessment committee receive a separate *Cum Laude* assessment form.
- When the members **unanimously** judge that the thesis should be **eligible** for the distinction, the chair informs the principal supervisor accordingly.
- The **supervisors** make their own assessment about the eligibility. If they agree, the chair of the assessment committee informs the *Rector Magnificus* about this judgment.
- The *Rector Magnificus*, in consultation with the Dean invites **two independent assessors** to examine the quality of the thesis, regarding the distinction.
- When both assessors agree with the judgment, the proposal is **passed on** to the defence committee to decide on the distinction.
- The **defence committee makes the final assessment**, in which the quality of the defence is taken into account as well. The distinction is rewarded, only when the defence committee unanimously vote for the distinction. This vote is anonymous.