SPOT Master's Thesis

Topic Selection and Registration

(For regulations, see "Module 10: Master's Thesis" and Sections 10 and 11 of the Study and Examination Regulations)

Students are required to select a Master's thesis topic and a first supervisor, subject to approval by the SPOT Governing Board. The thesis must be formally registered at the partner university where the first supervisor is affiliated. Any subsequent changes to the thesis topic and/or supervisory arrangement require prior approval by the Governing Board.

Supervision and Evaluation

The Master's thesis is supervised and evaluated by two academic supervisors:

- The first supervisor must hold a doctoral degree (PhD or equivalent) and be appointed as academic staff or adjunct professor at a partner university.
- The second supervisor must likewise hold a doctoral degree and be affiliated with another partner university.
- Both supervisors act as official evaluators of the thesis.

In addition, an external reviewer—who may be affiliated with the SPOT network but is not employed by a partner university—provides an independent third evaluation.

Reviews and Grading

The thesis is assessed on the basis of three written evaluation reports (two supervisors and one external reviewer), each including an individual grade.

- The final thesis grade is calculated as the average of these three grades and accounts for 75% of the overall module grade.
- The oral defence accounts for the remaining 25%.
- Both the written thesis and the oral defence must be passed in order to qualify for the award of the SPOT degree.

Thesis Colloquium

During the third semester, students participate in a Master's thesis colloquium (15 ECTS credits). Within this framework, they present their proposed research projects and submit a complete thesis proposal by the end of the semester.

- The colloquium is assessed on a pass/fail basis.
- Presentations and written proposals are evaluated according to predefined academic criteria.

Written Thesis

The written thesis (15 ECTS credits) is completed during the fourth semester and must be submitted no later than 30 June of the respective graduation year.

Students may conduct their thesis

- at the partner university of their first supervisor;
- at a university in the Western Balkans where they complete their internship; or
- remotely.

In the case of remote work, students are required to complete at least two on-site research stays at the institution of their supervisor. The public thesis defence must take place on-site at IPU Berlin in September of the respective graduation year.

The thesis may be empirical or theoretical in nature; however, the inclusion of an empirical component is strongly encouraged. Please note that UniNiš, ISCTE, and Tallinn University accept only empirical theses. Theoretical theses may be supervised byIPU, UNIPD, UNIBL and UNSA.

Submission of group work is not permitted. Secondary data analysis is permissible.

Thesis Defence

A public oral defence is mandatory and normally takes place by 30 September of the respective graduation year.

- The defence lasts approximately 30 to 60 minutes.
- It is conducted before a committee comprising both supervisors (on site) and the external reviewer (who may participate online).

Ethics, Confidentiality, and Format

Ethical approval for the thesis research is not universally required but may be mandated at the discretion of the supervisor and subject to confirmation by the Governing Board.

No uniform regulations regarding confidentiality apply; however, the thesis must be submitted in electronic form. A similarity check using approved software is mandatory. Any use of AI tools must be fully disclosed in accordance with APA guidelines.

Passing Requirements

Both the written thesis and the oral defence must receive passing evaluations. Failure in either component results in an unsuccessful thesis and precludes the award of the degree.