

**NOTE:** These are the **current regulations for Austrian/US dual-accredited Master's degrees.** (Last updated: September 2023, with respect to thesis writing schedule)

The following document contains the regulations specific to the MA programs at the Department of Philosophy of Central European University, including applications of the university's student policies. Students should be familiar with the rest of the university's student policies as well.

For the exact dates of the deadlines specified below, please consult the department's academic calendar: <https://philosophy.ceu.edu/ac>.

## Where can you find information?

If you have questions about some aspect of the program, it's worth checking out this document and the relevant university regulations, which are available here:

<https://documents.ceu.edu/>

These include:

- [Student Rights, Rules, and Academic Regulations](#)
- [Thesis Writing and ETD Submission Guidelines](#)
- [CEU Code of Ethics](#)
- [Central European University's Policy on Plagiarism](#)
- [Departmental Self-Plagiarism Policy](#)

If you still have questions, the following people may be able to help:

<a href="#">Kriszta Biber</a>	Departmental Coordinator and MA Coordinator (for administrative questions)	<a href="mailto:biberk@ceu.edu">biberk@ceu.edu</a>
<a href="#">Maria Kronfeldner</a>	MA Director (for academic questions about the program)	<a href="mailto:KronfeldnerM@ceu.edu">KronfeldnerM@ceu.edu</a>
<a href="#">Katalin Farkas</a>	Head of Department (for general problems and requests for extensions)	<a href="mailto:farkask@ceu.edu">farkask@ceu.edu</a>
Borbála Faragó	Lecturer, Center for Academic Writing (for writing related issues)	<a href="mailto:faragob@ceu.edu">faragob@ceu.edu</a> Sign up here: <a href="https://ceu.mywconline.com">https://ceu.mywconline.com</a>
Andrea Kirchknopf	Senior Lecturer, Center for Academic Writing (for writing related issues)	<a href="mailto:kirchknopf@ceu.edu">kirchknopf@ceu.edu</a> Sign up here: <a href="https://ceu.mywconline.com">https://ceu.mywconline.com</a>

## Communication with the department

In general, information about the life of the department (including announcements of talks, events, curriculum, syllabi etc.) are to be found on the departmental website, at <http://philosophy.ceu.edu/>. We also have a "CEU Philosophy Department" Facebook page, which you can Like and Follow.

The department uses your CEU email address to send you important information about deadlines, requirements, events, as well as your personal progress. It is very important that you check your CEU email address regularly.

## General Policies

Students are expected to reside locally and regularly attend department events during term time, throughout the entire academic year.

Regular and punctual attendance of all classes is normally required. Students must request the written approval of the course instructor in advance, cc'ing the MA Coordinator, if they need to miss any class. If students need to be absent for several classes in a short period (up to a few days; more than a week) during the academic year, they must request and secure advance approval in writing from the MA Director, explaining the reason for absence and cc'ing the course instructor(s) concerned and the MA Coordinator. In case of absence for emergency reasons without advance approval, students should inform the relevant course instructor(s) of the reasons, cc'ing the MA Coordinator, as soon as possible. A doctor's note or other evidence of a justified reason for absence may be required. More than a week of unjustified absence may result in a failing grade and/or the loss of tuition waiver or financial aid.

Please contact the MA Director or the Head of Department with any policy questions that are not answered by this document. Grievances, appeals, or requests for exemptions from the policies stated here should be addressed to either the MA Director or the Head of Department in a timely manner.

Apart from the exceptions stated in the next sentence, courses taken to fulfill program requirements, including credit requirements, are taken for a grade. The exceptions are: Logic, Academic Writing, the MA Thesis Seminar, Thesis Supervisions and the Departmental Colloquium.

In exceptional cases, the usual limit of four elective credits per year from courses offered by other programs at CEU and not cross-listed with the Department of Philosophy (see the section "Elective Courses" under your program, below) may be waived with the advance written permission of the MA Director. This waiver,

known as an "Individual Study Plan" will only be granted when there are compelling academic reasons relating to the proposed thesis topic for taking a larger number of non-philosophy, non-cross-listed credits. The choice of thesis topic and supervisor, as well as the overall study plan, must in any case reflect the accreditation/registration requirements for the philosophy programs. Students who wish to request an Individual Study Plan should see the MA Director.

For most courses, assignments are to be submitted via the assignment link on the Moodle course web site at <https://ceulearning.ceu.edu/>. You are responsible for verifying that your assignment has been correctly uploaded. The Department uses Turnitin to check for plagiarism. The time of the submission, which determines the status of the essay with respect to penalties, is automatically recorded. Any extension to the deadlines or exemption from the penalties should be sought with the MA Director and not with the course instructor. Requests for extension should be submitted before the deadlines.

In handling cases of plagiarism, the Department follows the [university's policy on plagiarism](#).

Please consult the academic calendar for registration deadlines. Failure to register for courses in a timely manner may jeopardize your enrollment in the program. Registration for courses is done through the electronic system (SITS). Registration also provides access to course web sites on e-learning, through which instructional materials are typically distributed and assignments are typically submitted.

Zero Week takes place during the week preceding the official beginning of Fall Term. During Zero Week instructors present their courses for the academic year. The schedule is posted on the departmental notice-board and website. These occasions present students with the opportunity to ask questions about the courses and hear faculty elaborate on the objectives and requirements of their courses.

During Spring Term, there are usually no classes. Students are expected to write their theses (one-year MA students and two-year MA students in their second year), or prepare for the final exams of Theoretical and Practical Philosophy and History of Philosophy (two-year MA students in their first year).

## The Structure of the Program

### Two-year program

To graduate in the two-year MA program, students must successfully complete a total of **60 CEU credits** (equals 120 ECTS), of which they earn:

- 24 credits from required courses (all MA core courses, Logic, Academic Writing, Departmental Colloquium and MA Thesis Seminar)
- 28 credits from elective courses
- 8 credits for the thesis (12,000–15,000 words total (references excluded); minimum passing grade C+)

While the minimum passing grade for all courses is C+, students must achieve a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.66 (B-) in the graded courses taken for credit in order to graduate.

## **Core courses, required in the first year**

A significant part of the grade for the core courses is determined by performance in a series of final exams scheduled for the end of Spring Term of the first year. The exams are grouped under two main headings: “Theoretical and Practical Philosophy”, which includes Epistemology, Philosophy of Mind or Philosophy of Language, Metaphysics and Ethics; and “History of Philosophy”, which covers the three history courses: Ancient Philosophy, Early Modern Philosophy, and Continental Philosophy. These are in-class, written exams. Students will get the questions from their instructors, by the end of the winter term, and use the spring term to prepare for the exams. They will answer one randomly drawn question for each course. The answers are graded by the instructors of the relevant courses. (Students outside the two-year program taking these courses will have a separate exam organized, if needed).

## **Logic**

This course is offered on a pass/fail basis and is mandatory for all MA students.

## **Academic Writing**

The course is offered on a pass/fail basis by the Center for Academic Writing and is mandatory for all MA students. After the first three meetings, the academic writing instructor can recommend that a student be exempted from attending the course. The decision whether to grant the exemption will be made by the MA Director and Head of Department.

## **Departmental Colloquium series**

The series consists of papers delivered by invited speakers and faculty members followed by a Q&A. Attendance at these colloquia is a key component in meeting the program objective of developing increased familiarity with current debates in philosophy. All MA students enroll each Fall and Winter Term in the one-credit pass/fail course entitled "Departmental Colloquium". A pass grade is earned by students who attend at least 70% of the colloquia.

## **MA Thesis Supervisions**

Second year MA students enroll in the mandatory Second Year Thesis Supervisions I, II and III courses in the Fall, Winter and Spring Terms respectively, on a pass/fail basis. A pass grade is earned by students who meet with their supervisors regularly and make due progress on their thesis. Though mandatory, these courses are zero credit in the US program.

## **MA Thesis Seminar**

MA students enroll in the thesis seminar on a pass/fail basis in the Winter Term prior to their defense. Students give presentations of their work and attend the presentations of others.

## **Elective courses**

Students in the two-year program earn 28 credits from other courses of their choosing. These courses are taken for a grade. Of these, up to 4 credits per year may be chosen from courses offered by other programs at CEU or University Wide Courses that are not cross-listed (courses cross-listed with the Department of Philosophy do not count toward this quota). The rest are from Master's or Doctoral elective courses either offered by the Department of Philosophy, or cross-listed with it. (Doctoral elective courses are usually open to MA students as well, and students are advised to check them too.)

Elective courses can be distributed between terms according to students' preferences, as long as 10 credits of elective courses are taken in the first year, and the remainder of the 28 required credits of elective courses are taken in the second year.

# **One-year program**

To graduate in the one-year MA program, students must successfully complete **a total of 30 CEU credits** (equals 60 ECTS), of which they earn:

- 8 credits altogether from required courses (Logic, Academic Writing, Departmental Colloquium, and MA Thesis Seminar)
- 14 credits from elective courses
- 8 credits for the thesis (12,000–15,000 words total (references excluded); minimum passing grade C+)

While the minimum passing grade for all courses is C+, students must achieve a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.66 (B–) to graduate.

## **Logic**

This course is offered on a pass/fail basis and is mandatory for all MA students.

## **Academic Writing**

The course is offered on a pass/fail basis by the Center for Academic Writing and is mandatory for all MA students. After the first three meetings, the academic writing instructor can recommend that a student be exempted from attending the course. The decision whether to grant the exemption will be made by the MA Director and Head of Department.

## **Departmental Colloquium series**

The series consists of papers delivered by invited speakers and faculty members followed by a Q&A. Attendance at these colloquia is a key component in meeting the program objective of developing increased familiarity with current debates in philosophy. All MA students enroll each Fall and Winter term in the one-credit pass/fail course entitled “Departmental Colloquium”. A pass grade is earned by students who attend at least 70% of the colloquia.

## **MA Thesis Supervisions**

One year MA students enroll in the mandatory Thesis Supervisions I, II and III courses in the Fall, Winter and Spring Terms respectively, on a pass/fail basis. A pass grade is earned by students who meet with their supervisors regularly and make due progress on their thesis. Though mandatory, these courses are zero credit in the US program.

## **MA Thesis Seminar**

MA students enroll on a pass/fail basis in the thesis seminar in the Winter Term prior to their defense. Students give presentations of their work and attend the presentations of others.

## **Elective courses**

Students in the one-year program earn 14 credits from other courses of their choosing. These courses are taken for a grade. Up to 4 of these credits may be earned from courses offered by other programs at CEU or University Wide Courses (courses cross-listed with the Department of Philosophy do not count toward this limit). The rest are from Master's or Doctoral courses either offered by the Department of Philosophy, or cross-listed with it. (Doctoral elective courses are usually open to MA students as well, and students are advised to check them too.) Elective courses can be distributed between terms according to students' preferences.

## **Retake**

Students who fail to achieve the minimum pass grade during an examination or for course assignments are allowed one retake (both for mandatory and elective courses). The maximum grade allocated in a retake assessment is "RP" (2.33 grade points; equivalent to C+, minimal pass). For the details on retakes, see the respective sections in the document on "Student Rights, Rules, and Academic Regulations" (see link above).

## **Thesis**

### **MA Thesis Supervisor**

When choosing the topic for their MA thesis, students specify potential supervisors. The department will do its best to give students the supervisor of their choice. However, in the interest both of students and faculty, the department can limit the number of supervisees per faculty member.

Every faculty member at the department is eligible to be a supervisor. In exceptional cases, a CEU faculty member outside the Department of Philosophy can be appointed as supervisor.

Students have only one supervisor. Other faculty may respond to questions or offer some other help, but cannot be expected to read thesis drafts.

### **Regulatory Limit on Submission of MA Theses**

The Master's thesis must be submitted within a maximum of two years of finishing the coursework of a program, with the MA Director's prior agreement if this has not been done in due course.

## **MA Thesis Writing Process and Deadlines**

### **Thesis supervision course step I (fall):**

Early November (see the academic calendar for the exact date), students are required to submit a thesis title and abstract (400-600 words) and a ranked list of three potential supervisors. On the basis of these submissions the MA Director and Head of Department, in consultation with the faculty, will assign supervisors. The decision will be communicated to students by the end of November.

Students should consult supervisors in the fall term already about the initial steps regarding their thesis development.

### **Thesis supervision course step II (winter):**

Students should meet with their supervisors at least once a month during Winter Term, and at least once every two weeks during Spring Term.

Each of the following formal submissions including the final thesis submission will be collected via assignments through the Moodle (e-learning) page of the MA Thesis Seminar. Other pieces of thesis writing (e.g., draft chapters) can be emailed directly to your supervisor.

Students submit a 2500-word research proposal in January (see the academic calendar for the exact date). The proposal should identify and situate the topic and the research question within the broader field; show a plan of the investigation that the thesis will employ to answer the question; indicate and justify the methodology as appropriate; and preferably indicate the overall argument of the thesis. The proposals will be discussed in the MA Thesis Seminar. Failure to meet the deadline or to participate in the seminar will affect the participation grade in the MA Thesis Seminar. Supervisors and students have to meet and discuss the research proposal within 2-3 weeks (see the academic calendar for the exact date). Students are required to consult with a member of the Center for Academic Writing on their 2500-word research proposal.

In March (see the academic calendar for the exact date), students submit a partial draft of at least 4000 words through the Moodle page of the MA Thesis Seminar. This draft should demonstrate the feasibility of their work and, preferably, is to concentrate on the overall argument of the thesis (it could, e.g., take the form of an outline or a methodology of the thesis, or of an introductory chapter). Handing in brief introductory statements or literature reviews beforehand is welcome but cannot be accepted as a substitute for satisfying the above requirement. Each draft is evaluated by the supervisor as either "all right" or "problematic", and the result is communicated to the student. No one will be



disqualified from passing to the June defense phase at this point, neither will the evaluation of the first draft affect the final grade.

### **Thesis supervision course step III (spring):**

In the Spring term, students develop the partial draft into a full thesis.

Early May (see the academic calendar for the exact date), a full draft of the overall thesis is submitted through the Moodle site. The supervisor decides on its basis whether the student may pass to the June defense phase. If the supervisor recommends, seeing a member of the Center for Academic Writing is mandatory either for the partial or the full draft of the thesis, to ensure that standards of academic writing are followed.

Students who are not allowed to pass to the June defense phase can appeal, in writing, to the Head of Department and the MA Director. It is to be understood that a reverse judgement will be made only under exceptional circumstances. Students who are not allowed to pass to the June defense phase shall automatically lose the right to defend their MA thesis in June. Excluding exceptional personal circumstances that might justify a later deadline, they retain the right to submit and defend their MA thesis no later than 31 October of the same year. The deadline for submission of the thesis will be determined by the Head of the Department in consultation with the thesis supervisor. No MA thesis subject to mandatory deferral shall obtain a higher grade than 3.33 grade points (equals B+).

The deadline for submission of the final version of the MA thesis prior to the June defense is specified in the academic calendar. The thesis is considered submitted when the departmental coordinator receives two printed copies; one bound and printed both sides and one loose. If the bound copy is not ready by the deadline, it has to be submitted by the time of the defense at the latest. The thesis has also to be submitted electronically, both to the Moodle site of the MA Thesis Seminar and to CEU's Electronic Thesis Database using the [Electronic Thesis Submission Guidelines](#).

Students can request a deferral of the submission of their MA thesis if medical problems or other extraordinary personal circumstances prevent them from completing the thesis by the deadline. A written request must be submitted before the deadline to the Head of Department, clearly specifying the reasons for deferral. The Head of the Department may ask the student to provide appropriate medical or other evidence supporting the request. If satisfactory reasons are provided for the deferral, the Head of the Department can accept the request and will establish a new deadline for submission of the thesis in consultation with the supervisor. In these cases, the final grade will not be affected by the deferral.

## **Grading criteria for MA theses**

The thesis is assessed by the Supervisor and a Second Reader assigned by the Head of Department and MA Director (the second reader is normally another member of the Philosophy Department faculty). The Supervisor and Second Reader, are each asked to provide a one page written report on the thesis, to be sent to the MA Coordinator (at latest 24 hours before the oral defense). The report should conclude with a proposed grade for the thesis, taking into account the evaluation criteria. The proposed grade can be changed as a result of the oral defense. The MA Coordinator will share examiners' reports with other members of the exam committee before the defense, and with the candidate (without proposed grades) afterwards. The evaluation criteria are as follows:

- The thesis is formatted in a commonly recognized academic style with a coherent system of citations and bibliography.
- The thesis is logically organized.
- The language is fluent and free from mistakes.
- The student has formulated a well-defined research project and has situated it in a broader philosophical context.
- The mode of presentation and research methodology are appropriate to the subject matter.
- The student has made a judicious selection of primary and secondary literature for discussion and analysis.
- The student has a good understanding of the current debates and theories in the subject under investigation.
- The student has used specialized philosophical terminology clearly and accurately.
- The argumentation of the thesis is clear, thorough and rigorous.
- The student has clearly differentiated his or her ideas from the ideas of others.

## **MA defense**

The MA defense is the final examination. The supervisor and second reader form the student's examination committee, which is chaired by a third faculty member - normally the MA Director. At least one of the faculty members present is a senior faculty member. At the defense, students are asked to present a 10-minute summary of their thesis and then answer questions about the thesis and questions relating to the topic of the thesis posed by members of the committee for around half an hour.

This is followed by the committee conferring in private and deciding upon a grade for the thesis, taking into account both the written thesis and the student's

performance at the oral defense. The grade is announced after departmental approval.

Students failing the defense (combined grade of thesis and defense performance lower than grade point 2.33, equals C+) have the right to retake it once. The maximum grade allocated in a retake assessment is "RP" (2.33 grade points; equals C+).

In case of a fail grade, the student receives a transcript of studies but no MA diploma.