

## **Procedure for MA thesis defense**

This document specifies the procedure for a thesis defense within the MA program in Language and Linguistics at Lund University (HSVPV). The exact time length for each defense may differ (but should not be shorter than one hour), as well as the language in which it is to be carried out, but it applies to all specializations and both the Two Year and the One Year programs.

### **Prior to the defense**

1. The thesis defense is announced and the thesis itself is made public at least one week in advance.
2. The opponent makes well-structured notes (1-2 pages) giving an overview of the thesis as well as central points that (s)he plans to take up in a discussion with the respondent. The notes serve to structure the presentation as well as to provide a guide to the audience. The opponent should give attention to the following aspects of the thesis:
  - a. Content
    - Is the content understandable, correct and objectively presented?
    - Are the arguments well motivated?
    - Are the sources given?
    - Are the aims attained?
    - Is there a solid theoretical connection?
    - Is the method reliable and well adapted to the subject matter?
    - Are the conclusions reasonable?
  - b. Structure
    - Is the thesis' structure clear?
    - Is the thesis' content optimally organised?
  - c. Language and formalia
    - Is the language acceptable?
    - Are references, citations, etc. properly given?

### **The actual defense**

1. The chairperson (often the main supervisor) of the thesis defense welcomes all, and introduces the respondent, opponent and examiner. The time frame for the defense is specified.
2. The chairperson gives the respondent the opportunity to make amendments or corrections to the thesis.

3. The respondent presents the thesis using audiovisual resources (20-30 minutes) taking up the following points: aim of the investigation, material, method, analysis, results, and conclusions
4. The opponent then makes his/her opposition (20-30 minutes): a summary of the thesis' strong and weak points. The opponent should proceed from the global to the local, by first giving an overall impression of the thesis, and then proceeding to take up specific sections of the thesis. Criticism of details should not be given overdue attention. The opponent should focus on the aims, problem formulation, delimiting of research topic, material, method and results. It is important that the opposition does not consist of a page by page discussion. It is good if the opposition takes the form of a dialogue. The respondent should avoid excusing himself/herself or making long explanations for any weaknesses pointed out by the opponent. Both the opponent and the respondent should aim at objectivity and avoid being aggressive. After concluding his/her opposition, the opponent may give the respondent a list of spelling errors and other details that should be corrected.
5. The examiner is given the opportunity to ask the respondent questions and comment on the thesis (5-10 minutes).
6. The audience is given an opportunity to ask questions and comment on the thesis.
7. The chairperson closes the defense.
8. The supervisor(s), examiner and if possible, the program coordinator retire to decide on the grade, as well as on what possible corrections and clarifications need to be introduced to the text, before the grade can be finalized. These corrections and clarifications should be relatively minor and they will not affect the final grade.
9. These corrections should not be so extensive so as to change the grade of the thesis.
10. This decision is then communicated to the respondent orally or by email, as well as the corrections that must be made in the final version.