



Information Sheet Bachelor's Thesis in Social Anthropology

The bachelor's thesis (*Bachelorarbeit*) is a graded module of its own. The thesis awards 15 ECTS credits and is written in one semester. It has a length of 12'000 to 15'000 words of text (without title page, table of contents, bibliography and appendix) or consists of a film with a written part of 6'000 to 7'500 words of text.

At ISEK – Social and Cultural Anthropology / Ethnographic Museum, it is possible to submit a film thesis (including a written paper reflection or commentary) under certain conditions and after consultation with the supervisor. Please refer to the information sheet "[Additional Information concerning audiovisual Bachelor's Theses in Social Anthropology](#)".

Bachelor's thesis: planning and procedures

The bachelor's thesis should be pursued at least one semester before the final semester of studies: if you would like to graduate in the 6th semester, you should begin with the bachelor's thesis or its planning in the 5th semester at the latest to ensure that you can register for the module in the 6th semester.

First, students should submit a thesis idea or concept to a possible supervisor (see "Supervisors" below for more information). A list of possible supervisors can be found on the ISEK – Social and Cultural Anthropology website under "[Bachelor's Theses](#)". After agreement to supervise your thesis, you will design your concept for your bachelor's thesis (a so-called "disposition"), and discuss it with your supervisor. Only after your supervisor confirms acceptance of your disposition by signing the "Attestation Disposition Bachelor Thesis" may you begin writing your thesis.

Detailed instructions on the form of the disposition and more general advice and guidelines on writing a bachelor's thesis can be found in the document "[Guidelines for Academic Works at the ISEK-Social and Cultural Anthropology](#)".

Finding your topic

Students choose the topic of their bachelor's thesis and propose it to a possible supervisor. The bachelor's thesis usually builds on one or more modules that a student has attended. In justified cases, however, a student may also choose a topic independently of these. In this case, the supervisor decides whether to accept a topic that is unrelated to a specific module.

A bachelor's thesis can also be based on one's own field research, for instance in the context of an excursion (*Lehrforschung*), or following a summer school or an individual fieldwork, but they do not have to be. Otherwise, an extensive literature research forms the data material for the thesis.

A literature search is, of course, also necessary to an appropriate extent in cases where empirical research is being carried out. In all cases, the bachelor's thesis is an independent and new piece of work, it does not replace nor extend a written paper as part of a seminar.

Interim discussions and revision

Two to three meetings with the supervisor should be planned to discuss the status of the work and to clarify questions regarding content. Before the final submission, a supervisor can be presented either a chapter, several chapters or a complete first draft, which will then be revised based on the supervisor's comments before submission of the final version. The exact procedure and number of chapters read by a supervisor should be discussed between supervisor and student in advance.

A "Bachelor Thesis Code of Practice for Supervision" is available to supervisors for this process. It is closely related to this "Information Sheet for a Bachelor's Thesis". Additionally, a supervisor explains in advance their own evaluation criteria and their weighting to the student, adopting the document "Bachelor Thesis Evaluation" to their needs and sharing it with the student.

Booking the module "Bachelor's Thesis" (*Bachelorarbeit*)

The "Bachelor's Thesis" module is booked via the regular online module booking system within the booking deadlines provided for bachelor theses. The module may only be booked when the supervisor has been determined, the topic has been agreed upon and the disposition has been accepted by the supervisor. The teaching coordinator (contact below) must report the supervisor's name and the preliminary title of the thesis to the Office of the Dean of Studies after the module booking deadline.

If a bachelor's thesis is not passed, the module can be booked again but a new topic must be specified for the second booking.

Booking the module "Bachelor-Colloquium" (*Ba-Kolloquium*)

The "Bachelor-Colloquium" with 3 ECTS credits is a compulsory module according to the new study regulations (from autumn semester 2019 onwards). The "Bachelor-Colloquium" module is booked in the same semester as the bachelor's thesis except for students following the old regulations (only applicable to students who started a bachelor's degree as a major social anthropology before autumn 2019), for whom attendance in the bachelor's colloquium is voluntary.

Supervisors

A bachelor's thesis can be supervised by professors, titular professors, private lecturers and members of the mid-level faculty. Supervisors must have at least a master's degree in social anthropology (or equivalent) and have taught social anthropology for at least two semesters. With the exception of titular professors and privatdozents, supervisors must be employed at ISEK – Social and Cultural Anthropology at the time of booking the thesis module. Visiting professors may also supervise a bachelor's thesis. Associated researchers who are not employed at ISEK but have particular expertise can act as co-supervisors. The final responsibility lies with the person who is authorized to supervise a thesis according to the criteria mentioned above. Exceptions require approval from the program director.

Bachelor's thesis with two authors

A Bachelor's thesis has to be an individual piece of work. Co-authorship is excluded. Cooperations for the development are possible if the contribution to the written work is submitted as an independent text and can be assessed independently.

Bachelor's thesis for a minor degree

It is not possible to write a bachelor's thesis for a minor.

Evaluation

As of autumn 2019, supervisors send students a written evaluation of their bachelor's thesis together with the grade. The document "Bachelor Thesis Evaluation" is available to supervisors. They may adopt it to their needs.

Submission dates and deadlines

For completion in an autumn semester:

1 December: latest possible submission of the thesis to the supervisor

9 January: deadline for the supervisor to submit the grade, a pdf version of the thesis (and in the case of a film thesis also the film) and the written evaluation to our teaching coordinator (contact information below)

For completion in a spring semester:

1 June: latest possible submission of the thesis to the supervisor

9 July: deadline for the supervisor to submit the grade, a pdf version of the thesis (and in the case of a film thesis also the film) and the written evaluation to our teaching coordinator (contact information below)

Please also refer to the [information provided by the Office of Student Affairs regarding the bachelor's thesis and the completion of the bachelor's studies](#).

Archiving obligation

The teaching coordinator (see contact below) must archive a pdf version of each bachelor's thesis as well as the written evaluation for three years at the institute.

Contacts

University of Zurich

ISEK–Social and Cultural Anthropology

Andreasstrasse 15

8050 Zurich

<https://www.isek.uzh.ch/en/anthropology.html>

Teaching coordinator

Miriam Wohlgemuth

Phone +41 44 635 22 12

E-mail: miriam.wohlgemuth@uzh.ch

Study Advisor Bachelor “Social Anthropology”

Dr. Olivia Killias

Phone +41 44 635 23 38

E-mail: olivia.killias@uzh.ch

Module coordinator / program director until the end of spring semester 2026

Prof. Dr. Annuska Derks

Phone +41 44 634 61 97

E-mail: annuska.derks@uzh.ch

Module coordinator / program director as of fall semester 2026

Prof. Dr. Johannes Quack

Phone +41 44 635 22 42

E-mail: johannes.quack@uzh.ch