

Phase	Description	Duration [recommended]
Exploratory phase	Please start independently finding out what kind of topic or research question you would like to work on. Do some preliminary research to shape your question, e.g., by defining which literature/philosophy/sources you will be using and what exact research goals/questions motivate your project. As a result, please produce a <b>mini-exposé</b> for (each of) the topic(s) you contemplate for your thesis.	1–3 months
<b>Meeting 1:</b> finding a topic	Based on your <b>mini-exposé(s)</b> we discuss your ideas and make a choice for your topic. You will receive feedback on how to finalise the mini-exposé for that final topic.	
Consolidation phase	Based on our discussion of your idea(s) and mini-exposé(s) you finalise your research concept. The finalised mini-exposé will serve as a fixed plan for your project.	1 month
<b>Meeting 2:</b> topic consolidation	You present your final mini-exposé that outlines your project. The mini-exposé now includes a clear research goal/question, a motivation for the goal/question, the corpus of phenomena and literature to be used, as well as a preliminary table of contents that serves as a working plan. When your mini-exposé is complete you will also have to <b>register your thesis with the examination office</b> before you can proceed.	
Writing phase	After <b>registration</b> , you start writing your thesis according to the work plan. Please start with one chapter (typically <i>not</i> the introduction but one of the earlier and more fundamental chapters).	1 month
<b>Meeting 3 (optional):</b> writing feedback on a sample chapter	In some cases, we will offer you to have another supervision meeting to discuss your writing skills. This meeting will usually be scheduled once you finished a first chapter of your thesis which you will hand in to us before the meeting. We might also use this meeting to re-evaluate your work plan.	
Writing phase	You continue writing independently on your thesis.	Rest of the time until deadline

Phase	Description	Duration [recommended]
Meeting 4: last mile	When you are 80% finished you schedule another meeting in which you show what you have done. The purpose is to give you some final feedback. It makes sense to have this meeting late enough in your writing process so that you can really present a considerable part of your thesis. At the same time, the meeting should be early enough so that you are still able to incorporate feedback and make some bigger changes (if recommended).	
Finishing	Potentially implementing the feedback from the final meeting, you finish your thesis. Please also take care of proofreading and adequate layouting in the end. Finally, you hand in your thesis <b>to the examination office</b> and also as a PDF to both your supervisors.	2 weeks

### **Guidelines for Meetings**

Meetings take around 30 minutes and should be on point. For you to take the most out of your supervision meetings, we request you to take the following steps for preparation and de-briefing:

Timing	Task
Preparation / briefing	Clear your mind what exactly you want to debate in the meeting, what questions you have and what it is that you would like to take away from the meeting. Create a brief agenda for the meeting (1–4 discussion points / goals for the meeting). <b>At least 24h before the meeting, send us an email</b> including the meeting agenda, all relevant document that we might have to read (mini-exposé, chapter, thesis draft). Please mention the <b>meeting time slot in the subject line</b> of your email.
in the meeting	Please <b>start the meeting with a 2 minute pitch</b> that briefly summarises where you stand / what the state of affairs looks like, and introduce the first point of your agenda. Use the agenda as a structure for moderating the meeting.
post-processing / debriefing	After the meeting, please <b>summarise all relevant results</b> in a short, concise bullet point list. The summary should clearly flag out any to-dos or decisions that were taken. Please <b>send the summary to us via email</b> within 48h after the meeting. In case we have a different perception of the meeting results, this will give us the chance to interact with you for clarification. Otherwise, the summary will serve as part of the briefing for our next meeting.

## How to write a mini-exposé (preparation for meeting 1)?

After making sure that you and your project fall within the scope mentioned above and you meet the prerequisites, you should start developing an interesting topic and working on a mini-exposé. A mini-exposé is typically 1.5–3 pages long and contain these pieces of information:

1. **Working title** of the thesis
2. **Topic statement.** Ideally, your topic statement should contain two pieces of information:
  - The description of an **empirical phenomenon** in the context of AI or digital technology that you want to address critically or ethically in your thesis (e.g., an app, a service, a company, a business model, a recent trend, ...);
  - A small **corpus of philosophical references** (within one of the philosophical approaches listed above) with which you intend to debate your phenomenon. Think of these philosophical references as the *target discourse* of your thesis, that is, as the discourse to which you aim to make a small contribution, either by applying theory to the phenomenon or by pointing at limitations of the theory.
3. **Description of the topic:** 1-2 paragraphs, maximum 0.5 pages. Think of this as an abstract. It should state (a) your motivation, (b) the phenomenon or theoretical desideratum you wish to address, (c) the means (philosophical discourses/resources) by which you intend to do so, and (d) the goal of the thesis. This can be brief and sketchy, but should give a clear idea. Make sure you describe both a phenomenon (b) and a theoretical context (c). Many students come to me with only a phenomenon in mind, but no idea of the theoretical dimension of their work, or vice versa.
4. **Draft structure:** Using numbered headings and subheadings, note the structure of the work as you envision it. This structure is not necessarily final, as it may change as you work on the thesis. However, the outline also serves as a working plan for the process of researching and writing the thesis.
5. **Time frame.** When do you plan to finish your thesis? Do you need a grade at a specific point in time?
6. A **brief self-statement** indicating why you have chosen to do your thesis in the area of AI ethics and to what extent you have specialized in this area during your studies. Please also include your name, degree program, and matriculation number.
7. **Literature List:** List the most important references, both in regard to the "phenomenon" you intend to address and to the philosophical literature you will use for this purpose. This literature list need not be exhaustive. It can be a mixture of texts that you already know (and that have given you your idea), and texts that you still want to read. It serves us to give a clearer idea of your philosophical background. So please don't make it so long that we "can't see the forest for the trees". The literature list is non-conclusive and you will add on to it in the process of writing your thesis.

## Thesis layout

- Use A4 paper
- Include a title page mentioning your name, Matrikelnummer, thesis title, thesis date, and the two supervisors.
- Include page numbers and include a table of contents after the title page.
- Use 11 or 12 point font size and 1.15–1.5 line spacing (not more).
- Use reasonable page margins of 35–40mm that can be used for notes and markup.
- Structure your thesis in reasonable sections and subsections that use numbered headlines.
- Use paragraphs. As a general rule, a paragraph is more than one sentence and less than one page long.
- Make use of direct quotation and paraphrases to the literature.

Use int-text author-year referencing scheme and include a full bibliography as the last section of your thesis.