

BA and MA THESIS GUIDE

BA and MA THESIS

A. Your thesis adviser

1. You will write your thesis under the supervision of your thesis adviser (University Professor). During that process you must keep your adviser reasonably well informed as to the progress of your research and writing of the thesis. Also for that purpose of consultation Thesis Seminar is launched to help you to proceed with writing of your MA thesis. You are obliged to complete BA and MA thesis seminar in its full length as offered in the third and final semester of the programme..
2. Your thesis adviser is your mentor throughout the thesis-writing process and will help you develop your thesis topic, methodology, research, bibliography, etc. Your thesis adviser will offer you helpful critiques of your written work in progress.
3. Your thesis adviser is your advocate throughout the entire thesis process, including the defence. Your thesis adviser will advise you on whether your thesis is ready to be submitted as a whole. Your thesis adviser also contributes to the mark received on the written thesis and prepares a written review that points out the strong (and weak) points of your work.
4. At the beginning of the fifth semester (BA); third semester (MA) students choose who the thesis adviser of the thesis will be. The choice of thesis adviser should be done by students based on their understanding whom of the lecturers they worked with in the programme or will be working in the final semester may be most instructive in terms of their intended thesis topic.
5. Students should remember that they are responsible for independently writing their thesis and staying in contact with their thesis adviser. It is not the adviser's job to chase students up and make sure that they are on track.
6. Your thesis adviser will usually hold the academic title of doctor (PhD) or higher.

B. The contents of your thesis

Originality

1. Do not create a thesis that is a summary of someone else's work. It should not be a summary of several other people's work, either. Your own research (in the field or in the library), analysis and thoughts should always be the focus of the thesis.
2. The easiest way to be original is to do some sort of field work as a major portion of your research. The results of your own questionnaire, interviews or participant observation will obviously be your own.

Mastery of your subject

1. You must demonstrate seriousness and commitment to the whole process of writing your thesis: you should manage your own time well and utilise the resources available to you to their fullest.
2. It is expected that you will choose a topic that demonstrates sophistication in your field. On the one hand, do not choose unanswerable questions or overly ambitious research projects that are beyond your abilities. On the other hand, do not set out to "prove" something that is obviously true or "investigate" something that everybody understands. It should be something that others in your field would like to read.
3. It is expected that you will have read both the standard "classics" and the newest "cutting edge" of books that directly relate to your thesis. Although your own research, thoughts and analysis should always be the focus of your thesis, you must also place those thoughts in their wider context in your field. You should mention all of the relevant authors and their works in your text and include them in your bibliography. You should credit them where you agree with their ideas and rebut them where you disagree. Your thesis adviser may also help you with your reading list.
4. It is expected that your research (whether it is done in a library or out in the field) will be methodologically sound and thorough as well as relevant to your subject and to your conclusions.
5. You must demonstrate that you know how to communicate your ideas. You will need to write, analyse what you have written (usually with the help of your thesis adviser) and then rewrite (often several times)

the various elements of your thesis. You should plan for several drafts of each chapter.

Unity

1. Your thesis should feel like a single work, not a collection of smaller pieces. There should not be inexplicable digressions or huge leaps of logic between sections of the work. Link everything that is relevant together and remove everything that is irrelevant.
2. Your thesis should feel like a complete work, not a fragment of something larger. Avoid starting topics that you will have to leave unfinished at the end of the thesis. If you cannot adequately cover everything in the topic that you have chosen in the space of your thesis, redefine the topic of your thesis.

Your thesis should be on a subject that you are interested in

C. Length, language, grammar, spelling, style and numbers

Length

1. In the case of a BA thesis: minimum number of characters: 40.000; maximum number of characters: 100.000 (between 25 – 50 pages)
2. In the case of an MA thesis: minimum number of characters: 80.000; maximum number of characters: 140.000 (between 40 – 70 pages)

Language

1. The language of instruction and thesis in our programme is English. It does not matter which version of English that you use in your thesis as long as it is consistent throughout. Do not mix dialects. “A colored center” is just as good as “a coloured centre” but “a colored centre” looks awkward. Generally speaking, British spelling tends to be the preferred variety for much of the world and it is the EU standard.
2. Remember that you are writing for an **international** audience: avoid constructions, usage and vocabulary that are limited to a particular dialect of English. Usually, these are slang or informal English and have no place in your thesis anyhow.

Anything that they do not understand should probably be rephrased. You can find discussions of these issues in The Economist Style Guide (10th

Revised edition edition (April 1, 2012), Oxford Guide to World English (McArthur, 2003, pp. 245-258, 439-451) and Linguistics (pp. 259-295).

3. Avoid sexist, racist or other discriminatory language.
4. Place names should be given in their common English form (Rome, Warsaw) not the local language form (Roma, Warszawa) where there is a clearly established English form. Where there is not an established English form, the local language form should be used, including diacritical marks such as accents. This simple rule can be difficult to use in practice. Be consistent.
5. Do not use the words “Europe” or “European” as synonyms for the institutions or policies of the European Union or the European Community.
6. Extended quotations should be given in the same language as the body text of the thesis. If you translated the quotation yourself from a source in another language, please note this fact along with the quotation’s citation. If you also want to include the text in the original language, please put it in a footnote or appendix.
7. Words in a language other than that of the main body text should be printed in italics. Words that are in a language that does not use the Latin alphabet (Greek, Russian, Hebrew, Arabic, etc.) should be transliterated.

Grammar and spelling

1. To ensure clarity, please be certain that you use proper grammar and spelling. You will not be marked on grammar and spelling as such, but if there are enough errors to make your thesis difficult to read and you may be asked to edit it and resubmit it. We strongly recommend that you have your thesis proofread, especially (but not only) if you are not a native speaker of English.
2. As above, both British and American spellings are acceptable as long as they are consistent.
3. If a proper name (like a company name or a book title) uses a different spelling, keep it in the original form.

Acronyms and abbreviations

1. Acronyms should always be spelled out in full on first reference: “EFTA (the European Free-Trade Association) will soon introduce...” Thereafter, they should be referred to by their acronym alone.
2. Some acronyms are so common that they do not need to be spelled out on first reference. The obvious ones are: EU, NATO, OPEC, UK, UN, US and USSR. Almost everything else should be spelled out, as above.
3. Use all capital letters for acronyms. Do not use full stops unless it is a proper name that requires them (for example, a registered company name). We recommend EU, not E.U.; US, not U.S.; USSR, not U.S.S.R.
4. If your thesis requires the use of a great deal of acronyms (more than ten that the layperson has never heard of), you should strongly consider including a glossary.

Currencies

1. Only use the international currency exchange abbreviations (USD, GBP etc) if you are quoting a table of currency exchange.

Numerals and numbers

1. For integer numbers less than 10, write out the number (one, two, three...) unless it is a price. Ten will normally be “ten”.
2. Use decimals rather than fractions whenever precision is needed. Always use a “0” if the decimal represents a number less than zero (“each of the samples was 0.7 cm long”) but do not use a “0” when the number is a ratio or proportion that could not be greater than one (“there was a .8 correlation between internet use and cell phone use”).
3. Be careful of the distinction between large numbers. A “thousand” is 1,000. A “million” is 1,000,000. A “billion” is 1,000,000,000. A “trillion” is 1,000,000,000,000. Do not use “milliard” or “a thousand millions” to mean 1,000,000,000. Do not use “billion” to mean 1,000,000,000,000.
4. Avoid starting sentences with numerals.

D. Size and shape of your thesis

1. The easiest way to measure the size of your thesis is by using the “word count” feature in your word-processor. (In older versions of MS-Word, it is under “Tools” and in newer versions under “Review” in the menu bar and then “Word count”) or will display automatically at the bottom-left of the screen (“Words”). Do not count your bibliography or table of contents in the thesis length. In fact, most students find that it is a challenge to fit everything that they have to say into the word limit. You will need to be strategic about what you can and cannot fit into the current thesis.

Division of text

1. Your thesis must include a title page, a table of contents, an introduction, at least one middle chapter, a conclusion, and a bibliography. Your thesis may also contain a dedication page, an acknowledgements page and any number of appendices.
2. Your thesis will be much easier to read and appreciate (i.e. will get a better mark) if the main content is divided into more than one chapter. **The exact contents and what percentage of the whole they represent should be discussed in depth with your thesis adviser.** One example of what a thesis might contain is:
 1. an introduction
 2. a chapter reviewing previous research
 3. a chapter discussing theory
 4. a chapter discussing your methodology and research
 5. a chapter discussing analysing and explaining your results
 6. a conclusion
3. Each chapter should have a distinct topic and clear structure. Each chapter should begin with an introductory paragraph and end with a concluding paragraph. Each chapter must have a title. The size of the chapters (amount of pages in every chapter) should be balanced.
4. The use of sub-headings inside the chapters is strongly encouraged. They will help to guide the reader to important information and give a sense of a controlled progression of ideas.

Please use three levels of chapter, of text division – this is the maximum number recommended to be used in thesis

1 NAME OF THE CHAPTER (bold, font 14 Times New Roman, All Caps)

1.1 Name of subchapter (bold, font 12 Times New Roman)

1.1.1 (italics, font 12 Times new roman)

5. Illustrations, graphs, timelines, appendices, indices and glossaries are optional and should be included if the subject matter calls for them. A well-chosen graph or photograph can do a lot to enhance the value of your thesis. A topic that requires a lot of jargon or acronyms may be clarified by a glossary. However, avoid “content-free” or irrelevant additions to your thesis as they will only draw attention away from what is important. (Padding your thesis with clip art, unnecessary maps, glossaries of well-known words, appendices that have nothing to do with the topic at hand, etc., will work against you.)

Title page

1. Sample Title Page (see Appendix).

Dedication page

1. Your thesis may contain a dedication page. It is not required. A dedication page is unnumbered and follows the title page.
2. Dedications are usually very short, perhaps a line or two. They are by nature a personal statement. For example, “To my mother, for all her support.”

Acknowledgements page

1. Your thesis may contain an acknowledgements page. It is not required. An acknowledgements page is unnumbered and follows the dedication page (if there is one) or the title page (if there is no dedication page).
2. Acknowledgements usually include the list of people who academically assisted or otherwise supported the writing of your thesis. It is traditional to thank any institutions that gave you financial assistance in your studies. For example, “I would like to thank Prof. dr hab. Czesław Porębski for his willingness to dedicate so much time to guiding my research and the International Visegrad Fund for their financial support of my studies.”

Table of contents

1. The table of contents must contain the page numbers of the first pages of all of your chapters and bibliography. We strongly recommend that it also give the page numbers of the first pages of all of your sub-headings.

Bibliography (References)

1. Your bibliography is an important part of your thesis and should be given as much time and effort as any other chapter. You will probably start writing your bibliography before any other chapter.
2. Your bibliography must be substantial. Less than 50 sources in your bibliography is likely to raise questions about the thoroughness of your research.
3. You should not pad your bibliography with books that you have not read or did not really use in the course of writing your thesis. Such “false” sources are often obvious to a careful reviewer and may become questions at your thesis defence.
4. Your bibliography must be varied and balanced. It should include at least a few classics and a few cutting-edge books. It should contain both primary and secondary sources. There should be reference works, books and periodicals. As appropriate, it should contain works in more than one language. Avoid the situation where almost every reference is from a similar type of source (for example, from web pages). Make sure that some of your sources are specialist sources (academic journals, conference papers, serious monographs, etc.) to demonstrate that you know how to find and use such things. When defining key concepts, ensure that you use reputable literature rather than internet sources.
5. Your bibliography should start with the word “Bibliography” or “References”. Your bibliography should be 1.5 line space.
6. In APA (American Psychological Association) reference style you would give the author’s surname (last name) followed by his or her initial(s). In parentheses cite the date of publication, followed by a full stop (period). The title should be written out in full, capitalised as is traditional in the language of publication, in italics (recommended) or underlined (not recommended), followed by a full stop (period). Give the place of publication, followed by a colon and the publisher.

For example, a whole book would be listed in your bibliography as:

Jorgensen, K.E. (2010). *International Relations Theory. A New Introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

A book with more than one author which is in its fourth edition would be listed:

Akmajian, A., Deners, R.A., Farmer, A.K., & Harnish, R.M. (2000). *Linguistics: An Introduction to Language and Communication* (4th ed.). Boston: MIT Press

An article within a book would be listed:

Schmidt, B. (2007). *On the History and Historiography of International Relations*. In Carlsnaes, W., Risse, T., & Simmons, B. (eds.). *Handbook of International Relations* (pp. 3-21). London: Sage Publications

Corporate authors are treated “as if they were human”. For example:

Pricewaterhouse Coopers (1998). *Doing Business in Poland*. New York: PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP

Articles in print periodicals should be listed in your bibliography in a similar fashion but with the title of the periodical in italics. Volume numbers are given after the title of the journal and issue numbers are given in parentheses. For example:

Merdjanova, I. *Religious Liberty, New Religious Movements and Traditional Christian Churches in Eastern Europe*. *Religion, State & Society*, 29(4), pp. 265-304 (2001).

Books or articles in languages other than the one used in the body of your thesis (which should be English) should be listed in your bibliography in their original, published language.

Sierant, A. (2003). *Jak zostać spółką giełdową? (How to Become a Publicly Listed Company?)*. Warsaw: Fundacja Edukacji Rynku Kapitałowego

Books or articles in languages that use non-Latin alphabets (such as Greek or Russian) should be transliterated into the Latin alphabet. For example, a Russian book might be cited:

Asov, A.I. (2001). *Svyato-Russkie Vedy: Kniga Velesa (Holy Russian Vedas: The Book of Veles)*. Moscow: Fair Press

7. Citations of materials that are internet-only (for example, a webpage that is not a pdf facsimile of a print journal) must always include the date on which the information was found at the address given. Always include the full URL (address). In most cases, there are no page numbers. For example:

Mach, Z. (2000). Polish National Culture and Its Shifting Centres. Article retrieved on 21 December 2009 from Jagiellonian University, Centre for European Studies website: http://www.ces.uj.edu.pl/download/mac_f_1.rtf

Citations of materials that are internet facsimiles of print periodicals (for example, a pdf of a print journal) do not need to include the date on which the information was found. However, if you have not seen the print version, you should include the text “[electronic version]”. Do include page numbers. For example:

Kruger, D. (2003). The European Constitution: A Briefing Note [Electronic version]. *The European Journal*, 10 (6), pp. 12-13

Where you are in doubt as to whether the internet resource that you are looking at is a facsimile of a print version or not, give the date on which it was downloaded just in case. It is a good idea to check through your internet sources shortly before printing your thesis to make sure that none of your cited links have been changed, moved or deleted. If they have, change your bibliography appropriately or mark that they are no longer available.

Undated sources should be listed as “(n.d.)” – short for “no date”.

McGrath, D. (n.d.). *The Development of Flexible Academic Structures in the Colleges Sector in Ireland*. Dublin: National Council for Educational Awards

Sources without a title should be listed in your bibliography by the first few words of the text.

Anonymous (n.d.). *Globalisation is a crime...* Photocopied flyer received on 1 May 2009 in Warsaw.

8. The results of questionnaires that you have delivered are not usually listed in your bibliography. Likewise, casual conversations (by telephone or in person) are usually just identified as such in the body text and ignored in the bibliography. However, some other sorts of original research may be listed in your bibliography. Depending on how commonly they are found in scholarly literature, you may need to be creative.

You might have a large collection of transcripts of interviews (on tape or written out). You should always keep such materials for later review and a simple reference system is usually required. However, there is no need to list them in your bibliography, as such. In many cases, it is helpful to include transcripts of interviews in an appendix and refer directly to that appendix in your citations.

10. Your bibliography should be in alphabetical order according to author's surname (last name). Works by the same author should be listed in order of publication. Where two works by the same author were published in the same year, they should be assigned a letter after the date. For example:

Kruger, D. (2003). The European Constitution: A Briefing Note [Electronic version]. *The European Journal*, 10 (6), pp. 12-13

Mach, Z. (1993). *Symbols, Conflict, and Identity*. Albany: SUNY Press

Mach, Z. (2000a). The Roman Catholic Church in Poland and the Dynamics of Social Identity in Polish Society. In Inglis, T., Mach, Z. & Mazanek, R. (eds.) *Religion and Politics: East-West Contrasts from Contemporary Europe* (pp. 113-128). Dublin: UCD Press

Mach, Z. (2000b). Polish National Culture and Its Shifting Centres. Article retrieved on 21 December 2009 from Jagiellonian University, Centre for European Studies website:
http://www.ces.uj.edu.pl/download/mac_f_1.rtf

Statement of authorship

When submitting your thesis you must attach a Statement of the Authorship (see Appendix) on which you declare that you are the author of this work and that it was not copied from any other work. This should be inserted at the end of the thesis in each submitted copy.

Paper, binding and cover

1. The presentation of your thesis does have an effect on how it is received by the Examination Committee. Your BA and MA thesis should look serious, important and well-organised before your reader even gets around to reading it.

Font and font size

1. Please use Times New Roman at 12-point size for the main text of your thesis and Times New Roman at 10 points for footnotes.
2. The body of your text should be printed in black. You should generally avoid using other colours, except on the title page.

Spacing

1. The main body of your text should be 1.5 space line.
2. Please cancel the setting in the paragraph where you have the extra space set in front and behind the paragraph, there should be no space between paragraphs

Margins

1. Your margins should be the following:
 - left 3,5 cm
 - right 2 cm
 - bottom and top 2,5 cm
2. Ensure that you justify the text, i.e. that it is neatly aligned on both sides.

Footnotes

1. We strongly recommend that you use footnotes.
2. Use footnotes for short digressions or supplementary information.
3. Do not put citations in footnotes, only online sources, articles published only online.¹

Even if you are paraphrasing an idea, you should cite the page number!

One expert predicts the rise of new rituals in post-communist Russia (Mach, 1993: 9).

Where the author is already indicated in context, you may leave the author out of the citation.

Mach predicts the rise of new rituals in post-communist Russia (1993: 9).

General observations or ideas may be cited by year alone.

Mach places great importance on the role of symbols in creating post-communist identity (1993).

The goal of in-line citation is to provide a quick reference to your bibliography. Every item that is referenced in this way must be fully listed in your bibliography (at the end of your thesis) like this:

Mach, Z. (1993). *Symbols, Conflict, and Identity*. Albany: SUNY Press

1. Short verbatim quotations (less than 40 words or two lines) must always be given inside quotation marks and have the same spacing and margins as the body of your text. Extended verbatim quotations (longer than 40 words

1

or two lines of text) should be indented by 1.5 cm from the left side of the regular text margins. Do not use quotation marks with extended quotations.

2. Personal communications (such as casual conversations, emails or telephone calls) are not usually listed in your bibliography but they should be cited in the text. For example:

Mach believes that pierogi may be analysed as a culinary symbol of Poland (personal communication, 23 October 2009).

3. Texts that are anonymous, untitled or undated should be treated in citations as they are in your bibliography. For example:
4. Common knowledge does not need to be cited. The problem is with defining what 'common knowledge' is.

In practice, common knowledge is always in relation to a given academic community. Consider your peers and the reviewers of your thesis when deciding what is common knowledge. Facts that are 'common' enough not to cite are often proper names, significant dates and well-established principles. Opinions and highly specific data usually need citation. If you have doubts, cite it.

Page numbers

1. Except for the title page, the table of contents, the dedication page (if included) and the acknowledgements page (if included) all pages must be numbered.
2. Please number your pages at the bottom centre of the page in Arabic numerals (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). Use the same font and text size as the main body of the text.
3. Appendices and other addenda should be numbered in accordance with the main body text. (Your first appendix is likely to start on page 61, rather than at 1 again.)

E. Writing your thesis

Working with your thesis adviser

1. You should start refining your ideas in co-operation with your thesis adviser as quickly as possible. Your adviser will not come looking for you; you are responsible for staying in touch.
2. **Your adviser must give their final approval before you may submit your thesis.** Make sure that you understand what your adviser's

expectations are for a “final” version. Make sure that you know when your adviser is available to give their approval.

Writing the bibliography

1. Although it falls at the end of the written thesis, your bibliography should be the first part of your thesis that you start writing. It is easier to write your bibliography at the same time as you do your research (when all the materials are still in front of you) than at the end (when you may no longer remember where you found something).
2. As you build up your bibliography, remember to note the date on which you accessed internet resources.

Writing introductions and conclusions

1. You should save writing your introduction and conclusion for the very end of the writing process. Both the introduction and the conclusion contain a “summing-up” of the whole thesis (although this is not all they are) and really can’t be done properly until you have finished with your analysis.
2. The introduction leads the reader into the topic. There are many ways to do this and they are only limited by your imagination. A common device is storytelling, especially a story that illustrates a particularly compelling event related to your topic (i.e. one that will draw your reader in) or a story that explains how you became interested in the topic. Another device is to discuss the reason why your topic is important to the “bigger picture”. In addition, the introduction usually gives a short “preview” of the research and analysis of the thesis which will be presented later in more depth.
3. The conclusion restates the main messages of the thesis and tries to give the reader a sense of completion. Like the introduction, the conclusion often invokes the “bigger picture” surrounding your topic, but usually looking forward to the future. If you want to speculate about what might happen in the future, or you would like to make some suggestions about what should be done to improve something in your subject-area, then this is the place for it.

BA and MA final exam and defence

1. BA and MA candidates must successfully pass the BA and MA state exam and defence in order to receive the BA and MA degree.

2. The BA and MA exam and defence is held as an oral exam with only the thesis committee and the student present.
3. The BA and MA exam and defence takes place as a single event. It consists of two parts:
 - a. Exam
 - b. Defence

II. Academic Ethics

A. Intellectual integrity

1. Students, instructors and staff of the programme must not violate the norms of intellectual integrity which forbid all forms of cheating and unethical behaviour in examinations and other marked academic work.
2. Student, instructors and staff are obliged to refrain from acts which impair the legal, academic and intellectual integrity of the programme. These include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and falsification or forgery of official documents.

B. Plagiarism

1. Plagiarism is defined as 'the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own'. (The New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1998, p. 1416)
2. The growing ease of electronic communication of information makes plagiarism, both intentional and unintentional, a greater risk. Students are required to clearly, diligently and scrupulously credit all sources of information used in any academic work. Even an unintentional failure to properly credit text, images or ideas may be considered plagiarism.
3. Instructors are expected to warn both the student whose work is in question and the Programme Coordinator in case of suspicions of plagiarism.
4. Cases of plagiarism may be referred to the university disciplinary commission and are likely to lead to disciplinary action being taken, depending on the seriousness of the offence.
5. All students submitting papers or the BA and MA thesis are required to complete a cover sheet confirming that they have not committed plagiarism and understand the seriousness and potential penalties involved.

BA/MA in International Relations

University of Pécs
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of Political Science and International Studies

Title of the Thesis

Author
Name and Surname

BA/MA thesis written under the supervision of
Prof. dr. hab. [change academic title accordingly]

Date (year)
Pécs, Hungary