

Guidelines for Master's Thesis Submission

Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
MA in International Studies
Reference guidelines for students and tutors

The Faculty of Institute of International Studies would like to assist students in the efficient preparation and completion of a Master's thesis. This document aims at providing information on the thesis submission procedure and guidelines.

I. General guidelines

I.1. In order to conclude their Master's studies and to receive a Master's degree, every MA student is to submit a thesis.

I.2. Considering its content and layout, the thesis needs to be suitable for the examination and worthy of earning a Master's degree.

I.3. The aim of the thesis is to prove that the student has gained the appropriate theoretical basis during their MA studies to handle topics related to the field of International Relations through conducting their own research from a specific viewpoint processing literature available both in Hungarian and other languages.

II. General information

II.1. Thesis topic, thesis topic acceptance, thesis topic submission

•Methods of thesis topic selection:

- 1) The topic of the thesis can be chosen from the topics listed in the range of topics of the programme.
- 2) The topic of the thesis can also be chosen from the offer of thesis topics of the tutors teaching in the programme.
- 3) The topic of the thesis can be proposed as a genuinely own one.

In all cases, the thesis topic is to be accepted by the future supervisor and the academic director of the programme in advance. The procedure of gaining this acceptance involves the filling in and the signing of the registration form of the thesis [entitled 'Szakdolgozati nyilvántartólap']. Topics are accepted only if they are related to the field of International Studies. The thesis is required to be of academic quality, theoretical and / or empirical, containing the appropriate bibliography. A topic is recommended to be chosen whose literature is sufficiently ample to form the basis of the thesis (where the language of the literature is appropriately matching the language competences of the student).

•Thesis topic acceptance

The narrower focus and the title of the thesis is to be determined after having consulted the supervisor. In order for the supervisor to consider the thesis topic, a one-or-two-page long research proposal needs to be submitted. The research proposal should include the topic to be researched and the method of conducting the research.

•Thesis topic submission

The topic and the title of the thesis needs to be accepted by 30th of September. The signature of the supervisor proves the acceptance of the topic (and the person of the supervisor), which the academic director of the programme confirms by signing the registration form of the

thesis, entitled 'Szakdolgozati nyilvántartólap'. Four copies of the registration form are required to be filled in, signed, and submitted at the Department of Studies (Tanulmányi Osztály).

II.2. Selection of the thesis supervisor, the supervisor's tasks, changing the thesis topic and replacement of the thesis supervisor

•Selection of the thesis supervisor

Supervisors can be selected from the list of qualified tutors (PhD, Candidate's Degree, DSc) and researchers compiled by the Institute, as well as tutors teaching at the programme with appropriate proficiency in the topic, whose supervision the academic director of the programme permits. The latter is completed by the signing of the registration form of the thesis, entitled 'Szakdolgozati nyilvántartólap'. The supervisor can be a tutor teaching at a different programme of the Faculty, as long as the topic requires it; and in exceptional cases, even a so-called 'external' supervisor, whose person, however, is required to be approved of by the academic director of the programme.

The supervisor has the right to reject the supervision of the topic of the student. No supervisor can undertake the supervision of more than five MA thesis topics.

•Changing the thesis topic and replacement of the thesis supervisor

Should there be a lack of co-operation between supervisor and supervisee, both the student has the right to change their supervisor, and the supervisor can also refuse to provide supervision for the student. The change of the supervisor requires the approval of both supervisors (the former and the new alike). If the change of the supervisor entails the change of the topic as well, the approving signature of the academic director of the programme is required, through submitting a new registration form of the thesis.

The topic of the thesis and the person of the supervisor can be changed no later than three months before the submission deadline of the thesis. Applying clarifications in the thesis title is not regarded as changing the thesis topic.

In the case of lagging behind schedule due to the change of the thesis topic, it is the responsibility of the student to fulfil all the requirements related to thesis writing and submission, in consultation with the new or the former supervisor.

•Tasks of the thesis supervisor

The supervisor provides assistance in clarifying the method of the research, in recommending literature, and in structuring the thesis. Every topic has its own approach. Finding and following this approach is where the supervisor can help the most.

The student is required to consult with the supervisor at least three times, at the frequency determined by the supervisor.

II.4. Submission of the Master's thesis

•Conditions of submission

1) The MA thesis can be submitted only if the topic and the title of the thesis were accepted no later than seven month before the submission of the thesis. (see II.1, Submission of the topic)

2) The student is required to submit their completed thesis (in a not-yet-bound form) to their supervisor so that the tutor can examine the thesis and draw the student's attention to the need of correcting particular mistakes.

3) Acceptance of the submitted thesis is confirmed by the signature of the supervisor of the thesis submission form, entitled 'Igazolás – szakdolgozat beadásához'. One copy of the thesis submission form is required to be submitted at the Department of Studies (Tanulmányi Osztály).

•*Method of submission*

Three paper copies of the thesis are required to be submitted at the Department of Studies no later than **15th November** and **15th April**, in accordance with the Regulations of Studies and Examinations (TVSZ 171.§ (6)(9)).

II.5. Examination of the Master's thesis

• Only thesis accepted by the supervisor (with the acceptance properly documented) can be handed out for examination.

•*The Examiner and their tasks*

The examiner of the Master's thesis, the internal opponent, must be a scholar teaching at the Institute and be of competence in the field of the thesis research. The supervisor may as well be the examiner of the thesis. The other external examiner must be from outside the University and a scholar of established reputation and expertise in the field of the thesis research.

After having consulted with the supervisor, the opponent must submit a written examination report on the thesis including a grade for the thesis and minimum two related questions to be answered by the candidate at the State Examination before the deadline set by the Institute. Candidates must receive the grade for the thesis and the questions two weeks before the thesis defence.

The written examination report must be submitted in 3 copies: one copy is deposited at the Department of Studies, the second is the candidate's copy, and the third copy is attached to the thesis and deposited at the Institute.

•*Process of examination, evaluation criteria*

Thesis examination criteria:

good selection of topic, relevant problem statement; systematic research, sufficiently comprehensive investigation of the topic; original approach; consistent, coherent and logical editing of the thesis; adequate academic style and language; appropriate research implementation; adequate use and interpretation of empirical data; familiarity, understanding and application of the bibliography presented in appropriate quantity and quality; the candidate's original contribution and reasoning; adherence to the formal requirements of the thesis (layout, design, references, table of contents, bibliography, appendix, tables and figures, etc.).

•*Thesis defence*

As part of the State Examination, the candidate is required to defend their thesis. At the thesis defence, the candidate must present their thesis briefly, provide answers to the opponent's previously given written questions, comment on the recommendations and issues raised in the examination report, and answer any prompt questions of the committee. Besides the members of the State Examination committee and the candidate, the supervisor of the thesis may also

be present at the thesis defence. The supervisor receives an invitation prior to the thesis defence.

III. Formal requirements of the Master's thesis

The following style guidelines must be applied when writing the Master's thesis. Should the following requirements not be met, the evaluation of the thesis may be inferior or the thesis may be rejected.

The thesis should be written in a foreign language following the academic discourse conventions of the given language. Theses written in Hungarian will not be accepted.

III.1. Layout and font

- Font type: Times New Roman (Microsoft Word Processor)
- Font size: 12-pt.,
- Spacing: 1.5 space,
- Margins: 2 cm top, bottom, right, 3 cm left (binding)

III.2. Cover

The cover of the thesis must include the following information:
MASTER'S THESIS, candidate's full name, year of submission.

III.3. Thesis internal title page

The internal title page must give the following information in the order listed:

- cover page upper left – full name of the place of submission (no abbreviations):
Pázmány Péter Catholic University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Institute of International Studies
- centred on the page – title of the thesis, subtitle of the thesis,
- below the title (after inserting empty lines), on the left of the page – supervisor's name, title and/or external supervisor's name and title. Also include the job title of the external supervisor should it be relevant to the topic of the thesis.
- below the title (after inserting empty lines), on the right of the page – candidate's name and major(s)
- at the bottom of the page, centred – place and date of submission
(e.g. Piliscsaba, 2008.)

III.4. The thesis begins with the Title page in the previously described format, and the Table of Contents with main and sub-chapters using Roman and Arabic numerals (e.g. I., I.1., I.2., I.2.1.). The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices (where applicable).

***III.5. Length of thesis* – The length of thesis (including table of contents, bibliography and appendices) must be minimum of 90,000 characters, but must not exceed 160,000 characters. Tables, charts and figures placed in the main text can only be calculated up to one fourth of the entire document.**

III.6. Pagination

With the exception of the internal cover page without page number, pagination should be continuous throughout the entire document including the bibliography, the appendices (tables and figures etc.) and other sections of the thesis. Pagination starts at the Table of Contents with page 3. It is common to bind in a blank page between the main cover and the internal cover page. Place page numbers at the bottom right of the page. If the Appendices of the thesis include copies of documents where pagination might be difficult, missing page numbers might be accepted. In this case pagination should run until the end of the bibliography. All exceptions should be consulted with the supervisor before submission.

IV. Further recommendations on the Master's thesis

IV.1. Contents of the Master's thesis

It is required to structure the thesis into chapters and sub-chapters which should be in appropriate to the length of the thesis and of a logical sequence. A well-constructed table of contents indicating the chapters and sub-chapters should reflect the logical structure of the thesis and should include the following elements.

The following sections are recommendations only, which may be adjusted in agreement with the supervisor. The only exception is the abstract in a foreign language, which is a mandatory element of the thesis and hence cannot be left out.

IV.1.1. Introduction

The introduction should include the following: justifying the field of the thesis research selected, problem statement, topic and scope of the thesis, aims and objectives, description of the field/topic, the hypotheses (if any) or the research questions, the gap that is filled by the thesis research, placing the thesis research among the previous and on-going research in the field, how the present work builds on previous research or how the present work is different from previous research, description of the research methods with an emphasis on the field of research. The introduction should approximately be 2-4 pages.

IV.1.2. Theoretical background

The theoretical background should review and assess the body of national and international literature in the field, present and synthesize the main findings and conclusions of previous academic research. In this section, the candidate should show familiarity with, and the understanding of relevant literature, and establish a theoretical background for their thesis research. Depending on the nature of the thesis topic, the historical background, correlations, principles and propositions of certain phenomena may be presented here.

IV.1.3. Research methods

This section should present the aims and hypotheses of the investigation, their possible historical context, and a short and systematic description of the applied research methods. Any possible difficulties and problems related to the research methods should be described here.

IV.1.4. Results

In this analytical section of the thesis, the main findings of the research should be presented in details, answers to the research questions should be provided, and the initial hypotheses should be confirmed or rejected.

IV.1.5. Conclusion

The conclusion should include a summary of the problem statement, the objectives and their accomplishment, the theoretical background, the main results of the research highlighting the

main findings and its contribution to current research in the field, and suggestions for future research. The conclusion should approximately be 3-5 pages.

IV.1.6. References

The references should include all applied and cited literature of the thesis in alphabetical order (see below for formal requirements).

IV.1.7. Appendices

Should the elaboration of the topic requires; the thesis can be extended with appendices and illustrations (see below for formal requirements).

IV.1.8. Signature page

Candidates must sign a statement declaring that the thesis is exclusively their own work and no part of the thesis has been submitted to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree, and that the candidate only used the given aids and tools during their thesis work.

IV.2. Other formal requirements

IV.2.1. References

References must always be clearly cited; plagiarism is considered a serious ethical offence and has serious consequences.

IV.2.1.1. Bibliography

The bibliography, which should be placed at the end of the thesis, lists the literature items reviewed during the research process and the writing of the thesis. In the case of books and edited books, the following information must be included: author(s), editor(s), title of the book, publisher, place and year of publication. In the case of journals include the following: author(s), title of the article, name of journal, year and issue (date) of publication, length of the article (page number). In the case of internet sources, the date of access must also be indicated after the reference details. The bibliography must be listed in alphabetical order.

Applied format:

Cohen, Stephen Philip (2001): *India: Emerging Power*. Brookings Institution Press: Washington.

Guelke, Adrian (2008): Negotiations and Peace Process. In: *Contemporary Peacemaking. Conflict, Peace Processes and Post-War Reconstruction* (ed. by John Darby, Roger M. Ginty). Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 63-78.

Milne, David (2010): America's intellectual diplomacy. *International Affairs*, vol. 86 (2010), 49-68.

IV.2.1.2. In-text citation

In-text citation must be made in the footnote.

Format:

In the footnote: Ferge (1998): 6.

IV.2.2. Appendices

Appendices are used to place additional information which support or extend the main body of the thesis and the inclusion of this information in the main text of the thesis may not be necessary. Extracts of provisions, regulations and organizational descriptions may be included in the appendices. The appendices must appear at the end of the document and each appendix must be assigned a consecutive number to which in-text references must be made. Tables and figures must also be assigned separate consecutive numbers. The number and title of the appendix must appear at the top left of the page, while the reference of the appendix must be given at the bottom left of the page.