
**THESIS WRITING AND ELECTRONIC THESIS AND DISSERTATION (ETD)
SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR CEU MASTER'S THESES AND DOCTORAL
DISSERTATIONS**

The thesis is the single most important element of the master's degree. It is a test of the student's ability both to undertake and complete a sustained piece of independent research and analysis, and to write up that research in a coherent form according to the rules and conventions of the academic community. As the official language of study at CEU is English, students are required to write the thesis in English to a standard that native speaker academics would find acceptable. A satisfactory thesis should not only be adequate in its methodology, in its analysis and in its argument, and adequately demonstrate its author's familiarity with the relevant literature; it should also be written in correct, coherent language, in an appropriate style, correctly following the conventions of citation. It should, moreover, have a logical and visible structure and development that should at all times assist the reader's understanding of the argument being presented and not obscure it. The layout and physical appearance of the thesis should also conform to university standards.

The purpose of this document is to outline the standard requirements and guidelines that a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation (hereafter the term 'thesis' is used to cover both master's and doctoral level except where the doctoral dissertation is distinguished) should adhere to in the area of organisation and writing skills in order to be accepted at CEU. Most requirements will be similar for both master's and doctoral level; where there are differences, these are specified. These guidelines touch only tangentially on questions of methodology and content as these are likely to be subject specific, and will be limited to those issues that are generally true across disciplines. For information on discipline-specific requirements, deadlines for submission, and for documents required in preparation for the thesis, such as proposals, outlines, or annotated bibliographies, students should consult their program coordinator.

1. Thesis Language and Format

The thesis should be written in English. Quotations should normally be in English, with the original language included in a footnote where appropriate. Exceptions to this may be made when discipline specific guidelines permit (for example the use of Latin in Medieval Studies), or when issues such as the wording of the original language or the difference between different translations are under discussion. Other exceptions are short phrases in Latin or French typically used in English, such as '*raison d'être*' or '*inter alia*' which should be written in italics. For specific guidance in this area, students should consult their supervisor or another member of their program. Book titles, magazine titles, and newspaper titles may appear in their original language as long as English translations are given in parentheses or in a footnote. Cyrillic, Arabic and other non-Latin scripts should use their Latin equivalent. Where more than one transliteration style exists, a single style should be used consistently. Students should consult their advisor concerning proper transliteration procedures.

1.1 Ordering of parts

Parts of the thesis should be ordered as follows:

1. Title page	Required
2. Copyright notice	(if required by the program)
3. Abstract or executive summary	(as required by the program)
4. Acknowledgements or dedications	Optional
5. Table of contents	Required
6. List of Figures, Tables or Illustrations	Where required
7. List of Abbreviations	Where required
8. Body of the thesis	Required
9. Appendices	Where required
10. Glossary	Where required
11. Bibliography/Reference list	Required

Students should consult their program as to whether any other discipline specific components should be included and if so where.

1.2 Layout and Appearance

- The thesis should be computer printed on A4 paper, single-sided, in Times New Roman or Garamond 12pt. Double-spacing should be used in the abstract and text of the thesis. Single spacing should be used in long tables, block quotations separated from the text, footnotes, and bibliographical entries. Paragraphs should be indented, or an empty line left between paragraphs, depending on program requirements.
- Margins should be one inch or 2.5 cm on all sides, and page size should be set to A4, not US letter. Pages should be numbered at the bottom in the centre, using Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3) starting with the first page of the thesis proper (i.e. the first page of the introduction). Pages prior to this should be numbered with lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii).
- Chapters should start on a new page, but sections and subsections should not.

See the sample thesis page at the end of this document for an example of page layout.

1.3 Structure of initial parts

1.3.1 Title page

The title page should provide the following information in the following order:

The full title of the thesis

The candidate's name

The academic unit/program and name of the university

The statement: "In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts/Sciences"

The supervisors' names

The place of submission (Budapest, Hungary)

The year of submission

See the sample title page at the end of this document for an example of title page layout. [Thesis templates](#) are available on Computer and Statistics Center's e-learning site.

1.3.2 Declaration of Authorship/Copyright Notice

Some programs require a declaration of authorship or copyright notice. Students should consult their program for the specific wording.

1.3.3 Abstract or Executive Summary

The abstract should be between 100 and 250 words, depending on program requirements. It should be written in the present tense and should normally include the following information: (1) a statement of the problem the research sets out to resolve; (2) the methodology used; (3) the major findings. Other information is optional unless required by the program.

1.3.4 Acknowledgements

This is an optional page acknowledging people who provided the author with assistance in the thesis project, notably, but not only the thesis supervisor.

1.3.5 Table of Contents

The thesis must have a table of contents page listing chapter headings, section headings and sub-headings, Appendices and references as well as their corresponding page number. The 'Table of Contents' feature of Microsoft Word (or other word-processing software where permitted by the program) should normally be used to create a table of contents and this should be done after final editing or updated (using the built-in feature) after final editing so that pages referred to in the table of contents are correctly numbered.

1.3.6 List of Figures, Tables or Illustrations

If appropriate, a separate list of figures, tables, or illustrations should be included on a separate page immediately following the table of contents.

1.3.7 List of Abbreviations

If the thesis makes use of a large number of abbreviations that may be unfamiliar to a reader, providing a list of them can act as a useful guide.

1.4 Structure of final parts

1.4.1 Appendices

Appendices may be needed for formulae, maps, diagrams, interview protocols, or any similar data that are not contained in the body of the thesis. These should be provided after the conclusion in the logical order they are mentioned in the main body. A list of appendices should be drawn up, each being given a consecutive number or a letter, and placed in the table of contents. If there are several appendices each should receive a title. If the thesis includes non-paper appendices such as computer data, software, or audio-visual material, students should consult program guidelines as to how to append and refer to these.

1.4.2 Glossary

A list of special technical words or acronyms may be necessary. This is particularly true if the subject deals with a new area with a specialised vocabulary that the average reader in the discipline might not be familiar with, such as the Internet. This list should come after the appendices.

1.4.3 Bibliography/Reference List

A list of the sources used in the thesis must be supplied which complies with the same program style guidelines used in the body of the thesis – this list should include *only* those sources cited in the thesis.

2. Structure of the thesis

The thesis should be divided into logical chapters and include an introduction and a conclusion. The introduction and conclusion may or may not be counted as chapters, depending on program requirements. Excluding the introduction and conclusion, the thesis will normally be expected to have not less than three and not more than six chapters, unless this has been agreed with the supervisor. The chapters should reflect the nature and stages of the research.

Depending on the program, the introduction and conclusion may either be given titles and counted as the first and last chapter, or alternatively be entitled ‘Introduction’ and ‘Conclusion’ and the first chapter after the introduction numbered Chapter 1. Students should familiarise themselves with the program guidelines on this point.

2.1 Organisation of the thesis

The following information is meant to serve as a general suggestion for those uncertain how to structure their work, not as a rigid prescription. Particularly at the doctoral level, the supervisor may be a better guide as to how the dissertation should be structured.

2.1.1. Introduction

The thesis should begin with a general introduction presenting an overview of what the thesis is about and situating it in the existing research. The introduction should show why the topic selected is worth investigating and why it is of significance in the field. This will normally be done with reference to existing research, identifying areas that have not been explored, need to be explored further, or where new research findings justify a reconsideration of established knowledge. At the master’s level, a significant contribution to the field is not expected, however, the thesis should claim to make a contribution in the sense that it goes beyond summarising the work of others and contains original analysis and thinking towards the solving of a relevant problem. It is also recommended that this contribution be made explicit. At the doctoral level, the contribution of the work to the discipline should not only be significant but explicit. The nature of this contribution should be discussed with the supervisor.

Having precisely defined the research problem, the introduction should propose a response to this problem, normally in the form of a solution. This response will be formulated as a thesis statement, in one or two sentences, and should make explicit the objective of the research, not simply state an intention to explore or discuss. The thesis statement may (typically in the second sentence, if two sentences are used) include a brief indication of the author’s position or overall findings, where permitted by the program. If appropriate to the nature of the research, the chosen methodology may also be introduced after the thesis statement. The final section of the introduction should briefly outline the structure of the body of the thesis. Where appropriate, this can be linked to and follow logically from the description of the methodology.

2.1.2. Conclusion

The introduction and conclusion are closely related to each other, thus students should take care in drafting and revising to ensure that these parts reflect and do not contradict one another. The conclusion should provide answers or solutions – to the extent this is possible – to the questions or problems raised in the introduction. The argumentation of the thesis should be summarised briefly, and the writer’s main argument or findings restated clearly, without going into unnecessary detail or including additional arguments not dealt with in the body. The conclusion will normally

be expected to return to the wider context from which the thesis departed in the introduction and place the findings in this context. The writer should, if appropriate, elaborate on how the research findings and results will contribute to the field in general and what sort of broader implications these may have. There is no need to hide the limitations of the thesis to the extent that these are appropriate to a work of this type (e.g. constraints of space, depth of research, etc.). Suggestions may be made for further research where appropriate, but this is not a requirement. It may be that some disciplines (notably mathematics) require a different approach to this part of the thesis. In such cases the discipline specific guidelines should overrule these guidelines.

2.1.3. Literature Review

Depending on the discipline and the nature of the research, the existing literature may be reviewed in the introduction or part of a chapter, or a separate literature review chapter may be appropriate. At the doctoral level the last option is the most likely, but again this should be discussed with the supervisor. The purpose of the literature review is to summarise, evaluate and where appropriate compare those main developments and current debates in the field which are specifically relevant to the research area, according to the guiding principle embodied in the thesis statement. In effect, the literature review shows that the writer is familiar with the field and simultaneously lays the ground for subsequent analysis or presentation and discussion of empirical data, as appropriate. Well-selected sources should convince the audience that research gaps have been identified correctly and that the writer has posed the right research questions, which will then be further addressed in subsequent chapters. Rather than simply summarising other authors' work, the chapter should make clear the writer's position in relation to the issues raised. The literature review should have a logical structure (whether by chronological, thematic or other criteria) and this should be made explicit to the reader. Like any other chapter, the literature review chapter should have its own introduction and conclusion.

2.2 Appropriate use of headings and subheadings

Headings should be distinguished from the surrounding text by a larger point size, a different font, bolding, italics, or a combination of these. All headings of the same level should use the same style, and headings at lower levels should be less prominent than those at higher levels. If there are program style guidelines for headings, these should be followed.

Example (not program specific):

<p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER 2 – TITLE (ARIAL BOLD SMALL CAPS 14 POINT)</p> <p><i>2.1 Heading for section (Arial Bold Italic 12 point)</i></p> <p>2.1.1 Heading for sub-section (Times Bold 12 point)</p> <p>2.1.1.1 Heading for part of sub-section (Arial Bold 10 point)</p>
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All headings should be left-aligned, except chapter headings, which may be centred. A heading at the bottom of the page must have at least two full lines of text below it. Otherwise, the heading should begin on the next page. Captions related to visual material (graphs, tables, maps) should appear on the same page as the material itself. Chapter and section headings should be consistently numbered according to the numbering system recommended by the program. It should not normally be necessary to go beyond three levels of sections.

Examples:

Chapter I, section A, subsection 1, sub-subsection a)

or

Chapter 1, section 1.1, subsection 1.1.1, sub-subsection 1.1.1.1

All tables and figures should also be numbered, either sequentially within each section e.g. 1.1, 1.2 and then restarted sequentially in the next section e.g. 2.1, 2.2. Alternatively, they can be sequentially numbered from Table 1, Table 2, etc., throughout the whole work.

Headings should clearly reflect what the chapter or section is about, and should be expressed in the form of a concise noun phrase (normally less than one line), not a sentence. Information which is present in a higher level heading need not be repeated in a subordinate heading. Where possible, headings at the same level of hierarchy should have similar structure (e.g. *3.1 Common Law*, *3.2 Continental Law*, and not *3.1 Common Law*, *3.2 The Supreme Court*).

3. Text Development and Coherence

The master's thesis should be written for a reader who is a specialist in the discipline but not necessarily a specialist on the specific topic or question, even if the immediate supervisor is a specialist in exactly this narrow topic. The doctoral dissertation should be written for a more specialised audience but should remain comprehensible to any member of the defence committee. The writer should take care to ensure that sentences and paragraphs flow logically from each other and do not demand knowledge the reader might not be expected to share in order to make these relationships clear. Where there is doubt as to the connection between two ideas, the onus is on the student to make this explicit not on the reader to try to deduce the connection.

3.1 Paragraph Development

A paragraph is a text unit of several sentences dealing with a single issue, topic or aspect. It should not therefore (except in special circumstances), be a single sentence, nor should it deal with a range of topics. The paragraph should develop one idea, through illustration or analysis, to a conclusion. It should normally start with a topic sentence indicating what it is about, develop this topic through further sentences until the topic is concluded and a new topic or a different aspect is ready to be broached. In linking sentences logically and coherently to one another, the writer should ensure that transition devices (e.g. *however*, *similarly*, *in consequence*, etc) are used appropriately wherever there is a danger that the connection between two sentences may be unclear. Reference back to previous sentences (e.g. *this*, *these*, *such*, *this question*, *these issues*, *this situation*) should also be used wherever it can help make the flow of logic clearer. When an already mentioned theme and new information about it are dealt with in one sentence, the theme should normally come first and the new information second, so as to facilitate the reader's understanding. For more detailed guidelines on paragraph development, students should refer to the Center for Academic Writing's course materials or consult an academic writing instructor.

3.2 Transition between paragraphs

Although a well-structured paragraph is a unit in itself, paragraphs should also logically develop and flow from each other using devices similar to those that link sentences within the paragraph. Where the reason for a shift of topic or approach might be unclear to the reader, this should be explained. Sections, like paragraphs, should have both coherence and cohesion, and should make use of appropriate linguistic devices to lead the reader logically and clearly through the stages of the writer's analysis or exposition.

4. Language and Style

The thesis should be written in an appropriate formal academic style. While it is not possible to prescribe the use or avoidance of the first person or the passive, or the length of sentences, students should make efforts to use the resources available to them, such as style manuals recommended by their program, and the Center for Academic Writing course materials to assess whether their

written style is appropriate to their discipline. Excessive or superfluous use of jargon or technical terms should be avoided and any term or acronym that would not be understood by a non-specialist reader *within the discipline* should be explained and/or included in a glossary. The thesis should wherever possible use gender neutral language, avoiding the use of male-specific words such as ‘man’ or ‘chairman’ where these could be considered inappropriately exclusive or discriminatory.

Students should make every effort to ensure that the thesis is free from grammatical, lexical and punctuation errors. Not only should a computer spellchecker be used, but the student should also proof-read the thesis to check that errors do not remain that are not detected by the spellchecker. The thesis should consistently use **either** American **or** British spelling but should not alternate between the two. Students should also be aware that the punctuation rules of English are almost certainly different from those of their own language and should familiarise themselves with and apply the rules of English.

When using numbers in the text, numbers up to ten should normally be written in words, and if the first word of a sentence is a number it should be written in words. Numbers above ten are usually written as numerals (12, 102). For precise guidance, students should consult the style manual recommended by their program.

It is the student’s duty to use the available resources during the year so as to master the skills necessary to write a thesis that is as far as possible error free, and so as to be able to proof-read that thesis and correct their own errors. Details of the precise use of punctuation can be found here: <http://caw.ceu.edu/online-writing-resources#Language>. The website also includes resources for the learning and correction of grammar points.

5. Use of sources and citation style

All source materials, primary or secondary, published or unpublished that are the intellectual property of authors or institutions other than the writer of the thesis must be credited and correctly cited in full, including illustrations, charts, tables, etc. *Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism and may result in a failing grade.* Students’ attention is drawn to the following extract from CEU’s Policy on Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct. It is a practice that involves taking and using another person’s work and claiming it, directly or indirectly, as one’s own. Plagiarism occurs both when the words of another are reproduced without acknowledgement, and when the ideas or arguments of another are paraphrased in such a way as to lead the reader to believe that they originated with the writer. It is the responsibility of all University students to understand the methods of proper attribution and to apply those principles in all materials submitted.¹

5.1 Use of Citation Styles

All citations should include a reference in the body of the text to the author as well as an entry in the bibliography/reference list. How this should be done is indicated by the citation style chosen for the thesis (e.g. Chicago, Harvard, APA, Blue Book.) The thesis should consistently use a single citation style as specified by the program, (or agreed with the supervisor, if the program permits flexibility). For precise details on citation style, students should always consult the style manual recommended by their program. For further information on the use of sources, students should refer to Writing Center course materials and/or the following web-link:

¹ Central European University's Policy on Plagiarism. Downloadable from <https://documents.ceu.edu>

<http://caw.ceu.edu/online-writing-resources#Citation>

5.2 Quotation, paraphrase and summary

Source material should be quoted where the precise wording is specifically relevant or significant, and the quotation always clearly marked as required by the citation style, including page numbers. Sources may be paraphrased or summarised where exact wording is not essential, but care should be taken not to change the original meaning through paraphrase, and all paraphrased and summarised sources must be fully cited, including page numbers. Where a quotation has been changed (for example, capitalisation, punctuation, emphasis changed or a pronoun replaced by a noun), the changes should be clearly indicated according to the citation style used.

Although interaction with existing research in the field is a requirement for all academic writing, no part of the thesis should normally consist purely of summarising the work of others, unless approved by the supervisor. Summarised or quoted source material should not be left to stand on its own, but should be introduced, explained, analysed and the purpose of its use made clear. Where different sources are compared or contrasted, it should be made explicit to the reader both that this is being done and why.

Care should be taken to ensure that the reader is in no doubt as to where a cited author's ideas end and the comments of the author of the thesis begin. Where there is doubt, the cited author's name (or s/he) can be used in the sentence with an appropriate verb reporting what that person has said so as to distinguish it from the ideas of the author of the thesis.

5.3 Data Commentary

Where data is provided in the form of charts, figures or tables, it should be effectively commented. This includes not only a clear reference in the text to the table or figure in which the reader can find the data (e.g. 'as table 1 shows'), and a summary of what the data shows. Trends or irregularities should also be highlighted and the more important findings separated from those that are less important. The commentary should not simply repeat in sentences all the information presented in the diagram but should also discuss implications, problems and/or exceptions in relation to the data in question. As with any other material taken from the work of other researchers, the source of the table, graph, illustration, figure or related materials must be stated at the bottom or in a footnote as specified in the program style guidelines.

6. Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD)²

Students must prepare and submit their theses or dissertations according to the CEU Thesis Writing Guidelines (this document) and the program-specific guidelines. Students are also required to convert their thesis/dissertation into a bookmarked PDF (Portable Document Format) and to upload the electronic document to CEU's Electronic Thesis and Dissertations (ETD) collection, following the specific requirements of their program.

Detailed information on how to create and upload a PDF to the ETD collection is available on the ETD Guidelines page of the Computer and Statistics Center's webpage or on CEU's e-Learning website:

- <http://www.personal.ceu.hu/comp>

- <http://e-learning.ceu.hu/course/category.php?id=21> (Other Units / Computer and Statistics Center / Thesis Submission)

² Amendment September 2007, following Senate decision on ETD.

6.1. Formatting an ETD

Students should plan for formatting their thesis from the very beginning. It is important to submit an ETD that has a consistent appearance.

1. Use tabs, page breaks and section breaks in formatting your text. Use MS Word tools for creating cross-references and tables of contents to forego inconsistent pagination.
2. Except for the title page and abstract, number all pages in your thesis.
3. Use standard fonts such as Times New Roman for normal body text.
4. Use only the following picture formats: JPEG, GIF, TIF and PNG. For onscreen viewing use a resolution of 72 or 75 dpi (dots per inch).

Use Heading styles (Heading 1 through 9) for your chapter titles and subtitles. These will later serve as internal navigational aids into your ETD. All submitted PDF documents MUST have bookmark links.

6.2. Creating an ETD

To convert the word document into the required bookmarked PDF, follow the Thesis Submission Guidelines at either of the above mentioned websites. Please make sure that pagination is consistent and all hyperlinks and headings are fully functional. The ETD file must display clearly and properly on a monitor screen.

Files submitted in unacceptable or corrupted formats will be rejected.

6.3. Uploading an ETD

After converting the thesis from MS Word document into PDF format, upload your PDF to the CEU Electronic Theses and Dissertations Collection at <http://etd.ceu.edu>. Each ETD will be made available through the Library catalogue in compliance with pertinent copyright laws.

6.4. ETD Electronic License Agreement

Upon submission of the ETD, students will be asked to accept the terms of the ETD Electronic License Agreement. A copy of this agreement is appended to this document, see Appendix 3. Uploaded theses will be publicly available online as a default requirement. Restrictions may be requested as set out in the [Student Rights, Rules, and Regulations](#).

Concluding comments

It is the duty of the student to ensure that the thesis meets the standards described above, and the duty of the supervisor and the program to ensure that the student takes the necessary steps to meet these requirements. Where a thesis fails to meet the requirements in one or more areas, it may be returned for revision and resubmission, or in the case of plagiarism, a failing grade awarded. Students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the above guidelines and to seek help from the support facilities provided by the university (Center for Academic Writing, CEU Library, assistance from relevant faculty, etc.) whenever necessary and in good time.

Signed by *CEU President and Rector Michael Ignatieff*.

The original document is filed at the Office of the Academic Secretary.

Sample Title Page

Socio-political and Economic Issues in Post-Communist Ruthenia

By
Anna Other

Submitted to
Central European University
Department/School/Program.....

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of ...

Supervisor: Professor Mary Lamb

Budapest, Hungary
2013

Sample page of thesis

CHAPTER 1: CAUSES OF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

A number of seemingly convincing explanations has been offered to account for the reasons *why* countries decide to develop nuclear weapons. However, nobody challenges the argument that perception of external threats plays a fundamental role in driving the countries to develop their nuclear weapons programs. This chapter assesses these different explanations and argues in favor of the traditional, security threat-based explanation as the most pertinent to the Indian-Pakistani conflict.

1.1 Alternative Theoretical Explanations for Nuclear Proliferation

Acquisition of the nuclear weapons provides states with a powerful means of leverage in international conflicts. Different theories in the realm of International Relations suggest alternative explanations for the causes of nuclear proliferation. While all of them contribute to our understanding of *why* nations want nuclear weapons, the explanation provided by the realist/neo-realist school still dominates all the others. It argues that the external threats perceived from the real or potential adversaries, especially nuclear ones, force the states to acquire nuclear weapons to be able to protect themselves by threatening to retaliate in kind, which in turn, causes a security dilemma. This explanation appears to be the most relevant and applicable to the Indian-Pakistani case³ for the reasons that will be further elaborated here.

1.1.1 The Security Threat-Based Explanation

While the debate in IR theory over the causes of states' decisions to acquire nuclear weapons and engage in an arms race is divided, many policymakers and most international relations scholars agree on the traditional and perhaps the most powerful and convincing explanations for...

³ For this suggestion, see Joshua Goldstein, *International Relations* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 68, 205

<i>Document information</i>	
Type	Guidelines
Number	G-0712-1v1806
Title	CEU Thesis Writing and Electronic Thesis and Dissertations (ETD) submission guidelines for master's theses and doctoral dissertations
Distribution	Internal
Filename	
Notes	
Related documents	Student Rights, Rules, and Regulations CEU Doctoral Regulations
For final documents	
Approved by:	Senate
Date of approval	December 7, 2007 amended August 19, 2014 and June 8, 2018
Enters force	August 19, 2014
Lead unit	Center for Academic Writing