

Writing a Thesis

*Official Guidelines of the Centre for Social Studies,
Warsaw*

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Writing a Thesis - Official Guidelines

The Centre for Social Studies, Warsaw

General

This set of guidelines is meant to help CSS candidates to write and present their final course dissertations in an appropriate manner. The need for this document partially originated in the demand from previous years' students, who expressed the wish for some official writing procedures and suggestions to recourse to in times of doubt. This was especially felt by those who had no previous experience of writing such a paper. As such, these guidelines are not meant to be prescriptive; however, candidates are strongly advised to adhere to them closely and wherever possible.

Generally, candidates should aim to take pride in the presentation of their work, and nowhere is this truer than in the presentation of theses. It is more than a symbol or representation of the writer; a paper well-presented and according to conventions is more likely to garner a positive or sympathetic response from its markers, no matter how subconscious this may be.

Please check the course handbook for related information.

1. **Pages.**

1.1 *Size.* Type A4 paper should be used exclusively.

1.2 *Orientation.* The 'Portrait' orientation (i.e. with the shorter edges of A4 paper at the top and bottom) should be used for all pages of text. Landscape may be used for diagrams, line drawings, etc.

1.3 *Margins.* Most computer word-processor programs should be set to something approximating 1" all around the page, or with 1.25" on the left- and right-hand sides. Either of these is suitable. In the event of a student taking his or her thesis to a professional binder, a larger left-hand margin will probably be recommended.

2. **Paragraphs.**

2.1 *Indentation.* New paragraphs should be indented (with no space between paragraphs).

2.2 *Size.* If there is need, please confer with the Academic Writing Tutor as to paragraph length. As a rule of thumb, paragraphs in academic writing should fully develop *one* idea, piece of evidence or aspect of theory. Any change in subject should be accompanied by a new paragraph.

3. Text.

3.1 *Size.* Size 12 should be used for all regular script.

3.2 *Font.* Times New Roman, or some close equivalent, is preferable for all regular script. Others may be used for headings, titles, labelling, etc.

3.3 *Use of bold and italic.* These should be used logically and consistently, and not indiscriminately. Occasions which may warrant the use of italics include: to denote emphasis; to denote theories or concepts to be used (first mention *only*); titles of books or articles, etc. (not to be used together with inverted commas); foreign and technical terms which can not be rendered or translated directly into English.

3.4 *Alignment.* Text should be justified (i.e. text stretched to fill the margins of each side of the page).

4. Lines.

4.1 *Spacing.* Spacing between lines should be 1.5, as the best compromise between ease of reading and retaining paragraph shape.

4.2 *Columns.* A single column should be used, including where text surrounds tables, graphs, etc.

5. Page information.

5.1 *Page numbers.* Page numbers must be included, and they should be located in the top right corner of each page, except where they are provided by default by the word-processing programme.

5.2 *Headers.* Headers may be used to denote a section or chapter, etc. They should not be used as footnotes, i.e. to provide referencing or other information. Moreover, candidates are advised to use headers sparingly and to avoid any potential confusion for readers.

5.3 *Footers.* The footers option on most word-processing programmes may be used to provide additional explanation, but not for references (see section 7 on referencing).

5.4 *Labelling.* All tables, graphs, charts and pictures, etc., should be labelled.

6. Presentation.

6.1 *Title page.* All copies of all theses submitted should include a title page, on which should appear the following information: the name of the candidate (on *one copy only* - see section 9. 'Submissions' below); the title of the thesis; the year of submission; the name of the supervisor; the name of the institution; the track that the candidate has followed (e.g. *Economy and Society* or *Society and Politics*); the qualification for which it is being admitted (e.g. Master of Arts). This information should be centred on the page; in other respects it may be presented as the candidate wishes.

6.2 *Contents page.* The contents page should be the first page after the title page; its function is to detail everything that follows thereafter ('Contents' should appear as the page heading). Presentation is again the choice of the candidate, but obviously again it should be stressed that clarity is the most important factors in a contents page. All subsequent contents should be noted, with the page numbers of where they are to be found. If desired, a second contents page detailing the tables, figures, etc., may be given, provided that there are sufficient of these to justify it.

6.3 *Acknowledgements.* If so desired, candidates may include an acknowledgements page listing *those people who were instrumental to their research only* (e.g. supervisors, translators, etc.).

6.4 *Appendices.* These may be included, at the end of the thesis, to present material which was extraneous in the main text but which the candidate nonetheless feels adds

some light to the project and would like to submit. This might include statistical information, surveys, questionnaire master-copies, interview schedules, lists of respondents, etc. However, it should be understood that too much material will certainly be unwelcome, and that appendices should be restricted to the absolutely necessary.

6.5 *References*. The last item of any given thesis should be a list of *all* the materials (books, articles, as well as other media) used in the work. This should be titled 'References,' and in keeping with all other aspects of the thesis should be presented clearly using the American Psychological Association (APA) style guidelines. See Appendix 2 for examples.

7. Referencing in the text.

7.1 *Summary*. Candidates are strongly encouraged to use the *in-text citation method* (also called "embedded citation) following the APA style.

7.2 *In-text citation*. The reference (author's name, year of publication, page number) is included in the text in the following fashion:

McKlusky claims that "theology is dead, and always has been" (1986, p. 34).

Note the order of characters. The first numbers in parentheses is the year of publication, and the second the page number that the quotation was taken from. The following is also possible:

McKlusky (1986) claims that "theology is dead, and always has been" (p. 34).

The third possibility is as follows:

It was claimed that "theology is dead, and always has been" (McKlusky, 1986, p. 34).

When paraphrasing an idea from another work (and not using a direct quotation), you only have to make reference to the author and year of publication in your in-text citation, but you are encouraged to also provide the page number if possible.

When an electronic source lacks page numbers, you should try to include information that will help readers find the passage being cited. When an electronic document has numbered paragraphs, use the abbreviation "para." followed by the paragraph number (McKlusky, 2001, para. 5). If the paragraphs are not numbered and the document includes headings, provide the appropriate heading and specify the paragraph under that heading.

If the author is unknown or not mentioned you should use the first few words of the reference list entry (usually the title), for example: ("Migration Trends," 1992).

7.3 *Footnotes*. Footnotes are meant to remove referential figures and explanations from the main text. Their use should conform to points 5.3 above.

7.4 *Occasions to refer*. Candidates are expected to be fully aware of when and how to refer to other authors in the text; this forms a standard piece of academic practice and integrity, and avoids potential problems with plagiarism. Thus, candidates are advised to consult the Academic Writing Tutor if at all unsure; and, more generally, to carefully note their references throughout the period of writing. It is very bad practice

to write the thesis first and organise the references later. The following are considered to be occasions where referencing is necessary.

7.41 *Quotation*. The verbatim use of another author's words, i.e. using the words exactly as they appear in another work. As such, they must appear within speech or quotation marks (see 7.5 below). Clearly, in order for a reference to be given, a quotation must consist of a statement or phrase long enough to be considered as an original idea or semantic structure. A phrase such as 'of the masses,' which could easily appear in speech or writing without theoretical significance, may be written without the use of quotation marks. Similarly, so-called 'common domain' knowledge, colloquialisms, figures of speech, etc., need not be presented as quotations (but see 7.5 below). However, candidates are advised to take the utmost care when considering the use of quoted material.

7.42 *Paraphrasing*. When paraphrasing another author, even if this is without the use of any quoted material, referencing is necessary.

7.43 *Use of ideas*. When mentioning or using the ideas or terminology of another author, then referencing is necessary.

7.5 *Use of quotation marks*. All quoted material should use double quotation marks, such as these: "...". Single marks ('...') should be used for the quotation within a quotation (i.e. where a quoted author cites a third party). Single marks should also be used when the candidate wishes to identify that part of the text as a concept, stock phrase, etc. Quotation marks such as „...”, which are not standard at British universities, should be avoided.

7.6 *Relation to list of references*. All works which have been referred to must be included in the reference list, no matter how many times they have been mentioned in the text, or what information has been previously given

7.7 *Works published in the same year*. Where a candidate has referred to more than one article or book published in a single year by the same author, then the works must be distinguished by the use of lower-case letters (1984a, 1984b, 1984c), assigned at the candidate's discretion.

7.8 *More than one author*. Where a work has two authors, both should be named when referencing. Where there are more than two, the use of 'et al.' to save space is advised: Mulholland et al. (1984). For the reference list, see section 6.5.

7.9 *Names*. It is only necessary to give the surname of the cited author, unless they are commonly known otherwise, e.g. D. H. Lawrence. Initials may also be used when there is more than author with the same surname. There should be a space between each initial, as in the example above.

7.10 *Sources in other languages*. When quoting from a source in a language other than English, an English translation must be included. Candidates can translate the quotations if they feel competent in doing so. It does not need to be mentioned in the text that the candidate is using his/her translation.

8. **Abstracts**. An abstract is required to be submitted as part of every thesis. In short, the abstract is a very short piece of writing (around 250 words) which is meant to summarise concisely the entirety of the contents. Therefore, it should include the aim of the thesis, the theoretical bases or predicates, a summary of important evidence and/or empirical findings, interpretation of this, conclusions, and anything else which is central or of substance.

9. **Submission**. Two copies of the thesis are required to be submitted by October 12, 2009 at 13.00 (for students following the 12-month programme, October 2010 for the 2-year programme). Candidates must either submit their thesis in person or by registered post. If a candidate chooses to submit by post, the thesis **must ARRIVE on or before October 12**. Also, it is strongly recommended that the candidate ask for a receipt from the post office as proof of sending the thesis. Of the two copies, one should bear the name of the candidate, and the other not (see 6.1 above). **MAKE SURE THAT THE RELEVANT SUBMISSION FORMS AND OTHER COMMITMENTS ARE FULFILLED**. You will be required to have forms signed by the chief librarian, the IFiS library, the accountant, and your supervisor.

10. **Binding**. There are binding facilities which may be used in the library.

11. **Common typographical errors**. The following are common typographical errors which should be avoided. Please proofread work before bringing it to the Academic Writing Tutor; it will save time.

11.1 *Double spaces*. Two spaces between words instead of one. An easy way to eradicate this is to use the 'find' function on Microsoft Word to find ' ' .

11.2 *Incorrect punctuation spacing*. Punctuation marks such as commas, full stops (periods), semi-colons, colons, questions marks and exclamation marks should be joined to the preceding word (i.e. with no space). Where a compound word is hyphenated (such as 'hyper-relativism'), there should be no spaces between either part of the word and the hyphen, as in the example given. Where dashes are used - like this - there should be a space between the dash and each word. Where parentheses are used, there should be no space between them and the parenthesised (internal) text (like this).

11.3 *Bracketing*. For their common functions of providing additional information or referencing, round brackets, more correctly called *parentheses*, should be used (like these). The use of brackets within brackets is not recommended, but is correctly executed by placing square brackets [...] within the parentheses.

11.4 *Spelling*. Please use the spell-check facility provided on every word-processing programme before submission. Please choose between British and American spelling, and try to keep to them consistently.

12. **Using the Academic Writing Services.** The thesis is the final piece of work that candidates undertake as MA students at CSS, so it is worth ensuring that it is well-presented and with error-free English. It is also the longest. Therefore, when coming to tutorials, students should bring no more than about ten pages per session, as little more than this can be achieved in an average tutorial under normal circumstances. Candidates are also asked to check the basics before they come to tutorials: spacing, punctuation, and spelling. Lastly, candidates should be aware of the *Writing a Thesis* course provided by the Academic Writing Tutor in the spring and endeavour to attend as many elements as possible, especially those with which the candidate does not have prior familiarity or competence.

Appendix 1 - Key Thesis Dates

Deadline for submitting outline	—	End of first term
Writing a Thesis course	—	March-June
Academic Writing Tutor available for thesis-related tutorials	—	September-October
First draft due	—	August 31 (or to be agreed with supervisor)
Final deadline	—	October 12, 2009
Marking	—	From submission to end of December (approx.)
External examiners' meeting	—	January
Candidates receive grades	—	Grades posted/advertised after the external examiners' meeting
Diplomas posted	—	March/April

Appendix 2 - Quick Guide to Making a Reference List

You should always provide a complete list of references at the end of your thesis, which lists all the sources that you have referenced. This should be titled 'References.' Remember that the reference list should be in alphabetical order by author's last name. Please see the APA style guidelines for more information on how to make a reference list.

Here are a few examples of how to make entries for different texts:

A book

Stark, O. (1991). *The migration of labour*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Ltd.

Two books by the same author, published in the same year

Saunders, P. (1990a). *Social class and stratification*. London: Routledge.

Saunders, P. (1990b). *Social mobility*. London: Routledge.

A book by two authors

Castles, S., & Miller, M. J. (1999). *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.

A chapter of a book

Honekopp, E. (1999). Germany. In John Ardittis (Ed.), *The politics of east-west migration*. (pp. 50-90). London: Macmillan Press Ltd.

A book with an editor or translator

Layton-Henry, Z. (Ed.). (2001). *The political rights of migrant workers in Western Europe*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

A newspaper article

Wilson, D. (2002, May 18). Do maquiladoras matter? *New York Times Magazine*.

An article in a journal

Bustamante, J. A. (2004). Mexico-United States Labour Migration Flows. *The International Migration Review*, 31, 1-4.

Online document

Leven, S. B. (2003). *Migration in figures*. Retrieved January 2, 2004, from <http://www.iom.int/articles.html>

Appendix 3 - Short Guide to the Use of Articles in English

The (the definite article)

- Before nouns, but never before the names of people, or most other names (“Adorno’s idea” is does *not* need an article; it is also better than “the idea of Adorno” or “the conception of Adorno” with their obvious double meanings), although the article is a part of some names.

- Before the adjectives that modify/refer to the nouns.

- Usually not with uncountable nouns, except where one of the following may apply.

1. When there is only one of something (*the next, the end, the beginning, the war in Africa, the Enlightenment project*, but not *the Beethoven’s 5th Symphony*. Also usually with ordinal numbers.).

2. When we know the things that is being referred to, i.e. it is obvious or it has been referred to before - the first time we use the indefinite article: “There was a man in the park. The man was waiting for a woman”; “the early stages of development.”

3. Usually, in possessive structures with *of*. “The thinking of the group was that...”; “The activity of the Nazis...”. Notice in the latter example that an uncountable noun is preceded by *the*. In general, however, direct possessive structures are better in English.

4. With superlatives: *the first, the last, the best*.

5. With many social groups: *the unemployed, the elderly, the middle class*.

6. With certain phenomena: *the mind, the future, the past, the truth*.

7. Either article may be used when a hypothetical, singular noun is being described: “the man in the street may...”; “the/a Romanian citizen would see that...” .

8. In a number of stock/regular phrases (which of course includes cliches, etc.) - “better the devil you know”; “the eye of the storm” - so be careful. Also: “in the terminology of Marcuse,” “on the one hand/on the other,” “in the sunshine.”

9. When talking about a general class: *The novel is the most popular form of fiction*.

These rules only cover about 90%+ of all possible usages, and each has its exceptions.

A/an (the indefinite article)

- Again, before uncountable nouns. The same general rules as for *the*.
- The simple search on the British National Corpus website gave 2224071 solutions for *a*, compared to 2165569 for *the*.

1. Where we are referring to one of many things or many possible types of things. So: *He was a cowboy* (i.e. one of a plurality of cowboys); *She chose a strawberry ice-cream* (i.e. there are many types of ice-cream and this was the one she chose).
2. Where we do not know the thing being referred to; it is the first time (cf. point 2 of *the*, above).
3. As with *the*, there are many stock phrases with *a*: what a *surprise!*, *at a time when*, *to make a profit*, *a long time*. Again, beware of clichés: *it cost an arm and a leg*.
4. As with *the*, the indefinite article may be used to express a hypothetical or archetypal idea: *management was replacing their old authoritarian image with that of a benevolent or sympathetic parent*.
5. With fractions (*a fifth = one fifth*).
6. In many cases, when describing type (*a beautiful city*).
7. With occupations (*She is a doctor*).
8. In definitions: “a thesaurus is a book that provides synonyms.”

Zero article

1. Before describing quality (i.e. with adjectives): *The edifice is large and impressive* (but *it is a large and impressive edifice*).
2. Before uncountable nouns, except where one of the preceding applies: so *They went to buy furniture*, but *The children were jumping on the furniture at home*.
3. Whenever writing about generalities.

Appendix 4 - Transliteration of Russian into Latin Characters

<u>Cyrillic Alphabet</u>	<u>Romanized equivalent (suggested)</u>
А а	a
Б б	b
В в	v
Г г	g
Д д	d
Е е	ye, e
Ё ё	yë, ë
Ж ж	zh
З з	z
И и	i
Й й	y
К к	k
Л л	l
М м	m
Н н	n
О о	o
П п	p
Р р	r
С с	s
Т т	t
У у	u
Ф ф	f
Х х	kh
Ц ц	ts
Ч ч	ch
Ш ш	sh
Щ щ	shch
Ъ ъ	” (separates two parts of a word)
Ы ы	y
Ь ь	’ (softens the preceding consonant)
Э э	e
Ю ю	yu
Я я	ya

Names familiar to English-speaking readers should be retained in this form. Capitalizations in Cyrillic should be retained in the Romanized transliteration. Punctuation, where it differs, should be given in the English (this refers, for example, to speech marks [“...”] and suspension points [...]). Principles of word division should be retained in any transliterated version.

Appendix 5 - Conventions of Formal Outlining

In formal outlining, there are common conventions in terms of numbering and indentation that establish and illustrate hierarchy and the relationship between chapters, sections, and sub-sections. The table below gives details of a commonly used formal outlining system.

- I. Roman numerals appear on the left margin of the page and denote the major divisions of a text, i.e. chapters.
 - A. Upper-case letters (capital letters) are the first indentation and denote the secondary ideas that will support a major division in a text.
 1. Arabic numerals are indented under upper-case letters.
 2. Arabic numerals denote significant examples that support a writer's ideas and general thesis.
 - a. Lower-case letters are indented under Arabic numbers.
 - b. Lower-case letters denote specific details or an explanation of an example's main point.
 - B. The division of a chapter into a number of secondary ideas is common.
- II. Formal outlines contain more than one major division reflecting the number of chapters in the thesis.

Appendix 6 - Declaration

The following declaration must be included in all theses. It should be the first page following the contents page, and should be copied verbatim (i.e. word for word) as follows:

Declaration

This is a thesis submitted to the Centre for Social Studies for the degree of Master of Arts. I hereby declare that the thesis has been written by myself without any unauthorised help, and that no portion of the work herein has been either previously published or submitted in support of a degree or other qualification to this or any other university or institution of learning. Any parts, words or ideas, of the thesis, however limited, and including tables, graphs, maps, etc., which are quoted from or based on other sources have been acknowledged as such without exception.