

**MA THESIS GUIDELINES
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

Last revised 5 Sept, 2015

MA THESIS GUIDELINES

This guide provides information concerning the thesis project. It includes deadlines and important instructions on the formatting and construction of your thesis as established by the Department of History of the Central European University.

General Overview

The thesis is a scholarly work, an extensive analytical research paper relying on both primary sources and secondary literature, written in English with grammatical accuracy and in good academic style. The thesis must identify an adequate research topic, which includes a manageable field of research involving a number of original questions to investigate. The narrative must contain original argument, show a convincing knowledge of the literature in the field, and demonstrate analytic faculties through the careful and critical use of the sources, the relevant concepts and approaches. Theses must also conform to the departmental academic style guidelines.

Important Deadlines

Throughout the year, the Department of History has a number of deadlines to assist you in conceptualizing and finishing your thesis within the prescribed schedule. The procedure for completing these tasks is to submit them to the Academic Writing Instructor for review, then to your advisor(s). For the Thesis Proposal and the Selection of Two Advisors, there is the additional requirement to submit a copy to the Coordinator of the one-year MA program.

Department Deadlines

Assignment	Due Date
Thesis Title and Advisors	November 23, 2015
Thesis Proposal	December 7, 2015
Research Chapter	May 3 (at earliest)
Spring Thesis Workshops	May 3–20, 2016
Thesis Submission	June 10 (Friday, till 13:00)
Final Examinations	June 15, 16, 17, 20, 21

Academic Writing Class Deadlines

Thesis Proposal (draft)	December 1, 2015
Annotated Bibliography	February 8, 2016
Working Introduction	March 14, 2016

Thesis Title and Academic Advisors

Students are required to submit to the Academic Coordinator information designating a primary advisor, a second reader, and the title of the MA Thesis.

Choosing Your Academic Advisors (Supervisor and Second reader)

The Department does not assign supervisors *ex officio* to students. The supervisors and second readers need to be selected by the students themselves. In this process, they are welcome to rely on advice from relevant departmental faculty, especially the Head of the Department and the Director of the One-Year MA Program. The supervisor and second reader allocations are discussed at a faculty meeting, which may then advise alternatives. If changes in a thesis topic justify it, it is possible to alter one's supervisor at the beginning of the Winter Term.

Class Attendance

Regular attendance is mandatory in all taught classes. Students may miss up to two units (two 100-minute sessions) in any 2 or 4 credit class without giving an explanation for their absence. Any further absence without a verified reason beyond the student's control will be made up for by an 8-10 page paper assigned by the Professor, as a rule covering the material of the class missed. The paper has to be submitted not later than three weeks after the missed class.

Thesis Proposal

This is a 4-8 page paper describing your thesis project. It should include a clear thesis statement (or hypothesis), the "thesis question", the focus of your thesis, and a structured outline of the planned treatment of your subject, possibly divided into sections under prospective chapter headings; a preliminary list of sources, the location of those sources, and the anticipated results of the project. This is to be submitted to your Academic Writing Instructor for review and then submitted to the Academic Coordinator by the designated date.

Annotated Bibliography of Sources

The Annotated Bibliography is a list of possible sources and their expected contribution to your thesis project. This is a preliminary list of sources you plan to consult when conducting your research on your thesis. It contains short descriptions and evaluations of ten major bibliographic items to be used for your project. These will be either books or articles/studies within books or journals. The purpose is to provide your advisor(s) with a potential list of sources and allow your advisor(s) to recommend further sources and/or comment on the sources listed in the bibliography. This is to be submitted to your Academic Writing Instructor for review and then discussed in a meeting with your advisor.

Working Introduction

To write a fitting introduction, you need to have acquired a mature knowledge of the subject of the thesis and even familiarity with the main text. Therefore, a good academic essay writer puts the final touches to the Introduction at the very end of the project, perhaps even after the Conclusion has been finalized. Nonetheless, it is a necessary part of the systematic build-up of thesis work to have a Working Introduction ready before the research (and possible theory) chapters are embarked on. The final text may differ from this working draft significantly.

There are wide variations for the implementation of this assignment. It may or may not contain a theoretical framework essay, and it may or may not contain a major historiographical-bibliographical assessment. Yet, it is possible to provide general guidance. The Working Introduction ordinarily contains a thesis statement, describing the central, controlling idea that drives the inquiry contained in the main body of the thesis. It may delineate the significance of the subject-matter among related areas. The Introduction briefly situates the idea behind the subject-matter in an academic context, focuses the reader's attention and generates expectations on the part of the reader. It may contain comments regarding specific terminology or special sources that will be used in the thesis. The length of the Working (and final) Introduction should not exceed 5-15 pages.

A separate set of rules will be handed to you by the Academic Writing instructors of the Center for Academic Writing which prescribes, among other things, the number of mandatory consultations with the AW instructors during the periods of preparation for the various assignments.

Research Chapter

On return from the research break, you will be required to submit to your academic advisor a draft chapter of your thesis, which is the result of the research work that you have carried out and addresses the core issues of the subject of your thesis. In most cases, this chapter will constitute the basis of your presentation at the Thesis Workshops. The purpose is to receive preliminary comments and advice before you make the presentation or incorporate the chapter into the wider context of your thesis.

Thesis Workshops

During the month of May, all one-year MA students will have the opportunity to present one chapter of their thesis to their colleagues and faculty at the MA Thesis Workshops. Students are assigned to workshop groups of about 8-10 students, headed by a faculty member. Students circulate a copy of their chapter to the other students in the group prior to their presentation to allow peer critiques. Supervisors are usually present during the presentation of the research chapters.

Thesis Submission

Three bound copies should be delivered to the Academic Coordinator of the Department of History by the required date of submission.

The final electronic version of the thesis also has to be uploaded to the “ETD database”, which is stored in the thesis/dissertation collection of the CEU Library. The theses stored in this database are accessible online according to the distribution option set by the author. The Computer Center will organize tutorials in May (well before the task is due) on the uploading process, showing you: How to structure and format your thesis correctly for uploading; How to convert a thesis into a PDF file in the required format; and the exact process of uploading the final pdf file.

The deadline for the submission of the MA theses will be announced by the Department. It is unalterable and must be met by all students who wish to fulfill the academic requirements. In very exceptional cases, the department may grant postponement of submission. These cases may be one of two kinds:

1. When a student, during the months of March or April, realizes that his/her research has not yielded a sufficient quality or quantity of material to bring the thesis to completion by the current graduation period. He/she may then request temporary withdrawal from the program. Temporary withdrawal on this basis must be initiated before the start of the Spring Session. The request must be supported by the supervisor's recommendation and followed by the establishment of a final and non-negotiable deadline for submitting the thesis after the summer break.
2. Where circumstances demonstrably beyond a particular student's control (e.g. serious health, family, personal safety or technical issues) prevent submission within the deadline, postponement of submission may be initiated. This must be reported to the department via the coordinators, and supported by relevant (medical or other) documents.

In all other cases of late submission, a grade penalty will apply: the passing of each 24-hour cycle calculated from the deadline entails the deduction of one grade during the evaluation of the thesis. (E.g.: 48 hours of delay means that the best possible grade for the thesis is B+ instead of A.)

Final Examination, including Thesis Defense

The Final Examination is a composite oral examination scheduled for the last week of the Spring Session. It is an approximately 50-minute academic discussion, of which the Thesis Defense takes up most of the available time. The three-member Examination Committee is chaired by the Second Reader of the MA thesis; the second member of the Committee is the First Supervisor of the examinee, and there is a third, external, member. Unless the Second Reader is external to CEU, the Third Member of the Committee is normally the external member, who is not a CEU professor.

The Defense part begins with a brief statement by the student on the principal findings of the thesis, and continues with the three examiners' observations, questions and comments. Following the defense stage, the Third Member of the Examination Committee will lead the panel in asking the candidate two or three additional questions. They will aim to explore the wider conceptual, geographical and temporal implications and significance of the candidate's research questions and his/her answers proposed in the MA thesis.

A document entitled "Protocol for Conducting Final Examinations in Master of Arts Programs in the Department of History at CEU", explaining the Final Examination procedure in full detail, is attached at the end of these guidelines.

Grading Assessment of the MA Thesis

Theses in the 1YMA program are graded according to criteria of substantive argumentation, original findings, and style. Theses deemed worthy of the "A" grade must exhibit high quality in all three domains - excellence in one cannot compensate for shortcomings in another. The presentation of the argument should be such that the generalist reader can readily ascertain the scholarly stakes even if certain subtleties are lost, while the specialist reader can easily identify the relationship of the thesis to a larger body of literature and not detect serious gaps. The quality of argumentation is assessed at multiple levels: with respect to key concepts and theoretical approaches employed in the wider profession, practical engagement with more circumscribed debates, or simply the consistent use of working terminology throughout the body of the thesis. The best theses will also demonstrate a reflexive awareness of how the problem addressed may, in turn, shed light on the scope and uses of historical inquiry. All theses should show mastery of source work, whether archival documents, published works, oral interviews, etc. The best theses employ a sophisticated apparatus of empirical demonstration that is sensitive to the ethics of accuracy and is capable of weaving together disparate source genres in an original fashion. Regardless of region or era, method or sources, each thesis should further exemplify fluency in presentation, aiming to win the reader through polished prose and rhetorical sophistication.

THESIS FORMAT

Length

The thesis should be about 18,000-22,000 words in length including footnotes, but not the bibliography and appendices.

Language

The thesis must be written in English. Quotations from foreign languages must be translated into English, while the original language text may be included in a footnote. The only exceptions to this are short quotations in Latin or French. Book, journal, and newspaper titles may appear in their original languages as long as English translations are given in parentheses at the first occurrence. Cyrillic, Arabic and other non-Latin scripts must be transcribed into Latin script. Consult with your academic writing instructor or advisor concerning proper transliteration procedures.

In summary, the thesis is an extensive analytical research paper relying on both primary sources and secondary literature, written in good academic style.

Fonts

Most 12-point fonts are acceptable. It is recommended that the student use Arial or Times New Roman font.

Margins

All margins must be 2.5 cm on the top, bottom, and right. The left margin must be 2.8 cm to compensate for binding and the right margin is justified.

Spacing

You should use double-spacing in the abstract and text of the thesis. Single spacing is to be used in long tables, quotations separated from the text, footnotes, and bibliographical entries.

Subheadings at the bottom of the page should have at least two full lines of text below it. Otherwise, the subheading should begin on the next page.

See the *Turabian Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* for specific instructions regarding spacing of other materials.

Page Numbering

Page numbers are required on all main body text of the thesis. Page number placement may be on the top or bottom of the page. However, the location should be consistent throughout the thesis.

All page numbers in the main body of the thesis should be in Arabic script. Page number placement begins on the acknowledgment page.

Footnotes

Either footnotes or endnotes may be used in the thesis. Embedded citation is not permitted. Footnotes should conform to the margins of the paper. They are to be written in the same font as used in the thesis but in 10-point size.

Footnotes should follow the Turabian *Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. For citation of material not included in the manual, consult the Academic Writing Instructor.

Tables, Graphs and Figures

Tables, graphs, illustrations, figures, and related materials should be numbered and titled by a system that makes them uniquely identifiable. The source should be stated at the bottom of the table, graph, illustration, figure or related materials. There is no requirement to list these separately in the Table of Contents page, but it is recommended.

The Components of the Thesis

The optional and required components of the thesis are listed below.

Component	Optional/Required
Title Page	Required
Copyright Notice	Required
Abstract	Required
Acknowledgments	Optional
Preface	Optional
Table of Contents	Required
List of Tables	Optional
Introduction	Required
Framework chapter	Optional
Body of Thesis	Required
Appendices	Optional
End(Notes)	(If endnotes are used)
Bibliography	Required

Title Page

Using the sample provided at the end of this guide, the Title Page is to contain the following information:

The full title of the thesis

The candidate's name

The year of submission

The department and name of the university

The place of submission (Budapest, Hungary)

The supervisors' names

The statement: "In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts"

Statement of Copyright

The following statement is located on the page immediately preceding the title page.

"Copyright in the text of this thesis rests with the Author. Copies by any process, either in full or part, may be made only in accordance with the instructions given by the Author and lodged in the Central European Library. Details may be obtained from the librarian. This page must form a part of any such copies made. Further copies made in accordance with such instructions may not be made without the written permission of the Author."

Abstract

The abstract is a two-three paragraph summary of the thesis project. It includes a brief statement of the problem, a description of the methods/techniques, and major findings.

Acknowledgment Page

This is an optional page that acknowledges those that provided the author with assistance in the thesis project.

Table of Contents

This page contains a list of Chapter titles, Headings and Sub-headings of Chapters, Appendices and References as well as their corresponding page number. This page may also include a separate list of tables, figures, illustrations, and related materials.

It is recommended that a separate list of Tables, Figures, Illustrations, etc. should be on a separate page, immediately following the Table of Contents page.

Introduction

The introduction must contain a brief statement of the issue under discussion, outline the scope of the issue, and describe the general character of the thesis. (See detailed notes on the Working Introduction above.)

Main Body

These pages contain the body of your thesis divided into chapters. Each chapter must begin on a new page. The first page of each chapter contains the title of the chapter.

Appendices

This is not a required component but may be included for some theses. Its purpose is to include supplementary information, original data, and other such relevant material.

Bibliography

These pages contain a list of sources cited and consulted during the thesis project. There are several techniques for the division of sources. Consult Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (the Chicago Manual of Style) for appropriate techniques for subdividing the Bibliography.

(Sample title page)

THE HISTORY OF HISTORY

By

Zora H. Hopeful

Submitted to
Central European University
Department of History

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Supervisor: Professor Thomas Serious
Second Reader: Professor Flora Heinrich

Budapest, Hungary

2016

Protocol for Conducting Final Examinations in Master of Arts Programs in the Department of History at CEU

The Final Examination is a composite examination which candidates studying for MA degrees at the Department of History have to pass as the final academic requirement to qualify for receiving their degrees. The Final Examination follows one (in the case of the One-Year MA Program) or two (in the case of the Two-Year MA Program) academic years of course work, supervised academic research, and the submission of an MA thesis.

The Examination Committee

The Examination is conducted by a three-member Examination Committee chaired by the Second Reader of the MA thesis. The second member of the Committee is the First Supervisor of the examinee. The accreditation of our MA programs in Hungary (and thus in the European Union) requires that at least one full professor or associate professor should be a member of the examining panel and that there also be an external examiner (a scholar independent of CEU) present. The main Supervisor of the thesis has to be a member of CEU. Unless the Second Reader of the thesis is external to CEU, the Third Member of the committee is normally the external member.

Thesis Defense

The first part of the Final Examination comprises the detailed Defense of the MA thesis. In the course of the Defense, the student should be prepared to answer questions and respond to comments and critique about his or her thesis from the Thesis Supervisor and the Second Reader – both of whom, as academic advisors, will have been familiar with the thesis research and writing –, and if he or she so wishes, the Third Member. These questions may concern any substantive, formal, conceptual, structural, source- as well as terminology-related issues that they deem relevant. The inquiry also allows the student to amend, improve, highlight, correct or explain points and aspects of the thesis that the examiners identify for this purpose. This part of the examination is best conducted in the form of a conversation, an exchange of ideas.

Additional examination questions

Following the Defense stage, the Third Member of the Examining Committee will ask two or three additional questions from the candidate. These supplementary questions, unlike those asked during the Defense stage, do not directly involve the particular subjects discussed in the thesis itself, nor do they constitute an examination of general historical knowledge or a testing of the student's ability to revisit and explain concrete problem areas analyzed in earlier course work. Instead, this part of the Final Examination aims to explore how the student explains the meaning and significance of the research questions posed in the MA thesis. Questions will typically focus on events, dominant personalities, phenomena, concepts or narratives that run chronologically and/or geographically parallel to or concentrically around the historical problem

areas discussed in the thesis and which explain the wider historical context in which the thesis may be interpreted.

This second stage of the Final Examination should take less time than the Defense: about one quarter to one third of the total length of the examination.

Announcement of the Examination Grade

Following the Defense and the additional questions stages, the candidate is asked to leave the examination room, whereupon a short discussion takes place among the examiners about the grading of the thesis and of the examination. This comprises two grades, both of which will appear in the Infosys record of academic results and in the graduate's transcript:

1. *Final Grade for the MA Thesis* (arising from the aggregate of the grade for the written thesis as agreed by the Supervisor and the Second Reader, and the grade for the Defense as agreed by each of the three examiners), and
2. *Oral Grade for the MA Final Examination* (as agreed by each of the three examiners)

The student will be invited back into the room and will be told the grades.

Minutes

Detailed minutes, entered into a standardized pre-printed form, will be kept by the examiners. These contain the grade for the written MA Thesis, the grade granted for the Oral Defense of the Thesis, the Final Grade for the Thesis, the Oral Grade for the MA Final Examination, and the main questions put to the candidate both at the Defense and the additional questions stages. At his/her request, the examinee should be given the opportunity to see these minutes.

Length of the Final Examination

The Final Examination should last between 40 and 50 minutes with the Thesis Defense taking up most of the available time.