Writing a Thesis

Official Guidelines of the Centre for Social Studies, Warsaw

2006
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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 denoted by the indentation of the first line, apart from first paragraphs of chapters, sections, etc. (where the first paragraph immediately follows a title of some kind). This does not include text that follows tables, etc., that do not denote a new section. See the section above, headed ‘General,’ as a model of this. Paragraphs should not be blocked.
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 should be located at the bottom right 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 page numbers, references or additional explanation. However, care should be taken to ensure that the page layout is as clear as possible. References and explanations should not interfere with page numbers. Also, the candidate should endeavour to ensure that the referencing system used is consistent, to avoid confusing reference footers.
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 (i.e. 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 Bibliography/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 either ‘Bibliography’ or ‘References,’ and in keeping with all other aspects of the thesis should be presented clearly. Information that must be included for every item: full name and middle initials of all authors; title; date of publication; place of publication and publisher’s name; as well as other information where necessary (for example, edition, where there are many editions which vary from each other). Where this information is missing, all pains should be taken to acquire it. If it cannot be found, then the missing information should be denoted by a double question mark (??); however, be aware that sources with too much missing information should not be quoted or referred to. Unpublished work may be referred to, and should be declared as such. If a source in a language other than English has been used, the title of the work should be given both in English translation and in the original language. Internet sources require a full page reference. Lastly, candidates should be very much aware that careful and comprehensive referencing throughout their thesis is a sine qua non for successfully attaining their qualification. See Appendix 3 for examples.

7. Referencing in the text.
7.1 Summary. There are two broad methods which may be used for referencing within the text: embedded citation (Harvard method); and footnotes (Chicago method). Either of these are suitable, with the proviso that the chosen method must be used exclusively.

7.2 Embedded 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” (1986:34).

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” (ibid.:34).

Ibidem (ibid. for short) means from the same book, writer or article as the one that has just been mentioned.

The third possibility is as follows:

It was claimed that “theology is dead, and always has been” (McKlusky 1986:34).
7.3 **Footnotes.** Footnotes are meant to remove referential figures 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.

7.4.1 **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.

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

7.4.3 **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 bibliography.** All works which have been referred to must be included in the bibliography, no matter how many times they have been mentioned in the text, or what information has been previously given, or what method for referencing has been used in the text.

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 bibliography, 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. Inclusion of the original version is optional.

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 14, 2006 at 13.00 (October 2007 for regular students). Candidates must either submit their thesis in person or by registered mail. If a candidate chooses to submit by post, the thesis must ARRIVE on or before October 14. 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, 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 coming to tutorials. 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.
The Academic Writing Tutor encourages students to bring each section or chapter to
tutorials as they are finished, to ensure that there is no inordinate rush for either the
candidates or the Academic Writing Tutor, and so that work can be seen to be correct.
Whole theses cannot be checked in one session. Candidates are also asked to check
the basics before they come to tutorials: spacing, punctuation, spelling. Lastly,
candidates should be aware of the informal Writing a Thesis course provided by the
Academic Writing Tutor 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for submitting outline</td>
<td>End of first term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing a Thesis course</td>
<td>March-June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Writing Tutor available for thesis-related tutorials</td>
<td>July-October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First draft due</td>
<td>August 31 (for intensive students) (or to be agreed with supervisor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final deadline</td>
<td>October 14, 2006 (intensive)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>October 2007 (regular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marking</td>
<td>From submission to end of December (approx.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External examiners’ meeting</td>
<td>Early January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates receive grades</td>
<td>Grades posted/advertised after external examiners’ meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomas posted</td>
<td>Early March</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2 - Quick Bibliography Guide and Sample Bibliography

Facts that should be included for book entries:

1. *Name of the author or authors.*
The name should be reversed - author’s surname first and first name last, separated by a comma and followed by a full stop. Initials may be used for first names.

2. *Full title of the book, including the subtitle.*
The title can be underlined or italicised, and must be followed by a full stop.

3. *Title of series, if any, and volume or number in the series followed by a full stop.*

4. *Volume number or total number of volumes of a multivolume work.*

5. *Edition, if not the original, followed by a full stop.*

6. *City of publication.*
If there are more than one, just choose one. It should be followed by a colon.

7. *Publisher's name, followed by a comma.*

8. *Date of Publication.*
The date usually goes at the end and is followed by a full stop (but may come after the name of the author/s - see below).

For an article:

1. *Name of author.*

2. *Title of article.*
This should be in quotation marks followed by a full stop.

3. *Name of the periodical.*
This can be underlined or italicised.

4. *Volume number (sometimes issue number).*

5. *Date.*
Usually goes in parentheses before the page numbers.

6. *Pages of the article.*

**Remember:**

- ALL entries should be listed alphabetically by author’s last name.
A few examples of bibliographical entries:

**A book**


**Two books by the same author**


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


**A book by two authors**


**A chapter of a book**


**A book with an editor or translator**

A newspaper article


An article in a journal


An unpublished work

Bibliography


Appendix 3 - Quick Footnoting Guide

The first time that you mention another person’s work in your thesis you should include all the information in the footnote in this order:

1. Author’s or authors’ first name, middle initial, and last name followed by a comma.
2. Title of the book, italicised.
3. Place and date of publication followed by a colon and then the publisher’s name. All should be enclosed in parentheses and followed by a comma.
4. Page number, followed by a period.

Here is an example of a footnote for a book:


Here is an example of a footnote for an article:


If you make reference to a work immediately after you have cited it, you do not need to write all the information again. You can just write *ibid.* (for the Latin *ibidem* meaning “in the same place”).


However, if you make another reference to this work and it does not follow the first reference (perhaps you want to refer back to this work after you have mentioned a few additional works), you can simply put the author’s/authors’ name, the title (shortened if needed) and the page number.

4 Masters and Johnson, Human Sexuality, p. 81

**Remember:**

- Even when you use footnotes you still need to include a complete bibliography at the end of your thesis.
Appendix 4 - 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 *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 cliches: 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 5 - Transliteration of Russian into Latin Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cyrillic Alphabet</th>
<th>Romanized equivalent (suggested)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>А а</td>
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<td>Д д</td>
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<td>Е е</td>
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<td>Ё ё</td>
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<td>shch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ъ ъ</td>
<td>” (separates two parts of a word)</td>
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<td>Ы ý</td>
<td>y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ьь</td>
<td>’ (softens the preceding consonant)</td>
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<td>e</td>
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<td>Ю ю</td>
<td>yu</td>
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<td>Я я</td>
<td>ya</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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 6 - 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 7 - 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.