



OSCE Academy in Bishkek



Approved

Director, A. Wolters  
28.12.2020

MA THESIS GUIDE AND  
FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

2020-2021 academic year

Bishkek

## CONTENTS

### I. INTRODUCTION

### II. GENERAL RULES

- A. Language
- B. Length
- C. Deadlines
- D. Number of copies
- E. Penalty
- F. Plagiarism
- G. Grading
- H. Grade review

- I. Thesis corrections

### III. PARTS OF YOUR THESIS

- A. Prefatory pages
- B. Body of the thesis

### IV. FORMATTING

- A. Margins
- B. Page numbers
- C. Centering
- D. Justification
- E. Spacing
- F. Font
- G. Style
- H. Color
- I. Formatting specific pages
- J. Templates

### V. OTHER SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDELINES

## I. INTRODUCTION

Writing a Master's thesis is an important stage of your study at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. The aim of this manual is to present you the Academy's requirements and rules on writing your MA thesis and guide you on formatting, style, and submission processes. All students are expected to follow this manual precisely. Failure to comply with it will incur penalties.

The MA thesis demonstrates the student's ability to conduct original research and to report the results in a formally correct way. The process of implementing the thesis project improves the student's research, analytical and writing skills. The result must be an independent work, testifying to the comprehensive understanding of the subject investigated, the application of appropriate research methods, and the ability to present in a clear and precise manner.

## II. GENERAL RULES

### A. Language

The working language of the Academy is English. The thesis must be written in English.

### B. Length

The thesis is expected to be 18,000–25,000 words (excluding the prefatory pages, notes-bibliography or references, and appendices) for students of the MA in Politics and Security Programme, and 14,000-18,000 words (excluding the prefatory pages, notes-bibliography or references, and appendices) for students of the MA in Economic Governance Development Programme. If the thesis exceeds the specified maximum length, supervisors and examiners will not read further than the specified limit and shall therefore not take into account any work beyond the specified limit when grading the thesis. If a thesis is shorter than required, it will not be accepted for evaluation by the Academy.

### C. Deadlines

Official deadline for the submission of a Master's thesis is the date when students submit an electronic version of their theses (please see further below). An electronic copy (in word format only) and a hard copy of the MA thesis must be submitted to your respective assistants: Jazgul Bolot kyzy, EGD Programme Assistant via [j.bolotkyzy@osce-academy.net](mailto:j.bolotkyzy@osce-academy.net); and Nazira Abakirova, PS Programme Assistant via [n.bakirova@osce-academy.net](mailto:n.bakirova@osce-academy.net)

### D. Number of copies

Students must submit two (2) copies of their Master thesis: 1) electronic copy; and 2) a hard copy. The electronic copy must be in *word format only*. Hard copy must be bound and will not be accepted until students meet all the formatting and style requirements set by the Academy. All parts of the thesis, including the cover page should be printed on a white, Portrait layout, A4 size paper. The cover page should be printed on a good quality, non-textured, and thick paper.

### E. Penalty

MA thesis submitted later than the specified deadline is subject for a penalty. Regardless of the number of delayed days, 5 points reduction from the final grade will be applied. Saturday & Sunday are included in the penalty period. After five days, a thesis is considered as failed.

## F. Plagiarism

### **Plagiarism**

All work submitted for assessment by a student is accepted on the understanding that it is the student's own effort without falsification of any kind. Plagiarism is the act of copying or including into one's own work, without adequate acknowledgement, intentionally or unintentionally, the work of another author, for one's own benefit. It is academically fraudulent and is, therefore, regarded as an offence against the *OSCE Academy's Academic Regulations* and *the Code of Conduct*. Any case of plagiarism, that may occur at whatever stage of a student's course of study, whether discovered before or after graduation, will be investigated and handled appropriately by the Academy's management.

Students are expected to offer their own analysis and presentation of information gleaned from research or any other outcomes of knowledge production, even when group exercises are carried out. In addition, students are required to acknowledge all help and other external assistance that they have received. This should be done both in a formal list of acknowledgements in a written work and at appropriate places and sections of the work. Any failure to adequately acknowledge or properly reference other sources in submitted work, as well as accurately and appropriately acknowledge external help and assistance received, will result in the non-award of the *Master of Arts* degree by the OSCE Academy.

If an Examiner suspects that a thesis contains evidence of plagiarism, he or she will inform the Head of Department of Graduate Education. Evidence of the suspected plagiarism should be collected together by the Head of Department of Graduate Education and a report made to the State Examination Committee. On the basis of this report and in consultancy with both the Head of Department of Graduate Education and the Examiner, the State Examination Committee will decide whether the plagiarism is minor or significant. If the plagiarism is minor the Examiner will be advised to take the minor plagiarism into account in determining the academic quality of the work.

If the plagiarism is significant, it will lead to the failure of the Master Thesis and, as a result, of the Master degree in Politics and Security or in Economic Governance and Development. This decision will be taken by the OSCE Academy Director and the Head of Department of Graduate Education in co-operation with the State Examination Committee. The Master Thesis cannot be re-submitted and the decision will be final with no appeal allowed.

If plagiarism or cheating is found to have occurred in the work of a student after the graduation the OSCE Academy has the authority to reduce the classification of a degree conferred, or to revoke a degree and to require the graduate to return the degree scroll.

## G. Grading

The lowest passing grade for MA thesis is C-. Each thesis is read by a supervisor and three independent reviewers, who provide written evaluation or comments. Reviewers also provide grades for each thesis and submit to the State Examination Committee, who will make final decision on grades taking into consideration: 1) student presentation of a thesis (thesis defense); 2) supervisor's comments, and 3) most significantly, reviewers' feedback and grade. A thesis that is evaluated below C- (and therefore failed) can be rewritten twice within the following two years after graduation. Anyone passing the MA thesis, but with a GPA less than 2.00, fails the programme.

## H. Grade review

In case a student decides to make a grade review request, she/he shall apply the following procedure:

- the student shall consult with the Head of Department of Graduate Education and express his/her concerns about the final course grade.
- in case the grievance was not resolved through consultation, the student shall submit a written request for review of the contested grade to the Head of Department of Graduate Education. As the burden of proof rests on the student, the grade review request must include a detailed explanation of reasons for the grade review. The Head of Department of Graduate Education will immediately send a copy of the student's request to State Examination Committee and request a written reply within 5 working days;
- The members of the State Examination Committee decide to accept or to reject the grade review request. If the State Examination Committee rejects the grade review request by the student, the initial assessment shall be valid. If the grade review request is accepted, the State Examination Committee initiates the grade review procedure. The result of the review procedure of the State Examination Committee is final and will be reported in writing to the parties.

## I. Thesis corrections

After the submission of electronic versions of the thesis, the Academic staff will check if the thesis submitted is in line with the Academy's formatting requirements. If any formatting corrections are needed, they will let you know before the hard copies are printed. However, it is the sole responsibility of the student to submit well formatted hard copies. *The Academy has the right to ask from a student to reprint the hard copy until it satisfies the formatting requirements.*

## III. PARTS OF YOUR THESIS

The following are the parts that your thesis must consist of. All sections are mandatory unless it is indicated *optional*. The order of the sections indicated below must be followed.

### A. Prefatory pages:

- Title Page
- Declaration
- Abstract
- Acknowledgments (optional)
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables (if applicable)
- List of Figures (if applicable)
- List of Illustrations (if applicable)
- List of Abbreviations (optional)
- Bibliography or References
- Appendix (or Appendices) (if applicable)

- B. The body of the thesis**
  - Body (text, chapters)

#### **IV. FORMATTING**

##### **A. Margins**

Margins are the white pages surrounding the text. The left (binding edge) margin must be 1.5 inches. Right, top and bottom margins must be 1 inch (2.54 cm).

##### **B. Page numbers**

Placement of Page number. Page numbers should appear at the center of the bottom of the page. Use the same font and size that you use for the body of your thesis (Times New Roman, 12). Prefatory pages: use consecutive lowercase Roman numerals for prefatory pages (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.). Title page, Declaration, Abstract, Acknowledgments (optional) and Table of Contents are all to be numbered and counted in a Roman numerical order (i, ii, iii, iv,...). Start counting from the title page, but the number (i) should not appear on the title page. Thus page numbering starts from the Declaration page, which is counted as page ii.

The body of the thesis: use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, ...) in the same size and font as the body of the text.

##### **C. Centering**

All chapters should be centered. Headings and subheadings may not be centered.

##### **D. Justification**

All the text, including the prefatory pages should be justified.

##### **E. Spacing**

Regular text (body) can be formatted with 1.5 line spacing. This includes chapters, headings and subheadings. Block quotations, figure captions, data in the tables (figures, illustration, etc) are allowed to be single spaced. Endnotes and footnotes must be single spaced but with a blank line after each entry and must be formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, 17<sup>th</sup> edition. Bibliography/References must be single spaced with one blank line after each entry and must be formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, 17<sup>th</sup> edition, as well.

##### **F. Font**

Times New Roman font must be used for all parts of thesis, including the title page, prefatory pages, headings, bibliography, etc (exceptions some data in the tables or some texts in the appendices). Times New Roman-12 point must be used for the body of the thesis, including the bibliography/references. For headings, titles of figures (tables and illustrations), subheadings etc, larger points may be used (up to 14 point). Notes (i.e. endnotes or footnotes) or in-text citations must be Times New Roman 12-point formatted consistent with the Chicago Manual of Style, 17<sup>th</sup> edition. Smaller font, down to 10 point, may be used for data in the tables.

Bold face and italics may be used in subheadings, tables, figures, and specific words in text, but extensive use should be avoided.

##### **G. Style**

The thesis must be written in accordance to the OSCE Academy's Thesis Manual Formatting Policy, which is primarily based on the Chicago Manual of Style, 17<sup>th</sup> edition with minimal

alterations. If the thesis, including the bibliography/references, does not comply with the policy and Chicago Manual of Style, 17<sup>th</sup> edition, it will not be accepted by the Academy.

#### **H. Color**

Color may be used for illustrative materials. Do not use colors for regular text, including the headings, chapters, titles of tables etc.

#### **I. Formatting of specific pages**

##### **Title page**

Follow the MA thesis template of the OSCE Academy. Don't change and shift margins, lines, caps letters, font type, font size etc. Make it as close as to the sample (see template).

##### **Abstract**

Abstract must not exceed 400 words and should describe the problem of your research, main methods used and the conclusions and results that you have found. The Abstract page must not include any of your details (e.g. your name, title of your research, page numbers etc, should not appear on this page).

##### **Declaration**

In this form you take the responsibility for the contents of your thesis and declare that you followed academic honesty procedures. Your signatures in both of the hard copies of your thesis must be original.

##### **Acknowledgements**

Acknowledgements must be written in first-person voice. Here you may acknowledge (thank) people who have assisted you with the thesis or supported you during the process. For example, you may thank your supervisors, professors, experts, any funding sources that supported your research, persons whom you have interviewed and family or friends, who supported you. There are no minimum or maximum word requirements for this part.

##### **Table of Contents**

Do not include the title page, abstract and declaration page in the table of contents. Do not use range numbers (e.g. 4-12 in indicating page numbers). Only the first page of the chapter (heading, subheading) must be indicated. You may single or 1.5 space the table of contents. Do not include illustrative materials (tables, pictures, figures) in the table of contents as you need a separate list for each illustrative group.

##### **Illustrative materials** (Figures, Tables, etc)

Use separate pages for each illustrative group even if you have only one item to display. "LIST OF TABLES", "LIST OF FIGURES", "LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS" must follow, not precede the "TABLE OF CONTENTS". Titles and order of illustrative materials must be displayed in the "LIST OF TABLES", (or "LIST OF FIGURES", "LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS) on the prefatory page. Titles and order of illustrative materials indicated in the LIST OF TABLES (LIST OF FIGURES, etc) must match with those written in the body.

##### **The body of your thesis** (text)

Text (body) must be in the Times New Roman font, 12 pt.. Footnotes/Endnotes must be formatted in the same type font but with 12 pt. Footnotes must appear at the bottom of the page and must be numbered in (full-sized) Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3). For block quotations you may use 10 pt. singled-spaced.

### **Bibliography/References**

Bibliography/References must be in the same font and size as the body of the thesis. It should be single spaced, with one blank line after each entry. The Chicago Manual Style, 17<sup>th</sup> Edition must be followed in formatting your bibliography/references (see template).

### **Appendix (Appendices)**

Appendices (if you have any) must be placed after the bibliography. In the Appendix, you may include any information (attachments) that is not directly relevant to your thesis but still worth to mention. If more than one, they have to be written as APPENDIX A, APPENDIX B and each appendix has to be on a separate page. Appendices may be page numbered and included in the table of contents.

### **Templates**

Templates (sample pages) or other supplementary guidelines that guide you to format your MA thesis can be found on <http://osce-academy.net/en/masters/Programmeresources/>

## **IV. IMPORTANT DATES**

SUBMISSION OF AN ELECTRONIC COPY (final copy) OF A THESIS  
15 November 2021, 11.00 A.M. (Bishkek time)

EVALUATION OF A THESIS  
16–30 November 2021

THESIS DEFENSE  
6-9 December 2021 (TBC)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FINAL GRADES  
15 December 2021

Additional announcements pertaining to completion of MA Thesis will be sent to students through email by respective Programme Assistants.