

Corvinus University of Budapest
MA in Sociology (with a specialization in Global Social Studies)
Content and Formal Requirements of the Thesis

2021

1 Content requirements

By writing the final paper, the student proves the ability to produce a paper - that is relevant to the topics of specialization - in discovering, defining and analyzing *sociological problems* using an appropriately chosen research method. The thesis should prove that the student is able to use the appropriate *qualitative or quantitative research methods or both (mixed methods)* that can best analyze the given sociological issue.

The final paper is written during the thesis writing seminar launched for the 3rd and 4th semester. The work on the final paper is continuously assisted by the professor of the thesis writing seminar. These classes are strongly connected to the specialization and offer particular topics for the students.

The thesis is going to be evaluated using the criteria presented in **Appendix 1**.

The following circumstances can lead to the failure of the paper:

- the structural elements described in the Section *The Structure of the Thesis* cannot be identified
- the balance between certain parts of the paper is disrupted (e.g. The topic suggested by the title constitutes a small portion of the paper)
- the paper improperly uses the scientific work or text of someone else without referring to the original author (plagiarism)
- the paper relies on only one piece of literature for several pages (even if it is indicated in the References)
- the paper contains basic misunderstandings and mistakes of the subject and gravely misinterprets the utilized literature.
- the paper's volume is significantly different compared to the requirements
- on a larger scale the paper contains basic grammatical, spelling, stylistic and/or editorial mistakes that can disturb the understanding of the text

2 The Structure of the Thesis

Cover and title

- Details on how to prepare the cover is described in the next section.
- The title should be concise and should express the topic and the content of the thesis.
- A Subtitle can be used to provide more details, if necessary.

Abstract (maximum 1 page)

- Concise summary of the research question, research methodology, results and conclusions.

Acknowledgement (maximum 1 page)

- Students are advised to thank the professor of the thesis writing seminar and those persons who provided help during the research and the preparation of the thesis. Please mention the name of those who gave you important advice and feedback, who helped you to contact the participants of your research, or who provided the database for your secondary analysis.
- You may also thank people for supporting you emotionally during the preparation of the thesis such as friends and family.

Table of contents (maximum 1 page)

- Only Headings 1 and 2 should be displayed

1. Introduction

- clear description of the topic and the research questions
- providing scientific reasons for choosing the topic
- short description of the structure of reasoning and of the thesis
- description of the limitations: what kind of topics are not included in your thesis, and why

2. Presentation of relevant theories and research findings

- Present the theories and previous research findings that are related to your research questions.
- The title of this section should be: *Literature Review* or *Theoretical Background*

3. Context

- **This section is optional!**
- In this section, you can present your ideas of how to apply general theoretical ideas (known from the international literature) to the specific cultural and societal context you study empirically.
- In case your thesis examines a public policy program or a social intervention, this section can describe the program (its history, purposes, and legal context).
- It might serve also as an introduction of the research field.

4. Research questions, hypotheses

- Precise formulation of the research questions that are examined in your thesis.
- In case you state hypotheses, the precise formulation of hypotheses and the presentation of arguments which make the hypotheses reasonable.

5. Methodology

- Short description of the chosen research method, as well as providing reasons for method choice. Short discussion of the limitations of the chosen method.
- Description and critical evaluation of data source(s). In case of own data collection, description of sampling procedure, which should include:
 - reasons for and the procedures of selecting the research settings (e.g. countries, regions, settlements, institutions),
 - in case you apply qualitative methods, the reasons of and the procedures of selecting the participants, and a short description of the chosen participants
- Information on informed consent and the protection of informants which may include anonymity – see **Appendix 2** for details.
- Description of eventual ethical issues and presenting information on how the research was ethically designed and how ethical problems were handled.¹
- Description of the methods of data analysis

6. Findings

- Focused presentation of research findings. The relevant pieces of information should be presented using tables and/or figures. Further requirements are discussed in the Section *Formal Requirements*.
- Results should be presented in a way that the reader can get an answer to the research questions (and eventual hypotheses) and finds the links back to the theoretical perspectives.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

- A general, theoretical interpretation and consequences of the empirical findings.
- Short summary of research questions (and eventual hypotheses), research methodology and empirical findings.
- Unanswered/open questions, suggestions for future research and policy change on the part of an organization/state.

References

- The list of references should contain all bibliographical information related to the citations that appear in the main text. The APA or the Harvard format should be used.²

¹ Students are recommended to look at the International Sociological Association code of ethics at: <https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/about-isa/code-of-ethics>

² See <https://www.mendeley.com/guides/apa-citation-guide> and <https://www.mendeley.com/guides/harvard-citation-guide>.

- The list of references should contain at least 20 items! Generally most of the sources will be academic journals and books and policy reports

Appendices (optional)

- Appendices should contain figures, tables, and documents (e.g. interview plan, questionnaire, data design, datasets) that are not closely related to the exposition, but are indispensable to properly understand and evaluate the research methodology and/or the empirical findings.
- Own questionnaires that are not available and interview guides should be included as an Appendix.
- Large tables that may disrupt the reading of the main text should be placed in the Appendix. A typical example for such a large table is the table showing the descriptive statistics for a large number of variables.
- If you do research in organizations, it is likely that you must obtain a written permission. Please include the permission in the Appendix! (Please consult with your thesis supervisor about when and how to obtain such permissions.)
- Do NOT include tables, figures, maps in the Appendix that are absolutely unrelated to the main line of thought. You need to refer to the appendices in the text showing its relevance.
- Formal requirements related to tables and figures are presented in the Section *Formal Requirements*.

Supplementary materials (optional)

- The preparation of supplementary materials may be necessary if
 - you cite on-line available material which may change over time.³
 - your thesis makes use of on-line not available documents and sources.
 - you collect data via survey, qualitative interview or field research.
 - your data collection requires either an ethical approval or a formal approval.
- The supplementary materials must include:
 - contents that are not (freely) available for the public;
 - voice records, pictures, videos that were recorded during interview-based and field research;
 - ethical and other permissions which were necessary to conduct the research (see **Appendix 2**).
- The supplementary materials must be stored in a separate folder in Office365 Sharepoint. The supplementary material should not be submitted together with your thesis, but it should be shared with the program manager of the Sociology MA program upon request. The supplementary materials (the Sharepoint folder) can be deleted only after the successful defence of the thesis, which is part of the final exam.

³ Printed publications and publications having a DOI identifier do not fall into this category.

3. Formal Requirements

1 Length of the thesis:

- The main part of the thesis (starting with the Introduction and ending with the last sentence of the Conclusions chapter) should be minimum 35 and maximum 50 pages.
- The complete thesis – including the main part as well as title pages, abstract, acknowledgment, table of contents, list of references and appendices – cannot be longer than 70 pages.
- the thesis should be printed 1 page per paper,

2 Layout and formatting

- Layout:
 - upper, lower and right margins: 2,5 cm; left margin: 3,5 cm
 - lead: 1,5 for the main text; 1 may be used for tables and appendix text
 - no extra lines between paragraphs that are not headings
- font face: Times New Roman
- font size:
 - main text and captions above tables and figures: 12pt
 - footnotes, notes below tables and figures: 10pt
 - texts/numbers in tables, Appendix: 10pt

3 Cover:

The cover and the inner cover should look like as illustrated below:

Cover	Inner cover
<p>THESIS</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Name of author current year</p>	<p>Corvinus University of Budapest Institute of Communication and Sociology Department of Sociology and Social Policy</p> <p>Title Subtitle</p> <p>Prepared by: Sociology MA Global Social Studies specialization Professor of thesis writing seminar</p>

4 Headings

- In the main part of the thesis (including Introduction Conclusion sections), headings must be numbered using Arabic numbers. Numbering must be hierarchical (e.g. the first subsection within section 5 must be numbered as 5.1).
- Use the built-in styles Heading1, Heading2 etc. to format the titles of sections and subsections. Please modify those built-in styles so that
 - hierarchical numbering is automatically applied to sections;
 - left indentation is set to 0;
 - font color is black and font face is Times New Roman

5 References and footnotes

- The sources used in the thesis should be referenced using general professional guidelines (e.g., APA, Harvard). To manage your bibliography, you may use Zotero or EndNote or other reference-manager software.
- In case you literally quote an author, or you present a list, a table or a figure of an author please provide the page numbers as well (e.g. Smith 1995: 140)
- Footnotes should be used to add further details and additional notes.

6 Tables and figures

- All figures and tables should be supplemented with numbered caption. Please use the built-in Insert Caption feature of Word.
- The caption should appear above the table/figure. If the table/figure is in the middle of the page please separate the caption and the main text using an empty line.
- Notes should appear below figures/tables in which you clearly indicate the data sources (using the general rules of citation) and you clearly indicate whether the figure/table is an own calculation or a table adopted from another sources. If the table/figure is in the middle of a page, please separate the note from the main text using an empty line.

4 Presentation of the thesis

Students are required to make a presentation of the thesis when defending it.

The guidelines for the presentation:

- should not be longer than 10 minutes
- the Power Point presentation should not have more than 10 slides
- the student should answer the questions given by the opponents during his/her presentation
- because of the limited time, the focus of the presentation should be on the research conducted by the student

Appendix 1: Evaluation criteria

The reviewers of the thesis

1. will evaluate the thesis using the criteria listed below
2. will also prepare a written evaluation of the thesis
3. will formulate questions that should be addressed during the oral defence of the thesis

Criteria of evaluation:

Criteria	5 points	(...)	0 points
1 The formulation of the research problem (and eventual hypotheses) is	Outstanding		Unacceptable
2 The processed literature, sources, databases are	Relevant		Unacceptable
3 The review of literature is	Thorough		Unacceptable
4 The research methodology is	Well-chosen		Inadequate
5 The analysis of sources and data is	Thorough		Unacceptable
6 The interpretation of results and the conclusions are	Outstanding		Absent
7 The structure of the work, the author's reasoning and line of thought are	Logical, focused		Impossible to follow
8 References (including references based on internet sources) are	Precise		Absent
9 Style, language, design and outlook of the thesis are	Exemplary		Unacceptable
10 As an original and independent work, the thesis is	Outstanding		Unacceptable

The points are transformed to grades as follows:

0 – 18 = 1 Fail

19 – 26 = 2 Sufficient

27 – 34 = 3 Satisfactory

35 – 42 = 4 Good

43 – 50 = 5 Excellent

Appendix 2: Informed Consent

Before starting research, it is important that potential research subjects receive information about the research and based on this can decide whether to give their consent to participate in the research (via informed consent form). Special care should be taken in case of research with minors. Parental consent is required in their case.

What information we need to give:

- Title of the research project, head of the research project, participants of the research.
- What is the background of the research project (here it is also possible to specify if the query takes place within the framework of a subject, for a thesis, who finances it, etc.).
- The aim and topic of the research. (In some cases, it may be appropriate to provide a broader topic than the narrow research topic so that information that we give out does not influence by the research findings.) It should be worded so that lay people can understand the description.
- It should be emphasized that participation is voluntary, research subjects can withdraw at any time.
- Confidentiality: how the personally identifiable information of the respondent will be protected. It should be discussed that the presentation of the results will not include the name of the interviewee or any additional information about him / her that could identify them (for example the name of the organization he / she represents, etc.). It should be noted some public figures/experts may not be opposed to their name being mentioned
- Who is expected to see the results, Where the data will be stored.
- Whether the interviewee will receive feedback or analysis (optional)
- How long the interview will last and how it will take place (e.g. in a place convenient for the interviewee, only the interviewer will be present, etc.).
- Potential risks and benefits for the interviewee.
- Who to contact for information about the research: name and email address.

This is followed by a first-person statement of informed consent, which follows the information described and relates to the respondent agreeing to the research and being informed of the research:

Informed consent statement:

I read or have been read the above information before starting to take part in the research. I had the opportunity to ask questions that were answered correctly. I agree that I will be interviewed as part of the research and that what is said in the interview will be used for analysis. I give permission in the knowledge that my name will not be included in the completed analyses, I will not be identifiable, and those I have named will not be included by name in the studies or research reports. The research will not disclose any of my personally identifiable information to any party outside the research. My participation in the research is voluntary.

Name:

Signature:

Date: