GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AND FORMATTING PAPERS
Including Bachelors’ and Masters’ theses
AT JOHAN SKYTTE INSTITUTE OF POLITICAL STUDIES,
UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

The following guide contains requirements and suggestions for writing and formatting written papers, including Bachelors’ (BA) and Masters’ (MA) theses, for undergraduate and graduate students of the University of Tartu’s Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies (hereinafter, the Institute).

This guide is a supplement to the Guidelines for submission and defence of the final thesis, adopted by the Institute Council in March 2016. The aim of this guide is to provide students with an overview of the writing process of written papers and requirements. When writing a paper, a student's assignment is to, to the best of their ability, combine the content of their research with appropriate formatting: the topic must be in accordance with the purpose of studies, problems covered must be clearly delineated, their analysis logical and in-depth. Additionally, students should pay attention to deadlines and formatting guides while writing.

Formatting requirements apply to all written papers, including texts, essays, written assignments, thesis extended research plans, an MA thesis presented for pre-defence, if applicable, and the final version of a thesis.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. GENERAL formatting REQUIREMENTS .................................................. 3

2. REQUIREMENTS for CONTENT and STRUCTURE of WRITTEN PAPERS. 3
   2.1. Language ................................................................................. 3
   2.2. Abbreviations ......................................................................... 3
   2.3. Writing numbers ....................................................................... 4
   2.4. Spelling and Punctuation ......................................................... 4
   2.5. Citing ....................................................................................... 4
   2.6. Tables, figures, formulas and lists ............................................ 5

3. WRITING THE THESIS ........................................................................ 7
   3.1. Setting the aim and hypothesis, formulating research tasks .......... 8
   3.2. Choice and work through literature .......................................... 8
   3.3. Structure and formatting requirements ...................................... 9
   3.3.1. Cover page ............................................................................ 10
   3.3.2. Abstract ............................................................................... 10
   3.3.3. Table of contents ................................................................... 11
   3.3.4. List of abbreviations ............................................................ 11
   3.3.5. Introduction .......................................................................... 11
   3.3.6. Content ................................................................................ 12
   3.3.7. Summary .............................................................................. 13
   3.3.8. List of sources ....................................................................... 13
   3.3.9. Appendices ......................................................................... 13
   3.3.10. Non-exclusive license .......................................................... 13
   3.4. Submission of the thesis ............................................................ 14
   3.5. Assessment ............................................................................. 14

4. Appendices .......................................................................................... 16
   4.1. Example of a written paper's cover page .................................... 16
   4.2. Example of application for consideration to proceed for defence ...... 17
   4.3. Example of annotation ............................................................... 18
   4.4. Example of an MA thesis' cover page ......................................... 19
   4.5. Example of the author’s declaration .......................................... 20
   4.6. Non-exclusive license for reproduction of thesis and providing access of thesis to the public .......................................................... 21
   4.7. Non-exclusive (restricted) for reproduction of thesis and providing access of thesis to the public .......................................................... 22
   4.8. MA thesis assessment criteria ................................................... 24
1. GENERAL FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

All written papers are submitted in A4-format. Spacing is 1.5, font is *Times New Roman* and font point size is 12. The MA thesis requires extra free space in the margins: 3cm from top and bottom, 2cm on the right side, 4cm on the left side. The text must be fully justified. Footnotes use point size 10.

The print format of a BA and MA thesis is single-sided. Papers written in courses can be double-sided, if the lecturer has not specified any formatting requirements. All written papers should have a cover page (cf. appendix 1).

Lecturers have the right to set their own formatting requirements for papers written in their courses. In this case, the formatting requirements established by the lecturer apply.

2. REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF WRITTEN PAPERS

All written papers, including the thesis, must follow the good practice of formatting, meaning linguistic and stylistic correctness are important. Papers must conform to generally accepted academic practices and ethical requirements. Cases of intellectual theft are dealt with pursuant to the “Procedure for processing cases of academic fraud” in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

2.1. Language

The language must be strictly scientific. Slang, journalistic, populistic, poetic phrases should not be used in a research paper, unless such use of language is the central topic of the research. Additionally, one should avoid (overly) emotional adjectives and adverbs when describing phenomena or processes (e.g. *The economic situation is mysteriously excellent, Vivacious rise in prices*, etc.).

Avoid excessive use of foreign language. The meaning of a sentence/paragraph should be translated, not simply specific words from the original text. Keep in mind that sentence structure differs between languages. If there is no adequate equivalent for a term in a foreign language, or if one is not sure of their choice, it is recommended to enclose the original term in brackets [ ] after the translated term. Use of terms and symbols must be consistent throughout the text. It is advisable to prefer the terminology used in earlier sources. If a previously-used term is considered inadequate, its replacement must be substantiated. Foreign words that do not fit the language morphologically or phonetically must be in italics.

The grammatical mood and form of writing must be constant throughout the paper. The author should not overly personalise the paper. It is recommended to use impersonal (e.g. *was researched, was analysed, etc.*) instead of *I, me* and *we* (e.g. *we researched, I analysed*, etc.). However, it is important that the use of the impersonal does not make the sentence vague. It is recommended to use indicative, because conditional (e.g. *Tried to research, Seems to cause*, etc.) may indicate that the author is not certain of their arguments.

2.2. Abbreviations

A term must be fully defined before using its abbreviation (e.g. *Gross domestic product (GDP)*, *International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)*, etc.). If an
abbreviation has been previously fully defined, it is not necessary to use the full definition again and the abbreviation can be used instead. Abbreviations are generally not used in titles.

2.3. Writing numbers

Single-digit numbers are generally written out, double-digit numbers and above are generally represented by their numerical characters, e.g. two points, eight days, 120 businesses, etc. If the one-digit number is followed by a measurement unit or symbol, it is written with the number (e.g. 3 cm, 8%, etc.). Years are presented numerically, not last year or this year. If possible, avoid numbers with 3-4 significant digits in both texts and tables. Short word forms, e.g. 1.42 million, should be used when large numbers are presented. A full stop should be used as opposed to a comma for indicating fractions.

2.4. Spelling and Punctuation

It is recommended to consult a dictionary and/or relevant spell check software when spelling foreign and seldom-used words. The consistency of spelling and punctuation system (e.g. UK English or US English) should be kept throughout the whole text.

2.5. Citing

Positions, arguments, factual/statistical data, incl. newspapers, the internet and information from oral presentations of other authors (incl. earlier works of the student), must be properly referenced. Every source in the references must be referenced in the body of the paper and/or footnotes. There are several possibilities of referencing and the author can choose which they prefer to use. Referencing must be constant throughout the text. The following three types of inline citation in academic texts are accepted:

- Harvard citation style (citing name/year)
- APA citation style (citing name/year)
- MHRA referencing style for footnotes

Quotes must be presented in their original format – wording, punctuation marks and distinctive letters. A quote's translation must be as similar to the original as possible (in meaning, not wording), if necessary, the original quote can be added to the footnote. If a quote has already been translated, the translation should be used, unless the translation is deemed inadequate or incorrect. Quotes are presented using quotation marks and the source is written right after the end of the quotation, irrespective of whether the quotation is in the middle or at the end of a sentence. If anything is left out of the original text, the omitted part should be indicated using an ellipsis in brackets: […]. If the author wishes to elaborate on parts of the quote, the explanation should be provided in brackets.

Referencing is conveying another author's thought or concept in free form, in one’s own words. Quotation marks are not used when referencing, but citing sources or authors is necessary. It is strongly recommended to avoid referencing an entire sub-point. If irrelevant changes are made to the original (e.g. replacing conjunctions), it is not a correct reference, but an incorrectly presented quote.
Quotations and references should not be overused (and lengthy quotes should be avoided). It is important to keep in mind that in academic papers, one’s original contribution should form a significant part of the work.

2.6. Tables, figures, formulas and lists

Tables are enumerated using Arabic numbers, either throughout the whole paper or within certain chapters, e.g. Table 1 or Table 3.4, etc., where the latter refers to the fourth table of the third chapter. This style should also be used for diagrams and formulas.

The order number (index) of a table is written before its title and separated with a full stop, e.g. Table 1. Marginal cost. The title is placed above the table. The content of an inline table should be exhaustively explained in the title, but the title should also be as concise as possible. The first part of the title should explain the table’s contents, followed by the object's name (organisation, country, etc.) and finally the time period. If a common unit of measurement can be used for all the data in the table, then the unit should be presented after the title of the table in parentheses. If the table uses several units of measurement, they should be presented by the names of the corresponding columns or rows without parentheses, but separated from the preceding text with a comma.

The source of the table must be cited; the citation is usually placed below the table.

Tables use point size 11 and are centred horizontally. Every column of a table must have a name, even the first column. When titling columns, general words like species, name, etc., should be avoided, e.g. Organisation, not Name of Organisation, Indicator, not Name of Indicator, etc. Columns are generally not numbered. Enumerate columns only if necessary, namely when:

- The text references single columns;
- The table continues on the next page and the title is not repeated, only column numbers are displayed;
- The name of the column indicates how the result for this column was achieved, e.g. Column 2 + Column 3.

Data in tables should be linked to the text. To achieve this, the following methods are used:

- Direct referencing, e.g. Table 3 characterises ...
- Indirect referencing, e.g. ... (cf. Table 8)

The table should be on the same page, or on the next page as such a reference. If the table is somewhere else, the page number should be added when referencing (e.g. cf. Table 8, page 14). If the table is smaller than one page, but does not fit on the page after the reference was made, it is recommended to put the entire table on the next page after the first paragraph. If the table is larger than one page, the table should start directly after the reference and continue on the next page. The first page has to contain at least the title and a few rows of the table.

All illustrations in the paper (diagrams, graphs, geographical maps, drawings, schemes and photos) are considered figures. Figures are enumerated like tables. However, generally, the
title is placed under the figure. Every figure must have a reference in the text. A small figure should be in an appropriate location within the text and larger figures on a separate page, after the reference. If the author did not create the figure, a source should be cited, as with tables. The source of a figure is usually placed right below the title of the figure.

Formulas are separated from the text by punctuation marks that correspond to general language conventions of the language the paper is written in. Signs, numbers and letters should be placed correctly in the formula and in accordance with the formula's contents. Formulas should be created using a formula editor. The style of writing formulae should be constant throughout the whole text. Formulas are written in italics, point size 12. One should avoid presenting definitions in the form of a formula.

Single symbols and simple mathematical expressions are generally presented inline; they are not placed on a separate line. Formulas do not contain units of measurement; these are stated in the explanation of symbols. A formula's explanation of symbols begins with the word where (without a colon) and explanations are underneath each other, for clarity.

Example: Formula describing a country's total expenses

\[ Y = C + I + G + (Ex - Im) \]

where \( Y \) – total expenses of national economy

\( C \) – consumption

\( I \) – investments

\( G \) – government expenditures

\( Ex \) – export

\( Im \) – import

If a list contains only single words or short phrases, list items are written underneath each other and separated with a comma. If even one list item contains a comma, a semicolon is used as the separator. In English, list items do not require a separator. Order is indicated by ascending letters or numbers followed by a closing parenthesis.

Example:

The inputs of manufacturing processes are work, capital, land.

Or: The inputs of manufacturing processes are: 1) work, 2) capital, 3) land.

Or: The inputs of manufacturing processes are: a) work, b) capital, c) land.

If items of a list are single sentences, they may be written after each other or every sentence on a new line. Order is indicated by ascending letters or numbers followed by a closing bracket and they are separated by a semicolon.

Example:

Accessing the market is easy if:
1) the market is large enough
2) the position suits this exact company

or

Accessing the market is easy if:

   a) the market is large enough
   b) the position suits this exact company

If just one item in the list is comprised of two or more sentences, the closing parenthesis is replaced by an order number. If a list item contains a list, then the outer list item indicators must be numbers and the inner list item indicators letters, accompanied by a closing parenthesis.

**Example:**

Theory is understood as a system of definitions, assumptions and hypotheses.

Theories can be divided into the following.

1. Classifying theories that explain the realities of economics through defining concepts
2. Nomological theories are aimed at discovering the inner patterns of processes
3. Decision-making theories are concerned with certain human behaviours. These can be divided into:
   a) descriptive
   b) prescriptive

Usually, a list is enumerated when the order of list items is important, list items are referenced in the text or when list items consist of several sentences. In other cases, enumeration (numbers or letters) can be left out or can be replaced with a dash (if list items are a continuation of the preceding text) or some other indicator.

**3. WRITING THE THESIS**

A thesis is an independently composed research paper in accordance with this guide with a clear problem statement where scientific methods are applied to a concrete object of research. The general goals of a thesis are to investigate an issue or problem concerning the specialty in depth, to collect original empirical material or data and to analyse this in light of the corresponding conceptual or theoretical framework, providing the research results as clear and reasoned conclusions. A thesis shows the student's theoretical and/or practical knowledge and skills in using literature of the field, substantiating their arguments and expressing them in written form. A thesis is not a reference of existing research or an essay on personal observations and evaluations. A thesis could be either theoretically or practically oriented and must contain a theoretical component. It is also advisable to include an empirical component. A thesis has only one author and should present the student's independent work.
The process of writing a thesis starts with finding a supervisor. If necessary, the Institute will assist the student in finding a suitable supervisor. Students can also turn to their programme manager who can help them find relevant contacts.

The thesis' extended plan (prospectus) is a part of writing the thesis. It has a crucial role in defining the topic, setting an aim and logical structuring of the thesis. Generally, the prospectus should be submitted a year prior to the defence.

The first part of both a theoretically and a practically oriented thesis should outline the theoretical approaches or previously established general causal law pertaining to the selected research problem. The subsequent parts of the thesis are dedicated to applying these theoretical approaches/causal laws for the analysis of the selected research problem. Practically oriented thesis focuses on a practical, ‘real life’ problems in a certain field.

A student who has defended a thesis:

- can establish research questions independently and select suitable theoretical treatments and methods for their analysis;
- can structure research logically and purposefully;
- can independently find and use suitable empirical and theoretical sources;
- argues and justifies their standpoints understandably and logically;
- uses terms, data and facts correctly and knows the rules of formalising research work;
- bases their conclusions on analysis and summarises in conformity with the line of thought of the thesis; and
- can explain and defend the results of their research in academic discussion and answer questions related to their research.

**3.1. Setting the aim and hypothesis, formulating research tasks**

Exact delineation of the topic, formulation of the aim and research questions, and a logical structure are of critical importance for the quality of the thesis.

It is recommended to start writing the thesis by setting an aim and a hypothesis, after which research tasks should be formulated. The set aim and hypothesis must provide a clear picture of what this thesis wishes to prove or disprove. Often it is difficult to distinguish the aim from the hypothesis, which is why the introduction of the thesis only needs to include the aim. Formulation of research tasks helps to specify the steps, which are necessary in order to achieve the thesis' aim.

When choosing the topic and setting the aim, it is important to keep in mind that these should fall into the student's area of competence and should not be too broad. If the student has no possibility to research a particular topic or if the topic is too broad, it must be avoided. It is suggested that a topic be selected for which sufficient professional literature is available. The planned research methods must be available to the student and within their ability to undertake.

When choosing a topic, students should make sure that they do not choose a thesis with the same topic as an already defended thesis or a thesis currently being defended.

**3.2. Choice and work through literature**

Finding, working through and analysing literature for the thesis is the student's independent task. When working with literature, it is recommended to keep in mind the following aspects.
When first browsing the literature, one should be aware of concepts related to the given topic. This helps the student to get an overview of which literature they should focus on when writing the paper. Literature used in the thesis should be wide-ranging, and contain different authors and sources. Referencing textbooks and popular science journals or newspaper articles should only be done in exceptional cases. The main focus must be on scientific sources, incl. newer foreign language articles. Statistical data used in the research must be supported by reliable data (e.g. European Statistics Office EUROSTAT, Estonian Statistical Office, TNS Emor, etc.). Using encyclopaedias, new literature catalogues, internet research sources and internet databases (e.g. databases of the University of Tartu Library) is recommended when choosing literature. The student should also make sure that the approaches and data they refer to are current and up to date.

It is recommended to write summaries of the literature after a thorough work through. These abstracts should contain ideas, quotes, definitions, problem development, etc related to the research problem. The author's name and other data required in the reference section and bibliographic record should definitely be added as well. This also simplifies the creating and referencing of a bibliography. Student should leave room on these papers for their own thoughts and references to related materials. Still, writing the summary is just the first step: the thesis should absolutely not consist only of loosely related report paragraphs. After working through the literature, the student should be able to present a number of arguments and the data as a whole. Citing sources is not a goal in its own, sources should be used to support one's own arguments and topic development.

3.3. Structure and formatting requirements

The parts of a thesis are the cover page, author's declaration, abstract, table of contents, list of abbreviations (if necessary), introduction, substantive content (as chapters), summary, references, appendices, foreign language abstract and non-exclusive license.

A thesis may be written in Estonian or English. Writing the thesis in any other foreign language is subject to the decision of the Institute council.

The advisable length of the BA thesis is approximately 25 pages and not more than 40 pages, including the cover page, table of contents, references and an abstract in a foreign language.

The length of the MA thesis is generally¹ 20,000-25,000 words (approx. 50-60 pages), but not more than 30,000 words, excluding cover page, abstract, table of content, references, appendices and foreign language abstract.

When structuring the thesis, students should pay attention to balance: there should not be too much division/partition, neither too little. In addition to the introduction and summary, based on the required volume of the thesis, there should be 2-4 additional chapters. The chapters should be balanced in content as well as volume. It is recommended that the structure should have no more than three levels (e.g. 1.1.1 and 2.2.2). Additional levels cause confusion, making the content harder to grasp, it is substantiated only in exceptional cases. The introduction and summary are usually approximately 5-10% of the thesis, each.

¹ Including 15 ECTS Master’s thesis in European Studies and European Union-Russia studies. Q.v. respective curriculum study guides.
The thesis' chapters begin on a new page; subchapters do not need to begin on a new page. A title should never be the last line on a page, there should be at least two lines of content under it. Titles do not contain periods.

All pages of the paper should have numbers, even pages that contain tables and figures. The cover page, table of contents and the first page of the introduction are also enumerated, but the numbers are not shown. Page numbers are shown from the second page of the introduction.

### 3.3.1. Cover page

The cover page should be double-sided; the rest of the pages should be single-sided.

The **thesis cover page** (see appendix 4) has to state the following:

- The name of the university and appropriate division (in this case, Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies);
- A reference as to the nature of the paper (BA thesis, MA thesis);
- The author’s name(s);
- The title of the thesis;
- The supervisor’s name and degree (e.g. supervisor: Prof. Raul Eamets);
- The place of compilation (Tartu) and the year.

On the reverse of the thesis cover page (see appendix 5), the student should write an author’s declaration, which should be certified with a signature indicating that the thesis has been completed independently and the positions and data used from other authors in the thesis have been referenced according to the set requirements.

### 3.3.2. Abstract

A thesis written in Estonian must include an abstract in a foreign language (in English, German, French or Russian). An English-language thesis, defended at the programme with Estonian as language of instruction, must include an abstract in Estonian.

An abstract is a synthesis of the introduction and the summary and should include:

- An exact translation of the thesis’ title
- Discussion on the relevance of the topic
- A description of the aims and tasks that were set
- An overview of the results, conclusions, solutions and suggestions

The recommended length of the abstract is 10% of the length of the thesis. The translated title (in capital letters), the author’s name (underneath the title) and the word ‘Abstract’ (in the corresponding language, e.g. *Zusammenfassung, Resümeer*) followed by the foreign language text.
Example:

**MEASURING PORTFOLIO RISK WITH VALUE AT RISK METHOD**

Sulev Mänd

**Abstract**

Growing volatility of financial instruments has resulted in higher interest in risk management. One of the most common...

3.3.3. **Table of contents**

In the table of contents, list all sections of the thesis that will be presented in accordance with the chapter/section title and page numbers. Only the sections of the main text will be enumerated (Arabic numbers, e.g. 1; 1.2; 2.3.1, etc.).

3.3.4. **List of abbreviations**

If there is an abundance of abbreviations, it is recommended to add a complete list of the abbreviations' full definitions.

3.3.5. **Introduction**

The aim of the introduction is to introduce the topic and thesis as a whole to the reader. Therefore, the introduction needs to substantiate the **relevance of the topic** and the **topicality of the problem**. The introduction should clearly present the aim of the thesis (and if possible, hypothesis), the means of accomplishing it and the research tasks.

The thesis introduction must clearly outline the following:

- **An explanation for choosing the topic.** The best way to carry this out is to present one’s own substantive argumentation, avoiding third party opinion. The author should answer the following questions: Why is it important to study the given problem? Why it is relevant? How does this thesis differ from previous studies done on the subject? While explaining topic choice, it is important to avoid emphasising personal motives, e.g. *I decided to choose this topic because it is connected to my daily work assignments* ...

**The specific aim of the thesis.** What does the student want to prove or disprove, which problem(s) will be solved, which question(s) will be answered? The aim of the thesis must be precisely defined. Thorough research in a narrow field is usually more convincing and effective compared to vague discussion on a vast or unclearly determined problem. It is important to keep in mind that the research expected usually serves only one clear purpose, therefore it is sufficient to present only one hypothesis.

- **An assessment of the research tasks necessary for reaching the aim.** What are the tasks necessary to reach the goal set in the thesis? Clear assessment of the research tasks allows for the definition of the thesis objective and topic. This also helps to develop the overall structure of the thesis.

- **An explanation of the thesis structure.** This should include arranging the thesis
into chapters and/or sections. This is very important both for following the thesis and for presenting a general impression. Correct structure also provides a good overview of the extent to which the author is familiar with the topic. The introduction has to contain a short summary of the structure: how many parts there are, what the aim of each section or chapter is, and how each part links to the next.

- **A short introduction of the data and methodology.** This should clearly state what methods have been used. What kind of empirical data has been used to ground the thesis argument? Where does this data originate from? It is important to keep in mind that so-called ideal data can be difficult to find. The problems related to the data (lack of representativity, reliability, access, etc.) have to be presented clearly. This should include an explanation as to why this data has been used in spite of problems and how these problems have affected the thesis conclusions. If a certain statistical programme is used to analyse data, it should be stated in the introduction.

- **Overview of references.**

It must be kept in mind that the introduction does not carry out set research tasks or solve set problems, it should not contain too many facts and numbers. Moreover, in the introduction, it is appropriate to acknowledge the people and institutions that have been of help during the research process.

### 3.3.6. Content

The main analytical body of the thesis deals with solving the problems mentioned in the introduction. Overall, it is recommended to move from the general (e.g. theoretical starting position, research methodology, etc.) to the specific empirical analysis. The proportion of theoretical analysis relative to empirical analysis depends on the topic and research aims.

When carrying out empirical analysis, the student can use both qualitative and quantitative methods depending on the research field, the thesis aim and the types of data. Although it is not necessary to outline a detailed description of generally accepted research methods used in the thesis, it is strongly recommended to mention the method(s) used when presenting the interpretation of results. The strengths and weaknesses of the selected method(s) should be briefly discussed and the selection of the method(s) should be justified. When using quantitative methods, it is recommended to clearly refer to the data processing programme (or packages). The student must only use the data that is relevant to the specific problem. It is advised to leave out information that might be interesting, but does not help to execute the study’s research tasks or aims.

Each thesis must clearly demonstrate the **student’s personal contribution** when dealing with the research problem. This can be demonstrated by involving and comparing contrasting opinions from different authors along with independent standpoints and evaluation, by presenting conclusions or practical recommendations based on the materials, or by evaluating a certain theory or model’s usability within specific conditions or within specific data sets. It is crucial for the student to not only present one or several authors’ standpoints along with their criticism or praise, but also to assess the empirical evidence presented to confirm or reject the claims and bring out other potential arguments/theoretical viewpoints. These can originate from either the arguments of other authors or the student’s own criticisms or objections.
3.3.7. Summary

For the thesis abstract, there needs to be a demonstration of how the set goals and aims were reached and what kind of solutions the author found for the set research problem(s). Moreover, the author’s independent contribution needs to be clearly outlined in relation to the problem(s) dealt with in the thesis.

The main aims of a thesis summary are as follows:

1) To concisely present the main results, conclusions, evaluations, suggestions, etc., reached in the main body of the thesis;

2) To outline possible ways in which to use and develop the outlined conclusions and suggestions, and also possible problems needing to be solved in the future.

In the summary, it is not necessarily important to draw any extensive conclusions, if the presented data does not allow it. The author should not introduce new issues, present possible new standpoints or conclusions regarding the questions not dealt with in the main body of analysis presented in the thesis. Generally, it is not recommended to refer to sources or present other authors’ standpoints in the thesis conclusion.

3.3.8. List of sources

The list of sources only concerns sources used and referred to when researching and writing the thesis. Sources need to be listed alphabetically, using the publication’s lead author’s last name. If the author(s) name(s) are missing, referencing should be done in accordance with the publishing organisation or the first word of the title, consistently. In the case of several authors, the names should be listed in the same way as they appear on the publication’s cover page. Latin sources should be presented first (both in Estonian and in other languages), Cyrillic sources second. The reference list can be numbered if necessary.

Use of sources of low academic level (e.g. secondary school text books) is strongly discouraged, with the exception that these are the study’s research object.

3.3.9. Appendices

Materials with extensive numerical data and other materials necessary for solving the research problem, yet not necessarily presented in the text should be presented as appendixes. Appendixes should be numbered, numbering should be displayed in the top right-hand corner, e.g. Appendix 7. If the appendix extends beyond one page, the next page(s) should say Appendix 7 (continued). Students are required to reference appendixes.

Appendices should be numbered according to their occurrence in the main text. Presenting appendixes displaying only weak links to the text is strongly discouraged.

3.3.10. Non-exclusive license

A non-exclusive licence (Appendix 6) to reproduce the thesis and make the thesis public should be presented within the manuscript, either at the end of the thesis or after the cover page. If a fixed-term restriction has been imposed on the publication of a graduation thesis
by an order of the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, the thesis will be published after the expiry of this restriction (Appendix 7).²

3.4. Submission of the thesis

Pursuant to the Guidelines for submission and defence of the final thesis³, adopted by the Institute, the thesis defence generally takes place during the fall semester (end of December or beginning of January) and in the spring semester (end of May or beginning of June). Double and joint degree programmes¹ defences may take place three times a year.

The thesis is submitted electronically (in pdf-format) and in a hard copy to the Academic Affair Specialist along with the following documents:

1. Application for consideration to proceed for defence (to the Head of the Institute, see appendix 2)
2. Short annotation of the thesis on paper, in Estonian and in English if the thesis is in Estonian, in English only if the paper is in English⁴ (½-1 page each) (cf. appendix 3).
3. Supervisor’s approval that the thesis is ready for consideration.

The bound copy of the thesis and the thesis in electronic form must be identical by content and format.

3.5. Assessment

All theses at the Institute should be defended in front of the defence committee. The procedure of defence is described in the Guidelines for submission and defence of the final thesis.

The BA thesis is assessed by the committee composed of four members of the Institute (generally, instructors and the programme manager) and a secretary. Grades are proposed by the supervisor and the reviewer. The defence of BA thesis takes place throughout June (upon agreement with supervisor and reviewer).

The following criteria are considered during assessment:

- topicality of the research;
- established goal(s) and clarity of the research tasks (if completing these can lead to an established goal);
- thesis structure (coherence, balance, consistency, etc.), conformity of different parts of the thesis (title vs content; method vs goal; summary vs body etc. and compliance with the Guidelines for writing and formatting papers);
- choice of research method(s) and the application of the chosen method(s);
- the choice of a method of analysis (in an empirical thesis), application of the chosen method;

² cf. Procedures of publishing final theses and doctoral dissertations, available online.
³ cf. Guidelines for submission and defence of the final thesis, available online.
⁴ If the thesis is defended in English at the study programmes with Estonian as the language of instruction, then a short annotation in Estonian must be included.
- hypotheses are logically derived from the theoretical framework, and are tested with adequate research and analysis; conclusions are derived based on both theory and analysis;
- level of analysis and comprehensiveness of material (clarity, relevance, thoroughness, correctness and logic of analysis, validity of conclusions, material combination skills, adequateness and sufficiency of material etc.);
- sufficiency, relevance and level of literature (e.g. relevant and recent articles from recognised international journals or simply some journal articles); how well is the author able to orientate in the literature and within different approaches;
- new knowledge established through research and the adequate representation of it (in a theoretical thesis or in the theoretical section – what is the original contribution of the author).
- linguistic correctness (grammar, orthography, terminology, style) and formatting;
- length (must be substantively justified);
- how well is the student able to present and defend their research in a public defence.

The Master thesis is assessed according to the assessment criteria, adopted by the Institute (cf Appendix 8)
4. Appendices

4.1. Example of a written paper's cover page

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
Faculty of Social Sciences
Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies

Essay / Research paper

Name of the author

TITLE OF THE PAPER

Lecturer / instructor: Mihkel Solvak, PhD

Course: SORG.00.362 Quantitative research methods

Tartu 2016
4.2. Example of application for consideration to proceed for defence

To the Head of the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies
of the University of Tartu

Date ________________

Application

I hereby apply for authorisation for my MA thesis, titled Thesis' full title, to be defended in order to obtain an MA Degree in __________________________ (name of curriculum).

(Thesis title in foreign language is Thesis' full title in foreign language) 5

Appendices:

1. 1 hard copy of the MA thesis, bound
2. Annotation of MA thesis in English and/or Estonian
3. Supervisor’s agreement regarding entitlement to defence (if not sent electronically to Academic Affair Specialist)

Name ______________ ______________
Signature ________________

__________________________

5 Thesis title in foreign language required for students graduating from programmes with Estonian as language of instruction.
4.3. Example of annotation

**Title:** Title of research paper

*(Title in foreign language): Title of research paper in foreign language)*

**Author:** Name of author

**Supervisor:** Name and academic degree of supervisor

**Reviewer:** Name and academic degree of reviewer

**Year:** Month and year of defence

**Original language and volume of paper:** English/Estonian (xxx pages)

**SUMMARY OF THE MA THESIS**

- Short summary of the research topic and its topicality
- **Aim**
- **Method**
- **Research results**
- **If and why the thesis topic should be further researched**

**Keywords:**

---

6 Thesis title in a foreign language is required for students graduating from programmes with Estonian as the language of instruction.
Appendix 4

4.4. Example of an MA thesis' cover page

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
Faculty of Social Sciences
Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies

Name of the author

TITLE OF THE THESIS

MA thesis

Supervisor: Mihkel Solvak, PhD

Co-supervisor: Kadi Siil, MA (if applicable)

Tartu 2016
4.5. Example of the author’s declaration

I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

..........................................................................

/ signature of author /

The defence will take place on ......................... / date / at ................. / time /
........................................................................ / address / in auditorium number ............ / number /

Opponent ..................................................... / name / (................ / academic degree /),
........................................................................ / position /
4.6. Non-exclusive license for reproduction of thesis and providing access of thesis to the public

I, ____________________________________________________________

_(author’s name)_

(personal code ____________________________________________________),

herewith grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive licence) to:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________,

_(title of thesis)_

supervised by __________________________________________________________,

_(supervisor’s name)_

1. To reproduce, for the purpose of preservation and making available to the public, including for addition to the DSpace digital archives until expiry of the term of validity of the copyright.

2. To make available to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the DSpace digital archives until expiry of the term of validity of the copyright.

3. I am aware that the rights stated in point 1 also remain with the author.

4. I confirm that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe the intellectual property rights or rights arising from the Personal Data Protection Act.

Tartu/Tallinn/Narva/Pärnu/Viljandi, _____________ (date)

_________________________________________________ (signature)
4.7. Non-exclusive (restricted) for reproduction of thesis and providing access of thesis to the public

I, ________________________________________________________________

(author’s name)

(personal code ____________________________________________________),

herewith grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive licence) to:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

(title of thesis)

supervised by ____________________________________________________________,

(supervisor’s name)

1. To reproduce, for the purpose of preservation and making available to the public, including for addition to the DSpace digital archives until expiry of the term of validity of the copyright.

2. To make available to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the DSpace digital archives from dd.mm.yy until expiry of the term of validity of the copyright.

3. I am aware that the rights stated in point 1 also remain with the author.

4. I confirm that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe the intellectual property rights or rights arising from the Personal Data Protection Act.

Tartu/Tallinn/Narva/Pärnu/Viljandi, ______________ (date)

__________________________________________ (signature)
### 4.8. MA thesis assessment criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment criteria/grade</th>
<th>F – fail</th>
<th>E – poor</th>
<th>D – satisfactory</th>
<th>C – good</th>
<th>B – very good</th>
<th>A – excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research design and theory (30%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>a) The Research question(s) (RQ) and research puzzle (RP)</strong></td>
<td>- RP is missing or is very vaguely defined; - RQs not explicitly related to each other and/or with the following research; - RQs are not or are insufficiently answered</td>
<td>- RP defined on basic level; - RQs stated in basic form, at a general level, defining a broad scope of study; - basic answers broadly related to RQs</td>
<td>- RP defined in general terms; - RQs related to each other and/or with the research which follows; - satisfactory answers related to RQs in general terms</td>
<td>- RP defined and argued well; - RQs clearly defined, providing for an appropriate focus for study; - well elaborated answers, consistent with RQs in appropriate manner</td>
<td>- RP defined and argued very well; - RQs very clear and precise, providing the study with excellent focus; - well-argued answers consistent with RQs</td>
<td>- RP defined thoroughly in an excellent manner; - RQs well related and form the basis of the research; - precise and elaborate answers consistent with the research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>b) Theoretical literature</strong></td>
<td>- lack of understanding of key theoretical literature</td>
<td>- basic understanding of key theoretical literature</td>
<td>- satisfactory general understanding of key theoretical literature</td>
<td>- good understanding of theoretical literature</td>
<td>- very good understanding of theoretical literature</td>
<td>- very thorough understanding of theoretical literature that is extensively discussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>c) Theoretical argument</strong></td>
<td>- missing</td>
<td>- very general; - based on minimal literature; - exists; - based on satisfactory usage of literature</td>
<td>- exists; - based on a good literature review and well integrated with existing literature</td>
<td>- exists; - strongly integrated with existing literature; - independent argument</td>
<td>- exists as central element of the study; - strongly integrated with existing literature; - strong academic contribution</td>
<td>- exists as central element of the study; - strongly integrated with existing literature; - strong academic contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Conceptualization and operationalization</td>
<td>- poor and vague conceptualization based on insufficient literature; - lack of explicit operationalization</td>
<td>- basic conceptualization based on minimal literature; - very general operationalization</td>
<td>- key concepts defined; - operationalization suitable in general terms</td>
<td>- well defined key concepts; - clear operationalization</td>
<td>- conceptualization based on extensive literature; - precise operationalization</td>
<td>- conceptualization based on extensive literature; - precise and thorough operationalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Research method</td>
<td>- lack of explicit research method; - inappropriate method</td>
<td>- suitable method(s) but described in very general terms</td>
<td>- suitable method(s); - described in general terms; - minimal justification</td>
<td>- suitable method(s); - clearly described; - well justified</td>
<td>- suitable method(s); - extensively described; - very well justified</td>
<td>- suitable, independently tailored method(s); - discussed in detail - thoroughly justified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Application of theoretical framework</td>
<td>- theory separate from the analysis; - research method does not match with theoretical assumptions; - research methods not properly applied</td>
<td>- related to the analysis in very general terms</td>
<td>- mechanically applied and related to the analysis mainly formally; - research method applied with a few major shortcomings</td>
<td>- suitable framework but study is mainly empirical; - research methods applied with some minor shortcomings</td>
<td>- well integrated theory that supports well the central argument; - research methods applied with few minor shortcomings</td>
<td>- thoroughly integrated theory which strongly supports the central argument; - research methods applied with very few minor shortcomings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empirical analysis (30%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Usage of data</td>
<td>- insufficiently used; - and/or usage does not correspond to the research focus</td>
<td>- used on a minimal level; - data supports answering of the research questions only in general terms</td>
<td>- used satisfactorily; - data supports answering of the research questions with some limitations</td>
<td>- well used; - data supports answering of the main research questions well</td>
<td>- very efficiently used; - data supports answering of the main research questions very well</td>
<td>- very efficiently used; - precise data used to answer the main research questions thoroughly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Collection of data</td>
<td>- obtained in an inappropriate way</td>
<td>- a few major issues regarding data collection</td>
<td>- properly collected in sufficient quantity</td>
<td>- properly collected in appropriate quantity</td>
<td>- precisely collected in line with quantity required to answer research questions very well</td>
<td>- very precisely collected in quantity required to answer research questions thoroughly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Conclusions of analysis</td>
<td>- biased conclusions, not corresponding to reality</td>
<td>- bias exists to some extent in the conclusions; - deviation from existing knowledge</td>
<td>- data enables the drawing of only general conclusions; - conclusions applicable only for limited cases</td>
<td>- data enables the drawing of solid conclusions - conclusions applicable for general knowledge</td>
<td>- very well based on data - conclusions applicable for general knowledge and certain cases</td>
<td>- thoroughly discussed and well-argued based on data - conclusions applicable for general knowledge as well as precise cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Critical approach towards sources and own limitations</td>
<td>without proper explanations</td>
<td>- missing critical approach; - some bias in approach; - minimal level of critical approaches to the sources</td>
<td>- some shortcomings to acknowledge own limitations; - satisfactory critical approach</td>
<td>- own limitations acknowledged properly; - solid critical approach</td>
<td>- own limitations acknowledged properly; - well-developed solutions to overcome them; - strong critical approach</td>
<td>- acceptable limitations acknowledged; - well-developed solutions to overcome them; - comprehensive critical approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Argumentation</td>
<td>- weak; - insufficiently supported with empirical findings</td>
<td>- supported by data sufficiently; - final conclusions partly unconvincing</td>
<td>- well supported with data; - few shortcomings in argumentation</td>
<td>- balanced argumentation based on collected data</td>
<td>- very thorough and balanced argumentation based on collected data</td>
<td>- very thoroughly and balanced argumentation based on collected data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) New knowledge</td>
<td>- no new findings, repeats earlier studies</td>
<td>- some trivial new conclusions</td>
<td>- some new knowledge but it is applicable only to limited cases</td>
<td>- some new knowledge; - findings incoherently elevated</td>
<td>- interesting new empirical findings; - coherently elevated</td>
<td>- strong new theoretical and empirical findings; - coherently elevated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Structure of the thesis (20%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Logic of the research</th>
<th>- logical errors; - contradictions in text</th>
<th>- few illogical conclusions; - tiny contradictions</th>
<th>- logically coherent work</th>
<th>- logically coherent work</th>
<th>- very logically coherent work</th>
<th>- very logically coherent work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b) Coherence of the research</td>
<td>- incoherent structure</td>
<td>- barely coherent</td>
<td>- some issues regarding coherence</td>
<td>- coherent and well elaborated structure - appropriate division of subsections</td>
<td>- strong and coherent structure; - accurate division of subsections</td>
<td>- thoroughly developed and coherent structure; - each subsection has its own clear location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Logic and coherence of argumentation</td>
<td>- inconsistent and incoherent</td>
<td>- some shortcomings</td>
<td>- logical but a few issues with coherence</td>
<td>- logical and coherent work</td>
<td>- strong logically and very coherent</td>
<td>- strong logically and very coherent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Technical requirements (20%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Language usage, spelling</th>
<th>- major issues in grammar; - improper usage of language that disturbs understanding;</th>
<th>- few major issues in grammar; - some improper usage of words but text is understandable;</th>
<th>- some minor issues in grammar; - some improper usage of words but text is understandable;</th>
<th>- grammatically correct language; - few issues regarding the usage of words but text is understandable;</th>
<th>- grammatically correct language; - proper usage of words; - few spelling mistakes, typos</th>
<th>- grammatically correct language; - proper usage of words; - very few spelling mistakes, typos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b) <em>Length and other technical requirements</em></td>
<td>- many spelling mistakes, typos</td>
<td>- some spelling mistakes, typos</td>
<td>- some spelling mistakes, typos</td>
<td>- some spelling mistakes, typos</td>
<td>- general technical requirements not fulfilled; length is significantly (3,000 words) below or exceeds the limit</td>
<td>- general technical requirements are only superficially fulfilled; length is marginally (500 words) below or exceeds the limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) <em>Citations</em></td>
<td>- incoherent citation system; list of references is not in alphabetical order; several missing sources in the list of references</td>
<td>- some incoherence in the citation system; list of references is not in alphabetical order; some missing sources in the list of references</td>
<td>- coherent citation system; list of references is in alphabetical order; a few missing sources in the list of references</td>
<td>- coherent citation system; a list of references is in alphabetical order; very few missing sources in the list of references</td>
<td>- coherent citation system; a list of references is in alphabetical order; no missing sources in the list of references</td>
<td>- coherent citation system; a list of references is in alphabetical order; no missing sources in the list of references</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>