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GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF MASTER'S THESES AT AEH

1. General Notes and Rules

1.1. Why are Master's theses needed?

- they are legally required
- one cannot receive a Master's degree without it

1.2. What is a thesis?

- it is one of the University's formal requirements
- it is proof that you have the relevant knowledge and skills (resulting from the curriculum) and can apply (use) them in practice (e.g. in solving specific social, economic, etc. issues)
- it is proof of your ability to access and use the available academic (and/or professional) literature to better understand and explore the complex social, economic, etc. issues.
- it is proof of your ability to search for and collect the data/information needed (to solve a given problem), analyze it properly and draw appropriate conclusions on which you base your recommendations in practice (helpful in solving various issues)
- it is proof that you have acquired the ability to analyze a selected research problem during your studies. This ability is reflected: in independence and inventiveness in the proper selection of the thesis topic; in the ability to select and analyze the relevant literature; in the ability to analyze the empirical material; in the ability to consider selected economic issues (to analyze, draw conclusions, see opportunities and risks related to the discussed economic phenomena, etc.), the ability to format and edit written works. Submitting a thesis means that you possess the above skills and are eligible to hold a Master's degree
- the Master's thesis should (if possible) be prepared on the basis of the student's own research and its references should include at least 10 articles published within the last 5 years in journals listed in the Master Journal List (<https://mjl.clarivate.com/home>)

1.3. How do I choose a topic/title for my thesis?

- remember that you are writing the thesis in your field of study (not your major/specialization)
- the topic of the thesis may be related to your academic interests or your professional work, but it is not required
- the topic of the thesis should not be complicated or intricate - choose a topic which will allow you to achieve your goal and answer research questions / verify hypotheses
- avoid topics that require you to investigate relationships between different variables (the effect of one variable on another) if you do not know how to investigate them or do not have the appropriate means
- avoid topics about companies that you do not have direct access to (beyond your reach) which will make it impossible to conduct your research in (e.g. Google, Amazon, and other global corporations) - unless the information you are interested in is widely available in the current scientific literature. It is better to choose a small or medium-sized company in your area as the subject of your research. The purpose of the thesis must have a realistic scope. Sometimes, once a thesis topic is selected, the student is unable to complete the thesis aim because the topic is too broad and/or the student does not have the necessary tools (e.g., when the objective is to measure the effectiveness of marketing efforts at Coca-Cola).
- to verify whether you are able to write a thesis, consider the following:
 - do you have any knowledge regarding the subject matter?
 - do you have experience in the industry you want to write about?
 - do you have access to necessary data (for instance, target company)?
 - is there current and international literature on the topic available (books, articles)?
- before writing your thesis, prepare an outline/plan of the thesis, which must be approved by your thesis supervisor. In the outline, include the aim of the thesis, the means to achieve that aim, the research questions, the initial structure of the thesis, and the primary literature which will be used in the process of writing the thesis. In the outline, the student must demonstrate that they will be able to accomplish the aim of the thesis. By proceeding to write your thesis without a previously prepared outline, you risk not being able to finish the thesis due to the inability to access empirical data or due to the lack of availability of literature on the topic.

2. Authorship of the Thesis

- 2.1. A Master's thesis is prepared by a single student. The thesis should be empirical or, with the Supervisor's consent, theoretical, if the subject allows it.
- 2.2. In English-language studies, the thesis is written in English. A thesis in English must be of high quality, use specialized terminology, and meet the standards of professional editing. Appropriate grammar and spelling checks must also be completed professionally. While software can be used for such grammar checks, it should not be the only method.

3. General Requirements and Rules

3.1. Please remember that:

- you need to use literary language (complex sentences; flowing text; do not use headings except chapter's/subchapter's titles)
- you need to include references (APA style) in the Literature Review Part (usually Chapter 1 and 2) – as many as possible
- APA encourages the use of first person pronouns. Avoid the third person when referring to yourself as the author, as it may cause unwanted ambiguity. For example:
Correct: I explored the issues surrounding employment in Poland.
Incorrect: The author explored the issues surrounding employment in Poland
- you cannot copy text from books, journals, etc. (try to paraphrase)
- you are not allowed to use popular online sources (such as Wikipedia), the Literature Review part must be based solely on scientific journals, books, and academic manuals; you can use online sources in the Empirical Part (usually Chapter 3)
- check spelling/typos, language style, and punctuation at all times
- avoid writing chaotically (do not describe the same problems/issues in different places)
- use English language only (American or British)
- observe formal adjustment requirements (spaces, format, font type and size etc.)

3.2. Please remember that the thesis must meet the minimum requirements to be accepted by the supervisor.

4. Thesis Structure

The necessary parts of the manuscript include:

4.1. Title page

Master thesis sample title page can be found in the annex 1.

4.2. Statement of compliance towards the ethical requirements and the non-violation of legal norms (current statement should be downloaded from the extranet)

This statement should be placed on the title page before the table of contents. The current statement is available on the University's extranet. You should print the statement, make a legible signature, and attach it as per the instructions above.

4.3. Table of contents

The table of contents comes after the Statement of Compliance. It contains the titles of all chapters, their subsections as well as other elements of the thesis (bibliography, lists, attachments) with the inclusion of the page number reflecting the beginning of a given section.

The page number should be aligned to the right margin.

4.4. Introduction

It must be written in the present simple tense and include:

1. Justification/motivation for the choice of the topic.
2. Statement of the research problem and research aim/objective
3. Research question/s and/or research hypotheses
4. Research method
5. Thesis/research range (what, who, where, when will be examined). Description of the research sample/respondents (number, age, sex, environment) and research procedure (step by step)
6. Research tool (how information and data will be collected)
7. Statistical method (if applicable) - how the collected data will be analyzed

The description of the research method should provide enough details to allow someone else to replicate the study. Do not describe the methodology (all existing methods described in

literature), do not present the theoretical/literature description of your method – only give a short and concise justification regarding the choice of a given method (no other) – the method must allow you to fulfill the thesis aim, answer your research questions / verify hypotheses.

4.5. Chapters

4.5.1. Literature review part. Chapters discussing the main concepts and the theoretical framework of the research problem which is the main focus of the thesis.

Why do you need this? You need to demonstrate that:

- you can use scientific sources,
- you know the “state of the art” (current knowledge of the topic; classic and modern theories and scientific achievements in this field),

You need to acquire in-depth knowledge of the research problem’s status quo, its specification, characteristics, etc. Moreover, you need to learn how to uncover ways of solving research problems. To do so, you also need to acquire knowledge on what has been done in that particular field until now. You need to learn from others’ (researchers) mistakes and use their achievements to be successful in your own research.

a) Chapter 1. Title/name (Literature Review Part; a general literature-based chapter) - *title must reflect its content*

A chapter itself does not have its own text. It comprises only of subchapters. No introduction is needed at the beginning of a chapter. Every chapter must consist of at least 3 subchapters (maximum of 4). Chapter 1 is devoted to a general view of the research problem/field. It is a background for your detailed problem description (in chapter 2).

Subchapter 1.1. Title/name (*must reflect its content*)

Subchapter 1.2. Title/name (*must reflect its content*)

Subchapter 1.3. Title/name (*must reflect its content*)

b) Chapter 2. Title/name (Literature Review Part; literature-based part; this is more detailed, very close to the main research problem/thesis topic) – *title must reflect its content*

Subchapter 2.1. Title/name (*must reflect its content*)

Subchapter 2.2. Title/name (*must reflect its content*)

Subchapter 2.3. Title/name (*must reflect its content*)

4.5.2. Empirical part. Chapter(s) presenting results of the study and discussion of results (including study limitations). Please, do not describe the questions and answers from your questionnaire used in the research – you need to describe the research problem undertaken in your thesis (respondents' answers are only a source for your knowledge about the problem and are used to build this description). In general, it is encouraged to report the results obtained in the corresponding order of the research questions or research hypotheses.

- a) **Chapter 3. Title/name** (Empirical Part; this is exemplification of the research problem/thesis topic, very detailed, devoted to results presentation and discussions, your own analyses and findings presentations) – *title must reflect its content*

Subchapter 3.1. Title/name (*must reflect its content*)

Subchapter 3.2. Title/name (*must reflect its content*)

Subchapter 3.3. Title/name (*must reflect its content*)

4.6. Conclusions

Conclusions must be written in the past tense and reflect the contents of the Introduction (repeat the main findings from Chapter 3; answer the research question/s; did you solve the problem?; you can describe the research limitations and make a perspective for future research).

4.7. Bibliography

Bibliography and references in the thesis text must adhere to APA style. You can find the rules described in “Instruction for authors” of Contemporary Economics: <http://www.ce.vizja.pl/en/instructions-for-authors>

You can also use latest published articles as the example: <http://www.ce.vizja.pl/en/issues>

4.8. Dedication, or acknowledgment. The student may, if they deem it relevant, add a section such as Dedication, or Acknowledgment. The names of these optional sections may differ, but must be agreed upon by the Supervisor.

4.9. Tables and figures

You need to list all tables and figures (together or separately) used in the whole thesis and indicate their page numbers where they originally appear.

4.10. Appendixes should also be included, wherever applicable (these include, for example, used research tools and other supplementary material)

5. Technical Requirements

5.1. Electronic form of the Thesis

The Supervisor uploads the final version of the thesis (approved by the Supervisor) to the appropriate system (for example: Verbis).

5.2. Thesis format

The manuscript is prepared on a computer in an A4 format.

5.3. Text editor

The preferred text editor for writing the thesis is Microsoft Word. The working draft should be prepared in one of the following formats: *.doc, *.docx.

5.4. Page layout

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Margins: | Left and right margins: 2.5 cm Top and bottom margins: 2.5 cm |
| Alignment: | To both margins ('justified' text) |
| Spacing: | 1.5 line |
| Indentation: | Paragraphs indented 0.5 cm. The line after the title or subtitle begins without indentation. |
| Footnotes: | Footnotes are not allowed (if information is important, please include it in the main text). |

5.5. Font

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Font type: | Times New Roman |
| Basic text font size: | 12 points |
| Chapter titles font size: | 14 points, bold |
| Subchapter titles font size: | 12 points, bold |

5.6. Manuscript volume

All MA theses (with all its components) should not exceed 80 pages of text prepared according to the above standards. Suggested range of the MA thesis is 50 to 80 pages. The lower limit of acceptable volume for MA studies depends on the Supervisor.

5.7. Numbering of chapters, subsections and the distribution of the titles

- Arabic numerals are used in the numbering of individual thesis components.
- Chapters start on a new page.
- Chapter numbers (Chapter 1., Chapter 2., etc.) are above their titles, both are centered.
- Lower-level subchapters can be introduced when there are at least two sub-chapters in a given chapter, similarly for all subsections. One page is not enough for a subchapter.
- The subchapters are numbered with two digits, separated by a period(e.g., 1.1.; 1.2.; 2.1.; 2.2., etc.). The first number indicates the chapter, the second indicates the order number of the subchapter.
- Lower-level subchapters are numbered with three digits separated by periods (e.g. 1.1.1.; 1.1.2.; 1.2.1.; 1.2.2., etc.). The first number indicates the chapter, the second indicates the order number of the first level of subsection, and the third number indicates a further subsection.
- Put a period after the numbers indicating chapters or subchapters, just like their titles. The title of the subchapter should be placed in the same line as its number. The subchapter designations (i.e., their numbers and titles) are centered.

5.8. Tables and figures

- Tables and figures are announced in the text of the thesis.
- The tables have continuous numbering throughout the whole thesis (Table 1.; Table 2.; ... Table 15.), they are not divided by chapters. The same applies to figures (Figure 1.; Figure 2.; ... Figure 15.).
- Tables and figures are centered.

- The figure/table number (e.g., Figure 1.) should precede the figure/table title in bold font. Capitalize the title in italics (e.g., **Figure 1. *This is the Title***).

- Unless the table or figure was made based on own data, its source should be given below (in other words, **do not** add “Source: author’s own data” below the table/figure).

In accordance with APA style, do not use vertical lines in tables. More details and examples of table formatting under APA guidelines can be found here: <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/tables-figures/tables>

5.9. In-text citations

APA style is used for text formatting - see the website for details https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

Below are the basic APA guidelines. In accordance with APA style, when citing information from a book or an article in-text, use the author's last name (without first names or initials) and the year of publication. If the sentence begins with a citation (i.e., author’s last name) – include the year of the cited publication in the brackets only, as per example:

Kowalski (2010) argues that...

As Kowalski (2010) suggests, (...)

If the author's name is not directly cited in-text, include the name and the year of publication in parentheses:

A similar phenomenon has been observed among American consumers (Kowalski, 2010).

If the paper has two authors, use the following format:

Kowalski and Smith (2010) argue that...

A similar phenomenon has been observed among American consumers (Kowalski & Smith, 2010).

If the cited works has three or more authors, include only the first author and add the abbreviation “et al.”

E.g., *As Kowalski et al. suggest... (2010).*

A similar phenomenon has been observed among American consumers (Kowalski et al., 2010).

If the author of the cited work or report is an organization then the in-text citation follows this format:

When citing for the first time, give the full name of the organization plus its [abbreviation in square brackets]

First citation: *(American Psychological Association [APA], 2010)*

if cited again, use the abbreviation only.

(APA, 2010)

When referring to data from different works, include them alphabetically according to the first author and separate them with semicolons, according to the following format:

(Berndt, 2002; Harlow & Abramowicz, 1983; Kowalski, 2010) - begin with Berndt because his name takes precedence in alphabetical order.

If a passage is quoted and not paraphrased, include page number:

"The public does not trust authority..." (Kowalski, 2010, p. 180).

When citing two different works by the same author published in the same year, you should add lowercase letters next to the year of publication in order to distinguish them. These added lowercase letters should also be used the reference list (the same way as in the text for the year of publication) e.g.:

Research by Kowalski (2010a) revealed strong correlations. However, a parallel study (Kowalski, 2010b) resulted in inconclusive findings.

Any information must include a source (appropriate in-text citation). The text should be coherent and clear (paragraphs consisting of one or two sentences are not allowed). Every new paragraph should begin a new thought. Keep that in mind when citing. In the example below, the author included one citation. It refers to the information contained in the second paragraph, as each new paragraph means a new thought. Therefore, in this situation, the citation "(Kowalski, 2010)" will not refer to the information contained in the first paragraph.

Example:

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Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat (Kowalski, 2010).

In your thesis, use full stops as decimal separators. However, three-digit numbers are separated by commas, e.g.: 100,000 - hundred thousand.

5.10. Bibliography and works cited

When writing your thesis, refer to books, scientific articles, reports prepared by national or international organizations, consulting companies, databases containing raw statistical data. Avoid citing non-scientific materials such as blogs, websites, web portals, newspaper articles, online encyclopedias, etc.

Only works cited in the thesis should be included in the references. Any item cited in-text must be included in the bibliography, and conversely, any item found in the bibliography list must be cited in the text. The rules for including cited articles, books, chapters in collective works, reports, online sources and unpublished dissertations in a bibliography are included below.

5.10.1. Articles in scientific journals:

Begin with the author's last name, then include the initials.

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, volume number(issue number), pages. <https://doi.org/xx.xxx/yyyy>

Example: Soto, C. J., & John, O. P. (2017). The next big five inventory (BFI-2): Developing and assessing a hierarchical model with 15 facets to enhance bandwidth, fidelity, and predictive power. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 113(1), 117-143. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000096>

5.10.2. Books:

Author, A. A. (Year of publication). *Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle*. Publisher Name.

Example: Stoneman, R. (2008). *Alexander the Great: A life in legend*. Yale University Press.

5.10.3. Chapter in a collective work:

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Year of publication). Title of chapter. In E. E. Editor & F. F. Editor (Eds.), *Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle* (pp. pages of chapter). Publisher.

Example: Armstrong, D. (2019). Malory and character. In M. G. Leitch & C. J. Rushton (Eds.), *A new companion to Malory* (pp. 144-163). D. S. Brewer.

When listing the pages of the chapter or essay in parentheses after the book title, use "pp." before the number: (pp. 1-21).

5.10.4. Report by an agency

Organization name, year, report title. Publisher and link to the report.

Example: Europeana Task Force on Metadata Quality. (2015). *Report and recommendations from the Task Force on Metadata Quality*. Europeana. https://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana_Professional/Europeana_Network/metadata-quality-report.pdf

5.10.5. Other requirements

- Individual bibliographical items must be written according to the rules described above.

- These rules are commonly known as the APA style referencing; many resources are available for further information.

- Individual bibliographic references shall not be numbered.

- Individual bibliographic references are presented in alphabetical and chronological order if publications of the same author (authors) from different years are given.

- Bibliography should be prepared in a way that allows quick and easy access to individual bibliographic items. The first line of a bibliographic entry are not indented, but the next lines have an indentation of 1 cm.

Example:

Ciarrochi, J. V., Chan, A. Y., Caputi, P. (2000). A critical evaluation of the emotional intelligence construct. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 36, 1781-1795.

Goleman, D. (1999). *Emotional intelligence in practice*. Media Family.

Leary, M., Kowalski, R. M. (2001). Social anxiety. Gdańsk Psychological Publishing House.

Mayer, J. D. (2001). A field guide to emotional intelligence. In J. Ciarrochi, J. Forgas, J. D. Mayer (Eds.), *Emotional intelligence in everyday life* (pp. 3-24). Psychology Press

6. Approval of the Thesis Topic

Master's thesis title is approved by the Supervisor. The supervisor of the planned thesis may ask for advice to on the possibility of accepting a specific topic of thesis (e.g. if he is not sure whether a specific interdisciplinary thesis will be considered a in a given area).

7. List of Attachments

Annex 1. Master Thesis Sample Title Page

Annex 1.