A Guide to Writing a Thesis at ELTE's Faculty of Primary and Pre-School Education[1]

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[1] The Faculty Committee validated this guide on February 7, 2018 based on resolution no. 26 for the academic year of 2017/2018. This guide is effective for all theses submitted beginning in the 2018/19 academic year. In accordance with the Senate's ruling of VIII/2020. (II. 24.), this guide has been updated to comply with the electronic submission of theses for July 30, 2020 and October 30, 2020.

Introduction

For our B.A.-level programs, the rules for writing and submitting a thesis are stipulated in the "Academic Regulations for Students" (ARS) found in the *Eötvös Loránd University Organizational and Operational Regulations, Volume II*. The general rules (Sections 76-80) are contained in a separate chapter while all regulations related to the Faculty of Primary and Pre-School Education can be found in Chapter 22, beginning with Section 474.

The regulations for students training in and graduating from our B.A.-level programs stipulate the submission of a B.A. thesis. By preparing and defending a B.A. thesis, the candidate demonstrates the following:

- The ability to apply knowledge acquired in the course of his or her studies to a chosen research topic in a manner that is both creative and independent;
- A familiarity with and the ability to utilize academic research methods;
- The ability to review and analyze the research literature examining the research topic;
- The ability to follow the formal and stylistic rules of academic publication.

The training and graduation requirements for specialized, post-graduate track programs also stipulate the submission of a thesis. By preparing and defending a thesis, the candidate demonstrates the following:

- The ability to apply the knowledge and experience acquired in the course of his or her studies in a manner that will make a creative contribution to both the student's professional development and that of his or her educational institution;
- The ability to conduct an independent examination of a topic related to the program and in accordance with the rules determining the utilized research and/or analytical methods;
- The ability to provide an overview of the research literature discussing the thesis topic;
- The ability to follow the formal and stylistic rules of a text containing a professional analysis.

Topic selection

Beginning with the 2020/2021 autumn semester, selecting a thesis topic is exclusively done through the Neptun system. After thesis topics are announced on Neptun, students can apply for a selected topic via Neptun and the chosen/requested thesis adviser will post his or her response on the Neptun interface. The Neptun interface for choosing a thesis topic can be accessed every autumn semester, from the second week of the study term (semester) at the latest. The Registrar's Office informs students of the exact deadline date by Neptun. The detailed rules regarding topic selection and information for applying for a topic and the means for determining the deadline can be found in ARS, Section 490.

Students may read about the technical details for choosing a thesis topic electronically under **For Current Students/Information About Thesis** on the website of the Student Affairs Office.

Timeframe for preparing and submitting a thesis

Students attending the Infant and Early Childhood Care Provider or Preschool Educator Programs choose thesis topics in their third semester. Students in the Primary Education Program choose thesis topics in the fifth semester. Preparation of the thesis is aided by a thesis course that is taken in the

same semester as the final examination; despite this, students are expected to consult with the thesis adviser regularly (at least twice a semester) throughout the period leading up to the final examination. Thesis advisers may be ELTE instructors, researchers or external experts. If the thesis adviser is not a Faculty instructor, it is the right of the Department Chairperson to decide whether the specialist will guide a thesis independently or with the support of a partner adviser.

The "Academic Regulations for Students" (ARS) found in the *Eötvös Loránd University Organizational and Operational Regulations, Volume II* regulates all aspects of thesis preparation. The general rules can be found in a separate chapter in Sections 76-80. All regulations related to the Faculty of Primary and Preschool Education are in Chapter 20, beginning with Section 474. "For final examinations held in the summer, students must submit a thesis by April 20th (or May 10th for students completing a specialized, post-graduate track program). For final examinations held in the winter, students in all programs must submit a thesis by November 20th. All submitted theses are to comply with the Guide and include a statement verifying authenticity" (ARS, Section 491, Paragraphs (1) and (2)) The deadline for submission is not subject to change!
Beginning with the spring semester of 2019/2020, all theses are to be submitted electronically. Theses can be uploaded via Neptun's menu points of *Studies>Degree thesis/Thesis application*. Students may familiarize themselves with the technical details of uploading by reading the information under the **Final exam** section here.

Fulfilling the **Dissertation Consultation** course during the final semester is a requirement for attaining the pre-degree certificate (absolutorium).

Types of theses

In accordance with the research fields that comply with our B.A.-level programs, the following three types of theses are recommended for students writing a thesis and the advisers who guide them.

(1)   **Research that is theoretical or even historical in approach** and can contain meta-analysis, i.e., a synthetic review of a number of previous, experimental works and a summary of their results. In other words, this type of thesis provides an analytical introduction to "state of the art" developments in a given field. Usage of databases containing international research literature (Ex. Educational Research Complete) is recommended for exploring and analyzing the more significant, relevant, international research papers related to the thesis topic. An important characteristic of theory-based research is that the author expresses a perspective or viewpoint that is then contrasted against different opinions found in the research literature.

(2)   **A qualitative or quantitative, empirical examination**. Qualitative research studies typically reply upon the preparing of interviews, the recording of observations, the posing of open, written questions, case studies made based upon fieldwork, iconographic analyses, content analyses of drawings, etc. Quantitative research studies characteristically contain a survey (Ex. a questionnaire) that (in the case of comparative analyses) collects data from a minimum of 20-40 participants while a survey seeking to examine correlations should have gathered answers from at least 100-120 participants. In its discussion of the related theoretical background, the thesis must review both the local and more significant international research literature and tendencies. Qualitative research frequently seeks answers to research questions while quantitative examinations are more focused upon answering research questions or proving hypotheses. The statistical techniques used to analyze the data must always be determined based upon the given task to be solved; utilization of Excel, SPSS or other types of software can be expected.

(3)   A **description of an innovation or development in the field of education** discusses a teaching material, teaching aid or new method/practice introduced within the context of a daycare, preschool, or elementary school environment. The student is expected to reflect upon the pedagogical process while providing a detailed documentation of the innovation's content and application in a way that is similar to the portfolio prepared by educators in the Hungarian state education system. Describing the teaching innovation or development must follow the same formal requirements that

have been set for other types of theses. In short, this type of thesis also contains a literature review and clearly cites the utilized research literature. Introducing a given teaching innovation or development must be supported by various, detailed documents (including factual data) while a reflection upon the introduced process, its results and impact constitutes a mandatory element of this type of research.

No matter what type of thesis is written, respecting the **fundamental rules of research ethics** is required. In studies that include children, particular attention must be paid to gaining the parents' permission while informing them of the research's nature, the protection of personal data, the guarantee of anonymity and the voluntary nature of participation, including the right to refrain from being a part of the research study.

Technical editing of the thesis

In general, the minimum length of a thesis is 50,000 characters (approximately 25-30 pages), not including interspacing between words, bibliographical materials or appendices.

When binding the manuscript, the inner margins must be increased by 1 centimeter, leaving 2.5 centimeters above, below and on the right-hand edge. It is recommended to leave 3.5 centimeters on the left-hand edge. Two-sided printing is requested.

The Faculty primarily requests that students use Times New Roman type with 12-point letter size. Using the automatic title format found in Word for Windows is not only suggested for aesthetic reasons, but also because this feature makes it much easier to assemble the table of contents.

Parts of a thesis:

- a cover (bearing the word THESIS, the author's name and the year of submission)
- a flyleaf: a blank page
- a title page (See the example provided on the *Guide*'s following page)
- a table of contents (the numbering of pages begins on this page)
- the body of the thesis
- a bibliography
- appendices (numbered in Arabic numerals)
- a Statement of Authenticity, filled out and signed by the student (See Appendix 1)
- for first-place winners of the OTDK, a form stating that the student's OTDK work has been accepted as a thesis (See Appendix 2)
- in the case of works submitted to the TDK, a form stating that the student's TDK work has been accepted as a thesis (See Appendix 3)

Eötvös Loránd University

Faculty of Primary and Preschool Education

Recent trends in early childhood education

Written by:

Samantha Smart

Student in Preschool Education

Thesis adviser:

Dr. János Kiss

Professor

Budapest

2021

Citing the research literature

The kinds of reference sources

In compliance with the aims that have been set for preparing his or her thesis, the author must primarily utilize and reference various academic works when writing a thesis. Out of these works, academic journals or works that publish the most recent scientific results are to be in the forefront of any literature review. Articles from academic journals are similar in length and style to chapters found in edited, academic volumes. When citing other sources, great care must be taken in determining whether the source has been adequately fact-checked and can therefore be viewed as a reliable source.

Conference lectures of presentations should only be referenced if they contained new results and occurred recently enough that a sufficient amount of time has not yet passed for those results to have been published (ex. a few years) in an academic journal or volume.

Manuscripts, images or video files that were located on the Internet may be used, but the thesis author must ensure the requirements listed above regarding inclusion of the author's name, the work's title, the date of most recent retrieval and the URL. The reader must be able to locate these sources as well.

It is furthermore recommended that the student be particularly careful when choosing these sources for the reasons of reliability already mentioned above.

Reference systems and citation

Various reference systems can be used to display and clearly inform the reader regarding the exact source of each work used by the student in the course of writing his or her thesis.

Sources are generally cited using in-text citations based upon the requirements of the APA (American Psychological Association) system for references.[2] If the thesis concerns an academic field that has its own requirements, another accepted and consistent citation system (such as MLA or Chicago) may be used. In the field of education or other areas of the social sciences or humanities, in-text citation primarily means displaying the author's name and the work's date of publication. In the sciences, it is common to reference sources by placing a number within brackets. When using the APA (American Psychological Association) reference system, students should consult the actual APA handbook. When writing about a topic from the sciences, the Vancouver reference system should be followed. No matter what reference system has been chosen, the most important requirement is for the thesis author to ensure that research sources can be clearly identified and located; as regards formal requirements, all references must be displayed in a consistent manner.

Citations do not only refer to textual documents: pictures, videos or any other form of media that is necessary for analyzing the thesis topic are also referenced. When citing Internet sources, other than providing the author's name and the source's title, the file name must be given as an URL (Uniform Resource Locator, i.e., the line beginning with http:// shown in the search engine) with the date of the most recent retrieval given in parentheses. Please make sure that any image or video included in the thesis is being used in accordance with copyright laws (See for example the categories listed in Creative Commons)! If tables, graphs or images are included in the thesis, these must be numbered in numerical order with their sources provided in a separate reference list at the end of the thesis.

Citation is uniformly determined by APA (American Psychological Association) requirements. Fo more detailed information see https://www.statokos.com/hivatkozasi-formatumok-apa. THe most common forms of citation can be found below:

In-text citation:

"Most recently Székely (2021) argues that…."

"In more recent years pedgogical evaluations have undergone significant changes (Csapó, 2019; Oswald, 2022)."

In the case of two authors the names are separated by an ampersand (&): (Székely & Hajnal, 2014).

In the case of three authors there is only a comma separating the names of the first two authors while an ampersand (&) comes between the second and third author's name: (Csapó, Telegdy & Molnár, 2019).

If there are more than three authors only the first author's name is included in the citation, followed by the abbreviation of "et al.": (Székely et al., 2018).

When providing multiple citations, each citation is separated by a semi-colon: (Agárdy, 2008; Széles, 2012; Szemerei, 2014).

In the case of quotations that are directly quoted, the citation also includes the page number:

"In human history there has never been a more complete revolution than what has occurred since the mid-nineteenth century in the area of visual perception and the recording of visual material." (Mitchell, 2001. 62.)

In the case that information regarding the author cannot be found (such as commonly occurs in the case of official reports), it is necessary to provide the name of the organisation: (UNESCO, 2017).

If the date of publication cannot be given, the abbreviation of "n.d." must be used: (Department of Education, n.d.).

Other than printed texts, it is also possible to use pictures, videos, podcasts, etc., if they are necessary and closely connected to analysing the topic. In the text, it is also necessary to provide the author and year: (Inkei, 2022).

When using Internet sources, it is necessary to make sure that the picture or video can be legally used (see for example the categories of Creative Commons)!

The Reference List is a compilation of the citations; to provide a uniform appearance, it is a good idea to use the function of "Citations list" in Word for Windows.

In the case of books, the order follows that of author's last name, first initial of first name, year, title (in italics), publisher:

Blackmore, S. (2000): *The Meme Machine*. Oxford University Press.

If there are multiple authors, we list each; in the case of edited volumes the abbrevitaion of "ed." must be provided. The ampersand (&) is used instead of "and."

Mandl, H., De Corte, E., Bennett, N. & Friedrich, H. F. (Eds.) (1990). *Learning and instruction. European research in an international context*. Pergamon Press.

In the case of chapters in volumes, the author(s) name is followed by the year and the title of the chapter/study. After this comes "In" and the name of the volume editor, followed by (Ed.), the title of the volume and the first and last page of the chapter/study:

Buckingham, D. (2008). Introducing Identity. In Buckingham, D. (Ed.): *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media* (pp. 1–24) MIT Press.

In the case of texts published in periodicals, the author(s), publication year, the title, the title of the journal (italicized), followed by the year and the first and final page of the study must be included:

Chae, J. (2017). Virtual makeover: Selfie-taking and social media use increase selfie-editing frequency through social comparison. *Computers in Human Behavior* 16(2), 370-376.

Where possible, please make sure to provide the DOI identification number:

Charalampos A. (2020). News authentication and tampered images: evaluating the photo-truth impact through image verification algorithms. Heliyon 6(12). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e05808

In the case of sources available on the Internet, beyond providing the name of the author and the title, it is also necessary to give the URL for the file name, i.e., the line beginning with http:// in the search engine and then the date for downloading in parentheses:

Nevill, H. J., Schmidt, A., Kutas, M. (1983). Altered visual-evoked potentials in congenitally deaf adults. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/b447/924c4d6b78415be0ba67899a89c515fed235.pdf (12 January, 2023)

Items in the Reference List are ordered alphabetically, by the author's last name or the first letter of the institution.

Using the "References" function found in Word makes it much easer to assemble the Reference List according to the requirements and in a way that is automatic and can be formed.

FIGURES

If the thesis contains figures and/or pictures, these must be numbered within the text and summarized in a separate list at the end of the thesis. We also recommend using the function for this in Word.

In the case of using pictures and figures, it is necessary to keep in mind the legality of copyright. Every picture and figure must be provided with a description that, other than the number, also contains the title of the picture and its source. Example: "Figure 1 The distribution of schools by settlement type based on the 2019 national assessment. Source: Lendvai (2020, 18)."

USAGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WHEN PREPARING THE THESIS

In addition to traditional sources, the student may use various applications that contain intelligent algorithms, but extreme caution must be exercised when using these. Whenever such an application is used, it must be indicated in the thesis (for example: "The author used the (...) application to prepare the diagram"). The modification of images or diagrams using intelligent methods must also be indicated. It is also the student's responsibility to verify materials generated by intelligent algorithms and ensure their reliability in every case. Regarding texts, during the research work for the thesis, the student may use intelligent algorithms (e.g., for note-

taking, preparing outlines or summaries, or exploring literary sources), but text generated by these algorithms may not be directly included in the thesis.

The supervisor and the thesis reviewer have the right to check the text of the thesis and reject texts generated by artificial intelligence.

Authenticity of the thesis and plagiarism

It is a basic requirement that the thesis be the author's own, original work. Plagiarism is defined as utilizing the intellectual property of others in a way that contradicts the contents laid out in ARS, Section 74/B., Paragraph 1. The author accepts that plagiarism consists of (1) including a quotation without usage of quotation marks or referencing; (2) paraphrasing content or a quotation without citing the source; (3) displaying another individual's published thoughts as if they were the thesis author's.

It is essential that quotation marks be used when repeating someone else's thoughts in a word-for-word manner. Other than the author's name and the source's date of publication, the page number of where the exact quotation can be found must also be provided. If the author and publication date has been given, neglecting to reference the page number is not viewed as a case of plagiarism, but this lack is seen as an anomaly in citation and can reduce the value of the thesis itself.

When not using others' thoughts word-for-word – such as when paraphrasing, summarizing the content – it is sufficient to provide the author's name and the work's date of publication; page numbers are not necessary.

Paragraphs 74/A, 74/B and 74/C in the ARS discuss the issue of copyright infringement in work done by students, including a thesis. If a student does not observe the rules regarding the legal usage of an extraneous work, "the thesis must be denied a grade" (ARS, Section 74/C, Paragraph 1).

"The thesis must include an original copy of a statement signed by the student in which he or she declares that the thesis represents his or her independent, intellectual work and thereby complies with the Sections 74/A–74/C listed in the Regulations…." (ARS, Section 76, Paragraph 6)

According to Section 79, Paragraph 7 found in the ARS, any work that has been awarded the main or first prize at the National Conference of Students' Scholarly Circles (OTDK) or any other academic competition can be accepted by the educational organization responsible for the given program and given the highest grade (without any need for evaluation) if the work fulfills the content and stylistic requirements for a thesis.

The form needed for having an OTDK project /ARS Section 79, Paragraph 7)/ or a TDK project /ARS, Section 492, Paragraph 3/ accepted as a thesis can be found on the website for the Registrar's Office in the tab marked *Students/Documents*. If the project is to be accepted as a thesis, this form must also be included with the thesis.

THESIS EVALUATION AND DEFENSE

The thesis will be assessed by one or more experts who have been selected for the task by the Chairperson of the department responsible for the thesis topic. Within thirty days following submission, the department will send one copy of the *preliminary expert evaluation* to the student; during the spring semester, this document can be sent no later than May 20th (or May 25th for specialized, post-graduate track programs). In the case of winter final examinations for all programs, this deadline is January 10th.

The point sheet included below provides the framework for thesis evaluations.

EVALUATION OF THE THESIS	
Name of Student: Neptun code, program, full-time/part-time training:	
Thesis title:	
Name of opponent, post: Opponent's department/place of employment:	
1. Selection of topic and title (points of interest, novelty; relevance, motivation for topic selection) *max. 5 points*	
2. Extent to which topic was developed **Review of research literature** (breadth, relevance, quality) **Selection of methods, professional application, amount, quality and organization of collected material** **Analysis, interpretation** (selection of analytical aspects, depth, quality, accuracy, clarity of analysis, interpretation of results) *max. 20 points*	
3. Execution of stylistic, formal elements - **Linguistic formulation** (spelling, punctuation, grammar, style) - **Structure** (harmony between structure and content; proportionate articulation and marking of subtopics, etc.) *max. 5 points* - **Bibliographical requirements** (conformity of citation and bibliography) - **Appendices** (harmonious connection to topic, amount, quality) *max. 5 points*	

0 - 14 points	fail	(1)
15 - 19 points	pass	(2)
20 - 24 points	satisfactory	(3)
25 - 29 points	good	(4)
30 - 35 points	excellent	(5)

The suggested mark/grade for the thesis based on total points*:

............(number)… …………………..(written)

……………………………………………. Signature of Opponent,
Budapest,………(month)……(day)……..(year)

Defending the thesis is a part of the *final examination*. The student **must defend his or her thesis before a committee**.

The student's tasks at his or her thesis defense are,

− to introduce a condensed presentation of the thesis,
− to reflect upon the opponent's statements,
− to respond to questions posed by the expert leading
the committee while convincing the committee of the
level of preparedness and erudition in the thesis topic.

Factors for evaluating the defense:

− the level of professionalism and meticulousness exhibited in developing the topic;
− the degree of familiarity with the topic and its research literature;
− the professional level and originality of
topic presentation; handling of debated
questions, attention to linguistic standards.

Sections 8, Paragraph 8 and 82, Paragraph 1 in the ELTE ARS are valid in the case of a thesis given a failing mark. In this case, the student must write a new thesis and cannot participate in the given final exam during the relevant exam period.

Appendices

Number 1

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

 I, the undersigned,

Name: _____

Place of birth, date: _____

Program: _____

NEPTUN code: _____

in complete knowledge that any infringement on my part will result in criminal or disciplinary measures being taken against me, do solemnly declare and certify by my signature that my thesis entitled:

_____

_____

is **the product of my own intellectual work.**

I state that I am familiar with the valid chapter in ELTE's ARS entitled, "Plagiarism" (Sections 74/A, 74/B, 74/C) and conformed to the rules regarding the usage and citation of other scholars' work while writing my thesis.

I am fully aware that, in the case of a thesis or other degree work, the following errors are considered elements of plagiarism:

- ☐ quotations made word-for-word, without benefit of quotations marks and citation;
- ☐ content matter used without benefit of citation;
- ☐ using others' published, intellectual work as if my own work.

I am fully aware that I will face disciplinary and/or criminal legal consequences should my thesis not comply with the aforementioned requirements regarding the quotation and citation of sources. My thesis will furthermore be declared unworthy of appraisal in accordance with ELTE regulations.

Budapest, _____(month) _____(day) _____(year)

                                           _____

                                               Student's signature

Appendices

(*To be included at the end of the thesis.*)

Number 2

Application for the Acceptance of an OTDK Project as a Thesis

Dear Deputy Dean of Education:

I, the undersigned, _____, (Neptun code: _____) as a Preschool, BA/primary teacher, BA/infant and early childhood caregiver, BA/single-cycle Art and Visual Culture program, MA/Teacher of Art and Visual Culture student at ELTE's Faculty of Primary and Preschool Education request that my project work submitted to the National Conference of Students' Scholarly Circles (OTDK) be accepted as a thesis.

My request is based upon the fact that I participated in the National Conference of Students' Scholarly Circles (OTDK) on _____(month), _____ (day), _____(year) with my work entitled,_____ and was awarded first place.

Budapest, _____(month)_____(day)_____(year)

_____

Student's signature

As the adviser for this OTDK project, I hereby support the student's request. In accordance with Section 79, Paragraph 7 in the ARS, the project must fulfill all content and formal requirements stipulated for theses. After verifying that the aforementioned rules have been observed, I certify that the requirements have been met.

Name of adviser:_____

Signature of adviser: _____

Budapest, _____(month)_____(day)_____(year)

Appendices

As the Deputy Dean of Education at the Faculty of Preschool and Primary Education, I hereby accept the student's application and declare that the submitted OTDK project is recognized as a thesis in accordance with Section 79, Paragraph 7 and worthy of the grade/mark of excellent (5).

Signature of the Deputy Dean of Education at ELTE TÓK: _____

Budapest, _____(month)_____(day)_____(year)

Appendices

No. 3

Application for the Acceptance of a TDK Project as a Thesis

Dear Program Leader of the Faculty TDK:

I, the undersigned, _____, (Neptun code: _____) as a Preschool, BA/primary teacher, BA/infant and early childhood caregiver, BA/single-cycle Art and Visual Culture program, MA/Teacher of Art and Visual Culture student at ELTE's Faculty of Primary and Preschool Education request that my project work submitted to the Faculty Conference of Students' Scholarly Circles (TDK) be accepted as a thesis.

My request is based upon the fact that I participated in the Faculty Conference of Students' Scholarly Circles (TDK) on _____(month), _____ (day), _____(year) with my work entitled,_____ and received a minimum of 45 points for its written evaluation.

Budapest, _____(month)_____(day)_____(year)

_____

Student's signature

As the adviser for this TDK project, I hereby support the student's request. In accordance with Section 79, Paragraph 7 in the ARS, the project must fulfill all content and formal requirements stipulated for theses. After verifying that the aforementioned rules have been observed, I certify that the requirements have been met.

Name of adviser:_____

Signature of adviser: _____

Budapest, _____(month)_____(day)_____(year)

Appendices

As the Program Leader of the Faculty TDK, I hereby accept the student's application and declare that the submitted OTDK project is recognized as a thesis in accordance with Section 79, Paragraph 7 and worthy of the grade/mark of excellent (5).

Name of the Program Leader of the Faculty TDK: _____

Signature of the Program Leader of the Faculty TDK: _____

Budapest, _____(month)_____(day)_____(year)