



# **IPE Complex Thesis Guide 2024**

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## I. MA Thesis

### 1. Important Information on the Purpose and Types of the MA Thesis, the Process of Preparation from Topic Selection to Submission

#### Purpose and Types of the Thesis

The purpose of the MA thesis (also known as MA dissertation) is to demonstrate that the student, based on the knowledge acquired during their studies and with the help of consultations with their supervisor, is capable of identifying a relevant professional topic and deeply investigating it. Based on this, they are to conduct independent empirical work related to the topic, following the professional and ethical rules of scientific research, and to document the results in a written work that meets the required professional and formal requirements.

The thesis must be based on empirical research (e.g., interviews, experiments, surveys, observations, case studies, etc.) with appropriate theoretical grounding. Deviations from this are only permitted in exceptional cases with the approval of the Head of the Institute of Intercultural Psychology and Education (IPE) (e.g., in the case of relevant philological or historical topics). For the preparation and completion of the thesis, in addition to this description, it is advisable to consider the currently effective version of the university's Academic Regulation for Students:

[https://www.elte.hu/en/dstore/document/1/ELTE\\_SZMSZ\\_II\\_EN.pdf](https://www.elte.hu/en/dstore/document/1/ELTE_SZMSZ_II_EN.pdf)

#### Topic Selection, Supervisor, and Topic Announcement

The chosen research topic or area has to align with the spirit of the Social Integration program, incorporating a broadly interpreted intercultural perspective in the context of social integration. In addition to personal motivations and areas of interest, the thesis writer must also be capable of applying the knowledge acquired during their studies in independent, empirically based work.

A supervisor (thesis supervisor) must be chosen for the preparation of the thesis, and the topic should be discussed with them before filling out and submitting the topic announcement form via the Neptun system. The supervisor can be a university instructor, researcher, or, with the Head of IPE's consent, a non-university employee or external expert. Beyond the supervisor's approval, the Head of IPE's approval is also required. This approval will be given after the topic announcement via the Neptun system.

When selecting a supervisor, it is advisable to consider the domains of their professional activities and the thesis topics currently offered by them. For this purpose, it is worth studying the faculty members' pages available on the IPPI website, where the main research areas and currently suggested topics are also listed:



[https://ippi.ppk.elte.hu/media/36/a0/220f7be694b77963e558e6ae590874f7eb50d8e8bd1406e34c4e01d22675/Thesis%20topics\\_english\\_2023\\_2024\\_II.pdf](https://ippi.ppk.elte.hu/media/36/a0/220f7be694b77963e558e6ae590874f7eb50d8e8bd1406e34c4e01d22675/Thesis%20topics_english_2023_2024_II.pdf)

Thesis topics can be chosen not only from those listed by the instructors; they are rather recommended for orientation. The suggested topics by faculty members are updated annually.

The thesis topic must be submitted in the semester preceding the planned defense. The deadline for thesis topic's submission is October 15 (autumn semester) and May 15 (spring semester) through the Neptun system. On the form, the student must specify the topic of their thesis, the name of their supervisor, and indicate whether a research ethics approval is necessary for the planned thesis; this must be consulted with the chosen supervisor beforehand.

It is advisable to outline the broader subject area, so it is reasonable to submit a more general title. After planning and executing the specific research, a more precise subtitle can be added to the completed thesis.

### **Research Ethics Approval**

According to the current regulations at PPK, any research work that involves the analysis of data derived from humans can only commence and be conducted with an existing research ethics approval. For psychological, educational, and related research, the approval is issued by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (KEB). Information regarding the ethics application, necessary forms, frequently asked questions, and answers can be found and downloaded from the PPK KEB website:

<https://www.ppk.elte.hu/en/research-ethics-committee/requests>

Obtaining the ethics approval is the responsibility of the thesis writer (with supervision from the supervisor). The student fills out the ethics application in consultation with the supervisor; however, only the supervisor may submit it to the KEB via email.

If research ethics approval is required for the thesis, it is advisable to consider that submitting the ethics application typically requires several weeks of detailed preparation of the research plan and instruments, conducted in collaboration with and guided by the supervisor, as the application must outline the steps of the research process and include the instruments to be used (questionnaires, tests, interview questions, etc.). If necessary, a data handling notice must also be completed with the application. These may be modified later, but not in a way that affects the essence of the research and the instruments used. The initial evaluation of the submitted application officially takes 2-4 weeks<sup>1</sup>, after which the ethics committee may request modifications from the submitters. The final evaluation of the modified ethics application typically requires only a few additional working days.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be submitted to the KEB no later than 1 December for the autumn semester and no later than 1 June for the spring semester.



If the empirical work presented in the thesis was conducted with research ethics approval, this fact – potentially including the ethics approval number – must be mentioned in the thesis.

### **Consultations**

In the process of preparing and completing the thesis, from selecting the topic to conducting the empirical work, writing the thesis, and submitting it, regular consultations with the supervisor are not only important but also mandatory. It is advisable to consider that the supervisor is responsible for the professional questions necessary for the thesis completion, not for the specific execution of technical tasks. The completion of a minimum of six consultations will be confirmed by the supervisor's signature on the Consultation Confirmation form. This document must be attached to the thesis.

### **Thesis Submission**

The thesis can only be submitted after the supervisor has checked it with a plagiarism detection program and confirmed that it meets the officially prescribed requirements in this regard.

The deadline for thesis submission is determined by the annual faculty regulations: April 20 (spring semester) and November 20 (autumn semester). Therefore, the thesis must be submitted in the semester during which the defense takes place. The thesis must include the aforementioned Consultation Confirmation form signed by the supervisor, as well as the Originality Statement, which the student must sign. In the originality statement, the student must confirm, under legal responsibility, that the submitted thesis is their own original work.

The Consultation Confirmation form and the Originality Statement can be downloaded from the following PPK website:

<https://ppk.elte.hu/en/research-ethics-committee/requests>

Knowledge of the rules, adherence to deadlines, and obtaining and submitting the appropriate documents are the responsibilities of the thesis writer!



## **General Content and Formal Requirements of the Thesis**

### **Mandatory Structural Units of the Thesis**

#### **External Title Page**

Format: at the top center of the title page, the name of the institution, faculty, and program, followed by "THESIS" or "MA THESIS" in the top third center of the cover. In the bottom third, on the left, the author's name, and at the center bottom, the year of thesis completion.

#### **Internal Title Page**

The title page contains the name of the institution, faculty, and program at the top, followed by the title of the thesis, and if applicable, a subtitle. In the bottom third, on the left, the author's name and Neptun ID, and on the right, the name and position of the supervisor. At the bottom center, the year.

#### **Originality Statement**

The page following the internal title page must contain the student's original statement, signed in the required format, declaring that the work is their own intellectual product. The thesis is the student's independent work, which must comply with the rules of citations and references. Authors of theses suspected of plagiarism may face disciplinary action.

#### **Consultation Confirmation, Supervisor Statement**

The subsequent page must include the standard format confirmation form, in which the supervisor verifies participation in the consultations with their signature and expresses their consent for the submission of the thesis.

#### **Table of Contents, Page Numbers**

The thesis includes a table of contents and a list of figures and tables. Following this, abbreviations used in the thesis and their explanations may optionally be included.

#### **Recommended Structural Outline, Chapters**

*Preface/Problem Statement:* An introduction to the problem area, a brief overview of the comprehensive goal of the investigation, and the researcher's motivation.

*Theoretical Introduction:* Presentation of the examined topic, summary, and evaluation of relevant theories and research, conceptualization of the constructs and interrelationships to be examined based on relevant literature.

*Hypotheses, Research Questions:* For quantitative research: Hypotheses are theoretically grounded statements that can be verified or falsified through empirical testing, relevant claims illuminating the examined phenomena and their relationships.



For qualitative research: Instead of hypotheses, research objectives and questions should be formulated.

*Method:* Presentation of the research procedure, detailing participants, applied instruments, and methods of empirical data collection. If relevant, it is worth showing that the empirical work was conducted with valid research ethics approval.

*Results:* Presentation of empirical data in accordance with the utilized method. In the case of quantitative research (or the quantitative part of mixed-method research), the presentation begins with descriptive analysis (characteristics of the sample, descriptive presentation of the measured variables) and concludes with hypothesis testing, progressing towards a complex presentation of the results based on the research questions and hypotheses. In qualitative research (or the qualitative part of mixed-method research), the analyzed data are interpreted in light of the theoretical framework and questions.

*Summary, Conclusions:* Interpretation of the results, evaluation of the research conducted, including its strengths and limitations or further improvable points. Where relevant, the practical applicability of the results should be addressed. Opportunities for the future continuation of the work presented in the thesis.

The above description only presents the suggested, customary structure of theses – deviations from this may occur at any point as a result of consultations with the supervisor. Throughout the text, all statements not from the author must be attributed to their sources. Citations must refer to source works (by name and publication year), with precise data provided in the bibliography. Particular attention must be given to verbatim quotes, for which additional data (page number) is also necessary. Failure to adhere to these guidelines constitutes a violation of plagiarism rules (see separate descriptions on this matter).

*Bibliography:* In-text references, citations, and the bibliography must be prepared according to the APA7 standard widely used in the social sciences.

- <https://apastyle.apa.org/>

## **Formal Requirements**

### **Length**

The length of the thesis, excluding appendices, is 36-54 pages (80,000-120,000 characters including spaces).

### **Font, Size, Line Spacing, Marg**

Times New Roman, font size 12, line spacing 1.5, margin 2.5 cm

### **Language**

The thesis is written in English.



## 2. Appendices

### 1. Suggested schedule

Tasks	Deadline ( <b>mandatory</b> , <b>highly recommended</b> , <b>proposed</b> )	
	State examination in the Spring semester	State examination in the Autumn semester
<b>Registering the topic of the thesis (via Neptun-sytsem)</b>	<b>15 October</b> (previous semester)	<b>15 May</b> (previous semester)
<b>Preparing work plan</b>	31 October (previous semester)	31 May (previous semester)
<b>Ethical approval</b>	<b>1 December</b> at the latest: 10 January	<b>1 June</b> at the latest: 1 September
<b>Developing the theoretical background</b>	15 February	15 September
<b>Data collection</b>	1 March	1 October
<b>Data analysis</b>	31 March	31 October
<b>Handing in the thesis to the advisor for approval*</b>	<b>10 April</b>	<b>10 November</b>
<b>Handing in the thesis (via Neptun-system)</b>	<b>20 April</b>	<b>20 November</b>

\* we can only guarantee the approval of the advisor if you hand the thesis in for approval by this date!



## II. The Process of Evaluating and Defending the Thesis: Review and Final Exam

### 1. Review

#### Reviewer, the Review Process

The reviewer of the thesis is the thesis supervisor, along with a designated second reviewer, who also evaluates the thesis in writing. If the evaluations of the two reviewers differ by more than two grades, the Head of IIPE will ask a third reviewer to evaluate the thesis in writing. The reviews include an evaluation of the thesis (strengths, limitations) along with a specific question that must be answered during the defense. The supervisor will ask a question closely related to the thesis, while the second reviewer will pose a more theoretical question related to intercultural studies. The reviews must be uploaded to the appropriate Neptun platform at least two weeks before the date of the final exam so that the student can access them in time and prepare for the oral defense of the thesis during the final exam.

#### Criteria for the Review

1. Topic: novelty, relevance, applicability
2. Theoretical background: quality and quantity of the used literature, and its elaboration
3. Methodology: hypotheses/research questions, method, procedure
4. Empirical analysis: professionalism, complexity, interpretation
5. Form and structure: standardization, structure, proportion
6. Language: (professional) terminology, style, elaboration
7. Altogether: coherence, independence, strength

### 2. The Final Exam

#### The Committee

During the defense, the committee consists of the chair (a university professor from IIPE, a habilitated associate professor, or an associate professor—typically the Head of the Institute) along with 2-4 permanent members from the IIPE faculty and one external member. Additionally, the thesis supervisor and, if possible, the second reviewer will be present as invited guests.

#### Tasks During the Defense

The candidate has four main tasks during the defense:





1. A concise presentation of the thesis (recommended duration: 8-10 minutes);
2. A response to the reviews (if they contain critical remarks that need to be addressed);
3. Answers to specific questions posed by the supervisor and the second reader;
4. Responses to questions posed verbally by the committee (if there are any).

### **Time Frame and Scheduling**

The total available time is a maximum of 15 minutes, but certainly no more than 17 minutes. Thus, good time management is important. The candidate can structure the 15 minutes as they see fit; for example, they may address points 1-3 in order, or they may integrate responses to the reviews and/or the supervisor's question within the thesis presentation. The theoretical question from the second reviewer must be answered separately. It is advisable for the candidate to inform the committee at the start of the exam about the strategy they will follow, i.e., how they plan to address the sub-tasks! It is common for the reviews to indicate a lack of some theoretical background or analytical aspect; in such cases, the candidate may choose to supplement the thesis presentation with the missing points. Therefore, it is worthwhile not only to respond to criticisms and questions but also to "add" to the presentation! The exam schedule allocates a total of 30 minutes for the defense of each student's thesis. We kindly ask everyone to arrive on time! (Preferably somewhat earlier than the given time).

### **Presentation**

It is highly recommended to prepare a presentation for the defense (ppt/prezi/canva/infographic, etc.). Considering the time available (15 minutes), it is advisable to create a maximum of 10-15 slides. Suggested titles (appropriately adapted to one's own research): Topic Introduction, Theoretical Background, Hypotheses/Research questions, Method, Results, Conclusions, Future research. The general principle is that the slides should primarily accompany the thesis presentation, complementing the oral exposition. It is important to strive for minimal but essential information on the slides; they should not be cluttered! In addition to presenting the thesis, it is worth dedicating 2-4 slides to briefly summarize the answers to the questions raised in the reviews (if they are presented separately from the thesis). To prevent unexpected technical issues, it is advisable to store the materials prepared for the defense in at least two independent locations (e.g., a USB drive and an online platform).

### **Evaluation**

Following the defense, the committee will briefly dismiss the candidate and evaluate the performance with a five-point grading scale for 1.) the thesis defense and 2.) the response to the theoretical question. Subsequently, the candidate will be called back, and the result will be announced by the Chair.