

CESL Master's Thesis Guidelines 2016

I. Introduction

The master's thesis is a significant part of the Master of European and International Law (MEIL) programme. As such, these guidelines are designed to give you direction and to guide you through the process of writing and submitting your master's thesis. However, as these guidelines are not exhaustive, if you have any questions, please ask your supervisor, Assistant Professor Monika Prusinowska and/or a member of the CESL Consortium Office team.

CESL Consortium Office contact:

Ms. Nicole Gonyea, Master's Programme Coordinator
E-mail: nicole.gonyea@uni-hamburg.de

II. Required items

The following items must appear in the thesis in the following order:

1. Title Page

The first page of your thesis is a title page. It should clearly indicate the full title of the thesis. In addition, it should include the author's name, university, address and student number. Below, the name of the supervisor and their affiliated university should be written along with the place and date of submission. See Annex 1 for a sample title page.

2. Authorship declaration

The second page of the thesis must contain an authorship declaration with a handwritten signature. The declaration should be as follows:

"I hereby declare and confirm that this thesis is entirely the result of my own work except where otherwise indicated in the bibliography, especially in regard to internet resources. This thesis has not been used as part of any other examination and has not yet been published."

Date/Signature

3. Abstract / Keywords

The thesis should have an abstract, a short summary of the thesis, which gives a succinct overview of the topic, the main question(s) or thesis that is pursued throughout the text, and a brief overview of the thesis' content and main conclusions. This should be approximately 200 to 300 words in length. In addition, on the same page under the abstract, a short list of keywords should be included.

4. Table of Contents

The master's thesis must have a table of contents containing the headings and subheadings of all the sections in the paper.

5. List of Tables

If the thesis contains tables, a list of tables should be included immediately following the table of contents.



6. Bibliography

In the list of literature, all cited works are to be listed in alphabetical order. It should appear after the table of contents (or, if applicable, following the list of tables).

There are various methods of citing books, articles, websites, etc., however be sure to indicate at least the name of the author(s), title of publication, title of the journal or book (if applicable), publisher (if applicable), and the year and place of publication, wherever possible. When citing websites or online material, the date of the last visit needs to be indicated as well. See section IV (3, 4 and 5) for more information.

III. Guidelines for the format

The master's thesis is to be written in accordance with the following specifications for the format:

1. Length

The master's thesis should be at least 8,000 words and no more than a maximum of 12,000 words. The length requirement of 8,000 to 12,000 words refers only to the main body of text (including footnotes) and excludes the table of contents, bibliography, etc. Failure to comply with the length requirement will be reported to the supervisor and may result in downgrading.

2. Font and line spacing

The thesis is to be written in the "Times New Roman" font with 12-point font and 1.5 line spacing for normal text. For block quotations, footnotes and the bibliography, use single spacing.

3. Margins

The margins should be as follows: left 4 cm; right 2.5 cm; top 2.5 cm; bottom 2cm.

4. Pagination

Page numbers should appear centered at the bottom of the page. For the preliminary pages, Roman numerals (like I, II, III, IV...) should be used. The title page is to be counted but should not be numbered. For all other manuscript pages, Arabic numbers are used, beginning with 1 on the first page of the first chapter.

5. Footnotes

The footnotes should be 10-point font and single-spaced.

6. Printing

When submitting a hard copy of the thesis, print single-sided.

IV. Requirements

In addition to the formal specifications, the following demands should also be met:

1. Language

The thesis is to be written in English. Attention should be paid to correct grammar, spelling and punctuation in the thesis.

2. Structure and content

The thesis should be structured in three main parts: introduction, main text and conclusion. The introduction should contain a clear description of the problem and what the thesis is about. In the main text the thesis should clearly analyse the problem and lead to a reasoned conclusion. The conclusion should contain a short summary of the candidate's arguments and express an original standpoint. Note that the main text is the main part of the paper and should thus be the longest part.



3. Use of literature

The thesis should be written by using all relevant and available literature. Only reliable sources should be used. For example, articles in law journals or scientific books are reliable sources; Wikipedia is not considered reliable.

4. Citing

Whenever you use somebody else's thoughts or arguments, you have to indicate this within the main text. The suggested way to do that is to make a footnote which states the author and the title of the publication used in order to enable the reader to find the source in your list of literature. The exact page number (when applicable) of where the thoughts or arguments are taken from must be specified.

You may choose your citation style. **Your proposed citation style should be approved by your supervisor.** Whichever style you select, you must use that style consistently throughout the text, footnotes and bibliography. Consistency in citation and referencing another's idea/argument are some of the most important aspects of citing.

5. Quotation

When you quote from a source, in addition to stating the source in the way outlined above, you have to indicate exactly which words are not yours with quotation marks, even if you quote only part of a sentence.

V. Supervisor Communication Guidelines

The timeline of communication with your master's thesis supervisor must follow these phases:

Phase I: Beginning of March 2016

E-mail potential supervisor and confirm supervision. Also confirm the exact topic and focus of the thesis as well as the citation style.

Phase II: March to April 2016

Send a *preliminary* abstract, 'thesis statement', table of contents and bibliography (fully formatted) to supervisor for comments. See <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/> for valuable information concerning a 'thesis statement'.

A document containing the preliminary abstract, 'thesis statement', table of contents and bibliography (fully formatted) should be sent to Assistant Professor Monika Prusinowska by 30 April 2016 the latest. Please send the documents to prusinowska.monika_cesl@cupl.edu.cn.

Phase III: May to June 2016

Send a first draft of one section of the thesis as well as a more developed 'thesis statement', table of contents and bibliography to the supervisor for suggestions.

Phase IV: June to mid-July 2016

Send a first draft of the entire thesis, or a significant portion of the thesis that includes a draft of the introduction and conclusion, to the supervisor for comments.

Deadline: 15 August 2016

Failure to continue contact with the supervisor after confirmation may lead to severe downgrading.

VI. Submission

The thesis must be submitted to Ms. Ma Anna at the following address:

**Room A410, International Exchange Center
No. 27 Fuxue Rd., Changping District
Beijing 102249
P.R. China**

1. Date of submission

The thesis must be submitted by **15 August 2016** without exemption.

2. Copies

On this date, one hard copy and two electronic versions of the thesis (one Word file and one converted to a PDF file which allows adding comments) must be submitted to the office of Ms. Ma Anna or be postmarked on the date of submission to the abovementioned address. Adobe Acrobat should be used for the conversion. Note that all three versions of the thesis (1. hard copy, 2. Word file and 3. PDF file) must be exactly the same.

3. Signed declaration

In addition, a signed declaration that the electronic versions are identical to the printed version must be submitted together with the hardcopy and the electronic versions. The declaration should be as follows:

“I hereby declare and confirm that the submitted electronic versions (Word and PDF) of the thesis are identical to the submitted printed version of the thesis.”

Date/Signature

VII. Plagiarism

The CESL Master’s Programme of European and International Law takes a strict approach towards cases of plagiarism in a master’s thesis.

1. Definition

Plagiarism is the use of another author’s thoughts, arguments or words without due indication.

2. Plagiarism of non-English sources

Although the language of this thesis is English, non-citation of non-English texts is also unacceptable and considered plagiarism. Under no circumstances should a non-English text’s English translation be copied directly into the thesis. Non-English texts can, and must be, cited within the paper as an English source would be (with the author’s name, the title of the source, year of publication, exact page numbers, etc.).

3. Checking with Plagiarism Software

The electronic version of the written work will be electronically checked by CESL with a plagiarism software programme for possible indications of plagiarism. The software checks the similarity of a document with all free internet sources and prepares a report showing the similarity in percentage. A high percentage indicates problems regarding originality and should lead to a more detailed investigation. However, a high similarity percentage does not prove plagiarism and does not prevent the supervisor from reading and correcting the thesis.

4. Procedure in case of indicated problems regarding originality

In the case the plagiarism software detects a high similarity percentage, CESL informs the supervisor accordingly and submits the software's report together with the thesis. The supervisor should correct and grade the thesis with regard to the report. In the case the supervisor considers the thesis suffers from plagiarism, the thesis will be counted as failed and CESL should be informed accordingly.

A short, written statement should be submitted by the supervisor(s) to give more detailed information. In minor cases of bad academic practice, the thesis should be downgraded according to the supervisors' discretion.

5. Random checks

Checks will also be conducted on random master's theses for plagiarism. These checks will evaluate citations, footnotes and the bibliography to ensure that the student cited correctly and did not plagiarize. Checks will evaluate the usage of both English and non-English texts.

6. Treatment

A thesis that suffers from plagiarism will not be accepted for the master's programme and counts as failed. The decision is to be taken by the supervisor who informs the CESL administration accordingly. The final decision is to be communicated to the candidate by the Co-Deans. Decisions of failure can be appealed within a period of one month. A failed thesis can be retaken once.

VIII. Assessment

For the assessment, a standard form is to be used by the supervisor and second evaluator. The following criteria will be taken into account and weighted as indicated (the total amount of points is 100, but the grade will be transferred to a 1 to 10 point grading scale upon assessment).

1. Language

- Correctness of spelling, grammar and punctuation (5 points)
- Clear and concise writing style (5 points)

2. Literature used (15 points)

- Use of appropriate sources, i.e.
 - primary sources, e.g. treaties, laws, cases
 - secondary sources, e.g. commentaries, journals, monographs
- Correct interpretation of sources used, i.e. correct comprehension, analyses and treatment of sources
- Completeness and correctness of footnotes or endnotes – for details see section IV (3, 4, 5)

3. Content

- Clear definition of the problem in the introduction (10 points)
- Consequential flow from the introduction to the conclusion and consequential subdivision of the main text (30 points)
- Consequential argumentation with the use of relevant literature (5 points)
- Clear conclusion which answers the problem (10 points)

4. Originality of approach

- Original approach and methodology (10 points)
- Complexity of argumentation and analysis (10 points)



Annex 1: Sample Title Page

Full title of the thesis

Author's full name

Author's university

Author's student number

Author's address

Name of Supervisor

Supervisor's affiliated university

Place and date of submission