

THESIS GUIDE - MASTER in EDUCATION

PREFACE

The thesis developed at the end of the MA program forms a landmark of a personal and professional development journey. The thesis defense allows the student-researcher to demonstrate abilities in conceptualization, problem formulation, empirical investigation, and methodological reflection.

1. STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION STANDARDS OF THE THESIS

The thesis is made up of around 100 pages (excluding the list of references and appendices), and it usually consists of the following sections:

- **Title Page** – Title of the thesis, author, institution, date.
- **Acknowledgments** – Optional, where you thank advisors, colleagues, family.
- **Abstract** – Short (200–300 words) summary of purpose, methods, results, and conclusions.
- **Table of Contents** – Chapters, sections, page numbers.
- **List of Tables / Figures** – If applicable.

1.1 Introduction (includes the following points, without numbering them, according to the order the student and Thesis Supervisor deem appropriate):

- Topic: Setting the stage for the study, background, context, ...
- Problem statement (analyzing studies relevant to the topic).
- Purpose of the study.
- Main research question(s) and / or the sub-questions derived from it.
- Significance of and rationale of study.
- Overview of the methodology.
- Forthcoming thesis sections and chapters.

1.2 Literature Review (This part is meant to review the relevant theories associated with the problem statement and the corresponding studies)

- Theoretical/Conceptual Framework
- Specifying the various theories related to the problem, while linking and synthesizing the ideas.
- Positioning the study in view of other theories and studies.
- Defining concepts and terms.
- Confirming hypotheses and/ or research objectives based on the theoretical framework and relevant previous studies.

1.3 Research Methodology

- Identifying and justifying the appropriate approach and design (qualitative, quantitative, mixed).
- Identifying study's population and sample (sampling technique).

- Identifying field study steps and procedures that address the study problem.
- Defining the operational variables.
- Specifying the data collection methods, techniques, and tools (Validity and Reliability)
- Discussing how the collected data will be analyzed.
- Study Limitations (Methodological)
- Discussing the ethical considerations.

1.4 Findings

- Presenting of the research results: via narrations, grids, graphs, charts, and tables.
- Synthesizing the results and linking them to the problem statement.
- Verifying the validity of the hypotheses and/ or answering the research questions by highlighting the relationship between them and the study's limitations.

1.5 Discussion and Interpretation

- Interpreting the findings
- Discussing the results based on the chosen theories and comparing them with the results of other research studies in the same field.
- Study Limitations (Interpretive)

1.6 Conclusion

- Presenting the most important results while highlighting the major and essential points.
- Practical Implications
- Recommendations for Future Research

- **References**
- **Appendices**

1.7 PRESENTATION NORMS

- 7th edition of the APA: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/index.html

Sections to be reviewed specifically: margins; font; line spacing; page number; captions and layout of tables and figures; acronyms and abbreviations; titles and subtitles; standards of scientific writing (citations, references, etc.).

Faculty-specific recommendations:

- Cover page: see Appendix A
- The letter size is 12-point.
- The typeface is Times New Roman.
- The line spacing is 1.5 between all text lines of the thesis. The space is 1.5 after every line in the title, headings, quotations, references, and figure captions.
- The page number must be typed in the header, on the right side.
- In the footer and on the left side, add the following Fsédu-USJ.

2 RESEARCH FORUM

- Every student involved in the writing of his or her Master's thesis in Education is required to present a research proposal, previously approved by their thesis supervisor, at the Research Forum.
- The research proposal includes the following:
 - Provisional title
 - Introduction that includes: Specifying the topic, discussing the status quo of the research topic/question and the problem statement, clarifying the purpose of study, mentioning the main research question(s) and/ or the sub-questions derived from it.
 - Theoretical/conceptual framework, discussing the relevant theories, the literature review.
 - Reminding the reader of the provisional research hypotheses and/or questions based on the revised literature.
 - Research methodology and techniques.
 - List of references according to the APA Style (Seventh Edition).
 - The preliminary study plan including a suggested timeline.
- The defense of the proposal is conducted during the Research Forum course and is done before a jury chaired by the course instructor.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria	
Submissions	Criteria
Written document 50% <i>Assessed by the thesis supervisor</i>	The proper coverage of the required sections
	Added value of the study & rationale of the Research Problem / Questions
	Theoretical and methodological rigor
	Quality of language and compliance with APA standards
Oral presentation 50% <i>Grade assigned by a jury, chaired by the course instructor</i>	Clarity and the logical flow of the presentation
	Use of Visuals and Time Management
	Professional posture and nonverbal communication
	Argumentative or persuasive quality of responses(Q/A)

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Following the defense of the proposal, the student prepares the application file ([\[USJ\] - Site de l'Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth](#)).

- Sections to be reviewed carefully: consent documents required for conducting the study, and the introductory paragraph for data collection tools.
- The file submitted to the Research Ethics Committee contains the following elements:
 - A recommendation letter signed by the teacher-researcher or the thesis supervisor; this letter includes the student's name, the framework of the work, the study's objective, the target population, and the proposed methodology.

- The detailed study protocol.
- The study instruments.
- The appropriate information and consent form outlining the ethical principles to be respected, written in French (or English) and Arabic.
- The confidentiality commitment letter.
- The agreement of the requested institutions.

SUBMISSION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

- Authorization for submission is granted by the thesis supervisor, who certifies in a report addressed to the head of the department that the thesis is defensible.
- Plagiarism check: Before submission, the manuscript is reviewed for plagiarism using anti-plagiarism software by the head of the department. Submission will be refused if any form of plagiarism is detected.
- Use of AI: The use of generative and assisted AI in the master's thesis must comply with the norms set by the university and the faculty's AI policy. (See Appendix B)
- Thesis jury: The head of the department, in coordination with the thesis supervisor, proposes the thesis jury. The jury is approved by the Dean of the Faculty. The head of the department informs jury members and other relevant parties of the defense details.
- Defense date: The defense is scheduled within two months of the thesis (latest updated version) submission date.
- Public defense: The defense is public and must be announced at least one week in advance.
- Reviewer comments: If the reviewer provides major comments on the manuscript, the student must make the necessary revisions.
- Jury chair responsibilities: The chair of the jury leads the defense session, manages the discussion flow, and submits a summary report to the head of the department within two weeks.

THESIS DEFENSE

- The President of the jury opens the session.
- The student has 20 minutes to present his or her PowerPoint presentation about the study without being interrupted.
- The thesis supervisor, reviewer, and jury chair each present consecutively for up to 15 minutes, including a question-and-answer session with the candidate.
- The jury members sign the official minutes during the deliberation session.

Thesis Evaluation Criteria	
Written document 50% <i>Assessed by the thesis supervisor and the reader</i>	Rationale of the research problem and logical structure of the entire thesis
	Use of a conceptual framework and alignment with the research question(s)
	Methodological design, selection of tools, and scientific validation
	Rigor and depth in presenting, interpreting, and discussing results
	Language quality, academic style, and adherence to APA standards
Oral presentation (50%)	Scientific rigor and content relevance
	Professional posture and nonverbal communication

<i>Grade set by the chair of the jury in coordination with the other members</i>	Use of visual aids and quality of expression
	Clarity of argumentation and oral communication skills

• **Evaluation Grid:**

18-19/20	Excellent with Jury's felicitations	The thesis does not need any amendments, and it is of a publishable standard.
16-17/20	Very Good	The thesis requires minor amendments before it is published.
14-15/20	Good	The thesis requires many modifications before publishing.
12-13/20	Fair	The thesis requires major amendments and rewriting before publishing.

Following the defense, the candidate must submit a revised copy of the thesis to the head of the department via email within one month, reflecting any comments and corrections provided by the jury members.

Appendix A
Title page (Sample)

SAINT JOSEPH UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

(20 pts, bold)

(Faculty of Education)

(16 pts, bold)

MASTER THESIS

(16 pts, bold)

EMPHASIS: [XXXX]

(16 pts, bold)

Title of thesis: *(14 pts)*

[XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX]

(16 pts, bold)

Presented by *14 pts)*

[NAME and first name(s) of student]

(16 pts, bold)

Supervised by: *(14 pts)*

[NAME and first name(s) of Thesis Supervisor]

(16 pts, bold)

(14 pts for what follows)

Defense [day] [month] [year]

The Jury is composed of:

[first name complete] [surname]	(Academic Title)	President
[first name complete] [surname]	(Academic Title)	Reader
[first name complete] [surname]	(Academic Title)	Supervisor

Appendix B

Policy on the Use of Generative and Assisted AI in the Master's Thesis

The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in research work is permitted under strict conditions. AI cannot replace personal reflection, critical thinking, methodological rigor, or the scientific originality expected of a master's student. Its use must remain minimal, transparent and ethical.

1. Permitted Use – with Precaution

- Identification of relevant resources and generation of bibliographic references with rigorous verification (risk of fictitious sources).
- Transcription of interviews or performing statistical tests.
- Converting tabular or textual data into graphical representations, such as figures, diagrams, and charts.

N.B.

- Explicitly mention any use of AI in a footnote at the end of the section in which it was used or at the end of the thesis.
- For language correction, use proofreading software that doesn't make your manuscript as an AI paraphrased one.
- Writing scientific content (introduction, theoretical framework, analyses, interpretation, conclusion) is strictly prohibited.
- The master's student remains fully responsible for the integrity, coherence, and scientific accuracy of his or her thesis whether AI is used or not.

2. Declaration of commitment to No-Plagiarism and AI use as per the set policy

I, the undersigned,, declare that I have obtained the necessary authorizations for the use or the reproduction of images, excerpts, figures, or tables borrowed from other published works, and I undertake to cite all the sources I have used in my thesis. I also confirm that I have complied with the Faculty's rules regarding the ethical use of AI, clearly specifying the applications and purposes for which I have used it.

Signature