

Thesis Writing and Evaluation Guidelines
Department of English, FF KU
(In effect as of 2013)

Before you start writing your thesis, please read the following guidelines carefully:

1. Have a **clear idea** of what you want to achieve/illustrate with your thesis.
Narrow down your scope of research to a specific and particular question. (This can be done either by choosing one of the thesis topics/titles advertised, or by discussing your ideas with your future supervisor before you start writing.)
As a rule of thumb, the research should be narrowly focused and based on authentic data (**literary** as well as **non-literary texts** – e.g. (a) poem(s), (a) novel(s), or a set of promotional leaflets, **visual images** – e.g. (a) film(s) or (a) corporate website(s), or, in the field of linguistics and didactics, **other relevant data**).
The point is to identify a problem, a research question, a phenomenon, a trend, or a characteristic feature that is relevant, and through the discussion of which you can demonstrate your familiarity with the subject-matter as well as your mastery of the critical, analytical and research skills required to produce a substantial and meaningful analysis of the problem.
Too general, all-encompassing, and encyclopaedic topics will be discouraged.
2. Your supervisors can (and will) assist you with drawing up the conceptual framework of your thesis and with locating the relevant sources, but you will have to do a proportionate part of both the **research** and the **writing bits independently**. You will be expected to take this job seriously and complete it to the best of your knowledge.
Pay attention to the **feedback** (i.e. the comments and suggestions) your supervisor gives you, and, amend your draft accordingly where needed.
If you consistently ignore your supervisor's feedback, your thesis might be lacking coherence and appropriate argumentation, or contain unsupported claims. As a result, the quality of your output (and, consequently, the final mark) might be lower. In an extreme case, your supervisor might even refuse to allow you to submit your thesis.
3. The theses, at their respective levels, should adhere to the following **scientific/academic principles**:¹
rigour (as to the way in which the research is carried out and written up; this includes clear statement of the research questions and analytical tools and their consistent application throughout the work)
objectivity (i.e. trying to be clear, detailed and open (so that one's position is unambiguous))
replicability (where relevant – the results and findings of your research should be based on multiple experiments or tests rather than a single source of data; also, these findings and results should be possible to reproduce multiple times and by other people as well if they conduct the same experiment or testing)
empiricism (all claims should be based on observation or experience; all claims should be substantiated and supported by arguments and /or illustrated by relevant data or other evidence)
falsifiability (any claims must be clear enough to be able to be challenged by other researchers)
philological /academic correctness (appropriate and acknowledged use of secondary sources; this includes finding the relevant sources, using them in a critical fashion, and properly referencing them via notes and bibliography at all times)
4. Use **appropriate resources** (books and articles the academic quality of which is assured). It is not enough to rely exclusively on the sources your supervisor gives you – you will have to expand the list of resources independently as well.
When you work with your sources, do not just quote or juxtapose them without any reflection, otherwise you will only be producing a compilation. Compare and contrast them, build them into your text by making them an **integral** part of your argument.

¹ (developed from Jeffries, L., McIntyre, D. (2010) *Stylistics*. New York: CUP)

5. Keep yourself to the **schedule** and method of cooperation you and your supervisor agree on. There should be **at least 3 (three) consultations per semester**. This also concerns **ICV/Continual Education** students.
Do not just send your material to your supervisor, go there in PERSON. These sessions are for consulting your supervisor's comments on, and your questions about, the thesis. Your mark for the 'diplomovy seminar'/'zaverecne prace' will be awarded on the basis of your attendance of these consultation sessions and the work you do for these.
6. Send your **draft** to your supervisor **at regular intervals**. It's a lot easier get feedback on shorter pieces because in that case you can discuss your writing as it unfolds. It is recommended that you send your work to your supervisor in not longer than 10-page units. If you send the full thesis at once without consultations, it will automatically be rejected.
7. Allocate **ample time for final editing** (formatting, spell-check, style-check, notes and bibliography, etc). When your thesis is 'finished' content-wise, you will still need time to do the final editing. Your supervisor will want to see the 'final-final version' of your thesis (the version you want to print and get bound) before you can submit it.
8. **'Final version'** means a completed, fully referenced version of your text. This includes appropriate structuring (introduction, chapters, and conclusion), title page, table of contents, illustrations (if any), notes, and a complete bibliography. You will not be allowed to submit a version of the thesis your supervisor has not seen from cover to cover.
9. **Important!** Send the **'final version'** of your thesis to your supervisor **TWO WEEKS before the submission deadline** the latest, otherwise the thesis will not be considered for that submission date. Those two weeks are for proofing, format-editing, binding, etc. **No content editing (i.e. changes to the actual content and structure of your thesis) will be possible beyond this point.** You will not be allowed to submit without your supervisor's written consent.

Please keep it in mind that even at this point your supervisor has the right to not allow you to submit, and they will exercise this right if they feel the thesis is not written well enough to earn a pass mark.

10. Your thesis will be **examined** by your **supervisor** and an **opponent**.
Their **evaluations** will be sent to you by the deadline specified by the Rules and Regulations of Academic Conduct.
The evaluation will contain a **summative** as well as a **narrative** part (i.e. grades for particular aspects, and a narrative evaluation of your work). The narrative part will contain 2-3 **questions** that you will be expected to respond to at your defence.
11. Theses and their evaluations will be discussed by an 'Examination Board' (consisting of members of the department) before the evaluations are published through AIS.
12. The defence will take 20 minutes at BA level, and 30 minutes at MA level. You will be expected to a) **summarize** your thesis' key arguments, and b) **respond** to your supervisor's and opponent's questions, c) engage in a brief discussion about the topic.
Students are encouraged (especially at MA level) to prepare a **10 minute presentation** (which can be aided by PowerPoint). It is also advisable that responses to the questions be incorporated into this presentation to allow time for a substantial discussion during the defence.

Ruzomberok, 04.02.2013.

Approved by the Instructors' Board,
Department of English, FF KU