**Guidelines and Requirements**

**for Bachelor Project Work and Thesis**

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**Tartalom**

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# Introduction

The objective of Project Work is to prepare students for writing the thesis. Therefore, the thesis is in fact completed in the course of three semesters, in the framework of the subjects called Project Work 1 and 2, and the Thesis writing itself. This will ensure that the thesis is sophisticated and of high quality and is an appropriate crowning piece of one’s studies.

## The importance of the thesis

Theses of high standard are paramount for three reasons:

1. This piece summarises and synthesises the knowledge and skills acquired during one’s studies.
2. The preparation of the thesis allows students to develop additional new skills in key practical areas.
3. Quality theses can be presented/referred to during job interviews and they give the applicant a competitive edge.

## The thesis aims to develop business skills

In addition to summarising and synthesising previously acquired knowledge, Project Work 1 and 2, and the Thesis writing aim to develop the following critically important **practical business skills, knowledge** as well:

* **Specialisation**: students acquire in-depth knowledge in a particular field.
* **Practical application**: students apply general theoretical knowledge and skills acquired during their studies to a specific case.
* **Independent, timed and deadline-driven execution**: students solve a major task according to the given criteria independently, keeping to their schedule, and strictly respecting the set deadlines.
* **Building on feedback**: successful performance requires that students learn as much as possible from the feedback and evaluation received during the process and incorporate this into the next phases of their work.
* **Enhanced writing skills** (Project Work 1 and 2 serve as Writing training courses)
* **Enhanced presentation skills** (Project Work 1 and 2 serve as Presentation training courses)

The above are core competences required in dealing with common professional tasks in any workplace.

## Methodology: a simulation exercise

The above competences are developed through a simulation exercise supported by detailed methodology. The writing of the thesis simulates the completion of a typical professional assignment in the workplace. The client/manager assigns a task to a staff member (Student) and he/she solves it in writing independently, by the given deadline, with the expected content and format, and communicates the solution of the problem in a convincing presentation.

The task can be to find a solution to a practical business problem or conducting a piece of academic research. (See below.) However, only a document that carries practical value can be considered a thesis. Students prepare either a business document which contains the independent solution to a business problem, or a professional study (in case of academic research) which provides the practitioners of the given profession with new insights.

The client pays for the expected result/benefit and the added value and demands high quality execution.

Students are supported in the completion of the assignment and in developing the necessary business skills by a wide range of presentations, consultations, and educational materials:

* this “Guidelines and Requirements for Bachelor Project Work and Thesis”, which contains the conceptual framework and an overview of the thesis, the requirements set for the various stages, the assessment criteria, and the most common risks,
* the Thesis Template, which defines the most important content and formal requirements of business documents and research studies,
* the Consultation and Evaluation Forms including the assessment criteria for Project Work 1 and 2,
* individual and group consultations, and
* four specific presentations on the methodology of producing professional materials. These include the recordings of these presentations, as well as the related slides, notes, and manuals:
	1. Literature research and analysis, referencing
	2. Analysis of data collection methods, choosing the right methodology, and substantiating one’s choice
	3. Data collection and analysis
	4. Presentation skills

The above indicates that the expected thesis is not a traditional university thesis. It does not follow traditional university patterns but, instead, it simulates a workplace situation. It is expected to demonstrate not only knowledge that has been mastered before but also, based on what has been learnt, to create new business value and relevant new results and opportunities for the client. The result is not an academic thesis of a particular genre, but a standard real-life business document or professional study that carries distinctive practical value.

## Development of skills and knowledge: pattern-following and learning-by-doing

Practical skills and knowledge (problem-solving, literacy, etc.) can be acquired through pattern following and learning-by-doing.

Literature should not only be used as a source of knowledge to derive methodologies, data, etc., but also as a source of learning how to solve such tasks, problems and how to present the solution. We observe how excellent professionals tackle such tasks and try to imitate them. How professionals present the literature, the methodology; what methods they use, how they present and analyse data, etc..

Learning-by-doing is based on a cycle of trial, result, improvement, and reattempt (see: PDCA). In the case of a thesis, this means that we create a solution, write a first version, then set it aside, review it, criticize it, improve it, rewrite it, set it aside again...... and so on. Consultations help with this process, providing guidance on how to further improve what you have done. Therefore, it is only worth consulting, if you have already made attempts, if you have already done the cycles with your own criticism and you can no longer make further improvements. As long as you can see the trivial error, your supervisor, the committee is likely to say the same things you already know.

# The process and timing of the thesis

## The three-semester process

Students arrive at the solution of a given business problem, i.e. prepare their thesis in the framework of an individual exercise (Project Work 1 and 2) by the end of a three-semester process.

In Project Work 1 students acquire the methodological knowledge required to produce professional materials, define their topic with the help of their supervisor, and prepare certain parts of their thesis, as it is determined by the supervisor during the topic choice consultation. Assessment: 9 credits and a seminar grade.

In Project Work 2 students prepare the complete thesis. Assessment as above: 9 credits and a seminar grade.

To complete the Thesis writing course, students revise, expand, and correct the thesis independently but by building on earlier feedback and recommendations, and ultimately submit it for the final examination. Assessment: 10 credits and a component of the final examination grade.

## Consultations

Students receive support in the form of consultations and feedback provided by their supervisor and a committee consisting of two members. They represent the client and, through their feedback, support the students to take the client’s perspective into consideration.

Consultations build on the students’ work. Consultations provide help and ensure development if the students are well prepared: if they have already understood and investigated the problem, have already worked on possible solutions and have clear and specific questions. During the consultations, work must be based on what the students bring to the session. Therefore, independent work and extensive preparation for the consultations are indispensable. (Questions like “What shall I do?”, “How should I start?” and “How should I go on?” are not appropriate for consultations. Remember, you could not go back to your client or your manager with similar questions, either.) Consultations, therefore, do not substitute exploratory work, literature research or individual problem-solving exercises.

At every stage in the thesis process, supervisors and committee members assess and evaluate if the students’ task

* was completed according to the standards of the “Guidelines and Requirements for Bachelor Project Work and Thesis”,
* is based on the materials provided for preparation (See below.),
* was written taking into consideration the specifications formulated in earlier consultations,
* is of good quality, and
* creates considerable added value.

During the consultations, the supervisor and the committee members’ primary role is to provide help and guidance. Evaluation is only their secondary responsibility.

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## Preparing to write the thesis

There are rules, tools, and quality criteria for the production of professional materials, and they do not come naturally or merely through producing such documents.

The necessary knowledge and skills must be acquired, and the means through which they can be acquired is the writing of the thesis itself. There are, however, a number of *general skills* that can - and should - be acquired in advance, but not necessarily by through your own mistakes. These include methodological, writing and presentation skills, as well as some common mistakes found in professional materials. Learning about these skills in advance is very important to allow them to become internalised practical skills during the writing process. It is also important that beyond developing general skills, attention is also paid to, and improvement is also achieved in, areas of personal imperfection and difficulty. Therefore, the writing of a thesis starts with preparing for the process itself.

During the preparation stage, students learn about the writing, planning, and managing of professional materials (e.g., thesis). They acquire the necessary methodological, writing, and presentation skills, and learn about the typical mistakes found in professional materials and how they can be avoided.

Presentations and materials to be studied during the preparation stage:

* Project Work-Thesis presentation, video recording, slides,
* this guideline: Guidelines and Requirements for Bachelor Project Work and Thesis
* Literature research and analysis, referencing: video recording, slides, and manual
* Analysis and choice of research methods, explaining one’s choice: video presentation and slides
* Data collection and analysis: video presentation and slides
* Compiling a presentation: video presentation and slides
* The Thesis template, which contains the most important information on the style and structure of professional materials.

A thorough knowledge of the above is the key to successful thesis writing. Students are advised to employ the acquired knowledge throughout the thesis process.

## The process of preparing a thesis

The main steps in the process to achieve the goals described in Chapter 1 are the following,

1. **Preparing for the thesis:** based on the presentations and other materials, students review the process and the objectives of the thesis process and learn about the requirements and expectations concerning the written materials. Students acquire the methodological, writing and presentation skills necessary for the preparation of professional materials.
2. **Mid-term:** the midterm tests if the above preparation for the writing process has been completed successfully.
3. **Thesis topic choice consultation**: Supervisors and students agree on and register the exact topic/title of the thesis. Students understand the assignment. Supervisors and students elaborate the directions to follow, the expected results, the literature to be used, the methodology to be applied during the thesis process, and the data to be used. Supervisors determine the scope of Project Work 1 (See the Topic Choice Consultation Form.).
4. **Project Work 1 submission consultation:** Students demonstrate to the two-member committee that they have acquired the necessary knowledge regarding the literature and methodology, are prepared to collect and present the data. They outline the solution to the problem and check if they are on the right track. They present and discuss the completed parts of the thesis. They have specific questions and are offered further suggestions.
5. **Project Work 2 submission consultation:** Students report to the two-member committee on having performed the research outlined in Project Work 1 and have completed the assignment to the best of their abilities. Students have completed the entire thesis to the best quality they have been able to. The committee gives feedback and suggestions to the students on how to revise and further develop the thesis in order to arrive at the best possible quality before submitting it for the final examination.
6. **Thesis submission to complete the course “Thesis writing” for the final examination:** the thesis revised by the students independently is assessed by two examiners each. The committee focuses on how much the thesis has improved compared to the previous evaluation stage (Project Work 2 Evaluation Form), how much and to what extent students have made use of the previous feedback and recommendations. Candidates defend their thesis and receive a final examination sub-grade for it.
7. **Defending the thesis at the final examination, consultation:** Candidates defend their thesis and receive feedback on their progress.

In addition to the above, supervisors may organise additional consultation sessions, either individual or group ones. Attendance may be compulsory to complete the course and may affect the semester grade.

It is the students’ responsibility to maintain contact with their supervisor.

The following sections explain Steps 3-7 in detail.

## Schedule

The deadlines in the table below are **indicative only** and give the reader an overall picture of the process.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Task** | **Deadline** |
|  | **PROJECT WORK 1 course** |  |
| 1. | General information Four presentations on the methodology of preparing professional materials:1. Literature research and analysis, referencing
2. Analysis of data collection methods, choice of methodology and substantiation of one’s choice
3. Data collection and analysis
4. Presentation skills

Midterm based on the material covered in the four presentations | start of the semester |
|  | Midterm  | week 2 of the semester |
| 2. | Students name their preferred supervisors (topics)  | end of week 2 of the semester |
| 3. | First consultation with the supervisor | week 5 of the semester |
| 4. | Confirming and registering the topic/title (Completing the Thesis Topic Choice Form)  | end of week 6 of the semester |
| 5. | Preparing Project Work 1 | weeks 6-14 of the semester |
| 6. | Submission of Project Work 1 (uploading Project Work 1, the presentation, and the consultation form to Moodle)  | end of week 14 of the semester |
| 7. | Project Work 1 presentation | First half of the exam period |
|  |  |  |
|  | **PROJECT WORK 2 course** |  |
| 1. | Students contact their supervisors | week 1 of the semester |
| 2. | Preparation of the first draft of the complete thesis in the framework of Project Work 2 | in the course of the semester |
| 3. | Submission of the first version of the complete thesis in the framework of Project Work 2 (uploading the thesis, the presentation, and the consultation form to Moodle) | end of week 14 of the semester |
| 4. | Project Work 2 presentation | in the exam period |
|  |  |  |
|  | **THESIS WRITING course** |  |
| 1. | Review and revision of the thesis  | in the course of the semester |
| 2. | Submission of the thesis in the framework of the Thesis writing course for the final examination  | end of week 11 of the semester |
|  |  |  |
|  | **FINAL EXAMINATION** |  |
| 1. | Posting the final examination dates  | continuous |
| 2. | Submitting the thesis to the final examination | from the 12 week of the semester |
| 3. | Setting up the committees | one week before the final examination |
| 4. | Thesis evaluation sent to students  | one week before the final examination |
| 5. | Thesis defence at the final examination | during the exam period |

# Topic choice

## Business and academic topics

Two types of theses (and related Project Work 1 and 2) can be written:

1) **Business problem solution** (report, analysis, proposal, draft proposal for decision-making, etc.): the development of an independent proposal for solving a specific (typically corporate) problem or task. This could be, for example, the economic viability analysis of a specific investment, the design of a new bonus system, the development of a marketing strategy for a product, etc. This type of work usually requires that students have access to the data needed for the thesis. It may be acceptable to present a case study on a (typically corporate) problem or task that has already been solved, but this should not be a simple description (the company did this and that). Without critical and professional analysis and independent impact assessment, such a thesis will not be accepted. Familiarity with and appropriate referencing to the relevant literature and best practices is also a requirement for theses dealing with such practical problems.

2) **Academic research**: the development of a well-defined sub-topic in the form of a longer academic research article essay. In this case, students explore existing data and research results, and use them to conduct secondary research, i.e. by processing and synthesising them, they arrive at new results and conclusions. Naturally, students can also carry out additional research, e.g., surveys, data collection, calculations, etc,. In fact, this may be a basic requirement in some areas (e.g., in marketing research or financial data analysis). The topic of this type of work may be, for example, "business prospects of cars using natural gas"; "regional differences in the use of negotiation techniques"; "the impact of open offices on workplace behaviour"; etc. In such cases, the point is that students should develop the topic in a truly thorough and sophisticated way based on the analysis of all relevant literature on the subject, and they should come to new conclusions. A thesis based purely on existing literature will not be accepted. The choice of the topic is of primary importance here. It should neither be too narrow (because then there is not enough related information to work with), nor too large or too general (because in such cases the scope of the project work/thesis is not suitable to develop the topic in sufficient detail, e.g., “the future of nuclear plants” or “reducing income inequality". The only acceptable academic-type studies are those which lead to independent new/novel results, and which would be purchased and published by a market analyst company or institution (e.g., McKinsey, MNB-the Hungarian National Bank, or GKI Economic Research Company) on its website or which could be published in a journal.

In both cases, the topic should be agreed upon with the supervisor during the topic choice consultation to ensure that the task is well-defined, meaningful, and feasible.

To choose the topic of the thesis, it is essential that students **read this document carefully**, as they should choose a topic that will not only be used for Project Work 1 and 2, but also for the thesis. The topic must therefore also meet the criteria discussed below.

## Methods and criteria for topic choice

Teachers usually identify more or less generally defined areas in which they can supervise students. (See the document called "Supervisors" in Moodle). Based on these areas, supervisors give their students a well-defined topic, taking also into account the students' interests, so that the task to be completed in the thesis is well-defined and of an appropriate scope.

During the topic choice consultation, the following need to be determined,

1. What is the **business problem (task)/research question** that the work seeks to solve/answer?
2. **Based on what theories/models** (if appropriate) and using what **data** does the student intend to solve the problem? What methods will be used to collect the data? How will the data be accessed?
3. What will be the **outcome**, the expected benefits, and the added value?
4. Which parts of the thesis will be completed in Project Work 1?
5. What kind of subject-specific literature and how much of it will have to be processed to solve the problem?

The topic choice consultation will be documented, and a copy will be given to the student (Topic Choice Consultation Form).

Students who do not have an approved topic by the deadline stated at the beginning of the semester cannot complete Project Work 1.

## Confidentiality and data protection

Project Work 1 and 2 and the Thesis cannot be made confidential, as neither the process outlined above, nor the university's IT systems make data protection possible.

This, however, is not a real problem as confidential company data can be protected by anonymising them.

* Use pseudo names for the company, the product, etc. Ensure that these are used consistently.
* Distort the data, e.g., multiply all values by a constant. Ensure consistent use.
* Use other units of measurement (EUR instead of Ft), geographical regions, etc. Ensure consistent use.

Anonymisation of confidential data should be discussed with the supervisor in advance.

# Project Work 1

## Objectives of Project Work 1

* Students learn the basics of the methodology of writing and presenting professional materials (the thesis) in four thematic presentations (literature research, data collection methods, etc.).
* Students analyse the recommended literature and seek further materials.
* Students elaborate the details defined when selecting the topic.
* Students practise writing. They write and elaborate parts of the future thesis.

## Project Work 1

The expected content and scope of the work to be submitted to complete the course Project Work 1 is determined by the supervisor during the topic choice consultation.

Unless otherwise specified by the supervisor, the first part of the thesis, approximately one quarter to one third of the final thesis, should be written in the framework of Project Work 1, and it should include the following elements,

* Presentation and interpretation of the business problem/research question, background/context/framework **essential** to the interpretation of the assignment (and only the essential ones)
* Literature review/presentation best practices
* Presentation and **justification** of the chosen methodology and/or theoretical framework
* Description and justification of the chosen data collection (information gathering) methodology
* Description of the data (information) to be collected (what data will be collected, where will it be collected, if anonymisation is necessary, etc.)

Project Work 1 also includes the following details of the thesis

* the titles of the planned further chapters and sections (a near-final table of contents, from which students may deviate if justified) and
* a brief summary/outline of each chapter following the chapter title.

Project Work 1 should therefore be submitted as a piece of writing made up of certain completed and planned parts of the thesis in its future format and structure, rather than as a separate essay. From the very beginning, writing should take place in the Word document that students will submit as their final thesis.

**Format**: Project Work 1 and 2 have to be prepared in the template devised for the thesis. (See Appendix)

**Length of Project Work 1**: 15-30,000 characters including spaces but without title page, table of contents, reference list and appendices. Pieces which are shorter than the minimum number of characters or contain twice the maximum number of characters will automatically receive a fail grade. The template also contains recommendations on the number of characters for each section/chapter of the writing, which should be adhered to in order to ensure that the writing meets the given length requirements. Both the type of the assignment (whether the thesis is a business document or a piece or academic research) and the specifics of the chosen topic have an impact on the length of a given section. For example, the Background section(s) can either be 2 or 10 pages long depending on the above factors.

**File format**: Word (.docx)

## Content and format requirements of Project Work 1 presentation

During the consultation, students summarise their work in a 5-6-minute presentation to a two-member committee.

The presentation consists of exactly six slides:

Slide 1: Title page

Slide 2: An accurate and detailed summary of the business problem/research question in one sentence. What is the business problem/research question, the thesis seeks to solve/answer? What is the new information we want to obtain?

Slide 3: Introducing the background, frameworks, and conditions. Based on what existing knowledge and situational analysis are you trying to find a solution to the problem? Presenting the company background, history, problem framework, best practices, contexts to be used (based on the literature), models, research analysis methods, and data. This means that it is the results of the secondary research and the results gained from the literature analysis which are to be presented here and not the secondary research or the analysed literature itself. The sources for every item must be indicated in parenthesis in the format used in the bibliography. You are reminded that reference should only be made to information which can be used for the intended solution. Do not give a general overview and do **not** explain textbook items/theories.

Slide 4: Presenting and justifying the data collection and data analysis (information collection and analysis) methods, describing the detailed data collection design. Present the methods you want to use to collect your data. How much and what kind of data and from whom/where do you want to collect? What methods and data will enable you to find an answer to the business problem/research question? What is the professional justification that lies behind this methodology?

Avoid generalisation on the slide (e.g., I am planning to conduct qualitative and quantitative research.). Concentrate on those elements which highlight the specifics related to the solution of the given problem. (e.g., surveying group X with a questionnaire based on sample questionnaire S and distributed through channel Y, respondents selected using method M, minimum number of respondents: Z)

Slide 5: The expected results, value, and novelty of the thesis. Clarify who will benefit from the thesis, and what benefit, for which they will be ready to pay as a client, they will derive from it.

Alternatively, clarify what new knowledge your research will add to existing knowledge for which someone would pay.

Slide 6: Presenting the thesis schedule. Risks related to the feasibility of the thesis: what are the critical and/or still unresolved steps in the process?

During the presentation, additions can only be made to the slides regarding the above issues, if deemed necessary. No mention should be made of your motivations, the importance of the topic, the history because such matters would not be discussed during a presentation given to the client, or to a superior who assigned you this task.

When designing the schedule for Semester 2, bear in mind that you are advised to complete the first full draft of the thesis two weeks before the submission deadline. This will be followed by formatting, corrections, additions, and rewriting, as well as the writing of the summary, and the finals revision. (The thesis writing process will be discussed in more detail below.)

Students must upload the following items to Moodle by the given deadline:

* the consultation form received after the approval of the topic choice,
* Project Work 1,
* the presentation related to Project Work 1, and
* the Project Work1 consultation form with the completed data section.

Students must also register for a Project Work 1 consultation session announced in Moodle.

Documents must be uploaded in **the following format and under the following file names as a single zip file:**

Student’s family name\_Student’s first name\_Neptun code\_topic choice consultation form.pdf

Student’s family name\_Student’s first name\_Neptun code\_Project Work\_1.docx

Student’s family name\_Student’s first name\_Neptun code\_Project Work\_1\_presentation.ppt

Student’s family name\_Student’s first name\_Neptun code\_Project Work \_1\_submission consultation form.docx

## Evaluation of Project Work 1

The committee consisting of two members evaluates the written work and the presentation as a single assignment with one grade. It also gives feedback and makes recommendations for Project Work 2 and the thesis. This will be documented, and a copy will be given to the student.

## Assessment criteria for Project Work 1

If students do not achieve a minimum 61% result in the midterm or do not submit Project Work 1 by the deadline, they will **fail the course**. In other words, meeting the deadlines is an essential condition of passing the course.

In Project Work 1 students have to elaborate the topic approved by their supervisor taking into consideration the supervisor’s instructions.

**Project Work 1 fails formally** if the uploaded package is incomplete, if the work is not of the expected length, was not submitted in the given template, and if the title page and the required declarations are not correctly completed.

**Completing Project Work 1 is the prerequisite of Project Work 2, which means that only students who obtain at least a pass grade in Project Work 1 are allowed to register for the course Project Work 2.**

The general criterion is that the student has made considerable progress in the thesis, i.e. if one third or half of the final thesis has been completed, and if the submitted piece reflects the amount of work corresponding to 9 credits, which is approximately 270 hours of work. In more detail, the written piece and the presentation are assessed according to the following criteria, based on which students will receive a grade.

|  |
| --- |
| **Criteria**  |
| The **range of literature** is sufficiently wide, relevant to, and up-to-date for the topic. To what extent did the student find literature discussing a similar topic to the one to be solved in the thesis? Did the student take the instructions given during the topic choice consultation into consideration?  |
| **Content:** The presentation of the analytical frameworks and methodologies is professionally correct, sound and well-synthesised. The chosen analytical framework and methodology fits the topic and is justified. The project work is an appropriate predecessor to the thesis.The text does not contain irrelevant parts, topics or introductory descriptions that are not appropriate in a professional document. |
| **Added value created by the student, expected results.** It is clear what new value and for whom the project work resulting from the student’s individual work will provideand how it adds to existing knowledge.  |
| **Structure, style, language, and use of terminology:** The work was written in the given template, it is clearly and concisely written, the relevant terminology is used accurately, the flow of thought is logical and easy to follow, and it contains the planned chapters/parts of the final thesis. |
| The rules of **referencing** are observed, no plagiarism is suspected.  |
| The formal and content requirements of the **presentation** are met. The presenter is well prepared, the oral elaboration is to the point, clear and convincing.  |

# Project Work 2

## Objectives of Project Work 2

In the framework of Project Work 2, students prepare the complete thesis to the best of their knowledge. The aim, therefore, is to produce a document which, the student believes, can be improved no further. It is the feedback and recommendations received during this stage that allow the skills related to the production of business documents (academic papers) to improve most remarkably. After all, if there are obvious mistakes in the writing of which even the author is aware, the reviewers will also be likely to refer to those in their feedback, and then there will be no opportunity to discuss those details that would give the student an opportunity to learn something new. We will only see what we do not know and where we need to improve if we are faced with criticism regarding material in which we did not detect any weaknesses or shortcomings, and which we considered perfect and lacking no further improvement opportunities.

Therefore, the assessment of the thesis submitted in Project Work 2 will be based on the general criteria used in the evaluation of the thesis itself.

## Formal and content criteria for the thesis

Both business documents which solve a business problem (reports, proposals, drafts, draft proposals for decision-making) and academic research documents (articles, research reports, monographs/books, etc.) must meet strict formal and content standards. The same is expected of your thesis. Mastering and applying the standards is an important objective of the thesis writing process.

## Format and length

The thesis must be prepared in the template itself and according to the formal requirements shown in the template in the Appendix.

The length of the thesis to be submitted for Project Work 2 (the same as the final version) is 45-70,000 characters including spaces but excluding, title page, table of contents, reference list and appendices. Students who submit work which does not reach the minimum character limit, or which exceeds the maximum character limit two times, automatically receive a fail grade. A grade reduction applies in the case of work that exceeds the maximum character limit by more than 10%. The template also contains recommended/typical dimensions (in a from-to number format) for each section/chapter of the writing, which should be adhered to in order to ensure that the writing meets the given length requirements. For example, if the Background section(s) is/are 2 or 10 pages long depends, in addition to the specifics of the chosen topic, on whether the thesis is a business problem piece or academic research.

**File format**: Word (.docx).

## Style

The general style expectations are as follows,

* Clarity, transparency (The logical and content links are clear.)
* Accuracy, economy (Avoid generalities and generalisations, vague or ambiguous wording. Use terminology accurately, appropriately, and consistently.)
* Intelligibility and simplicity (Aim for simple everyday wording and grammar.)
* Conciseness (Be as concise as possible. Include off-topic passages, sentences, avoid verbose expressions.)
* Linguistic accuracy.

A well-written text

* is characterised by unity (discusses a single well-defined topic and uses terminology consistently).
* displays clear progress in the elaboration of the reasoning. (Explain the logical order your explanation follows. Always make it clear why a certain sentence, paragraph or section follows the previous one. Discuss one matter only once and do not return to it later.)
* uses continuous content and logical links between successive sentences and paragraphs.
* and its parts are clearly structured and well balanced. The length of a section is appropriate to the importance of the discussed sub-topic. (Do not over-explain what is irrelevant and do not understate what is relevant.)

The above will make the text and its parts clear and easy to follow. This applies to both the smaller and the larger units of the text.

The titles of the chapters and the sections should be precise, meaningful, and should refer to the content of the given unit. Avoid general and meaningless titles. (e.g., The Problem)

The content structure of the thesis, as well as the content and formal requirements of the sections are found in the template.

## Submission and presentation of the full version of the thesis within the framework of Project Work 2

The presentation of the professional materials should follow this structure:

1. What is the problem?
2. What tools/methods were used?
3. What results did I arrive at using the above methods?
4. What business and management conclusions can be drawn from the results?

The aim of the presentation is to show the results and their professional substantiation.

Length: 10 minutes / 6 slides.

Slide 1: Title page

Slide 2: Summary page: Accurate and detailed summary of the business problem/research question in one sentence. Results: in no more than 3 sentences. What theoretical framework, methods and data led from the problem to the solution – 1 sentence each.

Slide 3: Starting points:

* in case of a business paper: the company background, the history, the problem framework, the relevant best practices, the context and models (from the literature) used (Present the results of the secondary research and the literature analysis, not the secondary research or the literature.).
* in case of academic research: presentation of the theoretical framework used, the discussion and critical analysis of the results of the literature (Present the results of the secondary research and the literature analysis, not the secondary research or the literature.).

Slide 4: A brief, professional and accurate presentation of the data collection methods and the data.

Slide 5: A detailed inventory of *your own* results, the elaboration, and interpretation of the data and the solutions/conclusions/theses/proposals resulting from these. What do they cover, what is the detailed answer to the problem/research question? How do your results answer the problem/research question?

Slide 6: Discussion of the results:

* in case of a business paper: What results/benefits/advantages do these results yield? What business and management conclusions can be drawn from them? What constraints/risks does the solution carry? What alternative options would have been available? Why is the suggested alternative superior to those options?
* in case of academic research: Under what conditions/limitations do the answers apply? What criticism can be voiced against the answers? How can the critical comments be addressed?

It is important to discuss what and only what is interesting and relevant to the client or the reviewer, and what convinces him/her that the results are justifiable. Do not discuss the work undertaken or the process performed. Do not *talk about* the results but rather *present* the results *themselves*. (So, do not say, for instance, that “as the next step, I assessed the company based on the criteria resulting from the secondary research”. Instead, say “the assessment based on the following criteria yielded the following results”.

The presentation will take place before a two-member committee who will evaluate Project Work 2 (the thesis) and the presentation with a single grade. A report with feedback and recommendations for the review of the work will also be drawn up (Project Work 2 Consultation and evaluation form). The Committee will evaluate the thesis based on the criteria listed in Chapter 7.

Students must upload the following materials to Moodle **as a single zip file** by the deadline:

* the consultation form received after the approval of the topic choice,
* the consultation form received after the approved Project Work 1 submission
* Project Work 2 (the thesis),
* the related presentation, and
* Project Work 2 Consultation and evaluation form with the personal data already completed.

Students must also register for a Project Work 2 consultation session announced in Moodle.

Documents must be uploaded in **the following format and under the following file names as a single zip file:**

Student’s family name\_Student’s first name\_Neptun code\_topic choice consultation form.pdf

Student’s family name\_Student’s first name\_Neptun code\_Project Work\_1\_submission consultation form.pdf

Student’s family name\_Student’s first name\_Neptun code\_Project Work\_2.docx

Student’s family name\_Student’s first name\_Neptun code\_Project Work review\_2\_presentation.ppt

Student’s family name\_Student’s first name\_Neptun code\_project work\_2\_submission consultation form.docx

**Project Work 2 fails formally** if the uploaded package is incomplete, if the work is not of the expected length, was not submitted in the expected template, and if the title page and the declarations are not correctly completed.

# Thesis writing

## The objective of the subject “Thesis writing”

Students receive detailed feedback and recommendations on how to further improve their work submitted in the framework of Project Work 2. Students revise, improve, and complete the thesis independently (on their own), following the feedback and recommendations received. (No further consultations are available at this stage.)

In practice, the process of problem-solving and producing high-quality professional text is usually done through feedback rounds. This process is also used in the preparation of the thesis. The aim is for the student to experience and practice the elaboration-feedback-revision-based writing and problem-solving process. The aim is also to allow students to gain self-awareness, to identify what they find difficult in the problem-solving and writing processes, and to improve in these areas during the revision and rewriting stages. (The same pattern is followed, for example, in the review process of academic articles in academic journals.)

Finally, as a result of this, the preliminary assessment of Project Work 2 is not merely feedback but also the basis for improvement during the revision process. (If students received feedback on their thesis during the final exam, they would not have a chance to improve their skills further as they would not rewrite their thesis afterwards.)

This feedback system is also a tool for quality improvement, which ensures that better theses are produced and submitted for the final exam.

## Submission of the thesis During the course “Thesis writing”

The revised version of the thesis must be submitted in a **proofread form, using the Track Changes function, which will reveal all the changes** which the student applied to the Project Work 2 version of the thesis based on the recommendations and assessment of the committee.

Students must upload the corrected, proofread version of the thesis in Word (.docx) format to Moodle by the deadline. Similarly, an identical PDF version of the thesis (but without the corrections) also uploaded to Moodle by the deadline, constitutes part of the **thesis submission package**.

This thesis package must be compiled and uploaded to Moodle as one file in ZIP format.

The thesis submission package should contain the following elements,

* the consultation form received after the approval of the topic choice,
* the consultation form received after the approved Project Work 1 submission
* the consultation form received after the approved Project Work 2 submission
* the final proofread version of the thesis in docx format (Use the Office *Track Changes* function!)
* the final version of the thesis in pdf format (without the corrections)

The documents must be uploaded in **the following format and under the following file names, as a single zip file:**

Student’s family name\_Student’s first name\_Neptun code\_topic choice consultation form.pdf

Student’s family name\_Student’s first name\_Neptun code\_Project Work\_1\_submission consultation form.pdf

Student’s family name\_Student’s first name\_Neptun code\_Project Work\_2\_submission consultation form.pdf

Student’s family name\_Student’s first name\_Neptun code\_Thesis.docx

Student’s family name\_Student’s first name\_Neptun code\_Thesis.pdf

**Length of the thesis** (the same as that of Project Work 2): 45-70,000 characters including spaces but without title page, table of contents, reference list and appendices.

**The Thesis writing course fails formally** if the uploaded package is incomplete, if the work is not of the expected length, was not submitted in the expected template, and if the title page and the declarations are not correctly completed.

## Submission of the thesis for the final examination

After completing the "Thesis writing" course, the thesis submission package, which has been accepted by the supervisor, **must be uploaded to Neptun by the specified deadline** in the semester when the student plans to take the final examination (i.e., the semester in which the student registered for the final examination at the beginning of the semester). At this point, the contents and file names of the thesis submission package should be consistent with those described in the previous chapter, with the only difference being the upload location.

The completion of the "Thesis writing" course and the Final Exam (i.e., the thesis submission for the final examination) may occur in the same semester or even in different semesters.

# Assessment criteria of the thesis

## Literature review

How **extensive, relevant, and sufficient** is the literature analysed by the student? How professionally, analytically, and critically is the specific literature reviewed? How far beyond simple description does it go?

The thesis fails if it contains no references to topic-specific academic literature or if it refers only to course materials or materials irrelevant to the topic of the thesis.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criterion** | **Score** |
| The thesis uses only general literature and what is specified in the topic description. It reviews no literature specific to the narrowly defined topic or literature on content similar to the chosen topic and does not use this specific literature as a source or a model.  | 0 |
| How targeted and appropriate to the task is the choice of the literature? | 0-5 |
| How appropriate, conscious, and critical is the use of literature? To what extent does the student use literature on a similar topic as a model for his/her own work? | 0-8 |
| How extensive is the literature used by the student? To what extent does the student go beyond the recommended literature, and how extensively does he/she use international sources? | 0-7 |

Maximum 20 points.

Important note: The thesis fails if it contains direct quotations, paraphrasing or summarising without acknowledging the source. All text (directly quoted or paraphrased) from other sources, including the student’s own previous work (with the exception of the Project Work) must be referenced.

##  Methodology and data collection

The thesis as a whole fails if the student did not carry out (primary or secondary) data collection even though it would be required by the topic.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criterion** | **Score** |
| Data collection is unprofessional. Either the methodology is inappropriate, or the collected data are irrelevant to the hypotheses.  | 0 |
| How professional and justified is the methodology of the data collection? How methodologically justified is the data collection? | 0-10 |
| How extensive and broad is the student’s own data collection?  | 0-5 |
| How relevant are the data the student worked with? How far do the data support the conclusions drawn from them? | 0-5 |

Maximum 20 points.

In case of an academic research thesis (conceptual work), this measure is not applicable. Instead, the score for the literature review must be doubled, must be used with double weighting.

##  Data analysis, drawing conclusions, articulation of results

How detailed, justified, systematic, and professional is thedata analysis, the drawing of the conclusions, and the articulation of the results?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criterion** | **Score** |
| The thesis is off-topic, i.e. it does not address the assigned problem/the research question. The elaboration of the topic is unprofessional.  | 0 |
| The thesis is eventually the mere combination of parts taken from others.  | 1-5 |
| The elaboration of the topic hardly exceeds the standard of general course materials. | 6-10 |
| Student used topic-specific methodological, theoretical, and other elements which go beyond general course materials, but these are not integrated into a coherent system or certain steps in the elaboration are missing.  | 11-15 |
| Student mastered the use of the conceptual, theoretical, logical, and methodological frameworks related to the narrow field of his/her topic and uses them confidently. The results are substantiated, professionally elaborated, and are supported by clear and logical thinking at every step of the process.  | 16-20 |

Maximum 20 points.

## Added value

To what extent does the thesis create new value and provide a novel and useful solution to the client’s business problem/to what extent does it yield new results to the organisation financing the research?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criterion** | **Score** |
| Student arrives at new results. In case of a corporate business problem, the thesis offers novel solutions and demonstrates their feasibility and effectiveness. In case of academic research, the findings go beyond academic literature and are supported by data and arguments. (What new value resulting from the student’s own research does the thesis contain? How much does the thesis add to existing solutions/knowledge? How novel, interesting, useful, and feasible is the solution?) | 0-10 |
| Student attempts to interpret and analyse his/her own results critically, from multiple perspectives. | A further 0-10 |

Maximum 20 points.

##  Structure and style

The thesis as a whole fails if it is sloppy and messy, the structure is unclear and the organisation of the material is not logical, the sentences are hard to follow, and it contains several grammatical and spelling errors.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criterion** | **Score** |
| The thesis is unstructured and sloppy (e.g., the structure cannot be followed, it contains incomplete sentences, important content elements are missing).  | 0 |
| The thesis contains and adequately elaborates all the professionally required content elements, and the summary is polished. The thesis follows the content and formatting guidelines.  | 0-8 |
| The thesis is well organised, has a clear structure, and the parts follow one other in a logical order. It contains no superfluous sections, topics or information unfit for a business document/academic research paper.  | 0-5 |
| Terminology is used accurately, sentences are formulated in a sophisticated manner, the structure of the paragraphs is clear, the titles of the sections and chapters are accurate, the spelling and the punctuation are correct. | 0-5 |
| Referencing is used accurately, and it follows the accepted academic referencing standards. | 0-2 |

Maximum 20 points.

If the thesis scores zero points in any of the above categories, the thesis as a whole fails. Maximum total score for the thesis: 100 points.

The grading system for the thesis is as follows,50-54 points: pass (2), 55-69 points: satisfactory (3), 70-84 points: good (4), 85-100 points: excellent (5).

In determining the final grade, however, the committee also takes into consideration the presentation and the quality of the answers given to their questions.

# Dangers and common mistakes of writing the thesis

Previous experience shows that the following factors pose the greatest problem and risk in the thesis writing process.

## Not reading the written information available to students carefully

For stress-free and focused work and to produce a high-quality thesis, it is essential that students read the available materials carefully, interpret the requirements to their own task, and follow them meticulously.

## Not being aware of the magnitude of the task and underestimating the work involved

The total credit value of Project Work 1, Project Wok 2, and Theis Writing is 28. According to the Higher Education Act (Felsőoktatási törvény, in Hungarian), one credit implies 30 hours of work. This means that to complete the thesis, one needs to invest a total of 840 hours of work. This is 105 working days or *nearly five months of work* (supposing 8 hours of work per day). This is the equivalent of work that must be dedicated to one’s thesis. The quality and the results expected by the client and the committee representing the client also correspond to this.

## Not meeting the deadlines

Project Work 1, Project Work 2 and Thesis writing are subjects assessed with a semester grade. These courses cannot be retaken in any given semester. Project Work 1 and 2 only run in the semester they are shown in the standard curriculum. Failing either one of them, therefore, results in an extra year for the student as Project Work 1 is the prerequisite of Project Work 2. The deadlines assigned to the various stages must be taken seriously and students must earn at least a pass grade in the tasks specified for every stage.

## Deviating from the requirements

The presentations and the submitted materials must comply exactly with the standards outlined in the Guidelines and in the consultation forms in terms of *content, form, and scope*. If they do not comply, the committee has the right to reject them without examining their content.

## Missing data

Data of sufficient quality and quantity is not available to complete the task defined for the thesis because students do not have access to the data or do not or cannot collect the appropriate data. When choosing/approving the topic, it is paramount to consider the data needed to complete the task, and to assess from whom, how, using what methods and with how much work they can be obtained. Will stakeholders agree and contribute to the data collection?

## Considering the thesis as a regular or trivial university assignment

Students often overlook the fact that writing a thesis at the Faculty of Economics is a workplace task simulation, a *problem-solving* workplace simulation exercise. What is really required here is contribution which has value for the client and which the student has arrived at independently. Students often mistakenly assume that they have to recount what they have learnt, and this already means that they have done something professionally meaningful, and they will obtain at least a pass as they know the course material.

Recounting the course material is neither required, not desired as what is to be prepared for the professionals on the client’s side/the task assigned by the manager is not a general introduction. On the contrary, it should be the effective and professional *application* of earlier acquired knowledge on the one hand and, on the other hand, of subject-specific know-how gained in the thesis process.

# Appendix: A list of educational support materials

The following resources are available to support students in producing high-quality Project Work assignments and theses (GTK website):

* Project Work and Dissertation Template (which contains the main issues regarding the writing and editing of professional materials)
* General Guidelines and Requirements for Bachelor Project Work and Thesis (this guide) – presentation/video recording and slides
* Literature research and analysis, referencing guide and requirements – presentation/video recording, documents, and slides
* Analysis of data collection methods, choosing the right methodology, and justifying one’s choice – presentation/video recording, slides
* Data collection and analysis – presentation, slides with comments
* Using data bases – Teams presentation
* Preparing a presentation - presentation/video recording, slides

# Appendix: A list of consultation forms and minutes

* Topic Choice Consultation Form
* Project Work 1 Submission Consultation Form
* Project Work 2 Submission Consultation Form
* Final Exam Dissertation Evaluation Form