**The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan**

M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University



**Master’s**

**Thesis Guidelines**

Nur-Sultan 2020

Methodological recommendations have been elaborated according to the State Compulsory Educational Standards of the higher education approved by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, dated 23 August, 2012 under No. 1080, Standard of Academic Program of the graduate and postgraduate education approved by the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK) Government dated October 31, 2018, under No. 604 and included the requirements and norms for completing and presenting the projects by master students.

Approved by the KAZGUU Academic Board Record

№\_\_\_4 dated on November 2, 2020

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# 1. Understanding Master’s thesis

The State compulsory standard of postgraduate education in the Republic of Kazakhstan (2016) claims that “Master's thesis in higher educational institutions is an independent graduates’ scientific research containing theoretical and/or practical developments of an urgent problem in the field of the chosen specialty, based on modern theoretical, methodological and technological achievements of science for an academic degree” (p.126).

Thesis is supervised by the School of Liberal Arts (hereinafter SLA) faculty member. Every graduate is to pass all SLA ethical review procedures and meet all the requirements to complete the thesis.

SLA is responsible for students identifying research topics relevant to their program major and of interest to them, designing appropriate and rigorous research projects, carrying them out, and writing about the research in the thesis.

#  2. Thesis requirements and key dates

The Master’s thesis includes approximately 15,000 to 18,000 words in length, excluding endnotes, tables, appendices, and bibliography. Requests to submit a shorter or longer thesis in exceptional circumstances must be approved by the student’s supervisor. The topic of the thesis must be approved by the supervisor and then by the SLA Committee of Research and Ethics (hereinafter referred to as CRE).

Writing the Literature Review report in November and Research Proposal in December are the initial stages of the thesis writing.

Students on the MA program will be asked by the Chancellor of SLA CRE to submit the provisional title of the research thesis in October. Thesis seminar groups (comprising thesis supervisors and designated supervisees) will be formed and meet during their research practice period and scientific and experimental work. These activities will follow the schedule stipulated in academic calendar:

October 27, 2020 – Research topic approval

November 20, 2020 – Literature Review report (Research field practice report)

December 23, 2020 – Proposal defense (Scientific (Experimental) research work report):

May 11-14, 2021 - Thesis VIVA

May 24, 2021 - Thesis submission

During periods when students are not physically present at KAZGUU, they are expected to work independently on their Master’s thesis and maintain regular contact with their supervisor online.

**The thesis VIVA will be on May 11-14, 2021 (TBC). This is when you will present your thesis research and answer questions about the content and methodology of your thesis.**

The date of **thesis submission is May 24, 2021 (TBC)**. Please follow the guidelines in Section 8 regarding format and method of submission.

Students should use academic English language while writing thesis and give well-reasoned and scientifically based ideas and suggestions.

# 3. KAZGUU SLA Code of Practice for Master’s thesis supervisors and students

## Master’s Thesis Supervisor

A principal supervisor is appointed to each graduate. The supervisor oversees the design and implementation of the thesis research, as well as the thesis writing process. In the event of the departure or absence of the supervisor or in the event of an irreconcilable breakdown in the supervisory relationship between supervisor and research student, another faculty member will take over the main supervisory role by the decision of the SLA CRE.

## Responsibilities of the Thesis Supervisor

The responsibilities of the thesis supervisor include:

(a) giving guidance about the nature of research and the standard expected, about the planning of the research project, appropriate literature and sources, and research methods;

(b) meeting or communicating with the student on a regular basis (generally, once every three weeks, in person or online), and being available to the student within reasonable limits when advice is needed;

(c) requesting written work as appropriate, and returning submitted work with constructive comments within a reasonable time frame;

(d) giving advice on the necessary rates of progress of successive stages of the work so that the thesis may be submitted within the scheduled time;

(e) ensuring that the student’s research meets SLA ethical guidelines and standards, and is approved by the KAZGUU SLA CRE;

(f) helping the student to develop understanding of professional and ethical conventions for educational research;

(g) ensuring that the student is made aware of inadequacy of progress or of standards of work below those generally expected and informing the Dean and the Program Coordinator in such cases so that supportive or ameliorative action can be implemented as necessary;

(h) encouraging the student to engage with others working in the field of research, for example, by attending conferences or submitting papers for journals where appropriate;

(i) arranging appropriate opportunities for the student to practice communication skills, for example, through presentations;

(j) providing a certain level of pastoral support, and referring the student to sources of appropriate support where required.

(k) being available to mark the thesis and attend the viva.

## Responsibilities of the Student

The responsibilities of the student include:

* accepting ultimate responsibility for his/her own research activity and timely completion of the thesis;
* discussing with his/her supervisors the type of guidance and commentary they find most helpful, agreeing a schedule of meetings, and meeting the supervisor on a regular basis;
* taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties concerning thesis writing;
* maintaining the progress of the work in accordance with the stages indicated by the supervisor including, in particular, the presentation of written material as required in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussion before proceeding to the next stage;
* researching responsibly and ethically;
* keeping a written note of meetings with the supervisor, which should include items for action;
* developing responsibility for the direction and implementation of the research project as it progresses.

## Delineating responsibility

Supervisors can guide and comment on students’ thesis plans and progress, but **will not rewrite students’ theses.** Supervisors will advise students on what to do, but **will not do it for them**. Ultimately, **the thesis is the student’s own independent piece of work.**

# 4. Ethics approval

Most research conducted by SLA students need to receive research ethics permission. All research that involves human subjects needs to be approved by SLA Committee for Research and Ethics (hereinafter referred to as CRE).

The SLA CRE is the school internal body that is responsible for ethical compliance. The Committee approves students’ proposals of the studies based upon the report and checklist signed by the research supervisor.

The requirements for the proposal are presented in Appendix 1.

All research proposals are defensed in the form of a presentation by the above-mentioned deadline. Before the defense date team should show the proposal to the research supervisor to get it signed according to the checklist criteria (See Appendix 2) and to submit it on paper together with the checklist to SLA CRE by the above-mentioned deadline. The proposals are submitted to rec\_sla@kazguu.kz

**IMPORTANT: Students must not start any research until the research proposal has been defensed and approved by a thesis supervisor and the SLA CRE approval is received.**

# 5. Plagiarism

The KAZGUU School of Liberal Arts’ statement on plagiarism for its master’s students.

Plagiarism is the representation of the works, ideas, thoughts, conclusions, or expressions of other people as one’s own. One of the aims of the master’s programs of the KAZGUU School of Liberal Arts (KAZGUU SLA) is to nurture novice researchers with the high level of academic integrity. KAZGUU SLA follows the policy on plagiarism as stated in [**the Handbook on Ensuring Academic Integrity**](https://bit.ly/3dnVW82)**.**

The Master’s thesis must be a product of a student's independent work. Still, the students may use other resources giving credits to the authors. It is also allowed to consult with supervisors or fellow students, but the final draft must be written by the student in his or her own words.

Forms of plagiarism stated in the Handbook on Ensuring Academic Integrity:

1. *Word-for-word Plagiarism without Clear Acknowledgement*

Quotations should be put in double inverted commas or indented and introduced with full acknowledgement of the used sources. A reader should be able to understand which part of the text belongs to the author and where someone else’s thoughts and / or ideas are quoted.

1. *Copying and Pasting Information from the Internet without Clear Acknowledgement*

Information obtained from the Internet should be properly cited and included in the Reference list. Such information should be thought through and analyzed to successfully pass a plagiarism test and to further undergo review procedure.

1. *Paraphrasing*

Paraphrasing someone’s work by changing some words, word order or structure of an argument is also plagiarism if you do not acknowledge authorship of this work.

You should make sure that a reader may not fall under the erroneous impression the paraphrased text or sequence of the idea belongs to you, therefore referencing in your text may not be enough. It is recommended to sum up a general argument of an author in one’s own words by pointing out that it is someone else’s thought. It will provide deep understanding of the argument.

Another form of a plagiarism is *self-plagiarism* when an author uses his/her own academic paper again without indicating the fact of its earlier publication, i.e. passing the previously published academic paper or its part off as an independent or a new one.

Collaboration with other persons without permission from authorized officials discords with principles of academic integrity and also questions the originality of the master’s thesis. If rendering assistance (excluding proofreading) in writing master’s thesis it is required to apply to the School’s regulations. If assistance or clarification is needed or there are questions concerning conducting researches, it is recommended to consult a research supervisor for clarification.

It is important to note that plagiarism is considered as a violation of academic integrity the principles of which are strictly followed by in M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University, is given serious consideration, and usually results in expulsion from the university.

# 6. Turnitin

The system that is used by M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University to ensure the academic integrity and originality of the master’s theses is called Turnitin. It is a software platform that checks paper projects of master students for text similarity against its own *Turnitin.com reference database* or other texts on the Internet, such as journal articles, reports, documents, etc.

The Turnitin system users shall admit and recognize that originality reports provided by the system are only tools for detecting text similarity between the compared papers, but not means for final plagiarism detection. Only the thesis supervisor can interpret the originality reports and detect true plagiarism. Results of checking a student’s paper are taken into account when a verdict on admitting a thesis to defence and / or its assessment is rendered.

## The process of checking the paper for plagiarism

1. The thesis supervisor creates an assignment in Canvas for the submission of the drafts of the master’s theses. Because Turnitin is integrated in Canvas LMS the submitted works are redirected to Turnitin right away. The drafts of the master’s theses must be submitted as a MICROSOFT WORD DOCUMENT. PDF is not acceptable. Please name your file with the following format: Family Name First Name Year of Graduation.

*E.g. Yemelyanova\_Yelena\_Translation studies\_2021*

**NOTE: In addition, you still must send an electronic copy in Word or PDF to** **rec\_sla@kazguu.kz****,**

**and bring one hard copy, spiral bound, together with opponent revision, TurnitIn report and supervisor's recommendation letter to SLA (room 503).**

1. A research supervisor having received a report of the Turnitin system on plagiarism detection or on a high rate of borrowed text fragments or otherwise having noticed academic dishonesty should independently assess the paper for violations of the Handbook. In case the thesis supervisor does not confirm the violation, the master’s thesis will be subject to further assessment without any reservations.
2. If the thesis supervisor believes that the master’s thesis is plagiarized, they should conduct analysis in accordance with the Handbook on Ensuring Academic Integrity and assess the master’s thesis independently or make a decision to submit materials to the Investigative Body.
3. If the research supervisor believes that the master’s thesis contains other forms of academic integrity breaches besides plagiarism and self-plagiarism, they need to draft a report on alleged breaches. This report should be submitted to Hearings of the Investigative Body within the time limit prescribed by regulations of the relevant department.

## Applying Measures and Consequences of Academic Integrity Breach

Applying measures and consequences of academic integrity breaches is possible provided that one of the following conditions is met:

* in case there is a decision of an Investigative Body, and appealing is not provided for by the Handbook or the deadline for appealing is missed;
* after a case is recognized an academic integrity breach by an *ad hoc* Panel.

All results of academic dishonesty should be reported in transcripts, certificates, personal records and other documents fixing performance of students.

## Measures Applied in Case of Academic Integrity Breach

Measures applied in case of academic integrity breach are aimed to correct and to form a proper attitude to academic integrity and principles indicated in the Handbook. Measures and consequences are to be applied only to the extent enabling to form such attitude.

## Measures for Master’s Students

* expel;
* withdrawal of privileges provided by the University;
* reproof.

Probation is an additional measure as supplementary to the main one and is put on in all cases of breaches of the 2nd and 3rd level (for more information see [**the Handbook on Ensuring Academic Integrity**](https://bit.ly/3dnVW82)).

Probation of students by the University department they belong to. Probation continues for a student until expiration of probation term, and if they change over to another department of the University, it will still be applicable, but administered by the department they have changed over to. Probation term is suspended for a period of departure, leave or another kind of the person’s absence while they do not conduct their activities in the University and renewed after their arrival.

If within the probation term a person commits the same or another academic integrity breach, then their breach is automatically classified as the first level breach.

The final decision on the measures to be applied to a master student is made by the investigative body that consists of the Provost of M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University, School Director, the chairman and the members of the SLA CRE, and the thesis supervisor.

## Levels of academic dishonesty

Each academic integrity breach is independently classified by an Investigative Body or an *ad hoc* Panel according to subdivision into three levels that are thoroughly described in [**the Handbook on Ensuring Academic Integrity**](https://bit.ly/3dnVW82)**,** Chapter 16, pp. 22-25**.**

#  7. Thesis Marking Procedures

* Public defense of a thesis will be conducted by the team at the meeting of State Attestation Commission. The authors of the thesis text shall defend their work within 15 minutes revealing the aim, objectives, novelty, findings of the research conducted, also explaining the methodology and implications for further development.
* Those who are present during public defense are entitled to ask the author questions regarding his or her thesis, and the author may answer those questions with the help of visual tools such as presentations, schemes, tables and statistical data.
* Upon completion of the public defense the members of the State Attestation Commission evaluate each thesis conferring a master’s degree according to each student’s area of specialization. The final grade must be decided upon by the agreement of the Chair and each member of State Attestation Commission (50% of the final grade), grade of the supervisor (30%) and customers’/reviewer’s grade (20%). The decision about the final grade of thesis is registered in the report written by State Attestation Commission members (See Table 1).

Table 1. ***Final assessment components***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activities** | ***Total points***  | ***Weight in Canvas (%)*** |
| **1** | **2** | **3** |
| The Master’s thesis VIVA | 0-100 | 50 |
| The Master’s thesis supervisor’s mark | 0-100 | 30 |
| The reviewer’s mark | 0-100 | 20 |
| Total |  | 100 |

* Each graduate is going to be evaluated individually according their knowledge of the Master’s thesis and presentation.
* Once final grades for thesis have been reconciled, they cannot be reconsidered.
* To know more about assessment criteria and its submission, see Appendix 3

# 8. Thesis style, contents and formatting

## Font, spacing, and margin requirements

 The thesis must be printed single-sided on A4 paper.

* 12-point Times New Roman is recommended throughout the dissertation. Font size requirement for figures, charts and graphs is 12-point Times New Roman as well. Quotations, words in a foreign language, or book titles may be italicized.
* Your thesis should be double-spaced with 1-inch (2,5 cm) margins on the right, top and bottom sides of every page, except the left margin (1,5 inches/3 cm). The first line of paragraphs must be indented by 0.5 inches. The required margins apply to all pages.

## Pagination

* All pages of the thesis must be numbered with the exception for the Title Page.
* Declaration, ethics approval, acknowledgement, abstract, table of contents, and lists of tables and figures are numbered by lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, v, etc.).
* The main text, references, appendices are numbered by Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.) starting with page 1 on the first page of text.
* Page numbers should be placed at the upper-right corner of the page inside the right margin.

## Other requirements

For tables, figures, footnotes, and other details, follow the guidelines in the Publication Manual of the American Association of Psychology [(7th edition).](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html)

## Headings

There is a special heading system that should be followed according to the APA Style. The heading system is used for organizing paper sections. Overall, there are 5 levels of headings, which should not be indicated with numbers or letters in the paper (See Table 2):

**Table 2. *Levels of headings***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Level** | **Centered, Boldface, Title Case Heading** |
| **1** | **Flush Left, Boldface, Title Case Heading** |
| **2** | ***Flush Left, Boldface Italic, Title Case Heading*** |
| **3** | **Indented, Boldface Title Case Heading Ending** |
| **4** | ***Indented, Boldface Italic, Title* *Case Heading Ending with a Period*.** |
| **5** | **Centered, Boldface, Title Case Heading** |

## Seriation

To list the key ideas in a specific order, use Arabic numbers followed by a period. Each key idea should be presented as a full sentence, not as fraction.

1. Use Arabic numbers to organize the key ideas.
2. Use a period after the Arabic numerical.
3. Write full sentences.

Seriation of ideas could also be presented by bullets:

* Ideas in bullets do not require a specific order.
* Ideas in bullets are not related chronologically or hierarchically.

## Content

The Master’s thesis includes approximately 15,000 to 18,000 words in length, excluding endnotes, tables, appendices, and bibliography.

1. *Title Page*. The title page includes the full title of the thesis; the author’s name; a statement indicating the degree you are submitting the thesis for and the institution, the date of submission, the word count of the thesis, and a copyright line. (See Appendix 4)
2. *Author Agreement.* Signing this form gives the KAZGUU library the right to make your thesis available to the KAZGUU community. (See Appendix 5)
3. *Ethical Approval Protocol.* Thesis should include a copy of the SLA CER Protocol that grants approval for the study.
4. *Acknowledgment (optional).* A brief statement acknowledging people and organizations can be included.
5. *Abstract in English, Kazakh, and Russian.* The abstract is a single paragraph dissertation summary (max 300 words) that includes problem statement, methods, findings and conclusions of the study.
6. *Table of Contents.* Thesis sections are listed in the order of appearance with indicated page numbers.
7. *List of Tables.* It lists the tables included in the thesis.
8. *List of Figures.* It lists the figures included in the thesis.
9. *Main Text.* The main part of the thesis includes the introduction, the literature review, the methodology, the findings, the discussion and the conclusion (See Appendices 6-8).
10. *References.* This section includes alphabetical listing of all references used in the dissertation. Publication Manual of the American Association of Psychology (7th edition) guidelines must be followed.
11. *Appendices.* This section includes copies of questionnaires, interview and observations protocols; samples of transcripts and other documents.

##  Citations and References

* Citations are placed inside the main text and consist of the author's surname and the publication year.
* Direct quotes include the author, year and page number in brackets except for long quoted phrases (more than 40 words) should be presented as an indented quotation block.
* In the reference list, alphabetic ordering is determined by the first author's surname. If the author designation is identical, the ordering is determined by publication date. [**See APA page.**](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_basic_rules.html)

# 9. Student support

M.S. Narikbayev KAZGUU Library provides a range of support for students preparing their Master’s thesis. Please be proactive and make sure that you use the support that is available.

The first and most important source of support is the Master’s thesis supervisor. As explained in the Code of Practice (Section 3), each student’s supervisor cannot and will not rewrite the thesis for the student, but is there to advise students on planning, implementation, analysis and writing.

The next source of support is the Library. KAZGUU Library offers Reference Help and regular sessions on how to use library resources most effectively. Please use these services.

To get the access to the e-databases of the M.S. Narikbayev KAZGUU Library you should visit "Databases" section in [www.library.kazguu.kz](http://www.library.kazguu.kz) official page. You should configure your browser according to the algorithm described in the "Configuring Remote Access" file, located in the "Databases" section.

KAZGUU Library offers the following Databases:

1. ScienceDirect - <http://www.sciencedirect.com/>

2. Scopus - <https://www.scopus.com/>

3. Web of Science - Clarivate Analytics <https://bit.ly/33ZCqeZ>

4. JSTOR - Open Access Ebooks - <https://about.jstor.org/oa-and-free/>

5. Section "Resources" - select "Electronic resources" in the menu - a special selection of Electronic resources with an open access on the Internet <https://library.kazguu.kz/ru/elektronnyie-resursyi-2/>

Finally, struggling students do not need to struggle alone. Students should talk to whomever they are most comfortable talking to, whether this is their classmates, tutors, faculty members, SLA staff, or the members of SLA CRE. All of these individuals are here to help the students.

# 10. Depositing final thesis to the Repository

All passing Master’s theses are now required to be deposited in M.S. Narikbayev KAZGUU Library repository for open access to readers.

Deposit of the thesis to the KAZGUU Library Repository is authorized by the *Author Agreement*. All final theses must include a signed Author Agreement. Signing this form and including it in your thesis gives the library the right to make your thesis available to the KAZGUU community.

All deposited theses must demonstrate the highest quality of presentation, with an absolute minimum of errors of spelling, punctuation, or spacing, suggestive of very careful proofreading. Additionally, full compliance with APA 7 edition is expected, specifically all in-text citations, quotations, paraphrases and the References page are accurate according to the seventh edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

## Academic information

Creswell, J. (2014). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research:* International edition (4th Ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Bui, Y. (2013). *How to write a Master’s thesis* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Jacob, S.A., & Furgerson S.P. (2012). Writing Interview Protocols and Conducting Interviews: Tips for Students New to the Field of Qualitative Research*. The Qualitative Report, Volume 17*, 1-10. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR17/jacob.pdf>

Mujis, D. (2011). *Doing quantitative research in education with SPSS* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Sage.

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Learn how to write a review of literature. University of Wisconsin – Madison. Retrieved from <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/ReviewofLiterature.html>

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**Recommended texts on the avoidance of plagiarism**

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*Senior Thesis Project Handbook 2019-2020*. Leicester, Leicester University: MRP, 2019.

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# Acknowledgements

*The Working team of KAZGUU SLA CRE appreciate knowledge, information, and criteria for the assessment interpreted and actively used by Oxford University and Nazarbayev University in the Master's and Bachelor’s programs. The knowledge and experience that you shared were fundamental for these Master’s Thesis Guidelines.*

# Appendix 1: Proposal requirements for the SLA CRE Approval

The proposal includes approximately 6,000 to 8,000 words in length, excluding endnotes, tables, appendices, and bibliography.

Proposals should contain the following elements:

1. Introduction

2. Literature Review

3. Methodology

4. References

*1. Introduction*

Introduction includes background information, problem statement, purpose of the study, research question (s) and significance of the study.

The purpose of the background information is to provide the historical context of the issue. It refers to the existing literature indicating the root and the scope of the issue and how far previous research studied the issue. Background information indicates the gap that the current study should fill.

Problem statement aims to define and explain the problem. It usually contains 1-3 sentences and is a short description of a problem that should be addressed. Problem statement explains why the issue should be studied in Kazakhstan.

Purpose of the Study is narrower than problem statement and tells what exactly should be studied.

Research Questions are “interrogative statements that narrow the purpose statement to specific questions that researchers seek to answer in their studies” (Creswell, 2012, p. 627). Master’s thesis has at least 1 or 3 research questions, contains target population and offers a methodology.

Significance of the study describes how potential audience, for example, students, employers, researchers, practitioners etc., could benefit from the research.

Length: 1-3 pages.

*2. Literature Review*

Literature review contains the analysis and synthesis of the existing studies of the topic. It summarizes articles, books, conference papers and other documents. Students can refer to both quantitative and qualitative studies. This section does not simply list works, but provides critical evaluation of the existing studies.

Length - 3-5 pages

*3. Methodology*

Methodology identifies how the research is carried out. First, it justifies the choice of research design and research methods for the study. Secondly, the section explains sampling strategy, criteria for choosing research site and selection of participants. Then, data collection instruments and procedure are indicated. Finally, it informs how anonymity and confidentiality of the involved participants and research site are guaranteed.

Length - 1-2 pages

*4. References*

This is the list of sources used in the proposal.

# Appendix 2: Proposal submission checklist

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria**  | **Yes** | **No** |
| Purpose of the study and research questions provided |  |  |
| Research design specified |  |  |
| Sample and sampling procedures described |  |  |
| Data collection instruments listed and described |  |  |
| Procedures for data collection explained |  |  |
| Anonymity and confidentiality procedures described |  |  |
| Risks of the research for participants and others specified |  |  |
| Benefits of the research for participants and others specified |  |  |
| APA is strictly followed |  |  |

Student’s name and surname\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Thesis supervisor:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix 3: Thesis Marking criteria

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Student Name:** |  |
| **Marker Name:** |  |
| **Thesis Title:** |  |
| **Grade (percentage and letter grade)** |
| **Criteria** | **Excellent****A/A-****(100 - 90%)****Meets and exceeds requirements** | **Good****B+/B/B-****(89 –75%)****Meets requirements sufficiently** | **Satisfactory****D/C+****(74– 50%)****Meets requirements at a basic level** | **Fail****F****(49% and below)****Does not meet requirements** |
| **Introduction Chapter** | The chapter clearly provides relevant background information and rationale for the study.The chapter includes research problem, relevance of the topic, novelty of the topic based on overview of previous researches, goal and objectives, hypothesis or research questions. Research methods are outlined and brief overview of paper’s structure is provided.The chapter clearly presents the significance, potential benefits and relevant audience of the research.The discussions are clearly and convincingly presented in relation to relevant literature as appropriate. | The chapter provides necessary background information relevant to the research and rationale for the study.The research problem, research purpose, and research questions are presented.The chapter explains the significance, potential benefits, and the relevant audiences of the research.The discussions are presented in relation to relevant literature as appropriate.Subsequent chapters are outlined. | The chapter provides some background information relevant to the research, rationale for the study may be missing. There might be background information that is not directly relevant to the research or its relevance is not clearly explained.The research problem, research purpose, and research questions are presented, but not in a clear manner. The potential benefits, significance and relevant audience may be missing or not presented in a clear way,The quality of discussions may be not consistent.The outline of subsequent chapters may be missing. | The chapter fails in presenting background information, and/or describing and arguing for the research. The research problem, research questions and research purpose are missing.In sum, this chapter does not provide a reader with a clear picture of what this thesis is about. |
| **Literature review** | The chapter demonstrates detailed knowledge of original sources, thorough knowledge of the field. There is no dependence on secondary sources. The key concepts, theories, issues related to the topic are clearly examined based on original sources and ideas are linked directly to the research purpose and research questions.The referred literature material is chosen with justification (not in the form of a ‘shopping list’ of unconnected topics) and use of references is precise and explicit.The chapter is effectively summarized clearly presenting author’s critical, analytic approach, with an understanding of sources of similarity and differences of opinion. | A wide range of literature is used, covering the topic area. A few secondary sources are used to analyze the topic.The literature review clearly supports the key concepts, theories and/or issues related to the research.Literature is effectively summarized, critically analyzed and synthesized.The literature is presented in the form of arguments linked directly to the research, not in the form of a ‘shopping list’ of unconnected topics.However, precision in use of the references varies a little.  | The referred literature relates to research topic and use of the references is mainly controlled. The used literature knowledge is partly insufficient, subjectively chosen or comes from unreliable or secondary sources.The literature review analyses the key concepts, theories and issues related to the research but not always in a insightful way. Some ideas presented in the chapter may not be directly linked to the research.There is some unclarity in summarizing and synthesizing literature, and critical analysis may be missing.Some parts of the chapter have a ‘shopping list’ of unconnected topics. | This chapter overall does not include an adequate number of literature sources for this study, key ideas, concepts and issues might be explained but in a very vague manner or not explained at all. No critical analysis and summary are given.  |
| **Methodology Chapter** | The chapter thoroughly and critically describes methodological choices which are effectively justified in relation to the research purpose and questions.A particular design strategy (e.g., Ethnography Action Research, Case Study) is clearly justified.Description of the data collection or models as well as the analysis methods is complete and clear.The research site and/or sample selection is clearly described and justified.Ethical considerations are followed for all stages of the whole research process.The required literature is used to explain the concepts related to methodology.The benefits of the chosen form of research above others are clearly presented. | Methodological choices are justified in relation to the research purpose and questions. The research design is described and justified quite clearly, with discussion of any particular design strategies (e.g., Ethnography Action Research, Case Study).The research site and/or sample selection is described; however, a few details may be missing.Research data collection instruments are acceptably described and justifiedData analysis procedures are described and justified clearly. Ethical considerations are followed for all stages of the research process.The required literature to explain certain methodological concepts is used. The benefits chosen form of research above others are generally presented. | Methodological choices are described and some justification for them is offered.Description of the data (collection, treatment) or models as well as the analysis methods used is lacking in a number of placesThe research design is presented, satisfying the requirements at the basic level.The research site and/or sample selection is not clearly described.Data analysis procedures are described and justified, achieving the basic standard required. Ethical considerations are explored and observed, but some ethical aspects are missing.  | This chapter fails in clearly justifying the methodological choices. The candidate does not explain why certain methods were selected, or how data were analyzed. Ethical aspects are not discussed at all. |
| **Results/ Findings/ Analysis/ Discussion** | The results and the conclusions drawn of them are connected well to each other. The data analysis approach is fully appropriate to the research questions. The answers to the research problems are systematically and critically scrutinized and it is examined how achieved results change or improve previous knowledge of the topic. The significance of the results is presented and the relevance of research conclusions to educational policy, practice or theory is clearly explored.Findings are fully supported by the evidence presented in the data analysis and critically and convincingly interpreted in relation to the relevant research literature and the research purpose and research questions. The research results provide thorough answers to the posed research questions.In sum, candidate clearly demonstrates WHY each particular analysis was conducted, HOW the analysis was done, and WHAT the analysis tells us about the data. | The results and the conclusions drawn of them are connected well to each other.The research results provide quite full answers to the posed research questions.The answers to the research problems are critically scrutinized, but not always in a consistent manner and it is examined how achieved results change or improve previous knowledge of the topic.Findings are fully supported by the evidence presented in the data analysis and critically and convincingly interpreted in relation to the relevant research literature and the research purpose and research questions though there may be a lack of clarity in the discussion.The relevance of research conclusions to educational policy, practice or theory is addressed. | There is only limited discussion of the results and it is repetitive. Linkage of own results to existing knowledge is partly weak. The conclusions have been drawn slightly over- or underestimating manner. The significance of the results is missing.The data analysis approach is appropriate to the research questions and data, but could have been more clearly justified. Data are not consistently presented in a logical or clear way; findings are either not highlighted sufficiently for the reader or are not presented carefully enough.Not all the findings are clearly supported by the evidence presented in the data analysis.The relevance of research conclusions to educational policy, practice or theory is not clearly addressed. | The results and the conclusions are presented in a very limited way or not presented at all.The data analysis approach is not appropriate to the research questions. The significance of the research is not presented.Findings may not be supported by the data analysis; there may be no effort to present findings in relation to literature or conclusions to education policy, practice or theory. |
| **Conclusion Chapter** | The chapter provides exceptional conclusions that relate strongly to the topic of the thesis with excellent justification in the evidence. Conclusions add new insight to the topic of the dissertation and identify clear and practical recommendations / opportunities for further development.Limitations of the study are clearly presented.In sum, the chapter effectively concludes the thesis, providing a clear sense of: the extent to which the research purpose was achieved; the extent to which the research questions were ‘answered’; and the importance of the conclusions to the researcher. | The chapter provides clear conclusions that relate strongly to the topic of the thesis with justification in the evidence. Conclusions add new insight to the topic of the dissertation and identify practical recommendations / opportunities for further development. However, practical recommendations and opportunities could have been discussed in a more detailed and clearer manner. Limitations of the study are clearly presented.The chapter concludes thesis with some discussion as to: the extent to which the research purpose was achieved; the extent to which the research questions were ‘answered’; and the importance of the conclusions to the researcher. | The chapter provides general conclusions that possibly relate to the topic of the thesis with some justification in the evidence, but there is some lack of clarity in the discussion. Conclusions may not provide new insight to the topic of the dissertation and may not identify clear practical recommendations / opportunities for further development. Limitations of the study are presented, but in a very vague manner.Overall, the discussions are superficial and unconvincing.The chapter concludes the thesis, overall, but it could be more readable, engaging, succinct and relevant. | The chapter does not provide clear conclusion with justification. Major findings are not connected to the topic of the thesis.Limitations of the study and practical recommendations for further development are missing.  |
| **Organization** | Information is presented in a readable, stylistically excellent manner; the structure is clear and consistent. Each chapter is effectively introduced and concluded. | Information is presented in a readable, stylistically excellent manner, creating a coherent text overall that presents no significant challenge for the reader. Each chapter is effectively introduced and concluded. | Information is presented in a readable way, but some parts/chapters are not coherently linked presenting significant challenge to the reader. Each chapter is quite clearly introduced and concluded but there may be lapses or repetitions. | Chapters are not coherently linked and information within chapters is not presented in a readable and coherent manner. |
| **Referencing** | All in-text citations, quotations, paraphrases and the references page are accurately presented according to the seventh edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. | Overall, in-text citations, quotations, paraphrases and the references page are accurately cited according to APA, with few lapses. | There are frequent lapses in APA accuracy with in-text citations, quotations, paraphrases and/or the References page. | In-text citations, quotations, paraphrases and/or the References page are not cited accurately according to APA.  |
| **Presentation** | Candidate demonstrates an outstanding logical flow, excellent use of language, appealing and effective use of graphics, charts and tables, appropriate and consistent referencing, very skillfully developed structure, outstanding logical flow, most effective use of conventions appropriate. No spelling or grammatical errors. | Candidate demonstrates logical flow and cohesion, discerning use of graphics, charts and tables, appropriate and consistent referencing, well developed and appropriate structure.There are noticeable errors of grammar, structure and/or expression in the thesis, but these present no significant problems of readability and clarity. | Candidate demonstrates adequate use of graphics and charts, there are some omissions or inconsistencies in reference list, most sections have a logical flow and structure. However,there are many noticeable errors of grammar, structure and/or expression in the thesis, significant enough to distract the reader from the work. | Candidate does not seem to be ready to make a clear presentation.Many errors of grammar, spelling, punctuation make it challenging to understand the thesis text and presentation. |
| **Thesis Formatting** | The whole thesis is formatted in compliance with KAZGUU SLA Master’s Thesis Guidelines. |  The thesis overall is formatted in compliance with KAZGUU SLA Master’s Thesis Guidelines with some lapses. | The thesis overall is formatted in compliance with KAZGUU SLA Master’s Thesis Guidelines, however, there are significant errors. | The thesis is not clearly formatted in compliance with KAZGUU SLA Master’s Thesis Guidelines. There are many significant errors. |

# Appendix 4: Title page

**Title of Thesis**

[Author’s name]

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

In

Translation Studies

M. S. Narikbayev KAZGUU University

 School of Liberal Arts

[Month, Year]

Word Count: [number of words, excluding references and appendices]

© Copyright by [Author’s name]

# Appendix 5: Author Agreement

AUTHOR AGREEMENT

I, the undersigned \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ grant to M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University the right to store and distribute my submission in print and electronic format.

I confirm that I am the sole author of this thesis, and that it does not infringe any copyright. This thesis is the result of my own original work, except where due acknowledgement has been made.

M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University will clearly identify my name(s) as the author(s) of the submission, and will make any alteration, other than as allowed by this agreement, to your submission.

I hereby accept the terms of the above Author Agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Author’s signature:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date:

# Appendix 6: Introduction draft chapter

This guide will help you to write your introduction chapter in a logical way. The chapter needs to be coherent description of and argument for the study.

Use this guide *two ways*:

1. a guide as you write (do not use it as a rigid blueprint!);
2. a checklist at the end, before you submit, to make sure everything is complete.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Content** | **Comments** |
| Introduction | * Purpose of chapter’ statement (“In this chapter, I will…”);
* ‘Preview’ of chapter argument, section by section:
	+ “In the first section, I will discuss…This is important for my study because it establishes…
	+ In the second section, I will present…This is important to my study because…
 | * The purpose of this chapter is to present your reader with:
	+ The background information needed to understand the rationale of the research;
	+ The research problem to be investigated;
	+ The purpose and research questions that guide your study;
	+ The argument for why your study needs to be done;
	+ The outline of your thesis
 |
| Background information | * Section Heading (APA-appropriate);
* Section Introduction (“In this section, I will…);
* Use Sub-headings (APA-appropriate) as necessary:
* Section Conclusion (1 or 2 sentences).
 | * This section should offer a broad context for your study.
* If an alien (or, more likely, a foreign researcher who has never been to Kazakhstan) reads your thesis, what do **they** need to know about your context to understand **your** study? For example, what is NIS? What is the trilingual policy? What is Kazakhstan 2050? In the chapter, these will likely take the form “**According to the** Kazakhstan 2050 policy…” Or “Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools **are**…”
 |
| Statement of problem | * Section Heading (APA-appropriate);
* Section Introduction (“In this section, I will…);
* Use Sub-headings (APA-appropriate) as necessary:
* Section Conclusion (1 or 2 sentences).
 | * Within the context you identify in the background, there must be some general problem or issue that you have identified. Explain it in a few paragraphs.
* Note: “No one has studied this in Kazakhstan” is a problem, but there also has to be a reason why it is worth studying in Kazakhstan. What are the issues here?
 |
| Purpose of the study | * Section Heading (APA-appropriate);
* Write the purpose statement in a single sentence:
	+ Begin the statement with key identifiers words, such as “The purpose of this study is…”, to clearly signal readers.
	+ Use a verb that clearly indicates what you intend to do in your study (describe, analyze, explain, explore, interpret, understand…).
	+ State your central phenomenon/variables next.
	+ Include participants and research site in your purpose statement.
 | * Now within that problem and within that context, you provide a narrower focus. Within this general problem, what subproblem or sub issue does your thesis address?
* Your purpose, like your questions, should also suggest a methodology.
 |
| Research questions | * Section Heading (APA-appropriate);
* List your research questions using bullet points
 | * Choose at least one but not more than three questions.
* You may have sub questions as well.
* Make sure your questions are not biased (not showing a conclusion before they start), that they indicate the target population of the study, and suggest a methodology.
 |
| Significance of the study | * Section Heading (APA-appropriate);
* Present effectively the significance, potential benefits and the relevant audience of the research.
	+ What will you gain from knowing the results of the study?
	+ Who else will learn and grow from this knowledge?
	+ How will they learn and grow from the knowledge you acquire in this study?
 | * Provide evidence to document the need to study the problem. You can justify the importance of the problem by citing evidence from other researchers and experts as reported in the literature, experiences others have had in the workplace, and personal experiences.
* Identify the audiences that will potentially profit from the study and the ways they will profit. Audiences may include researchers, practitioners, policy makers, school principals, employers, individuals participating in the study… E.g., “Policy makers will potentially benefit from this study because…”
 |
| Outline of the thesis | * Section Heading (APA-appropriate);
* Conclude the introduction by presenting a reading map where you outline the structure of the thesis and the content of the chapters that follow.
 | * Describe subsequent chapters of the thesis described (as “road signs” to the reader) [Note: If you are doing a quantitative study, this section will have a clear pattern. If you are doing a qualitative study, this section might not be completed until you have analyzed your data and at least outlined your chapters.]
 |

# Appendix 7: Literature review draft chapter

This is a guide for our Literature Review chapter draft. Your professors agree that this is a logical way to present your data analysis and your ‘findings’ interpreted from that analysis. Use this guide *two ways*:

1. a guide as you write;
2. a checklist at the end, before you submit, to make sure everything is complete. (Circle every bullet-point to indicate that you have included each element.)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Content** | **Comments** |
| **Introduction** | * ‘Purpose of chapter’ statement (“In this chapter, I will…”);
* Restate Research Purpose and Research Questions (briefly);
* State (briefly) research methodology/methods;
* ‘Preview’ of chapter argument, section by section:
	+ “In the first section, I will discuss…This is important for my study because it establishes…
	+ In the second section, I will present…This is important to my study because…
	+ Just before the Conclusion, I will present my Conceptual Framework in relation to my research questions.
 | 1. The purpose of this chapter to present your reader with:
* a clear understanding of the nature of your study;
* your knowledge and critical analysis of the key issues, data, debates, issues, concepts and theories related to the study;
* your argument for how you understand the ***relevance to your study*** of key issues, debates, concepts and theories;
* your argument for why your study needs to be done.
1. Remember this ALWAYS: A Literature Review is **NOT** a book report or a bulletin board of topics that are ***possibly*** relevant to your study. A Lit Review, instead, is a careful presentation an argument for how key data, issues, debates, concepts and theories are central to your study, that help you understand and explain it, and form the conceptual basis for your RQ-s, your data collection instruments, your data analysis, and your findings.
 |
| **Sections** | * Section Heading (APA-appropriate);
* Section Introduction (“In this section, I will…);
* Use Sub-headings (APA-appropriate) as necessary with clear and logical language for descriptors;
* Section Conclusion (1 or 2 sentences).
 | 1. Each section needs a clear, logical section heading that indicates the key idea of the section using key words. (The key words are called “descriptors” in Bloomberg & Volpe, ***so let us call them ‘descriptors’***).
2. Sometimes the descriptor comes right from literature (“Learner-centered Instruction”). You can certainly have sections that are about debates, such as: “Learned-centered vs. Teacher-centered Instruction: The Key Points of Conflict.” Other descriptors could be things like “History of Learner-centered Instruction in Kazakhstan,” “A Critique of Learner-centered Instruction,” and so on. The point is to make be clear, conceptually, in what you are talking about, and to signal that clarity with a simple, clear section heading.
3. Introduce the section in a couple of sentences: “In this section, I will discuss/present/analyze/compare and contrast/argue…”; “This discussion is central/important/key/important to my study because…”
4. Use connecting language as you move through the section: “First of all…”; “As opposed to Author X, Author Y argues that…”; “Together, these authors share the view that…”; “One study that is consistent with the argument presented by Author X is Author A’s research into why students with…”;
5. Always be connecting to your study, point by point. There should be several places where you are saying things like: “This point is important to my study because…”
6. Do not forget methodology. Try to discuss between 3 to 5 articles (NOT methodology book chapters) that (a) help you understand your topic AND (b) help you understand and explain your methodology. ***Bottom Line: Find studies done similarly to yours.***
7. You will be doing a LOT of paraphrase and quotation—*mostly paraphrase*, but often using KEY quotes. ALWAYS use page numbers when paraphrasing a specific point from any text. You MUST give the reader a chance to check your interpretation of an author’s point, so use page numbers always.
8. Present ideas in a logical way as we have done all year:
	* State the idea clearly;
	* Explain the idea in your words, using cited paraphrases and quotes;
	* Give examples (try to use the examples in the text and also connect to your research context);
	* State what is important about the idea, focusing on how it is relevant to your study.
9. Often you will be synthesizing several ideas from different authors, which means bringing together the individual ideas into one, clearly stated point.
 |
| **Policy Context (Optional)** | * Section Heading (APA-appropriate);
* Section Introduction (“In this section, I will…);
* Use Sub-headings (APA-appropriate) as necessary;
* Section Conclusion (1 or 2 sentences): “From the analysis of this/these policy text(s) presented above, we can see that… Central to my study is…
 | 1. This optional section, following the academic literature review sections, is the place for you to:
	1. Present ideas from key policy texts that help you establish that your research topic is currently an important policy issue in Kazakhstan;
	2. Show that you are aware of the key policies related to your topic.
2. Always do this systematically:
	1. Introduce the text by sating why you are talking about it: “Discussion of this text will help me establish…”
	2. State the FULL text name, in both English (translate if necessary, and say you translated it) and in the original language (in parentheses);
	3. State the author(s) and the intended audience and where it is available (or where you found it);
	4. State what you did with the text: “I analyzed this text for statements about/the Ministry’s strategy for…”;
	5. Very briefly (two or three sentences) summarize the entire text so the reader knows, in general, what sort of text it is. Be sure to list the major sections or chapters that comprise the text;
	6. State which section or sections (or chapters) are going to be explored in depth in your discussion; or, if you are using small passages from several places in the text, say so, but always state which sections/chapters of the text;
	7. Always use APA appropriate citations; make an APA reference for the References page.
 |
| **Conceptual Framework** | * Section Heading (APA-appropriate);
* Section Introduction (“In this section, I will…);
* Present an analytic framework, RQ by RQ:
	+ RQ1: State the research question completely;
	+ “This question was explored drawing on the following key ideas described above. First, Author X’s notion of ‘…………’ is important because… Second…”
* Use Sub-headings (APA-appropriate) as necessary;
* Section Conclusion (1 or 2 sentences).
 | 1. The purpose for this framework is fourfold:
	1. It shows the reader that you know HOW the information you discussed above is important in your study;
	2. It shows the reader that your study is firmly based in relevant and important literature;
	3. It is a logical summary of all the points you made above;
	4. The framework is something that you built to actually use as a conceptual ‘frame’ for your entire study. It is a major reason you wrote the chapter.
2. The framework is built by connecting key ideas (Bloomberg and Volpe’s “descriptors”) to your RQs, one by one. It is possible to use the same descriptor for more than one question; but each RQ needs at least one descriptor.
3. You will be providing definitions throughout this entire discussion. NEVER assume your reader knows what you mean by a key term. Use appropriate definition language, and make CLEAR that you are doing either:
	1. Using an author’s definition: “The definition of ‘autonomy’ I will be using throughout this thesis is that presented by Author X, who defines it as…”
	2. The definition of ‘autonomy’ I will be using in this thesis is drawn from both Author A and Author B. I will be combining Author A’s description of ‘blah, blah, blah,’ with Author B’s notion of ‘blah.” Together these combine in my definition of ‘autonomy’ as …”; Also, “My definition of ‘autonomy’ has three dimensions. The first dimension, economic autonomy, refers to the freedom of an institution to…. This economic dimension is drawn from Author X, who describes…. The second dimension of autonomy in my three-part definition is…”
4. Each RQ is a sub-heading. Write the rest as a paragraph.
5. See pages 29 – 30 in Bloomberg and Volpe on “Conceptual framework.” Notice how they link the concepts to the RQs.
 |
| **Conclusion** | * Re-state ‘Purpose of chapter’ (“The purpose of this chapter was to…”);
* Summarize chapter content (“As we saw above, the chapter began with…Next I…Finally I…”):
* State that the topics discussed above, and the conceptual framework you developed, formed the basis of the methodological instruments you developed, which will be described in detail in the next chapter, Methodology and Methods.
 | 1. This is a conventional conclusion.
2. Be sure to make the ‘transition’ to the next chapter clear. This will show your reader that you understand the relationship of this chapter to the next, and prepare your reader for what is to come in the following chapter. Good transitions will also impress your reader with your writing mastery!
 |

# Appendix 8: Methodology draft chapter

This is a guide for our Methodology chapter draft. Your professors agree that this is a logical way to present your Methodology chapter. You can use this guide *two ways*:

1. a guide as you write (do not use it as a rigid blueprint);
2. a checklist at the end, before you submit, to make sure everything is complete. (Circle every bullet-point to indicate that you have included each element.)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Content** | **Comments** |
| **Introduction** | * Explain the purpose of this chapter.
* You may remind the reader about your research focus and briefly state it.
* You may paraphrase your research questions, but do not copy research purpose and research questions word by word.
* State (briefly) research methodology/methods:
	+ “I will describe and justify the choices I have made in developing a qualitative, interview-based study that will help me answer the research questions described above”
* ‘Preview’ of chapter argument, section by section:
	+ “In the first section, I will discuss…
	+ In the second section, I will present…”
	+ Etc.
 | 1. The purpose of this chapter to present your reader with:
* a clear understanding of the design of your study;
* your explanation **and***justification* for your approach (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods), your data collection instruments (interviews, questionnaire, etc.), your data analysis approach and other important features of the study;
* your understanding of the relevant ideas from the literature (theoretical or secondary sources and empirical studies).
1. Remember: A methodology is a careful presentation of ***an argument*** for ***why*** you have chosen your approach and your methods. These were chosen because you believe they are most appropriate for your research project. Make sure your reader sees this argument CLEARLY! Always be connecting ideas discussed to **YOUR** study, your Research Purpose, your Research Questions.
2. Use one or two relevant quotes from Creswell, Judith Bell and/or another author to state the purpose of a methodology chapter.
3. Try to keep the word count for this chapter only as large as necessary (so, not too long). Present full and detailed discussions, but keep the sections concise and clear.
 |
| **Research Design** | * Section Heading (APA-appropriate);
* Section Introduction (“In this section, I will…);
* Describe and justify the *“approach”* qualitative, quantitative, mixed or combined (This section should *not* be too long):

“This research uses a qualitative research approach, described by Creswell (2011) as ‘*………………….*’ I understand my research as being qualitative because, as Creswell (2011) describes, my research includes…A qualitative research approach is justified for my study because…”* (If appropriate) describe and justify your use of special design strategies, such as Case Study or Action Research design.
* If your design has no special name, use a descriptor like “interview-based study.”
	+ “Consistent with the qualitative approach of this study, this is interview-based research (described in detail in Research Methods below). Interviews are described in the literature as being consistent with qualitative inquiry because…This is the case in my study because…”
* Briefly describe the re*search process*:
	+ “First, I developed a research problem and then a research purpose aimed at that problem, and then research questions working to achieve that purpose. Then I developed data collection instruments based in my research questions. I developed a 10-question interview protocol, pilot tested it on three people, and then…Next, I used the information from the interviews to develop a questionnaire that I administered to…”
* Use Sub-headings (APA-appropriate) as necessary with clear and logical language for descriptors;
* Section Conclusion (1 or 2 sentences).
 | 1. Here you are doing two important things: (1) describing and justifying the ‘approach’ you used (see Creswell, for example on qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods); and (2) describing and justifying your choices as appropriate for your particular study. Naturally, this conversation is linked to your research purpose and questions. Always. (‘Justify’ means argue for **why** you did what you did.)
2. Narrate the process of the research, from the beginning when you developed your research questions through the development of the instruments to the data collection to the data analysis and interpretation of findings. This should be brief, but clear. The focus here is on the research steps, with special emphasis on data collection. In sum, tell the story. Briefly but clearly.
3. Use literature throughout this discussion.
4. A methodology discussion is **NOT** a book report or a bulletin board of methodological topics that are ***possibly*** relevant to your study; it is an argument for choices you made. For example, how do you understand YOUR study as qualitative case study design? How do you understand the manner in which you mixed methods? Why did you decide these things needed to be done?
5. This section should be shorter than the Research Methods section below, which is more important. Masters students are expected to be able to accurately describe their methods and how they were used, as well as justify them.
 |
| **Sample** | * Section Heading (APA-appropriate);
* Section Introduction (“In this section, I will…);
* Describe your sample, and include a Participant Chart, either in this chapter or, if it is too large, in the Appendix, which you will reference here.
* Describe the research site, if appropriate, and describe relevant and interesting details of data collection context: the location, setting, atmosphere;
* Describe what you did to sample and justify that approach (why?).
* Use literature to help;
* Use Sub-headings (APA-appropriate) as necessary with clear and logical language for descriptors;
* Section Conclusion (1 or 2 sentences).
 | 1. You need to give your reader all the information they need to see how and why you selected the sample (‘Participants’) that you did. Naturally, this conversation is linked to your research purpose and questions. Consult the literature to help you understand and describe your sampling.
2. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008, pp. 6-8) nicely detail what this discussion needs to have:
	1. the sample and the population from which that sample was drawn
	2. the sampling strategy used. (Depending on the qualitative research tradition, a sample can include people, texts, artifacts, or cultural phenomena.)
	3. the research site if appropriate (program/institution/organization)
	4. the criteria used for inclusion in the sample, how participants were identified, how they were contacted, the number of individuals contacted, and the percentage of those who agreed to participate (i.e., the response rate).
3. Typically, in qualitative studies like ‘purposive sampling’ is used.
4. In Mixed Methods studies, we need to describe each sampling procedure for each method. Organize your discussion logically by method. VERY IMPORTANTLY: describe the relationship of these methods: which came first and why? How you combined the data in the data analysis.
5. You may include “demographic information,” a “participant profile information that describes who the participants in your study are—where they come from, some of their history and/or background, education, and personal information such as age, gender, and ethnicity” (p. 11).
6. Do not forget to provide a brief description of details of the research site (place) and the actual setting where your data collection took place if you were doing observations or interviews.
7. When using literature, make sure you are ALWAYS connecting the ideas to YOUR study.
8. This should not be an exceptionally long section. So be concise and clear, using literature consistently, but in small amounts.
 |
| **Research Methods** | * Section Heading (APA-appropriate);
* Section Introduction:
	+ “In this section I will describe and justify my research methods used to collect data for my study. First I will present…”
* Present your methods, one by one:
	+ “As described above, this is an interview-based study in which I did semi-structured interviews of 5 pre-school teachers who have…. Wellington (2006) defines semi-structured interviews as…This description by Wellington fits my study because I used… I selected interviews as the appropriate method for this study because…”
* As you present your methods, be sure to include details:
	+ “The ten interview questions focused on the issues of A, B, C, D and E (please see Appendix A).”
	+ “The interviews lasted between 40 to 60 minutes. Each interview began with my explanation of the study and my presentation of the Consent Form. Once the form was signed, I began the questions.”
* Use Sub-headings (APA-appropriate) as necessary;
* Section Conclusion (1 or 2 sentences).
 | 1. This chapter is especially important. Details matter here. Readers are looking to see that you understand the methods you used and that you understand why you chose them. Naturally, this conversation is linked to your research purpose and questions.
2. Here, you are emphasizing the methods, the actual instruments you developed to collect data. In the Research Design discussion, you were talking about the ‘approach’ and the overall large-picture view of your study. Yes, you mentioned your instruments in that section above, BUT it was brief and only to support the design discussion. Here, it is a detailed, complete discussion of your data –collection methods.
3. Organize the discussion logically using section headings. Separate individual methods, discussing them one at a time. Keep it simple. Keep it clear.
4. Remember you are **ALWAYS arguing for WHY** these methods are appropriate for YOUR study.
5. Always make clear who or what the sample is, as needed.
6. Provide specific details. For example, if you did interviews: how many? For how long? Were they recorded? How? Did you use follow-up questions? Did things go smoothly? Any problems? How did you solve them?
7. When using literature and you should always be doing so, make sure you are ALWAYS connecting the ideas to YOUR study.
8. When mixing methodological approaches (quant/qual) or combining methods using the same approach, make CLEAR what the relationship between the methods is.
9. Include all instruments in the Appendix. This means interview protocols, questionnaires, observation protocols, and even protocols for content analysis! [Just write the ‘questions’ you were asking the text. For example. “I analyzed the text for words, phrases or larger passages of text that would provide the following information: A, B, C, D, and E.)
10. Learn the APA appropriate way to make references to your Appendix: “As presented in Appendix A, I developed a 10 questions interview protocol.”
11. It is often interesting for readers to hear interesting description of challenges and how they were overcome, or one or two interesting aspects of the experience. Insert these where they seem appropriate. Keep them brief, though.
 |
| **Data Analysis Approach** | * Section Heading (APA-appropriate);
* Section Introduction:
* “In the section above, I described the methods I used to collect data. In this section, I will…”
* Begin the narrative with what you did with the collected data:
	+ “The six 30-minute interviews were recorded on my iPhone recorder. I transferred the file to an mp3 and uploaded it to… I also backed up the data by…
* Next, describe the way you engaged the data:
	+ “I played back the mp3 file on my stereo and, through headphones, and transcribed each of the interviews. Once transcribed, I read through each transcript to get a sense of the overall information. Then, I began a coding process, looking for themes related to categories already existing in my research questions, but also themes I did not anticipate. These existing categories were A, B, C (please See Appendix B). Once I…”
* Then, show how you went from categories to findings:
	+ “These categories were further analyzed in order to develop my statements of findings (please see Statements of Findings in page 33; also see Appendix B). For example, my second finding stated that “FINDING.” This finding is developed using the categories of…(please see Appendix B);
* State how you combined any mixed methods (e.g. questionnaire and interview) or combined methods (e.g. qualitative content analysis and interviews);
* Section Conclusion (1 or 2 sentences).
 | 1. The purpose of this section is very nicely described by Bloomberg and Volpe (2008): in this section “you report on how you managed, organized, and analyzed your data in preparation to write up and present your findings and then how you went on to analyze and interpret your findings” (pp. 16-17). This sums it up! Tell the story!
2. This section is CRITICAL for qualitative inquiry, because the data analysis was not done by a computer, it was done in your brain—you interpreted themes and you coded them; then you interpreted these smaller themes into larger categories, and you gave them descriptors. These categories formed the basis of your findings. So, your job here is to make VISABLE what is an essentially *in*visible data analysis process.
3. The Bottom Line is that you MUST convince your reader that you effectively and honestly developed findings based in a transparent process of data analysis. You must SHOW the process. How? Prepare a Data Analysis Example Chart for your Appendix. This need only be one page. We used these in our data analysis workshops. I suggest one organized around 1 or 2 findings, showing the largest category (labeled with descriptor), the sub-categories (labeled with descriptors) and a passage of transcribed text for each sub-category. This will be described in narrative in the chapter, but referenced to the Appendix in the discussion. You need not include all categories, but do include 2 or 3 substantially-supported categories.
4. Remember that the Data Analysis Example Chart MUST correspond to your Data Analysis & Findings Chapter! Readers WILL check! So make sure that findings, descriptors and quoted passages are the SAME.
5. It is often interesting for readers to hear interesting description of challenges and how they were overcome, or one or two interesting aspects of the experience. Insert these where they seem appropriate. Keep them brief, though.
 |
| **Ethical Considerations** | * Section Heading (APA-appropriate);
* Section Introduction:
* “In this section, I will…”
* Describe the ways you worked through the SLA ethics approval process:
	+ “Once I developed the proposal for my research, I used that information to prepare the SLA Ethics Form (please see Appendix C). On this form, I described…. This research was approved on March 17, 2014 by…”
	+ “Important to this ethics review process was my Consent Form, on which I described…”
* Describe whether confidentiality or anonymity is important in this study and why. Make clear what was promised in your ethics form for these issues, and how you stated you would ensure this confidentiality or anonymity. Also, describe how you did, in fact, actually keep these promises in your storage of data and representing the participants in your writing. SHOW this with text examples.
* Explain why any participants or research sites or departments will be named. If people are anonymized but a school or department is named, describe how you worked to protect their identity in this case.
* Discuss any issues or challenges of ethics that emerged and how you worked to address them.
* Describe how you stored and protected data and if and when this will be destroyed.
* Use Sub-headings (APA-appropriate) as necessary;
* Section Conclusion (1 or 2 sentences).
 | 1. This is not an exceedingly long discussion, probably. But it is important. Your reader wants to see that you followed all required SLA ethical practice guidelines and procedures; that you were consciously seeking to be an ethical researcher during the research, and that you are VERY careful about keeping promises made in your Consent Form—particularly confidentiality and anonymity.
2. Keep this simple and clear and work through the topics concisely.
3. Be sure to append your consent form and any SLA approval documents. Check the SLA Thesis Guidelines for clarification on what MUST be included.
4. It is always interesting—and important—for readers to see how you encountered and addressed any challenges of ethics. Briefly discuss these as narratives.
5. It is critical that you describe how you are protecting confidentiality and anonymity.
6. If you promised to ‘member check’ and you did so, describe this process and why you used it. At least describe how you worked, ethically, to represent the ideas of your participants accurately, and in a manner that would not put them at risk professionally or in society.
7. It is often interesting for readers to hear interesting description of challenges and how they were overcome, or one or two interesting aspects of the experience. Insert these where they seem appropriate. Keep them brief, though.
 |
| **Conclusion** | * State that design, methods and data analysis approach described above formed the basis of the discussion in the next chapter, Data Analysis & Findings.
 | 1. This is a conventional conclusion.
2. Be sure to make the ‘transition’ to the next chapter clear. This will show your reader that you understand the relationship of this chapter to the next, and prepare your reader for what is to come in the following chapter. Good transitions will also impress your reader with your writing mastery!
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