



University of New York Tirana
Faculty of Law and Social Sciences
Department of Law

MSc in International Commercial Law (ICL)

Final Thesis Handbook

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Introduction

This paper should guide you and help you write your Master Thesis. Please read it carefully before you start working on it.

Form and Contents of the Thesis

Length and form

The length of the thesis must be at most 15,000 words, including footnotes and any appendices, excluding the bibliography. Please take the word limit seriously – penalties may be imposed on excessively lengthy theses. The thesis must be written on a computer, and you must submit an electronic version. The font size should be Times New Roman 12 points, double-spaced. Make sure that there is enough space for correction notes at the side margin. Suggestion: top margin 2.5 cm; bottom margin 2 cm; left side margin 4 cm, right side margin 2 cm.

Please pay attention to correct spelling and appropriate style.

Submission

The thesis must be submitted before the deadline set and published by the Head of the department without exception.

On this date, hard copies of the thesis must be posted (they may arrive later) to the Post Graduate Studies Office, University of New York – Tirana.

The electronic version must consist of one document only. We will not accept a submission comprising a series of appendices, a separate cover sheet, etc. The file must be in **.doc** or **.pdf** format.

The first page of the thesis must contain an authorship declaration with a handwritten signature. The declaration should read:

"I hereby declare and confirm that this thesis is entirely the result of my work except where otherwise indicated. I have acknowledged on page... the supervision and guidance I have received from... This thesis is not used as part of any other examination and has not yet been published."

Date/Signature

Language

The thesis should be written in English.

Content

The research topic must relate to one of the areas of the law explored during the program courses. Research topics must be proposed by students and approved by the Research Tutor.

The thesis must be related to the Law; it should not discuss broad topics in general terms but should concentrate on specific problems and discuss them profoundly.

The thesis is a scientific text, not a composition or an essay. Therefore, it is necessary to use an objective and abstract style. The text should not contain emotional passages. You must form a clear structure to guide the reader through your questions and arguments and towards your conclusion.

At the outset, you should describe your research question(s) by identifying the legal problem(s) to be addressed in the thesis. Usually, a master's thesis in law addresses one legal problem. This problem must be particular and relevant for legal practice and academia. It is helpful to explain why these questions are essential for the development of legal science and why the study was undertaken. By stating the paper's aims, you should give sufficient background information to allow the reader to understand the context and the significance of the question(s) you are trying to address. Moreover, you must explain the scope of your work or any possible caveats, i.e. what shall be included or excluded from the scope of the study.

Then, your explanatory, analytical, and argumentative parts should follow. Here, you should analyse the legal sources by using the contributions of academic sources, such as writings of scholars (books, articles in scholarly journals, or other selected sources (not encyclopaedical sources), such as law dictionaries or reference sources), as well as notable jurisprudence addressing legal issues of relevance for the scope of the thesis. Explain the methods you use for your analysis, such as the legal analysis and interpretations of legal sources and materials. After implementing the law on your research question, you should be able to reach relevant conclusions or answers to the identified problem. Describe the results or findings by formulating statements of observations pertinent to the legal practice and theory and answering the question you described at the outset of the thesis.

The conclusion should be concise and answer the question(s) raised at the beginning of your work.

Please highlight the most vital statement you can make from your observations in the concluding chapter.

Structure

Since your thesis only aims to describe and solve the chosen problem, you should only observe your thread of analysis and interpretation of your topic. Hence, addressing questions unimportant to your scientific problem is advisable only, even if these topics seem attractive. Any other explanation would be a detour from your topic.

As with all scientific texts, your thesis must be structured. Four levels are usually sufficient since the individual parts must be a manageable length. Two alternative systems may be used to structure your master's thesis.

The first uses uppercase letters on the first, Roman numerals on the second, Arabic numerals on the third-, and lower-case letters on the fourth level. The second system uses only Arabic numerals separated by dots:

| | | | |
|---------------|-----|----------------|----------|
| First system: | A. | Second system: | 1. |
| | I. | | 1.1. |
| | 1) | | 1.1.1. |
| | a) | | 1.1.1.1. |
| | b) | | 1.1.1.2. |
| | 2) | | 1.1.2. |
| | II. | | 1.2. |
| | B. | | 2. |

It is optimal to use one subsection for each thought or idea. It would be best if you devoted a new subsection with a new heading to every new argument in your chain of argumentation. Only the less critical arguments can be summarised under the same heading. Good headings describe the subsequent problem or argument with only one subject or predicate rather than a long question or sentence.

Your task is to guide the readers and convince them of your opinion. Hence, make sure that every statement, argument, opinion, and conclusion follows from the parts you have written before.

Your thread of thought must be complete and comprehensible. It should not contain any gaps. On the other hand, each thought or argument can only be used for one step of progress on the way to the conclusion. Thus, your work should be kept from elsewhere in your paper.

Literature work, citing, and bibliography

If you have identified a relevant opinion in the literature, your task is to examine it and determine whether it is right or wrong. Usually, you will find many different utterances to your topic so that you can decide which one of them is most suitable. You can criticise the existing literature or statements by arguing your ideas.

Then, it would be best to reject them (arguing why) and develop your proposition/solution. In any event, you must mark all thoughts and arguments that are not your own.

Incorrect use of other people's ideas and words will be taken seriously, and penalties will be imposed. To avoid that, you must carefully follow a simple three-step procedure.

Firstly, you must organise a bibliography that lists all sources you used in alphabetical order at the end of the thesis.

The footnote references and citations should be made on LSE; therefore, for further clarifications and samples, please refer to the following:

<https://www.lse.ac.uk/Economic-History/Assets/Documents/Study/masters/MSc-Documents/Citations.pdf>

Every page (excluding Introduction and Conclusions) should contain at least one reference. The total number of references should be at most 200.

Secondly, when using other writers' arguments, you must indicate this within the main text. The usual way to do that is to make a footnote stating the author and year of publication so the reader can identify the source in your bibliography. Specify page numbers if possible and make clear exactly which thoughts are taken from that source.

Thirdly, when you **quote** from a source, in addition to stating the above source, you must indicate exactly which words are not yours, even if you quote only part of a sentence.

You can use quotation marks or italics, setting the quote apart from the main text, or by any combination of these means. **To use only a footnote at the end of a quote is not sufficient and will be considered plagiarism.**

The theses will be checked for plagiarism with a computer program that detects incorrect citations. Penalties may range from a reduction of the thesis grade to non-acceptance. Students are warned that *Wikipedia* is not an academic source. The dates of the last visit should be supplied for all internet sources.

The Advisor-Student Relationship

The working relationship between a thesis student and their Thesis Advisor is essential.

To ensure that it runs smoothly, the student will:

- Regularly communicate with the Thesis Advisor.
- Work to complete a proposal within the first four weeks of the specified timeline and a final thesis by the deadline.
- Keep the Thesis Advisor informed of all matters relevant to progress, including planned absences.
- Submit regular monthly status through e-mail.
- Send work sections for review by the Thesis Advisor during the thesis period.
- Normally submit one complete draft of the whole thesis to the advisor. Feedback on multiple versions of the entire document will usually not be given.
- Submit the completed thesis for grading after revising it according to the advisor's comments on the entire draft.

The Thesis Advisor will:

- Allow all communications to take place regularly.
- Work with the student to ensure the proposal and final thesis are timely.

- Inform the student promptly if, for any reason, these response times will not be met on certain occasions.
- Inform the Head of Department once the student has submitted the final thesis.

Assessment

All the components of the project (the specification, design, and thesis) will be assessed in terms of their having met:

- The proposal, which should be considered the "contract" between the student and the Thesis Advisor, details exactly what should be accomplished and what timetable should be followed.
- The project's learning outcomes are identified in this document's introduction.
- The specific planned project outcomes and evaluation criteria are identified in the project proposal.

Please submit at least 80% of the required Status Reports to avoid a reduction of the final grade of up to ten points, as recommended by the Thesis Advisor and the Head of the department.

Once the student has submitted the final draft to the Thesis Advisor and the Thesis Advisor is satisfied with the final draft (after verifying the word count and checking the document using software applications), a message will be sent to the Head of the Department about the existence of the draft.

As part of this process, the second assessor, and sometimes the Thesis Advisor (acting as the first assessor), might ask the student to answer a few questions to clarify the work presented and assess the student's depth of understanding. This dialogue should not usually take more than one week at the most. A date when the questions will be posted should be coordinated with the student, and the responses should be given within one week.

The assessors will attempt to return all final assessments within ten days.

The thesis will thus be assessed independently by the two assessors, who will each provide a grade for the thesis. They will be invited to discuss their assessments and attempt to reach an agreed outcome. If the two assessors can't resolve the disagreement, the Head of Department will nominate a third assessor. The third assessor will then complete a separate analysis, and the three reports will be presented to the Board of Examiners, which will arrive at the final decision.

Presentation

According to the legal requirements, the students shall conduct a 20-minute oral presentation of the thesis in front of the Board of Examiners and other department members. At the end of the presentation, the students shall answer the questions of the department members regarding their thesis and presentation.

Conclusion phase

The whole process will be monitored by the university academic personnel to resolve differences when necessary and to guarantee that the thesis is written in an acceptable level of English according to the university's requirements.

All the components of the grade and the assessors' reports will be made available to the Board of Examiners, which will agree upon the final grade. The Board can give greater weight to one or the other after reviewing all the evidence, especially in cases where the two assessors disagree.

The Head of Department will release the final overall grade to the student only after the meeting of the Board of Examiners.

The Head of Department will send the student a message with the UNYT graduation contact details, confirmation of the thesis grade, and an explanation of UNYT involvement in the graduation and associated processes.

If the Board decides upon a failing grade, the Head of Department will inform the student of why a failing grade was given and a list of instructions on how to proceed. The student has the option of repeating the thesis once. This will be the "second sitting" of the module.

A student who fails to obtain a passing grade will be given one opportunity to rewrite and resubmit a thesis for re-examination.

Ms.C. in ICL (SAMPLE)

Course: Internship and Dissertation Department/Level: Law & Social Sc. / Master
Coursework: Thesis Assessment Weight: 100%
Supervisor: _____ Submission: Deadline: _____

Disclaimer

Coursework is received on the understanding that it is the student's work and that it has not, in whole or part, been presented elsewhere for assessment. Where material has been used from other sources, it has been appropriately acknowledged by the University's Regulations regarding Cheating and Plagiarism.

Student's Name & Surname: _____ **Student's Registration No:** _____

| <i>Tutor's Comments</i> | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <p>Overall: The student has produced an interesting master's thesis by showing the importance of modification of the extradition regime in the Albanian legal system. The thesis included legal comparison, critical reasoning, and a case-law study focusing on the most recent case of the ECtHR. Using the language and the methods applied made this thesis a good piece for future research.</p> | <p><u>Component's Assessment:</u> 18/ 20</p> |
| <p>Argumentation: Argumentation is excellent. The student has included all the legal argumentation needed for a master thesis by also underlying the importance of a new policy in Albanian national literature. The student also considered the eventual possibility of unconstitutionality of the current regime of the legal institute of extradition.</p> | <p><u>Component's Assessment:</u> 17/ 20</p> |
| <p>Structure: The structure is excellent and easy to understand. The student followed the required formatting style with a logical structure.</p> | <p><u>Component's Assessment:</u> 18/ 20</p> |
| <p>Language: The language used is perfect.</p> | <p><u>Component's Assessment:</u> 18/ 20</p> |
| <p>Style: Specific formatting requirements are generally met. The student made good references to all the most important literature.</p> | <p><u>Component's Assessment:</u> 19/ 20</p> |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Supervisor | Grade: 90% | Signature | Date: |
| Committee Member #2 | 91% | | Date: |
| Committee Member #3 | 89% | | Date: |
| Grade Awarded: 90 % | For Office Use Only: _____ | | |