



**UNIVERSITY *of***  
**DEBRECEN**

## **RULES FOR WRITING A THESIS**

**for students in BSc/MSc programs  
and postgraduate programs**

**Debrecen**

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# **1 Aim and scope of the rules**

The rules aim to ensure that the tasks related to

- assigning the subtasks of the thesis and diploma work (hereafter thesis),
- organizing and documenting the thesis,
- the responsibilities of students, internal supervisors, external supervisors, and reviewers

are executed according to uniform principles, methods and quality assurance requirements.

Related regulations: §21 and §27 of the Rules and Regulations of the University of Debrecen (hereafter Rules and Regulations), and §13 of the Special Provisions and Supplement for the Faculty of Engineering.

The regulations apply to students in the bachelor's, master's, and postgraduate programs of the Faculty of Engineering, as well as to persons employed by or having an employment relationship with the Faculty.

## **2 Students' rights and obligations**

### **2.1 Students' rights**

Students have the right to

- a) choose from the available topics and supervisors, considering the options,
- b) receive the highest quality of professional guidance and consultation available,
- c) have their human dignity and personal rights respected,
- d) receive the supervisors' opinions, suggestions and further tasks related to the writing process within 8 working days after the submission of the sub-tasks during the consultation period,
- e) ask the internal supervisor to carry out a similarity analysis using the software provided by the university no later than 8 working days before the thesis submission deadline,
- f) contact the Head of Department in case of a dispute during the preparation of the thesis and, if this is unsuccessful, to contact the Vice-Dean for Educational Affairs.

### **2.2 Students' obligations**

Students are obligated to

- a) choose a topic from those announced by the department or present their own proposal to the responsible person at the department or the supervisor of their choice no later than the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the last semester of their training,
- b) comply with the formatting requirements of the thesis (which are defined in the document entitled “Thesis Formatting Requirements”, appended to the present rules),
- c) continuously contact the internal supervisor, at least 4 times during the semester (personal consultation, e-mail, e-learning),
- d) continuously contact the external supervisor, at least 4 times during the semester (personal consultation, e-mail, e-learning),
- e) complete the tasks set by the supervisors by the given deadlines,
- f) observe the maximum value of the similarity index (15-25%, regulated by the department) during the similarity analysis of the thesis. Deviations from the specified value are possible with the internal supervisor’s approval. The maximum similarity to a document is 2%. The similarity of obligatory documents (e.g. declaration, bibliography) is an exception.
- g) apply the rules and principles of the profession with the greatest possible care and diligence in the preparation of the thesis, and to observe ethical principles and standards,
- h) comply with the regulations of the host institution or business organization if the thesis is prepared in part or completely outside the Faculty of Engineering,
- i) seek the internal supervisor's approval to submit the final thesis.

### **3 Rights and obligations of contributors to the topic, assignments, and thesis**

#### **3.1 Head of Department**

##### **3.1.1 The Head of Department’s obligations**

The Head of Department is obligated to

- a) provide an internal supervisor for students in all of the department’s programs and specializations,

- b) provide the necessary personal and material conditions for the internal supervisor to carry out his/her tasks,
- c) select the reviewer,
- d) handle disputes that may arise during the preparation of the thesis, and to contact the Vice-Dean for Educational Affairs if necessary.

## **3.2 Internal supervisor**

### **3.2.1 About the internal supervisor**

The internal supervisor may be

- a) a full-time or part-time instructor, researcher, teacher of engineering, technical instructor, departmental engineer (or employed on a contract basis) at the department assigning the task or at another department, or
- b) a PhD student of the department assigning the task or another department, who has at least a master's degree, or a legally equivalent qualification.

### **3.2.2 The internal supervisor's rights**

The internal supervisor has the right to

- a) choose from the students applying for his/her thesis topics,
- b) evaluate and give his/her opinion on the assignment prepared by the student,
- c) know the student's and the external supervisor's opinions and suggestions on the elaboration of the thesis,
- d) have his/her human dignity and personal rights respected,
- e) in case of a dispute during the preparation of the thesis, contact the Head of Department or the Vice-Dean for Educational Affairs.

### **3.2.3 The internal supervisor's obligations**

The internal supervisor is obligated to

- a) provide the data necessary for the preparation of the thesis topic announcement form in consultation with the external supervisor and the student,
- b) guide and supervise the development and completion of the assignment,

- c) continuously supervise the student's work, to check it at least 4 times, and to have the student report on his/her progress (personal consultation, e-mail, e-learning),
- d) respond to the student's inquiries within 8 working days,
- e) set a feasible deadline for the assigned tasks,
- f) check the professionalism, content, and format of the student's assignment, with special regard to independent work,
- g) carry out a similarity analysis using the software provided by the university at the student's request no later than 8 working days before the thesis submission deadline. The internal supervisor sends the results to the student within 5 working days at the latest.
- h) carry out the similarity analysis using the software provided by the university within 8 working days from the thesis submission deadline,
- i) be familiar with the regulations of the University and the Faculty regarding the issues covered by the regulations in this document (Rules and Regulations, Thesis Formatting Requirements),
- j) respect the human dignity and personal rights of those involved in the development of the assignment,
- k) work with the utmost care and respect for professional and ethical rules, and draw the student's attention to these as well,
- l) comply with confidentiality obligations in the case of restricted theses.

### **3.3 External supervisor**

In addition to the internal supervisor, the external supervisor may also be involved in the preparation of the thesis.

#### **3.3.1 About the external supervisor**

The position of the external supervisor may be filled by a person who has at least the same level of education or equivalent qualifications as the student may obtain in his/her training.

The external supervisor may be:

- a) an employee of an organization or institution outside the university,
- b) an employee of the department assigning the task or another department.

### **3.3.2 The external supervisor's responsibilities**

The external supervisor is responsible for:

- a) providing the student with professional assistance and advice, and for checking the student's work,
- b) providing regular consultation opportunities for the student, at least 4 times, and for ensuring the conditions for preparing the thesis within the organization or institution,
- c) evaluating the assignment on the department's thesis evaluation form.

## **3.4 Reviewer**

### **3.4.1 About the reviewer**

The reviewer may be someone who has at least the same level of education or equivalent qualifications as the student may obtain in his/her training.

The reviewer may be

- a) an instructor of the department assigning the task or another department,
- b) another university's instructor,
- c) an employee of an organization or institution outside the university.

The thesis may not be reviewed by the student's internal or external supervisor.

### **3.4.2 The reviewer's responsibilities**

- a) evaluating the assignment on the department's thesis evaluation form,
- b) making a proposal to accept or reject the student's thesis.

## **4 Conflicts of interest**

- a) The student's relatives may not participate in the review and evaluation process of the thesis.
- b) The Head of Department must take into account the regulations on conflicts of interest when appointing the reviewer.
- c) The student may request, in a written and fully reasoned request, the appointment of another person to replace the reviewer or internal supervisor whom he/she considers to be incompatible. The request must be submitted to the Head of Department responsible

for the matter, or to the Dean's Office in case the Head of Department is involved. A decision must be made on the request within 8 working days.

- d) The student must report conflicts of interest within 8 days of becoming aware of the information.

## **5 Announcement, assignment, and approval of available topics and tasks**

### **5.1 Announcing and choosing topics**

- a) The departments may publish the thesis topics announced for the given semester on their website along with the names and contact details of the internal supervisors. Students can apply to the responsible person at the department for these topics.
- b) Students having their own topic proposals (e.g. from the internship) can contact the internal supervisor of their choice, or the Head of Department/ responsible person at the department, who will determine who may be assigned to the topic as an internal supervisor from the department.

### **5.2 Assigning tasks**

- a) It is primarily the department taking care of the major or specialization taken by the student that is responsible for assigning tasks.
- b) It is the responsibility of the department assigning the task to appoint the internal supervisor. There may be one internal supervisor for a thesis. An internal supervisor may supervise multiple theses.
- c) Students may write the thesis at another department with the permission of their own department, if the head of the host department agrees.

### **5.3 Approving and documenting the topic announcement**

- a) Students are required to provide the necessary information for the topic announcement form as specified by the department, after consulting the internal supervisor and the external supervisor.
- b) The department prepares one original copy of the thesis topic announcement form in the language of instruction. The thesis topic announcement contains mandatory basic data, which may be supplemented by further information deemed necessary by the

department (defining sub-tasks, providing the final exam subjects).

- c) The topic announcement agreed with the internal supervisor is checked by the responsible person at the department in terms of formatting and by the Head of Department in terms of content (e.g. the task falls within the educational-research profile of the department, the necessary human and material resources are available, the internal supervisor is competent in the topic of the thesis and suitable for guiding the student's work). The Head of Department certifies that the content has been checked and compliance has been achieved by signing the form.
- d) The signed topic announcement form must be handed to the student, who must bind it into his/her thesis in the prescribed place  
(DE-MK\_thesis\_formatting\_requirements).
- e) In justified cases, the department may take the initiative to withdraw an existing topic announcement and issue a new one, or replace a lost or destroyed announcement form.

## **6 Writing, evaluating, and reviewing the thesis**

### **6.1 Writing**

- a) The student must contact the internal supervisor within 8 working days from receiving the topic announcement form in order to decide on the
  - aim(s) of the thesis,
  - tasks to be done, and the structure of the thesis,
  - student's independent work,
  - planned dates and means of consultations (in person, e-mail, webex, e-learning),
  - milestones, key checkpoints, expected results related to writing the thesis.
- b) The student and the internal supervisor cooperate with the external supervisor during the elaboration of the thesis.
- c) The student informs the internal supervisor and the external supervisor in detail about his/her progress and the tasks he/she has completed during the regular consultations.
- d) The obligatory content and formatting requirements of the thesis are laid out in the file

entitled DE-MK\_thesis\_formatting\_requirements.

## 6.2 Consultation

- a) Consultations must be documented. Only the use of university systems is considered acceptable. For example:
  - university mail system (unideb.hu),
  - university Cisco Webex meeting (unideb.webex.com),
  - university e-learning platform (e-learning.unideb.hu).
- b) A consultation sheet may be kept for in-person consultations. The consultation sheet may be attached to the thesis as per departmental regulations.
- c) During/after the in-person consultation, the internal supervisor informs the student by e-mail about his/her comments and suggestions regarding the formatting and content requirements.
- d) The student regularly (at least 4 times during the semester) sends the sub-tasks to the internal supervisor and the external supervisor (e-mail, e-learning) for checking and correction.
- e) The student revises his/her work according to the internal and external supervisors' remarks.
- f) In case the student does not cooperate with the internal supervisor or the external supervisor, especially if:
  - he/she fails to attend the consultations despite warnings,
  - he/she fails to send the sub-tasks regularly, at least 4 times during the semester (e-mail, e-learning),
  - he/she deviates significantly from the plan without permission or prior agreement, or falls behind the planned progress schedule,
  - the similarity index of the thesis exceeds the maximum value set by the department,

the internal supervisor is authorized to mark the assignment as unsatisfactory, after informing the student, by recording the lack of completion in the student record system (hereafter: Neptun).

- g) If the internal supervisor or the external supervisor does not respond to the student's inquiries within 8 working days, the student has the right to contact the Head of Department, who notifies the supervisors based on the student's statement.
- h) If the cooperation between the internal supervisor, the external supervisor, and the student is inadequate, and this is reported in writing to the Head of Department by one of the people concerned, the Head of Department is obliged to investigate the matter and, if necessary, assign another internal supervisor or external supervisor, after having been informed of the circumstances. A decision must be made and communicated in writing to the people concerned within 8 working days of receiving the request.

### **6.3 Evaluating the assignment**

- a) The mid-term grade for the subject related to the thesis (Thesis, Diploma work, etc.) is determined by the internal supervisor and entered on Neptun on the basis of the student's diligence, cooperation, work and its quality and consistency. The grade may also be entered by the responsible person at the department.
- b) The grade given by the internal supervisor for the subject related to the thesis is not a sufficient condition for the student to submit the final thesis by the deadline specified on the thesis topic announcement form.

### **6.4 Reviewing the assignment**

- a) The thesis completed by the student and accepted by the internal supervisor must be reviewed. The review must be prepared according to the criteria set out in the department's review form. The reviewer makes a proposal for the thesis grade. The proposed grade may also be 1 (fail).
- b) The reviewer is invited by the Head of Department according to the criteria in chapter 3.4 and the conflicts of interests in chapter 4.
- c) The review must be made available to the student at least 3 working days before the final examination so that he/she can respond to the observations in it, and answer any questions raised during the thesis defense.

## **7 Submitting the thesis**

The thesis must be submitted in hard copy to the department assigning the task, and it must also be uploaded to the e-learning course of the department. The department informs the

concerned graduating students about the exact place and time of the upload.

7.1. The following documents must be uploaded to the e-learning platform:

- thesis in PDF format,
- scanned thesis topic announcement form,
- scanned declaration (with the student's original signature),
- abstract,
- similarity analysis results,
- confidentiality agreement (if requested by the company).

7.2. The bound copy must contain the following documents:

- thesis,
- the original and signed thesis topic announcement form,
- declaration (with the student's original signature),
- confidentiality agreement (if requested by the company).

The one-page abstract must be submitted with the thesis, but not bound into it.

## **8 Plagiarism and similarity**

### **8.1 Plagiarism**

Omitting references is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as one's own, which is the most serious copyright infringement. Any suspicion of plagiarism must be avoided when writing the thesis. It is considered plagiarism:

- when an idea or passage written by another author is quoted without indicating the original author's name and without using quotation marks,
- when another author's ideas are presented as one's own in a summary or paraphrase (after leaving out the author's name, using the passage, and slightly modifying its structure and content).

Theses created using any form of artificial intelligence in full or partial violation of the provisions of the present document are subject to the same assessment as plagiarism.

## **8.2 Artificial Intelligence**

The following rules must be followed when preparing the thesis regarding artificial intelligence (hereinafter: AI):

- a) The thesis must be entirely the student's own intellectual product, therefore no AI-generated text or text fragments may be included in it. If the student uses generative AI and AI-enhanced technologies in the writing process, these technologies may only be used to improve the readability and language of the essay. The use of AI is not allowed for key student tasks such as making scientific, technical or engineering connections or drawing, formulating, or substituting conclusions.
- b) The student is responsible for ensuring that everything he or she writes is correct and complies with the referencing principles. Generative AI may provide incorrect or false information that cannot be used in the thesis because the student may come to incorrect or incomplete conclusions.
- c) The use of AI tools must always be conducted in an ethical manner. Personal or corporate data, confidential or classified information must not be shared with the AI tools.
- d) The student must declare the use of artificial intelligence which is Appendix 3 to the document entitled “Thesis Formatting Requirements”.
- e) The internal and external supervisors, the reviewer and any other person involved in the process must not upload the thesis or any part of it to a generative AI application, as this may infringe the intellectual property rights of the student or the company and, if the thesis contains personally identifiable information, the upload may also constitute a breach of privacy.

## **8.3 Plagiarism detection/similarity analysis**

The University of Debrecen also carries out a similarity analysis using Turnitin and iThenticate. As a student, full registration is not possible.

During the similarity analysis, the thesis is uploaded to Turnitin’s private system. The software searches for matches between the online content that it covers and the given thesis. A potential match does not in itself constitute plagiarism, because if the author of the thesis cited the relevant part in accordance with the citation rules, he or she has not committed an infringement.

**Important:** If a low score is determined, it does not mean that the thesis could not contain plagiarized material. Regardless of the detection/analysis results, the inspector will thoroughly review the thesis and, if necessary, discuss the questionable parts with the student.

Possible reasons for the low score:

- The program only compares the thesis to online content. Consequently, if a piece of writing exists only on paper, the program will not find a match.
- In the case of a translation, it will most likely not find a match either, even if the work is available online in Hungarian as well.

## **8.4 Consequences of plagiarism**

The student must declare that the thesis is his/her own work and that he/she has respected the copyright rules.

The reviewer will give the thesis containing plagiarism an unsatisfactory mark and inform the Faculty's vice-dean for educational affairs. The student who wrote the thesis may appeal the decision to the Faculty Studies Committee.

If the Faculty becomes aware, after the submission of the thesis, but before the successful final examination, that the student has presented his/her thesis as his/her own independent work in violation of the rules on the use of the work of another author, the Faculty will annul the mark previously awarded for the thesis and classify it as unsatisfactory. The institution will notify the student of this decision in writing and will set a deadline – a maximum of two semesters – for him/her to re-submit the thesis.

If the Faculty becomes aware after the successful final examination that the student has presented his thesis as his own independent work, in violation of the rules on the use of the work of another author, §27 (9) of the Rules and Regulations shall apply.

## **9 Publishing the thesis**

- a) The student must upload the electronic version of the thesis to the Electronic Archive of the University of Debrecen (hereinafter: DEA). The DEA submission deadline is the same as the electronic thesis submission deadline.
- b) Further restrictions on access (encryption) may be initiated by the student, the internal supervisor, or the external supervisor by filling in the confidentiality

agreement and submitting it to the responsible person at the department.

- c) The rules of procedure for handling encrypted papers is set out in Appendix 5 to the Rules and Regulations.
- d) The restricted access, the reason for it and its duration are set out in the confidentiality agreement. A copy of the confidentiality agreement must be bound into the thesis and submitted electronically as well.