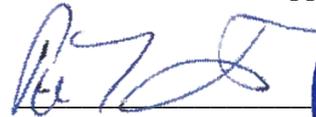**OSCE ACADEMY in Bishkek**

Approved by

Dr. Pal Dunay
Director

29.12.2025

BACHELOR'S THESIS GUIDE

Applicable to: BA in Economics, Cohort 2022–2026

CONTENTS

1. Introduction

The BA Thesis is the culminating academic project of the undergraduate programme at the OSCE Academy and serves as a demonstration of a student's ability to conduct independent, academically rigorous research. It requires students to synthesize the knowledge and skills gained throughout their studies, formulate a relevant and well-defined research problem, engage with scholarly literature, and apply appropriate qualitative, quantitative, or mixed research methods.

This Guide provides structured instructions for all stages of the thesis process—from selecting a topic and designing a research plan to writing, submitting, and defending the thesis. A strong BA Thesis is built around a clear research question and coherent analytical framework. Students must justify their methodological choices, critically analyze data, and present findings in a structured, well-written, and academically sound manner. The thesis should demonstrate the student's capacity for independent thinking, intellectual rigor, and meaningful engagement with academic debates.

The thesis process develops essential academic and professional skills, including research design, data analysis, critical reasoning, time management, and effective written and oral communication. The Academy supports students through several preparatory courses—Introduction to Research Methods; Qualitative Research Methods for Economists: Research Proposal; Quantitative Methods for Economists; and the BA Thesis Seminar—as well as through thesis supervision and access to academic resources. Nevertheless, the ultimate responsibility for the timely and successful completion of the thesis rests with the student. Students are expected to take initiative, plan their research carefully, maintain regular communication with their supervisors, and adhere to academic integrity and formatting standards.

2. Preparatory Courses

Several courses within the BA programme are designed to help students build the knowledge and skills necessary for preparing and writing their BA Thesis. These courses introduce students to research fundamentals, guide them in developing their research proposals, and provide methodological tools that support the full research process.

Introduction to Research Methods

This course familiarizes students with the basics of academic research. It introduces research design, data types, academic integrity, and the principles of developing clear and focused research questions. Students learn how research is structured and what makes academic work rigorous and credible.

Qualitative Research Methods for Economists: Research Proposal

In this course, students develop a complete research proposal that later becomes the foundation of their BA Thesis. The proposal includes: a clearly defined research problem, research objectives and questions, a brief literature review, theoretical framework, hypotheses, methodology, and a timeline. By completing this course, students gain a solid plan that guides the first steps of their thesis.

Quantitative Research Methods for Economists

This course helps students acquire practical skills in data collection, statistical analysis, and interpretation of results. Students learn how to work with datasets and apply quantitative methods to real-world problems. These skills are essential for conducting the empirical component of the BA Thesis.

Together, these courses provide a strong methodological and practical foundation. They help students understand how to plan research, choose appropriate methods, analyze data, and present findings in an academically sound way.

BA Thesis Seminar

Offered in the spring semester, this seminar supports students as they prepare for writing their full thesis. The seminar includes lectures, discussions, and individual consultations. Students receive feedback on drafts, refine their research questions, and strengthen the clarity and logic of their proposals. While instructors guide students throughout this process, they do not serve as thesis supervisors; their role is to help students prepare for the thesis-writing stage and ensure they begin with a well-developed research plan.

3. Selecting a Thesis Supervisor

By the end of January 2026, students must select a thesis supervisor from among the available faculty members. Thesis supervisors may be affiliated with the OSCE Academy or may be external to the Academy, provided they possess relevant academic qualifications and expertise. Supervisors play an essential role in guiding the thesis process: they provide academic advice, offer methodological recommendations, and give feedback to help students maintain high academic standards and meet required deadlines.

Students are responsible for initiating contact with potential thesis supervisors, presenting their research ideas, and agreeing on a consultation schedule. After confirming a supervisor, students must inform the Department of Education of the approved thesis topic and supervisor by submitting the official approval form. Consistent and clear communication between the student and a thesis supervisor is important for monitoring research progress, addressing emerging challenges, and ensuring that feedback is incorporated into subsequent drafts.

While thesis supervisors review drafts, advise on methodology, and help students refine their arguments, the primary responsibility for designing, writing, and completing the BA Thesis remains with the student. Students are expected to manage their time effectively, meet agreed-upon deadlines, and thoughtfully integrate the feedback they receive.

4. Writing the BA Thesis and Consultations

During the BA Thesis course, students are expected to conduct their research while regularly consulting with both their course instructors and supervisors. This stage involves integrating data, analyzing results, developing arguments, and drafting individual chapters of the thesis. Students are required to hold regular meetings with their thesis supervisors to discuss progress, methodological issues, and any challenges encountered. Feedback and guidance should be systematically incorporated into successive drafts to ensure clarity, coherence, and academic rigor.

BA Thesis Length Requirement

The body text of the BA Thesis (excluding prefatory pages, notes, bibliography, and appendices) must contain 10,000–12,000 words. Theses that exceed the word limit will be evaluated only up to the maximum allowed length, and a thesis that is shorter than 10,000 words will not be accepted for evaluation. Students must follow the formatting and referencing rules outlined in the BA Thesis Guide and submit an electronic copy (Word and PDF) by the specified deadline.

Thesis Structure

The Bachelor's Thesis follows a standard academic structure appropriate to the level of undergraduate study. The thesis consists of the following parts:

1. *Prefatory Pages* – These pages appear at the beginning of the thesis and include:
   • Title Page
   • Declaration
   • Abstract
   • Table of Contents
   • List of Tables *(if applicable)*
   • List of Figures *(if applicable)*
2. *Body of the Thesis* – The main part of the thesis, organized into chapters that present the research topic, objectives, methodology, analysis, and discussion, followed by a conclusion.
3. *References* – A complete list of all sources cited in the thesis, prepared in accordance with the prescribed citation style.
4. *Appendices* – Supplementary materials (if any), such as research instruments, additional data, or supporting documents referenced in the thesis.

Official templates and sample pages are available on the Academy's website:

https://osce-academy.net/en/programmes/Undergrad/curstud/

5. Submission, Review and Defence

Submission for Committee Review:

- The final version of the BA Thesis must be submitted for committee review by 4 May 2026.
- Committee members provide written evaluations (reviews) that assess the academic quality, methodology, originality, and clarity of each thesis.

Thesis Defence:

- Scheduled for 1 June 2026 (TBC).
- Each student delivers a 15-minute presentation (recommended 10–12 slides) followed by a 10-minute Q&A session.
- The committee deliberates on the thesis grade, considering supervisor feedback, reviewer evaluations, and performance during the defence.

Adherence to formatting requirements (Appendix C) and plagiarism regulations (Appendix B) is mandatory. Late submissions incur penalties in accordance with Academy Policy. The defence process provides students with an opportunity to present their work, respond to questions, and demonstrate comprehensive understanding of their research topic.

6. Appeal Procedure

Students may request a review of their thesis grade if they believe it was assigned incorrectly. Appeals may address procedural irregularities but not academic judgment and must be submitted within three working days of grade notification. The process includes:

1. Consulting with the Head of Department of Education to discuss concerns.
2. Submitting a formal written request detailing the reasons for grade reconsideration.
3. The State Examination Committee reviews the request and issues a final, binding decision within three days.

The appeal procedure, along with the prescribed template, is outlined in the Academic Regulations. All grade review requests must provide sufficient justification and evidence to support the appeal.

Appendices

Appendix A. Thesis Preparation Deadlines

Date / Deadline	Course / Stage	Key Actions
November – December 2025	Qualitative Research Methods for Economists: Research Proposal Course	Completion of the full research proposal to be used for the BA Thesis
November – December 2025	Quantitative Research Methods for Economists Course	Beginning of data collection and preliminary analysis for the BA Thesis
January 2026		Submission of the Thesis Supervision Agreement
January – March 2026	BA Thesis Seminar	Writing the BA Thesis; consult regularly with the course instructor and thesis supervisor
4 May 2026		Submission of the thesis for review by Committee members; the Committee prepares written evaluations
1 June 2026 (TBC)		BA Thesis Defence

Appendix B. Plagiarism Regulations

All work submitted for assessment by a student is accepted on the understanding that it is the student's own effort without falsification of any kind. Plagiarism is the act of copying or including into one's own work, without adequate acknowledgement, intentionally or unintentionally, the work of another author, for one's own benefit. It is academically fraudulent and is, therefore, regarded as an offence against the OSCE Academy's Academic Regulations and the Code of Conduct. Any case of plagiarism, that may occur at whatever stage of a student's course of study, whether discovered before or after graduation, will be investigated and handled appropriately by the Academy's management.

Students are expected to offer their own analysis and presentation of information gleaned from research or any other outcomes of knowledge production, even when group exercises are carried out. In addition, students are required to acknowledge all help and other external assistance that they have received. This should be done both in a formal list of acknowledgements in a written work and at appropriate places and sections of the work. Any failure to adequately acknowledge or properly reference other sources in submitted work, as well as accurately and appropriately acknowledge external help and assistance received, will result in the non-award of the Bachelor of Arts degree by the OSCE Academy.

If an examiner suspects that a thesis contains evidence of plagiarism, they must inform the Head of Department of Education. Evidence of suspected plagiarism should be documented and reviewed jointly with the Head of Department of Education, after which a report will be submitted to the State Examination Committee. Based on this report, and in consultation with both the examiner and the Head of Department of Education, the Committee will determine whether the case constitutes minor or significant plagiarism. If the plagiarism is assessed as minor, the examiner will take it into account when evaluating the academic quality of the thesis. Minor Plagiarism involves limited, non-central portions of the BA Thesis, where the academic value of the work is not substantially affected. Minor cases may result in grade penalties, requirements for corrections or additional work, and a written reprimand issued by the Department of Education.

Significant cases involve substantial or central portions of the work, or demonstrate intent to mislead. If plagiarism is assessed as significant, it will result in failure of the BA Thesis and, consequently, failure to obtain the bachelor's degree in Economics. The decision will be made by the OSCE Academy Director and the Head of the Department of Education, in cooperation with the State Examination Committee. In such cases, the BA Thesis may not be re-submitted, and the decision is final with no appeal allowed.

If plagiarism or cheating is detected in a student's paper after graduation, the OSCE Academy has the right to revoke a degree and require the graduate to return his / her degree certificate and transcript.

Use of AI Tools

The OSCE Academy recognizes that AI tools have become increasingly widespread in academic and professional environments. When used appropriately, these tools can provide meaningful technical support to students, faculty, and staff. However, as with any technology, improper use of AI poses a significant risk when it undermines the primary purpose of the academic process: student learning.

The Academy's highest priority is to ensure that students develop essential academic skills, including organizing ideas, constructing arguments, writing clearly, and presenting their findings effectively. When students delegate these intellectual tasks to AI systems, the learning process loses its meaning. For this reason, the Academy firmly expects that all submitted work—including essays, research proposals, and the BA Thesis—reflects the student's own thinking, analysis, and academic effort.

Students may use AI tools for limited technical purposes (e.g., grammar checking, idea generation, formatting assistance). However, the research design, structure, argumentation, and analysis must be independently developed by the student. Submitting work that relies on AI-generated content—whether fully or partially—constitutes academic misconduct and will be treated accordingly. Students who are uncertain about the appropriate use of AI tools are encouraged to consult their instructors or academic supervisors.

Appendix C. Formatting Requirements

Referencing Style

Your essays, thesis proposal and BA Thesis must be referenced in the format outlined by the Chicago Manual of Style https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html

There are two styles of Chicago formatting. You can choose one of them and use it throughout the whole work (essay, thesis or any other written assignment):
1.   Author-Date in text citation. Please see the guide:
https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

2.   Notes citation. Please see the guide:
https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html

You can either create references manually or use one of the free automatic reference generators *(if you use an automatic generator, you should always check that the automatic referencing form is filled correctly – e.g. name, surname, year of publication etc.):*

Citation machine: https://www.citationmachine.net/
Cite this for me: https://www.citethisforme.com/us/citation-generator/Chicago
Mendeley: https://www.mendeley.com/download-reference-manager/windows

Mendeley is also a useful free tool for creating an online and an offline library from which you can add automatic references and bibliographies in word documents. Please see:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zkrVbBSrK_w

Formatting of specific pages (Final Thesis)

Title page
Follow the BA Thesis template of the OSCE Academy. Do not change and shift margins, lines, capital letters, font type, font size, etc. Make it as close as the sample (see the template provided).

Declaration
In this form, you declare that you are taking the responsibility for the content of your thesis and that you have followed the academic honesty procedures. Your declaration in both of the hard and electronic copies of your thesis must be signed.

Abstract
An abstract must not exceed 400 words and should describe the problem of your research, main methods used, and conclusions and results that you have discovered. The Abstract page must not include any of your details (e.g. your name, title of your thesis, page numbers, etc. should not appear on this page).

Acknowledgements
Acknowledgements must be written in a first-person voice. Here, you may acknowledge (thank) people who have assisted you with the thesis or supported you during the process. For example, you may thank your supervisors, professors, experts, any funding sources that supported your research, persons whom you have interviewed, and family or friends who

supported you. There are no minimum or maximum word requirements for this part.

Table of Contents
Do not include the title page, abstract and declaration page in the table of contents.
Do not use range numbers (e.g. 4-12 in indicating page numbers). Only the first page of the chapter (heading, subheading) must be indicated. You may single or 1.5 space the table of contents. Do not include illustrative materials (tables, pictures, figures) in the table of contents as you need to have a separate list for each illustrative group.

Illustrative materials (figures, tables, etc.)
Use separate pages for each illustrative group, even if you have only one item to display. "LIST OF TABLES", "LIST OF FIGURES", "LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS" must follow, not precede the "TABLE OF CONTENTS". Titles and order of illustrative materials must be displayed in the "LIST OF TABLES", (or "LIST OF FIGURES", "LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS) on the prefatory page. Titles and order of illustrative materials indicated in the LIST OF TABLES (LIST OF FIGURES, etc.) must match those written in the body.

Bibliography/References
The Bibliography/ References section must be in the same font type and size as the body of the thesis. It should be single spaced, with one blank line after each entry. The Chicago Manual of Style, 18th edition, must be followed in formatting your bibliography / references (see the template provided).

Appendix (Appendices)
Appendices (if any) must be placed after the bibliography. In an appendix, you may include any information (attachments) that is not directly relevant to your thesis but is still worth mentioning. If you have more than one appendix, they have to be written as APPENDIX A, APPENDIX B, and each appendix has to be placed on a separate page. Appendices may be page numbered and included in the table of contents.

Appendix D. Thesis Supervisory Agreement (template)

OSCE ACADEMY in Bishkek

BA Thesis Supervision Agreement[1]

Between

Student:

_____

BA Programme 2022-2026

and

Thesis Supervisor: _____
Institution (incl. address):   _____
Position: _____
Contact (phone, e-mail):   _____

1. (Working) title of the BA Thesis

_____

_____

2. BA Thesis Supervision Guidelines

The main responsibility of the thesis supervisor is to offer guidance, advice, and recommendations to a student in his / her attempt to write a BA Thesis. A student should seek advice and guidance taking into consideration the supervisor's limited amount of time and multiple occupations and responsibilities. The supervisor will be requested to sign a service contract with the OSCE Academy for the period of supervision (January 2026 - May 2026). The student and the supervisor should discuss and achieve understanding regarding the interaction and supervision process.

The BA Thesis should be the result of the student's independent research efforts. The ultimate responsibility for its successful completion rests with the student.

The thesis supervisor is expected to:

❖ advise the student throughout the research and writing process about the nature and feasibility of his / her thesis project, planning and implementation of research activities, methods to be used, availability of sources, as well as general standards applied for undergraduate level theses;

❖ alert the student about relevant ethical and security issues that may affect both the student and research informants – human subjects – when a proposed research topic

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[1] Before sending the BA Thesis Supervision Agreement to a potential supervisor, the student should inform the Department of Education by e-mail - c.osmonalieva@osce-academy.net- and **receive its initial approval.**

or methods give rise to such concerns; help the student find alternative approaches to mitigate ethical and security risks, if relevant;

- ❖ at the beginning of supervision, establish, together with the student and on her initiative, a plan for supervision and thesis writing that should include arrangements for meetings, deadlines for the student to submit drafts of thesis chapters and final draft; this outline should be fixed in writing and signed by both parties (*in addition to the present supervision agreement*);
- ❖ Be accessible to the student during the supervision process according to a schedule agreed upon by both the student and the supervisor, within a reasonable format;
- ❖ provide timely notifications to the student and the Academy's management about the unsatisfactory progress or other problems that could impact successful completion of the thesis by the student;
- ❖ promptly notify the student and the Academy's management about the supervisor's inability to start, continue, or finish the supervision, and advise on potential replacement;
- ❖ apply sanctions in cases where the student fails to comply with the agreed plan, including, if necessary, refusal to review or comment on a thesis draft, if the text is not submitted in due time;
- ❖ evaluate the student's BA thesis based on the common quality standards applied to undergraduate theses and the OSCE Academy's Grading Guidelines;
- ❖ submit the BA thesis review following the OSCE Academy format by the established deadline.
- ❖ Inform the Head of the Department of Education immediately if evidence of plagiarism is detected during the supervision process.

The student is expected to:

- ❖ organize and follow the supervision process, take responsibility for making the best use of the support provided by the supervisor;
- ❖ work with the supervisor throughout the thesis writing process, planning of research activities, as well as their implementation;
- ❖ closely follow the agreed thesis research and writing plan, meet all deadlines set by the supervisor, and consult with the supervisor before making changes to the agreed research plan;
- ❖ promptly notify the supervisor about any concerns, problems or questions related to the thesis research and writing process;
- ❖ schedule meetings with the supervisor taking into consideration the supervisor's multiple duties;
- ❖ submit parts of the thesis paper or thesis draft for the supervisor's review with an adequate period of time for the supervisor to provide reasonable feedback;
- ❖ be accessible and well prepared for meetings with the supervisor;
- ❖ complete and submit the thesis in the required format by the deadline;
- ❖ remember that supervision does not mean writing the thesis for the student and that it can only facilitate the research and writing process;
- ❖ follow and comply with all the regulations of the OSCE Academy, including the Anti-Plagiarism Rules.

Appendix E. Supervisor's Review Form (template)

OSCE Academy
BA in Economics Programme 2022-2026
Supervisor's Review of BA Thesis (no grade, review only)

Student:
BA Thesis Topic:
Supervisor:
Institution:

Criteria	Comments
Research questions	
Structure: focus, relevance, coherence, argumentation, and logic	
Analysis: depth and development of discussion	
Research: adequacy of research design and execution, consistency of interpretation	
Bibliography and ability to incorporate research data	
Presentation: writing, expression, style, coherence and unity, grammar, spelling, punctuation	
Conclusion:	

Date:

Signature:

Appendix F. BA Thesis Grading Sheet (template)

OSCE Academy
BA in Economics Programme 2022-2026

BA Thesis Grading Sheet

Student's ID:
BA Thesis Topic:
Reviewer:
Institution:
Letter Grade: Percentage (mandatory):

Criteria	Comments
Choice of research topic	
Structure: focus, relevance, coherence, argumentation and logic	
Analysis: depth and development of discussion	
Research: adequacy of research design and execution, consistency of interpretation	
Bibliography and ability to incorporate research data	
Presentation: writing, expression, style, coherence and unity, grammar, spelling, punctuation	
Overall Assessment	
Comments:	

Date:
Signature:

Appendix G. Grading Scale

The table below describes the grading system to be followed for the Comprehensive State Examinations (BA Thesis and State Examination). A detailed description of the grading criteria and requirements is provided in the Academic Regulations, Appendix I.
https://www.osce-academy.net/upload/file/Academic_Regulations2023-2027.pdf

Letter Grades	Grade	Numerical Grades	Grade Points	Grade Percentages
A	Excellent	5	4.00	Above 92.49%
A-			3.67	89.50% – 92.49%
B+	Good	4	3.33	85.50% – 89.49%
B			3.0	82.50% – 85.49%
B-			2.67	79.50% – 82.49%
C+		3	2.33	75.50% – 79.49%
C	Average		2.0	72.50% – 75.49%
C-			1.67	69.50% – 72.49%
F	Fail		0.0	Below 69.50%

Appendix H. BA Thesis Approval Form

OSCE Academy
BA in Economics Programme 2022-2026

BA Thesis Approval Form

    I. To be filled by the student

SURNAME:	FIRST NAME:
STUDENT ID:	SIGNATURE:
DEGREE:	NATIONALITY:
EXACT TITLE OF THE THESIS:	
SUPERVISOR'S NAME, INSTITUTION:	

    II. To be filled by the State Examination Committee members

We, the undersigned members of the State Examination Committee, certify that this Thesis satisfies all the requirements established for the above noted degree issued by the OSCE Academy in Bishkek	
Title, Name, Institution	Signature
1) Chair	
2) Deputy Chair	
3) Member	
4) Member	
5) Member	
DATE OF DEFENCE:	FINAL GRADE*:

* The lowest passing grade is "C-".

Appendix I. Declaration (template)

Declaration

Herewith I declare that I clearly understand §11 of the Academic Regulations and that the submitted paper is accepted by the OSCE Academy in Bishkek on the understanding that it is my own effort without falsification of any kind. I declare that I am aware of the consequences of plagiarism or / and cheating.

Name:
Date: