Classification: Academic Affairs
Approving Authority: Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
Responsible Authority: Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
Implementing Authority: Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research; Office of the Registrar
Effective Date: September 2026
Review Date: August 2027

Graduate Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines

1.0 Purpose and Scope

1.1 These Guidelines govern the preparation, submission, examination, and final deposit of theses and dissertations for all thesis-track graduate programs at AUIB. They apply to all students enrolled on a thesis track and to all faculty members serving as thesis supervisors or committee members.

1.2 These Guidelines should be read alongside the Graduate Student Handbook (Sections 10–13), the Graduation Policy and Procedures, and any program-specific requirements published in the AUIB Academic Catalog.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 Thesis: an original research work of approximately [15,000–25,000] words completed by a master's student under faculty supervision, demonstrating independent scholarly inquiry and a contribution to knowledge within the field.

2.2 Thesis Committee: the supervisory and examination panel comprising the primary faculty advisor and at least one additional faculty member, responsible for guiding the student's research and examining the final thesis.

2.3 Primary Advisor: the faculty member with primary responsibility for supervising the student's thesis research, providing regular feedback, and certifying readiness for defense.

2.4 Oral Defense: the formal examination in which the student presents and defends their thesis before the Thesis Committee and, in the public presentation phase, before the wider university community.

2.5 Plagiarism Detection Report: a report generated by the university's plagiarism detection system indicating the degree of textual similarity between the submitted thesis and other sources.

3.0 Eligibility to Begin Thesis Research

3.1 A student may commence the formal thesis proposal process only after:

- 3.1.1 Completing a minimum of [18] credit hours of taught coursework with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above;
- 3.1.2 Identifying a primary faculty advisor who has agreed in writing to supervise the proposed research; and
- 3.1.3 Obtaining written endorsement from the Program Director.

4.0 Thesis Proposal

4.1 The thesis proposal is a formal academic document that must be approved by the Thesis Committee before substantive research commences. It must include:

- 4.1.1 A working title and clearly stated research question(s) or hypotheses;
- 4.1.2 A background and rationale section situating the proposed research within the existing literature;
- 4.1.3 Research objectives and expected contribution to knowledge;
- 4.1.4 Research methodology, including design, data sources, and analytical approach;
- 4.1.5 Ethical considerations and IRB implications;

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4.1.6 A timeline with key milestones; and

4.1.7 A preliminary bibliography in the required citation style.

4.2 The proposal is ordinarily [15–25] pages in length, excluding references. The Thesis Committee will review the proposal and may: approve it, request revisions, or decline approval with written justification. Approval must be recorded on the Thesis Proposal Approval Form.

5.0 Supervision

5.1 The primary advisor must meet with the student a minimum of once per month during the active research period. A written record of each supervisory meeting must be completed using the Supervisory Meeting Record Form and retained by both the student and the advisor.

5.2 The primary advisor must provide written feedback on submitted drafts within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt.

5.3 If the supervisory relationship becomes untenable, the student may request a change of advisor by submitting a written request to the Program Director. See Section 11.3 of the Graduate Student Handbook for the full procedure.

6.0 Formatting Requirements

6.1 All theseis must be prepared in accordance with the following minimum formatting standards:

Element	Specification
Font	Times New Roman or Arial, 12pt throughout body text
Line Spacing	Double spacing for body text; single spacing for block quotations, footnotes, and references
Margins	1 inch (2.54 cm) on all sides; binding margin of 1.5 inches (3.81 cm) on the left if printing
Page Numbering	Roman numerals (i, ii, iii…) for preliminary pages; Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3…) from Chapter 1 onwards
Title Page	Must use the AUIB official thesis title page template (available from the CGSR office)
Abstract	Maximum 300 words; placed before the table of contents; must appear in English
Table of Contents	Required; must list all chapters, sections, and subsections with page numbers
Citation Style	As specified by the program (see Section 7.0)
Minimum Body Length	[50–80] pages of body text, excluding front matter, references, and appendices
File Format for Submission	PDF/A for digital submission; plus one printed and bound hard copy

7.0 Citation Style

7.1 Students must use a recognized academic citation style consistently throughout the thesis. The required style for each program is:

Program	Required Citation Style

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Master of Business Administration (MBA)	APA 7th Edition
Master of Engineering (MEng)	IEEE
Master of Science in Data Science	APA 7th Edition or IEEE (confirm with Program Director)
[Other Programs]	[To be confirmed by Program Director and published in Catalogue]

8.0 Plagiarism Check

8.1 All thesis must be submitted through the AUIB plagiarism detection system before submission to the Thesis Committee. A Plagiarism Detection Report must accompany all thesis submissions.

8.2 The following thresholds apply:

8.2.1 Similarity index below 20%: acceptable; the advisor may approve submission to the Thesis Committee.

8.2.2 Similarity index 20–30%: the advisor must review the report in detail and confirm in writing that the similarity is attributable to properly cited quotations and standard phrases before approving the submission.

8.2.3 Similarity index above 30%: automatic referral to the Research and Ethics Committee before the thesis may proceed to examination.

9.0 Eligibility for Defense

9.1 A student is eligible to proceed to thesis defense only upon satisfaction of all of the following:

9.1.1 All taught coursework has been completed with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0;

9.1.2 The primary advisor has confirmed in writing that the thesis is ready for examination;

9.1.3 The Plagiarism Detection Report has been reviewed and approved.

9.1.4 A complete draft of the thesis has been submitted to the Thesis Committee at least three (3) weeks prior to the scheduled defense date;

9.1.5 All required IRB approvals have been obtained and documented; and

9.1.6 No outstanding academic integrity or academic probation matters are in progress.

10.0 Thesis Defense

10.1 The thesis defense comprises a public oral presentation followed by a closed examination by the Thesis Committee.

Component	Duration / Description
Public Presentation	20–30 minutes; open to the university community
Q&A – Open Audience	5–10 minutes; general questions from attendees
Closed Examination	45–60 minutes; Thesis Committee questions only
Committee Deliberation	Private; student not present
Outcome Notification	Communicated to student on the day of the defence defense

11.0 Defense Outcomes

Outcome	Description and Next Steps
Pass – No Revisions	Thesis accepted as submitted. Student proceeds to final submission.

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Pass with Minor Revisions	Thesis accepted subject to minor corrections verified by the primary advisor within four (4) weeks of the defense date.
Pass with Major Revisions	Thesis requires substantial revision. Resubmission to the Thesis Committee required within three (3) months. One further examination may be scheduled.
Fail – Re-defense Permitted	Thesis does not meet the required standard. Student may apply to re-defend once, after a minimum of three (3) months, subject to GAC approval.
Fail – No Re-defense	Thesis does not meet the required standard and re-defense will not be permitted. Degree not awarded. Student may appeal to the GAC within 14 calendar days.

12.0 Final Submission and Library Deposit

12.1 Following a successful defense and completion of any required revisions, the student must submit the final approved thesis within eight (8) weeks of the defense date. The submission must include:

12.1.1 One electronic copy in PDF/A format submitted to the Office of the Registrar;

12.1.2 One electronic copy submitted to the AUIB Library for institutional archiving; and

12.1.3 One printed and bound hard copy submitted to the CGSR office.

12.2 No degree will be conferred until the final thesis has been submitted in all required formats and confirmed as received by the Office of the Registrar and the AUIB Library.

12.3 The student and primary advisor must sign the Thesis Final Submission Form, confirming that all revisions specified by the Thesis Committee have been satisfactorily completed.

Related Policies and Documents

Graduation Policy and Procedures
Graduate Student Handbook
Graduate Academic Standing Policy
AUIB Research Ethics Policy
IRB Procedures
Academic Integrity Policy
AUIB Academic Catalog

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Thesis Proposal Approval Form | CGSR-FORM-PROP-001

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This form must be completed and submitted to the CGSR office before any substantive thesis research commences. Refer to Section 4.0 of the Graduate Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines.

Section A: Student and Program Information

Student Full Name	
Student ID	
Programme of Study	
Degree Track (Thesis)	
Academic Year / Semester	
Credit Hours Completed to Date	
Current Cumulative GPA	

Section B: Thesis Details

Proposed Thesis Title (working title)	
Research Question(s) / Hypotheses:	
Brief Summary of Proposed Methodology:	
Anticipated Completion Date	
IRB Review Required? (Yes / No / Under assessment)	
If Yes: IRB Application Status	

Section C: Thesis Committee Composition

Role	Name	Department / Institution	Qualifications
Primary Advisor			
Committee Member 1			
Committee Member 2 (if applicable)			

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External Member (if applicable)			

Section D: Student Declaration
I confirm that I have completed the eligibility requirements for commencing thesis research (minimum 18 taught credit hours, cumulative GPA ≥ 3.0) and that the information provided in this form is accurate.

Student Signature _____ Date: _____

Section E: Primary Advisor Assessment

Comments on the feasibility, originality, and academic rigour of the proposed research:	
Recommendation (Approve / Approve with Revisions / Decline)	
If revisions required, specify:	

Primary Advisor Signature _____ Date: _____

Section F: Thesis Committee Decision
All Committee members must sign. The proposal is approved only when all members have signed or have provided written approval.

Committee Decision (Approved / Approved with Revisions / Declined)	
Date of Committee Review	
Conditions or revisions required (if any):	

Committee Member 1 _____ Date: _____
Committee Member 2 (if applicable) _____ Date: _____
External Member (if applicable) _____ Date: _____

Section G: Programme Director Endorsement

Endorsement (Approved / Not Approved)	

Programme Director _____ Date: _____

Section H: CGSR Office Use

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Date Received by CGSR	
Proposal Approval Recorded in SIS (Yes / No)	
IRB Status Confirmed (Yes / No / N/A)	
Processed by	

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