

RULES OF AWARDING DIPLOMAS FOR THE AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM, FIRST CYCLE STUDIES (27.04.20)

I. DETAILED RULES OF PREPARING AND GRADING A DIPLOMA THESIS

1. Rules and procedures for choosing a thesis supervisor

- 1) Students shall independently choose their BA thesis supervisor, in accordance with their research interests, by registering for a specific Proseminar towards the end of semester IV of the program. Signing up for a Proseminar taught by a particular supervisor shall be a declaration of continuing to work with them and attending their BA Seminar on the same topic in the following semester.
- 2) An academic teacher is allowed to supervise no more than 9 BA theses in a particular academic year. In special cases, the Teaching Council may permit an academic teacher to supervise a BA thesis outside of a BA Seminar.
- 3) Should the Teaching Council give permission to supervise a BA thesis outside of the Seminar, the Teaching Council shall recommend that the Director includes it in the supervisor's teaching hours, 5 irregular hours (as established in the Rules of Employment at UW) for every thesis, settled based on the rules established by a resolution of the IAiE Faculty Council. Supervising a BA thesis outside of the seminar requires the supervisor to be available for the student via email or during office hours and to read, comment on, and discuss the received thesis or thesis fragments within three weeks.

2. Rules and procedures for choosing a thesis topic

- 1) The topic and content of the BA thesis shall be within the scope of the American Studies program.
- 2) The topic of the thesis shall be chosen by the student in agreement with their supervisor.

3. Rules and procedures for accepting the topics of theses

- 1) The topic of the BA thesis shall be approved by the supervisor and by an ASC verification committee established by the ASC Counselor for Students' Affairs consisting of independent academic teachers (full doctors, associate professors, professors) from the ASC, representing various areas of American Studies, a representative of the ASC Educational Quality Assurance Team, and the ASC Counselor for Students' Affairs as the committee chair.
- 2) Topics of BA theses shall be approved by the ASC verification committee by the end of the calendar year during which the Proseminar had started.
- 3) The list of approved topics shall be relayed by the ASC Counselor for Students' Affairs to Head of the Educational Unit for approval by the IAiE Teaching Council.

4. Substantive requirements for a diploma thesis for first cycle studies with a general academic profile

- 1) The author of a BA thesis should demonstrate preparedness for conducting research, both on a substantive and on a formal level. They should use basic theoretical and methodological tools to identify, present, and interpret facts, phenomena and processes concerning the United States. They should be able to find and select data from various sources, integrate acquired information, draw conclusions, formulate opinions.
- 2) To fulfill the substantive requirements, a thesis must include the following elements: a research problem, a claim, reasons for choosing the topic, a goal and scope of the thesis, basic research methods, a table of contents, and a bibliography.
- 3) A BA thesis should verify educational outcomes assigned to the Proseminar and BA Seminar.
- 4) A BA thesis shall not breach the principles of academic honesty. Every thesis at the University of Warsaw is verified using the Uniform Anti-Plagiarism System and discovering plagiarism disqualifies it from further proceedings. Additionally, the American Studies Center uses a specialized antiplagiarism system Turnitin adapted to verifying materials written in English based on English-language texts. Similarly, to an UAS test, discovering plagiarism by Turnitin disqualifies a thesis from further proceedings.

5. Formal requirements for a diploma thesis

- 1) The first pages of the BA thesis shall be compliant with the sample pages presented in Attachment 1 of Ordinance no 16 of the Rector of the University of Warsaw from the 18th of May 2006.
- 2) The thesis shall be written in English.
- 3) The thesis shall be written in proper English, compliant with academic standards.
- 4) The suggested volume of the thesis is ca. 25 pages of text (a minimum of 7500 words).
- 5) The thesis shall include at least 10 academic sources and the references to them shall be compliant with standards established by the supervisor.
- 6) The thesis shall be submitted to the ASC Office for Students' Affairs in 3 copies, double-sided print. The thesis shall be submitted in accordance with the schedule announced by the ASC Counselor for Students' Affairs.
- 7) Students are required to submit a CD containing an electronic version of their BA thesis identical to the printed version, saved as a single file named 4219-LIC-AM-OSA-PESEL.doc (.pdf) – in Word and PDF formats.

6. Responsibilities of a BA thesis supervisor

- 1) The topic of the thesis shall be a result of cooperation between the supervisor and student and take into account the research interests and competences of both parties.
- 2) The person teaching a Proseminar and BA Seminar shall acquaint the students with formal and substantive requirements for BA theses at the ASC, monitor the process of

writing a thesis, be available to students via email or during office hours, and return theses or their fragments (depending on what was agreed upon) with commentary and discuss them within three weeks.

7. Grading criteria for a diploma thesis

- 1) In accordance with the Rules of Study at the University of Warsaw, a diploma thesis shall be graded by the thesis supervisor and at least one more reviewer.
- 2) Reviewers shall be chosen taking into account compatibility of their research interests with the thesis topic.
- 3) Reviewers shall receive the thesis for review 10 days before the planned date of the exam at the latest.
- 4) Grading criteria for diploma theses are included in the diploma thesis review form to be found in the University of Warsaw Theses Archive (APD).

8. Timeframe for making theses reviews available to students

Reviews shall be submitted to APD no later than 3 days before the planned date for the BA exam.

9. Grading criteria for a diploma thesis prepared by more than one student

The Teaching Council adopts the principle of evaluating each case like this individually.

II. DETAILED RULES OF CONDUCTING A DIPLOMA EXAM

1. Rules of forming an examination committee appropriate for the education level and studies' profile

- 1) The examination committee shall include at least 3 people: the committee chair, the thesis supervisor and reviewer.
- 2) Members of the committee shall be appointed by the ASC Counselor for Students' Affairs.

2. Substantive requirements for a diploma exam

The aim of the BA exam is to verify knowledge gained by the student over the course of their studies, as well as their proficiency in topics relevant to the thesis. Questions posed in the course of the exam shall be consistent with the program's educational outcomes and within the scope of the program. The committee shall grade the student's answers based on their substantive content and the proficiency in knowledge, skills, and social competences acquired over the course of studying.

3. Procedure for conducting a diploma exam

- 1) To proceed to the BA exam a student shall first:

- fulfill all requirements, that is gain the required number of ECTS points, obtain credit for compulsory subjects, pass compulsory exams, and fulfill other requirements detailed in the studies program;
 - submit a BA thesis, approved by the supervisor, which passed anti-plagiarism tests and received positive reviews from the supervisor and reviewer;
 - submit the form “Dane osobowe abiturienta OSA UW” [Personal Data of an ASC Graduate] together with the thesis and the form “Karta obiegowana” [Clearance slip] on the day of the exam at the latest.
- 2) The BA exam shall be conducted in English.
 - 3) The exam shall consist of three questions.
 - 4) In justified cases, a BA exam may be conducted remotely using widely available internet tools. Both the student and the examiners may participate remotely. All participants have to agree to this form of exam and to record the proceedings.
 - 5) To graduate with honors a student has to fulfill the requirements established in the Rules of Study at the University of Warsaw (§ 44, pt. 4).

4. Duties of each member of the examination committee

- 1) The committee chair shall conduct the exam and ensure that exam procedures are followed. The chair may also pose one question to the student.
- 2) The supervisor and reviewer shall pose questions to the student.

5. Scope and form of a diploma exam

- 1) During the exam the student should demonstrate knowledge of the assigned readings for the course American History and Society, the bibliography prepared with the supervisor, and the thesis’ reviews.
- 2) A BA exam shall consist of three questions:
 - a question concerning issues covered by the assigned readings for the course American History and Society – this question shall be posed by the committee chair, who may forgo posing the question and relay it to the thesis supervisor
 - a question concerning the submitted thesis – this question shall be posed by the reviewer
 - a question concerning 4 academic texts (books, articles, essays) selected by the student (and approved by the supervisor) from the thesis bibliography

6. Grading criteria

- 1) Grades for the student’s answers shall be assigned unanimously, or if it is impossible, by majority vote.
- 2) A failing grade for one out of three questions shall not automatically result in failing the diploma exam, as long as the answer for at least one of the remaining questions was graded as “good” (4); in this case the final grade shall be decided by the examination committee. The exam automatically results in a failing grade if:

- a student receives a failing grade for one of the questions and a grade lower than “good” (4) for both remaining questions;
- a student receives a failing grade for more than one question.

III. DETAILED RULES OF MONITORING THE PROCESS OF AWARDING DIPLOMAS

1. Analysis of the process of awarding diplomas

- 1) At the end of each academic year the IAiE Teaching Council shall conduct an analysis of the process of awarding diplomas in that particular academic year.
- 2) The following shall be subject to analysis:
 - reviews of diploma theses and the awarded grades, especially: compliance with the schedule of making thesis reviews available to students; objectivity, completeness, and accuracy of the justification for the grades awarded by the supervisor and reviewer for the thesis; legitimacy of discrepancies in grades awarded by the supervisor and the reviewer;
 - exam questions and grades awarded for the diploma exam;
 - remaining within the scope of the assigned material and following procedures for conducting a diploma exam
 - results of surveys about cooperation with the supervisor and the process of writing the diploma thesis filled out by graduates when they collect their diplomas.
- 3) Based on the results of conducted analyses, the Teaching Council shall prepare a report and send it to the University’s Educational Council before the end of the semester following the academic year which was subject to analysis.

2. Procedures for implementing corrective actions to improve the process of awarding diplomas prepared based on the results of analyses described in pts. 1 and 2

- 1) The analyses described in par 1 pts. 1 and 2 shall be conducted annually regarding the previous academic year, by the Teaching Council. A report including results of analyses described in par 1 pts. 1 and 2 and information regarding planned corrective actions to improve the process of awarding diplomas shall be sent to the University’s Educational Council by the end of the semester following the academic year which was subject to analysis.
- 2) If needed, as part of the report, the Teaching Council shall present recommendations of corrective actions to improve the process of awarding diplomas in the department.
- 3) The ASC Director and ASC Counselor for Students’ Affairs, in cooperation with ASC Educational Quality Assurance Team, shall be responsible for implementing corrective actions. In case new regulations need to be included in the rules, they shall apply from the next cycle onwards.