



Guidelines for
Term Paper and Thesis

MASTER OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS (MPA)

Bangladesh Institute of Governance and Management

E-33, Syed Mahbub Morshed Sharoni, Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

www.bigm.edu.bd

Date of Publication : September 2025

Published By : BIGM

Bangladesh Institute of Governance and Management (BIGM)

E-33, Syed Mahbub Morshed Sarani, Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-I 207

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Term Paper Supervision and Grading.....	2
3.	Thesis Supervision and Grading	3
4.	Proposal Structure (<i>common for both term paper and thesis</i>)	5
	A. Title Page.....	5
	B. Introduction	5
	C. Literature Review	5
	D. Research Methodology	5
	E. Expected Outcomes and Contributions.....	5
	F. Work Plan and Timeline.....	5
	G. References	5
	H. Proposal Formatting Requirements	5
	I. Proposal Submission Guidelines	5
5.	Term Paper Submission Guidelines	6
	A. Preliminary Pages	6
	B. Main Body	6
	C. Final Section	6
	D. Formatting Requirements	7
	E. Submission	7
6.	Thesis Submission Guidelines.....	7
	A. Preliminary Pages	7
	B. Main Body	7
	C. Final Section	8
	D. Formatting Requirements	8
	E. Submission.....	8
7.	Referencing Guide (<i>American Psychological Association-APA Style</i>)	8
	1. Journal Article	9
	2. Book	9
	3. Book Chapter	9
	4. Conference Paper	9
	5. Website/Webpage	9
	6. Unpublished Manuscript/Thesis/Dissertation	10
	7. Report (Corporate/Government)	10
	8. Newspaper/Magazine Article	10
	Appendix A	11
	Appendix B.....	12

1. Introduction

As part of the requirements for the Master of Public Affairs (MPA) program at BIGM, each student must complete either a term paper (3 credits) or a thesis (9 credits). These academic projects allow students to apply their knowledge, develop research skills, and explore policy-relevant issues related to their program. Students who opt for a thesis will get an exemption from two courses (6 credits) offered in the 4th semester of the MPA program. Students are encouraged to choose a topic that is aligned with their academic program and has practical policy implications, especially in the context of Bangladesh. Each student will work under a supervisor who will guide the research process.

To ensure quality and consistency, BIGM has introduced a revised set of guidelines for the preparation, supervision, and evaluation of term papers and theses in 2025. These guidelines also aim to enhance student engagement with their supervisors and maintain the academic standards of the institute.

All students must submit a research proposal during the 2nd semester by following the proposal guidelines given in this booklet. However, students with strong academic performance (CGPA \geq 3.50 up to the 2nd semester) may choose to pursue a thesis, subject to approval.

This booklet outlines the steps, structures, formatting, and evaluation criteria for completing the term paper or thesis successfully.

2. Term Paper Supervision and Grading

- i. During the 2nd semester, each student must prepare a research proposal and submit it to the Term Paper and Thesis Coordination Committee.
- ii. The topic should align with the student's MPA program and focus on relevant policy implications, particularly within the context of Bangladesh.
- iii. The committee will evaluate all submitted proposals and assign supervisors based on the topic's relevance to the faculty's area of expertise.
- iv. The assigned supervisor will guide the student in refining the topic and supporting the development of the term paper at various stages. The coordination committee will organize a writing workshop.
- v. Throughout the 3rd and 4th semesters, students must maintain an attendance log when formally meeting or communicating with their supervisor. A standard format is provided in Appendix A.
- vi. Once the paper is finalized, a separate recommendation page signed by the supervisor must be included after the title page.
- vii. Final term papers will be evaluated by a second examiner from within BIGM or an external expert in a similar field.
- viii. Students will present their term papers before an evaluation committee comprising both internal and external members from BIGM and other institutions.
- ix. The evaluation will be based on the following distribution of marks:

Term Paper Evaluation (03 credits)

SL.	Description	Marks for evaluation
a.	Proposal submission and evaluation	10%
b.	Evaluation by the supervisor 1. Attendance = 10% 2. Term paper evaluation = 20%	30%
c.	Evaluation by the second examiner	30%
d.	Final defense	30%
	Total	100%

- x. Evaluation criteria for the term paper would be-
 - a) Originality = 20%
 - b) Relevance and Problem Definition =15%
 - c) Literature Review = 15%
 - d) Methodology = 15%
 - e) Data analysis and findings = 15%
 - f) Conclusion and Recommendations =10%
 - g) Visualization and Language = 10%
- xi. All students must submit the proposal during the 2nd semester. After the 2nd semester results, qualified students may choose to pursue a thesis; however, marks for the proposal will be based on the proposal submitted during the 2nd semester (a separate proposal is not mandatory for the thesis grading).

3. Thesis Supervision and Grading

- i. A student who enrolled in the MPA program and meets the minimum CGPA requirements (3.50 or above out of 4.00) up to 2nd semester is allowed to opt for a thesis under the supervision of a faculty member, assistant professor or above, of BIGM.
- ii. The topic must be aligned with the master's program in which the student has enrolled. The study should also focus on the policy implications (e.g., for Bangladesh).
- iii. During the 3rd semester of the MPA program, each student interested and qualified for a thesis must find a supervisor (an assistant professor or above) and submit the Thesis Consent Form (see Appendix B) signed by the proposed supervisor.
- iv. The supervisor can select a co-supervisor (e.g., a Research Associate) among the internal faculty members of BIGM.
- v. After the acceptance of the consent form by the competent authority, the student begins the thesis work according to the supervisor's guidelines.

- v. After the acceptance of the consent form by the competent authority, the student begins the thesis work according to the supervisor's guidelines.
- vi. The coordination committee will organize a symposium on 'Thesis paper writing and publications' for students qualified for and interested in writing a thesis.
- vii. During the 3rd and 4th semesters, students must maintain an attendance record whenever they formally meet or communicate with their supervisor, who must sign it. [A standard format is provided in the appendix.]
- viii. The supervisor will guide the student through different stages of finalizing the topic, methodology, data collection, analysis, and thesis drafting.
- ix. After finalizing the thesis, a separate page containing the recommendations signed by the supervisor must be added after the title page. The coordination committee will provide a template.
- x. The submitted thesis will be sent to the second examiner within BIGM/outside, with a similar area of expertise.
- xi. The coordination committee will arrange for the student to present a defense in front of the evaluation committee, which consists of internal and external members from the BIGM and other institutes.
- xii. The distribution of marks for evaluation is given below-

Thesis Evaluation (09 credits)

SL.	Description	Marks for evaluation
a.	Proposal submission and evaluation	20
b.	Evaluation by the supervisor 1. Attendance = 10 2. Thesis work evaluation = 90	100
c.	Evaluation by the 2nd examiner	
d.	Final Defense	80
	Total	200

- xiii. Evaluation criteria for the thesis are given below.
 - a) Originality= 20%
 - b) Relevance and Problem Definition=15%
 - c) Literature Review= 15%
 - d) Methodology= 15%
 - e) Data analysis and findings= 15%
 - f) Conclusion and Recommendations=10%
 - g) Visualization and Language= 10%
- xiv. Both the supervisor and the 2nd examiner will grade based on the given criteria, and the coordination committee will average it. The thesis will be sent to a third examiner (within BIGM or outside) of equal position or higher than the supervisor if there is a difference of more than 20% between the marks given by the supervisor and the second examiner.

4. Proposal Structure *(common for both term paper and thesis)*

The proposal can be 1000-2500 words long (excluding references). Students are advised to follow the structure below:

A. Title Page

- Title of the research (clear and concise)
- Student's name and ID
- Program name (e.g., IER, GPP, etc.)
- Submission date

B. Introduction

- Background of the study (context and significance)
- Research problem (What is the problem that requires research to solve?)
- Research objectives
- Research questions/hypotheses

C. Literature Review

- Brief overview of key theories and prior research
- Identification of gaps your study will address
- Theoretical/conceptual framework (if applicable)

D. Research Methodology

- Research design (qualitative/quantitative/mixed)
- Data collection methods (surveys, interviews, case studies, etc.)
- Sampling technique and target population
- Data analysis approach (statistical tools, thematic analysis, etc.)
- Ethical considerations (if applicable)

E. Expected Outcomes and Contributions

- Anticipated findings
- Practical/theoretical contributions of the study

F. Work Plan and Timeline

- Proposed schedule (e.g., Gantt chart or table) with milestones

G. References

- Follow a consistent citation style (e.g. APA)
- Minimum of 15-20 credible academic sources

H. Proposal Formatting Requirements

- Font: Times New Roman, 12pt
- Line Spacing: 1.5
- Alignment: Justified
- Margins: 1 inch (2.54 cm) on all sides
- Page Numbers: Bottom center
- File Format: PDF (Name: StudentID_Program_Year.pdf)

I. Proposal Submission Guidelines

- Submit via email to the Term Paper and Thesis Coordinator by the deadline.
- Plagiarism will result in rejection of the proposal (Acceptable Turnitin similarity < 20%).

5. Term Paper Submission Guidelines

The final term paper should be 30-45 pages in length (excluding references). Each section, from introduction to conclusion, should start on a separate page. Students are advised to follow the following format.

A. Preliminary Pages

1. *Title Page*
 - Title of the research (clear and concise)
 - Student's name and ID
 - Program name (e.g., IER, GPP, etc.)
 - Submission date
2. *Complementary Pages*
 - Declaration by the student
 - Declaration from the supervisor
 - Acknowledgement (if any)
 - Table of contents
 - List of tables
 - List of figures
3. *Abstract (150-200 words)*
 - Brief summary of the research problem, methodology, key findings, and conclusions

B. Main Body

4. *Introduction*
 - Background and significance of the topic
 - Research problem, objectives, and questions
 - Scope and limitations
5. *Literature Review*
 - Critical analysis of existing research
 - Theoretical framework (if applicable)
 - Research gaps addressed
6. *Methodology*
 - Research design (qualitative/quantitative/mixed)
 - Data collection methods
 - Sampling strategy
 - Data analysis techniques
 - Ethical Issues (if applicable)
7. *Results/Findings*
 - Presentation of results (tables, charts, or thematic discussion)
 - Interpretation of the results

C. Final Section

8. *Conclusion and Recommendations*
 - Summary of key findings
 - Practical/theoretical implications
 - Suggestions for future research

9. *References*
 - Minimum 20-30 credible sources (APA style)
10. *Appendices (if applicable)*
 - Questionnaires, interview transcripts, raw data

D. Formatting Requirements

- Font: Times New Roman, 12pt
- Line Spacing: 1.5
- Alignment: Justified
- Margins: 1 inch (2.54 cm)
- Page Numbers: Bottom center
- Submission: 3 hard copies, of which two should not contain the supervisor's name.

E. Submission

- Plagiarism check (Turnitin acceptable similarity < 15%).
- Submit to the Thesis and Term Paper Coordinator by the deadline.

6. Thesis Submission Guidelines

The thesis can be 50-100 pages (excluding references). Each section, from introduction to conclusion, should start on a separate page. Students are advised to follow the following format.

A. Preliminary Pages

1. *Title Page*
 - Thesis title
 - Student's name and ID
 - Degree program (e.g., GPP, IER)
 - Supervisor's name
 - Submission date
2. *Complementary Pages*
 - Declaration by the student
 - Declaration from the supervisor
 - Acknowledgement (if any)
 - Table of contents
 - List of tables
 - List of figures
3. *Abstract (250-300 words)*
 - Research problem, methodology, key findings, and contributions

B. Main Body

4. *Chapter 1: Introduction*
 - Research background, problem statement
 - Objectives, research questions/hypotheses
 - Scope, significance, and limitations

5. *Chapter 2: Literature Review*
 - Comprehensive review of related studies
 - Theoretical/conceptual framework
6. *Chapter 3: Methodology*
 - Research philosophy (positivism, interpretivism, etc.)
 - Data collection and analysis methods
 - Ethical considerations
7. *Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis*
 - Detailed presentation of results
 - Statistical/thematic analysis

C. Final Section

8. *Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion*
 - Interpretation of findings
 - Comparison with existing literature
 - Recommendations for practice and future research
9. *References*
 - Minimum 30-50 academic sources (APA Style)
10. *Appendices*
 - Research instruments, raw data, consent forms

D. Formatting Requirements

- Font: Times New Roman, 12pt
- Line Spacing: 1.5 (for main texts)
- Margins: 1.5 inches (left for binding), 1 inch (others)
- Page Numbers: Roman (i, ii) for preliminaries, Number (1,2) for main text

E. Submission

- Submission: 3 hard copies, of which two should not contain the supervisor's name.
- After the defense is completed, one PDF copy should be submitted for the institutional repository to the BIGM library.
- Must pass plagiarism check (Turnitin acceptable similarity <15%).

7. Referencing Guide (*American Psychological Association-APA Style*)

Proposal to final submission, referencing should be one-to-one, meaning the in-text citations must be listed in the reference list, and any reference available in the list must be cited in the main text. Moreover, in-text citations and the list of references must follow APA (7th edition) style available in the APA Style website- <https://apastyle.apa.org>. However, students are encouraged to use any referencing software- Endnote, Zotero, Mendeley etc. For better understanding, the latest APA (7th edition) referencing format for different source types are given.

1. JOURNAL ARTICLE

Format:

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Year). *Title of the article in sentence case*. *Journal Name in Title Case*, Volume(Issue), Page range. <https://doi.org/xxxxx>

Example:

Smith, J. D., & Lee, M. K. (2023). The impact of digital marketing on consumer behavior. *Journal of Business Research*, 45(3), 112-125. <https://doi.org/xxxxx>

2. BOOK

Format:

Author, A. A. (Year). *Title of the book in sentence case*. Publisher.

Example:

Kotler, P. (2022). *Marketing management* (16th ed.). Pearson.

3. BOOK CHAPTER

Format:

Author, A. A. (Year). Title of the chapter. In B. B. Editor & C. C. Editor (Eds.), *Title of the book in sentence case* (pp. xx-xx). Publisher.

Example:

Porter, M. E. (2021). Competitive advantage. In S. Thompson & R. Davis (Eds.), *Strategic management* (pp. 45-67). Harvard Business Press.

4. CONFERENCE PAPER

Format:

Author, A. A. (Year, Month). *Title of the paper in sentence case*. In *Proceedings of the Conference Name in Title Case* (pp. xx-xx). Publisher. <https://doi.org/xxxxx>

Example:

Brown, L., & Wilson, E. (2023, June). AI applications in finance. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Business Innovation* (pp. 89-102). Springer.
<https://doi.org/xxxxx>

5. WEBSITE/WEBPAGE

Format:

Author, A. A. (Year, Month Day). *Title of the webpage in sentence case*. Website Name. URL. Access date.

Example:

World Health Organization. (2023, May 15). *Global health trends in 2023*. WHO. <https://doi.org/xxxxx>. Access date.

If no author:

Title of the webpage in sentence case. (Year, Month Day). Website Name. URL. Access date.

6. UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT/THESIS/DISSERTATION

Format:

Author, A. A. (Year). *Title in sentence case* [Unpublished manuscript/Thesis/Dissertation]. University Name.

Example:

Johnson, R. (2023). *Employee motivation in remote work environments* [Unpublished master's thesis]. BIGM University.

7. REPORT (CORPORATE/GOVERNMENT)

Format:

Organization Name. (Year). *Title of the report in sentence case* (Report No. xxx). Publisher. URL

Example:

McKinsey & Company. (2023). *Global economic outlook 2023* (Report No. 456). <https://www.mofa.gov.bd/.....>

8. NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE ARTICLE

Format:

Author, A. A. (Year, Month Day). *Title of the article in sentence case*. Newspaper/Magazine Name in Title Case. URL. Access date.

Example:

Taylor, S. (2023, April 10). The rise of sustainable business practices. *The Financial Times*. <https://www.ft.com/xxxx>. Access date.



Attendance Sheet

Master of Public Affairs (MPA)

Bangladesh Institute of Governance and Management

1. **Student's Full Name (BLOCK LETTERS):**
2. **ID/Roll:**
3. **Program Name:**
4. **Email:** **Mobile:**
5. **Supervisor's Name:**

Meeting	Date	Activity (e.g., Topic selection, methodology finalization)	Supervisor's signature with date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			

.....
Class Coordinator

.....
Coordinator,
Thesis and Term Paper Coordination Committee



Thesis Consent Form

Master of Public Affairs (MPA)

Bangladesh Institute of Governance and Management

Appendix B

1. Full Name (BLOCK LETTERS):
2. ID/Roll: CGPA: Last Semester GPA:
3. Program Name:
4. Email: Mobile:
5. Tentative title of the thesis:

.....
.....
.....

6. Nature of analysis in your research (put a tick mark in the left side box of the relevant one):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Quantitative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Qualitative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Others (Specify)
--------------------------	--------------	--------------------------	-------------	--------------------------	-------	--------------------------	------------------------

7. If you have any prior experience in research, write an overview of what you have learnt and done so far.

.....
.....
.....

8. Do you have a further study plan (e.g., PhD) after completion of this thesis?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not decided yet
--------------------------	-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------	-----------------

9. Write briefly why you are interested in a thesis.

.....
.....
.....

10. Proposed Supervisor's Name and Designation:

11. Teachers' Signature with date:

Comment			
Signature Thesis Supervisor (<i>proposed</i>) Coordinator, Thesis and Term Paper Coordination Committee Wing Chief, Academic Wing, BIGM

N.B. Student must complete this form and collect signatures before submitting it to the Thesis and Term Paper Coordination Committee.