Academic Writing Standards in Poland

MS in Poland Resource Guide

© MS in Poland 2023

For International Students

Academic Writing Standards in Poland

Academic Writing Standards in Poland

This guide outlines the formal academic writing expectations at Polish universities for international students. Understanding these standards is essential for success in coursework and thesis preparation.

General Principles of Academic Writing

Academic writing in Poland emphasizes:

- **Formality:** Use appropriate academic language and avoid colloquialisms

- **Objectivity:** Present balanced arguments supported by evidence

- **Precision:** Be specific and clear in your language and claims

- **Structure:** Follow logical organization with clear sections

- **Evidence-based:** Support claims with references to scholarly sources

- **Analysis:** Go beyond description to critically evaluate information

NOTE: Polish academic tradition places high value on theoretical frameworks and thorough literature reviews. Your writing should demonstrate familiarity with both classic and contemporary scholarship in your field.

Types of Academic Writing Essays (Esej)

- **Length:** Typically 5-10 pages (1,500-3,000 words)

- **Purpose:** Develop an argument on a specific topic

- **Structure:** Introduction, body paragraphs (arguments), conclusion

- **Evaluation criteria:** Quality of argument, evidence, and writing style

Research Papers (Praca badawcza)

- **Length:** Usually 10-20 pages (3,000-6,000 words)

- **Purpose:** Present original research or analysis
- **Structure:** Abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, conclusion
- **Evaluation criteria:** Research quality, methodology, analysis, and significance of findings

Seminar Papers (Praca seminaryjna)

- **Length:** Typically 15-25 pages (4,500-7,500 words)
- **Purpose:** Demonstrate knowledge in a specific area of study
- **Structure:** Similar to research papers but may be more literature-focused
- **Evaluation criteria:** Depth of knowledge, critical thinking, and synthesis of sources

Bachelor's Thesis (Praca licencjacka)

- **Length:** Usually 30-50 pages (9,000-15,000 words)
- **Purpose:** Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and research skills
- **Structure:** Full academic paper with all formal elements
- **Evaluation criteria:** Originality, research quality, analysis, and adherence to academic standards

Master's Thesis (Praca magisterska)

- **Length:** Typically 60-100 pages (18,000-30,000 words)
- **Purpose:** Contribute new knowledge or perspectives to the field
- **Structure:** Comprehensive academic paper with theoretical framework and original research
- **Evaluation criteria:** Originality, significance, research quality, and scholarly contribution

Structure of Academic Papers Standard Paper Structure Title Page (Strona tytułowa)

Must include:

- University name and logo
- Faculty and department
- Full title of the paper
- Your full name and student ID

- Supervisor's name and title

- Place and date of submission

Abstract (Streszczenie)

- Brief summary (200-300 words)

- Written in both Polish and English for most theses

- Includes research question, methodology, key findings, and significance

Table of Contents (Spis treści)

- List of all chapters, sections, and subsections with page numbers

- Include separate lists for figures and tables if applicable

Introduction (Wstęp)

- Context and background information

- Research problem and questions

- Significance of the research

- Brief overview of methodology

- Structure of the paper (what each chapter contains)

Literature Review (Przegląd literatury)

- Comprehensive overview of existing research

- Critical evaluation of relevant theories and studies

- Identification of gaps in the literature

- Theoretical framework for your research

Methodology (Metodologia)

- Research approach and design

- Data collection methods

- Analysis techniques

- Ethical considerations

- Limitations of the methodology

Results (Wyniki)

- Presentation of findings without interpretation

- Use of tables, figures, and charts where appropriate

- Organized by research questions or themes

Discussion (Dyskusja)

- Interpretation of results

- Comparison with existing literature

- Implications of findings

- Limitations of the study

Conclusion (Zakończenie/Wnioski)

- Summary of key findings

- Answers to research questions

- Theoretical and practical implications

- Recommendations for future research

Bibliography (Bibliografia)

- Complete list of all sources cited

- Formatted according to required citation style

- Typically divided into primary and secondary sources

Appendices (Załączniki)

- Supplementary materials (questionnaires, additional data, etc.)

- Raw data that supports your findings

- Any additional information too detailed for the main text

TIP: When writing longer academic papers, create a detailed outline first and discuss it with your supervisor. This will help ensure your structure meets departmental expectations before you invest significant time in writing.

Formatting Standards General Formatting

- **Font:** Times New Roman, 12pt (unless specified otherwise)

- **Line spacing:** 1.5

- **Margins:** 2.5 cm on all sides

- **Text alignment:** Justified

- **Paragraph indentation:** 1.25 cm for first line or space between paragraphs

- **Page numbering:** Bottom center (excluding title page)

Headings and Subheadings

- **Chapter titles:** Bold, 14pt, centered, all caps

- **Section headings:** Bold, 12pt, left-aligned

- **Subsection headings:** Italic, 12pt, left-aligned

- **Numbering system:** Typically hierarchical (1., 1.1., 1.1.1.)

Tables and Figures

- Must be numbered consecutively throughout the text

- Should include titles (tables above, figures below)

- Must be referenced in the text

- Should include source information if not original

- Large tables and figures may be placed in appendices

Citation Practices In-Text Citations

- Parenthetical citations typically follow the author-date system: (Kowalski, 2020) or (Kowalski, 2020, p. 25)

- For three or more authors, use et al.: (Kowalski et al., 2020)

- Direct quotes require page numbers

- Quotes longer than 40 words should be indented and set off from the text

Footnotes

- Sometimes preferred in humanities disciplines

- Used for additional information, clarifications, or tangential points

- May also be used for citation in some departments

Bibliography/Reference List

- Complete citations for all sources

- Alphabetical order by author's last name

- Different formats depending on the citation style

- Consistent formatting throughout

Common Citation Styles

- **APA:** Social sciences, education, business

- **MLA:** Humanities, language studies

- **Chicago/Turabian:** History, arts

- **Harvard:** Various disciplines

- **IEEE:** Engineering, computer science

- **Vancouver:** Medicine, health sciences

WARNING: Citation requirements can vary significantly between departments. Always verify the expected citation style with your professor or department guidelines.

Language and Style Academic Tone

- Formal, objective language

- Third-person perspective (avoid "I", "we", "you")

- Limited use of contractions and colloquialisms

- Precise terminology specific to your field

- Balanced presentation of different viewpoints

Common Style Issues for International Students

- **Overly complex sentences:** Break long sentences into shorter ones

- **Inconsistent tense:** Maintain consistent verb tense (typically present tense for literature discussion, past for methodology and results)

- **Informal language:** Avoid slang, idioms, and conversational expressions

- **Hedging language:** Use appropriate qualifying terms (e.g., "suggests" rather than "proves")

- **Imprecise vocabulary:** Use field-specific terminology precisely

Language Resources

- University writing centers offer specialized help for academic writing

- Consider using academic English resources like Academic Phrasebank

- Use academic editors or proofreaders for important papers, especially theses

Thesis Preparation and Defense Special Requirements

- **Declaration of originality:** Required signed statement that the work is original

- **Abstract in multiple languages:** Typically Polish and English, regardless of the language of the thesis

- **Summary in Polish:** Required for theses written in foreign languages

- **Digital submission:** Electronic copy for the university repository

- **Bound copies:** Typically 2-3 hard copies with specific binding requirements

Working with a Supervisor

- Meet regularly throughout the writing process

- Submit drafts of each chapter as you complete them

- Address feedback promptly and thoroughly

- Discuss methodology and analysis before fully implementing them

- Allow sufficient time for revisions (typically 2-4 weeks before submission deadline)

Thesis Defense

- 15-20 minute presentation summarizing your research

- Questions from the examination committee

- Discussion of strengths and weaknesses

- Closed committee deliberation

- Announcement of grade

IMPORTANT: Prepare thoroughly for your defense by anticipating potential questions and practicing your presentation multiple times. Your defense performance can significantly impact your final grade.

Resources for Academic Writing University Support

- **Writing centers:** One-on-one assistance with academic writing

- **Language support services:** Help with language issues for non-native speakers

- **Library workshops:** Sessions on research methods and citation styles

- **Department guidelines:** Specific requirements from your faculty

Digital Tools

- **Citation managers:** Zotero, Mendeley, EndNote

- **Grammar and style checkers:** Grammarly, ProWritingAid, Language Tool

- **Plagiarism checkers:** Turnitin, iThenticate (available through most universities)

- **Academic databases:** JSTOR, Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar

Final Checklist

Before submitting any academic paper, ensure you have:

Followed all formatting requirements

Included all required sections

Properly cited all sources

Checked grammar and spelling

Verified that the argument flows logically

Eliminated informal language

Had a peer or mentor review the paper

Proofread the final version

Prepared any required accompanying documents

Made backup copies of your work

TIP: Quality academic writing takes time. Plan to complete your draft at least 2 weeks before the deadline to allow time for revisions, proofreading, and formatting.