

GRADUATE HANDBOOK

Master of Arts in Media & Visual Studies

Bilkent University
Department of Communication & Design

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Information for all current and prospective graduate students at Bilkent:

<http://www.bilkent.edu.tr/bilkent/academic/graduate/intro.html>

What is a Master of Arts in Media and Visual Studies?

The M.A. in Media and Visual Studies offers a curriculum that blends humanities with social science approaches to media and visual communication. The capstone project involves original research, presented as a written thesis, that contributes to scholarly discussion in the field.

The skills built and applied in earning this degree can prepare you for work in the media sector and/or further graduate work and an academic career in media studies, cultural studies, or communications.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students in the Media and Visual Studies M.A. must complete a total of **eight**, fully-credited courses designated at or above the 500-level, for a total of 24 Bilkent credits.

Two credited courses are required, and they should be completed successfully in the first two terms of study:

COMD 511 Research Methods
COMD 512 Foundations in Visual Studies

After you have completed the first term of coursework, you must register for **COMD 599 Master's Thesis** and maintain enrollment each term for the rest of your time in the program.

In addition to these requirements, students must earn credits from select **six elective courses**, of which **no more than two can come from departments other than COMD and/or GRA**. Courses taken outside of the department must be coded 500 or above and offer at least 3 course credits in order to be applied towards the M.A. degree. (*See below for guidelines if you are transferring credits from a different institution.*)

At least **four electives must come from the Restricted Electives list** provided below and/or as indicated the current course catalog linked below. Please note that not all of these courses will be open for enrollment during your time in the program. For more information, you can check the course catalog here: <https://catalog.bilkent.edu.tr/current/dep/d77.html>

Restricted electives applicable to the M.A. degree include the following (this list may change, and none of these are guaranteed to be offered in any given academic year):

COMD 513 Film and Genre
COMD 514 Identity Space and Image
COMD 515 Media Reception
COMD 516 Turkish Cinema and Modernity
COMD 517 Topics in Media Studies
COMD 518 New Media and Film Cultures
COMD 520 National and Transnational Cinemas
*COMD 521 Body Movement and Vision in Immersive and Interactive Media
COMD 523 Media and Everyday Life
*COMD 524 Essay Film
*COMD 525 Curatorial Practices in Contemporary Art
*COMD 527 Creative Sound Design and Synthesis
COMD 531 Science and Media
*COMD 538 Adaptation in Media
*COMD 541 Writing for Media
*COMD 566 Documentary Form and Practice
*GRA 517 Image Time and Motion I
*GRA 542 Mass Media and Visual Technologies

* = *Restricted elective for both M.A. and M.F.A. programs*

Students are strongly encouraged to complete all required coursework during the first two semesters of their enrollment. **All course credits MUST be earned by the end of the fourth enrollment semester** (see below).

Guided by their interdisciplinary research interests, some of our M.A. students have fulfilled their unrestricted elective requirements by taking 500-level courses in other graduate programs at Bilkent. For a complete list of Bilkent graduate programs in the humanities and social sciences: <http://esbe.bilkent.edu.tr/degprog.html>

Non-Credit Course Requirements

Three additional, non-credit courses are required by the program:

GE 500 Research Methods and Academic Publication Ethics

All graduate students enrolled at Bilkent are required to complete GE 500 with an S (Satisfactory) grade during their first year of enrollment. **Make sure to register for GE 500 in your first semester.** The course is organized as a series of five independent modules and designed to prepare students both for academic work and for future careers outside academia. For more information about the GE 500 requirement, including the current schedule for required modules and how to register: <http://w3.bilkent.edu.tr/bilkent/ge-500-research-methods-and-academic-publication-ethics/>

GE 590 Academic Practices is a module-based course that aims to prepare graduate students for academic studies and research. Register for this course starting in your first semester. For more information: <https://w3.bilkent.edu.tr/bilkent/ge-590-ge-690-academic-practices/>

COMD 590 Seminar in Research Topics is a non-credit course that should be taken in the third registration semester.

REGISTRATION

Graduate students register for courses through the online registration service STARS-SRS. When you have either finalized your course selection, OR when the deadline to finalize arrives---whichever comes first---this will activate the “Send Registration to Advisor for Approval” function. It is then up to the graduate adviser to review and approve your course selection (see below for more about adviser selection and advising in general).

After registration is completed through STARS-SRS, either by student action or automatically, students will not be able to add/drop a course or to change the section of a course online. These actions will only be possible by filing a paper Registration Form that shows all required signature approvals.

Academic advisors have about a week to review and approve the registered courses of their advisees. After this deadline, which will shift each term but fall within one week of the first day

of classes, any course which has not been approved by the adviser will be dropped from the student's records.

Transferring Graduate Credits from Other Universities

According to Bilkent University regulations, current graduate students may apply to transfer credits from another university towards course requirements of the Bilkent graduate program they are enrolled in. These credits must have been earned in graduate-level courses taken within the last three years. Credits for a **maximum of two courses taken outside Bilkent** can be applied to the requirements for Bilkent M.A. programs, which will consider these courses as unrestricted electives.

A course taken outside Bilkent University which is to be transferred toward the M.A. must be passed with at least a **B grade** and must not be counted towards the requirements of another degree. The courses counted towards your program are transferred with a **T grade** on the Bilkent University transcript, and the original letter grades of those courses are not included in calculating grade point averages.

All applications for credit transfers are finalized by EYK (the board of the related institute) by the end of the second semester of the program.

Time to completion: Regulations

YÖK regulation stipulates that all requirements for an M.A. program with a thesis component must be completed within six semesters of initial enrollment in order to graduate. This time to completion includes a successful thesis defense. Failure to successfully defend a thesis by the end of the sixth enrolled semester will result in dismissal from the program.

The program in Media and Visual Studies is designed so that, ideally, **candidates complete all credit-bearing coursework in the first two terms**. The second year (the third and fourth semesters) should then be dedicated to the thesis project and other research activities in the Department of Communication and Design.

All course credits **MUST** be earned by the end of the fourth semester. Failure to complete the coursework on time and with a CGPA of at least 3.0 will result in dismissal from the program.

Students may apply for a leave of absence under certain extenuating circumstances, but any semester(s) spent on leave will be counted toward the six-term maximum duration of the program and incur tuition fees that must be paid out of pocket or waived with department approval.

Applying for extended enrollment

Extensions to the normal four-term program of study will only be granted in cases where unforeseeable circumstances prevent a timely defense.

If sufficient progress has been made on the thesis by the end of the fourth semester, but for legitimate reasons the defense cannot take place until the fifth semester, the Graduate Director, Department Chair, and the University administration will consider applications for extended enrollment.

This application must:

1. demonstrate clear progress with the thesis (generally, two or more fully drafted chapters), and
2. have the full support of the project adviser.

If either of these criteria is found to be deficient, the application may be denied. In this case, the candidate may continue the program without a tuition waiver OR, in the case of glaringly deficient progress, the candidate may be dismissed from the program.

Applications for fall extension are due to the Graduate Director no later than September 1.

FUNDING

All applicants to the graduate program are automatically considered for financial support from the Department of Communication and Design. Funding decisions are made jointly between the department and university administration.

Financial support for any graduate student is offered with the understanding that the student will study full-time and actively contribute to academic activities of Bilkent University above and beyond the requirements of his/her coursework. Full-time employment outside of the academic program is considered to be incompatible with this goal.

Upon acceptance to the program, the department offers three levels of financial support to full-time students who are not otherwise employed:

- 1) Partial tuition waiver
- 2) Full tuition waiver only
- 3) Full tuition waiver, plus additional funding

Applicants initially granted a partial waiver may receive additional support for subsequent semesters IF academic performance exceeds initial expectations AND the budget allows for expanded support.

The cost of tuition is reduced by 50% for students currently registered only for thesis credits (COMD 599) and for those registered for a leave of absence. The department cannot guarantee tuition support for scholarship students undertaking a leave of absence.

Students receiving any level of funding from the department MUST maintain at least a 3.0 CGPA and have no F course grades in order to continue receiving financial support.

Extended funding

Tuition aid packages offered at the time of initial registration are time-limited and meant to cover ONLY the standard timeline of four semesters. **No department funding can be guaranteed beyond four semesters**; this includes partial and full tuition waivers.

Absolutely no funding beyond tuition remission can be granted to students enrolled past their fourth semester. Fifth-semester students may be considered for tuition remission based on availability of funds and progress with the thesis as described in the application for extension (see above). Absolutely no tuition remission will be offered to students beyond the fifth registration semester.

BOTTOM LINE: Defend on time---that is, within two years of your initial enrollment. If you anticipate extending your enrollment into the fifth and, if required, sixth semesters, then you should expect to pay tuition costs for these additional term(s) out-of-pocket.

Additional Research Funding

All currently enrolled graduate students are strongly encouraged to seek funding for their academic work outside of the department. There are some university- and faculty-wide opportunities, but national and international scholarships can also be pursued.

Your faculty adviser can help you with the strategies and logistics involved in proposal writing, but a successful outcome ultimately depends on your own investment in the project you are trying to fund, your attention to requirements, meeting deadlines, etc.

If your application(s) for outside funding is/are successful, it is your responsibility to alert your adviser, the Graduate Director, the Department Chair as soon as possible after receiving notice, as receiving outside funding may affect your eligibility for continued university support.

TÜBİTAK

<https://www.tubitak.gov.tr/tr/burslar/lisansustu/egitim-burs-programlari/icerik-2211-yurt-ici-lisansustu-burs-programi>

The link provided above (in Turkish) outlines the various funding opportunities available to graduate students through TÜBİTAK, the national science administration of Turkey. Applications are accepted twice a year (October/March).

Research scheme 2210-A seems to be most applicable to our program; however, other grants might also be of interest depending on the nature of the thesis project.

Interested students are responsible for following the relevant application timeline/deadlines as well as adhering to the requirements checklist.

Dean's Fund

The Dean's Fund offers limited, one-time funding for graduate students carrying out research-related activities (e.g. software, equipment, conference travel, etc.). The maximum award per student is \$300 USD. Applications for the Dean's Fund must be submitted by the academic adviser, who also directs its spending.

Timeline for M.A. Completion

TERM	Dept & Elective Courses	Additional Requirements	Thesis Progress (by end of term)
1	COMD 511 + two or three 500-level electives	GE 500 & GE 590	-
2	COMD 512 + three 500-level electives	GE 500 (if needed), GE 590, COMD 599	Complete all required sessions for GE 500. Submit Topic & Adviser Declaration Form. Plan timeline for proposal & bibliography.
summer	-	-	Draft full proposal. Collect & annotate bibliography. Look for relevant conference & publication opportunities.
3	Any remaining courses (no more than 2)	GE 590, COMD 590 & COMD 599	Present proposal in COMD 590 for feedback. Begin drafting chapters. Submit work for peer review or conference presentation. Progress Report Form
4	All course credits MUST be earned by the end of the fourth semester.	GE 590 & COMD 599	Full draft of thesis to adviser. Finalize full committee and distribute copies. Schedule defense before 15 May for spring graduation. Apply for a summer extension by 15 May if you cannot finish in time.
summer	-	-	Defend no later than 15 August for summer graduation. Apply for fall term extension (if needed).
5	-	GE 590 & COMD 599	EXTENSION beyond four terms granted ONLY in cases of extensive revisions and/or extenuating circumstances.
NOTES:	<i>Total of 8 courses at 500-level, including 511, 512 & six electives, of which at least four are restricted. No more than two courses can come from outside COMD/GRA. Must maintain a CGPA of at least 3.0</i>		Defense MUST take place no later than ONE MONTH before the graduate school submission deadline. Failure to schedule accordingly will require an application for extended enrollment, possibly incurring tuition fees.

ASSESSMENT & GRADING

While each course draws on these components to varying degrees, the program as a whole is designed to build and assess the following skills:

- Academic writing in English
- Knowledge and understanding of key concepts in media studies
- Ability to build and draw on a relevant bibliography
- Project management skills
- Self-directed research and overall self-discipline

Graduate students **MUST** maintain a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.0 or higher in order to remain enrolled in the program.

Letter grades for courses should be understood as follows:

A range = Consistently meets or exceeds expectations for graduate-level work

B range = Mostly in line with graduate-level work, but leaves room for improvement.

C range = The C grade indicates performance that does not meet the standard for graduate-level work. Any final course grade in the C range should be discussed promptly with the course instructor and the Graduate Director. Earning multiple C grades in a single term should be reason to consider withdrawing from the program, and continuing students may find their departmental support in jeopardy.

F = Earning an F grade in a course will result in withdrawal of all financial support from the department.

Other Letter Grades

I = Incomplete

An Incomplete indicates that the student has met basic requirements for course assessment (e.g., regular attendance, some assignments submitted) but substantial assignments have not been submitted due to illness or some other valid reason as discussed in advance with the course instructor.

All Incomplete grades must be resolved within two weeks of the grade submission deadline, during which the missing work must be submitted to the instructor and graded. The instructor must then file a Letter Grade Correction form to change the I to a regular letter grade.

Failure to submit missing work (on the part of the student) and/or file the necessary paperwork (on the part of the course instructor) within this two-week period will automatically change the grade on the transcript from I to F.

P = In-Progress

Indicates satisfactory performance in a course that requires registration for multiple terms, such as COMD 599. After the thesis is successfully defended, the P grade earned in the last registration term will be converted to S.

S = Satisfactory performance

This grade indicates either 1) that all requirements have been met in a single-term, non-credit course, or 2) that a multi-semester course has been completed successfully.

U = Unsatisfactory progress

Failure to meet the minimum requirements for non-credit courses will result in a U grade. This is considered a failing grade, and its consequences are the same as an F grade earned in a credit-bearing course.

For more about grading policies, including how to calculate CGPA, please consult the Bilkent University catalog.

<https://catalog.bilkent.edu.tr/current/general/grading.html#GRADES>

ADVISING

All first-year graduate students, by default, have the current Graduate Director on record for their program as their primary academic adviser. During this first year, this relationship is largely informal, not binding for present or future advising, and unrelated to thesis or other project work. If there is pressing reason for an exception—for example, if a first-year student is working on a funded project with another faculty member—the student and project adviser may present a joint petition to formally change this advisorship in the first year of enrollment.

By the end of the second semester, each student is expected to determine a topic for thesis research and formally declare affiliation with an appropriate faculty adviser, chosen from current COMD/GRA graduate faculty. The primary adviser for a thesis project must also be present on campus and NOT on any kind of administrative leave at the moment of the defense (see below).

The **Graduate Thesis Topic Declaration Form** should be signed by both the student and the new adviser and submitted to the Graduate Director no later than the last week of classes in the second term of enrollment. ***This form also asks for your ORCID number***, an ESBE requirement, which can be obtained free of charge at <https://orcid.org/>

Co-advising

Co-advising between two or more members of the COMD/GRA graduate faculty OR between one COMD/GRA faculty member and another faculty from another Bilkent department may be pursued if the thesis topic can demonstrate interdisciplinary relevance. In formal co-advising, where two faculty members share equal responsibility for overseeing the project, the co-advisors “share” a single vote on the defense committee, so a fourth member must then be recruited to sign off on the defense.

Faculty outside COMD/GRA

Non-advising or co-advising (with COMD faculty) thesis committee members may be recruited from departments at Bilkent other than COMD/GRA. The department reserves the right to oversee the composition of any candidate's thesis committee.

One member of the thesis defense committee **MUST** hold a current affiliation from a university other than Bilkent. It is the thesis adviser's job to recruit someone for this role, but suggestions from the student should be welcome.

Throughout the program, graduate students are strongly encouraged to seek mentors among Bilkent and other universities' faculty in addition to the official adviser.

Adviser absence / Changing advisers

During the course of thesis research, if the primary adviser leaves the department temporarily (e.g., medical or sabbatical leave) or permanently (e.g., takes a new position elsewhere) and therefore can no longer fulfill their duties, then the adviser role will revert to the Graduate Director unless or until an alternative is proposed by the student.

If a student wishes to change his/her adviser for reasons other than the adviser's foreseeable absence, the change must be proposed in writing and discussed with the Graduate Director before taking effect. *No change in adviser will be approved if fewer than three months remain before the anticipated date of defense AND the original adviser can assure his/her presence on campus at that time.*

Expectations

As an advisee, **you can expect the following from your adviser** during your thesis year:

- Guidance for methodological issues and structuring the thesis
- Filing your application for ethics review (if applicable; see below for details)
- Recommendations for relevant readings
- Face-to-face meetings scheduled at regular intervals throughout the year (minimum once per month)
- Prompt responses to emails (within one week)
- Feedback on written drafts
 - A reasonable expectation would be one round of feedback per individual chapter, then another round with the finished thesis before the defense.
 - Discuss with your adviser what to expect for feedback cycles
- Suggestions for publication or conference opportunities, and feedback on work designated for submission
- Support for applications to obtain outside funding or special research funds offered by the University
- Fair warning before any prolonged, foreseeable absence (e.g., new position, sabbatical leave, etc.)

Your adviser, in turn, expects the following from you:

- Accountability for your progress

- Use scheduled meeting time wisely
- Prompt responses to emails (within one week)
- Understand and apply proper citation techniques (including APA style as required by the Graduate School) in all academic work; NEVER engage in plagiarism
- Pre-reviewed drafts submitted for feedback
 - At least one other person should read any writing you want to submit to your adviser for feedback BEFORE your adviser sees it
 - This reader could be someone at BilWrite, a fellow graduate student, or another trusted reader who can address issues with content as well as language/grammar/readability
- Effective and thorough responses to critique
- **Written notice if you plan to leave the program--in this case, please CC the Graduate Director and COMD Department Chair.**

All masters-level theses must show evidence of rigour and appreciation of the relationship of the subject to a wider field of knowledge/scholarship. They must be clear, concise, well-written, and orderly. However, please note that *no one expects perfection*. The goals shared by you, your adviser, and the program are for you to complete a defensible thesis and finish the program in a timely manner. Do not hold your work to impossibly high standards of scope or quality. Our standards are high, but they are achievable; your admission to the program means that we believe you can meet these standards with sufficient effort.

Your adviser should be involved in determining appropriate research methods and overseeing your work; however, they should NEVER be the first person to read a draft of your work (see above). The primary adviser is neither an editor nor a collaborator, and it is ultimately the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that the submitted work represents the academic procedures, theoretical perspectives and intellectual creativity that have led to its production. In light of this, it should be noted that **it is the responsibility of the student to maintain suitable contact with the adviser** through pre-arranged meetings during the time of research.

As a general principle, the earlier you begin writing your thesis, the stronger the result. Writing should begin while research is still actively in progress. While completing research before 'writing up' is appropriate in some disciplines, this approach is rarely suitable for media studies, where the writing process itself forms a crucial part of research activity. Be prepared to write early—as early as your second semester, and certainly the summer thereafter—and understand that much of your adviser's active supervision will come from commenting on your submitted work.

The thesis is always a work in progress, even at the moment of its defense. Do NOT let the perfect be the enemy of the done: you're looking for "good enough" to defend, NOT the final and total word on the topic you've studied.

Publication and conference presentation

M.A. candidates are expected to work with their advisers and/or another faculty mentor to **prepare original research or writing for submission** to EITHER an academic conference OR an academic journal or similar publication by the end of the third enrollment semester. This submitted work can be related to the graduate thesis, or it can come from an unrelated project, e.g., developed as part of graduate coursework. This submission will be counted as part of the requirements to successfully complete COMD 590.

Please note that **acceptance for presentation or publication is not a requirement**. But evidence of submission of material(s) for consideration must be presented to the Graduate Director in a timely manner, no later than the end of the third enrollment semester (normally 30 December; 15 May for spring starters).

ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL

If your thesis project involves **any contact with human subjects** – which in communications and media studies might include interviews, focus groups, and/or surveys, including those administered online – then you and your adviser will need to apply for approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) university board of ethics **before** beginning data collection.

The student should complete all relevant forms, which can be downloaded here:

<https://w3.bilkent.edu.tr/bilkent/application-for-an-ethics-committee-approval-for-a-research-project-which-will-use-human-participants/>

While completing the form(s) fully and properly is up to the student, it is the adviser who must apply for IRB approval through STARS by uploading the completed forms:

<https://stars.bilkent.edu.tr/ecahs/>

For more information, check this FAQ about ethics applications:

<https://w3.bilkent.edu.tr/bilkent/frequently-asked-questions-about-ethics-applications/>

THESIS FORMATTING & PROCEDURES

a. Length

While there is no fixed requirement for thesis length, an MA project should aim for ~30,000 words exclusive of bibliography (80-120 double-spaced pages) in order to demonstrate sufficient scope and depth of research.

Some of the total page count may be devoted to visual illustrations in addition to written text. However, any and all images in the submitted thesis should be attributed to source(s) according to APA rules AND adhere to principles of fair use as understood by copyright law.

To this end, we recommend that you consult the Fair Use Policies of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies:

https://www.cmstudies.org/page/fair_use

b. APA style

All theses in the Graduate School are expected to adhere to APA citation and formatting style. For a guide to the most up-to-date version of APA style, check the Purdue OWL website:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/1/>

It is in your best interest to master APA citation as soon as possible. Apply it meticulously to all your work, particularly but not only the thesis. This practice is important, because if there are style errors in the draft(s) submitted to Turnitin, there is a high risk of “false positive” signs of plagiarism, which can take a lot of time and effort to correct before resubmission.

Learn APA style and be vigilant in its application starting from your very first semester.

c. Academic integrity & plagiarism

Academic integrity is central to the mission of the Bilkent University Graduate School. The graduate programs in the Department of Communication and Design seek to uphold this mission. All students enrolled in these programs are held to the highest possible standards of academic integrity in coursework and in thesis work.

Any submitted work found to be in violation of these standards due to plagiarism, falsified data, or cheating may be grounds for loss of scholarship funding and/or disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program.

For detailed university policies pertaining to academic integrity and plagiarism:

<http://w3.bilkent.edu.tr/bilkent/policy-on-conflicts-of-interest-and-commitment-academic-integrity/>

d. Turnitin

The Graduate School requires that a pre-defense draft of all theses be submitted to Turnitin no later than one week before the scheduled defense date.

The candidate must provide the files in a timely manner, but **it is the thesis adviser’s responsibility to submit the draft** to plagiarism@bilkent.edu.tr for processing, in both .docx and .pdf formats.

The results of the report may then be sent to the committee for full consideration. However, if the percentage is too high, ESBE may request pre-defense revisions and/or instigate disciplinary action on the submitted work. **NOTE:** Errors in citation style can raise the Turnitin score. Check your citation style as thoroughly as possible before submitting for pre-defense screening.

The revised, post-defense draft must also be submitted to Turnitin for approval (see below). This process may take several days, and it is up to the adviser and the candidate to allow enough time, up to one week, to receive this approval before proceeding with binding and other ESBE submission protocols.

Graduate instructors may require Turnitin submission for coursework at their discretion.

e. **ESBE regulations**

General formatting & preparation guide for graduate theses:

<http://esbe.bilkent.edu.tr/GuidelinesFinal.pdf>

Thesis cover pages (adviser & committee signatures) with sample formatting

<http://esbe.bilkent.edu.tr/CoverPages.pdf>

THESIS DEFENSE

a. **Committee**

For the M.A., **the Graduate School requires a committee of three faculty members, each ranked Assistant Professor or higher, to serve on a thesis committee.** One must be the primary adviser from the Bilkent COMD graduate faculty; another must also be from Bilkent, generally COMD, but interdisciplinary projects might bring in someone from another department; and the third **MUST** be affiliated with a university other than Bilkent, in a department/field that relates closely to the thesis topic.

The department reserves the right to oversee the composition of any candidate's thesis committee. It is the thesis adviser's responsibility to recruit the outside committee member, but suggestions from the student should be welcome during the selection process.

b. **Scheduling**

Graduate students are expected to defend their thesis project on time for spring graduation ceremonies. Any extensions beyond this timeline will require proof of progress and approval from the adviser as part of an application submitted to the Graduate Director.

IMPORTANT: The department will not schedule any thesis defense less than one month before a Graduate School submission deadline. These deadlines are

determined by the academic calendar and change from year to year, but they are always made public on the academic calendar:

<http://w3.bilkent.edu.tr/bilkent/academic-calendar/>

While exact dates will change each year, the following time frames are a guide for timing the thesis defense and final submission:

- **Spring defense, by 15 May** // Bound thesis to ESBE before spring term grades are submitted in June

SPRING DEFENSE IS THE GOAL.

- **Summer defense, by 15 August** // Application for summer extension to the Graduate Director by May 15. // Bound thesis to ESBE before graduate student registration begins in mid-September
- **Winter defense, by 15 December** // Application for fall extension to the Graduate Director by 1 August // Bound thesis to ESBE before fall term grades are submitted in mid-January

After the adviser receives a satisfactory pre-defense Turnitin report, **a complete draft of the thesis AND a copy of the Turnitin report should be distributed to all committee members at least one full week before the scheduled defense date.**

It is recommended that candidates ask each committee member whether s/he prefers digital files or hard copy for making comments. Consider as well the form in which you would rather receive these comments in order to smooth out the revision process.

c. Preparation and outcomes

At the defense, the candidate is expected to orally present the project (for no more than 15 minutes; visual materials are welcome but not required) and respond to the committee's questions and critiques.

There are three possible outcomes for the thesis defense:

1) Success

The thesis passes as it stands (which is extremely rare) or passes with minor corrections to be completed within **one month** of the defense, which is the most common successful outcome.

2) Extension

The thesis is referred back to the candidate for revisions extensive enough to require additional time to complete. If this time includes an additional semester, this extended registration will normally be at the candidate's expense.

A **post-defense extension** is recommended by the committee in cases where:

- there is still time remaining within the six-semester limit,
- **AND** the project shows potential for significant scholarly accomplishment,
- **BUT** the revisions requested by the committee exceed what could be reasonably completed within the one-month period granted a successful defense.

The kind of revisions involved in a post-defense extension may include: expanding the corpus or bibliography; reorganizing chapters or major sections of writing; reconsideration of relevant theories; etc.

Under these circumstances, the candidate must remain enrolled in the program through the summer OR for an additional term, as applicable, in order to complete the required revisions under supervision of the adviser.

At the end of the extension period, a revised draft of the thesis will be distributed to the same committee members, and a new defense will be scheduled in accordance with the deadlines imposed by the academic calendar.

3) Failure

The candidate will fail the defense and be dismissed from the program if, at the time of defense, the thesis project fails to demonstrate scholarly accomplishment or potential for accomplishment in line with the expectations for an M.A. degree.

A post-defense report must make clear to the candidate the areas in which the thesis is deficient and why, in the committee's view, these deficiencies are not addressable by revision or re-submission.

In all cases except passing without any requested revisions, the adviser shall compile the input of the entire committee and prepare a post-defense report for the candidate that clearly indicates the area(s) in which the committee finds the thesis deficient and, in the case of successful and extended defenses, the report will outline the revisions which are required to bring it up to standard.

d. After the defense

After a successful defense—whether on the first attempt or after an extension—the candidate will have **one month** to make adjustments to the thesis as requested by the committee. For a successful defense, these changes will be minor.

After completing these minor corrections, the candidate **MUST** submit a new draft to the adviser, who will approve the changes and submit the files to Turnitin **BEFORE** the candidate can proceed to formatting, printing, and binding the thesis for submission to the Graduate School.

As with the pre-defense draft, **the candidate must provide the final draft in both .docx and .pdf formats, but it is the adviser's responsibility to submit the files to the relevant administrator for the post-defense Turnitin report.** Advisers may contact the Graduate Director for current information about Turnitin requirements.

It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the printed thesis follows all formatting rules required by the Graduate School (see ESBE link provided above).

It is also the candidate's responsibility to obtain signatures from each member of the committee after the final draft has been prepared and approved by the adviser. Make sure all names are spelled correctly and all academic titles are accurate BEFORE seeking signatures on the approval form. Multiple original copies of this form will be required by ESBE. **Please read all requirements and submission procedures carefully before finalizing your paperwork, and follow ALL formatting requirements in the cover pages of the thesis.**

Candidates are strongly encouraged to obtain the adviser's signature FIRST in all paperwork that circulates among the full committee. It is best if signatures can be obtained in person, and by scheduled appointment.

It is also the candidate's responsibility to **allow sufficient time for this revision and approval process** before the Graduate School submission deadlines. Once the final draft is approved by the primary adviser, plan for at least three days to complete the printing and binding.

CAMPUS & DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

BilWrite

<http://bilwrite.bilkent.edu.tr/>

BilWrite provides free tutorials to Bilkent students that help improve academic writing at all levels. Check the website for more information and to schedule an appointment.

Media Archaeology Lab

<http://comd.bilkent.edu.tr/facilities/media-archaeology-lab/>

The BITS media archaeology lab offers a unique place for cross-disciplinary experimental, transdisciplinary research in media technology and history. The lab contains an assortment of analog and digital audiovisual tools, software, and platforms, many of which are seemingly "obsolete" or have fallen into disuse.

The lab aims to make these tools and equipment accessible for research and artistic practices and production. While making these tools usable and opening up these technologies, the lab not only expands the established institutional practices of archives and museums, but it also develops "pedagogical ways of appropriating past technologies as epistemological ways of understanding the modern technological culture" (Jussi Parikka).

Other Department Facilities

<http://comd.bilkent.edu.tr/facilities/>

Libraries

<http://library.bilkent.edu.tr/>

Library orientation sessions can be scheduled by request:

<https://library.bilkent.edu.tr/reference-introductory-services/>

The faculty librarian for the Faculty of Art, Design, and Architecture is Semra Kesler:

usun@bilkent.edu.tr

Graduate students are invited to recommend materials to purchase for the library's permanent collection. First, perform a search to make sure the title isn't already available in the collection. The Quick Search function on the library website should check both the stacks and electronic materials; the Library Catalog database does not always reliably return electronic holdings.

If the material isn't already in the catalog, log in with your Bilkent ID and password, then click the "Send a Request" prompt at the top of the page. Under "Request Type," in the drop-down menu, select "Recommend to Order," fill in as much of the information as you can, and submit the form.

Orders for new material can take several weeks or months to process. They can be tracked using the My Account feature on the library website.

If you are requesting material needed for an urgent deadline, Interlibrary Loan can usually make books and articles available more quickly, generally within two weeks. However, the loan period is shorter for ILL materials than for those found in the permanent collection.

APPLYING FOR FURTHER STUDY

If you plan to apply for doctoral programs, make this goal known to your thesis adviser as soon as possible. This may shape your research and writing timeline in significant ways, depending on where you aim to apply and the deadlines they require for your application.

Aim to **have at least two chapters of your thesis completed before applying to any PhD program**, and be on track to defend your thesis for a spring or VERY EARLY summer graduation (i.e., by late June). This is important, because *your letter writers will need to discuss your thesis in detail* in order to properly support your application.

Your letter writers should also be able to vouch for your ability to finish the work on time to begin a new program in the fall. In fact, your acceptance may also be conditional, depending on a completed M.A. to enroll. Please also note that few doctoral programs offer a winter start with full financial support, so assume that you will start any new program in the fall wherever you go, no matter when you do finally graduate.

Once you have determined where you plan to apply, it will be helpful to provide your letter writers with a single chart containing the following information about each of your applications:

- **Name of institution**

- **Department**

Be specific and accurate -- it makes a difference, for example, whether you plan to study film in a Comparative Literature department, a Communications Department, an American Studies or another interdisciplinary area studies department, or in a Media Studies department.

- **Application deadline**

- **Why you are applying to this particular program**

Is it the chance to work with a particular professor? Reputation in a specific subfield? Proximity to relevant archives? etc.

- **Required format** for submission of letter, if you can learn this information (e.g., hard copy or online; letterhead required or optional)

Give your letter writers at least two weeks' notice before the first application is due.

THESIS AWARD

Every year, Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences recognizes outstanding work on MA and PhD theses by awarding the **Çiğdem Barçan Tansel and Kalbiye Tansel Thesis Awards**.

Each year, COMD can nominate only one MA thesis that has been completed and defended during the previous academic year. *All graduates from the previous year's defense cohort will be automatically considered for the award.*

Nominations consist of a letter from the advisor and an accompanying note from the Graduate Director or Department Chair explaining the contribution and excellence of the thesis. These dossiers are generally completed in the spring semester, and submitted to ESBE for transferal to the Thesis Award Committee for the final selection.

ACADEMIC WRITING

At the graduate level, it should be assumed that you have already mastered the basics of academic writing in English, e.g.: clear grammar and usage, good and consistent citation practice, essay organization, etc.

Graduate courses are not designed to build these skills from scratch, but rather to reinforce skills already gained before starting the program. If you or your instructors feel that these basic areas fall below the expected standard for graduate study, remedial work on your writing needs to be undertaken individually and under your own initiative.

In addition to the personal services offered through BilWrite, to this end the Bilkent University Library has a number of books offering tutorials on improving academic writing. You are strongly encouraged to peruse this collection, and find the book(s) that will address the particular issues that you face in your writing.

Selected volumes and their call numbers are given below, but other books may present equally useful or more personally relevant information. You are also strongly encouraged to order new materials on academic writing for the library's collection.

Academic Writing: Selected Bibliography (available in Bilkent Library)

Belcher, Wendy Laura. *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2009. **Z 471.B45 2009**

NOTE: Belcher's workbook focuses on completing an article rather than a thesis, but the front matter has some keen insights into the psychology of writing that make it worth a look.

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*. 3rd ed. Chicago, IL: U Chicago P, 2008. **Q 180.55.M4 B66 2008**

Dunleavy, Patrick. *Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, Draft, Write, and Finish a Doctoral Thesis or Dissertation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003. **LB 2369.D85 2003**

Evans, David, Paul Gruba and Justin Zobel. *How to Write a Better Thesis*. 3rd ed. Melbourne: Melbourne U P, 2011. **LB 2369.E92 2013**

Godfrey, Jeanne. *How to Use Your Reading in Your Essays*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009. **LB 2369.G58 2009**

Goodson, Patricia. *Becoming an Academic Writer: 50 Exercises for Paced, Productive, and Powerful Writing*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2017. **PE 1408.G585 2017**

Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. 3rd ed. New York: Norton, 2017. **PE1431.G73 2018 (Reserve collection)**

Hayot, Eric. *The Elements of Academic Style: Writing for the Humanities*. New York: Columbia U P, 2014. **PE 1404.H3943 2014**

Murray, Rowena. *How to Write a Thesis*. 2nd ed. Berkshire: Open U P, 2008. **LB 2369.M87 2008**