

Guidelines for Writing Graduate Thesis

Faculty of Science, University of Colombo

This document provides guidelines for preparing postgraduate thesis for submission to the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo.

Objectives:

Adherence to this standard will ensure that:

- the quality of all theses is both uniform and appropriate to the value placed upon them by the scientific community;
- the thesis is of a form that can be reproduced for distribution to examiners and deposited in the library as a permanent document;
- the candidates do not compete over matters of presentation that have little to do with the quality of the science in the thesis.

The Structure

Cover

Theses presented for examination may be soft-cover, provided they are securely bound. Final copies of the thesis, following examination, should be hard-cover bound. The hard cover should be of the appropriate colour for the degree for which the dissertation is submitted.

- Thesis submitted for M.Sc. degree should be bound in black
- Thesis submitted for M.Phil degree should be bound in maroon
- Thesis submitted for Ph.D. degree should be bound in dark green

The title, the author's name and the year of submission should appear on the front cover. The title should be placed 3 cm from the top, in a font size equivalent to 28 of Times New Roman in the lower case. The author's name and the year of submission should be placed 2 cm from the bottom, in font size 20. All text should be centered and aligned. Gold lettering should be used on the hard cover (**Annex I**). The year of submission, the degree for which the thesis is submitted, and the name of the author with initials should also be in gold lettering on the spine, running lengthwise in that order from the top. The writing on the spine should also be in gold lettering and in a single line (**Annex II**). The thesis should be bound with two blank sheets, one each on the inside of front and back cover.

Text Format

Paper:

Each copy of the thesis shall be on clear white paper of good quality having at least 80 GSM and A4 (210 ×297 mm) size. One type of paper must be used throughout the thesis. However, paper of different quality may be used for figures, photographs, maps etc.

Font:

The text should be computer-printed in 12 point Times New Roman font. Chapter headings should not exceed 16 point and any other title should be in 14 point. Only one side of the paper should be used for type-setting.

Line Spacing:

Typing should be with a spacing of 1.5 between lines, including the List of References. Candidates may choose the spacing appropriate for Appendices.

Margins:

Top, right and bottom margins should be of 2 cm. The left margin should be 3 cm.

Pagination

Pages should be numbered consecutively throughout the thesis. Preliminary pages (for example, the title page, statement of declaration, acknowledgement, abstract and table of contents, list of tables, list of figures and abbreviations) that precede the main text should be numbered with lower case roman numerals beginning with one (i). Appendices that follow the list of references should be numbered with upper case roman numerals. Number the main text, starting with the “First Chapter - Introduction”, consecutively beginning with the Arabic number one (1). All page numbers should be placed on the top right edge of the page.

Title Page

The title page should include the university crest, the full title of the thesis, the author's name, the degree for which the thesis is submitted, and the faculty and university, and the month and year of submission, as given in **Annex III**.

Declaration:

The thesis must contain signed and dated statements of originality and conformity by the candidate and the supervisor/s, such as:

This thesis is my original work and has not been submitted previously for a degree at this or any other university / institute. To the best of my knowledge it does not contain any material published or written by another person, except as acknowledged in the text.

Author's name Date.....

Signature

This is to certify that this dissertation is based on the work carried by Mr./Mrs./Ms under my / our supervision. The dissertation has been prepared according to the format stipulated and is of acceptable standard.

Certified by:

Supervisor 1 Name..... Date.....

Signature.....

Supervisor 2 Name..... Date.....

Signature.....

Acknowledgements:

It is expected of the candidate to acknowledge all persons who facilitated the research described in the thesis and organizations that have helped in matters scientific, as well as the sources of funding that made the research possible.

Abstract:

The abstract should be a concise description of the problems addressed in the research work, the method of solving them, the results and conclusions. The abstract should not exceed 500 words, and maybe typed single-spaced.

Table of Contents:

A Table of Contents, with page references, should be provided with sufficient detail to allow ready access to the content of the thesis. A List of Tables and a List of Figures should also be included. They should include page references.

The Body of the Thesis:

Candidates may have some flexibility in the structure of the body of the thesis itself and should consult with their supervisor(s). However, theses comprising the following sections are encouraged.

- A general introduction to the thesis, setting the work in the context of existing knowledge and understanding, establishing the need for the current study and its significance, and stating the aims and objectives;
- A literature review, that arise out of a survey of already available literature that is relevant to the particular area of research;
- A general materials and methods section. This however may vary among theses; i.e. For some theses, it might be appropriate to discuss different techniques in different chapters rather than to have a single materials and methods section while in theoretical theses this section may be absent altogether;
- Middle chapters detailing the various experiments;
- Chapters on results and discussion;
- A conclusion or a synopsis, providing an integrated discussion of results and suggestions for future work;
- A list of literature cited
- Appendices

Units:

Standard international units should be used. Unit symbols should be written after the numerical value, leaving a space between. E.g., 5 m.

Formulae:

Formulae should be printed leaving ample space around the formulae. Subscripts and superscripts should be clear. Meanings of all symbols should be given immediately after the equation in which they are first used. For simple fractions use the solidus (/) instead of a horizontal line. Equations should be numbered serially at the right hand side in parentheses. Use of fractional powers instead of root signs is recommended. Also powers of **e** are often more conveniently denoted by exp. Levels of statistical significance which can be mentioned without further explanation are * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.001$ and *** $p < 0.0001$. In chemical formulae, valence of ions should be given as, e.g. Ca^{2+} and CO_3^{2-} , not as Ca^{++} or CO_3^{-} . The repeated writing of chemical formulae in the text should be avoided. Instead, the name of the compound should be given in full. Exceptions may be made in the case of very long names occurring very frequently or in the case of a compound being described as the end product of a gravimetric determination.

Biological Names:

Names of biological species should be in italics. E.g. *Stemonoporus canaliculatus*; *Caryota urens* L; *Elettaria cardamomum* var. *mjor* Thw. When the same name appears more than once in the text it may be identified by the first letter of the genus name, followed by a period and then by the species name. E.g. *S. canaliculatus* instead of *Stemonoporus canaliculatus* in repeated writing of the name.

Tables and Figures:

Whenever possible tables and figures should be confined to a single page, and should be placed as close as possible to the first mention of these in the text. Captions and legends for both tables and figures must give enough information so that they can be understood without referring to the text. The caption should be placed above the table next to their unique number and underneath for figures. The axes of the figure (if it is a graphical presentation) should be clearly specified and the units and scale identified. Plates should be referred to as figures. Plates must be of publication standard which generally requires that they are photographic plates. Scanned images reproduced on a laser printer are not suitable for the original thesis, but may be used in copies. Adequate margins should be left on pages with tables and figures. Wherever possible, use the same margins that are used in the text. If large tables / figures require a landscape orientation, the top of the printed page should be at the thesis binding edge. Do not include tables / figures that are not referred to in the text.

References:

All references cited in the thesis should appear in the reference list, and all references in the reference list should appear as citations in the thesis. The reference list should be formatted to comply with one of the two following methods (**See annex IV for details**).

- Numeric system: Assign a number to each reference as it is referenced the first time in the thesis, and then to list these in numerical order in the reference list.
- Author – year system: Reference the author’s last name(s) and the year of publication whenever that source is referenced in the thesis. These references should then be placed in the reference list in alphabetical order by the last name of the first author of each reference.

Web sites should not be included in the reference list. These should be placed as foot notes on the same page, guided by an asterix. When citing web sites, the URL as well as the date on which it was down-loaded should be provided.

Appendices:

Detailed information or data which may increase the usefulness of the thesis for subsequent workers, but which are too detailed for inclusion in the main body of the thesis may be included as appendices. Appendices must be numbered with upper case roman numerals and separate from the text. Appendices must meet the standards with respect to margins and be formatted according to the remainder of the thesis, though text may be single spaced.

Style:

Simplicity and directness of writing style is recommended. The thesis should be free of spelling, grammatical, typographical and punctuation errors. A high standard of editing is expected.

Faculty of Science
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