

# Higher Degrees by Research Thesis Presentation - Guidelines



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## Introduction

These Guidelines apply to theses prepared for Higher Degrees by Research (HDR). HDR candidates at the University of the Sunshine Coast may submit either a:

- Traditional thesis; or
- Thesis with publication(s)

These guidelines stipulate requirements for thesis presentation and where applicable, specifications are provided to ensure conformity to discipline expectations. Regardless of the discipline area, it is required that the thesis be presented in scholarly English and be free from typographical and grammatical errors.

If there is a legitimate case for a thesis or exegesis to exceed the below word limits, special representation should be made to the Chair, Research Degrees Committee, for prior written approval to submit such a thesis or exegesis.

## Traditional thesis

### Word length (excludes appendices and footnotes)

- PhD: ~80,000
- Masters: ~40,000

### Format (PhD and Masters)

Typically, the following type of approach should be adopted for the format of the thesis:

- International Standard Paper Size A4 (297 x 210mm) should be used;
- The typing should be 1.5 spaced, presented in a clear and legible font and would normally be expected to be double-sided;
- Left and right margins should be no less than 30mm and page numbers should appear inside the margins;
- Pages should be numbered consecutively and clearly;
- Folding diagrams or charts should be arranged so as to open to the top and right;
- Before producing final copies of a thesis for submission, the candidate should ensure that all the spelling, grammar, punctuation and choice of language are of a higher degree standard and the bibliography is complete and exact. It is recommended that candidates have their theses proof-read before producing final copies.

## Structure

All theses should incorporate, in the following order:

**Title page:** A title page, giving the name of the thesis in full, the full name and academic qualifications of the candidate, the full details of the degree for which the work is submitted, the name of the Faculty and School associated with the work, the name and address of the University associated with the work, and the date of submission.

**Abstract:** A one to two page abstract of the work. This abstract or summary may be used for citation purposes, and should clearly outline the essence of the submitted work.

**Declaration of Originality:** A declaration of originality, attesting that the work does not contain material which has been previously published or written by any person other than the candidate except where due and proper reference has been given in the text. The declaration should be signed and dated by the candidate.

In the case of work that is based upon joint research or publications, the statement should include a statement disclosing the relative contributions of the respective authors, and, where practical, be counter-signed by all contributors.

**Acknowledgements:** An acknowledgements page, in which due scholarly acknowledgements are made by the candidate to persons or organisations that have materially assisted with the work. Due care must be exercised here to preserve the anonymity of persons or organisations who have been protected by research ethics conditions.

**Table of contents:** A table of contents, listing page references to the major sections and subsections of the text. Usually, pages that precede the main text are numbered using small Roman numerals, and the main text is numbered using Arabic numerals.

**List of tables, illustrations and figures:** A list of tables, a list of illustrations, and a list of figures.

**Preface:** A general preface to the work is optional. The words of the Preface will count towards the word total. The Preface can be used to make a researcher's statement and/or contextualise the work in a condensed way.

**Body of Thesis:** An example of a traditional thesis format could include chapters such as:

[usc.edu.au/policy](http://usc.edu.au/policy)

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Theoretical Framework
- Methodology and Methods
- Research Data Analysis and Findings
- Discussion and Conclusion

**References:** A reference list, containing full details of all works referred to in the text, using a standard referencing system must be included. There are many accepted referencing systems, but it is usual that a discipline will have a preferred system. The supervisor and student should ensure that the referencing system is followed precisely and accurately.

In the case of cross-disciplinary studies that might imply different referencing systems, the supervisor and student should decide upon one of these systems, and not mix referencing conventions.

**Bibliography:** In some theses, a bibliography will be expected, that lists all works that have contributed to the development of the scholarly ideas behind the thesis. In certain specialist areas, it will also be usual to distinguish between primary sources and secondary sources, and it is recommended that a student seek out recent examples of theses published in the area and use these as a model.

**Appendices:** Any appendices referred to in the text.

## Thesis with Publication

**Word length (excludes appendices and footnotes)**

- PhD: ~60,000
- Masters: ~30,000

## Format (PhD and Masters)

Typically, the following type of approach should be adopted for the format of the thesis:

- International Standard Paper Size A4 (297 x 210mm) should be used;
- The typing should be 1.5 spaced, presented in a clear and legible font and would normally be expected to be double-sided;
- Left and right margins should be no less than 30mm and page numbers should appear inside the margins;
- Pages should be numbered consecutively and clearly;
- Folding diagrams or charts should be arranged so as to open to the top and right;
- Before producing final copies of a thesis for submission, the candidate should ensure that all the spelling, grammar, punctuation and choice of language are of a higher degree standard and the bibliography is complete and exact. It is recommended that candidates have their theses proof-read before producing final copies.

## Publications

Publications must be either published or accepted for publication.

- Candidates may be either a sole or co-author.
- In cases of co-authorship, the candidate must have a general declaration on all papers that they have contributed 50% or more.
- The minimum number of publications to be included in a thesis is dictated by the discipline.

## Structure

All theses should incorporate, in the following order:

**Title page:** A title page, giving the name of the thesis in full, the full name and academic qualifications of the candidate, the full details of the degree for which the work is submitted, the name of the Faculty and School associated with the work, the name and address of the University associated with the work, and the date of submission.

**Abstract:** A one to two page abstract of the work. This abstract or summary may be used for citation purposes, and should clearly outline the essence of the submitted work.

**Declaration of Originality:** A declaration of originality, attesting that the work does not contain material which has been previously published or written by any person other than the candidate except where due and proper reference has been given in the text. The declaration should be signed and dated by the candidate.

In the case of work that is based upon joint research or publications, the statement should include a statement disclosing the relative contributions of the respective authors, and, where practical, be counter-signed by all contributors.

**Acknowledgements:** An acknowledgements page, in which due scholarly acknowledgements are made by the candidate to persons or organisations that have materially assisted with the work. Due care must be exercised here to preserve the anonymity of persons or organisations who have been protected by research ethics conditions.

**Table of contents:** A table of contents, listing page references to the major sections and subsections of the text. Usually, pages that precede the main text are numbered using small Roman numerals, and the main text is numbered using Arabic numerals.

List of tables, illustrations and figures: A list of tables, a list of illustrations, and a list of figures. List of original publications. To facilitate referencing to the published research papers and to items within published papers, accurate page numbers should be provided for all aspects of the thesis.

Preface (optional): A general preface to the work is optional. The words of the Preface will count towards the word total. The Preface can be used to make a researcher's statement and/or contextualise the work in a condensed way.

Body of Thesis: A thesis with publication(s) will consist of a series of related research articles, at least one of which has been published bound into the one volume, accompanied as appropriate by an introduction and a conclusion chapter. The thesis may be organised as the candidate deems most logical, and will normally consist of chapters or sections such as:

- Introduction/context
- Research articles (incorporating Literature Review, Methodology and Methods, etc.)
- Findings and Conclusions

References: A reference list, containing full details of all works referred to in the text, using a standard referencing system must be included. There are many accepted referencing systems, but it is usual that a discipline will have a preferred system. The supervisor and student should ensure that the referencing system is followed precisely and accurately.

In the case of cross-disciplinary studies that might imply different referencing systems, the supervisor and student should decide upon one of these systems, and not mix referencing conventions.

Bibliography: In some theses, a bibliography will be expected, that lists all works that have contributed to the development of the scholarly ideas behind the thesis. In certain specialist areas, it will also be usual to distinguish between primary sources and secondary sources, and it is recommended that a student seek out recent examples of theses published in the area and use these as a model.

Appendices: Any appendices referred to in the text.

## School specific requirements

If your enrolling school is not listed below, then follow the guidelines outlined above/and or seek further advice from your school or discipline.

## Education

The submission will take the form of a collection of original authored published works and an introductory statement. It is expected that for a significant number of the publications, the applicant will be the first-named author. All publications must have been subjected to peer review.

The collection of published works may include, for example:

- Books and monographs
- Chapters in books
- Scholarly articles, e.g. refereed articles in research journals

The introductory statement will include:

- In chronological order, list the publications being presented for examination
- Indicate the way in which the applicant's work has developed
- Demonstrate the contemporary relevance of each publication
- Make clear the way in which the publications make an original scholarly contribution to knowledge
- Provide a thematic overview which converts the individual publications into an integrated work
- Make the applicant's contribution to all jointly authored publications clear

## Health and Sport Sciences

The thesis will take the form of at least three thematically linked research articles for a doctoral candidate and one research article for a masters candidate authored by the candidate during candidature, each of which has gone through a

peer-review process and has been accepted for publication in a refereed research journal. The thesis should further provide an exegesis or literature review on the overarching research theme that gives background and context to the research question/s. The candidate's role in each publication should be clearly stated and highlight how individual publications address the main aim/s of the thesis. A summarising and conclusion statement relevant to the publications should be included at the end of the thesis.

Where one or more of the submitted papers are co-authored, each should be preceded by a clear statement of the intellectual contribution of the candidate which is signed by each of the co-authors, as well as the relative role of the candidate in the execution of the study and writing of the paper.

The candidate is normally expected to be the first-named author on their submitted papers. Where a candidate includes a paper on which they are not first-named author they should also include a statement explaining why they are not, and describing their contribution to the paper.

Quality refereed journals are the most appropriate research outlets for publication of papers for this type of thesis. Research books may also be accepted.

## Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedicine

The thesis summarises the research work undertaken by the candidate to provide evidence of academic achievement in original research.

A thesis may contain the following elements:

- Synopsis / extended abstract: a concise account of the research question/s or hypotheses, need and significance, the key findings of the results, the significance of the work undertaken, the main conclusions drawn, and how the included works are linked within a cogent intellectual framework.
- Introduction: a description of the research conducted, aims/questions and or hypothesis. An account of the research papers that links the papers to provide continuity for the thesis so the reader can understand the logic underpinning the progression of the research.
- Literature Review If one of the published papers is not a comprehensive literature review that underpins the study program as a whole then a literature review or additional literature review is provided in this section.
- Methodology
- Main body: may be in the in the form at least 3 papers, all of which should be accepted for publication in peer reviewed journals appropriate to the topic. Each paper should be prefaced with a clear explanation of the contribution made by each author of a jointly authored paper. This section should include a detailed account that explains the relationship of the papers to each other and the research question.
- Discussion and Conclusion: sets out how the work presented in the main body / chapters has advanced the discipline, what new research questions it generated, and how the findings can be contextualised into the broader research domain.

Where there is multiple authorship, the candidate should be principal author on at least two of the three papers and have written permission of the co-authors.

## Science and Engineering

The thesis summarizes the research work undertaken by the candidate to provide evidence of academic achievement, rigour and innovation in original research

A thesis comprises three parts:

- Synopsis / extended abstract A concise account of the main hypotheses/questions addressed, the key findings of the results, the significance of the work undertaken and the main conclusions drawn). PhD – max. 1,000 words; Masters – max. 750 words.
- Main body Generally presented in the form of a series of chapters that resemble in style, format, structure and presentation publications in leading journals in the discipline#. PhD – max. 75,000 words; Masters – max. 40,000 words.
- Conclusions This section sets out how the work presented in the main body has advanced the discipline, what new hypotheses it generated, and how the findings can be contextualised into the broader research domain. PhD – max. 4,000 words; Masters – max. 3,000 words.

## Creative Arts Exegesis

Word length (excludes appendices and footnotes)

- PhD: 30,000-40,000
- Masters: 15,000-20,000

Word length (creative component)

There is no recommended word length for the creative component.

## Format (PhD and Masters)

Typically, the following type of approach should be adopted for the format of the thesis:

- International Standard Paper Size A4 (297 x 210mm) should be used;
- The typing should be 1.5 spaced, presented in a clear and legible font and would normally be expected to be double-sided;
- Left and right margins should be no less than 30mm and page numbers should appear inside the margins;
- Pages should be numbered consecutively and clearly;
- Folding diagrams or charts should be arranged so as to open to the top and right;
- Before producing final copies of a thesis for submission, the candidate should ensure that all the spelling, grammar, punctuation and choice of language are of a higher degree standard and the bibliography is complete and exact. It is recommended that candidates have their theses proof-read before producing final copies.

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**Abstract:** A one to two page abstract of the work. This abstract or summary may be used for citation purposes, and should clearly outline the essence of the submitted work.

**Declaration of Originality:** A declaration of originality, attesting that the work does not contain material which has been previously published or written by any person other than the candidate except where due and proper reference has been given in the text. The declaration should be signed and dated by the candidate.

In the case of work that is based upon joint research or publications, the statement should include a statement disclosing the relative contributions of the respective authors, and, where practical, be counter-signed by all contributors.

**Acknowledgements:** An acknowledgements page, in which due scholarly acknowledgements are made by the candidate to persons or organisations that have materially assisted with the work. Due care must be exercised here to preserve the anonymity of persons or organisations who have been protected by research ethics conditions.

**Table of contents:** A table of contents, listing page references to the major sections and subsections of the text. Usually, pages that precede the main text are numbered using small Roman numerals, and the main text is numbered using Arabic numerals.

**List of tables, illustrations and figures:** A list of tables, a list of illustrations, and a list of figures.

**Preface (optional):** A general preface to the work is optional. The words of the Preface will count towards the word total. The Preface can be used to make a researcher's statement and/or contextualise the work in a condensed way.

**Body of Thesis:** The examinable material for the Doctor or Master of Creative Arts is constituted by the creative arts product and an exegesis. Where the creative work consists of printed materials, it must be bound into the same volume as the exegesis. The creative work may precede or follow the exegesis as the candidate deems most logical.

Where the creative work consists of non-print materials, the requirements are specified in section 7 of the Higher Degrees by Research Thesis Submission and Examination – Procedures.

The exegesis will normally consist of chapters or sections such as:

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology and Methods
- Findings and Conclusions

**References:** A reference list, containing full details of all works referred to in the text, using a standard referencing system must be included. There are many accepted referencing systems, but it is usual that a discipline will have a preferred system. The supervisor and student should ensure that the referencing system is followed precisely and accurately. In the case of cross-disciplinary studies that might imply different referencing systems, the supervisor and student should decide upon one of these systems, and not mix referencing conventions.

**Bibliography:** In some theses, a bibliography will be expected, that lists all works that have contributed to the development of the scholarly ideas behind the thesis. In certain specialist areas, it will also be usual to distinguish between primary sources and secondary sources, and it is recommended that a student seek out recent examples of theses published in the area and use these as a model.

**Appendices:** Any appendices referred to in the text.