

## Department of Postgraduate Studies

# Thesis Writing Guidelines

### Using Introductions and Conclusions to Chapters:

Each of the thesis chapters should encompass both an introduction and a conclusion. The former equips the reader with a map road of what is to come, and the latter provides a brief summary of what they have just read. Each introduction should be connected to the conclusion of the preceding chapter, and forwards to the contents of the chapter which you are introducing. The conclusion should recall the chapter just completed, and forward to the introduction of the following chapter. Those conclusions and introductions should smooth out the transition from chapter to chapter.

### Introduction:

This chapter provides an introduction by giving a brief overview of the structure of the thesis. This is by giving details of the research topic you have decided to focus on, the significance of the study (i.e. the gaps in current knowledge are and how your work adds value to previous research), the research aim and objectives, and research questions (or the hypotheses) and any sub-set of questions to be tackled. The aim of the research provides a description of what you want to attain from running this research. The objectives of the research outline the specific matters that you are required to tackle in order to achieve the aim above. The research questions are more precise than the research objectives. They specify the various information and understandings that are required to be collected in order to achieve the objectives. It is worth to mention that the research question often starts with a why, how, or what.

The introduction should also comprise a brief statement identifying the delimitations (i.e. factors that were controlled by the researcher), limitations (i.e. factors that were not under the control of the researcher), and assumptions (i.e. factors that the researcher assumes were taken into consideration) linked to the study.

### Background:

A background chapter should only be comprised when the thesis is about a focused topic. It should acquaint the non-specialized reader with the necessarily information to be able to acquire a full understanding of the thesis argument.

## **Literature Review:**

This chapter thoroughly summarizes previous work conducted on a particular topic. It capitalizes on secondary sources (i.e. what scholars have already written on the subject) and concentrates on the relevant previous academic works.

The author should present the subtopics that affect the processes of the study. Each subtopic should include an in-depth examination of the literature that influences that subtopic. A critical review of other researchers can be integrated as a part of arguments of the broad theoretical background. However, it might be necessary in numerous theses to run comparisons with homogeneous studies tackling similar problems in some aspect. The literature review should together prop up the process and motive of the study.

It is worth to mention that the literature review should lead and defend the research objectives and questions of the study. It should not just be a list of authors, frameworks and thoughts but should endeavor to present a critical evaluation of those authors' research.

To prepare a literature review the researcher should:

- Search for authentic, accurate and recent material on the subject
- Peruse and outline the main points from this literature
- Merge these major ideas, theories and concepts into a summary
- Deliberate and evaluate this summary
- Identify specific areas of argument or controversy
- Apply these ideas to a new study

## **Methodology:**

This chapter is How, why and what chapter. It must meticulously argue for and justify each decision taken on how to organize the research and gather the data. In other words, it should provide a concise and clear description of how the researcher had handled the study and what are the methods that had been adopted to tackle the research objectives. The researcher is required to justify and provide a set of arguments of the selection of the deployed methods as the most suitable for his/her study among the many other ones given its particular objectives, and limitations that may be encounter in terms of access, time, etc.

A solid thesis will inform the reader on:

1. How has the researcher compiled the data?
2. Why this was a reliable and valid approach to conducting it?
3. How this approach fitted the questions he is asking?
4. Why has he chosen such a method (e.g. quantitative survey rather than qualitative case studies)?
5. How he intends to analyze the gathered data
6. What are the limitations of the methods he is adopting? And how is he attempting to mitigate those problems?

**Findings, analysis and discussion:**

In this chapter, the researcher should present a structured view of the data he has collected by addressing his/her research questions derived from the literature review. The analysis should exactly tackle the issues or questions that are the foundation of the thesis. In other words, it should address the following questions, what does the extracted data tell the reader? Are the findings in line with existing research, theories, and established practices? Do the outcomes have any real-world implications? Have they proven or abandoned issues raised in the literature review? How might this all build a more comprehensive picture of the area that the researcher has been probing? The chapter should encompass a critical analysis of the findings by discussing similarities and discrepancies between the results obtained and previous studies. It should follow a logical and coherent order to render the thought processes and interpretation clear to the reader.

Theses covering detailed modelling or quantitative analysis are required to summarize the relevant assumptions, relationships and methods. The academic supervisor shall advise on the level of detail needed in the main body in contrast to that incorporated in the Appendix.

Tables and figures are always valuable ways of presenting research results and breaking up “static text blocks” – to include only the most relevant ones as evidence of your findings.

**Conclusion and Recommendations:**

This chapter should consist of a concise summary of the thesis argument and findings. In other words, it should briefly review earlier chapters. The conclusion should mention the extent to which each of the aims and objectives has been satisfied. The researcher should not include any additional material or references here. However, he needs to reiterate the research questions and state his/her perception of those questions.

The chapter should provide a short section on recommendations for future research in this area. Besides, it should include a statement of the research limitations.

**References:**

A Bibliography or reference list should include, in alphabetical order, the references used in writing the thesis (whether direct quotations or paraphrasing). The researcher should use the American Psychological Association style, i.e. APA style, for listing references.

**Appendices:**

If necessary, the researcher may use Appendices to provide pertinent supporting evidence for reference. The appendices incorporate evidence confirming the work originality as well as supporting the point the student is making.

**Note that the university takes seriously the statement that the thesis is the own work of the student and has not been written for him/her, in whole or in part, by any other person. Furthermore, any quotation or paraphrase from published or unpublished work of another person has been firmly acknowledged in the work which the student presents.**