

Guidelines for Thesis Writing

Guidelines for the submission of theses and dissertations for higher degrees of the University of Khartoum in basic and applied sciences

I. General

The thesis or dissertation must be type - written or printed on good quality A4 paper. Typing must be double - spaced and on one side of the page only. Copies must be clear. There should be a 5cm margin on the left and a 2.5cm margin on the right side of page. Typing should be about 4cm from the upper edge, and there should be a 2.5cm margin at the bottom of page. Pages should be numbered consecutively, and the number should appear just below the center of the lower margin.

Each copy of the thesis or dissertation is to be bound in black. The spine should be embossed in gold with the initials and surname of the candidate, the degree for which the thesis or dissertation is being submitted and the year of submission.

II. General Layout of Theses and Dissertations

There are, generally two plans for the layout of theses and dissertations. These are outlined hereunder.

Plan A :- this is the usual plan, and consists of the following:

- 1) Preliminaries: these are
 - i. Title page
 - ii. Declaration
 - iii. Dedication (optional)
 - iv. Table of contents
 - v. Acknowledgements
 - vi. Abstract (Arabic and English)
 - vii. List of tables
 - viii. List of figures
- 2) Introduction
- 3) Literature review
- 4) Materials and methods
- 5) Results
- 6) Discussiton
- 7) References
- 8) Appendices (optional)

Plan B:- this may be necessary if the work is so diverse as to to need separate sections. This is not likely for short M.Sc. theses and more often is found in Ph.D. theses. In this plan, the layout is as follows:-

- 1) Preliminaries (**as in plan A**)
- 2) General introduction (inculding literature review)
- 3) section1:
 - i. Title
 - ii. Introduction
 - iii. Materials and methods
 - iv. Results
 - v. Discussion
- 4) section2:
(**same as in section1**)
- 5)section3:
(**same as in section1**)

- 6) General Discussion
- 7) References
- 8) Appendices (optional)

III.Guidelines for the different parts of a thesis or a dissertation.

Normally, a thesis or dissertation is made up of two main parts: preliminaries and text.

1) Preliminaries:

(i) Title page: it consists of the following:

- title of thesis or dissertation in capitals
- full name of candidate, with previous qualifications.
- A phrase that reads " A thesis or dissertation submitted to the university of khartoum for the degree of (name degree)". If The submission is in partial fulfillment of degree, this should be indicated in the previous phrase.(this should come in centre of the page)
- Name and title of supervisor and co-supervisor (if any)
- Faculty or school or institute.
- The month and year of submission

(ii) Declaration: every thesis or dissertation must be accompanied by a signed declaration, to the satisfaction of the Graduate college stating that it has not been submitted for a degree in any other University.

(iii) Table of contents: it should include page numbers of the preliminaries in Roman numerals (I,ii...etc)and of the text (starting with the introduction) in Arabic numerals (1,2...etc). pages before the table of contents (title page , dedication) should have no numbers.

(iv) Abstract :

* Arabic and English abstracts , should be included in the thesis .Abstracts in other languages will be required if the thesis is prepared in a language other than English or Arabic. * Abstract should not exceed a thousand words. It briefly reports the objective(s) of the investigation, the material and methods used, the main results and the principal conclusion(s).

* The Abstract is a mini-version of the thesis. It should not contain reference to the literature, tables or figures. (in medical sciences structured abstracts are used).

(v) Acknowledgements: include all those who helped in conducting the research, e.g., supervisor, co-supervisor(if any), fund and material providers, persons who gave advice or technical assistance ... etc.

(vi) Lists of tables; figures and plates should include a number, a caption and a page number of each table, figure and plate.

2)Text:

It usually consists of six sections, starting with the introduction and ending with the list of references.hereunder is a brief description of the main contents of each of these sections

(i) Introduction: it defines the nature and importance of the problem studied and justification for the study.

(ii) Material and methods: this section should contain a full description of what was done and how it was done and the tools which were used. If experiment(s) was conducted indicate site (s), dates (s) and design. Most of this section is written in the past tense.

(iii) Literature review: this section should contain an extensive up-to-date review of the important work carried out previously in the Sudan and elsewhere, on the problem under study. Literature must be cited in the text by author and date(Harvard system)or citation sequence system). Students should consult their supervisors in this regard.

(iv) Results: this section describes what was found. The data should be presented in tables or figures or both, but the same should not be presented in both a table and a figure. Each table, figure and plate should be self-explanatory and have a number and a caption (title). The latter should be a phrase rather than a sentence. Refer to the tables, figures and plates by their numbers and not by their positions (below, above , following). Results are written in the past tense.

(v)Discussion: this is the key section and the most difficult part to write. It includes interpretation explanation of the results and comparison with the results reported in the literature on the same

problem under study. It ends with a sentence or more on conclusions or else conclusions may be written under a separate heading. Make sure that your conclusions are, in fact, conclusions and not a summary.

(vi) References (literature cited):

The reference list should include all works cited in the text. There is no "right" way and "wrong" way for listing references, but consistency is a must.

Generally, there are three common styles for reference lists in the biological sciences. These are:

(a) name-year system (some times is referred to as the Harvard system).

(b) Alphabet -number system, and

(c) Citation -sequence system (sometimes referred to as the vancouver system). This system is preferred in the biomedical studies.

Within these three systems, there are many variations. The list of references should include mainly published references. Personal communications should not be included in the reference list; they may be cited in the text, e.g. M.M.A. Elnur pers.Comm.).

All references cited in the text should be included in references section and vice versa, and that the spelling of the names of authors and year of publication are the same in the text and the list.

Writing a Ph.D.Research Proposal

1. Title: should be brief , expressive and contains as few words as possible. It is a phrase, not a sentence.
2. Name and qualifications of the proposer: e.g., B.Sc. where and when they were obtained.
3. Introduction: it defines nature and extent of the problem to be studied; relates the research that will be undertaken to previous work by brief review of the literature; adequate rationale to justify the research proposal. The introduction should be short, not more than two pages.
4. Objective(s) : general and specific (if any).
5. Material and methods: A brief description of the material and methods to be used including experimental design and data collection and analysis. That is, this section should contain a description of what will be done.
6. Output: what is expected?
7. Time frame for execution of the different phases of the research project.
8. References: only the key references should be cited and listed.

Further reading:

1. Khidir, M. Osman (2003). Guide to Scientific Writing, second edition.,76p.,Khartoum University Press. (It deals mainly with basic and applied biological sciences).
2. Mohamed, Adam Elzein (2001). Guide to research methodology and writing of thesis, third edition (In Arabic) . Omdurman Islamic University Printing & Publishing. (It deals mainly with research in humanities).