Guidelines for Thesis Preparation

[updated November 2024]

Contents

1   Introduction

The writing of a doctoral degree thesis can seem a daunting prospect. Often there can be a great deal of information that has been accumulated and analysed during a research project. Making sense of it can be made more manageable by breaking down or collating the content into chapters, with headings of choice. Each chapter can itself be broken down further into numbered sections. Planning these sequentially numbered chapter and section headings in advance of writing can be of benefit in organizing thoughts and ideas, as well as helping to develop a coherent thesis plan. Students can begin planning their research degree thesis at any time during the research period.

A thesis is statement of investigation or research, presenting your findings and any conclusions reached, submitted in support of your candidature for a higher degree, professional qualification or other award. Aside from meeting this general questions criterion, you should bear in mind that theses are read, stored, and copied, and should be designed, prepared and produced for such use.

1.1   Support

Your Director of Studies and supervisory team are your primary source of advice, particularly about subject/area specific issues. You can also get advice from the Graduate School's academic writing specialist and the digital specialist within your School's Learning Development Centre.

1.2   When a chapter has been published

If any part of the thesis has been published or has been accepted for publication as part, then you need to check the copyright agreement you have signed with the publisher. Even if the copyright is assigned to the publisher, the publisher will normally

allow the use of the material in the thesis. Publications with a peer-review process are usually accepted.

Types of copyright can be found on the Sherpa website resources https://beta.sherpa.ac.uk/search or contact the GCU Library team for support around copyright.

 If your publication has been published or accepted for publication by the time you submit your thesis, you should include the accepted version in the appendix. You should include the latest version of the publication (this would normally be the author accepted manuscript) and update the publication status in the corresponding declaration (see Declaration)

2   Thesis format

Doctoral degree theses are normally submitted for examination in an electronic format (pdf file).

2.1   Language

The thesis must be presented in English. Consistent forms of language, spelling, numbering, symbols, etc. should be used throughout a thesis. The expectation in UK universities is that British spelling should be used, e.g. colour not color, labour not labor. However, in exceptional cases where US spelling and grammar are used, it should be consistent throughout the text.

You should also make sure you have checked the thesis and/or proofread for spelling and accuracy, including cross-references and sequences of numbers, before submission. The author of the thesis is responsible for any errors and examiners are entitled to reject or return any thesis where the presentation, including the standard of English language, punctuation and grammar, is such that it impedes understanding or does not meet the requirements of study at doctoral level.

2.2   Text

It is essential that the presentation of a thesis follows the conventions of its particular discipline. However, there are conventions that are common to all disciplines. For example, italic script and esoteric or idiosyncratic fonts should not be used merely for decorative effect. Typically, a thesis should be produced in portrait mode, using 12 pt sans-serif font like Aptos, Arial, Calibri, etc. with 1.5 line spacing and a clear gap between paragraphs, and the main text should be aligned left. You should also avoid using all capitals, unless needed for abbreviations.

2.2.1 Quotations

As a general guideline also, quotations should be indented either on the left hand side or both on the left and the right hand side. They should not be set in italics.

2.3   Chapters

Research degree theses are normally divided into appropriately sized units, or chapters. Each chapter should relate to a single theme. Chapters, sections and sub-sections should be sequentially numbered using Arabic numerals and a hierarchical system, e.g. chapter 1; section 1.1; sub-section 1.1.1, etc., where the word "chapter" could be included before the number, but words like "section" or "subsection" should not be added to the headings.

Each chapter should begin on a new page, with the chapter number and title included.

2.4   Paragraphs

Paragraphs should be left aligned and set flush left with a space of at least 12pt between them to clearly separate individual paragraphs.

2.5   Numbering and lists within Chapters

Lists should ideally be simple bullets when the order is not of consequence. Typically, numbered lists should be used where the list in a sequence with Arabic numbers, rather than Roman numerals or letters.

2.6   Page formatting

Pages should be A4 in portrait mode, apart from when very wide tables or other visuals are presented which can sit in a landscape orientated page(s). Page numbers should be visibly clear of the text, preferably in the top or bottom right corner of each page. The pages of the thesis should be numbered in a single sequence beginning with the title page, which should be counted but not numbered. The use of blank pages should be avoided if possible.

2.7   Tables and figures

If tables are used within a thesis, they should be designed with care so that they fit the format of the thesis, i.e. do not go into the margins of the page and are formatted following the accepted standards of the discipline. If tables are integrated into the text, as opposed to presented in appendices, each should appear as near as possible to the first reference to it in the text.

The text inside the tables should be left aligned where possible. The font used should be the same as the rest of the thesis, but the font size may be smaller to accommodate the amount of information in the table, however a minimum font size of 8point (ideally 10-12pt) should be used.

Figures, if embedded in the text, should also appear as near as possible to the first reference to them in the text.

Each table and figure should have a caption with a number and title/short description. Simple consecutive Arabic numerals should be used in the numbering of the tables and figures, i.e. Figure 1, Table 7, etc.

3 Structure of the thesis

3.1 Title page

Title page should have:

> The most up to date University logo
>
> Thesis title (including number of volumes if more than one and the number of a particular volume)
>
> Author full name
>
> Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of _____
> Department of _____
>
> School of _____
>
> Glasgow Caledonian University
>
> Month and year of submission

Any additional funding for this research should be acknowledge by adding:

"This research programme was [partly] funded by _____"

If you collaborated with researchers from other institutions you can mention them here too

"This research programme was carried out in collaboration with _____" before the month and year of submission.

The candidate's name should be in the form registered with the University. A sample of a title page can be found in the Appendix on page 16.

3.2 Declaration

A declaration regarding the publication in your thesis should also be included. The wording can be something like:

"I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified."

If parts of your thesis have been submitted for publication or have been accepted then you should also add to the Declaration regarding the publication in your thesis to clarify that part of it has been published, i.e. "Parts of this work [provide details] have been published in [provide details of publications]/have been submitted for publication in [provide details] and are included in the Appendix [ ]".

For jointly authored publications based on your thesis you should use this text instead, note that you should include a declaration like this for every jointly authored publication: "The work presented in Chapter [provide details] was previously published in [publication name] as [title of article] by [authors]. This study was conceived by all of the authors. I carried out [description of your contribution]".

3.3   Abstract

The abstract should follow the title page. It should provide a synopsis of the thesis, stating the nature and scope of work undertaken and the contribution made to knowledge in the subject treated. It should appear on its own on a single page. The abstract can be formatted with a single line spacing if needed.

3.4   Preface/Acknowledgments

If a preface is included, it should precede the acknowledgements, and both should be included separately. If there is no preface, the acknowledgement should have its own heading. The preface or acknowledgement should include reasons for undertaking the study as well as acknowledgement of assistance, for example, support such as scholarships and grants, consultations and discussions with supervisors and colleagues.

3.5 Table of contents

A full table of contents should be added, including all levels of headings and any appendices.

3.6 List of figures and tables

The list of figures and tables should follow the list of contents. They may be separate with separate headings (List of figures, followed by List of tables); or if there are only a few figures and tables in the thesis, they can be listed under one combined heading.

3.7 Abbreviations

It is recommended that a list of abbreviations used is included in the thesis document. To keep the structure neat, a table of two columns, one for the abbreviation and one for the corresponding explanation, can be used with the borders of the table not visible.

3.8 Definitions (if needed)

If any terms are used that may benefit from being clarified to facilitate understanding, it may be useful to include a list of definitions.

3.9 Content chapters

Research degree theses are normally divided into appropriately sized units, or chapters. Ensure that your chapter structure is clear and logical, using sections and sub-sections where appropriate.

Each chapter should begin on a new page, with the chapter number and title included.

3.10 References

A bibliographical reference should be given for every work, published or unpublished, cited in the text; this is normally referred to as a Reference List. Candidates should seek advice from their supervisory teams about the preferred referencing systems for their disciplines.

A consistent form of presentation, for example the Cite Them Right Harvard Referencing System, APA or Numeric Referencing, should be used for all bibliographical references throughout the thesis. Certain disciplines have their own rules and it is essential that students/candidates seek advice to ensure that they are using the correct conventions. More information on referencing can be found on the Library's website.

3.11 Appendices

Appendices may consist of material of considerable length or of lists, documents, commentaries, tables or other evidence that, if included in the main text, would interrupt its flow.

3.12 Glossary (if needed)

If there is a glossary, it should follow the text and any appendices. It should contain any specialist terms used in the thesis.

3.13 Index (if included)

An index is a list of key terms and themes that are mentioned in the thesis and list of pages where they are mentioned.

4 Copies, Submission and Distribution

An electronic copy of the draft thesis for examination should be emailed to researchdegreeexams@gcu.ac.uk along with the completed RDC8 at least 6 weeks before the intended viva voce. Theses should not be sent directly to the examiners. A copy of the final version, after any corrections and after approval by the internal/external examiners, as appropriate, must be emailed to researchdegreeexams@gcu.ac.uk to be forwarded to the University Library. No award can be made until the final, corrected version of the thesis has been submitted.

Candidates for GCU research degrees are required to deposit an electronic copy of their **final thesis** in GCU's research repository (Pure) to be made open access in GCU's institutional repository ResearchOnline.

Follow the guidelines from the GCU Thesis deposit page to make sure that you deposit your thesis successfully. Your degree will not be awarded until you have deposited your thesis and a copy of the Library Doctoral Thesis Deposit Declaration. You can contact the library research team if you have any questions: libraryresearch@gcu.ac.uk.

Please note: only the final, post-viva copy of your thesis needs to be electronically submitted to the Library in this way. Deposit is not required for the examination copy prior to the viva.

4.1   Printed version

Formatting of the thesis should follow the guidance given in Sections 2.1-2.7 and Section 3.

If printing the thesis, paper used for the text should be of a substance within the range of 70 g/m2 to 100 g/m2. The paper should be white to be easy to read and reproduce. Text should be printed recto (i.e. on the right-hand page of an open book only). Text for illustrations or tables, may be required to be versos (left hand page of an open book) to allow a diagram to face related text). In the latter case, the verso should be numbered as facing the recto, e.g. "facing page 13" or "fp 13."

If it is necessary to present an illustration on a paper size larger than A4, it should be produced on paper that can be folded to fit within the thesis. If possible, such an illustration should be mounted on an A4-size guard. The binder should be asked to advise on an appropriate format for presentation, if there are likely to be several large illustrations. Illustrations should be not pasted across both pages of an open volume. Material that cannot conveniently be bound near the related text, should be packaged in such a way that it can be bound with the thesis, stored in a pocket attached to the inside back cover of the appropriate volume.

The margin on the binding edge of the page (i.e. the left-hand edge of a recto and the right- hand edge of a verso) should not be less than 40 mm. Other margins should be not less than 15 mm. The font size and line length should also be considered when deciding margin width.

Running heads and page numbers should be within the recommended margins. The margins around all illustrations and off-prints should normally be no smaller than those of the text.

The title of the thesis should be given on the cover. Titles or words in non-roman characters should be converted to the roman alphabet. Arabic numerals are acceptable, but other symbols in non-roman characters (e.g. some mathematical symbols) should not be used in spine or cover titles.

The candidate's name should be in the form registered with Glasgow Caledonian University. A specimen thesis cover showing the appropriate layout is shown on page 10 of this document. Any lettering on the spine and cover should be large enough to be legible when the volume is on a library shelf. Normally, lettering of 8 mm capital height will be required if the lettering is all in capitals and 10 mm capital height if capitals and lower case are used. The spine should bear the surname and initials of the candidate, the year of submission and the volume number if the work consists of more than one volume.

4.2   Thesis binding (where required)

The following companies are located in Glasgow and have prepared theses to GCU regulations in the past. Other companies may be available.

Cameron Bookbinders 103 Commerce St Glasgow G5 8DL

Tel. 0141 429 7333

fraser@cameronbookbinders.co.uk http://www.cameronbookbinders.co.uk

Downie Allison Downie (Bookbinders and Printers)

Unit H Purdon St

Glasgow G11 6AF Tel. 0141 339 0333

mail@dadbookbinders.com http://www.dadbookbinders.com

Appendix

Sample cover page is available on the next page.

Glasgow Caledonian University

University for the Common Good

The Origins of Microcredit Finance: Policy and Practice

Andrea Banker

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Glasgow Caledonian University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

May 2024