

Producing your thesis – a guide for research students

Contents

Contents	1
1. Introduction.....	2
2. Declaration of Authorship	3
3. Maximum thesis length.....	3
4. Language requirements	4
5. Preparation of your thesis	5
6. Specifications	5
7. Text, Typographical Design, Page Layout and thesis templates.....	6
8. Images and graphics	9
9. Proof reading and editing.....	9
10. Ordering of material	10
11. Abstract.....	11
12. Appendices.....	12
13. Copyright	12
14. Submission of your thesis	13
15. Reproduction and binding of your thesis (optional)	13
Document Information	16

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance is intended for research students at the University of Southampton on the production of a thesis for a Doctoral or Master of Philosophy degree. Separate guidance is available on submitting your thesis in the document [Submitting your thesis – a guide for research students](#).
- 1.2 You are required to submit:
 - For examination - one electronic copy of your thesis
 - For award - one electronic copy of your final thesis (e-thesis), including all corrections/amendments, in PDF/A-3 (an archivable version of PDF [Portable Document Format]) for cataloguing and storage in the Library.
- 1.3 It is your responsibility to follow the specifications laid out in this document when preparing your thesis. If you are seeking help with the preparation of your thesis, you should ensure that those helping you are aware of the requirements. Further information on thesis templates; copyright; restricting access; the Institutional Repository; and Research Data Management, is available via the [University Library thesis website](#).
- 1.4 You are strongly advised not to submit your thesis for examination until your main supervisor (or any other member of the supervisory team as appropriate) has had an opportunity to comment on the separate chapters and on the work as a whole. You should take note of supervision advice but your supervisor's comments and their agreement that your thesis is suitable for submission should not be taken as an indication that the thesis will fulfil the requirements of the examiners. The decision to submit is your own.
- 1.5 You must submit your thesis by the end of the maximum period of candidature. You will be examined at your *viva voce* on the criteria described in the [Code of Practice for Research for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#) (known herein as the 'Code of Practice'), and your examiners will make one of the

recommendations as listed in the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#).

2. Declaration of Authorship

- 2.1 It is very important that your thesis contains a clear declaration stating that it is the result of work done wholly or mainly by you whilst in candidature for a research degree at this University. If it is based on work done jointly with others, you must clearly state what was done by others, and what you have contributed yourself. If applicable, you need to indicate the extent to which the thesis incorporates material already submitted (by yourself or any other person) for another degree. You also need to confirm that you have attributed published sources you have consulted or quoted, and acknowledged all main sources of help. A completed but unsigned [Declaration of Authorship form](#) must be included in your electronic thesis (e-thesis).
- 2.2 You are at liberty to publish the whole or part of your work prior to submitting it as a thesis, provided that there is no indication in the published work that it is under consideration for the award of a higher degree. If you do publish parts of your thesis before submission, you will need to list references to these publications in the [Declaration of Authorship form](#).

3. Maximum thesis length

- 3.1 As stated in the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#), the maximum length of a thesis is normally 75,000 words for a PhD or 50,000 words for an MPhil. You should confirm the word limits and requirements of your particular research degree with your supervisor as, where appropriate, the Faculty Director of the Graduate School (in their capacity as Chair of Faculty Graduate School Subcommittee) may determine a higher word limit for a specific discipline. A thesis submitted for an MPhil after a PhD examination is not subject to a maximum length of 50,000 words but it must not exceed 75,000 words.

- 3.2 As stated in the [Code of Practice](#), the maximum length of the thesis does not include: supporting material or evidence which may be bound in as appendices; references; the bibliography; or as footnotes. All supporting material or evidence will be available to the examiners and will form part of the record.
- 3.3 It is important to remember that the stated maximum word limit is not a target figure; an important aspect of scholarship that must be demonstrated in a thesis is the ability to convey information concisely. If your thesis exceeds the stipulated length, you may be required by the examiners to re-submit your thesis in a format which does not exceed the maximum length.
- 3.4 Prior to notifying your intention to submit, you may present a statement to your supervisory team indicating that the thesis cannot be contained within the stipulated length for reasons relating to the subject material. Should your supervisory team consider a longer thesis is appropriate, its recommendation must be submitted to the Faculty Director of the Graduate School for a decision in advance of your submitting your thesis for examination.

4. Language requirements

- 4.1 You should use gender neutral language unless the nature of your research requires the use of gender specific language.
- 4.2 In accordance with the [Code of Practice](#), a thesis may be written in a language other than English with the approval of the Faculty Graduate School Subcommittee. Any such request must be made through your co-ordinating supervisor to the Faculty Graduate School Subcommittee which will consider your request on an individual basis. It will require assurances that there will be no problems in examining the thesis and that the subsequent published work will be accessible to subject specialists. If permission is granted, you will be expected to provide the accompanying abstract in English.

5. Preparation of your thesis

- 5.1 If there are issues of confidentiality relating to the content of your thesis that might affect its preparation, proof-reading, or editing, you should seek advice from your main supervisor in the first instance or, on their advice, from the University's [Research and Innovation Services' website](#).
- 5.2 You should be aware that typesetting a thesis for a student is not part of the duties of University staff. If you are not planning to typeset the thesis yourself, you may be able to arrange for someone within or outside the University to prepare your thesis, but both acceptance of the work and the charge to be made are entirely a matter between you and the person employed by you to carry out this work. You are advised to agree in advance the method of charging and the date by which the completed work is required. It is also advisable to provide guidance contained in this document on typographic design. The use of a commercial typesetting service may reduce the time taken but will incur cost.

6. Specifications

- 6.1 One electronic copy of the thesis must be submitted for examination. Please access paragraph 7. Text, Typographical Design, Page Layout and thesis templates.
- 6.2 The University follows the principles as set out in the 'British Standard Specification for Abbreviation of Title Words and Titles Publications, BS4148:1985', and the 'BS4821:1990 British Standard Recommendations for the Presentation of Theses and Dissertations'. Whilst this standard has now been officially withdrawn, it still offers the best guidance. Both publications are available through the University Library via [British Standards Online](#). The information below covers all of the major aspects of thesis production, but the British Standards publications contain more detail on, for example, colour reproduction, tables, references, and appendices. The Library also provides support for [citing and](#)

[referencing](#). You should refer to these if you come across a particular problem.

7. Text, Typographical Design, Page Layout and thesis templates

7.1 Available on the [University Library thesis website](#) are links to Word and LaTeX thesis templates that meet the requirements as set out below. Using templates from the outset to format your work will simplify the process of submitting your thesis, for example, by enabling time-saving features such as the automatic generation and updating of the table of contents. [iSolution's 'Producing your thesis in Word' website](#) also offer useful guides on the completion of your thesis using Word for Windows or Mac using such templates. Training on the use of Word and the thesis template is available via the [Doctoral College's Workshops and events](#) pages.

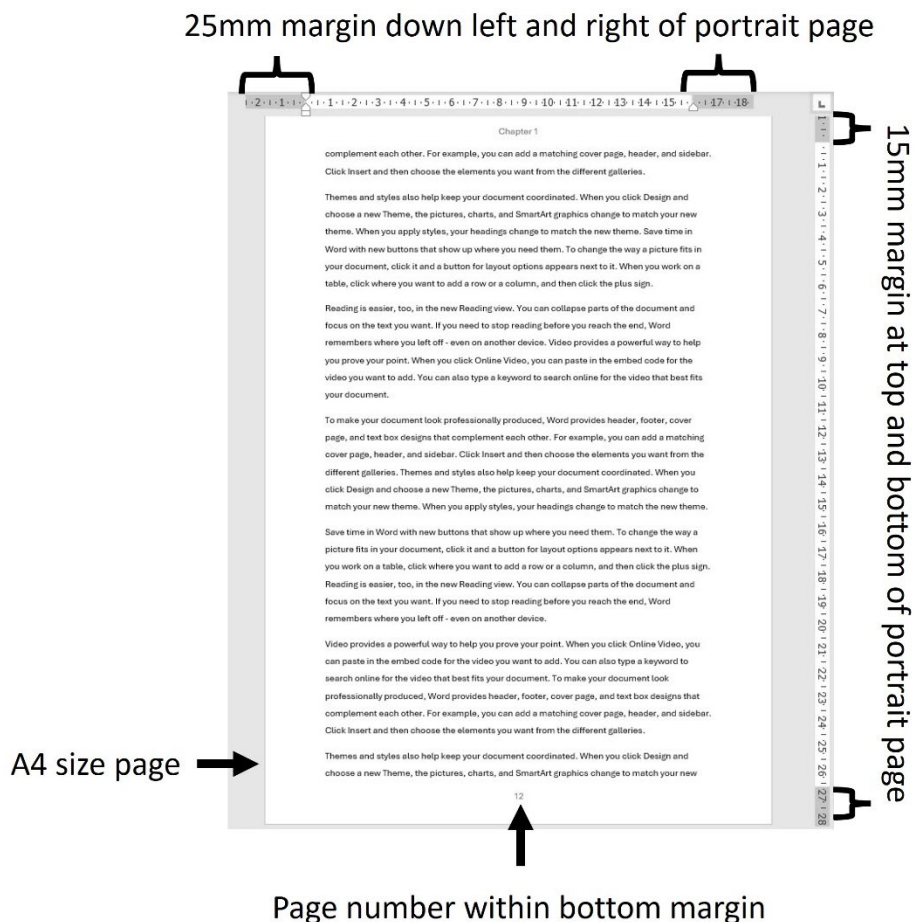
7.2 Text must be presented:

- in a font size of:
 - not less than 2.0mm high for capital letters (2.0mm is approximately 11 pt character size, depending on the font in use);
 - not less than 1.5mm for lower case letters;
- in a font appropriate to the discipline. Serifed fonts have extra decorations on the ends of the letters that can impact their readability, and sans-serif fonts (e.g., Aptos (formerly Bierstadt), Arial, Calibri, Lucida Sans, Trebuchet MS, or Verdana are easier to read;
- with even spacing between words; with left justification only of text;
- with 1.5 spacing between lines: double spacing may be used if necessary in the interests of legibility, particularly if lines contain mathematical formulae, diacritic marks or strings of capital letters that may require additional space;
- to make it clear where a new paragraph is starting. This is best done through use of paragraph spacing;
- to make it clear where matter in the text is being quoted.

7.3 The file's page layout must be presented:

- on A4 paper size;
- with margins;
- on a portrait page on the left and right not less than 25mm (0.98") and for the top and bottom not less than 15mm (0.59");
- on a landscape page at the top and bottom of not less than 25mm (0.98") and for the left and right not less than 15mm (0.59");
- with running headers and page numbers within the recommended margins;
- each section or chapter should always start on a new page. In Word this is best achieved through use of Section Break (Next Page).

7.4 A diagram showing these text requirements is shown below:



7.5 The Title page (of every volume if more than one) must contain the following information in the order shown in the table below:

Requirements	Example
Name of University (in title case, bold hyperlinked)	University of Southampton
Name of Faculty in which the research was conducted (in title case)	Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences
School (title case)	Ocean and Earth Science
Full title of the thesis and any subtitle (in title case, bold) and Thesis DOI (optional include hyperlink)	Fractures in Coal Seams DOI: https://doi.org/10.5258/SOTON/Tnnnn
Total number of volumes (if more than one) and the number of that particular volume	Volume 1 of 2
Your full name (in title case, bold), followed if you wish, by any qualifications and distinctions	Arthur Francis Jones
ORCID number (optional, include hyperlink)	ORCID ID 0000-0000-1234-5678
Qualification for which the thesis is submitted	Doctor of Philosophy
Month and year of submission (update to final submission date after examination)	July 2023

7.6 A title page is included within the thesis templates previously mentioned, which are available on the [Library thesis website](#). An example title page is available from the [Quality Handbook](#).

7.7 You must ensure that you use a consistent style of referencing, appropriate to your discipline, throughout your thesis. The University would suggest using the Vancouver or Harvard style, but

you are advised to decide on a style in discussion with your supervisor. The Library website contains detailed information about [citing and referencing](#), including a 'Find your style' guide.

8. Images and graphics

- 8.1 You should ensure that you are able to provide digital versions of all material within your thesis, including maps, diagrams, photographs, folded materials and illustrations that are of a high enough quality for digital and print display.
- 8.2 Guidance is available from iSolutions on best practice on the [placement of images and graphics in Word](#).

9. Proof reading and editing

- 9.1 You should make sure that your thesis shows a high standard of proof-reading and copy editing, including attention to layout, spelling, grammar, and sentence structure. Your thesis should be checked for accuracy, including references, cross-references, and sequences of numbers. Your text, diagrams, and tables must be numbered sequentially.
- 9.2 As a rule, your supervisory team is not expected to edit your thesis. If your thesis requires editing, your main supervisor should advise you of the need and, if appropriate, give advice on where to obtain help with proof-reading and editing. You are responsible for:
 - 9.2.1 Arranging help with proof-reading or editing and paying for the service, if required; and
 - 9.2.2 Acknowledging the role of the editor in the 'Acknowledgements' section of the thesis using the following words: 'With the oversight of my main supervisor, editorial advice has been sought. No changes of intellectual content were made as a result of this advice.'
- 9.3 If you seek help with editing your thesis, you and your main supervisor are responsible for:
 - 9.3.1 Ensuring that your main supervisor, and other members of the supervisory team as appropriate, are aware of the entire

intellectual content (i.e., the structure, logic, and organisation) of your thesis before assistance is sought from an editor.

- 9.3.2 Ensuring that the editor is directed on what is required, and the extent of input to the thesis that is allowed.
- 9.3.3 Overseeing any contribution to the thesis from the editor.
- 9.3.4 Being satisfied that the editor has not changed the intellectual content, and that the final thesis submitted is your own work.
- 9.3.5 Ensuring that you acknowledge editorial advice in the thesis.
- 9.3.6 Ensuring that any issues of confidentiality are dealt with appropriately (visit paragraph 5.1 of this guidance).

10. Ordering of material

10.1 In a single¹ volume, thesis material should be arranged in the following sequence. Note that not all sections will be required by all disciplines:

- Title and subtitle
- Abstract
- List of contents
- List of tables, illustrations etc
- List of accompanying material (physically appended or electronically linked to), if any. The data DOI should be included if available
- Author's declaration
- Acknowledgements
- Definitions, abbreviations
- Introduction
- Main text, divided into chapters, sections etc.²
- Conclusion
- Appendices

¹ Please visit the information in this guidance for requirements for additional copies of individual sections and further documentation.

² Note that submission of a PhD thesis containing chapters in the form of research papers should reflect this in the main text, with the introduction and the submitted papers constituting the main chapters of the thesis.

- Glossary
- List of references
- Bibliography

11. Abstract

- 11.1 The abstract should provide a synopsis of your thesis, stating the nature and scope of work undertaken, and the contribution made to knowledge in the subject area. An example of a thesis abstract page is available from the [Quality Handbook](#).
- 11.2 The abstract should not exceed one page (preferably within the limit of 300 words). Single spacing will be acceptable if necessary to keep the abstract on a single page.
- 11.3 The abstract must be immediately after the title page and before the table of contents.
- 11.4 If your thesis is in a language other than English (visit paragraph 4.2 of this guidance) one copy of a translation into English of the abstract must also be provided. It must say in which language your thesis is written.
- 11.5 The abstract must be headed as follows:

Requirements	Example
Name of University (in title case)	University of Southampton
Abstract (in title case & underlined)	<u>Abstract</u>
Name of Faculty (in title case)	Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences
Discipline (in title case)	Ocean and Earth Science
Degree for which thesis is submitted (in title case & underlined)	<u>Doctor of Philosophy</u>
Title of thesis (in title case)	Fractures in Coal Seams
Full name of author	by Arthur Francis Jones

- 11.6 Apply the following conventions for layout of the abstract:
- Indentation of paragraphs (none for the first paragraph; two spaces for each succeeding paragraph);
 - Paragraph headings must not be used;
 - Quotation marks must be single throughout

12. Appendices

- 12.1 Appendices should be clearly marked as such and listed on the contents page. If appendices are submitted in separate volumes, they must be prepared and bound in the same style as the thesis. All supporting material or evidence will be available to the examiners and will form part of the record. In deciding whether to include an appendix, you should consider the requirements of the research funder as well as the University's [Research Data Management Policy](#).

13. Copyright

- 13.1 The copyright in all material submitted for a research degree remains with you. However, if you include material that is not entirely of your own creation, for example, if it is reproduced from a book, a journal, or other published source, copies of photographs, drawings, diagrams, or graphs, then copyright clearance may be required if re-use is not covered by fair dealing copyright exemptions. The [Government's definition of fair dealing](#) can be found on their copyright the webpages.
- 13.2 For other published material you will need the copyright holder's permission before making copies. For literary, artistic, or dramatic works, permission is not required if the author has been dead for 70 years or more. You should seek further information and guidance from the Library in the case of films, sound recordings, and broadcasts, which are subject to different copyright restrictions. Special considerations apply to manuscripts. In the case of loose photographs, the name of the copyright holder may be stamped on the back. In the case of books, the name of the

copyright holder is usually printed at the beginning. If this information is not obvious then further investigation must be undertaken. You should allow at least two months to obtain copyright permission. You must include in your thesis an acknowledgement of the source of any copyright material and written permission must be attached to the [Permission to deposit thesis form](#) or the final submission in PGR Manager

- 13.3 If you are in any doubt about the law regarding copyright of material, you should obtain information from the [University Library copyright webpages](#). If you are still uncertain, the safest course is to seek permission to make the copies you require.

14. Submission of your thesis

- 14.1 For guidance on the administrative arrangements that apply from your 'intention to submit' through to award, access the guidance document [Submitting your thesis – a guide for research students](#).

15. Reproduction and binding of your thesis (optional)

- 15.1 As stated in Section 1 paragraph 1.2 of this guidance, you are required to submit one electronic copy of your thesis for examination; and one electronic copy of your final thesis (e-thesis), including all corrections/amendments made in portable document format (PDF), with PDF/A-3 is required for cataloguing and storage in the Library. If, at your own cost, you wish to produce a printed copy of your thesis for your own use, then please follow the guidance below regarding its reproduction.

Large illustrations, and material that cannot be bound

- 15.2 Any maps or tables on oversized sheets included in the text should be folded so that they are at least 7mm (0.25”) in from the right-hand edge of the text sheets, otherwise they may be cut by the guillotine in binding.
- 15.3 Large maps and diagrams unsuitable for binding in the text may be accommodated in a pocket at the back of the thesis. Their overall dimensions when folded must not exceed 254mm x 180mm (10” x

7.25”) for an A4 volume, and their total thickness should not be more than one-third of the thesis. Failing this, a separate portfolio will be necessary.

- 15.4 It may occasionally be necessary for non-print material, such as computer programmes, tapes, or film to be included as part of a thesis. As far as possible, such material should be avoided or submitted only as illustrative or supporting material. If material in this form is an integral part of the thesis, then you must consult with your main supervisor, or other members of the supervisory team as appropriate, with regard to its presentation and the number of copies required. It may be possible, depending on the nature of the material, to deposit it in the institutional research repository as a dataset and obtain a DOI that can be quoted in your thesis. For more information contact researchdata@soton.ac.uk.
- 15.5 Care must be taken to ensure that images and graphics are of a good enough quality for print display. Advice on reproduction and binding is available from the [Print Centre](#), Building 36, situated behind the Library, Highfield campus (telephone: ext. 23603 or 023 8059 3603 (external)).
- 15.6 Folded material can increase the cost of binding, as does the inclusion of a pocket, but a pocket may be cheaper in the end if all folded material, suitably numbered and indexed, is gathered into it. Alternatively, large originals can be reduced either by using a photocopier, or the [Print Centre](#) (situated in Building 36 behind the Library).

Binding of the thesis

- 15.7 A soft-bound copy of your thesis can be produced by the Copy Room in the George Thomas Building (Building 37) on the Highfield Campus. The Copy Room can be contacted on copy@soton.ac.uk.
- 15.8 The University’s approved binding suppliers, Caromar Limited, provide hard-bound thesis binding services. Their details are as follows:

- Caromar Limited, Unit 7 Belgrave Industrial Estate, Portswood, Southampton SO17 3EA Telephone: 023 8055 8554 Email: info@caromar.ltd.uk

If you do wish to purchase a hard-bound copies of your thesis, it is recommended that it is bound in black washable buckram with stiff boards, 2-lb strawboard or .090 millboard, and sewn by one of the following methods:

- oversewn on an oversewing machine;
- oversewn by hand onto three 13mm (0.51”) tapes;
- plates and diagrams may be guarded where necessary;
- trim head, tail and fore-edge 3mm (0.12”); round, back and line up spine.

15.9 You may wish any hard-bound volume of your thesis to have lettering on the spine in gold or simulated gold. The following is recommended:

- candidate’s surname preceded by initials up the spine (18 pt typeface), starting not lower than the centre of the spine;
- the degree, the year in which the thesis was submitted for examination and the volume number (if applicable), may be lettered across the spine under the candidate’s name and initials (16 pt typeface), the degree abbreviation to start 70mm (2.76”) from the tail of the spine;
- if the spine is too narrow for (b) above, it is recommended that the degree and year be lettered up the spine.

15.10 If your thesis is bound in more than one volume, the volume or part number would normally appear on the spine beneath the year. The amount of space beneath ‘degree’ and beneath ‘year’ should be the same.

15.11 You may wish to include the title of the thesis on the front cover of each volume, but only the lettering indicated above would normally appear on the spine.

Document Information

Author: Quality Standards and Accreditation Team

Owner (committee): Academic Quality and Standards Subcommittee

Approved Date: August 2019

Last Revision: September 2023

Type of Document: Guidance