

TEMPLATE FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION

- Title Page. The title page is not numbered.
- Abstract: The abstract is not numbered.
- Approval Page. The approval page is not numbered.
- Acknowledgments. The Acknowledgments page is page i.
- Table of Contents. The Table of Contents includes page numbers of chapters and all sub-sections. The page numbers are right-aligned and are preceded by a dot leader. The Table of Contents is numbered using small Roman numerals. The Table of Contents includes Appendices but not Tables or Figures.
- List of Tables with page references. The List of Tables is formatted the same as the Table of contents.
- List of Figures. The List of Figures is formatted the same as the Table of contents.

- Text (Body of Document)

The Introduction starts on with page 1. Each chapter starts on a new page. **Indent each paragraph a half an inch.** Do not have extra space after each paragraph (Word's default setting is for there to be 10 pts of spacing after each paragraph – change this to zero points for the entire document). Use double line spacing in the document.

- Bibliography

Bibliography or (Literature Cited) starts on a new page. Page numbering continues from the main body of the document.

- Appendices

Each appendix should have a cover page with the appendix material starting on the following page. Page numbering continues from the Bibliography.

Title page

The very first page of your document contains your dissertation's title, your name, department, institution, degree program, and submission date. Sometimes it also includes your student number, your supervisor's name, and the university's logo. Many programs have strict requirements for formatting the dissertation title page.

Acknowledgements

The acknowledgements section is usually optional, and gives space for you to thank everyone who helped you in writing your dissertation. This might include your supervisors, participants in your research, and friends or family who supported you.

Abstract

The abstract is a short summary of your dissertation, usually about 150-300 words long. You should write it at the very end, when you've completed the rest of the dissertation. In the abstract, make sure to:

- State the main topic and aims of your research
- Describe the methods you used
- Summarize the main results
- State your conclusions

Although the abstract is very short, it's the first part (and sometimes the only part) of your dissertation that people will read, so it's important that you get it right.

Table of Contents

In the table of contents, list all of your chapters and subheadings and their page numbers. The [dissertation contents page](#) gives the reader an overview of your structure and helps easily navigate the document.

All parts of your dissertation should be included in the table of contents, including the appendices. You can generate a table of contents automatically in Word if you used heading styles.

List of Figures and Tables

If you have used a lot of tables and figures in your dissertation, you should itemize them in a [numbered list](#). You can automatically generate this list using the Insert Caption feature in Word.

List of Abbreviations

If you have used a lot of abbreviations in your dissertation, you can include them in an [alphabetized list of abbreviations](#) so that the reader can easily look up their meanings.

Glossary

If you have used a lot of highly specialized terms that will not be familiar to your reader, it might be a good idea to include a [glossary](#). List the terms alphabetically and explain each term with a brief description or definition.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the introduction, you set up your dissertation's topic, purpose, and relevance, and tell the reader what to expect in the rest of the dissertation. The introduction should:

- Establish your [research topic](#), giving necessary background information to contextualize your work
- Narrow down the focus and define the scope of the research

- Discuss the state of existing research on the topic, showing your work's relevance to a broader problem or debate
- Clearly state your research questions and objectives
- Give an overview of your dissertation's structure

Everything in the introduction should be clear, engaging, and relevant to your research. By the end, the reader should understand the *what*, *why* and *how* of your research.

Chapter 2: Literature review / Theoretical framework

Before you start on your research, you should have conducted a literature review to gain a thorough understanding of the academic work that already exists on your topic. This means:

- Collecting sources (e.g. books and journal articles) and selecting the most relevant ones
- Critically evaluating and analyzing each source
- Drawing connections between them (e.g. themes, patterns, conflicts, gaps) to make an overall point

In the dissertation literature review chapter or section, you shouldn't just summarize existing studies, but develop a coherent structure and argument that leads to a clear basis or justification for your own research. For example, it might aim to show how your research:

- Addresses a gap in the literature
- Takes a new theoretical or methodological approach to the topic
- Proposes a solution to an unresolved problem
- Advances a theoretical debate
- Builds on and strengthens existing knowledge with new data

The literature review often becomes the basis for a theoretical framework, in which you define and analyze the key theories, concepts and models that frame your research. In this section you can answer descriptive research questions about the relationship between concepts or variables.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology chapter or section describes how you conducted your research, allowing your reader to assess its validity. You should generally include:

- The overall approach and type of research (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, experimental, ethnographic)
- Your methods of collecting data (e.g. interviews, surveys, archives)
- Details of where, when, and with whom the research took place
- Your methods of analyzing data (e.g. statistical analysis, discourse analysis)
- Tools and materials you used (e.g. computer programs, lab equipment)
- A discussion of any obstacles you faced in conducting the research and how you overcame them
- An evaluation or justification of your methods

Your aim in the methodology is to accurately report what you did, as well as convincing the reader that this was the best approach to answering your research questions or objectives.

Results

Next, you report the results of your research. You can structure this section around sub-questions, hypotheses, or topics. Only report results that are relevant to your objectives and research questions. In some disciplines, the results section is strictly separated from the discussion, while in others the two are combined.

For example, for qualitative methods like in-depth interviews, the presentation of the data will often be woven together with discussion and analysis, while in quantitative and experimental research, the results should be presented separately before you discuss their meaning.

In the results section it can often be helpful to include tables, graphs and charts. Think carefully about how best to present your data, and don't include tables or figures that just repeat what you have written – they should provide extra information or usefully visualize the results in a way that adds value to your text.

Full versions of your data (such as interview transcripts) can be included as an appendix.

Discussion

The discussion is where you explore the meaning and implications of your results in relation to your research questions. Here you should interpret the results in detail, discussing whether they met your expectations and how well they fit with the framework that you built in earlier chapters. If any of the results were unexpected, offer explanations for why this might be. It's a good idea to consider alternative interpretations of your data and discuss any limitations that might have influenced the results.

The discussion should reference other scholarly work to show how your results fit with existing knowledge. You can also make recommendations for future research or practical action.

Conclusion

The dissertation conclusion should concisely answer the main research question, leaving the reader with a clear understanding of your central argument.

The conclusion refers to the final chapter, where you wrap up your dissertation with a final reflection on what you did and how you did it. This type of conclusion often also includes recommendations for research or practice.

In this section, it's important to show how your findings contribute to knowledge in the field and why your research matters. What have you added to what was already known?

Reference list

You must include full details of all sources that you have cited in a reference list (sometimes also called a works cited list or bibliography). It's important to follow a consistent citation style. Each style has strict and specific requirements for how to format your sources in the reference list.

Common styles include APA and MLA, but your program will often specify which citation style you should use – make sure to check the requirements, and ask your supervisor if you're unsure.

Appendices

Your dissertation itself should contain only essential information that directly contributes to answering your research question. Documents you have used that do not fit into the main body of your dissertation (such as interview transcripts, survey questions or tables with full figures) can be added as appendices.

Word count: limit to 25000 words

FULL TITLE OF YOUR THESIS

[Put your full name here]

[For your Confirmation document, list your Supervisors here]

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts in English

Department of English and Linguistics
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
University of Sri Jayewardenepura
[year in which the thesis is submitted]

Abstract

Put your abstract here (do this last).

Table of Contents

Keywords	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Abstract.....	vii
Table of Contents.....	viii
List of Figures.....	ix
List of Tables	x
List of Abbreviations	xi
Statement of Original Authorship.....	xii
Acknowledgements.....	xiii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Context.....	1
1.3 Purposes.....	1
1.4 Significance, Scope and Definitions.....	2
1.5 Thesis Outline.....	2
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	3
2.1 Historical Background [optional]	4
2.2 Topic 1.....	4
2.3 Topic 2.....	4
2.4 Topic 3.....	4
2.5 Summary and Implications.....	4
Chapter 3: Research Design.....	5
3.1 Methodology and Research Design.....	5
3.2 Participants	6
3.3 Instruments	6
3.4 Procedure and Timeline.....	6
3.5 Analysis	6
3.6 Ethics and Limitations	7
Chapter 4: Results.....	9
Chapter 5: Analysis.....	11
Chapter 6: Conclusions	13
Bibliography	15
Appendices	17
Appendix A Title	17

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

If appropriate, list any abbreviations used in the thesis.

Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1: Introduction

The introduction chapter needs to state the objectives of the program of research, include definitions of the key concepts and variables and give a brief outline of the background and research approach. The aim of the introduction is to contextualise the proposed research.

In the opening paragraph, give an overall view of what is included in the chapter. For example:

This chapter outlines the background (section 1.1) and context (section 1.2) of the research, and its purposes (section 1.3). Section 1.4 describes the significance and scope of this research and provides definitions of terms used. Finally, section 1.5 includes an outline of the remaining chapters of the thesis.

1.1 Background

Give the background of the problem to be explored in your study and what led you to doing the thesis. For example, you might discuss educational trends related to the problem, unresolved issues, social concerns. You might also include some personal background.

1.2 Context

Outline the context of the study (i.e., the major foci of your study) and give a statement of the problem situation (basic difficulty – area of concern, felt need).

1.3 Purposes

Define the purpose and specific aims and objectives of the study. Emphasise the practical outcomes or products of the study. Delineate the research problem and outline the questions to be answered or the overarching objectives to be achieved.

1.4 Significance, Scope and Definitions

Discuss the importance of your research in terms of the topic (problem situation), the methodology, and the gap in the literature. Outline the scope and delimitations of the study (narrowing of focus).

Define and discuss terms to be used (largely conceptual here; operational definitions may follow in Research Design chapter).

1.5 Thesis Outline

Outline the chapters for the remainder of your thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review chapter should demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the area and provide arguments to support the study focus. The aim of the literature review chapter is to delineate various theoretical positions and from these to develop a conceptual framework for generation of hypotheses and setting up the research question. The literature review chapter needs to:

- Critically evaluate the literature rather than merely describe previous literature (i.e., what is good/bad about the body of literature?).
- Show a synthesis and be integrated rather than being more like an annotated bibliography.
- Identify key authors and the key works in the area, thus acquainting the reader with existing studies relative to what has been found, who has done work, when and where latest research studies were completed and what approaches to research methodology were followed (literature review of methodology sometimes saved for chapter on methodology).
- Constitute an argument.
- Clearly identify the gap in the literature that is being addressed by the research question.

Suitable sources for the literature review include:

- General integrative reviews cited that relate to the problem situation or research problem such as those found in psychological and sociological reviews of research.
- Specific books, monographs, bulletins, reports, and research articles – preference shown in most instances for literature of the last 10 years.
- Unpublished materials (e.g., dissertations, theses, papers presented at recent professional meetings not yet in published form, etc.).

The literature review chapter can be arranged in terms of the questions to be considered or objectives/purposes set out in the Introduction chapter.

Start with an overview of this chapter by outlining the topics to be discussed. For example [your thesis may have more than 3 topics and therefore more sections]:

This chapter begins with a historical background [optional] (section 2.1) and reviews literature on the following topics: [topic 1] (section 2.2) [briefly describe the topic]; [topic 2] (section 2.3) [briefly describe the topic]; and [topic 3] (section 2.4) [briefly describe the topic]. Section 2.5 highlights the implications from the literature and develops the conceptual framework for the study.

2.1 Historical Background [optional]

2.2 Topic 1

Present and discuss your first topic.

2.3 Topic 2

Present and discuss your second topic.

2.4 Topic 3

Present and discuss your third topic.

2.5 Summary and Implications

Summarise the literature review and discuss the implications from the literature for your study – the theoretical framework for your study. Here you can make an explicit statement of the hypotheses, propositions or research questions and how they are derived from existing theory and literature. Establish from the literature (or gap in the literature) the need for this study and the likelihood of obtaining meaningful, relevant, and significant results. Outline any conceptual or substantive assumptions, the rationale and the theoretical framework for the study. Explain the relationships among variables or comparisons, and issues to be considered. This section should demonstrate the contribution of the research to the field, and be stated in a way that leads to the methodology.

Chapter 3: Research Design

This chapter of the thesis should outline the design and methodology of your research. The basis for the choice of research method should be whether it will help you answer your research question(s).

Give an overview of what is to be included in this chapter. For example:

This chapter describes the design adopted by this research to achieve the aims and objectives stated in section 1.3 of Chapter 1 [if you wish, you can restate those objectives]. Section 3.1 discusses the methodology [to be] used in the study, the stages by which the methodology was [will be] implemented, and the research design; section 3.2 details the participants in the study; section 3.3 lists all the instruments [to be] used in the study and justifies their use; section 3.4 outlines the procedure [to be] used and the timeline for completion of each stage of the study; section 3.5 discusses how the data was [will be] analysed; finally, section 3.6 discusses the ethical considerations of the research and its [potential] problems and limitations.

3.1 Methodology and Research Design

3.1.1 Methodology

Discuss the methodology [to be] used in your study (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, casual-comparative, survey, discourse, case study, analysis, action research). If using stages, outline them here. The methods used must link explicitly to the research question and must be suited to the nature of the question. Discuss any methodological assumptions.

3.1.2 Research Design

Outline the research design (e.g., quantitative, qualitative). If quantitative, spell out the independent, dependent and classificatory variables (and sometimes formulate an operational statement of the research hypothesis in null form so as to set the stage for an appropriate research design permitting statistical inferences). If qualitative, explain and support the approach taken and briefly discuss the data gathering procedures that were [will be] used (observations, interviews, etc.)

3.2 Participants

Give details of who were [will be] the participants in your study (including, if applicable, sample type and size, reasons for the number selected and the basis for selection).

3.3 Instruments

List and briefly describe all the instruments (e.g., tests, measures, surveys, observations, interviews, questionnaires, artefacts) [to be] used in your study for data collection and discuss their theoretical underpinnings, that is, justify why you used [will be using] these instruments. So that the line of argument is not broken, it is useful to place copies of instruments in Appendices to which this section can refer.

3.4 Procedure and Timeline

Outline the procedure across and within the techniques [to be] used in your study for collecting and recording data. This could include how, when (in what order) and where the instruments were [will be] administered (for example, field, classroom or laboratory procedures, instructions to participants or distribution of materials) and how the data was [will be] recorded. Include the rationale for the procedures used. If the study was [is to be] done in stages, give a timeline for the completion of each stage.

3.5 Analysis

Discuss how the data was [will be] processed and analysed (e.g., statistical analysis, discourse analysis). This section needs to link the analysis of the research to the methods and demonstrate why this is the best approach to analysis. For qualitative research, justification needs to be provided for methods such as coding and dealing with divergent data. For quantitative research, justification of the choice of statistics and the expected results that they will provide [confirmation document] should be described. There should be enough detail for the reader to replicate the analysis. For example, “NVivo or SPSS will be used” is not adequate. Rather, the approach to coding, including how categories were [will be] derived and validated, how the data was [will be] structured, and specific analytical techniques applied, should be included.

3.6 Ethics and Limitations

Outline the ethical considerations of the research and any [potential] problems and limitations (weaknesses), as well as any [anticipated or actual] threats to the validity of the results.

Chapter 4: Results

Chapter 4 details all the results of your study. You can put some analysis of the results here, but generally just the results are presented, without interpretation, inference, or evaluation (which will be in Chapter 5). The results should be linked inextricably to the design – describe what happened factually and unemotionally. However, in certain historical, case-study and anthropological investigations, factual and interpretive material may be interwoven rather than being presented as “findings”.

Include a paragraph at the beginning of the Results chapter outlining the structure of the chapter. The results should be reported with respect to furnishing evidence for your research question(s) as outlined in Chapter 1. Thus, you might choose to use headings that correspond to each main question of your hypothesis/objectives from Chapter 1 and/or your theoretical framework from Chapter 2. Or you might organise your results in terms of the stages of the study (if applicable).

Present the findings/results in tables or charts when appropriate, making sure to use correct APA formatting for any tables used (refer to *Thesis PAM* for further guidance on formatting).

[Extra page inserted to ensure correct even-page footer for this section. Delete this when chapter is at least 2 pages long.]

Chapter 5: Analysis

Chapter 5 contains a full discussion, interpretation and evaluation of the results with reference to the literature. This chapter can also include theory building.

As with the previous chapters, include a paragraph at the beginning summarising the structure of the chapter. Organise the chapter in terms of the objectives of the study and/or the theoretical framework. For each objective, discuss the results with reference to the literature, for example, the similarities/differences to the findings in the literature review. Develop theory or models from this comparison and evaluation.

It can be useful to check your literature and try to find a place for as much of the literature as you can. If you find that a section of your literature can not be used in this chapter, it may be useful to consider the pertinence of this literature and reduce the space in the literature chapter given to it.

Thus your research outcomes are tied together in relation to the theory, review of the literature, and rationale.

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Chapter 6: Conclusions

This chapter contains conclusions, limitations, and recommendations – so what is the theory? Where to from here? What are the practical implications? Discussion of where the study may be extended.

Again, the chapter should begin with a summary paragraph of the chapter structure. The opening section(s) of the chapter should be a brief summary of everything covered so far. Follow this with your conclusions. This is the “so what” of the findings – often the hypothesis/research question(s) restated as inferences with some degree of definitive commitment and generalisability, and the raising of new and pertinent questions for future research. You could include a final model of the theory.

It can be useful to use the purposes from Chapter 1 as an organising structure for this chapter. The chapter should also include a discussion of any limitations of the research, and should end with your final recommendations – practical suggestions for implementation of the findings/outcomes or for additional research.

[Extra page inserted to ensure correct even-page footer for this section. Delete this when chapter is at least 2 pages long.]

Bibliography

American Psychological Association (APA). (2010). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

For Faculty of Education theses, the bibliography and all in-text citations must conform to APA style. Refer to QUT's Cite/Write guidelines (available from www.citewrite.qut.edu.au).

For further information on citations and referencing, see *Thesis PAM*.

[Extra page inserted to ensure correct even-page footer for this section. Delete this when bibliography is at least 2 pages long.]

Appendices

Appendix A

Title

Start each appendix on a new page. Place appendices in the same order as they are referred to in the body of the thesis. That is, the first appendix referred to should be Appendix A, the second appendix referred to should be Appendix B, and so on. Appendix formatting can be different to the main document. Refer to *Thesis PAM* for information about appendix figures and tables.