

Producing your thesis – a guide for research students

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Declaration of Authorship	2
3. Maximum thesis length	2
4. Language requirements	2
5. Preparation of your thesis document	2
6. Specifications	3
7. Text and thesis templates	3
8. Proof reading and editing	5
9. Ordering of material	5
10. Abstract	5
11. Appendices	6
12. Large illustrations, and material that cannot be bound	6
13. Copyright	6
14. Reproduction of your thesis	7
15. Binding of the thesis	7
16. Submission of the thesis	8

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 MPhil degree. Separate guidance is available on submitting your thesis in the document [Submitting your thesis – a guide for research students](#).
- 1.2 It is your responsibility to follow the specifications laid out in this document when preparing your thesis. If you are seeking help with either the preparation, or the binding 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](#).
- 1.3 You are strongly advised not to submit your thesis for examination until your main supervisor, or any other members of the supervisory team as appropriate, has had an opportunity to comment on the separate chapters and on the work as a whole. However, your supervisor(s)' comments and agreement that your thesis is suitable for submission do not have any bearing on the outcome of your examination. You will be examined at your *viva voce* on the criteria described in paragraph 5 for PhD, or 6-7 for MPhil, of the [Code of Practice for Research for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#) (known hereon as the 'Code'), and your examiners will make one of the recommendations as listed in paragraph 58 of 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 signed [Declaration of Authorship](#) form, must be bound into the print thesis. A completed but unsigned copy of the form should be included in your electronic 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 The maximum thesis length is as stated in paragraph 54 of the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#). In most cases, your thesis must not exceed 75,000 words (in the case of a PhD), or 50,000 words (in the case of an MPhil), however you should confirm the word limits and requirements of your particular research degree with your supervisor. A thesis submitted for an MPhil after a PhD examination is not subject to a maximum length of 50,000 words but must not exceed 75,000. Alternative formats of thesis submission may be permitted in certain disciplines as stated in paragraphs 86-88 of the [Code](#). The maximum length of the thesis does **not** include: supporting material or evidence¹ which may be bound in as appendices; references; the bibliography; or as footnotes. It is important to remember that the stated maximum word limit is not a target figure, and an important aspect of scholarship that must be demonstrated in a thesis is the ability to convey information concisely.
- 3.2 If, however, you think that your thesis needs to be longer than the stated maximum, you must discuss this with your supervisor as soon as possible. To be permitted to submit a longer thesis, you will need to submit a statement to your supervisory team indicating that your thesis cannot be contained within the maximum length for reasons relating to the subject material. Your supervisory team may then recommend to your Faculty that a longer thesis is permitted. If your thesis exceeds the maximum stipulated length without prior permission, you will normally be required by the examiners to resubmit in a form that does not exceed the maximum length.

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 paragraph 85 of the [Code](#), if you wish to write your thesis in a language other than English, you must make an application through your main supervisor to the Faculty Graduate School Committee which will consider applications on an individual basis. If permission is granted, you will be expected to provide the accompanying abstract in English.

5. Preparation of your thesis document

- 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 If you are not planning to type/word-process the thesis yourself, you should be aware that typing or word-processing a thesis for a student is not part of the duties of University staff. You may be able to arrange for someone within or outside the University to prepare your

¹ See paragraph 84 [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#)

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 typing/word-processing service may reduce the time taken, but the cost will probably be greater.

6. Specifications

- 6.1 Two soft-bound copies and one electronic copy of the thesis must be submitted for examination (for members of staff in candidature for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the requirement is for three soft-bound copies and one electronic copy to be submitted). Please see the paragraphs below on Text and Typographic Design, Reproduction and Binding requirements.
- 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.
- 6.3 You should bear in mind that after examination, and before your award can be considered for approval, you must submit copies of your thesis and a completed [Permission to deposit thesis form](#) to your Faculty Graduate School Office; please refer to paragraph 5.1 of [Submitting your thesis – a guide for research students](#) which sets out the specific requirements.

The research data underpinning your thesis should also be deposited in the Institutional Repository via [Pure](#), where this is appropriate to the type of data – see [Thesis Data Deposit guide](#).

7. Text 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 greatly 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. iSolutions also offer useful guides on the completion of your thesis on a [Windows PC](#) or a [Mac](#). Training on the use of Word and the thesis template is available via [Gradbook](#).

- 7.2 The paper used must be:

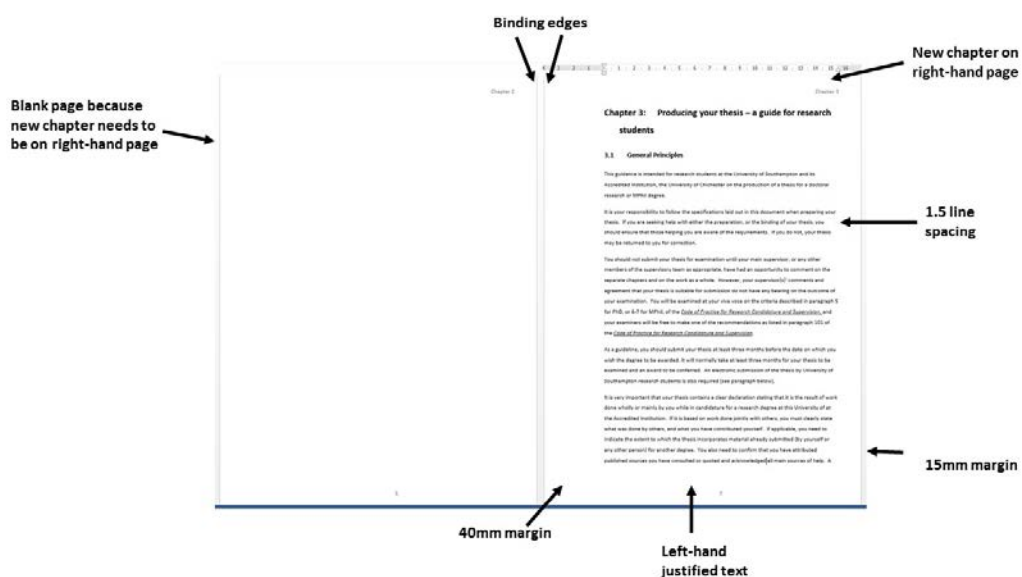
- A4 size (210 x 297 mm)
- Acid-free
- White
- Bond quality (a minimum of 80gsm, and for theses containing a large number of graphs or illustrations, 90 or 100gsm)

Text must be presented:

- typewritten/word-processed;
- in a font size of:
- not less than 2.0mm high for capital letters (2.0mm is the equivalent of approximately 11pt character size, depending on the font in use
- 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 for example, Arial; Calibri; Lucinda 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;
- so that margins at the binding edge are not less than 40mm (1.5”), and other margins are not less than 15mm (0.59”);
- with running heads and page numbers within the recommended margins;
- Printed double-sided. However, each section or chapter should always start on a right-hand page. In Word this can be achieved through use of Odd Page section breaks. Because of this you may have some pages that are blank apart from the header and footer text.

7.3 A diagram showing these text requirements is shown below:



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

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: 10.5258/SOTON/T000
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	July 2019

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

7.6 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. Proof reading and editing

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 As a general rule, your main supervisor 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:
 - 8.2.1 Arranging help with proof-reading or editing and paying for the service, if required; and
 - 8.2.2 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'.
- 8.3 If you seek help with editing your thesis, you and your main supervisor are responsible for:
 - 8.3.1 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
 - 8.3.2 Ensuring that the editor is directed on what is required, and the extent of input to the thesis that is allowed
 - 8.3.3 Overseeing any contribution to the thesis from the editor
 - 8.3.4 Being satisfied that the editor has not changed the intellectual content, and that the final thesis submitted is your own work
 - 8.3.5 Ensuring that you acknowledge editorial advice in the thesis
 - 8.3.6 Ensuring that any issues of confidentiality are appropriately dealt with (see paragraph 5.1 above).

9. Ordering of material

- 9.1 In a single bound² volume, thesis material should be arranged in the following sequence note: 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 used
Introduction
Main text, divided into chapters, sections etc.³
Conclusion
Appendices
Glossary
List of references
Bibliography

10. Abstract

³ Please see paragraph 28 for requirements for additional copies of individual sections and further paperwork/forms. Note the Copyright Statement is not required in the bound volumes.

³ Note that when a PhD is being submitted under the 'Three-Paper' format, this should be reflected in the main text, with the introduction and the submitted papers constituting the main chapters of the thesis.

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 The abstract should not exceed one side of paper (preferably within the limit of 300 words). Single spacing will be acceptable if necessary to keep the abstract on a single side of paper.
- 10.3 The abstract must be bound immediately after the title page and before the table of contents.
- 10.4 If your thesis is in a language other than English (see paragraph 4.2 above) one copy of a translation into English of the abstract must also be provided. It must say in which language your thesis is written.
- 10.5 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

- 10.6 The following conventions for layout of the abstract are to be observed:
 - 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

11. Appendices

- 11.1 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](#).

12. Large illustrations, and material that cannot be bound

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 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.
- 12.3 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.

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.
- 13.2 The [Print Centre](#) (situated in Building 36 behind the Hartley Library) can make any number of copies of original material provided it is wholly and entirely of the author's creation and it is the author who requests it.
- 13.3 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](#).
- 13.4 If you are in any doubt about the law regarding copyright of material, you should consult the Print Centre or obtain information from the University Library thesis [website](#). If you are still uncertain, the safest course is to seek permission to make the copies you require.

14. Reproduction of your thesis

- 14.1 Care must be taken to ensure that images and graphics are of a good quality for printing and digital display. Illustrations and photographs should, if possible, be printed onto appropriate paper stock the same size as the text sheet. [Guidance](#) on incorporation images and graphics into your thesis is advice from iSolutions. Advice on reproduction and binding is available from the [Print Centre](#), Building 36, situated behind the Hartley Library, Highfield campus (telephone: ext. 23603 or 023 8059 3603 (external)).
- 14.2 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 together into it. Alternatively, large originals can be reduced either by using a photocopier, or the [Print Centre](#) (situated in Building 36 behind the Hartley Library).
- 14.3 Line diagrams and outline maps can be reproduced cheaply on paper suitable for colouring, either by photocopying or printing.
- 14.4 As you are required to provide an electronic copy of your thesis, you should ensure that you are able to provide digital versions of all material within your bound thesis, including maps, diagrams, photographs, folded materials and illustrations. [Guidance](#) on incorporation of images and graphics into your thesis is available from iSolutions.

15. Binding of the thesis

- 15.1 You are responsible for the payment of all costs incurred in the preparation and submission of your thesis. The copies required for examination (see paragraph 6.1), and the final copy of the thesis after examination (and when any corrections have been approved), should all be soft-bound. Soft-bound copies can be obtained from 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.
- 15.2 Although the University no longer requires hard-bound copies of the final thesis, should you require any hard-bound copies for your own use, 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

- 15.3 Although it is not a requirement, if you do wish to purchase any hard-bound copies of your thesis, it is recommended that they are 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.
- 15.4 You may wish any hard-bound volume of the thesis to have lettering on the spine in gold or simulated gold as follows:
- 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
- 15.5 If each copy 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.
- 15.6 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.

16. Submission of the thesis

- 16.1 For guidance on the administrative arrangements that apply from your ‘intention to submit’ through to award, see [Submitting your thesis – a guide for research students](#).

Document Information	
Author	Quality Standards and Accreditation Team
Owner (committee)	Academic Quality and Standards Committee
Approved Date	August 2019
Last Revision	August 2020
Type of Document	Guidance