

**Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering**

**计算机科学与软件工程系**

Guidelines to Thesis Write-up

**1. The Thesis Style**

1. There is no absolute standard (e.g. page layout or for the headings) to follow. However, the general style should be consistent throughout the thesis.
2. Thesis should be written in a style similar to that used for formal technical reports and refereed papers. The third person is preferred, i.e. the words ‘I’, ‘we’ and ‘you’ should normally be avoided. Grammar, spelling and punctuation must be accurate.
3. The emphasis should be on a clear, objective and logical presentation of material with a sharp analysis of the evidence. Arguments should be impartial. ‘Padding’ should be avoided. Jargons should be minimised and conversational colloquialisms must be avoided. Short and clearly structured sentences are very helpful to the reader. Repetition between sections should be minimised by referring back or forward.
4. Quotations should be used effectively, for example, to support the argument. Avoid paraphrasing, but in any case, the originator must be given credit by proper referencing. The format of *italics*, **bold** and underlining should be used for emphasis and must be used sparingly.
5. Shortened words such as “phone” or “isn’t” should not be used. Acronyms may be used provided they are defined (e.g. their full form is given when they first appear in the text) and preferably included in the Glossary. There is no need to define well-known phrases or acronyms such as *laser*.
6. There are two main styles for references, and the important thing to remember is the consistency of format. References are cited by the author’s surname followed by the year of publication, and listed in the References section in alphabetic order of the (first) author. References are cited by numbers in the main text and listed in the References section in the order as they appear in the main text.
7. The total length of the main body depends on the nature of the project. Theoretic work-based projects tend to result in a short thesis while experiment-based projects often require more description. The length of the main body should not exceed 20,000 words.
8. As the writing progresses, every aspect of the thesis should be read and re-read, checked and double-checked to minimise errors (e.g. using a spelling and grammar checker). References must be scrutinised for accuracy. Mistakes, sloppy presentation, typographical errors, all give a very bad impression.
9. You are encouraged to read and consult books on project reports and dissertations (e.g. Kathleen McMillan and Jonathan Weyers, *How to Write Dissertations and Research Projects*, Prentice Hall, 2007, ISBN 978-0273713586).

**2. The Thesis Structure**

The thesis is divided into logical chapters. The structure should generally follow the following format where the number of chapters may vary.

* Title Page
* The Following Pages

- Abstract

* Acknowledgements
* Dedication (if so wish)

- Glossary / Key words (if necessary)

* Table of Contents (List of Table and List of Figures may be included if necessary)
* Chapter 1 Introduction
* Chapter 2 Research / Literature Review
* …
* Chapter n Conclusions
* References
* Appendices if any

**Title Page**: This is the coversheet for your thesis which contains project details such as your name, student ID, programme of study, project title and your supervisor’s name.

**Abstract**: The abstract should be a concise summary of the project, identifying the nature and scope, the major findings and the contribution to the overall field of the subject. It gives the reader an overview for the work without first having to read the whole thesis. It must be succinct (not exceeding 200 words) and clearly written. It is important to note that the abstract is not an introduction.

**Acknowledgements**: This part acknowledges the individuals (e.g. your supervisor) who have provided substantial help.

**Dedication**: The author may dedicate the project to his/her spouse, parents or whomever deserves.

**Glossary / Key words**: This part may be necessary depending on individual projects.

**Introduction**: This is the first chapter informing the reader of brief subject background, the problem, main aim and specific objectives, proposed methodologies and expected outcomes. It may also introduce the thesis structure.

**Literature Review**: This could include a general background to the subject, the current situation, applications and problems, methodologies, contemporary technologies / software tools for implementation, discussions and analysis of existing work (including comparative / case studies) and so on. It should lay a good basis for your project, providing useful information to demonstrate / justify the academic significance of your project.

**Other Chapters**: These chapters should describe the project realisation. The coverage varies from project to project, but should normally include - technical requirements / specifications, data acquisition and analysis, system / structural design, implementation, testing and analysis of results, improvement/enhancement and overall evaluation. All of these chapters should be DIRECTLY about the project (there should not be too much information from textbooks)!

**Conclusions**: This chapter brings together and summarises the main points and findings with any recommendations. The conclusions should not be used to introduce new materials.

**References**: This is a list of references cited in the main text in either alphabetical order by the first author’s surname or in the order of their appearance in the main text with a sequenced number. Remember consistency is very important.

References include published literature (books, journals and conferences), organisations and experts and the Internet. Appropriate citing the references is important. It acknowledges others’ work and avoids plagiarism suspect. It is not sufficient to just list a website in the reference section. The actual page (not just the homepage) must be referred in the main text, and the date of access given.

**Appendices**: In general, appendices can be used to present detailed information of relevance that is not essential in the main text, helping to minimise ‘clutter’ in the main body of the project, making it more readable. Materials in appendices should be closely linked to the main document. For example, the project plan, source code listings, test data, rough work, questionnaire results and so on may be included as appendices (as advised by the supervisor). Every appendix can be coded with a letter (e.g. Appendix A, Appendix B, and so on, and should be titled), and begin on a fresh page. All appendices should be cited in the main text.

**An Important Note**: Excellent artefact does not necessarily mean an excellent project! The academic value of a project is of great importance, which is largely reflected in the thesis through research, analysis and synthesis, evaluation and substantial conclusions/recommendations.