**Dissertation/Thesis Conclusion Template**

Thanks for downloading the template. **Here’s what you need to know:**

This document provides a generic template for the conclusion chapter/section in a typical dissertation, thesis, or research project. While the **exact requirements will vary between universities** and degree programs, this template should help you get started with the generic components.

Keep in mind that some universities and programs require students to combine the discussion and conclusion sections into one chapter, while others prefer them separated. So, be sure to follow any instructions provided by your university to ensure you’re aligned with their specific requirements.

In each section of this template, we’ll briefly **explain what that section is about** and the essential points that you need to cover. We’ll also provide links to additional videos and blog posts that will help you conquer each section with confidence.

If you’re new to research, a good starting point would be to watch our YouTube video covering the conclusion chapter: <https://gradcoach.com/dissertation-conclusion-chapter/>

[Graphical user interface, application

Description automatically generated](https://gradcoach.com/dissertation-conclusion-chapter/)

If you need **1-on-1 assistance** with your dissertation or thesis, feel free to [book an initial consultation](https://my.gradcoach.com/book/new/) with us to discuss private coaching for your project.

Good luck with your research!

***Grad Coach***

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# Opening overview

In this opening section, you should tell the reader **what they can** **expect** to find in the chapter (content), and in **what** **order** (layout/structure). This section serves to help the reader orient themselves and understand what to expect from the chapter.

You can use the headings in this template (see the table of contents above) as a guide for this section. For example:

*“This chapter will begin by providing a summary of the findings, as well as the limitations of the study, followed by recommendations for further research…”*

This section should be no more than one concise and cohesive paragraph. Keep it short.

# Summary of Findings

Next, you’ll summarize your key findings, as presented (in detail) in the discussion chapter.

Ideally, you should start by reminding the reader of the overarching research aims and research questions that you sought to answer in your study. Then, explain what your findings were in relation to these research aims and questions.

Simply put, in this section you’ll connect the first chapter (the introduction chapter) to the final chapter (the conclusion chapter), thereby bringing your research full circle and directly answering your research questions. It’s important to have a strong connection between these two chapters, as many readers will jump directly from the intro chapter to the conclusion to get an overview of the study. So, make sure that these two chapters “fit” together well.

Some phrases that might come in handy as you write this section:

* *“This study aimed to…”*
* *“This study asked whether…”*
* *“The results indicate that…”*
* *“The findings appeared to…”*

Keep in mind that you don’t have to be particulary detailed here, as you should have covered all of the findings in-depth in the discussion chapter (the previous chapter). Instead, it’s important to zoom out a little bit here and focus on the **broader findings** – specifically, how the findings that help address the **research aims.**

# Limitations

Now that you’ve presented a summary of your findings, you’ll need to clarify the limitations of the findings, and of the study in general. These limitations can cover **any part of your study.** For example:

* The scope of the study (e.g., perhaps too narrow or broad a focus)
* The analysis method(s) (e.g., perhaps too simplistic)
* Sampling issues (e.g., a small sample size)

Be clear and specific when you describe what limitations exist and what improvements could be made. Discussing the limitations and shortcomings of your research in a frank way is how you demonstrate your understanding of the research process, which is what will earn you marks. So, don’t be shy here. At the same time, you don’t need to be overly critical either (i.e., don’t shoot down your research). Outline the limitations, but also remind the reader of the value of your study, despite its limitations.

# Recommendations for Future Research

Next, you’ll need to outline the **opportunities for future research**, based on the findings and limitations of your study. In other words, you’ll describe how future studies can build on what you’ve found and improve the findings by overcoming some of the limitations in your study.

In this section, you might begin with or use phrases like…

* *“To better understand the implications of these results, future studies could address…”*
* *“Further research is needed to determine the causes of/effects of/relationship between…”*
* *To overcome the methodological limitations of this study, future research could…”*

If you need some inspiration for this section, have a look at past dissertations as well as journal articles in your research topic area. These will all have a section discussing future research recommendations which you can draw on.

# Contribution

Now comes your time to shine! In this section, you’ll highlight the key contribution that your study has made to your field of research. There are a few angles you can approach this from:

* From a **practical viewpoint**, discuss how your findings can be used in the real world – in other words, what contribution can they make to the field or industry? Where are these contributions applicable, how and why?
* From a **theoretical view**, you can illustrate how you’ve either challenged or supported a particular theory or framework. Similarly, you might show how you’ve addressed a gap in the literature.
* From a **research perspective**, you can demonstrate once more how your findings help solve the research problem you identified and why this is important.

As a rule of thumb, it’s best to be relatively conservative with your claims in this section. In other words, don’t overstate your contribution or try to make it look better than it is (fluff it up). At the same time, don’t be shy either. Clearly state how your study generated value, whether practical, theoretical, or both.

# Conclusion

Finally, it’s time to wrap up your document.

In this section, you’ll need to provide a short recap of the conclusion chapter to remind the reader of the **key takeaways**. Most importantly, you’ll need to (very concisely) remind the reader of the purpose of the study, along with the key findings (yeah, it’s getting repetitive, we know).

Here’s an example of what this section might look like:

*Given the critical importance of XXX, this study sought to identify potential antecedents of XXX in within the XXX context. This chapter concluded the study by highlighting the key findings in relation to the research aims and questions. Notably, XXX and XXX were found to act as the primary antecedents, while XXX and XXX were found to act as secondary antecedents. Based on these findings, actionable recommendations were made. The chapter concluded with a review of overall limitations, from which future research recommendations flowed.*

Remember that this section is essentially a reference point for your readers who will probably be looking for a recap on what you discussed throughout the chapter, so **don’t present any new information**. Stick to what you’ve already covered and keep it concise.

# Additional (free) resources

We hope you found this conclusion template useful. Here are a few more resources you might find useful while working on your discussion chapter:

* [How to write the conclusion chapter](https://gradcoach.com/dissertation-conclusion-chapter/) (video & article)
* [Common mistakes in the conclusion chapter](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmAgdEG7d7k) (video)
* [Free templates for each section of the dissertation/thesis](https://gradcoach.com/category/templates-tools/)
* [Free dissertation writing course (online)](https://gradcoach.com/dissertation-course/)

If you would like **1-on-1 support** with your dissertation, thesis or research project, check out our [private coaching service here](https://gradcoach.com/dissertation-coaching/).