



# **Editing your thesis**

### Presented by:

Dr Cherie Todd-Williamson Learning advisor (CTL)

&

Katherine Chisholm Subject librarian







# **Good presentation**

applies to...

Presentation of the problem





### Your PhD

You will write approx. 200-300 hundred pages
Conduct at least 3 years of research (if not more)
Collect and interpret data

Organise literature

Produce a critical, comprehensive and cohesive discussion to support your thesis

### **Editing (by definition) involves:**

Arranging, revising, and preparing written, audio, or video material for final production....

The objectives of editing include:

- 1. Detection and removal of factual, grammatical, and typographical errors
- 2. Clarification of obscure passages (i.e. unclear sentences)
- 3. Elimination of parts not suitable for the targeted audience, and
- 4. Proper sequencing to achieve a smooth, unbroken flow of narrative

(Business Dictionary, 2018).

**Editing** your work is not only beneficial, it's practically a mandatory component of writing your thesis.

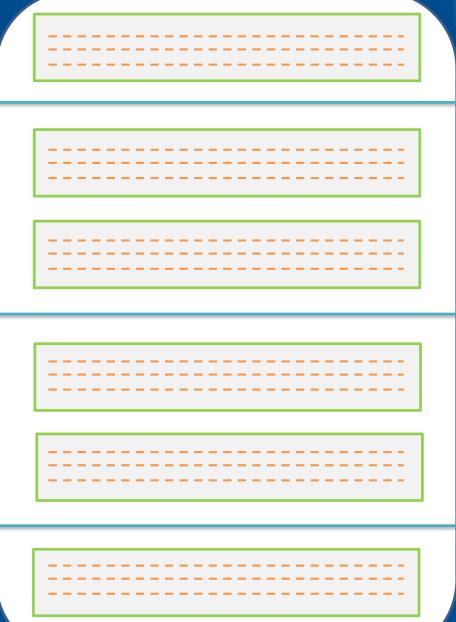


## **Activity: In Break Out rooms:**

- Introduce yourself, your research topic, and how far along you are
- Discuss, what 'editing' means for you. What editing have you done so far
- Also, what editing are you planning to do
- What you are having problems with, and what is working well for you









# Editing your thesis: From macro to micro

As a whole

Each section/chapter

Each paragraph

Each sentence







Make an outline plan and keep it in front of you while you go through your work as a whole.

#### Questions to ask yourself:

 Does your thesis answer your central research question or thesis title?

Research can be unpredictable, therefore, it's important to make sure your content matches your title. For example, you may have shifted focus while writing, in which case, you will need to re-phrase your dissertation topic while editing.

 Have you defined key words and concepts early on in your thesis?

It's also important to minimise the risk of confusing a reader. When editing, imagine a friend or family member who has no knowledge of your discipline or your dissertation, and then ask yourself, have I done enough to explain each term and concept?



# Editing your thesis: From macro to micro

As a whole





### **Sections/chapters:**

Read each chapter and create a label that will help you ensure all of relevant points and details have been provided.

#### Questions to ask yourself:

 Does all of the content belong in this chapter/section?

Flag anything that might be better placed in another section (or possibly be cut). For example, you might identify repetitive parts which have been stated previously, or discussion that is peripheral.

 Is there too much description and not enough analysis?

In other words, are you being explicit about the implications of a point? Remember to make it clear to a reader why a particular point is included, and how this point helps to address the problems/questions in your thesis.

#### Structure and flow:

#### **Introduction: Does it:**

- Define the topic?
- State the purpose of the research?
- Provide an outline of the thesis discussion?

#### Chapters: Do they:

- Have a logical order?
- Divide the discussions into appropriate sections?
- Have introductory and concluding segments?
- Present smooth transitions between each paragraph?

#### Conclusion: Does it:

- Link back to the introduction?
- Sum up the thesis argument?
- Express ideas for to future research avenues?

#### Reference List: Does it:

- List all sources fully and in the correct format?
- List only the references that you have cited in the main body? And vice-versa?

#### Appendices or List of Figures/Tables, are they:

- All included and correctly labelled?
- See <u>Doc Handbook</u>.







### **Sections/chapters:**

#### Questions to ask yourself:

- Is the first sentence of each paragraph a topic sentence?
- Does it introduce the idea you want it to communicate as well as show how it relates to the rest of the discussion?
- Have you used signposting words and phrases effectively to show the relationship between the paragraphs and the points in them?
- E.g. Opening phrases like: In addition; Similarly; Furthermore; In contrast; However.

  Other sentences in the paragraph could include:
- An explanation / Develop a point
- A quote / An indirect reference that supports it
- An example from your research
- A hint at what still remains to be addressed

# Editing your thesis: From macro to micro

### Each paragraph

#### **GOOD & BAD TOPIC SENTENCES**

**BAD**: A sentence that only states the topic using a keyword.

**GOOD**: A sentence that makes an argument point (e.g. a thesis statement for just that paragraph).

• For example, if your research is about relationships, it's not enough just to put the keyword 'relationship' in the sentence. Rather you have to create a topic sentence that is specific to that paragraph, which in this case, would tell the readers exactly what part of a relationship this paragraph addresses.



# -----Sentences-----

Editing a thesis can feel like a BIG job but there are lots of things you can do to minimise the number of typo, grammar and other sentence structure errors:

- Check your sentence length: Aim for sentences that are no longer than three lines and carefully review all punctuation.
- Read each sentence aloud.
- Check quotes have quotation marks –
  double or single, depending on your
  referencing style, and ensure that your style
  is consistent.
- Check for common grammar errors (e.g. their/there and advice/advise).
- Ensure apostrophes are correct.

# Editing your thesis: From macro to micro

#### Each sentence

#### USA vs. British spelling:

http://owll.massey.ac.nz/academicwriting/american-vs-britishspelling.php

#### Commonly confused words:

http://owll.massey.ac.nz/academicwriting/commonly-confusedwords.php

#### Apostrophes:

http://owll.massey.ac.nz/academicwriting/apostrophes.php



## --Sentences-----

#### Continued...

- **Identify sentence fragments:** the sentence subject, the verb/action.
  - Are they buried among too many unnecessary words and phrases?
  - Try cutting unnecessary words and read it again.
- Use a spellchecker: very helpful in general.
  - Pay attention to your spelling of key names and theories.
  - Ensure the use of capital letters is consistent and correct.

# Editing your thesis: From macro to micro

Each sentence

Sentence Fragments: OWLL

http://owll.massey.ac.nz/academicwriting/sentence-fragments.php

Also see: Manchester Phrasebank <a href="http://www.phrasebank.Manchester.ac.uk">http://www.phrasebank.Manchester.ac.uk</a>

# **Editing and proofing summary**



It's never too soon to start revising, but try to tackle it in these stages, from Macro to Micro.

#### Revision of ...

### **Macro** - Formatting the whole structure of your thesis:

- Layout and presentation; margins, spacing, indentation, correct citation details.
- Does your thesis answer your central research question or thesis title?
- Are the central concepts clearly defined?

### **Meso** - Content and organisation (How everything fits together):

- Do you have a clear research question?
- Are concepts defined (in plain language) early on in chapters?
- Do your introduction and body and conclusion all flow together?
- Do the paragraphs in each chapter have a logical flow?

### — Micro - Grammar and structuring of sentences:

Have you used transition sentences, and signposting between chapters and paragraphs. Spell checks, grammatical issues sorted etc.

Editing over a thesis timeline

> At the beginning

> > Durina

Towards the end

**NOTE**: Often editing (especially micro editing) is easier when all of the writing is done.



# **Plagiarism**

Sometimes students are concerned, or just merely curious about their level of plagiarism...

"Is there any way that I can check my thesis writing before I submit it"

Accessing Turnitin? – Via supervisors

### Three ways to avoid plagiarism:

- Referencing properly
- Developing good ways to paraphrase:

StudyUp online: "How to avoid plagiarism" -

Taking good notes:

Massey library: "How to keep track of your literature searches" -

StudyUp online: "How to use reading techniques and note taking with a literature matrix –

# What about professional editing services?

Always avoid services that offer to re-write, or even write your thesis. Using a service like this could be seen as a serious offence.

### **Editing companies:**

- Typically made up of editors who have an academic background.
- Like to assure quality editing results.
- Multiple editors, so tend to work well with tight deadlines.

Check out several editing agencies to compare prices and level of service.

#### **Freelance editors:**

 Like companies, different freelance editors offer different levels of work.

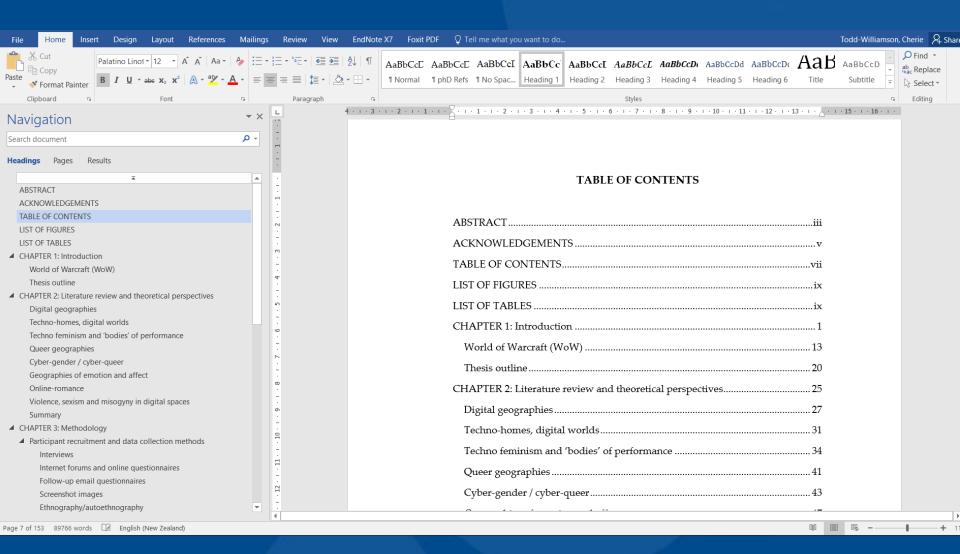
You need to make sure that your editor/proofreader has suitable qualifications, as well as a known history of producing successful work.

Key points to keep in mind when searching for an editor:

- Ethics
- Affordability
- Capability
- Turn around time



# What type of doc is this?



# The thesis as a long document



## **Microsoft Word Resources**

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

Library | Alumni Portal | Staffroom | MyMassey

Search OWLL

### **OWLL** About OWLL Academic writing Assignment types Computer skills **Microsoft Word** Basic formatting Images, tables, & figures Long documents Microsoft Excel Microsoft PowerPoint Stream

#### Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word is the most common word-processing program used to create assignments and other written documents. This section contains guides on how to format documents correctly using this program. Many repetitive tasks – such as double-spacing an assignment, creating a table of contents, or inserting a table or figure caption – can be done automatically.

#### In this section

- · Basic formatting
- · Images, tables, and figures
- Long documents

#### Related sections

For information on how to arrange and present your work, see the section on formatting and layout.

#### Academic Q+A

Have a study or assignment writing question? Ask an expert at Academic Q+A

#### Live online workshops

StudyUp (undergraduate)

StudyUp Postgraduate

Library

#### Campus workshops

Campus workshops

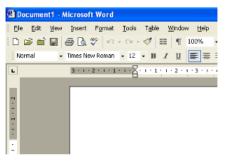


## **OWLL** About OWLL Academic writing Assignment types Computer skills Microsoft Word Basic formatting Images, tables, & figures Long documents Microsoft Excel Microsoft PowerPoint Stream Distance study ESOL study Maths & statistics Postgraduate study Referencing Sample assignments Study skills

### Long documents in Microsoft Word

This page contains helpsheets for the three versions of Microsoft Word (2003, 2007, and 2010). If you are not sure which version of Word you are using, check the chart below.

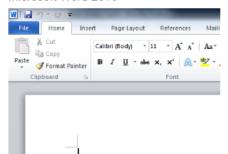








Microsoft Word 2010



If you have difficulty loading the helpsheets, you may need to install the latest version of the Adobe Acrobat Reader.

	2003	2007	2010
Creating a table of contents	PDF (405kb)	PDF (386kb)	PDF (345kb)
Numbering headings			PDF (568kb)
Shortcut navigation keys	PDF (142kb)	PDF (141kb)	PDF (117kb)
Comparing documents	PDF (193kb)	PDF (505kb)	PDF (279kb)
Changing the orientation of a single page	PDF (148kb)	PDF (280kb)	PDF (345kb)
Inserting different page numbers	PDF (148kb)	PDF (433kb)	PDF (415kb)
Different page numbers for different sections			PDF (393kb)
Page numbers different on the first page	PDF (74kb)	PDF (98kb)	PDF (110kb)
Starting the page number greater than 1	PDF (78kb)	PDF (96kb)	PDF (131kb)
Printing multiple pages per sheet	PDF (115kb)	PDF (119kb)	PDF (134kb)
Booklet printing			PDF (451kb)
Line numbers	PDF (174kb)	PDF (88kb)	PDF (157kb)





# Long document tutorials

### **Massey Library offers:**

1 workshop per semesterand1 to 1 tutorials (when requested)

Email: <u>library@massey.ac.nz</u>

(Include the words "long document tutorial" in your subject heading)





# Endnote@Massey



http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/library/help-and-instruction/endnote/endnote\_home.cfm

#### **EndNote**

EndNote software stores and manages references.



#### Download EndNote

By downloading EndNote you agree that Endnote will be installed for the purpose of Massey-related work or study and will not be installed on more than 3 computers per download.

#### Windows PC Version

- · Personally owned computers
- Massey owned computers
   NOTE: Versions X6 or older must be manually uninstalled.

#### Mac Version

- Mac Installer
- Installation tips for Mac users
   NOTE: Manually uninstall any previous EndNote versions.

Log in: with your student or staff Massey network login.



#### **EndNote Classes**

All Massey Libraries provide regular face-to-face and online EndNote workshops. Note: Distance students can also book for an on-campus session.

SELECT YOUR ENDNOTE CLASS & REGISTER HERE

EndNote is Massey's preferred reference management software; with it you can:

- · create, import, manage and search references
- · download and manage full text
- · insert citations into Microsoft Word documents
- create bibliographies in a variety of bibliographic styles

#### EndNote@Massey

Adjusting Author View in a List of References 🗗

EndNote X8 ☑

EndNote and Office 365

Repairing Corrupt Libraries 🖪

Journal Titles That Can't Be Changed 🖪

Sharing Libraries With Other Users

How Do I Set Endnote To Permanently Open My Library? ☑

Massey Profile Installer

Discover: Import Filter Request 🖪





## 6

# **Examples of style inconsistency**

### Reference list: APA Style

Singh, A. 2005. Guidelines for Thesis Writing. Journal of Higher Kernstein States and St

Smith, J. (2000). Referencing and why it's such a pain! *Journal of Academic Writing Standards*, *3*(4), 7-21.

#### In-text citations:

(Singh, 2005)

(Smith 2000)

In-text citations with page numbers:

(Singh 2005, 25) **X** 

(Smith, 2000, p. 12)



# **Checking your References**

- Check for style consistency.
- That all in text citations (in the body) are in the end reference list.
- And vice versa... do you have references in your Reference list that you have not cited in your chapters.
- Checking references can be tedious, but it's very important.
   Also it can be incredibly time consuming, so allow yourself time to do this properly, without rushing.
- Enrol in workshops on Endnote, or watch online video tutorials about the software that you are using to record your references (e.g. Xotero, Mendeley, Reciprocity, Citation Manager etc...).





# **Online Quiz**

# Three categories (26 questions in total):

**Qs 1 – 10**: Spelling consistency – USA & British

Qs 11 – 18: Singular or Plural forms

Qs 19 – 26: Commonly misspelt words





You'll see questions on the screen – e.g.

What is the name of Massey's learning management system?

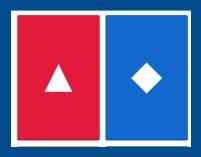
After a few seconds, you'll be given two possible answers – e.g.







You need to select the correct answer by pressing the appropriate square on your phone, pad or laptop.



You'll receive points not only for correct answers but also according to the speed of your selection.

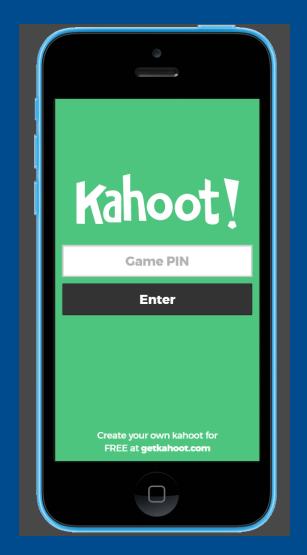




## To join the quiz you need to:

 Open kahoot.it in your browser

- Enter the game pin which I will show you in a minute
  - Enter your nickname (and you will see it appear on the public screen)







# Singular or plural?

- Axis
- Crises
- Criterion
- Nuclei
- Phenomenon
- Stimuli
- Strata
- Matrix

- Singular
- Plural
- Singular
- Plural
- Singular
- Plural
- Plural
- Singular



# Consistency in singular/plural



Axis

Axes

Crisis

Crises

Criterion

Criteria

Nucleus

Nuclei

Phenomenon

Phenomena

Datum

Data

Stratum

Strata

Matrix

**Matrices** 

(Venolia, 1995)

#### Citing author/s – Singular or Plural?

1 author = shows/states/argues 2 or more authors = show/state/argue

#### E.g.:

- Smith (2000) states that ....
- Smith and Jones (2001) state that ...

### For example:

What criterion do you use to find suitable research participants?

[Decision based on one factor].

What criteria do you use to find suitable research participants?

[Decision based on multiple factors].

- The data are / show / indicate data as a group of different factors.
- The data is / shows / indicates data as a whole unit (datum).



# Referring to sources: Use of tenses



acknowledge	admit	agree	allege	argue
assert	assume	believe	claim	conclude
consider	decide	demonstrate	deny	determine
discover	doubt	emphasise	explain	find
hypothesise	imply	indicate	infer	note
object	observe	point out	prove	reveal
say	show	state	suggest	think

- 1. Da Souza argues that previous researchers have misinterpreted the data.
- 2. Researchers have demonstrated that the use of this procedure is harmful.
- 3. Smith admits that aggregating the data limits the possible variations.

(Smollet, Proctor & Plotnick, 2004)





# Consistency in spelling

### **USA** or **British?**

Labour

Centre

Fiber

Organize

Realise

Dialog

Analogue

Traveler

Anesthesia

Programme

- British

- British

- USA

- USA

- British

- USA

British

- USA

- USA

- British

NOTE: The NZ dictionary follows the British style of spelling.

(Venolia, 1995)





# **Consistency in spelling**

**USA** 

Labor

Center

Fiber

Organize

Realize

Dialog

Analog

Traveler

Anesthesia

Program

**British** 

Labour

Centre

Fibre

Organise

Realise

Dialogue

Analogue

Traveller

Anaesthesia

Programme

#### Note:

- USA shortened version/as sounds
- Use of z rather than s
- Which ever you use, be consistent

(Venolia, 1995)





# Common misspellings

- Accomodate
- Definitely
- Occurrence
- Independent
- Questionnaire
- Recommend
- Compulsary
- Catagories

- Accommodate
- **Definately**
- -Occurence
- -Independant
- Questionaire
- Reccommend
  - Compulsory
  - Categories





# Commonly confused words

- Clients were given good advise/advice about the procedure
- This population has been effected/affected by droughts
- The knock on effect/affect was a drop in house prices
- Fish oil provides an alternate/alternative source of essential minerals
- Participants took the medication on alternate/alternative days
- Three discreet/discrete measurements were recorded
- The interviewer was very discret/discrete in addressing these difficult issues
- Oatmeal serves as a complement/compliment to the babyfood
- Following the group therapy session we observed an increased number of complements/compliments





- Affect is usually a verb, and it means to impact or change.
- Effect is usually a noun, an effect is the result of a change.

**BUT...** 'affect' and 'effect' can both be verbs and nouns. E.g.: "We want to effect this change immediately" (ie cause it to occur) / "The effect of the action was ..." / "This will affect the situation" / "she developed a positive affect" (a subjective way of being, like "affectation" - this one is common in psychology writing).

Alternate = every other

Alternative = substitute

Discreet = subtle

Discrete = separate

Complement = to go well with

Compliment = praise





# **Avoiding verbose phrases**

### **Simplify sentences:**

 Wordy sentences should be avoided and edited down to simpler versions. Doing this will make the content more readable as well as more easily understandable.

#### For instance:

Despite the fact that = Although

In the event that =

Has a requirement for = Needs

• It is often the case = Often

In view of the fact that =



## 6

# Useful tips for avoiding wordiness

- Look out for prepositions: "of", "in", "by" (e.g. "in the event of") if you see it, it often signals a wordy phrase.
- The same thing is often true for "tion" and "ance" words (e.g. "the maintenance of the relationship" vs. "maintaining the relationship").
- Relative pronouns: "who" "whose" "whom" "which" and "that" (e.g. "the experiment, which is a new one, showed that ..." vs. "the new experiment showed ...").
- Introductory phrases like "There is", "It is" (e.g. "There are many antelope interested in ..." vs. "Many antelope are interested in ...").
- Cliches tend to repeat unnecessarily (e.g. "each and every", "first and foremost").



# Written too much and have to cut words?

## **Editing to cut:**

- Take out certain sections?
  - Deleting whole paragraphs can be problematic if they are connected to other areas of discussion, or be linked to previous signposts.
- Go back to key arguments:
  - If they are adequately answered, you may be able to cut words from places where you have added discussion that is not essential to the point being made.
- Too light in other areas?
  - You may need to add more. It's a balancing act!
- Look for redundant sentences or material and cut it.
- Create a clear outline to stop yourself from writing too much.





# **Paragraphing**



Clear topic sentence that reflects the whole paragraph

One point per paragraph

Make sure the paragraphs fit together i.e flow





# Read for understanding and clarity

- Do not use overly complicated language:
  - When possible, you need to write as simply as possible so that (theoretically) anyone off the street could pick up your thesis, read it, and understand it.
- Give your thesis chapters to people outside of your discipline:
  - If they can understand it, you are doing well!
  - And if it's not easily understandable, you will need to work on it some more.







# It's important to remind the reader why your research is important



This study is a first in showing the importance of the early embryonic period in the development of lambs and indicated significant biological and economical implications of the uterine environment in sheep production. Supplements at this early stage would reduce likelihood of infection and the potential for stillborns later on.





# Acknowledging the need for further research



Reinforce the contribution of your own research and acknowledge the need for further research in the area. For example:

A further line of work that would be of considerable interest...

This research has made important contributions to X and Y but there is scope for future work in this area.

The development of a more general X that applies to networks other than Y and Z remains an enormous challenge.

Another recurring issue is ... ... ... The methods we introduce in this thesis present a vast improvement in terms of X ... ... ... however Y makes these methods unsuitable for very large networks. There is still much work that needs to be done in terms of...



## 6

# Other tips

- Time management:
  - Don't leave editing to the last minute. It takes time!
- Look at other theses by past PhDs to use as a guideline:
  - They can give you a better idea of how you want your thesis to look (e.g. overall structure and presentation style, Table of Contents, Fonts, Citation style). Also look at the ways they have structured particular sentences in the different sections/chapters of their thesis.
- Being a good writer means adopting good writing and revision techniques:
  - Create your own editing checklists. For example...



# 6

# Tips for your working environment

### When writing:

- Always try to give yourself time to write and think.
  - Remember, writing doesn't always flow, so factor that into your writing schedule.
- Find a place that lets you work with minimal interruptions.

### Working and communicating with supervisors:

- > Supervisors will at give feedback on your writing, and the sooner the better. So writing early is a really good idea.
  - ➤ **However**, you might decide to focus on just getting your points across in early drafts, and going back to do grammar later. So you will need to let your supervisors know.

### Have you tried:

Bootcamps or writing retreats?





### **Example of an Editing Checklist - Micro**

Micro element	Guidelines	Check
Capitalisation	Use of capitalisations are correct and consistently used.	
Punctuation	Commas, colons etc. are correct and in appropriate places, including apostrophes.	
Grammar	All sentences are easy for the reader to understand.	
Formatting	The correct formatting guidelines for PhDs in my college have been followed.	
Spelling	All words are spelled correctly & consistently (e.g. in depth, in-depth, indepth)	
Glossary terms	Complex words have been explained in-full when used, AND added to the Glossary's list of terms, with a full description.	
Acronyms	Acronyms are used for ease of reading and are re-written in full at the first instance in each chapter.	





### Massey's Doctoral Research Student webpage -

(where you can find all of the recent resources from these and other sessions): <a href="http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/researcher-development/postgraduate-research-student.cfm">http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/researcher-development/postgraduate-research-student.cfm</a>

### **Guide to the presentation of theses:**

https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/fms/Library/Documents/Publications/guide-to-presentation-of-theses.pdf?89AEB481E10A6E27312695165B2E2A0D

### Long Doc Resources (& unofficial thesis template)

https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/staffroom/national-shared-services/information-technology-services/help/learning-resources-for-students.cfm

### What font should you use?

https://thesiswhisperer.com/2016/03/30/what-font-should-i-choose-for-my-thesis/

### Choosing a referencing management system

https://thesiswhisperer.com/2013/08/21/endnote-vs-well-everything-else/



## **Useful literature**

- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Day, R. A. (1998). How to write and publish a scientific paper (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Phoenix, AZ: The Oryx Press.
- Dunleavy, P. (2003). Authoring a PhD: How to plan, draft, write and finish a doctoral thesis or dissertation. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Evans, D., Graba, P., & Zobel, J. (2012). *How to write a better thesis* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Carlton: Melbourne University Press.
- Kamler, B., & Thomson, P. (2014). *Helping doctoral students write: Pedagogies for supervision*. London: Routledge.
- Rountree, K. (1996). Writing by degrees. A practical guide to writing theses and research papers. Auckland: Longman.
- Swales, J., & Feak, C. (1994) *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills.*University of Michigan Press
- Swan, M. (2002). Practical English Usage. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Venolia, J. (1995). Write right: A desktop digest of punctuation, grammar and style. California, CA: Ten Speed Press
- Walters, D. (1999). The readable thesis: A guide to clear and effective writing. USA: Avocus Publishing.



### Support over the summer period

CTL services: <a href="https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/staffroom/teaching-and-learning/centres">https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/staffroom/teaching-and-learning/centres</a> tl/centrestl-students/centrestl-students home.cfm

Library services: <a href="https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/library/library-home.cfm">https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/library/library-home.cfm</a>

Massey's Doctoral Research Student webpage: <a href="http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/researcher-development/postgraduate-research-student.cfm">http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/researcher-development/postgraduate-research-student.cfm</a>

Ka kite anō. We'll be back in 2021 with more!

Writing workshops by Martin McMorrow: tinyurl.com/martinspresenations AND academicenglishresources.com