

HOW TO START WRITING YOUR PHD THESIS

(MUST BE AGREED WITH THE SUPERVISOR ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS)



GENERAL THESIS ORGANISATION AND CONTENTS

- **Cover Page and Title Page** (1 page)
 - Thesis title; Author's name; Institution name; Date; Coordinator(s)
- **Acknowledgements (optional)** (1 page)
- **Abstract** (Portuguese and English, 1 page each, including keywords)
 - Thesis content overview, including background, research question/objectives, methods, main findings, and conclusions
- **Table of Contents** (three levels)
 - List of chapters and subchapters with respective page numbers
- **Introduction / Background**
- **State of the Art**
- **Objectives**
- **Methodology**
- **Results**
- **Discussion**
- **Limitations**
- **Conclusions**
- **References**
- **Appendixes and Annexes**

GENERAL THESIS ORGANISATION AND CONTENTS

- **General Introduction / Background:** Begin with a general introduction to the thesis topic. Briefly describe the broader context and the importance of the problem you are addressing in your research (1 to 3 pages). Explain why your research is relevant, significant, and worthy of further investigation. All statements must be supported by references.

The relevance of the problem can be justified in various ways, such as:

- Statistics; Work done by other authors; Social impact; Economic impact; Moral and/or ethical reasons; Legal, standardisation or regulatory issues.

Don't confuse problems with objectives.



GENERAL THESIS ORGANISATION AND CONTENTS

- **General information:** Present the main general concepts, frameworks and other issues relevant to its study. Explain how these issues relate to your research topic and why they are important for understanding the problem you are addressing (5 to 15 pages).

As an example and if applicable:

- Definitions, Conceptual framework, Legal Framework, Regulatory Framework, ...

In general, the necessary information should be given so that the following points of the thesis can be understood without the need to look for additional information.

GENERAL THESIS ORGANISATION AND CONTENTS

Literature Review

- **Field Evolution:** Discuss the historical evolution of the relevant field of study for your research. Describe how knowledge in this field has evolved over time and how these changes influence your work (3 to 10 pages).
- **State of the Art:** Conduct a comprehensive review of the existing literature on your topic. Identify the main research, debates, gaps, and trends in the field. Organize the literature review into thematic sections to ensure a clear and organized approach. Summarize the current state of knowledge on your topic and identify any gaps or unresolved issues that your research aims to address. Highlight why your research is important and how it will contribute to advancing the field. (15 to 40 pages).

GENERAL THESIS ORGANISATION AND CONTENTS

To be developed according to the Supervisor

- **Objectives** (global and specific)
- **Methodology** (with what is described in this chapter, any other researcher should be able to replicate the work as long as he or she can use the same means)
- **Results** (to present the results obtained in a clear and objective manner, following the steps described in the methodology)
- **Discussion** (present a comprehensive and critical analysis of the results, contextualising them with the existing literature and highlighting their contributions to the advancement of knowledge in the area under study)
- **Limitations and bias** (identify and discuss possible methodological restrictions, limitations in the data and potential biases, thus recognising the contextual nature and areas for future research)
- **Conclusions** (summarise the main results, highlighting their relevance to the field and outlining possible directions for future work, thus providing a comprehensive synthesis and projection of your work)
- **References**
- **Appendixes and Annexes**