

Thesis Preparation Guide

For

Graduate Students

Dr. Stephen Petrina
University of British Columbia
27 March 2009

Conventional Dissertation or Thesis Format

	Title Page
	Abstract
	Table of Contents
	List of Tables
	List of Figures
	Preface (if applicable)
	Acknowledgements and/or Dedication
Chap 1	Introduction
	Background/ Positionality
	Rationale
	Statement of Purpose
	Statement of Problem
	Limitations
	Definitions (Terminology, etc.)
	Organization of Thesis
Chap 2	Review of Literature
	Introduction
	Background
	Theoretical Frameworks
	Conclusion
Chap 3	Methodology
	Introduction
	Site of Research
	Methods (description, criticisms, etc.)
	Instrument (if applicable)
	Data Collection & Analysis (Ethics, Techniques, etc.)
	Conclusion
Chap 4	Findings
	Introduction
	Data Analysis and Examples
	Key Findings
	Conclusion
Chap 5	Conclusions, Implications & Recommendations
	Introduction
	Summary
	Implications
	Recommendations
	Conclusions
References	References or Bibliography
Appendices	Appendix I (Instruments, etc.)
	Appendix II (Raw Data Samples)
	Appendix III (Data Collection Protocols, dates, etc)

SUGGESTED CHAPTERS FOR A THESIS OR DISSERTATION

Galen Erickson

NOTE: Doctoral dissertations are personal constructions of a series of arguments ultimately leading to one or more knowledge claims that are judged to be significant and important for the educational community. This community is typically composed of academics, policy makers and practitioners. The dissertation should try to address at least two of these groups. The outline below is only ONE example of how the dissertation might be organized and it is simply a product of Galen's experience working with a number of graduate students. It represents a very traditional approach to developing and laying out the claims in a dissertation and follows to some degree Gowin's Knowledge Vee.

Chapter 1 The Problem and Its Context

Introduction to the Chapter

- A short overview of what this chapter will contain

Context or Background to the Problem

- What are the contexts in which the problem is situated?
- How do these contexts influence the problem area

General Problem Area

- What area of educational research is this study addressing

Specific Research Questions

- Identify the specific research question

Methods of the Study

- A very brief overview of how you will address these research questions (Sometimes this information is provided in the General Problem Area section, or other sections. Some people wait until Chapter 3 to discuss methods. I think that it is useful to let your reader know briefly)

Significance of the Problem Area

- Why is this an important problem for educators to address
- How is it situated in the research literature?

Limitations of the Study

- What are the decisions you made and other factors which limit your ability to make knowledge claims or generalizations about your study

Overview of the Dissertation

- Outline briefly the contents of each of the chapters

Chapter 2 Review of Literature

Introduction to the Chapter

- Briefly outline the major headings and issues that you will be addressing in the chapter

The Context of The Research Problem

- Develop in greater detail the discussion about the context presented in Chap 1.

Review of literature in specific problem areas of your study

- This will vary depending upon your specific area of study. But it should include both empirical work as well as any theoretical/conceptual writings on your topic area.
- Make sure that this is a critical review where you comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the articles or books.
- Try to use this review to make an argument for why you are doing your study.
- Possible arguments might be: a) there is a lack of literature in the area; b) there are conflicting reports in the literature and clarification is required; your work is an extension of existing studies in terms of scope and context.
- Review of literature regarding any theoretical perspectives you are using in your study
- Make a connection between this perspective and your own study

Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction to the Chapter

- Briefly outline the major headings and issues that you will be addressing in the chapter

Design of the Study

- Description of the methods that you used to address the research questions that characterize your study (You may wish to repeat the research questions here).
- Discussion of your reasons for selecting the particular methods that you selected (for example, why did you use a questionnaire, or employ a case study or use interviews, etc).

Data Collection

- What data will you collect and what methods will you use to collect these data?

Participants

- What sampling process did you use to select these participants?
- Description of the sample

Data Analysis

- How did you go about analyzing the data

Chapter 4 Findings or Results of the Study

Introduction to the Chapter

- Briefly outline the major headings and issues that you will be addressing in the chapter
- Organize the subheadings and discussion of your results around the research questions, if possible
- The sub-headings here will depend upon the nature of your study.
- The results may be presented in more than one chapter IF it makes sense. For example if you have two lengthy case studies then you might want to have 2 results chapters. OR, you might want to devote a separate chapter to each research question. This is a choice you might want to make with advisors.

Chapter 5 Conclusions, Implications of the Study, and Recommendations

Introduction to the Chapter

- Briefly outline the major headings and issues that you will be addressing in the chapter

Conclusions of the Study

- The conclusions should be organized around your research questions and should basically be a summary of the findings reported in your results chapter(s)

Discussion of the Study

- In this section you can discuss some of the findings in terms of the literature review that you carried out in Chap. 2 plus add any issues that you consider to be noteworthy and important to comment on.
- This is a section where you can speculate about your findings without worrying about providing strong evidence of the claims being made

Implications of the Study

- Outline some of the implications of the study for the field. Again, this might mean referring back to your literature review or it may take the form of recommendations for improved practice by researchers, policy makers, or teachers

Future Directions

- Outline some possible research studies that would further extend your work in some important areas
- This is a section that could map out further studies that you hope to do upon graduation OR that another graduate student who is just beginning might consult for guidance.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES

- Include Instruments and any other forms, etc. that were used for data collection
- Include components that were not core to the Chapters but that are meaningful for future researchers
- Data samples if relevant

Conventional Masters Thesis Format

Chapters

1. Introduction and Research Problem— 20-25 pp.
2. Review of Literature— 30 pp.
3. Methodology— 30 pp.
4. Findings and Data— 30 pp.
 - Quantitative Statistics
 - Interview Examples
5. Conclusions, Implications & Recommendations— 20 pp.
 - References
 - Appendices (As Necessary)

Digital Formats

(<http://www.grad.ubc.ca/students/thesis>)

In certain cases, the Faculty of Graduate Studies may approve submission of all or a significant portion of a thesis on CD-ROM. Approval must be obtained **prior to** submission, and will be granted only under exceptional circumstances. Please contact FoGS for details.

When submitting an approved thesis on CD-ROM, the author should ensure that the document conforms to the **formatting requirements** listed on this webpage. The student must submit two copies of the thesis on CD-ROM, as well as a paper copy of the title page (no signatures), a signed paper copy of the Thesis Approval Form with original signatures, a paper copy of the abstract, and paper copies of all applicable forms.

Students are also required to provide a description of the software and other applications used to create the CD-ROM, including a list of files and file sizes on the disk. Labels that include the student's name, thesis title, and production date should appear on both the jewel case and the disk.

Manuscript-Based Theses

In some departments, graduate students are encouraged to write their theses in manuscript-based format. A manuscript-based thesis is a collection of published, in-press, accepted, submitted, or draft manuscripts. This collection must be integrated and presented as part of a unified document, with consecutive page numbering throughout. It must include elements of the traditional format thesis, such as literature review, introduction of the research topic, objectives/hypotheses, discussion and conclusions (to relate the manuscripts to each other and to the discipline or field of study), and comments on future research.

Producing this type of thesis allows students to gain scientific writing experience in a format used by researchers in their field of study.

Manuscript-based theses should contain the following elements, in this order:

Prefatory Pages

- Title page
- Abstract (maximum 350 words)
- Table of contents (list chapter heads and subheads, bibliographies and appendices)
- List of tables (if any)
- List of figures (if any)
- List of plates (if any)
- List of symbols, nomenclature and abbreviations (if any)
- Acknowledgement or dedication (if any)

Body of Thesis (At Least Three Chapters)

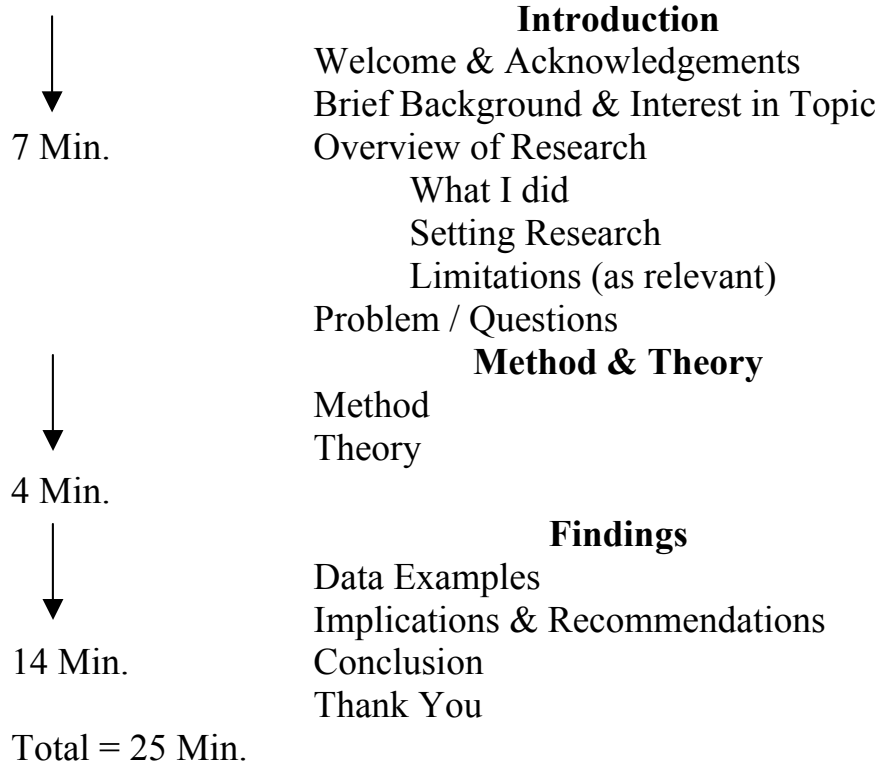
1. Introductory Chapter
 - Literature review
 - Thesis theme and objectives/hypotheses to be tested by the research
 - Bibliography
2. Manuscript Chapters
 - Paper format, no abstract
 - Footnotes for each chapter citing publications
 - Figures and Tables
 - Bibliography
3. Concluding Chapter
 - Discussion and conclusions relating manuscripts to each other and to the discipline or field of study
 - Comments on future research
 - Bibliography
4. Appendices (if any)— details of methodology, tabulated data not in manuscripts, etc.

Formatting Requirements

- General formatting requirements are the same as they are for a Traditional Format thesis.
- Note:** Formatting of included manuscripts must be consistent throughout the thesis, including formatting of footnotes, citations etc.

Oral Examination (Defense) Presentation Format

Recommended Presentation Sequence:
(20-30 minutes Total)



In general, the sequence of the presentation should mirror the organization of the thesis. Do not try to cover everything. Less is more. Use examples of your data rather than attempting to cover everything. Do not read from a script— it's ok to read parts, but do not attempt to read through the entire presentation. The goal is to communicate with a fluent style to a general audience. This is a chance for the committee to judge your presentation capabilities. Be sure to arrive early to prepare the technology that will be used. The only way to deliver an adequate or outstanding presentation is to practice. Practice, Practice, Practice.

Thesis Style/Formatting **(<http://www.grad.ubc.ca/students/thesis>)**

Pagination and Facing Pages

Every page (other than the title page and copyright/co-authorship forms) must be numbered. Page numbers should be placed at least .5 inches (12 mm) from the edge of the page; they may be either in the centre (top or bottom) or on the right of the page.

Number the preliminary pages in lower case Roman numerals (ii, iii, iv, etc.). The title page is "i" but is not numbered. Numbering begins at "ii" on the first page of the abstract.

Number the body of the thesis in Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.). The first page of the text is "1" and the numbering continues throughout, including pages with tables and figures, the bibliography, appendices, and index.

Facing Pages

Facing pages are not acceptable. If the caption for a figure, table, etc., cannot appear on the same page as its accompanying illustration, place the illustration on a separate page after the caption.

Margins and Spacing

Margins must be at least 1.25 inches (32 mm) on the left and .75 inches (19 mm) on the three outer edges of each page. For exceptions to this rule, see Illustrative Material.

Spacing

The thesis may have double, 1.5, or single line spacing. The print quality must be consistently sharp throughout.