

HIGHER DEGREE BY RESEARCH THESIS FORMAT GUIDELINES



This guide is to assist HDR candidates with general thesis formatting information. More information about this guide is available in the [HDR Thesis Submission and Examination Policy](#).

Section 1: Overview

In all circumstances, candidates are advised to consult with their Principal Supervisor regarding the required format for their thesis to ensure that it meets the expectations of the disciplines to which it is addressed.

All HDR theses are to be in accordance with the HDR Thesis Submission and Examination Policy

Section 2 – Language

In accordance with the HDR Thesis Submission and Examination Policy, all theses are to be written in English unless otherwise approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).

Section 3 – Style

It is important that a thesis be written well and in acceptable style, the thesis should be clear, concise, correct and complete:

- a. accuracy and clarity
- b. precision and conciseness
- c. a high standard of spelling, grammar and punctuation
- d. sound paragraph and sentence construction
- e. elimination of redundant or ambiguous words, phrases and passages
- f. a thorough revision before final typing and correction of all typing errors

Section 4 – Length of Thesis

All candidates should refer to the HDR Thesis Submission and Examination Policy for information regarding word limits.

A thesis is intended to evaluate the ability of candidates to present a report on their research in a clear and succinct manner; an excessively lengthy thesis could be counterproductive.

Section 5 – Format of Thesis

All candidates are to submit their thesis as a digital (Adobe PDF) file.

Theses with creative work or portfolios may submit more than one file in a format other than PDF.

It is recommended that all candidates use Microsoft Word to prepare the dissertation. All UNE students are entitled to download this software for free.

It is recommended that the PDF file size is reduced which can be done in Adobe PDF.

The font type should be easy to read and should follow discipline norms. Typically Times New Roman is used for text content. The height of the print size in the final copy shall be not less than twelve (12) points for the main text. The point type and size for captions and other addenda shall be not less than nine (9) points with font type Arial Narrow.

Candidates may choose to use a one and one half OR two-line spacing

Refer to the format for your discipline and as a general format margins on all four sides should be no less than 20mm.

Figures, diagrams, maps and computer printouts should be ensured that information is neither lost (e.g. if characters are too small or too faint) nor lost in the case of binding and trimming if required by an examiner.

The contents of the submitted thesis should normally be in the following order:

- a. **Initial Pages** The Initial Pages May Be Numbered Using Roman Numerals (I, II, III, IV, Etc.) Centred On Bottom Of Page
- b. **Main Text** (Including Figures As Appropriate) Pages Are Numbered In Sequence 1, 2, 3, 4 And Positioned Relevant To Required Header & Footer I.E. Odd And Even Headers And Footers
- c. **References**
- d. **Bibliography** (If Appropriate)
- e. **Plans** (If Any)
- f. **Appendices**

Candidates submitting an thesis containing publications or items that have been added to the thesis, should check to ensure that the page size throughout the thesis is set to A4.

Section 6 – Heading Styles

The size of styles should follow disciplinary norms. For specific information, candidates should consult with their Principal Supervisor in the first instance.

Section 7 – Raw Data

In accordance with the HDR Thesis Submission and Examination Policy and the HDR Thesis Submission and Examination Procedure, all material and data must be registered and archived with the University repository, RUNE.

It is up to the candidate and supervisors to determine the appropriate level of raw/semi processed/processed data to present in the thesis.

The candidate may choose to include in the thesis a permanent identifier to data uploaded to a repository, for example RUNE, DOI, etc.

In most cases, graphical presentation is preferable to numerical presentation because it is much easier for the reader to comprehend at a glance.

Section 8 – Computer Programs

Computer programs should be listed, as appendices, only when they have been written by the candidate. Note that the listing(s) MUST BE PRODUCED BY DIRECT COMPUTER THESIS FROM

AN OPERATIONAL PROGRAM. They must not be retyped in any way as this is almost guaranteed to introduce errors.

All source code (compiled computer languages, scripts, formulas) should be provided as a code repository and/or archived as a dataset on RUNE (and permanent URL/DOI cited), etc.

Each program should be adequately "self-documenting", that is adequately furnished with comment panels outlining language, machine requirements, library function/subroutine requirements (where non-standard), input and thesis variables, etc. Flow charts are not specifically required, but if there is a suite of programs or interactive subroutine one (or more) structure charts may be appropriate.

Section 9 – Editing of theses

In accordance with The Australian Standards for Editing Practice, supervisors are to provide editorial assistance as follows:

- a. Standard C: Substance and Structure;
- b. Standard D: Language and Illustrations; and
- c. Standard E: Completeness and Consistency.

Editorial assistance provided to the candidate from other parties must be declared and limited to editorial intervention in accordance with The Australian Standards for Editing Practice as follows:

- a. Standard D: Language and Illustrations; and
- b. Standard E: Completeness and Consistency.

Section 10 – Printed Thesis

As per the HDR Thesis Submission and Examination Policy and the HDR Thesis Submission and Examination Procedure, requests for printed copy/ies of the thesis will be advised by the staff in the Graduate Research School.

Candidates should consult the below information for setting the margins for printing. When printing double sided, the page margins must be alternating to allow for a mirror image so that no text is lost due to binding.

If the thesis contains publications or items that have been added to the thesis, candidates should check to ensure that the page size throughout the thesis is set to A4.

Comb Bound - Single Side

Paper Type	Margins
International A4 paper (297 mm x 210 mm)	Left hand margin of at least 20 mm Top, bottom and right hand margin of at least 25 mm

Comb Bound - Double Side

Paper Type	Margins
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International A4 paper (297 mm x 210 mm)	Alternating left and right hand margin of 20 mm Top, bottom margin of at least 25 mm
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Soft bound - Single Side

Paper Type	Margins
International A4 paper (297 mm x 210 mm)	Left hand margin of 40 mm Top, bottom and right hand margin of at least 25 mm

Soft Bound - Double Side

Paper Type	Margins
International A4 paper (297 mm x 210 mm)	Alternating left and right hand margin of 40 mm Top, bottom of at least 25 mm

Standard Thesis Format

Section 1 – Initial Pages

The order of these pages will normally be as follows candidates should follow discipline norms and seek advice from the Principal Supervisor in the first instance. See Appendix A

Section 2 – Title Page

This page should set out the full title, the award for which the thesis is submitted (e.g. Master of Philosophy), the full name and academic qualifications of the candidate and the year of submission. Any candidate in receipt of a Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship either as a tuition offset or stipend payments, must acknowledge the government in the thesis and at any time during or after completion of the HDR degree. For more information about this requirement, refer to Section 1.6.55 of the Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2017. An example of this statement is provided at the end of this guide in the Appendix.

Section 3 – Abstract

An abstract is a particular and essential form of summary of academic work. It is not the same as a Summary or Synopsis which would normally be found at the front of any technical report because it does not necessarily summarise every aspect of the work in strict order or proportion to the full work.

An abstract is essentially a concise statement of the major conclusions of the academic work. A brief mention, usually restricted to a sentence or two, of the objectives and methodology is usually given to set these conclusions in context; and similarly any other significant aspects of the work will be mentioned. An abstract would normally be approximately 300-400 words.

Great care must be taken when writing the abstract as it is by this page, and often this page alone, that other academics will peruse the work and decide whether to delve into the full thesis. There exist a number of "Abstract" publications containing entirely academic thesis abstracts reproduced for this purpose.

Section 4 – Certification

See Appendix A. This is a statement headed 'Certification' candidates may choose to title this page as 'Declaration.' The statement is used to indicate that the work contained in the thesis is the bona-fide work of the candidate, that the work has not been previously submitted for an award, and that, to the best of the candidate's knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement and reference is made in the thesis to that work. Candidates typed name and date is placed beneath the statement, candidates may choose to a signature however a signature is not required as a typed name will suffice.

Section 5 – Acknowledgements - Optional

It is important that the candidate acknowledge assistance received whilst undertaking the project and preparing the thesis. The candidate should consider carefully all forms of assistance received -

academic, technical, secretarial, administrative and personal (e.g. family) as appropriate. Adequate acknowledgement should not normally exceed one page.

Section 5 – Table of Contents and Notation

The purpose of a 'Table of Contents' is to provide a clear and comprehensive index to the material presented. It should include:

- i. Chapter headings (numbered 1, 2, etc and underlined)
- ii. Headings within chapters (numbered 1.1, 1.2, etc)
- iii. Further subheadings as appropriate (similarly "nested" and numbered 1.1.2.1 etc)
- iv. If applicable - The heading "References" and its appropriate page number
- v. If applicable - The heading "Bibliography" and its page number
- vi. If applicable - The heading "List of Figures" (Table of Figures) and its page number
- vii. If applicable - The heading "List of Tables" and its page number
- viii. If applicable - The heading "List of Plans" and its page number (if appropriate)
- ix. Appendices; each numbered or lettered (A, B, C) in order and with its heading.

The "List of Figures" (Table of Figures), "List of Tables" and "List of Plans" (if used) shall follow in subsequent pages.

For larger tables and figures—if items break over two or more pages place these large tables or figures in the appendices

Section 6 – Citation, Referencing and Footnotes

Citation and Reference List

Candidates should consult with their supervisor(s) and/or the HDR Coordinator regarding the most appropriate referencing and citation style for their discipline.

Footnotes

The footnoting system provides within the text superscripted numerals that direct the reader to references at the bottom of the page. A bibliography is also provided with this system. Text used for footnotes will be a smaller font size than the body (typically 9 or 10 point) and should be placed at the bottom of a page but not within the footer region.

When to Footnote

Candidates should indicate the source of quotations, information, ideas or interpretation in a footnote. Acknowledging the intellectual property and moral rights of authors is one of the primary roles of referencing. In the case of information, only substantial information or possibly contentious statements of fact need to be documented. Commonly accepted facts do not require a footnote.

Appendix A – Preliminary Title Pages

University of New England



Title

Candidate Name

Degree, Institution/University

For the award of Doctor of Philosophy

Year

If applicable - This research has been conducted with the support of the Australian Government
Research Training Program Scholarship

Certification

I certify that the ideas, experimental work, results, analyses, software and conclusions reported in this thesis are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

Candidate Name

Date

Appendix B - Traditional Theses

Initial Pages of a Thesis may include the following:

- a. Title Page – sample attached
- b. Abstract
- c. Certificate Page – sample attached
- d. Acknowledgements
- e. Table of Contents including
- f. Table of Figures
- g. List of Tables

The Main Text

For traditional theses, the main text will usually be divided into chapters. Typical chapter headings are listed below as a guide and please follow discipline/degree norms and seek clarification from your principal supervisor.

Chapter 1 Introduction

The first section of the body of the thesis should be an introduction, which should make clear the aims and focus of the study, identify its significance, and set the frame and sequence for each of the papers that follow. Its maximum length need only be 20-30 pages.

Chapter 2 Methodology

A number of chapters, which may be written in the format of a self-contained journal article, will follow. These need not have been submitted to any journal. Each chapter must include by the candidate a signed Statement of Originality and Statement of Contribution by Others.

Chapters of the thesis and self-contained articles need to be integrated and therefore need to flow cogently from one to another. It needs to be made clear how the chapters are linked and how they contribute to each other.

Chapter 3 Results

Chapter 4 Discussion of results

Chapter 5 Conclusions

The final chapter should provide integrative Conclusions, drawing together all the work described in the journal-article-format parts of the thesis and relating this back to the issues raised in the Introduction

Of these only two are compulsory. The first, "Introduction" which must also include a clear statement of the objectives of the research project, often as a specific subsection; and the last, "Conclusions", which will normally include suggestions for further work in the topic, as appropriate.

Referencing

Any thesis must indicate its relation to other literature in the field and this is usually accomplished by means of citation (referencing). Follow the discipline/School norm and if needed, seek further clarification from the supervisors and/or HDR Coordinator.

Referencing of documentation is also a formal mechanism for giving appropriate acknowledgement of the work of others within the main text. Proper documentation enables an author to avoid any suspicion of plagiarism to refer to the source or authority for statements made in the text, and to indicate where fuller details on a particular point may be found.

Bibliography (if appropriate)

The Bibliography is a list of books and other sources that the candidate has found useful in an overall way, but for which there are no direct in text references - for example, books on thesis presentation which the candidate has read, and background textbooks to the thesis topic.

Follow the discipline/School norm and if needed, seek further clarification from you supervisors and/or HDR Coordinator.

As with References, they are described by the Author, Title, Year, Place, Publisher and sometimes the specific Chapter or subsection.

The Bibliography should be in alphabetical order.

Plans, Diagrams, Tables, Photographs

Follow the discipline/School norm and if needed, seek further clarification from supervisors and/or HDR Coordinator. As a general rule, small diagrams and tables and photographs should be incorporated into the text and numbered.

A chapter based numbering system is usually most convenient, e.g. Figure 2.1, Table 3.1. If a set of Figures or Tables are considered together they may be labelled Figure 2.2(a) and 2.2(b), etc.

Each Figure, Table or Photograph should be designed as 'stand-alone' which means that the item should be able to be read and understood without reference to the text.

Captions must, therefore, be provided and be informative with adequate definition of characters, symbols, etc. used in the table or figure. Recommend font type for captions is Arial Narrow with font size being no less than nine (9) points. This will visually separate these items from the main content. This font type can also be used for the table text with a font size ranging from 10 to 12 depending on volume of content within the table.

Table captions are always placed above the table: Figure captions (ie for diagrams, photographs or other illustrations) are always placed below the figure. Assembly of the thesis is sometimes made easier if figures and tables are presented in separate pages which are then "interleaved" with the text before pagination. Beware excessive photo reduction of diagrams, which can render labelling or dimensions too small to be adequately legible.

In general, it is preferable to have only one figure per A4 page - only if the diagram is very simple will two fit on a single page. Occasionally, some thesis involve the preparation and presentation of material in large tables or plans of A4 or greater size. Where this occurs, all such diagrams, tables

or plans should be placed after the main body of the thesis and bound in such a manner that they are able to be opened out and read even when the rest of the thesis is closed.

This requires provision of a left hand margin of between 215 and 220 mm. Care should be taken that all plans, diagrams, tables and photographs are fade proof and professionally fixed in place. Where photographs are numerous it may be preferable to include a number on a whole page for photographic copying. Everyday adhesive tape is NOT suitable for fixing diagrams or photographs to a page.

To facilitate conciseness in the main body of the thesis, it is advisable to place essential, but voluminous material such as experimental results and computer program listings in appendices. Other areas of literature, theoretical or experimental investigation undertaken, but not central to the thesis should be reported, as concisely as possible, in appendices.

Appendices should be labelled Appendix A, B, etc with the order being determined by the order in which they are referred to in the main body of the text.

Page numbering may be carried through to the appendices or separate pagination such as A1, A2, A3 used if more convenient as frequently appendices are prepared in advance of the final draft of the text.

Figures, tables, etc, when used exclusively in an Appendix, may conveniently be labelled Figure A.1, Table A.1, etc.

Appendix C – Thesis with Creative Work

An exegesis requires more than wholly personal reflection on, or recounting of, the candidate's own creative work and practice. It should articulate an argument growing out of the practice-based inquiry, or otherwise show how the thesis project contributes new knowledge, understanding or perspectives within a disciplinary field. For this purpose, an exegesis can do many or all of the following:

- Explain the subject, objectives, rationale and context of the creative work, which should normally include articulating a central question or problem that both components of the thesis investigate;
- Situate the project in its field of creative practice and in relation to pertinent disciplinary concerns, problems or aspects of scholarship;
- Document and reflect on the principles, methods and processes of their research and inquiry into the subject;
- Explain opportunities and/or problems that they have encountered, and how they have responded to them, in the course of the project;
- Reflect on the structure and themes of the creative work, or decisions involved in finding its form;
- Document interactions with others that inform the creative work; and
- Comment on ethical considerations where relevant, and cite or present material (e.g., ethics clearances, interview questions) that helps to understand the research framework.

Appendix D - Doctoral Innovation Portfolio

The Innovation project Portfolio (approximately 75,000 to 80,000 words total length) normally comprises three distinct but closely inter-linked components, supported by empirical evidence and arguments.

1. Innovation Conception and Development History (approximately 25,000 - 30,000 words)

Presents a detailed story about and analysis of the development of the Innovation; parts of the story may be presented as a mixture of a variety of formats, including multimedia, but the history is expected to have a coherent written aspect. The scope of the history should encompass, among other things, those aspects indicated in the box on the left in Figure 1, which are elaborated on below:

Idea(s) Generation

- Discussion of the context(s) relevant to the Innovation (e.g., pertinent literature background and prior innovations; impacted by or impacting on the Innovation, with an emphasis on critical analysis of the relevant contexts, their particularities and generalities)

Idea selection and refinement to identified innovation

- Describe the boundaries/limitations of the Innovation and surrounding contexts.
- Description of the Innovation itself
- Discussion of why it was developed and what need(s) or gap(s) did it address
- Discussion of how it was developed, including discussion of participatory involvement in these processes by key stakeholders/users/beneficiaries

Innovation implementation and evolution

- Describe where the Innovation may or may not be useful or productive
- Identification of the intended 'audience(s)' for the Innovation
- Identification of key stakeholders and communication protocols
- Description of the implementation and, where relevant, refinement processes
- Discussion of how information about the Innovation was disseminated
- Discussion of the quality criteria used to guide the development process
- Outcomes from any early developmental evaluations and diagnostic evidence

2. Innovation Impact & Change Report (approximately 25,000 - 30,000 words)

Based on research carried out, presents a detailed report on what happened during the development and implementation of the Innovation; presented in written format and should encompass:

- What assumptions and quality criteria were used to guide the research?
- Detailed discussion of the method(s) and data collection approaches used to evaluate the Innovation and its impact
- How did the candidate acquire evidence and from whom?
- How did the candidate analyse, evaluate and learn from evidence?
- Using empirical data to address the following issues:
 - Assessment of local/wider impacts
 - Is it having, did it or will it have the intended impacts?
 - Where/are there any unintended consequences & impacts identified?
 - Evaluation of the costs vs benefits on a number of dimensions (economic, human, social, technological, environmental)
 - Identifies target audience or end-users
 - How much impact and change was found or is there potential for that can/could be attributable to the Innovation and why?

3. Reflections & Anticipations (approximately 10,000 - 15,000 words)

Reflective analysis, presented in written format including critical systems thinking, that details and addresses, what has been learned over the entire Innovation project and where things should go forward and should encompass:

- Description of the reflective process
- Identification and discussion of the quality criteria used to guide the reflection process
- What has been learned over the life of the project (e.g., what went right? What went wrong? Unanticipated benefits and/or side-effects? What should be changed versus what should be retained? Overall assessment of success or failure of the project)
- Address the question 'What does the Innovation mean for?'
 - The profession/industry relevant for the Innovation
 - Practice and/or policy
 - Wider society in terms of economic, social, institutional and physical environments.
- What are the implications of the innovation for the future, which could include strategic, spread of adoption and/or marketing discussions?
- Significance of the innovation and its contribution to the field, including discussion of future research needed.

4. Bridging and Supplemental Material (approximately 10,000, words)

There is an expectation that the candidate will integrate the entire Innovation project Portfolio together. This could take the form of a coherent linking paper (see Maxwell & Kupczyk-Romanczuk, 2009)¹. This content should draw upon and build on the knowledge generated within the *Research Learning Program* component of the PhD.I.

Material relevant to the substance and/or implementation of the candidate's actual Innovation, where there is insufficient space to provide it in one or more of the Portfolio components, can be provided in one or more Appendices to the Portfolio and may take any variety of multimedia formats, including text, CD-ROM, DVD, webpages and other relevant media.

Appendix E - Master Innovation Portfolio

The innovation portfolio is the assessable research output from MPhil.I. It shows how the innovation project:

- is relevant to a specific context that constitutes an original, scholarly contribution to a field of work or learning,
- bridges the boundaries between the academic research community and practice-based communities relevant to their Innovation,
- conducts highly contextual developmental and evaluation, based on research principles and methods applicable to that Innovation project,
- produces evidence-based research surrounding the Innovation development and its realised or potential consequences,
- communicates, critically analyses and reflects on the entire innovation process including its role in innovation development and implementation,
- produces an Innovation project Portfolio for examination based on empirical evidence and critical analysis.

This innovation portfolio should comprise of three distinct, but interwoven knowledge pillars:

- a) innovation conception,
- b) evidence for impact or potential impact of the innovation,
- c) critical and systemic reflection upon the process of development and what this innovation means to the person, profession/industry and more broadly.

Appendix F – Thesis by Publication

The following is a recommended structure:

Preliminary Pages

- a. Title Page: showing the title of the thesis, the full name of the candidate together with their prior degrees and other qualifications indicating the awarding institutions, and the date when the degree was conferred.
- b. Certification: a statement signed by the candidate certifying that the work has not been and is not being submitted for any other degree to this or any other university. The candidate will also certify that all help received in preparing the thesis and all sources used are duly acknowledged.
- c. Acknowledgements.
- d. Dedication (optional).
- e. Preface: an explanation that the thesis is by publication.
- f. A Table of Contents indicating clearly how the thesis is structured and how the journal articles are organised.
- g. List of Figures, Tables, Abbreviations, etc. where appropriate.
- h. An Abstract or Summary.

Main Body

The main body should follow the format of Appendix B – Traditional Theses and for each chapter that relates to a publication or publishable work by the candidate the following information must be included:

Manuscript information page, including title, authors, journal, status of manuscript, full citation information and submission dates.

Statement of author's contribution, signed by the candidate and Principal Supervisor.

Statement of originality, signed by the candidate and Principal Supervisor.

Note; the published/publishable work should **not** be included in the body of the thesis.

Conclusion/Synthesis

A general conclusion outlines how the research manuscripts link together and as a collective address the philosophy of the research as well as highlighting the original contribution of the body of knowledge in the chosen area. This chapter would normally also include recommendations for further work. References for the Conclusion are included at the end of this chapter.

Appendices

The publications/publishable work referenced in the thesis should be included in the appendices. Additionally, include material that relates to the thesis as a whole. An example may be a questionnaire that was used to collect data for the various journal articles but has not been included in any of the articles.