HIGHER DEGREE BY RESEARCH THESIS FORMAT GUIDELINES

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.

All theses must be written in English.

Important Information for Ethics Clearance - Any HDR Candidate that has been granted ethics clearance for the research project are advised to speak with the Principal Supervisor as to what information is required to be included in the thesis.

Any candidate in receipt of an RTP Scholarship either as a tuition offset or stipend payments (both domestic and international candidates) 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, please refer to Section 1.6.55 of the Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2017. An example of how to acknowledge the Australian Government in the thesis can be found in the UNE Thesis Template.

Section 2 – Style

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

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. thorough editing, proofreading and correction of all typographical errors

Section 3 – 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 demonstrate 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 4 – Format of Thesis

All candidates are to submit their thesis as a digital (Adobe PDF) file. It is recommended that the PDF file size is reduced, which can be done in Adobe PDF.

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.

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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 preliminary pages may be numbered using Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, Etc.) on the bottom of the pages
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. **Reference list or Bibliography** There are a number of referencing styles in use at UNE, each Faculty/School and Discipline has one or more preferred styles. Please consult your supervisor and/or the HDR Coordinator on the method to use in your thesis. For more information about referencing styles at UNE, please refer to the [Referencing webpage](#).
d. **Appendices**

NOTE: Candidates submitting a thesis containing publications, appendices, 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 5 – 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 6 – Raw Data

In accordance with the [Research Data Management Policy](#) and the all material and data must be registered and archived with the University repository, Research at UNE (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.

Section 7 – Computer Programs

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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 8 – 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.

UNE recommends that HDR candidates who are seeking the services of an editor obtain services through the Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd) or The NSW Society of Editors. This way candidates can be sure of getting expert assistance from trained professionals. UNE also recommends that HDR candidates refer to the Theses Editing Guidelines from the Institute of Professional Editors so that they are aware of what editing entails.

Institute of Professor Editors
Institute of Professional Editors Limited (IPEd) Theses Editing Guidelines

The Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd) also has an Editors Directory which is a national list of freelance editors, who are professional members of IPEd. The Editors Directory can be found in the IPEd website, on the Find an Editor listing.

Section 9 – 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.

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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 20 mm

Comb Bound - Double Side

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

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 20 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 20 mm

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Traditional 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. HDR Candidates and supervisors should refer to the UNE Thesis Template.

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 in the UNE Thesis Template.

Section 3 – Abstract

An abstract is a concise summary of your completed research. If done well, it makes the reader want to learn more about your research by succinctly stating the purpose, methods, major conclusions and implications of your research findings. A thesis 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 read or accept an invitation to examine the full thesis. There exist a number of "Abstract" publications containing entirely academic thesis abstracts reproduced for this purpose.

Section 4 – Certification or Declaration

This is a statement headed 'Certification' or '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. The HDR candidate's typed name and date is placed beneath the statement, candidates may choose to insert a signature however a signature is not required as a typed name will suffice.

HDR Candidates and supervisors should refer to the UNE Thesis Template.

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 -

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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.)
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," "Works Cited," or "Bibliography" and its appropriate page number
v. If applicable - The heading "List of Figures" (Table of Figures) and its page number
vi. If applicable - The heading "List of Tables" and its page number
vii. If applicable - The heading "List of Plans" and its page number (if appropriate)
viii. 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 or in-text reference. 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.

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Appendix A - Traditional Theses

Initial Pages of a Thesis may include the following:

a. Title Page – sample attached
b. Abstract
c. Declaration or Certification Page – sample attached
d. Acknowledgements
e. Table of Contents
f. Table of Figures
g. List of Tables
h. Appendices

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.

If applicable - 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.

If applicable - Chapter 3 Results

If applicable - 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

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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.

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 (i.e., 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 theses involve the preparation and presentation of material in large tables or plans of A4 or greater size.

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.

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Appendix B – 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 its style and form;
- Document the context of practice with reference to influential works or 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 C - Innovation Project Portfolio

The Innovation Project Portfolio (approximately 80,000 words total length for the PhD Innovation or 40,000 words for the MPhil Innovation) normally comprises three distinct but closely inter-linked components, supported by empirical evidence and arguments.

The Innovation Project Portfolio should comprise of three distinct, but interwoven knowledge pillars:

1. innovation conception,
2. evidence for impact or potential impact of the innovation,
3. critical and systemic reflection upon the process of development and what this innovation means to the person, profession/industry and more broadly.

The innovation portfolio is the assessable research output from the PhD.I and the 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.

For the PhD.I the Innovation Project Portfolio must also demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge and/or the field of professional practice.

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Appendix D – 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. Declaration or 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. Preface: an explanation that the thesis is by publication.
e. A Table of Contents indicating clearly how the thesis is structured and how the journal articles are organised.
f. List of Figures, Tables, Abbreviations, etc. where appropriate.
g. An Abstract or Summary.

Main Body

The main body should follow the format of Appendix A – Traditional Theses.

There are two methods of presenting a thesis by publication; the first is to have the published/publishable work within the body of the thesis, or the second method is to have all published/publishable work in the Appendices only, **not** in the body of the thesis. Published work includes written work or manuscripts that have been submitted for publication and accepted by the publisher. Publishable work includes written work or manuscripts that have been submitted for publication but not yet accepted or published.

Whichever method is chosen, HDR Candidates must clearly indicate at the beginning of the thesis, page three (3) of the UNE Thesis Template, the publication(s) that are included in the thesis with the following details: title, authors, journal, status of manuscript, full citation information, submission dates (if applicable) and the thesis page numbers.

NOTE: HDR Candidates who are nearing submission may continue to include published/publishable work within the body of the thesis and include the two forms at the end of each chapter that contains a publication.

- Statement of Authors' Contribution Form
- Statement of Originality

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 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.

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